

An addition of things that came to
my minde afterward.

A He last combat with the diuell in the pang of death, is oftentimes most dangerous of all. For then he will not vrge men to desperatio[n], knowing that by this meanes hee shall stirre them vp to refit; but hee labours with them that they would not refit him when he assaults them, and by this meanes hee indeauours to extinguish hope. And this is not done in any other temptation in which faith or hope alone are impugned, whereas in this they are both impugned together. This must be thought vpon, for when the diuels temptations is, not to refit his temptation; it is most deceitfull of all; and it is more easie to overcome the enemy that compels vs to fight, then him that disuades vs from it.

B Li, de o-
biu
Knevi.

The temptation of *M. John Knox*, in the time of his death is worth the marking. He lay on his death-bed silent for the space of fourt hours, very often giving great shighes, sobbes, and groanes, so as the standers by well perceiued that he was troubled with some grievous temptation, and when at length he was raifted in his bed, they asked him how hee did, to whom he answered thus: that in his life time he had indured many combates and conflicts with Satan, but that now most mightily the

roaring lyon had assaulted him: often (said he) before he set my sinnes before mine eyes; often he urged mee to desperation, often he laboured to intangle me with the delights of the world; but being vanquished by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, hee could not preuale. But now hee assailes me another way: for the wily serpent would perswade mee that I shall merit eternall life for my fidelity in my ministerie. But blessed bee God which brought to my minde such Scriptures wherby I might quench the fierie darts of the diuell, which were, *What hast thou that thou hast not received?* and, *By the grace of God, I am that I am;* and, *Not I but the grace of God in me;* and thus being vanquished he departed.

C When thou art tempted of Satan and feest no way to escape, even plainly close vp thine eyes, and answer nothing; but command thy cause to God. This is a principall point of Christian wisdome which we must follow in the houre of death.

If thy flesh tremble and feare to enter into another life, and doubt of salvation: if thou yeld to these things, thou hurtest thy selfe: therefore close thine eyes as before, and say with S. Stephen, *Lord Iesus into thy hands I commend my spirit;* and then certaintely Christ will come vnto thee with all his angels, and be the guider of thy way. *Luther.*

3.

4.

A
**DISCOVRSE OF
CONSCIENCE.**

WHEREIN IS SET DOWNE THE
nature, properties, and differences thereof:

as also the way to get and keepe
a good Conscience.

The seventh Edition.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOVRABLE
SIR WILLIAM PIRYAM KNIGHT, LORD
CHIEFE BARON OF HER MAESTIES
Exchequer, Grace and Peace.

Light Honourable, it cannot be unknowne to your selfe, or to any man of a daies experiance, that it is thought a small matter to committ a sinne, or, ly in sins against a mans owne conscience. For many when they are tolde of their daies in this point, reply and say, What, tell me of Conscience? Conscience was hanged long agoe. But unless they take better heedes, and prevent the danger by repenteance, hanged conscience will resue and become both gibbes and hangman to them, either in this life, or the life to come. For Conscience is appointed of God to declare and punishe in execution his iust iudgements against sinners: and as God cannot possibly be overcome of man, so neither can the iudgement of Conscience being the judgement of God, be wholly extinguished. Indeede Satan for his part goes about by all meanes he can, to benumme the conscience: but all is nothing. For as the sick man, when hee feares to sleep and take his rest, is inwardly full of troubles: so the benummed and drousy conscience wants not his secret pangs and terrours, and when it shall be rousyd by the iudgement of God, it waxeth cruell and fierce like a wild beast. Againe, when a man sines against his conscience, as much as in him lyeth, he plumbeth himself into the gulf of desperation: for every wound of the conscience, though the smart of it be little felt, is a deadly wound: and he that goes on to sinne against his conscience, stabbles and wounds is often in the same place: and all renewed wounds (as we know) are hardly or never cured. Thirdly, be that lyeth in sinnes against his conscience, cannot call upon the name of God: for a guilty conscience makes a man lie from God. And Christ fayth, God heareth not sinners, understanding by sinners such as goe on in their owne waies against conscience: and what can be more doleful then to be barred of the invocation of Gods name? Lastly, such persons after the last iudgement, shall have noe mercy their bodies in torment, but the worms in their soule and conscience shall never die: and what will it profit a man to gaine the whole world by doing things against his owne conscience, and lose his owne soule?

Now, that men on this manner carleſe touching conscience, may see their folly and the great danger thereof, and come to amendment, I haue penned this small Treatise: and according to the ancient and landable custome, as also according to my long intended purpose, I now dedicate and present the same to your Lordship. The reasons which haue emboldened me to this enterprise (all by respects excluded) are these: Generall doctrine in points of religion is darke and obscure, and very hardly practised without the light of particular examples: and therefore the doctrine of conscience, by due rights pertaines to a man of conscience; such an one as your Lordship is, who (other of like place notwithstanding) haue obtained this mercie at Gods hand to keepe faith and good conscience. Againe, considering that iuste and conscience haue alwaies bin friends: I am indued to think that your Lordship being publikely set apart for the execusion and maintenance of ciuital iuste, will approove and accepte A Treatise propounding rules and precepts of conscience. Thus therefore cravng pardon for my boldnesse, and hoping of your Lordships good acceptance, I commend you to God, and to the wortds of his grace. 1596. June 14.

Your Lordships to command,

WILLIAM PERKINS.



A Treatise of Conscience.

CHAP. I.

What Conscience is.

A Conscience is a part of the vnderstanding in all reasonable creatures, determining of their particular actions either with them or against them.

I say Conscience is a part of the vnderstanding, and I shew it thus: God in framing of the soule, placed in it two principal facultys, *Vnderstanding and Will*. Vnderstanding is that facultie in the soule, wherby we use reaſon: and it is the more principall part seruing to rule and order the whole man: and therefore it is placed in the soule to be as the waggoner in the waggon. The will is another facultie wherby we doe will or nill any thing, that is, choose or refuse it. With the will is ioyned ſundry affections, as ioy, ſorrow, loue, hatred, &c. wherby wee imbrace or eſchew that which is good or euill. Now, conſcience is not placed in the affections nor will, but in the vnderstanding: because the actions thereof ſtand in the vfe of reaſon. Vnderstanding againe hath two parts. The firſt is that which ſtands in the view and contemplation of ruer and ſalfound, and goes no further. The ſecond is that which ſtands in the view and conſideration of every particular action, to ſearch whether it be good or badde. The firſt is called the *Theoretical*, the ſecond the *practical vnderstanding*. And vnder the latter is conſcience to bee comprehended: because his proprietie is to judge of the goodneſſe or badneſſe of things or actions done.

Againe, I say that Conſcience is a part of the minde or vnderstanding, to ſhew that conſcience is not a bare knowledge or iudgement of the vnderstanding (as b) men commonly write): but a natuſall power, faculty, or created qualifie, from whence knowledge and iudgement proceede as effects. This the ſcriptures conſirme, in that they ascribe ſundry workeſ & actions to conſcience, as acciſing, excusing, comforting, terrifyng: which actions could not then proceede, if conſcience were no more but an action or aſte of the minde. Indeede I grant, it may be taken for a kinde of actual knowledge in the minde of man: but to ſpeakē properly, this knowledge muſt proceede of a power in the soule, the proprietie whereof is to take the principles and conſclusions of the minde and apply them, and by applying either to acciſe or excuse. This is the ground of all, and this I take to be conſcience. If it be obiected that conſcience cannot be a natuſall power, because it may be lost: I anſwer, if conſcience be lost, it is only in reſpect of the vfe thereof, as reaſon is lost in the drun-

ken man, and not otherwife.

I addē, that the proper ſubiects of conſcience are reaſonable creatures, that is, men and Angels. Hereby conſcience is excluded, firſt of all from brut beaſts: for though they haue life & ſenſe, and in many things ſome ſhadowes of reaſon, yet because they want true reaſon, they want conſcience alſo. Secondly, from God the creator, who beeing righteouſe in ſelfe, needeth not conſcience, to order and gouerne his actions. And whereas Peter fayth, 1. Pet. 2. 19. that men muſt endure ſtrife wrongfully for conſcience of God, his meaning is not to shew that God hath conſcience, but that men are to ſuffer many wrongs, because their conſcience bindeth them, in ſo doing to obey Gods will, which conſcience directly reſpecteth.

B And I say that conſcience is in all reaſonable creatures, that none might imagine that ſome men by nature haue conſcience in them, ſome none at all. For as many men as there are, ſo many conſciences there be: and every particuler man hath his owne particuler conſcience.

The proper end of conſcience is, to determine of things done. And by this conſcience is diſtinguished from all other gifts of the minde, as intelligence, opinion, ſcience, faith, prudence. Intelligence ſimply conceiueth a thing to be or not to be opinion, iudgeth a thing to bee probable or contingent: ſcience, iudgeth to be certhen and ſure: faith, is a perſuasion, wherby we beleue things that are not: prudence, diſcerneth what is meete to be done, what to be left vndone, but conſcience goes further yet then all theſe: for it determines or giues ſentence of things done, by laying vnto vs. This was done, this was not done, this may bee done, this may not be done; this was well done, this was ill done.

The things that conſcience determines of, are a mans owne actions: his owne actions, I fay. To be certhen what another man hath faid or done, is commonly called knowledge: but for a man to be certhen what he himſelfe hath done or faid, that is conſcience. Again, conſcience meddles not with generall, onely it dealeth in particular actions, and that not in ſome few, but in all.

The manner of conſciences determination, is to ſet downe his iudgement either with the creature, or againit it: I addē this clauſe, because conſcience is of a diuine nature, and is a thing placed of God in the middest betweene him and man, as an arbitraitor to giue ſentence, and to pronounce either with man or againit man vnto God. For otherwhiles, it conſents and ſpeakes with God againit the man in whom it is placed: otherwhiles againit it conſents with him, and ſpeakes for him be-

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b Tho.
Aquin,
1.9.79.
2.1.13.
Domini-
nic, Ban-
onis on
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aus, &c.

fore the Lord. And hence comes one reason of the name of conscience. *Sic et know, is of one man alone by himselfe: and confise is, when two at the least know some one secret thing; either of them knowing it together with the other. Therefore the name *conscientia*, or *Consciencia*, is that thing that combines two together, and makes them partners in the knowledge of one and the same secret. Now man and man, or man and Angel cannot be combined; because they cannot know the secret of any man vntill it be revealed to them: it remans therefore that this combination is only betweene man and God. God knowes perfectly al the doings of man, though they be never so hid and concealed: and man by a gift given him of God, knowes together with God, the same things of himselfe: and this gift is named Conscience.*

CHAP. II. Of the duties of Conscience.

§. i. Of the testi-
monie of
conscience,

THe proper actions or duties of conscience are two fold: to give testimony, or to give judgement, Rom. 1.13.

Conscience gives testimonie by determining that a thing was done, or it was not done, Rom. 2.15. Their conscience also bearing witness, 2 Cor. 1.12. Our testifying is the testimony of our conscience, that in, &c.

Here we must consider three things: I. of what things conscience bears witness. II. in what manner. III. how long.

For the first, conscience bears witness of our thoughts, of our affections, of our outward actions.

That it bears witness of our secret thoughts, it appears by the solemn protestation which at sometime men vfe; *In my conscience I never thought it*: whereby they signifie that they think some thing or they think it not, and that their consciences can tell what they thinke. Neither must this seeme strange. For there be two actions of the understanding, the one is simply, which barely conceiueth or thinketh this or that: the other is a reflecting or doubting of the former, whereby a man conceiueth or thinks with himselfe what he thinks. And this action properly pertaines to the conscience. The mind thinkes a thought, now conscience goes beyond the mind, and knowes what the mind thinkes, so as if a man would goe about to hide his sinfull thoughts from God, his conscience as it were another person within him, shall discouer all. By means of this second action, conscience may bear witness even of thoughts, & from hence also it seemes to borrow his name, because conscience is a *science* or knowledge ioyned with another knowledge: for by it I conceiueth and know what I know.

Again, conscience bears witness what the wils, and affections of men be in every matter, Rom. 9.1, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my Conscience bearing me witness by the holy Ghost*,

A. that I have great heaviness and continuall sorrow in my heart: for I would my selfe to bee separate from Christ for my breschens.

Lastly, it witnesseth what mens actions, Eccles. 7.24. *Oftentimes also thine heart knoweth, (that is, conscience witnesseth) that thou likewise hast curfed others.*

The manner that conscience witnesseth in giving testimony, stands in 2 things. First: it observes & takes notice of al thing that we do: secondly, it doth inwardly and secretly with the heart, tell vs of them all. In this respect it may stily be compared to a Notarie, or a Register that hath alwaies the penne in his hand, to note and record whatsoever is said or done: who also because he keepesthe rollles and records of the court, can tell what hath bin said or done many hundred years past.

Touching the third point, How long conscience bears witness: it doth continually; not for a minute, or a day, or a moneth, or year, but for ever: when a man dies, conscience dieth not: when the body is rotten in the graue, conscience lieth & is safe and found: & when we shall rise again, conscience shall come with vs to the barre of Gods judgement, either to accuse or excuse vs before God, Rom. 2.15,16. Their conscience bearing witness at the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

By this first dutie of conscience, wee are to learne three things. The first, that there is a God: and wee may be led to the sight of this euuen by common reason. For conscience bears witness of what? Of thy particular doings. But against whom or with whom doth it give testimony? thou maist feele in thy heart that it doth it either with thee or against thee. And to whom is it a witness? to men or Angels? that cannot be, for they cannot heare the voice of conscience they cannot receive consciences testimony, nay they cannot see what is in the heart of man. It remans therefore that there is a spirituall substance, most wise, most holy, most mighty, that sees all things, to whom conscience bears record, & that is God himselfe. Let Atheists bark at this as long as they will: they haue that in them that will conuince them of the truth of the Godhead, will they nill they, either in life or death.

Secondly we learne that God doth watch ouer all men by a speciaill prouidence. The master of a prisone is knowne by this to haue care over his prisones, if hee send keepers with them to watch them and to bring them home againe in time convenient: and so Gods care to man is manifest in this, that when he created man and placed him in the world, he gaue him conscience to bee his keeper, to follow him alwaies at his heels, and to dogge him (as we say) and to prie into his actions, and to beare witness of them all.

Thirdly, hence we may obserue Gods goodness & loue to man. If he do any thing amiss, he sets his conscience firt of all to tell him of it secrely: if the he amend, God forgives it:

not

not, then afterward conscience must openly accuse him for it at the barre of Gods judgement before all the Saints & Angels in heaven.

The second worke of conscience is to give judgement of thing done.

To give judgement is to determine, that a thing is wel done or ill done. Herein conscience is like a judge that holdeth an assise, & takes notice of indictments, and caueth the most notorious malefactor that is, to hold vp his hand at the barre of his judgement. Nay it is (as it were) a little God setting in the middle of mens hearts, arraigning them in this life as they shal be arraigned for their offences at the Tribunal seat of the everlasting God in the day of judgement. Wherefore the temporarie judgement that is given by the conscience is nothing els but a beginning, or a fore-runner of the last judgement.

Hence we are aduertised to take speciall heed that nothing past lie heauie vpon vs, and that we charge not our conscience in the time to come with any matter. For if our conscience accuse vs, God will much more condemne vs, saith S. John. 1.7b, 3. 20. because hee seeth all our actions most clearly, and iudgeth them more severely then conscience can. It shall bee good therefore for all men to labour that they may say with Paul. 1. Cor. 4. 4. *I know nothing by myselfe*, that they may stand before God without blame for euer.

Here we must consider two things: first, the cause that makes conscience give judgement: secondly, the manner how.

Se. 2. Of the binding of the conscience.

The cause is the binder of the conscience. The binder is that thing whateuer, which hath power & authority ouer conscience to order it.

To bind, is to vrge, cauife, and constraine it in every action either to accuse for sorne, or to excuse for well doing: or to say, this may be done, or it may not be done.

That we may know what this phrase meaneth (*to bind in conscience*) we must in mind consider conscience apart by it selfe from the binding power of Gods commandement. For then it hath libertie and is not bound either to accuse nor excuse, but is apt to doe either of them indifferently: but when the binding power is set ouer the conscience, then in every actio it must needs either accuse or excuse: euen as a man in a city or towne hauing his libertie, may goe vp and downe or not goe, where and when he will; but if his body beatached by the magistracie and imprisoned, then his former libertie is restrained, hee is bound and can goe vp and downe but within the prisone, or some other allowed place.

The binder of conscience, is either proper or improper. Proper is that thing, which hath absolute and soueraigne power in it selfe to binde the conscience. And that is the word of God, written in the booke of the old and new Testament. Reafon. I. He which is the Lord of conscience, by his word and lawes binds conscience: but God is the onely Lord of conse-

ience: because he once created it, and he alone governes it: and none but he knowes it: therefore his word & lawes only binde conscience properly. II. He which hath power to save or destroy the soule for the keeping and breaking of his lawes, hath absolute power to bind the soule and conscience by the same lawes: but the first is true of God alone, James 4.12. There is one Law-giver which is able to sanctify, Esa. 32.22. *The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, and he wil save us.* Therefore the word of God alone by an absolute and soueraigne power binds conscience. Because this point is cleare of it selfe, further proofe is needless.

Hence we are taught sundrie points of instruction. I. Such as are ignorant among vs must labour to get knowledge of Gods word, because it binds conscience. Neither will the plea of ignorance serve for excuse: because, whether we know Gods lawes or know them not, they still binde vs. And we are bound not only to do them, but whē we know them not, we are further bound not to bee ignorant of them, but to seeke to know them. If we had no more finnes, our ignorance were sufficient to condemne vs. II. Gods word is to be obeyed, though wee shoulde offend all men, yea losse all mens fauour, and suffer the greatest damage that may be, even the losse of our liues. And the reason is at hand because Gods word hath this prerogative to bridle, binde, and restraine the conscience. III. Whosoeuer we enterprise or take in hand, we must first search whether God give vs libertie in conscience, and warrant to doe it. For if we do otherwise, conscience is bound presently to charge vs of sinne before God. Lastly, we doe here see how dangerous the case is of all Time-servars that will live as they list, and be of no certen religion till differences and dissentions therein be ended, and they haue the determination of a generall Councill: for whether these things come to passe or no, certen it is that they are bound in conscience to receive and beleeue the ancient, Propheticall, and Apostolical doctrine touching the true worship of God, and the way to life euerlasting, which is the true religion. The same is to be said of al drowsy Protestants, and alke-warme gospellers, that vfe religion not with that care and conscience they ought, but only then and so farre forth as it serues for their turnes, commonly neglecting or despising the assemblies where the word is preached: & seldom frequenting the Lords table vniuersall at Easter. Like filly wretches they neither fee nor feele the constraing power, that Gods word hath in their consciences.

Gods word is either Law, or Gospell. The Law is a part of Gods word of things to bee done, or to be left vndone. And it is threefold; Morall, Iudicall, Ceremoniall. Moral law concernes duties of loue, partly to God and partly towards our neighbour: it is contained in the Decalogue or ten commandements,

Se. 2. Of the moral binding.

The morall law is unchangeable in respect of that everlast justice which it prescribeth; yet it is changeable as it is applied to some particular actions & cases, & in that respect it admits a dispensation, and no other wife.

b. 1. Com.
c. 5. Com.

Gen. 22.
2.

Ios. 6.

dements; and it is the very law of nature written in all mens hearts (for substance, though not for the manner of propounding) in the creation of man: and therefore it bindes the consciences of all men at all times, even of blind and ignorant persons that neither know the most of it, nor care to know it. Yet here must be remembered three exceptions or cautions.

i. When two commandments of the morall law are opposite in respect of vs; so as we cannot do them both at the same time; the lesser commandement gives place to the greater, and doth not bind or contraine for that instant. Example. i. God commands one thing, and the magistrate commands the flat contrarie; in this case of these two commandments is to be obeyed, (b) Honor God, or, Honor the Magistrate? the answer is, that the latter must give placeto the former, and the former alone in this case must be obeyed:

Act. 4. 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God, judge ye. ii. The fourth commandement prescribes rest on the Sabbath day: now it falleth out that at the same time a whole towne is set on fire, and the first commandement requires our helpe in saving our neighbours life & goods. Now of these two commandments which must be obeyed? for both cannot. The answer is, that the fourth commandement at this time is to give place, & the first commandement alone binds the consciences as then (if need should require) a man might labour all the day without offence to God. *Mat. 9. 13. I will have mercy and not sacrifice.* And the rule must not bee omitted. That charitie towards our neighbour is subordinate to the loue of God, and therfore must give place to it. For this cause the commandement concerning charitie must give place to the commandement concerning loue to God: and when the case so falleth out, we must either offend our neighbour or God, we must rather offend our neighbour than God.

ii. Caution. When God gives some particular commandement to his people, therein dispending with some other commandement of the morall law, for that time it bindes not. For even the morall commandement, must be conceited with this condition, *Except God commandeth otherwise.* Example. i. The sixt commandement is, Thou shalt not kill: but God gives a particular commandement to *Abraham*; *Abraham offer thy son Isaac in sacrifice to me.* And this latter commandement at that instant did bind *Abraham*: and he is therefore commended for his obedience to it. ii. And when God commanded the children of Israel to compasse Ierico seuen daies, and therefore on the Sabbath; the fourth commandement prescribing the sanctifying of rest on the Sabbath, for that instant and in that action did not bind conscience.

iii. Caution. One and the same commandement in some things binds the conscience more straitly, & in doing some other things

lesse, *Gal. 6. 10. Doe good to all men, but especially to them which are of the household of faith.* Hence it ariseth, that though all sinnes be mortall and deserve eternall death, yet all are not equal, but some more grievous then other.

Judicial laws of *Moses* are all such as prescribe order for the execution of justice and judgement in the common wealth. They were specially given by God, and directed to the Jewes; who for this very cause were bound in conscience to keepe them alialand if the common wealth of the Jewes were now standing in the old estate, no doubt they shoud continue still to bind as before.

But touching other nations and specially Christian Common wealths in these daies, the cause is otherwise. Some are of opinion, that the whole judicial law is wholly abolished, and some againe run to the other extreame, holding that judicial laws bind Christians as straitly as Jewes: but no doubt they are both wide: and the safest course is to keepe the meane betwene both. Therefore the judicial laws of *Moses* according to the substance and scope thereof must be distinguished, in which respect they are of two sorts. Some of them are laws of (e) particular equitie, some of (d) common equitie. Laws of particular equitie, are such as prescribe justice according to the particular estate and condition of the Jewes Commonwealth and to the circumstances thereof, time, place, persons, things, actions. Of this kind was the law, that the brother should rafe vp seede to his brother, and many such like: and none of them bind vs, because they were framed and tempered to a particular people.

Judicials of common equitie, are such as are made according to the lawe or instinct of nature common to all men: & these in respect of their substance, bind the consciences not only of the Jewes, but also of the Gentiles: for they were not gien to the Jewes, as they were Jewes, that is, to people receiued into the covenant above all other nations, brought from Egypt to the land of *Canaan*, of whom the *Messias* according to the flesh wasto come; but they were given to them as they were mortal men, subiect to the order and lawes of nature as all other nations are. Again, judicial laws, so farre forth as they haue in them the general or common equitie of the law of nature are morall; and therefore binding in conscience, as the morall law.

A judicial law may be knowne to be a law of common equitie, if either of these two things be found in it. First, if wife men not only among the Jewes, but also in other nations, haue by natural reason and conscience judged the same to be equal, iust, and necessary, and withall haue iustified their judgement by enacting lawes for the common wealths, the same in substance with sondry of the judicial lawes gien to the Jewes: And the Roman Emperors among the rest, haue done this most excellently, as wil appeare by confering their laws

See 5. Of
judicial
binding.

a. Burin.
in Horat.
Theodol.
&
Archela.

1.3 C. de
Pint. au-
diens.

Gen. 3.

21.

Ier. 19.

23.

Ioll. feb.

Item lex.

Itali.

publ.

ad.

Sect. 6.

Of the

ceremo-

nial law

binding.

Augst.

epis. ad

Hieron.

with the lawes of God. Secondly, a Judicial hath common equity, if it serue directly to explane and confirm any of the ten precepts of the Decalogues; or, if it serue directly to maintaine and vphold any of the three estates, of the family, the Common-wealth, the Church. And whether this be so or not it will appeare, if we do but consider the matter of the law, & the reasons or considerations vpon which the Lord was moued to give the same vnto the Jewes. Now to make the point in hand more plaine, take an example or two. It is a Judicial law of God that murtherers shoud be putt to death: now the question is, whether this law for substance bee the common equite of nature binding the conscience of Christians or no? and the answer is, that without further doubting it is so. For first of all, this law hath bin by common consent of wife law-givers, enacted in many countries and kingdomes befores the Jewes. It was the law of the Egyptians, and of old Grecians, of *Draco*, of *Numa*, and of many of the Romane Emperours. Secondly, this law serues directly to maintaine obedience to the sixth commandement: and the consideration vpon which the law was made is so weighty, that without it a common-wealth cannot stand. The murtherers blood must be shed (faire the Lord, *Numb. 35. 33, 34. because the whole land is defiled with blood*, and remaineth uncleansed till his blood be shed. Againe, it was a iudicall law among the Jewes, that the adulterer and adulteresse shoud die the death: now let the question be whether this law concerne other nations, as being derived from the common law of nature: and it seemes to be so. For first, wife men by the light of reason and naturall conscience haue judged this punishment equall and iust. *Indah* before this judicial law was gien by *Moses*, appointed *Tamor* his daughter in law to be burnt to death for playing the whoore. *Nebuchadnezzar* burnt *Echad* and *Zedekias* because they committed adultery with their neighbours wifes. By *Dracos* law among the Grecians this sinne was death, and also by the law of the Romanes. Againe, this law serues directly to maintaine necessary obedience to the seuenth commandement: and the considerations vpon which the law was gien are perpetuall, and serue to vphold the common wealth. *Leuit. 20. 22. Ife (faith the Lord) shall keep all my ordinances and my iudgements (the law of adulterie beinge one of them.)* Now marke the reasons, 1. *Left the land spue you out.* 2. *For the same sinnes I haue abhorred the nations.*

The Ceremoniall law is that which prescribes rites and orders in the outward worship of God. It must be considered in three times. The first, is the time before the comming and death of Christ: the second, the time of publishing the Gospel by the Apostles: the third, the time after the publishing of the Gospel. In the first, it did binde the consciences of

the Jewes, and the obedience of it was the true worship of God: But it did not then binde the conscience of the Gentiles; for it was the partition wall betweene them and the Jewes. And it did continue to bind the Jewes till the very death and ascension of Christ. For then the hand-writing of ordinances which was against vs, was nailed on the croffe and cancelled. And when Christ faith, that the *Law and the Prophets endur'd till John, Luk. 16. 16.* his meaning is not, the ceremoniaill law ended then: but that things foretold by the Prophets, and obscurely prefigured by the ceremoniaill law, began then more plainly to bee preached and made manifest.

B The second time was from the ascension of Christ, till about the time of the destruction of the Temple and the Citie: in which, ceremonies ceased to bind conscience, and remained indifferent. Hereupon *Paul* circumcised *Timothy*: the Apostles after Christs ascension, as occasion was offered were present in the Temple, *Act. 3. 1.* And the Council of Ierusalem tendering the weaknes of some beleueers, decreed that the Church for a time should abstaine from things strangled, and blood. And there was good reasoun of this, because the Church of the Jewes was not yet sufficiently conuictid, that an end was put to the ceremoniall law by the death of Christ.

In the third time, which was after the publishing of the Gospel, ceremonies of the Jewes Church became unlawfull, and so shall continu to the worlds end.

By this it appears, what a monstrous & miserable Religion the Church of Rome teacheth and maintaineth, which stands in ceremonies, partly heathenish, and partly Lewish.

As for the Gospel, I take it for that part of the word of God which promiseth rigteousnesse and life everlasting to all that beleue in Christ and willfully commandeth this faith.

That we may the better know how the Gospel binds conscience, two points must be considerid: one touching the persons bound, the other touching the manner of binding.

Persons are of two sorts: some be vncalled. Persons called are all such to whom God in his mercie hath offered the meanes of saluation & hath reuealed the Gospel in some measure more or lesse, by meanes either ordinary or extraordinary. All such I thinke are straightly bound in conscience to beleue and obey the Gospel. For that word of God whereby men shall bee judged in the day of judgement, must first of all binde their consciences in this life, considering abolition and condemnation is according to that which is done in this life: but by the Gospel, all men that haue beeene called, shall be judged as *Pau* faith, *Rom. 2. 16. God shall judge the secrets of men by Iesus Christ, according to my Gospel.* And our Savior Christ faith, *Ioh. 3. 18. He that believeth not is already condemned.* It remaynes therefore that the Gospel binds the consciences of such men

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men in this life. By this very point we are all put in mind not to covet our felues with this, that we have a liking to the Gospel, and to believe it to bee true (though many Protestants in these our daies thinks it sufficient both in life and death, if they hold that they are to bee saved by faith alone in Christ without the merit of mans works) but we must goe yet further, and enter into a practise of the doctrine of the Gospel as well as of the precepts of the moral law; knowing that the Gospel doth as well binde conscience as the law; and if it be not obeyed, will as well condemne.

Men vncalled, are such as never heard of Christ, by reason the Gospel was never reuelac'd vnto them, nor meanes of reuelation offered. That there haue bin such in former ages, I make manifest thus. The world since the creation may be distinguished into four ages. The first, from the creation to the flood: the second, from the flood to the giving of the Law: the third, from the giving of the Law to the death of Christ: the fourth, from the death of Christ to the last judgement. Now in the three former ages there was a distinction of the world into two sorts of men, whereof one was a people of God; the other no people. In the first age, in the families of *Seth*, *Nos*, &c. were the sonnes of God, in all other families the sonnes of men, *Gen. 6.2*. In the second age were the sonnes of the flesh and the sonnes of the promise, *Rom. 9.7*. In the third, Jewes and Gentiles: the Jewes being the Church of God, all nations before no Church. But in the last age this distinction was taken away, when the Apostles had a commission given them that was never given before to any man, to goe teach not only the Jewes, but all nations. Now this distinction arose of this, that the Gospel was not revealed to the world before the comming of Christ, as the Scriptures witness. The Prophet saith, *Ezay 52.14*, that kings shall *flout their montes at Christ*, because that which had not bin told them they shal see, & that which they had not heard shall they understand: And *55.5*, that a nation that know him not shall run vnto him. Paul saith to the Ephesians, that in the former times they were without God, and without Christ, strangers from the covenant, *Eph. 2.12*. And to the Athenians he saith, that the times before the comming of Christ, were times of ignorance, *Act. 17.30*. And that it may not be thought that this ignorance was affected, Paul saith further, that God in times past suffered the Gentiles to walke in their owne wates, *Act. 14.16*. and that the mysterie of the Gospell was kept secret from the beginning of the world, and is now in the last age revealed to the whole world, *Rom. 16.25*. Some alledge that the Jewes being the Church of God, had traffique with all nations; and by this meanes spread some little knowledge of the Mefsias through the whole world. I answer againe, that the conference & speech of Jewish merchants with fortainers was no sufficient means to publish the promises of saluation

by Christ to the whole world: first, because the Jewes for the most part haue alwaies bin more ready to receive any new and false religion then to teach their own: secondly, because the very Jewes themselves, though they were well acquainted with the ceremonies of their religion, yet the substance thereof, which was Christ figured by external ceremonies, they knew not: and hereupon the Pharisees when they made a Profelyte, they made him ten times more the child of the diuell then themselves: Thirdly, because men are seldom or never suffered to professe or make any speech of their religion in foraine countries. Again, if it be alledged that the doctrine is set downe in the booke of the old Testament, which men through the whole world might haue read, searched, and knowne if they would: I answer, that the keeping of the bookes of the old Testament, was committed to the Jewes alone, *Rom. 3.2*; and therefore they were not given to the whole world, as also the Psalmist testifieth, *Psal. 147.19,20*, *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his iudgements unto Israel: he hath not dealt so with every nation: neither haue they knowne his iudgements*.

Now touching such persons as haue not so much as heard of Christ, though they are apt and fit to be bound in conscience by the Gospell, as in much as they are the creatures of God; yet are they not indeed actually bound till such time as the Gospell bee reuelled, or at the least, meanes of reuelation offered. Reasons hereof may be these. I. Whatsoever doctrine or law doth binde conscience, must in some part be knowne by nature, or by grace, or by both; the vnderstanding must first of all conceive, or at the least haue meanes of conceiving, before conscience can contraine; because it bindeth by vertue of knowne conclusions in the minde. Therefore things that are altogether vnnknowne and vnconceived of the understanding, doe not binde in conscience; now, the Gospell is altogether vnnknowne and vnconceived of many, as I have alreadie proved; and therefore it binds not them in conscience. II. Paul saith, *Rom. 1.2*, *They which sinne without the law [written] shall be condemned without the law*; therefore they which sinne without the Gospell, shall be condemned without the Gospell: and such as shall be condemned without the Gospell after this life, were not bound by it in this life. Augustine the most judical Divine of all the ancient Fathers, vpon these words of Christ: *But now they haue no excuse for their sinne*, saith on this manner. A doubt may be moued, whether they to whom Christ hath not come, neither hath spoken vnto them, haue an excuse for their sinnes. For if they haue it not, why is it said that these (namely the Jewes) haue no excuse because he came and spake to them? and if they haue it, whether is it that their punishment may be taken away quite, or in part lessened. To these demands, to my capactie as the Lord shall enable mee, I answer, *That they to whom Christ*

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came not, neither hath spoken vnto them, haue an excuse, of every sinne but of this sinne, that they haue not believ'd in Christ. Againe, it remains to inquire whether these, who before Christ came in his Church to the Gentiles, and before they heard his Gospell, haue bin or are presuyed by death, may of this excuse, Doubtless they may, but they shall not therefore escape damnation. For whosoever haue sinned without the law, shall perish without the law.

As for the reasons which some of the Schoole-men haue alledged to the contrarye, they are answered by all (a) men of the same order, & I will briefly touch the principal. First it is objected, that the holy Ghost shall judge the world of sin, because they haue not believ'd in Christ, *Iob. 16.9*. I answer, that by the world we must not understand *all* and *every* man since the creation, but all nations and kingdome in the last age of the world to whom the Gospell was revealed. Thus hath Paul expounded this word, *Rom. 11.12*, *The fall of them is the riches of the world, & the diminishing of them is the riches of the Gentiles*. v. 15, *The casting of them away is the reconciliation of the world*. Secondly, it is objected, that the law binds all men in conscience, though the greatest part of it be vnnknown to them. Ans. The law was once given to Adam and imprinted in his heart in his first creation, and in him, as being the roote of all mankind, it was given to all men: and as when he sinned, all men sinned in him, so when he was enlightened all were enlightened in him, and consequently when his conscience was bound by the law, all were bound in him. And though this knowledge be lost by mans fault, yet the bond remains still on Gods part. Now the case is otherwise with the Gospell, which was never written in mans nature, but was given after the fall and is above nature. Here a further reply is made, that the covenant made with Adam, *The seeds of the woman shall bruise the serpents head*, was also made with his seede which is all mankind, and was afterward confirmed with Abraham to all nations. I answer, againe, that Adam was a roote of mankind only in respect of mans nature with the gifts, and forsooth thereof; he was no roote in respect of grace which is above nature, but Christ the second Adams. And therefore when God gave the promise vnto him, and faid to beleue the promise, he did not in him giue them both to all mankind; neither, if Adam had afterward fallen from faith in the Mefsias, should all mankind againe haue fallen in him. Moreover, that the promise of grace was not made to Adams seede vniuersally but indefinitely, it appeates; because when God did afterward renew the covenant, he restraineit it to the family of Noe and Abraham, and in Abrahams family it was restraineit to Isaac. In Isaac (faith the Lord) shall thy seede be called: yea in the tenour of the covenant there is a distinction made of the seede of the woman and the seede of the serpent, which seede of the serpent is a "part of mankind, and it is excluded from

Joh. 15.16, *August. tract. 89. in Joh.*

b 1 Joh.
3.8.

the covenant. And whereas the Lord promised to Abraham that in his seede all the nations of the earth should bee blessed, the promise must not be understood of all men in every age, but of all nations in the latte age of the world. And thus Paul hath cleared the text, *Gal. 3.8*, *The Scripture fore seeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith* (which was done after Christs ascencion) *preached before the Gospell to Abraham*, *In thee shall all nations bee blessed*. Lastly, it may be objected, that if any man be ignorant of the doctrine of saluation by Christ, it is through his owne fault; it is true indeed that all ignorance of the doctrine of saluation comes through mans fault and sinne: but sin must be distinguished; it is either personal, or the finne of mans nature. Now in them that never heard of Christ, their ignorance in this point proceedes vnt of any personal sinne in them, but only from the finne of mans nature, that is, the first sinne of Adam common to all mankind, which finn is punished even when God leaves men wholly to themselves. Now many things there be in men proceeding from this finne, which nevertheless are no sinnes, as the manifold miseries of this life: and so I take the ignorance of things aboue mans nature altogether vntreputed, to be no sin, but a punishment of originall sinne.

This much of the persons which are bound by the Gospell: now let vs see how farre forth they are bound by it.

God in the Gospell generally reueales two points vnto vs: the first, that there is perfect righteousness and life everlasting to be obtained by Christ: the second, that the instrument to obtaine righteousness and life eternal is faith in Christ. Moreover when this Gospell is dispersed and preached vnto vs: God reueales vnto vs two points more: the first, that he will make vs particularly to bee partakers of true righteousness and life everlasting by Christ: the second, that he will haue vs without doubting to beleue thus much of our felues. And for this cause every man to whom the Gospell is revealed, is bound to beleue his own election, iustification, sanctification, and glorification

D in, and by Christ. The reasons and grounds of this point out of the word of God are these: 1. *Ioh. 3.23*, *This is his commandement that we beleue in the name of his Son Iesus Christ*, and *one another as he gave us commandement*. Now to beleue in Christ, is not confusly to beleue, that he is a Redeemer of mankind, but withall to beleue that he is my Saviour, and that I am elected, iustified, sanctified, & shall be glorified by him. This is granted of all men, yea of the Papists themselves, which otherwife are enemies of this doctrine. For Lumbard saith, *To beleue in God, is by beleuing to love, and as it were to go into God: by beleuing to cleane vnto him, and as it were to bee incorporate into his members*. 11. Paul, *Gal. 2.16*, first of all propounds a general sentence, *That a man is not iustified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Christ*.

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Afterward he addes a speciaill application, *Euen we (namely Iewes) haue beleue in Jesus Christ, that we might be iustified by the faith of Jesus Christ:* and in v.20. he deſcends more ſpeciaill to apply the Gofpel to himſelfe, *I loue (faith he) by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loued me, and given himſelfe for me.* And in this kinde of application there is nothing peculiar to *Paul,* for in this very action of his he auoucheth himſelfe to be an example vnto vs, *1. Tim. 1.16. For this caſe (faith he) was I received to mercie, that Jesus Christ ſhould ſhow firſt on me all long ſuffering, unto the example of them which ſhall in time to come beleeue in him to eternall life.* Againe, *Phil. 3.8.* he ſaith, *I thinke all things but loſe, that I might win Christ, and might be found in him not hauing mine own righteouſnes, but that which is through the faith of Christ, that I may know him and the verine of his reſurrecſion:* and afterward he addeth, *v.15. Let vs, as many as be perfeſt, be thus minded.* III. Whatſoever we pray for according to Gods will, we are bound to beleue that it ſhal be givē vnto vs, *Mark. 11.24. Whatſoever ye deſire when ye pray, beleue that ye ſhall haue it, and it ſhall be done unto you.* But we pray for the pardon of our ſinnes, and for life euerlaſting by Christ; and that according to the will of God: Therefore wee are bound in conſcience to beleue the Gofpel only by a Catholike faith, which they make to be nothing elſe but a gift of God, or illumination of the minde, whereby affent is giuen to the word of God that it is true; and more ſpecially that Jesus is Christ, that is, an alſufficient Sauour of mankind. All which the damned ſpirits beleue: whereas the Gofpel for the comfort and faluation of mens ſoules, hath a further reach, namely, to enioyne men to beleue that the promife of faluation is not only true in it ſelfe, but also in the very perfon of the beleuer, as appears evidently by the Sacraments, which are as it were a viſible Gofpel, in which Christ with all his benefits is offered and applied to the particular perſons of men: to the end, no doubt, that they might beleue the accomplishment of the promife in themſelues.

Secondly, we leare that it is not preſumption for any man to beleue the remiſſion of his own ſinnes; for to doe the will of God to which we are bound, is notto preſume: now it is the will of God to which he hath bound vs in conſcience, to beleue the remiſſion of our own ſinnes: and therefore rather not to do it, is preſumptuous diſobedience.

Thirdly, wee are here to marke and to remember with care, the foundation of the viſitabile certainty of mans faluation. For if man be bound in conſcience firſt to give affent to the Gofpel, and ſecondly to apply it to himſelfe by true faith; then without doubt a man by faith may bee certainly perſuaded of his owne election and faluation in this life, without any extraordinary revelation: Gods commandements being in this and the like caſes poſſible. For commandements are either Legall, or Euangelical: Legall, ſhew vs our diſcate, but giue vs no remedie: and the perfect doing of them according to the intent of the Law gifer, by reaſon of mans weakeſſe and through mans default, is imposſible in this world. As for Euangelical commandements,

by beleueing they might indeed be faued; God enabling them to do that which he commands. To the reſt, whom God in iuſtice will refufe, the fame commandement is giuen not for the fame caſe; but to another end, that they might ſee how they could not beleue, and by this meaſures be bereft of all excuse in the day of judgement. God doth not alwaies give commandements ſimply that they might be done, but ſometimes for other reſpects, that they might be meaſures of trial, as the commandement giuen to *Abraham* of killing *Isaac*: again, that they might ſerve to keepe men at the leaſt in outward obedience in this life, & ſtop their mouthes before the tribunnal ſeat of God.

B In that we are bound in conſcience on this matter to beleue the promises of the Gofpel, with an application of the benefits thereof to our ſelues, ſundry neceſſary & profitable points of iuſtruction may be learned. The firſt, that the Popiſh Doctors aboliſh a great part of the Gofpel, when they teach that men are bound to beleue the Gofpel only by a Catholike faith, which they make to be nothing elſe but a gift of God, or illumination of the minde, whereby affent is giuen to the word of God that it is true; and more ſpecially that Jesus is Christ, that is, an alſufficient Sauour of mankind. All which the damned ſpirits beleue: whereas the Gofpel for the comfort and faluation of mens ſoules, hath a further reach, namely, to enioyne men to beleue that the promife of faluation is not only true in it ſelfe, but also in the very perfon of the beleuer, as appears evidently by the Sacraments, which are as it were a viſible Gofpel, in which Christ with all his benefits is offered and applied to the particular perſons of men: to the end, no doubt, that they might beleue the accomplishment of the promife in themſelues.

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they haue this priuiledge, that they may and can be performed according to the intent of the Law-giver in this life: because with the commandement is ioynd the inward operatiōn of the ſpirit in the elect, to enable them to effect the dutie commanded: and the will of God is not to require absolute perfection at our hands in the Gofpel as in the Law, but rather to qualifie the rigour of the law by the faſtification of a Mediatoſr in our stead; and of vs (we being in Christ) to accept the upright wil and indeanour for the deed; as the will to repente, & the will to beleue, for repenteance and true faith indeed. Now then, if things required in the Gofpel, be both ordinarie and poſſible; then for a man to haue an inſallable certeinty of his owne faluation, is both ordinarie and poſſible. But more of this point afterward.

Laſtly, all ſuch perſons as are trouled with doubting, diſtrutting, vnbelleſte, deſpair of Gods mercy, are to learn & confider that God by his word bindes them in conſcience to beleue the pardon of their own ſinnes be they never ſo grievous or many, & to beleue their own election or faluation wherof they doubt. Men that are but ciuill hauecare to avoid robbing and killing, because God giues commandements againſt stealing and killing: why then ſhould not we much more ſtriu against our maniſtold diſtributings and diſtributings of Gods loue in Christ, haunting a commandement of God that calſ upon vs & binds vs to do fo.

C Thus we ſee how Gods word bindes conſcience: now conſcience beeing thus bound, againe bindes the man in whom it is.

The bond of conſcience is called *guiltiſſe.* Guiltiſſe is nothing elſe but a worke of the conſcience, binding every ſinner to the punishment of euerlaſting death, before God for this or that ſinne.

D Thus muſt of the proper binder of the conſcience, now follows the improper.

The improper binder is that, which hath no power at all or vertue in it ſelfe to bind conſcience: but doth it onely by the authority and vertue of Gods word, or ſome part therof. It is threefold, Humane lawes, an Oath, a Promife.

Touching humane lawes, the ſpeciall point to be conſidered is, in what manner they bind. That this may be part cleare, I will ſtand a while to examine & conſider the opinion, that the very pillars of the popiſh Church at this day maaintaine; namely, that *Ciuitiſſe and Ecclesiſtical inviſiſſion haue a coaſtive power in the conſcience, & that the lawes made thereby doe as truly & properly bind (as they ſpeak) to mortal and veniall time, as Gods lawe it ſelfe.* The arguments which commonly they vſe are theſe:

Argum. 1. *Deut. 17.12. That man ſhall wil do preſumptuously, and not obey the (a) authority of the Priſt, or Judge, ſhall die: and thou ſhalt take away cuill from Ifrael.* Here (ſay they) the preceptes of the high Priſt are (b) imperia, not admittions or exhortations, & they bind in conſcience; otherwife the tranſgrefſors thereof ſhould not

A haue bin puniſhed ſo ſeriously. *Anſ.* The intent of this law (as a very childe may perceiue) is to eſtabliſh the authority & right of the higheft appeals for all matters of coniouerſe in the *Synedriū*, or great Court at Ieruafalem. Therfore the words alledged do not giue vnto the priſt a fourraigne power of making lawes, but a power of giuing iudgement of coniouerſes, and that according to laws already made by God himſelfe: from which judgement there might be no appeal. Now this power of determining doth not conſtraine conſcience, but the outward man to maintaine order and peace. For what reaſon is there, that that fentece, which might be either a gainſaying of Gods law, or a miſtaking of it, ſhould bind the conſcience to a fine? Againe, not every one that refuſed to ſubiect themſelues to the fentece of this court, were ſtraight way ſet by a fine. (for this did *Ieremy* the Prophet, and Christ our Sauour, when the Iewes condemned them for wicked perſons) but he that preſumptuously defiſped the fentece, & by conſequēt authority it ſelfe, which was the ordinance of God, was guilty. Laſtly, the ſceturie of the punishment, which is temporall death, doth not argue any power in the Judge of binding conſcience: thiſ they might haue learned of their owne *Doctor Gerson*, who holdeth, that they that bind any man to mortall ſin, muſt bee able to puniſh him with anweſable punishment, which is eternall death.

Argu. 2. *Mat. 16.19. Whatſoever ye ſhall bind in earth, ſhall be bound in heaven.* Herc (ſay they) to bind, is to make lawes conſtraining conſcience, according to *Mat. 23.4. They bind heauie burdons, and lay them on mens ſhoulders.* *Anſ.* The fourraigne power of binding, & looſing, is not belonging to any creature, but is proper to Christ, who had the keys of heauen and hell: he openeth & no man shutteth, he flutteth and no man openeth. *Ren. 3.5.* As for the power of the Church, it is nothing but a miniterte of ſervice, whereby men publiſh and pronounce that Christ bindeth or looſeth. Againe, this binding ſtandes not in the power of making lawes, but in remitting and retaining of mens ſins, as the words going before declar. v.18. *If thy brother ſin againſt thee, &c. and Curit ſhews his own meaning whiſe he ſaith, Whose ſins are remitted, and whosoev're ſins are retained, they are retained, Job. 20. 23.* Hauing before in the perſon of Peter promiſed him his honour, in thiſ forme of words, *Mat. 16.19. I will giue unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heauen: whatſoever thou ſhalt bind upon earth, ſhall be bound in heauen.* This which I ſay is approoved by conſent of auncient Diuiines. Aug. P.d. 101. term. 2. *Remiſſion of ſin (faith he) is looſing therfore by the law of contraries, binding is to hold ſinne empordened.* *Hilar. vpon Mat. c.18. Whom they bind on earth, that is (faith he) leauing vnyty of the knottes of their ſinnes.* Lumbard the Popiſh malter of ſentences, *The Lord (faith he) hath giuen to Priſts power of binding and looſing, that is,*

1er. 2.6.
11.15.

Lib. de
vita
rit.ted.4.

Set 8. Of
humane
lawes
binding.

simplicia

b Prince-
cial com-
mandemts.

they

Lib. 4.
diff. 13.
cap. 4-

son
18.
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16.

of making manifest that men are bound or loosed. Again, both *Origen*, (a) *Augustine*, & (b) *Theophilus* attribute the power of binding to all Christians, and therefore they for their parts, never dreamed that the power of binding should be an authority to make laws. Lastly, the place *1 Cor. 12. 23. 4*, overturns the argument, for there the *Scribes* and *Priests* are condemned, because they laid upon mens shoulders the burthen of their traditions, as means of Gods worship & things binding conscience.

Argu. 3. Act. 15. 28. 29. It comes good unto us & the holy Ghost, to lay no more burden on you then these necessary things, that ye abstain from things offered to idols, and blood, and that which is strangled, and fornication. Here (say they) the Apostles by the instinct of the holy Ghost make a new law not for this or that respect, but simply to bind the consciences of the Gentiles, that they might bee exercised in obedience. And this is proved, because the Apostles call this law a burden, and call the things prescribed, necessities: and S. Luke teares them, the Commandments of the Apostles: and *Chrysostom* calls the Epistle sent to the Church, Imperium, that is, a lordly charge. To this they add the testimonie of *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Augustine*. *Auf.* Though all be graunted, that the law is a burden imposed, a precept of the Apostles, a charge: again, that things required therein are necessary: yet will it not follow by good conjecture, that this law simply binds conscience, because it was given with a reprobation of Idolatry. For by Idolatry he vnderstands not things that have bin offered to Idols, & are afterward brought to private houses, or to the market, as other common meats: but he vnderstands things that remaine consecrated to idols, & are no-where else vset but in their temples; which we grant him must or can be avoided as meanes & instruments of idolatry. Whereas the law of the Apostles speaks onely of the first kind. And that will appear by these reasons: First of all *Peter* saith, that it is a temptation of God to impose vpon the Gentiles the yoke of Iewish ceremonies: he therefore must needs be contrarie to himselfe, if he intend to bind mens consciences to abstinence from that which is strangled, blood, and things offered to Idols. A replie is made, that this abstinence is preferred, not by the ancient law of *Moses*, but by a new Ecclesiastical or Apostolical authority. I answer againe, that a Mosaicall ceremony is still the same thing, though it be established by a new authortie. And whereas Christ by his death put an end to the ceremoniall law, it is absurd to thinke that the Apostles by their authority renied some part of it again, & bound mens consciences thereto. Secondly, the Church of God in all places suffered this commandement to cease, which the faithfull seruants of God would never haue done, if they had bene perswaded that this law had bound conscience simply. It is answered, that this law ceased not because the giving of offence vnto the Iewes ceased, but because it ceased universally: yea, but it could not haue ceased universally, if it had bound conscience, specially considering it was propounded to the Church without any mention or limitation of time. Thirdly, *Paul* was present in this Council: and

he knew the intent of the law very well, & therefore no doubt he did not in any of his Epistles gainsay the same. This being granted, it cannot bee, that this should binde conscience out of the case of offence, for he teacheth the Corinthians that things offered to Idols, may be eaten, so be it the weake brother be not offended. Here it is answered, that when *Paul* writ this *1. Epist. to the Corinthians*, this commandement of the Apostles touching things strangled and blood was not come vnto them. Well, to grant all this, which cannot be proved, let it be answered, why *Paul* did not now deliuere it, & why he deliuered a doctrine contrary to that which he had decreed at Ierusalem, which was that the Gentiles shoule absolutely abstaine from things offered to Idols. As for the testimonies of the fathers they are abused. Indeede *Tertullian* saith plainly, that Christians in his daies abstained from eating of blood, and he persuades men to continue in so doing, because he is of opinion (beeing indeede farre deceipted) that this very law of the Apostles must last to the end of the world: which conceit if the Papist hold not, what meane they to build vpon him? *Origen* saith, that this law was very necessary in his daies: and no manuell. For by Idolatry he vnderstands not things that have bin offered to Idols, & are afterward brought to private houses, or to the market, as other common meats: but he vnderstands things that remaine consecrated to idols, & are no-where else vset but in their temples; which we grant him must or can be avoided as meanes & instruments of idolatry. Whereas the law of the Apostles speaks onely of the first kind. And that will appear by these reasons: First of all *Peter* saith, that it is a temptation of God to impose vpon the Gentiles the yoke of Iewish ceremonies: he therefore must needs be contrarie to himselfe, if he intend to bind mens consciences to abstinence from that which is strangled, blood, and things offered to Idols. A replie is made, that this abstinence is preferred, not by the ancient law of *Moses*, but by a new Ecclesiastical or Apostolical authority. I answer againe, that a Mosaicall ceremony is still the same thing, though it be established by a new authortie. And whereas Christ by his death put an end to the ceremoniall law, it is absurd to thinke that the Apostles by their authority renied some part of it again, & bound mens consciences thereto. Secondly, the Church of God in all places suffered this commandement to cease, which the faithfull seruants of God would never haue done, if they had bene perswaded that this law had bound conscience simply. It is answered, that this law ceased not because the giving of offence vnto the Iewes ceased, but because it ceased universally: yea, but it could not haue ceased universally, if it had bound conscience, specially considering it was propounded to the Church without any mention or limitation of time. Thirdly, *Paul* was present in this Council: and

1. Cor.
8. 9.

Apoll. op.
s. 1. de
Punctione
Corin.
Capit. 1.

1.
2.

Epist. ad
Puth.
Capit. 1.

only

only to preach the redemption of mankind, but also to effect and worke the same. If this be absurd, then it is a flat abusing of Scripture to gather from this saying of Christ, that the Apostles had power of binding conscience before he had so. It is true indeed that there is a similitude or analogie between the calling of Christ and his Apostles, but it wholly stands in these points: Christ was ordained to his office before all worlds, and so were the Apostles: Christ was called of his Father immediately, & so were they of Christ: Christ was sent to the whole world, and so were they: Christ received all power in heaven and earth as beeinge necessary for a mediator; and they received an extraordinary authortie from him with such a plentiful measure of the spirit as was necessary for the Apostolical function. Lastly, Christ was sent euens hee was man to bee a teacher of the Iewes: and therefore hee is calld the minister of circumcision, *Rom. 15. 8.* and so the Apostles are sent by him to teach the Gentiles. Thus farre is the comparison to be enlarged, and no further. And that no man might imagine that some part of this resemblance standes in a power of binding conscience, Christ hath put a speciale exception, when he saith; Goe teach all nations, teaching them to obserue al things that I haue commanded you, and not commandements of your owne.

Argum. 6. Rom. 13. 2. Whosoeuer resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God and they that resist shall receive to themselves judgement: and, 5. see must bee subiect not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. *Auf.* Magistracie indeede is an ordinance of God to which we owe subiectio, but how far subiectio is due, there is the question. For body and goods and outward conuincion, I grant all, but a subiectio of conscience to mens lawes, I deny. And betwene these two there is a great differenceto be subiect to authority in conscience; and to be subiect to it for conscience, as will be manifest if we doe but consider the phrase of the Apostle, the meaning whereof is, that we must performe obedience not only for anger, that is, for the avoideing of punishment, but also for the auoideing of sinne, and so by consequent for auoinding a breach in conscience. Now this breach is not properly made because mans law is neglected, but because Gods law is broken which ordaineth magistracie, & with all bindes mens consciences to obey their lawfull commandements. And the damnation that is due vnto men for resifting the ordinance of God comes not by the ingle breach of magistracie commandement, but by a transgression of Gods law which appointeth magistrates and their authority. To this answere Papists replie nothing that is of moment. Therefore I proceed.

Argum. 7. 1. Cor. 4. 21. What will you? that I come vnto you with a rodde, or in the spirit of meeknes? Now this rodde is a midcliall power of punishing of sinnes. *Auf.* For the regiment and protection of Gods Church, there bee two rods

mentioned in Scripture: the rod of Christ, and the Apostolical rod. The rod of Christ is termed a rod of iron, or the rod of his mouth, & it signifies that absolute and oueraigne power which Christ hath ouer his creatures, whereby he is able to convert and save them, or to forsake and destroy them. And it is a peculiar privilege of this rodde to smite and wound the conscience. The Apostolical rod was a certaine extraordinarie power, whereby God enabled them to plague and punish rebellious offenders with grievous iudgements, not in their foules but in their bodies alone. With this rod *Paul smote Elmae* blind, and *Peter smote Ananias and Sabina* with bodily death. *B* And it may be that *Paul* by his power did give vp the incelitous man, when he was excommunicate, to be vexed in his body and tormented by the diuel: but that by this rod the Apostles could smite conscience, it cannot be pronounced.

Argum. 8. 1 Tim. 3. 2. Paul made a law that none hauing two wifes shoule be ordaine a Bishop: Now this law is politice & Ecclesiastical, and bindes conscience. *Auf.* *Paul* is not the maker of this law, but God himselfe, who ordaine that in mariage no thre but two alone shoule be one flesh: and that they which ferre at the after of the Lord, should be holy. And to grant that this law were a new law besid the written word of God, yet doth it not follow that *Paul* was the maker of it; because he vset not to deliuere any doctrine to the Churches but which he received of the Lord.

Argum. 9. Luk. 10. 16. He which heareth you, heareth me. *Auf.* These words properly concerne the Apostles, and doe not in like manner belong to the Paffors and teachers of the Church. And the end of these words is not to confirme any Apostolical authority in making lawes to the conscience; but to signifie the pridlege which he had vouchsafed them above all others, that he would to farre forth assit them with his spirit, that they shoule not erre or be deceived in teaching and publishing the doctrine of saluation, though otherwise they were sinfull men: according to *Mat. 10. 20.* It is not you that speak, but the spirit of your father which speaketh in you. And the promise to be led into all truth, was directed into them.

Argum. 10. 1 Cor. 11. 2. I praise you that you keepe my commandments. *Auf.* *Paul* deliuere nothing of his owne concerning the substance of the doctrine of saluation and the worship of God, but that which he receiued from Christ. The precepts here meant are nothing else but rules of decencie and comely order in the congregation: and though they were to be obeyed, yet *Pauls* meaning was notto bind any mans conscience therewith. For of greater matteres is the faith. *This I speake for your commode, and not to intangle you in a snare,* 1 Cor. 7. 35.

Argum. 11. Councils of auncient Fathers when they command or forbid any thing, doe it with threatening of a curse to the offenders. *Auf.* The Church in former time vsed to

anncxe voto her Canons the curse *Anathema*, because things decribed by them were indeed, or at the least thought to be the will and word of God; and they had respect to the saying of *Paul*, If any teach otherwise, though hee be an Angell from heaven, let him be accurfed. Therefore Councils in this action were no more but instruments of God to accurfe those whom hee fift had accurfed.

Argum. 12. An act indifferent if it be commanded, is made necessary; and the keeping of it is the practice of vertue, therefore every law bindes conscience to a finne. *Answ.* An act it selfe indifferent, beeing commanded by mans law, it is not made simply necessary, for that is as much as Gods law doth or can doe, but only in some part, that is, so farre forth as the said act or actions tends to maintaine and preseure the good end for which the law is made. And though the action bee in this regard necessary; yet doth it still remayne indifferent, as it is consider'd in it selfe out of the ende of the law: so as if peace, the common good, and comely order may bee maintained, and all offence avoide by any other meanes, the acte may be done or not done without sinne before God. For whereas God himselfe hath given liberty and freedome in the vfe of things indifferent, the law of man doth not take away the same, but only moderateth and order the ouercommon vfe of it for the common good.

Argum. 13. The fast of Lent stands by a law & commandement of men, and this law binds conscience simply: for the ancient fathers have called it a Tradition Apostolical, and make the keeping of it to be necessary, and not the keeping of a finne, and punish the offenders with excommunication. *Ansf.* It is plaine to him that wil not be obliniate, that lent fast was not commanded in the primitive Church, but was freely at mens pleasures, and in several Churches diuersly both in regard of place or time, as also in respect of diuerstie of meats. *Ierome* in his Epistle to *Victor* cited by *Eusebii* faith, Some haue thought that they must fast one day, some two dyes, some more, some 40 hours day and night, which diuersitie of fasting commendeth the unitye of faith. *Spiridon* a good man did eate flesh in lent, & caufeth his gullet to do the same, & this he did vpon judgement because he was perswaded out of Gods word, that to the clean allthings were cleane. And *Eusebii* records, that *Montanus* the hereticke was the first that preferred solemnie and fet lawes for fasting. And whereas this fast is called an Apostolical tradition, it is no great matter, for it was the manner of the ancient Church in former times to teame rites and orders Ecclesiastical not set down in the scriptures, Apostolical orders, that by this means they might command them to the people. *Ierome* testifieth; Every prouince (alſe) may think the constitutions of their Ancestors to be Apostolical laws. And whereas it is said to be a fin not to fast in Lent (as *Augustine* speakeith) it is not by reaſon of

A any commandement binding conscience, for *Augustine* faith plainly, that neither Christ nor his Apostles appointed any fet time of fasting: and *Chrysostome*; that Christ never commanded vs to follow his fast; but the true reason hereof is borrowed from the end. For the primitive Church vſed not the populi fast, which is to eate white-meat alone, but an abſſinencie from almeats, vſed ſpecially to mortifie the flesh, & to prepare men before hand to a worthy receiving of the Eucharift. And in regard of this good end was the offence. And whereas it is ſaid, that auncient fathers taught a neccſſity of keeping this fast, cuen *Hierome* whom they alleadged to this purpoſe, ſiſt the contrary. For conuerting the error of *Montanus* who had his fet time of fast to bee kept of necessity, hee faith, We ſift in Lent according to the Apoftles tradition in a time meet for us: & we do it not, as though it were not lawfull for us to fast in the rest of the yeare except Pentecote: but it is one thing to do a thing of necessity, and another to offer a gift of free will. Lastly, excommunication was for open contempt of this order taken vp in the Church, which was, that men ſhould fast before Eaſter for their further humiliatiōn & preparation to the Sacrament. So the 29. Canon of the Councill of Gangres muſt bee underſtoode. As for the Canons of the Apoftles (ſo tally called) and the 8. Council of Toledo, I much reſpeſt not what they ſay in this case.

Argum. 14. Gods authority bindes conſcience: Magistrateſ authority is Gods authority: therefore Magistrateſ authority binds conſcience properly. *Answ.* Gods authority may be taken two waies: firſt, for that ſoueraigne and absolute power which hee vſeth over all his creatures: Secondly, for that finne and limited power which hee hath ordained that men ſhould exercife over men. If the minor, namely, the Magistrateſ authority is Gods authority, be taken in the firſt ſenſe, it is false; for the ſoueraigne power of God is incomminable. If it be taken in the ſecond ſenſe, the propoſition is false. For there be ſundry authorities ordained of God, as the authority of the faſher ouer a childe, of the maſter ouer the ſeruant, the authority of the maſter ouer his ſcholler, which doe bind in conſcience as the authority of Gods lawes doth.

By theſe arguments which I haue now anſwered, and by many other being but lightly ſkanned, it will appear that neceſſarie obediēnce is to bee performed both to ciuill and Ecclesiastical iurisdiction; but that they haue a conſtraining power to bind conſcience, and that properly as Gods lawes doe, it is not yet prooued, neither can be as I will make manifest by other arguments.

Argum. 1. Hee that makes a law binding conſcience to mortall fin, hath power, if not to ſue, yet to destroy; because by finne, which follows vpo the transgreſſion of his law, comes death & damnation. But God is the only law-giuere that hath this priuilege; which is, after

Scrim. Temp. Epiph. Chrysostome on Math. hom. 47

Hieron. ad Mal. col. de Error. Mon.

he hath giuen his law, vpon the breaking or keeping thereof, to ſue or destroy, *Iam. 4.12.* There is one Law giuere that can ſue or destroy. Therefore God alone makes lawes binding conſcience properly, and no creature can doe the like. Anſwer is made that S. James ſpeakes of the principall Law-giuere, that by his owne proper authoritie makes lawes, and doth in ſuch manner ſue and destroy, that hee neede not ſear to be destroyed of any: and that hee ſpeakes not of ſecondary law-giuers that are deputieſ of God, and make lawes in his name. I ſay againe, that this anſwer stands not with the text. For S. James ſpeakes ſimply without diſtinguiftion, limitation, or exception: and the effect of his reaſon iſ this. No man at all muſt flander his brother, because no man muſt be iudge of the law: and no man can be iudge of the law, because no man can be a law-giuere to ſue or detroy. Now then where bee thoſe perſons that ſhall make lawes to the louelſt men, and bind them vnto punishment of mortall finne; conſidering that God alone is the ſuing and detroying Law-giuere.

Argum. 2. Hee that can make lawes as truly binding conſcience as Gods lawes, can also preſcribe rules of Gods worship: because to bind the conſcience, is nothing elſe but to cauſe it to excuse for things that are wel done, and therefore truely pleafe God; and to accuse for ſin, whereby God is diſhonoured: but no man can preſcribe rules of Gods worship; and humane lawes, as they are humane lawes, appoint not the ſeruice of God. *Eſ. 29.13.* Their ſeare towards mee was taught by the precepts of men. *Math. 15.9.* They worship me in vain, teaching doctrine which are the commandments of men. Papists haue make anſwer, that by lawes of men we muſt underſtand ſuch lawes as be unlawfull or vaprofitable, being made without the authoritie of God, or in iudgement of his ſpirit. It is true indeed, that theſe commandments of men were unlawfull; but the caufe muſt be conſidered; they were unlawfull not becauſe they commanded that which was unlawfull & againſt the will of God, but becauſe things in themſelues lawfull were commanded as parts of Gods worship. To walke the outward part of the cup or platter, & to wafh hands before meat, are things in respect of ciuill vſe very lawfull, and yet are theſe blaſmed by Christ, and no other reaſon can be rendred but this; that they were preſcribed not as things indiuerſe or ciuill, but as matters pertaining to Gods worship. It is not againſt Gods word in ſome politike regards to make diſtinctions of meates, and drinkeſ, and times: yet *Paul* calleſ these things, doctriues of diuels, becauſe they were commanded as things wherein God ſhould be worshipped.

Argum. 3. God hath now in the new Testaſment giuen a libertie to the conſcience, where by it is freed from all lawes of his owne whatſoever, excepting ſuch lawes and doctriues as are neceſſary to ſaluation, *Col. 2.20.* If ye be dead with Christ, yee are free from the elements of the world, *Gal. 5.1.* Stand in the libertie wherewith Christ hath freed you, and be not againſt entangled with the yoke of bondage. Now, if humane lawes made after the grant of this libertie, bind conſcience of themſelues, then muſt they either take away the foreſaid liberty, or dimiſh the ſame: but that they cannot doe, for that which is gaunteed by an higher authoritie, namely, God himſelfe, cannot be reuoked or repealed by the inferior authoritie of any man. It is anſwered, that this freedom is onely from the bondage of finne, from the curse of the moral law, from the ceremoniall and judicial law of *Ayofs*, and not from the lawes of our ſuperiours. And I anſwer againe, that it is abſurd to think that God giues vs libertie in conſcience from any of his owne lawes, and yet will ouer our conſciences ſtill to remaine in ſubjection to the lawes of finnall men.

Argum. 4. Whoſoever binds conſcience, commands conſcience. For the bond is made by a commandement vrging conſcience to doe his dutie, which is to accuse or excuse for culle or well doing. Now Gods lawes command conſcience in as much as they are ſpirituall, commanding body and ſpirit, with all the thoughts, wil, affections, deſires, and faculties, & requiring obedience of them all, according to their kinde. As for the lawes of men, they want power to command conſcience. Indeede if it were poſſible for our gouernours by law to command mens thoughts and affections, then alſo might they command conſcience: but the firſt is not poſſible, for their lawes can reach no further then to the outward man, that is, to body and goods, with the ſpeeches and deeds thereof: and the end of them all, is not to maiſtaine ſpirituall peace of conſcience, which iſ betweene man and God, but only that externall and ciuill peace which is betweene man and man. And it were not meet that men ſhould command conſcience, which cannot ſee conſcience, and iudge of all her actions, which appear not outwardly, and whereof there be no witneſſes, but God and the conſcience of the doer. Lately, men are not fit commanders of conſcience, because they are no Lords of it, but God himſelfe alone.

Argum. 5. Men in making lawes are ſubiect to ignorance and error: and therefore when they haue made a law (as neare as poſſibly they can) agreeable to the equitie of Gods law, yet can they not auſtre themſelues and others, that they haue failed in no point or circumſtance. Therefore it is againſt reaſon, that humane lawes being ſubiect to defects, faults, erreurs, and manifold imperfections, ſhould truly bind conſcience, as Gods lawes doe, which are the rule of righteouſneſſe. All gouernours in the world (by reaſon that to their old lawes, they are conſtrained to put reſtraints, ampiſtacions, and modiſcations of all kinds, with new readings and interpretations) vpon their daily experience ſee & acknowledge this to be true

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which I say, fasing the Bishop of Rome (so falfely earneid) which perswades himselfe to haue when he is in his Confitory, such an infallible assystance of the spirit, that he cannot possibly erre in iudgement.

Argum. 6. If mens lawes by inward vertue bind conscience properly as Gods lawes, then our duty is to learne, study, & remember them as well as Gods lawes: yea Ministers must bee diligent to preach them, as they are diligent in preaching the doctrine of the Gospel: because every one of them bindes to mortall sinne, as the Papists teach. But that they shoule be taught and learned as Gods lawes, it is most absurd in the iudgement of all men, Papists themselves not excepted.

Argum. 7. Inferior authoritie cannot bind the superior: now the courts of men and their authoritie are vnder conscience. For God in the heart of every man hath erected a tribunall seat, and in his stead he hath placed neither Saint nor Angel, nor any other creature whatsoeuer; but conscience is selfe, who therefore is the highest? Judge that is or can be vnder God; by whose direction also courts are kept, and lawes are made.

Thus much of the Popish opinion: by which it appears that one of the principall notes of Antichrist agrees foly to the Pope of Rome. *Paul 2 Thess. 2:4.* makes it a speciall properte of Antichrist to exalte himselfe against or aboue all that is called God, or worshipped.

Now what doth the Pope else, when he takis vpon him authoritie to make such lawes as shal bind the conscience, as properly and truely as Gods lawes? and what doth he else when he ascribes to himselfe power to free mens consciences from the bond of such lawes of God, as are unchangeable? as may appear in a Canon of the Council of Trent: the words are these. *If any shall say, that those degrees of consanguinitate that be expressed in *Leuiticus*, do only hinder matrimony to be made, & break it when made, and that the Church cannot dispense with some of them, or approve that more degrees may hinder or break marriage, let him be accursed. O sacrilegious impycy!* considering the lawes of affinitie & consanguinitate, *Leu. 18:8* are not ceremonial, or iudicall lawes peculiar to the Jewes, but the very lawes of nature, what is that Canon else, but a publicke Proclamation to the world, that the Pope & Church of Rome do fit as Lords, or rather idols in the hearts and consciences of men? This will yet more fully appear to any man, if we reade popish booke of *practicall* or *Catechisme*, in which the common manner is, to binde conscience where God loogeth it, and to loose where he binds: but a declaration of this requires long time.

Now I come (as neare as possibly I can) to set downe the true maner, how mens lawes by the common iudgement of Diuines, may bee said to binde conscience. That this point may be cleared, two things must be handled. By what meanes they bind, and how farre forth,

A Touching the meanes, I set downe this rule: *Wholeome lawes of men, made of thingz indifferent, so far forth bind conscience by vertue of the generall commandement of God, which ordaineth the Magistrate au thorite: that whosoeuer shall wittingly and willingly, with a disloyal mind, either break or omit such lawes, is guilty of sin before God.*

By wholeome lawes, I understand such positive constitutions, as are not against the law of God, and withall tend to maintaine the peaceable estate and common good of men.

Furthermore, I adde this clause, *made of thingz indifferent*, to note the peculiare matter whereof humane lawes properly intreate: namely, such thingz as are neither expressly commanded or forbidden by God.

Now such kind of lawes have no vertue or power in themselues to contraine conscience, but they binde only by vertue of an higher commandement, *Let every soule be subject to the higher powers, Rom. 13:1. or, Honour father and mother, Exod. 20:12.* which commandments binde vs in conscience to performe obedience to the good lawes of men. As Peter faith, *Submit your selves to every humane ordinance for the Lord, 1 Pet. 2:13.* that is, for conscience of God, as he faith afterward, v. 19, whereby he signifieth two thingz: first, that God hath ordained the authoritie of governours; seconde, that he hath appointed in his word, and thereby bound men in conscience to obey their governours lawfull commandments.

If the case fall out otherwife, as commonly it doth, that humane lawes be not enacted of thingz indifferent, but of thingz that be good in themselues, that is, comanded by God; then are they not *humane* properly, but *divine* lawes. Mens lawes intreating of thingz that are *moral* & *good*, & the parts of *Gods worship*, are the same with Gods lawes: & therfore bind conscience, not because they were enacted by men, but because they were first made by God: men being no more but instruments and ministers in his name to reueue, renew, and to put in execution such precepts and lawes as prescribe the worship of God, standing in the practise of true religion and vertue. Of this kinde are all positive lawes touching articles of faith, & the dutties of the moral law. And the man that breaks such lawes finnes two waies: first, because he breakes that which is in conscience a law of God; seconde, because in disobeying his lawfull Magistrate, he disobeies the general commandement of God, touching Magistracie.

But if it shall fall out that mens lawes bee made of thingz that are euill, and forbidden by God, then there no bond of conscience at all but contrariwise men are bound in conscience not to obey, *Act. 4:19.* And hereupon the three children are commended for not obeying *Nabuchadnezzar*, when he gaue a particular commandement unto them to fall downe and worship the golden image, *Dan. 3:28.*

Moreover, in that mans law binds not, but by authoritie of Gods law, hence it follows,

that

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that Gods law alone hath this priuiledge, that the breach of it should be a sinne. *S. John 1:10.* *1. epist. 3:4. Since is the anomye, or transgression of the law, understanding Gods law. When David by adulterie and murthe had offended many men, and that many waies, he saith, *Psal. 51:4.* *Against thee, against thee I have sinned. And Augustine defined it to be something fad, done, or desired against the law of God.**

Some man may say, if this be so, belike the we may breake mens lawes without sin. I answer, that men in breaking humane lawes, both may & doe sin; but yet not simply, because they breake them, but because in breaking them, they doe also breake the law of God. The breach of a law must be considered two waies. First as it is a trespass, hindrance, iniurie, damage: & in this respect it is committed against mens lawes: secondly, the breach of a law must be considered as it is a sin, and so it is only against Gods law, which appoints obedience to the Magistrate.

The second point, namely, How farre forth mens lawes bind conscience, I explayne on this manner. It is all that the lawes of God doe or can do, to bind conscience simply & absolutely. Therefore humane lawes bind not simply of themselves, but so far forth as they are agreeable to Gods word, serue for the common good, stand with good orders, and hinder not the libertie of conscience. The necessarie of the law ariseth of the necessarie of the good end thereof. And as the end is good & profitable more or lesse, so is the law it selfe necessary more or lesse. Mens lawes are like their testimonies, which neither proue nor disproue of themselves, but borrow all the strength which they haue to constraine, from the truth, wisedome, and fidelite of them that bearre witnessesse.

Hence it followeth that a man may do any thing before humane lawes & constiutions without breach of conscience. For if we shall omit the doing of any law, I. without hindrance of the end or particular considerations, for which the Law was made: II. without offence giving, as much as in vs lyeth: III. without contempt of him that made the law, we are not to be accused of sinne. Example. In time of warre, the Magistrate of the citie commandeth that no man shall open the gates: the end is, that the citie & every member thereof may be in safetie. Now it falleth out that certayne citizens, being vpon occasion without the citie, are pursued by the enemy, and in danger of their liues. Hereupon some man without any more ado openeth the gate to reskeue them. The question is, whether he hath sinned, or no. And the truth is, he hath not: because he did not hinder the end of the law, but rather further it, & that without scandall to men, or contempt to the Magistrate.

And this stands even by the equite of Gods word. God made a law, that the Priests onely shoulde eate of the Shew-bread: now *Daud* being no priest, did vpon urgent occasion eate of it without sin. If this be true in Gods law, then it may also be true in the lawes of men,

that they may in some cases be omitted without sinne against God.

Neither must this seeme strange. For as there is a keeping of a law, and a breaking of the same; so there is a middle or meane action betweene them both, which is to doe a thing *(a) beside the law*, and that without sinne.

To proceede further, mens lawes be either Civil or Ecclesiastical. Civil lawes, are for their substance determinations or necessary & profitable circumstaunces, tending to vphold and mainaine the commandements of the seconde Table. More specially, they prescrive whatis to be done, and what is to be left undone, touching actions both ciuill and criminal, touching offices & bargaines of all sorts, & yea they conclude, in ioyne, and command not only such affaires as be of small importance, but also things & actions of great weight, tending to mainaine common peace, ciuill society, and the very state of the common wealth. Now such lawes bind so farre forth, that albeit they be omitted without any apparent scandal or contempt, yet the breach of them is a sin before God. Take this example. A subiect in this land, vpon pouerty, or vpon a concurous mind, against the good law of the land, coynes money, which afterward by a flight of his wit, is cunningly conveyed abroad into the hands of men, and is not espied. Here is no evident offence given to any man, nor open contempt shewed to the law-giver; and yet in this action he hath sinned, in that closely, otherwise then he ought to haue done, he hath hindered the good of the common wealth; and robbed the soueraigne Prince of his right.

Ecclesiastical lawes, are certaine necessarie and profitable determinations of circumstaunces of the commandements of the first Table. I say here *circumstaunces*, because all doctrines pertaining to the foundation and good estate of the Church, as also the whole worship of God, are set downe and commandes in the written word of God, & cannot be vpreferred and concluded otherwise by all the Churches in the world. As for the Creeds and Confessions of particular Churches, they are in substance Gods Word, and they binde not in conscience by any power the Church hath, but because they are the Word of God.

The lawes then which the Church in proper speech is said to make, are decrees concerning outward order and comeliness in the administration of the word and Sacraments, in the meetings of the Congregation, &c. And such laws made according to the general rule of Gods word, (which requires that all things be done to edification, in comeliness, for the avoyding of offence) are necessarie to be obserued, and the word of God binds all men to them, so farre forth as the keeping of them maintains decent order, and prevents open offence. Yet if a law concerning some extenal rite or thing indifferent, be at sometime, or vpon some occasion omitted, no offence given,

a Facere aliquid praeter legem, non contra ta-

nor contempt shewed to Ecclesiastical authority, there is no breach made in the conscience; & that appears by the example before handled. The Apostles guided by the holy Ghost, made a decree for the annoyding of offence, necessary to be obserued, namely, that the Gentiles should abstaine from things strangled & blood, & Idololatries; and yet *Paul* out of the case of scandal & contempt, permits the Corinthians to do otherwise, *1 Cor. 8. & 9.* which he wold not have done, if so do otherwise out of the case of scandal & contempt, had bin fin.

Again, lawes are either mixt or merely penal. Mixt, are such lawes as are of waughtie matters, and are propounded in commanding or forbidding tearmes; and they according to the good intentio of the Law-giver, bind mens first of all to obedience, for the necessary good of humane societys; and seconde, to a punishment, if they obey not; that a suply may be made of the hindrance of the common good. In the breach of this kinde of lawes, though a man bee neuer so willing to suffer the punishment, yet that wil not discharge his conscience before God, when he offends. If a man coyne money with this misde, to be willing to die when he is convicted, yet that will not free him from a sin in the action, because Gods law bindes vs not only to subiecction in bearing of punishment, but also to obedience of his bare commandement, it being lawfull, though he should set downe no punishment.

A law *merely penal* is that, which being made of matters of lesse importance, and not vterred precisely in commanding tearmes, doth only declare and shew what is to be done, or conditionally require this or that with respect to the punishment, on this manner. If any person doe this or that, then he shall forfeit thus or thus. This kinde of law binds especially to the punishment, and that is the very intent of the Law-giver, & that is ready in omitting the law to pay the fine or punishment, is not to be charged with fine before God: the penaltie being answerable to the losse that comes by the neglect of the law. Here a question may be demanded: whether a man that hath taken his oath to keepe all the lawes or orders of any towne or corporation, & yet afterwards omits the doing of some of them; be perjured or no? The answere may be this, that the lawes of every societie and corporation must be distinguisched. Some are very weightie (as I have said) being of the very foundation and state of the body; so as it cannot well stand without them; and whosoeuer willingly breaks any of these (they being good and lawfull) cannot be freed from perjurie. Again, there be lawes of lesser importance, that tend only to maintaine decent order and comeliness in the societies of men; and they are of that nature, that the estate of the corporation or towne may stand without them; and whosoeuer vpon occasion omitts the doing of any of these, is not therefore perjured, so he bee carry a loyal

A minde, and be content to pay the fine or penalty. For such kinde of order and constitutions require first of all obediencie, and if that be omitted, they require a mulct or fine: which, if it be willingly payed, the law is satisfied.

Thus wee see how farre mens lawes bind conscience. The vse of this point is this: first, hence we learne that the immunitie of the Popish clergie, whereby they take themselves exempted from ciuill courts, and from ciuill authoritie in criminal causes, hath no warrant: because Gods commandements bind every man whatsoeuer, to be subiect to the Magistrate, *Rom. 13.1.* Let every soule be subiect to the higher powers. III. Hence wee see also what notorious rebels those are, that beeing borne subiects of this land, yet choose rather to diethen to acknowledge (as they are bound in conscience) the Kings Maiestie to bee supreme governor vnder God in all caufes and ouer all persons. III. Lastly, we are taught hereby to be willing to give subiecction, obedience, reverence, and all other dutiess to Magistrates, whether they bee superiour or inferiour: yea with chearefullnes to pay taxes and subsidies, and all such lawfull charges as are appointed by them. *Gives to Caesar that which is Caesars, and to God that which is Gods. Give to all men their dues: tribute to whom tribute: custome to whom custome.* *Rom. 13.7.*

Now followes the Oath; which is either afforty, or promisorie. Afforty, by which a man avoucheth that a thing was done or not done. Promisorie, by which a man promiseth to doe a thing or not to doe it. Of both these I mean to speake: but specially of the second. And here two points must be considered, the first, by what means an oath bindeth; the second, when it bindeth.

An oath bindeth by vertue of such particular commandements, as require keeping of oathes lawfully taken. *Numb. 30.3. Whosoever swareth an oath to bind his soule by above, shall not break his word, but shall doe according to all that proceedes out of his mouth.*

This being so, a question may be made whether the oath of Infidels bind conscience, and by what vertue, considering they neither know the Scriptures, nor the true God? Ans. They doe bind in conscience. For example: *Jacob* and *Laban* make a covenant confirmed by oath. *Jacob* swareth by the true God, *Laban* by the gods of *Nabor*, that is, by his idols: Now *Jacob*, though he approue not the forme of this oath, yet he accepts it for a ciuill bond of the covenant: and no doubt, though *Laban* beliede not Gods word revealed to the Patriarkes, yet he was bound in conscience to keepe his oath, even by the law of nature: and though he knew not the true God, yet hee repented the false God of *Nabor* to be the true God, *Gen. 31.53.*

Again, if a lawfull oath by vertue of Gods commandements bind conscience, then it must needs be that the Romane Church hath

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1.4.89.

longerred, in that she teacheth and mainaineth that gouernors, as namely, the Pope and other inferiour bishops, haue power to give relaxations & dispensations, not only for oathes vnlawfull (from which the word of God doth sufficiently free vs, though they shoud never giue absolution) but from a true & lawfull oath made wittingly & willingly without error or deceit, of a thing honest and possible; as when the Pope frees the subiects of this land, as occasion is offered, from their sworne allegiance and loyaltie to which they are bound, not onely by the law of nature, but also by a solemnme and particular oath to the Supremacie, which none ever deemed vnlawfull, but such as carry traitours hearts. Now this crimonious diuinite would easilie be reuoked, if men did but consider the nature of an oath, one part whereof is invocation, in which we pray unto God, first, that he would become a witness unto vs that we speake the truth, and purpose notto deceiue; seconde, if wee faile and breake our promise, that he would take reuengc vpon vs: & in both these petitions we finde our selues immediately to God him selfe: and God a-gaine, who is the ordainer of the oath, acceptes this bond and knites it by commandement, till it be accomplished. Hence it follows, that no creature can haue power to vntie the bond of an oath, that is truly and lawfully an oath, vniuersall we will exalte the creatures aboue God him selfe. And the iudew teachers gaue better counsell, when they commanded the people to *performe their oathes to the Lord*, for the preventing of periuery, and our Sauiour Christ in that gaue-sies them not.

B

Next let vs consider the time when an oath bindeth or bindeth not.

An oath bindeth then, when it is made of things certaine and possible, in truth, iustice, judgement, for the glory of God, and the good of our neighbour.

Ques. I. Whether doth an oath bind conscience, if by keeping of it there folle wofles and hinderances? Ans. If it be of a thing that is lawfull, and the damages be priuate to him that swareth, then doth it bind conscience. For example: A man makes a purchase of land at the sea side: his bargaine is confirmed only by oath: and it falleth out, that before he do enter possession, the sea breakes in and drownes a part of that purchase. Now he is in conscience to stand to his bargaine, because the thing is lawfull, and the damage is priuate, & great reuersione mult bee had of the name of God which hath bin vifed in the bargaine making. *David* makes it the properte of a good man, *to swewe to his owne hinderance, and not to change,* *Psal. 15.4.*

Ques. II. Whether the oath which a man hath taken, being induceth thereto by fraude and guile, doth bind conscience? Ans. If it bee still a thing lawfull, and bring nothing but priuate losses, it is to be kept. When the Gibonites had by a fraud brought *Iosua* to make a

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Math. 5.
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C league with them, & to binde it with an oath; he and the Princes of the people answer them thus: We haue sworne unto hem by the Lord God of Israell now therefore we may not touch them, *Isr. 9.19.* And 300 years after, when Saul slew certaine of the Gibonites against this oath, the plague was vpon the people of Israell 3 years, and was not staid til certaine persons of Sauls family for a recompence were put to death, *2 Sam. 21.6.9.*

Ques. III. Whether an oath made by feare or compulsion bind in conscience? For Example: a theife disappointed of the bootie which he looked for, binds the true man by soleyme oath, vpon paine of prefent death, to fetch and deliuer unto him some portion of money, as 100 or 200 crownes for the redeeming of his life. Well, the oath is taken, and the question is, whether it bind him or not to performe his promise? An answer may be this: some a Protestant diuinite think it doth bind: some againe thinke^b not but I take it the safest course to hold the meane betweene both, on this manner.

The oath seemes to bind, and is to be performed: neither it is against the good of the common-wealth (for then it were vnlawfull) but it is rather a furtherance, in that a member thereof is preferred: and the loyalties which follow are only priuate to the man, rather to be endured then losse of life. Yet that a remedy may be had of this priuate iniurie, and that a publicke mischiefe may be prevented, the partie is to reueale the matter to the Magistrate, whose office it is to punish robbers, and to order all things according to equity, for the common good. But if the case fal out, that the man thorough exceeding feare, doe further swewe to keep silence, I see not how his oath may bee kept, except he be sure that nothing will enue thereof, but a priuate damage to himselfe. For otherwise, perpetuall silence seemes to be a feare confesting to the robber, and an occasion that others fall into the like danger and hazard of their liues.

Again, in fixe cases an oath binds nothing at all. I. If it be made of a thing that is flat againt the word of God. For all the power of binding which it hath, is by the word of God: & therfore when it is againt Gods wil, it hath no power to contraine. And it is an old received rule, that an oath must not bee a bond of iniquite. Hereupon *Daud* when hee made a rash oath to kill *Nabal* and all his household, reioyced when he had occasion offered by *A. bigail* to breake the same, *1 Sam. 25.32.* And though he swwe to *Sleomi*, that he would saue his life, *2 Sam. 19.23.* yet afterward vpon better consideration (as it may seeme) he comanded his sonne *Salamon* to put him to death, as one that had long agoe defered the same, *1 King. 2.9.* And *Herod* was farre deceived, that thought hee was bound by his oath to give to the damfell *John Baptists* head in a platter, *Math. 14.7.* II. If it be againt the good and wholesome lawes of any kingdome or coun-

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Jaff. 2.
loc. 13.
21.
Nelian.
in Eth.
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C. Calv.
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i. fal. 15.

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Bellar. I
z de Mor-
cap. 36.

Concil.
Ging. c.
16.

tre, wherof a man is a member, it bindes not at all because on the contrary, Gods commandement binds vs to keep the good laws of men. III. If it be made by such persons as want sufficient reason & discretiō, as yong childe, fools, mad men. For the conscience cannot indeed bee bound, where the vnderstanding cannot determine what is done. IV. If it be made of such as have no power to bind them selues, it bindes not: because it is made against the law of nature, which is, that he which is not in his owne power cannot bind himselfe. Hence it follows, that Papists erre grossly when they teach, that a child may enter into any rule or order of religion, yea bind himselfe thereto by oath, & the oath to bee good, flat against his parents consent. Num. 30. 4. If a woman vow unto the Lord, bind her selfe by a bond, being in her fathers house in time of yherouls, &c. v. 6. If her father disallow her the same day that he heareth all her vows & bonds, they shall not be of value.

An ancient Council declared, that al children that upon present of Gods worship shold depart from their parents, and not doe them due reverence, shold be acciſed. Secondly, they erre, in that they teach that the promise made privately by a childe in way of marriage, without and against consent of wife and carefull parents, binds them: whereas indeed, if this promise were further bound by an oath, it could not stand, because children under government & tutition of parents, cannot give them selves. V. It bindes not if it bee made of a thing that is out of a mans power, as if a man sware to his friend to give him another mans goods. VI. If the first it were lawfull and afterward by some means become either impossible or vnlawfull, it binds not conscience. For whē it becomes impossible, then we must safetly thinke, that God from heaven frees a man from his oath. And when it begins to be vnlawfull, then it easeth to bind, because the binding vertue is only in and from the word of God. For example: A king bindes himselfe by oath to a foraine Christian Prince to find him men and money to defend his people against all enemies. This oath is lawfull. Well, afterward the Prince becomes a professed enemy to him, his religion, and people: and then the kings oath becomes vnlawfull & binds him not: because the word forbids there should be any league of amitie with Gods enemies: though there may be leagues of concord with them.

Seeing a lawfull oath mulf bind conscience, though a man be deceived, & great losses follow, it shews in how great reverence we shold haue Gods name, and with what care and consideration take an oath. And by this wee must be aduertised to take heed of customeable swearing in our common talke, whiche our oaths be great or small. We must thinke of an oath as a part of Gods worship: nay, the H. Ghost often puts it for the whole worship of God: Esa. 19. 18. In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speake the language of Canaan, and shall jweare by the Lord of hosts, that is, acknowledge

and worship him. Jer. 12. 16. If they will leare the waies of my people, to jweare by my name, The Lordlnerb, then shall they be built in the midle of my people. This serues to shew vnto vs, that such as give them selves to swearing, want religion & conscience: and that those families in which there is riferesse of oathes, abandonall care of religion, and banish God out of their houses. And indeed it is a very hard thing for the common swearer to avou common perjurie. If we see a man hold vp his hand at the barre of an earthly iudge, we pitie him, and are sorrie for him: Oh then, why doe we not pitie blasphemers and common swearers? For with God they are no better then rebels, that hold vp their hands at the barre of his judgement seat, as guiltie malefactours. Exod. 20. 7. Auguſtine faith well. They that worship stocks & stones, fear to swear falsely by stones, and doest thou not feare God that is pretē, God that liveth, God that knoweth, God that taketh revenge of contumessors? but of bad custome, when thou art beleved, thou swarrest when none requires it; thou swarrest: and when men cannot abide it thou jwearest.

Thus much of an oath: now followes a promise, which is either to God, or man: the first is called a vow, the second a single promise.

A vow is taken three waies. First, generally for a promise of morall obedience: and this vow is first made in Baptisme, and continued in the Lords Supper, as in the spirituall exercisice of invocation and repentance. It is called of Pet. 1. Epift. 3. 21. the stipulation which a good conscience makes to God.

This kind of vow binds all and every member of the Church of God. And the not keeping of it is the common sin of the world: for most men make not conscientie to perform that which they haue promised to God in Baptisme: and therfore their Baptisme is become vnto them the sacrifice of viles. Eccle. 4. 17. But considering we are bound in conscience by this vow, let vs hereafter indeanous to be as good as our word: and that shall be, when we begin to die to our sins, and rise to newnesse of life. There is no man almost but wil seeme to haue care to keep touch with men; what a shame is it then for vs not to keep covenant with God?

Againe, a vow is taken for a promise of ceremoniall obedience, whereof read Num. 6. & 30. Lest. 27. This vow is peculiar to the old testament, and did not bind all men, but only such as had peculiar occasion to vow: & therupon boud the selues: as the Nazarites & others.

Thirdly, a vow is taken for the performance of some outward and bodily exercises, taken vp of a mans own accord, as being things in a mans owne libertie, without any commandement of God: as the keeping of fet times of fast, of praying or reading, the performance of set taskes, almes-giving, abstinence from certaine meats and drinke, in the vse whereof, through our owne weaknesse, we feare any occasion of sinne. And this kinde of vow is more peculiar to the new Testament.

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In the making of it, that it may be warranted, four things must be observed: I. It must be agreeable to the word of God: II. It must not bee against a mans generall or particular calling. III. It must be in a mans power, and not against Christian libertie. IV. It must be so made and be so observed without any opinion of merit or worship of God, to this end alone, that it may be a meanes to exercise and cheriſh repenteance and invocation, tempeſtance, patience, and to shew forth thankfulneſſe to God.

A vow thus made binds conscience by vertue of Gods commandement. Eccle. 5. 3. When thou hast vowed a vow to God, deferre not to pay it.

And the vow once made continues to bind so long as the thing is in force which was the occasion of the vow. For example: A man desirous to practice boisterie and tempeſtacie, finds that drinking of wine is hurtful vnto him: whereupon he vowed to God to drinke no wine: now this vow once made, binds him till the state of his body alter, and hee feeleſſe no inconuenience in wine: but then it catcheth to bind any longer.

Quicq. Whether Papists are bound in conscience to keep the voies of ſingle life, and voluntarie pouertie which they make, or no?

Ans. No. The reasons hereof are these: I. Such voies are flat against Gods commandement: But if they cannot abyſſine, let them marry: for it is better to marry then to burne. 1 Cor. 7. 9. This we arnēd you of, that if there were anythat would not work, they shold not eate. 2 Thes. 3. 10. II. They are not in the power of him that voies: for example, to promise perpetuall chasticie in ſingle life. III. They abolish Christian libertie in the vſe of the creatures and ordinances of God, as riches, and mariage, meat, drinke, apparel; making that neceſſarie which God left to our libertie. IV. They are made to this end that men may thereby merite life eternall, and worship God: whereas Paul faith, 1 Tim. 4. 8. Bodily exercitie profiteth little: but godlyneſſe is profitable for all things. Therfore they are better broken then kept.

As for a ſingle promife, it also binds a man according as he will to whom the promife is made; though he be an (a) hereticke or an infidell. As for the purpoſe of the minde, it binds not, but may vpon conuenient caufe, be altered.

Yet we muſt remember that there are ſome caufes, in which a promife made binds not. I. If it be againſt Gods word. One faith well, In euill promifcute off thy faith. It is a wicked promife that cannot be performed without an offence. II. If he which makes it want reaſon or ſufficient diſcretiō, I II. If he make the promife who cannot bind himſelfe: as a childe vnder the gouernment of his parents. I V. If a man be induc'd to make his promife by fraud and guile. V. If the promife beeing at the firſt lawfull, become afterward either impossible or vnlawfull.

And though men bee bound in conscience to keep their promiſes: yet this hindres not but that there is and may be a good and lawfull vſe of indentures and obligations. For the bond of conscience is betwene man and God: but the bond of an obligation pafseth only betwene man and man. When Abraham bought a purchase of Ephron the Hirſtie, hee paid his money, and made it ſure before witness. Gen. 23. 17.

Here wee muſt conſider the generall ſinne of this age, which is, to ſpeak deceitfully euery one to his neighbour. It is a hard thing to finde a man that will ſtand to his word and lawfull promife. It is a rule of Machiavel, that a man may practice many things againſt his faith, againſt charitié, and humānitie, and religion: and that it is not neceſſary to haue these vertues, but to counterfeite and diſemblaſe them. But let all ſuch as feare God make conſience of their word, because they are bound fo to do: and hereby they ſhall reſemble their heavenly Father who is true in all his promiſes; and they ſhall alſo bring forth a notable fruit of the ſpirit, Gal. 5. 22.

Hitherto I haue ſpoken of the caufe that maketh conſience to giue iudgement. Now followeth the manner of iudgement.

Conſience giues iudgement in or by a kinde of reaſoning or diſputing, called a practi- call ſyllogisme. Romaneſ. 2. 15. Their reaſoning, (in reuocatiō), &c. acciſing or excusing each other.

In the making of this reaſon conſience hath two aſſistantes: minde, and memorie.

The minde is the ſtore-houſe and keeper of all manner of rules and principles. It may bee compared to a booke of law, in which are ſet downe the penaltiſtates of the land. The dutie of it is to preferre and preſent to the conſience rules of diuine law, whereby it is to giue iudgement.

Memorie ſerves to bring to minde the particular actions which a man hath done or not done, that conſience may determine of them.

Now conſience aſſisted by theſe twaine, proceeds in iudgement by a kinde of argumentation: an example whereof we may take from the conſience of a murtherer, thus:

Every murtherer is curſed, faſh minde;
Thou art a murtherer, faſh conſience aſſisted by memorie:

Ergo, *Thou art curſed, faſh conſience, and fo giueſt her ſentence.*

To proceede: Conſience giues iudgement either of things past or things to come.

Of things past two waies, either by acciſing and condemning, or by excusing and abſolving. Rom. 2. 15.

To acciſe is an action of conſience, giuing judgement that this or that thīng was culd done: & that full by reaſoning on this manner:

Every murtherer is a ſinner:
This thy action is murther:
Ergo, This thy action is a ſinner.

To condemne is another action of the conſience.

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Sect. 12.
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ence ioynd with the former, whereby it giueth judgement that a man by this or that flime had defterred death on this manner.

*Every murtherer defterber a double deaſt,
Thou art a murtherer:*

Ergo, Thou haſt defterber a double deaſt.

These two actions are very forcible and terrible: for they are the *complaintions* and prickings that bee in the heart. *Act. 2. 37.* they are the stripes as it were, of an iron rod, where-with the heart of a man smiteth it selfe. *2 Sam. 24. 10.* And by reason of them, conscience is compared to a worme that never dieth, but alwaies lieth gnawing and grabbling, and pulling at the heart of man, *Mark. 9. 44.* and causeth more paine and anguish, than any disease in the world can doe.

The time when conscience performs these actions, is not before the sinne, or in the act of sinning, but especially after the sinne is done and past. Reason, I. Before a man sinneth, the diuell doth extenuate the fault and make sinne to be no sinne. II. Corrupt affections doe for a time so blinde and ouerlaste judgement, that it doth not see or at the least consider what is good or bad, till afterward.

Neither doth conscience accuse and condemn only for the time present, but also long after a thing is done. The consciences of Iosiphs brethren accused them 22. yeres after they had fold him into Egypt, *Cen. 42. 21.*

The effect of the accusing and condemning conscience, is to stirre vp sundry passions and motions in the heart, but specially these five.

The firſt is *shame*, which is an affliction of the heart, whereby a man is grieved and displeased with himselfe, that he hath done any culle, and this shame fleteweth it selfe by the rifting of the blood from the heart to the face.

Yet we must here remember that even ſuch as haue the pardon of their ſinnes, and are not guilty, may be affamed and blafh, *Rom. 6. 21.* *What finis haſt ſee in thy things, whereof now ye blafh, or be affamed?* Yet for all this, even thoſe who are not guilty, may be without all shame, *Ier. 6. 15.* *Were they affamed when thy had committed abomination? nay, nay, they were not affimed, neither could they haue any shame, because they are grown to ſome great height in iniquity.* *Eph. 4. 18.*

The ſecond paſſion is *fideſſe* and forrow: commonly thought to be nothing else but *melandholie*: but betweene them twaine, there is great diſference. Sorrow, that comes by melancholij artiſtly of that humour annoyng the body: but this other forrow ariseth of a mans ſinnes, for which his conscience accuseth him. Melancholij may be cured by phisick: this forrow cannot bee cured by any thing, but by the blood of Christ.

The third is *fear*, in cauſing wherof, conſcience is very forcible. If a man had all the delights & pleaſures that heart can wiſh, they cannot doe him any good if conſcience bee guiltie. *Belfazzor* when he was in the middest

A of all his delights, and ſaw the hand writing vpon the wall; *his countenance changed, his thoughts troubled him, his ſyours looſed, and his kynees ſmote together,* *Dan. 5. 6.* Yea the guiltie conſcience will make a man afraid, if hee ſee but a worme peape out of the ground: or a filly creature goe croſſe his way; or if hee ſee but his owne shadow on a fiddaine, or if hee doe but foreſcall an euill with himſelfe. *Pro. 28. 1.* *The wicked flyeth when no man purſueth him.*

Terrours of conſcience, which are more vehement, cauſe other paſſions in the body, as exceeding heate, like that which is in the fit of an ague, the riſing of the churals towards the mouth, and ſwelling; as experience hath often ſhewed. And the writer of the booke of Wiſdome faſh truly, cap. 17. 10. *It is a fearefull thing when malice is condemned by her owne reſiftomy, and a conſcience that is touched, doth her foreſcall cruell things. For fear is nothing elſe, but the betraying of the ſuccours, that reſon offeſt, &c. They that did indure the (a) night that was intolerable, &c. ſometimes are troublous with monſtrous viſions, and ſometimes they ſwound, as though their owne culles ſhould betray them: for a ſudden feare not looked for, came upon them.*

The fourth is *desperation*, whereby a man through the vehement and conſtant acuſation of his conſcience comes to bee out of all hope of the pardon of his ſinnes. This made *Saul*, *Achiphel*, and *Iudas* to hang themſelues; this makes many in these daies to doe the like; as appeareth by the declarations of ſuch as haue bin preuented, when they were about to hang or drowne themſelues, or to cut their owne throats.

The laſt is a *perturbation* or diſquietneſſe of the whole man: whereby all the powers and faculties of the whole man are forth of order. *Efa. 57. 20.* *The wicked is like the raging of the ſea that cannot ſtop, whose waters cast up mire & dirt.*

This much of the two firſt actions of conſcience, which are to accuse and condemne: the ſecond followeth to accuse and abſolute.

The excuse, is an action of the conſcience giving iudgement that the thing is well done.

To abſolute, is an action of the conſcience giving iudgement that a man is free and cleare from fault, and fo from punishment.

From theſe two actions arife ſome ſpeciall affections: I. boldneſſe and confidence, *Pro. 28. 1.* *The righteous are bold as a lion. 11. Joy and reioyng, 2 Cor. 1. 2.* Our reioyng is the teſtimony of my conſcience, that is in all ſimplicitie and godly paſſeſſe I haue had my conuerſation in the world. Hence it is ſaid, that a good conſcience is a continual feaſt, *Prov. 15. 15.*

Hitherto I haue ſpoken how conſcience giues iudgement of things done and past: now followeth her iudgement of things to be done.

Conſcience giues iudgement of things to come, by foreſtelling, & (as it were) ſaying inwardly in the heart, that the thing may bee well done. Oft this kinde of iudgement every man may haue experience in himſelfe, when

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hee is about to enterprize any buſineſſe either god or bad.

By this we may ſee the goodnes of God to all men. If a man being to make an unknowne iourney, ſhould finde one that would goe with him and ſhew him the way, and all the turnings thereof, hee coulde not but take it for a point of courteſie. Well, we are pilgriimes in this world, our life is our iourney: God alſo hath appointed our conſcience to be our companion and guide, to ſhew vs what conſe we may take, and what we may not.

And here it may be noted, that in all things to be done, conſcience is of great force and bears a great ſtroke. For this is the beginning of a good worke, that the conſcience forſt of all giues her iudgement truly, that the thing may be done, & is acceptable to God. *Rom. 14. 23.* *What ſomer is not of ſuith,* (that is, what conſcience is not done of a ſetled peruation in iudgement and conſcience out of Gods word, howſoever men judge of it) is ſinne. Again, God regards not the outward pompe of the action, or the doer, but obedience, and especially the obedience of the heart: therefore vilenesse the conſcience well informed firſt of all approue the thing to bee good and agreeable to Gods will, it can be nothing elſe but a ſinne. And he that ſhall doe a thing, because it is good in his owne eies, not knowing that God doth allow of it, prefers himſelf before God, and diſobeys; & as the ſervant that in his maſters houſe will not doe his maſters will but his owne will.

From this former rule arife three other: the firſt, *What ſomer is done with a doubting conſcience is a ſinne.* For example: ſome beleivers in the Primitive Church held, that ſtill after the acuſion of Chrift there remained a diſference betweene meat and meat, and therefore it was a ſcruple to them to eate of sundry kinds of meates: now put the cafe, that by example they are drawne on to eate ſwines ſleath: or ſome other thing which they thinkē is forbiidden: this done, there is no queſtion but they haue ſinned, as Paul prooueth, *Rom. 14. 14.* *I know and am peruaded through the Lord Iesuſ, that there is nothing uncleane of itſelfe: but unto him that iudgeth any thing uncleane, it is uncleane:* and v. 23. *He that doubteth is condemned, if hee eat, because hee eateth not of faith.*

The ſecond, *What ſomer thing is done in or wiſh an erroneous conſcience, it is a ſinne.* For example: in the primitive Church diuers of the Gentiles held this error, that fornication was a thing indifferent, & therefore conſcience told the that they might do it: and yet neuertheleſſe fornicatio[n] in the was a ſin, because conſcience erred in her judgement, and culle remains culle, though conſcience ſay the contrary a thouſand times.

The third, *What is done (a) againſt conſcience though it erre, and be deſcried, it is ſin in the doer.* Example. An Anabaptist holding it vittery unlawfull to ſwear, is brought before a magistrate; and vrged either through feare or ſome like cauſe, takes an oath, and that againſt his

own conſcience: now the queſtion is, whether hee haſt ſinned or no? *Anſ.* Hee hath indeſſe ſinned; not fo much because hee hath taken an oath, for that is the ordinaunce of God; but because hee hath take[n] an oath in a bad manner, that is againſt his conſcience, & therfore not in faith.

Thus it is manifest that conſcience bears a great ſtroke in all things that are to be ſaid or done. And hereby we are aduertified of many things. First, if a thing done without good diſcretion of conſcience, be a ſinne, then much more that which is done without good diſcretion of Gods word, is a flat ſin: for without diſcretion of Gods word, conſcience can giue no good diſcretion. And if God will hold that for a ſinne which is done without diſcretion of his word; then no doubt Gods word miniftris ſufficient diſcretion for all actions whatſoever: fo as if a man bee but to receive a morsel of bread into his mouth, it can ſo farre forth diſcreet him, that in doing of it, he ſhall be able to please God. If this were not true, mans caſe were moſt miſerable. For then we ſhould ſin in manifold actions, & that without remedie. And here by the Word, I meane nothing but the Scriptures of the old and new Testament, which containe in themſelues ſufficient diſcretion for all actions. As for the law of nature though it afford indeſſe ſome diſcretion; yet it is corrupt, imperfect, uncertaine, & whatſoever is right and good therein, is contained in the written word of God. And as for the beſt vnuwritten traditions, let all the Papiſts in the world anſwer if they can, how I may in conſcience be peruaded that they are the word of God. If they ſay that the ancient Fathers of the Primitive Church auouch in their writings that they are Apoſtolical traditions; I anſwer againe, how ſhall I know and be certaine in conſcience that the Fathers ſubiect to errore, in laying fo, haue not erred?

Again, we leare hence, that a good intention is not ſufficient to make a good worke, vilenesse withall conſcience giue iudgement that God doth approve the action. This ſhewes the ignorance of our people that when as in their dealings they runne vpon a good meaning, then alwaies they think they doe well and please God.

Thirdly, hence it appears that all things deuided by man for the worship of God, are flat ſines: because conſcience cannot ſay of them that they please God. *Efa. 29. 13. Mark. 7. 7.*

Lastly, wee leare here that ignorance of Gods will and word, is a dangerous thing, and makes the life of man to abound, yea to flow with a ſea of offences againſt God. Men commonly think that if they keepe themſelues from periurie, blaſphemie, murther, theft, whoredome, al is wel with them: but the truth is, that fo long as they liue in ignorance, they want right & true diſcretion of conſcience out of Gods word, and therfore their bell actions are ſins, euē their eating and drinking, their ſleeping and waking, their buying and ſelling,

their speech and silence, yea their praying and serving of God. For they doe these actions either of custome, or example, or necessity, as beasts do, and not of affaith; because they know not Gods will touching things to be done or left undone. The consideration of this point should make every man most carefull to seeke for knowledge of Gods word, and daily to increase in it, that he may in all his affaires have Gods lawes to be the men of his counsell, *Psa. 119. 14.* that he may give heed to them as to the light shining in a darke place, *2 Pet. 1. 19.* that he may say with Peter, when Christ commanded him to lunch forth into the deepe, and to cast forth his net: *Lord, we have beeene all night, and haue catched nothing: yet in thy word will I let downe my net.* *Luk. 5. 5.*

C H A P. III.

Of the kinds of conscience: and of conscience regenerate.

C Onscience is either good or bad.

Good conscience is that which rightly according to Gods word, excuseth & comforteth. For the excellency, goodness, and dignity of conscience, stands not in accusing, but in excusing. And by doing any sinne whatsoeuer to give any occasion to the conscience to accuse and condemnme, is to wound it and to offend it. Thus *Paul* saith, that the Corinthishoun wounded the consciences of their weake brethren, when they visted their libertie as an occasion of offence to them, *1 Cor. 8. 9. 12.* Againe, he calleth a good conscience, a conscience without offence, that is, which hath no stop or impediment to hinder it from excusing. *Act. 14. 19.*

Good conscience, is either good by creation or regeneration.

Good by creation was the conscience of *Adam*, which in the estate of innocency did only excuse & could not accuse him for any thing: though it may be, an aptnes to accuse was not wanting, if afterward an occasio shoulde be offered. And hence we haue further direction to consider what a good conscience is, namely, such an one as by the order set downe in the creation, excuseth only without accusing. Yea to excuse is a defect in true conscience, following after the first creation. For naturally there is an agreement & harmony betweene the parts and the whole; but if the conscience should naturally accuse, there shoulde be a difsent and disagreement and diuisioun betweene the conscience and the man himselfe.

Regenerate conscience is that which being corrupt by nature, is renewed and purged by faith in the blood of Christ. For to the regenerating of the conscience, there is required a conversion or change; because by nature all mens consciences since the fall are culle, and none are good but by grace. The instrument seruing to make this change is faith: *Act. 15. 9.* *Faith purifieth the heart.* The meritorious cause is the blood of Christ. *Heb. 9. 14.* How much more shall the blood of Christ, &c. purge our conscience from deadworks to serue the living God.

A The properte of regenerate conscience is two-fold: Christian libertie, and certaintie of saluation. Because both these haue their place, not in the outward man, but in the spiri and conscience.

Christian libertie, is a spirituall and holy freedome purchased by Christ.

I say, it is *spirituall*, firs, to put a difference beweenne it and ciuill libertie, which stands in outward & bodily freedome and priuiledges; secondly, to confute the leues, that looke for earthly libertie by Christ; & the Anabaptists, who imagine a freedome from all authoritie of Magistrates in the kingdome of Christ.

Againe, I say it is an holy freedome, to confute the Libertines, who thinke that by the death of Christ they haue libertie to liue as they list.

Easly, I say it is purchased by Christ, to shew the authoritie thereof. *Gal. 5. 1.* *Standfast in the libertie wherewith Christ hath made you free.*

And to contue the Papists, whose doctrine in effect is thus much, that this libertie is procured indeed by Christ, & is continued partly by Christ, and partly by the man himselfe.

Christian libertie hath three parts.

The firs is freedome from the iustification by the morall law. For he that is a member of Christ, is not bound in conscience to bring the perfect riteouesesse of the law in his owne person for his iustification before God. *Gal. 5. 1.* with ver. 3.

Hence it followeth, that he that is a Christian, is likewise freed from the curse and condemnation of the law. *Rom. 8. 1.* *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.* *Gal. 3. 13.* *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, when he was made a curse for us.*

By this firs part of Christian libertie, it appears that there cannot bee any iustification of a sinner by workes of grace before God. For he that will be iustified but by one worke, is *debtore to the whole law.* *Gal. 3. 3.* but no man that is a member of Christ, is debtore to the whole law; for his libertie is to be free in that point; therefore no man is iustified so much as by one worke of his owne.

The seconde part, is freedome from the rigour of the law, which exacteth perfect obedience, & condemmeth all imperfection. *Rom. 6. 14.* *Sin hath no more dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* *1 Joh. 5. 3.* This is the loue of God, that we keepe his commandments: and his commandments are not grieuous.

Hence it followeth, that God will accept of our imperfect obedience, if we be sincere: yea he accepts the will, desire, and indeauour to obey for obedience it selfe, *Malac. 3. 17.* *And I will spare them as a man sparing his owne sonne that serueth him.*

The third part is, that the conscience is freed from the bond of the ceremonial law. *Gal. 3. 25.* But after that faith is come, we are no more under a schoolmaster. *Eph. 2. 14. 15.* & hath broken the stop of the partition wall, in abrogating

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A through his flesh, the law of commandments which standeth in ordinances, *Col. 2. 14.* And hath put out the hand-writing of ordinances, which was a. gainst vs. ver. 16. *Let no man therefore condemne you in meat and drinke, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new Moone, &c.*

A way of dislike, *Eph. 5. 3.* much lesse is it warrantable to gefture and represent vice in the way of recreation and delight. The seconde rule is, that recreation must be sparing, moderate and lawfull vse of things indifferent, according to the rules ^b following.

The spirituall vse is when we take occasion by the creatures to meditate & speake of heavenly things: as, vpon the sight of the vine & the branches thereof, to consider the mystical coniunction between Christ & his Church: by the sight of the rain-bow, to think of the promise of God of not drowning the world by waters: and by any thing that befalls, to take occasion to consider in it the wisedome, goodness, justice, mercy, prouidence of God, &c.

I add further, that things indifferent, as bondage, outward liberty, riches, pouerty, single estate, mariage, meat, drinke, apparel, buildings, may be vised freely, because they are neither commanded by God nor forbidden: and in themselves considered, they may be vised or not vised without breach of conscience.

The right manner of vsing them, is to sanctifie them by the word and prayer, *1 Tim. 4. 3, 4.* and not only some of them, but the vse of them all. Meate, drinke, and mariage are thus to be sanctified, as the place before noted declareth. *Paul* sanctified his journey on this manner, *Act. 21. 5.* And the leues were commanded to dedicate their houles at the first entrance, *Deu. 20. 5.* By this dedication we may well understand not only the letting of the house, or the prouiding of a tenant, but also the sanctifying of it by invocation of Gods name, that by his blessing, the place with the rooms thereof might serue for their benefit & confort.

C C On this manner to blesse our dwelling places when we first enter into them, is the best way that can be to preferre them from the casualties of fire within, & lightening from heaven, and from the annoyace and molestation of culle spirits, and other judgements of God.

Things indifferent are sanctified by Gods word, because it shewes what things we may vise, and what things we may not: and if wee may vise them, in what manner it is to bee done. And to this purpose the Scripture affords four rules.

The firs, that all things must bee done to Gods glory, *1 Cor. 10. 31.* *Whether ye eat or drinke, or whatsoeuer ye do, do all to the glory of God.* And that this may bee performed, things indifferent must be vised as signes and tables, in which we may shew forth the graces and vertues that God hath wrought in the heart. For example: we must so make our apparel both for matter and fashon, and so weare it, that it may in some sorte set forth to the beholder our modestie, sobertie, frugality, humilitie, &c. that hereby he may be occasioned to say, behold a graue, sober, modest peron: and so of the rest. And the common liame of this time is, that meate, drinke, apparel, buildings are vised as banners displayed to set forth to the

world, mans ryot, excesse, and pride of heart.

The second. Wee must suffer our selues lawfully to be limited and restrained in the ouer-much or ouer-common vfe of things indifferent. I say the common vfe, because it is not Gods will vtterly and absolutely to barre vs of the vfe of such things. Now the refrainers of our vfe, are two; the first is the law of charitie. For as charitie gives place to piety; so Christian liberty in the vfe of outward things, gives place to charitie. And the law of charitie is, that we should not vfe things indifferent to the hurt or offence of our brother, *1 Cor. 8.13.*

Quæst. Whether may a man vfe his libertie before such as are weake, and yet not perswaded of their libertie. *Ans.* Some are weake of simple ignorance, or because they haue beene deceived by the abuse of long custome: & yet are willing to be reformed. And before such we must abstaine; lest by example wee draw them to sinne, by giving occasion to them of doing that whereof they doubt. Againe, some are weake vpon affected ignorance or of malice, and in the presence of such we need not abstaine. Vpon this ground *Paul* who circumcised *Timothie* would not circumcise *Titus*.

The secound restrainer, is the wholesome lawes of men, whether Ciuil or Ecclesiastical. For howsoeuer things indifferent, after the law is once made of them, remaine still indifferent in themselves: yet obedience to the law is necessary, and that for conscience sake. *Abt. 15.28.*

The third. Wee must vfe things indifferent so far forth as they shall further vs in godlinesse. For we ought to doe all things not only to the edification of others, but also of ourowne selues. And therefore it is a flat abuse of Christian libertie, for men to pamper their bodies with meate and drinke, that thereby they disable themselves to heare Gods word, to pray, to giue counsell, to doe the ordinary workes of their callings.

The fourth. Things indifferent must bee vfed within compasse of our callings, that is, according to our ability, degree, state, and condition of life. And it is a common abuse of this libertie in our daies, that the meane man will be in meate, drinke, apparel, building, as the Gentleman; the Gentleman as the Knight; the Knight as the Lord or Earle.

Now then things indifferent are sanctified to vs by the word, when our consciences are resolved out of the word that wee may vfe them, so it bee in the manner before named, and according to the rules here set downe.

They are sanctified by prayer, when wee craue at Gods hands the right vfe of them, and haue obtained the same, & giue him thankes therefor. *Coloff.3.17.* *Whatsoever ye do in word or deede, doe all in the name of the Lord Iesu, giing thanske to God the Father by him.*

Thus much of Christian libertie, by which we are admoued of sundry dutys: I. to labour to become good members of Christ, of what estate or condition souer we be. The li-

berty of the city of Rome made not only the Romanes borne, but even the men of other countries seek to be citizens thereof. *Abt. 22.28.* The Privilidges of the Iewes in Persia made many become Iewes. *Hes. 8.17.* Othen much more shoulde the spiritual libertie of conscience purchased by the blood of Christ, moue vs to seeke for the kingdome of heauen, & that we might become good members thereof. II. Againe, by this we are taught to studie, learne, & loue the Scriptures, in which our liberties are recorded. We make account of our charters whereby we hold our earthly liberties, yea we gladly read them & acquaint our selues with them; what a shame then will it be for vs, to make no more account of the word of God, that is the law of spiritual libertie? *Iam. 2.12. 11.1.* Lastly, we are aduertised most heartily to obey & serue God according to his word, for that is the end of our libertie: the servant doth all his busynesse more chearefully, in the hope and expectation he hath of libertie. Againe, our liberty most of all appears in our seruice and obediency; because the service of God is perfect freedome: as on the contrary in the disobedience of Gods commandements, stands our spirituall bondage.

The secound proprietie of conscience is an infallible certaintie of the pardon of sin and life everlasting. That this point may be cleared, I will handle the question betweene vs and the Papists touching the certenty of saluation. And that I may proceede in order, we must distinguishe the kinds of certenty. First of all certaintie is either Vnfallible or Coniecturall; Vnfallible, wherein a man is never disappointed; Coniecturall, which is not so evident, because it is grounded only vpon likelihoods. The secound all Papists grant, but the first they deny in the matter of saluation. Againe, certaintie is either of faith, or experimental, which Papists call morall. Certaintie of faith, is whereby any thing is certenely beleued: and it is either generall or speciall. Generall certaintie, is to beleue assuredly that the word of God is truth it selfe, and this both wee and Papists allow. Speciall certaintie, is by faith to apply the promise of saluation to our selues, and to beleue without doubt, that remission of sinnes by Christ & life everlasting belong vnto vs. This kind of certenty we hold and maintaine, and Papists with one consent deny it; acknowledging no assurance but by hope. Morall certainty, is that which proceeds from sanctification and good workes, as signes and tokens of true faith. This we both allow, yet with some difference. For they esteem all certentie that comes by worke to be vncertain and often to deceiue: but we doe otherwise, if the worke be done in vprightnesse of heart.

The question then is, whether a man in this life may ordinarily without reculation, be vnfally certaine of his owne saluation, first of all & principally by faith, & then secondly, by such worke as are vnseparable companions of

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of faith. We hold this for a cleare and evident principle of the word of God, and contrariwise the Papists denie it wholly. I will therefore prooue the truth by some few arguments, and then answer the common objections.

Arg. 1. That which the Spirit of God doth first of all testifieth in the heart and conscience of any man, & then afterward fully confirme, is to be beleued of the same man, as vnfally certaintie: but the Spirit of God first of all doth testifieth some men, namely true beleuers, that they are the sons of God: and afterward confirme the same vnto them. Therefore men are vnfally to beleue their owne adoption. Now that the Spirit of God doth give this testimony to the conscience of man, the Scripture is more then plaine, *Rom. 8.15.* *Ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The same spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the sonnes of God.* Answer is made, that this testimony of the Spirit is giuen only by an experiment or feeling of an inward delight or peace, which breeds it vs not an infallible but a coniectuall certaintie. And I answer againe, that this exposition is flat against the text. For the Spirit of adoption is said here not to make vs to think or speake, but to cri *Abba, Father;* and crying to God as to a father argues courage, confidence, and boldnes. Against the same Spirit of adoption is opposed to the *spirit of bondage* causing *fear;* and therefore it must needs be a Spirit giuing assurance or liberty, & by that means driveng away distrustful feares. And the end, no doubt, why the holy Ghost comes into the heart as a witness of adoption is, that the truth in this case hidden and therefore doubtful, might be cleared and made manifest. If God himselfe haue appointed that a doubtful truth among men, shall be confirmed and put out of doubt by the mouth of two or three wittenes, it is abfird to thinkle that the testimonie of God himselfe knowing all things, & taking vpon him to be a witness, should be coniectural. Saint Bernard had learned better diuinitie, whyle he said, *Who is iust, but he that beeing loued of God, returnes loue to him againe?* which is not done but by the *Spirit of God* (a) retealing by faith unto man the eternall purpose of God concerning his saluation in time to come: which reuelation undoubtedly is nothing else but an infusion of spiritual grace: by which, whilst the deuds of the flesh are mortified, the man is prepared to the kingdome of God, receyning withall, that wherby he may presume that he is loued, and loue againe.

Furthermore, that the spirit of God doth not only perswade men of their adoption, but also confirme the same vnto thic, it is most manifest. *Criue not the Spirit wherby you are sealed up to the day of redemption.* And *1.v.13.* *After ye beleueed, ye were sealed with the Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.* *2.Cor.1.22.* *It is God that hath sealed vs, and giuen us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts.* Here the wordes of sealing & earnest, are to be considered. For things that passe to and fro among men though they bee

in question, yet when the seale is put to, they are made out of doubt: & therefore when God by his spirit is faide to seale the promise in the heart of every particular beleauer, it signifieth that he giues vnto them evident assurance that the promise of life belongs vnto them. And the giuing of earnest is an vnfally token vnto him that receiueth it, that the bargain is ratified, and that he shall receive the things agreed vpon. And it were a great dishonour vnto God, to thinke that the carefull of his own spirit giuen vnto vs, should be an evidence of eternall life, not vnfally, but conjecturall.

Arg. 2. The faith of the elect, or fauing faith, is a certaine perswasion, & a particular perswasion of remission of sin and life everlasting. Touching the first of these twaine, namely, that faith is of the nature of faith, it appears by ex parte testimonie of Scripture, *Mat. 14.33.* *O thou of little faith, why hast thou doubted?* and *21. v.21.* *If ye haue faith, and doubt not, I am. Let him arise in faith, and waue not for he that wauest is like a vane of the sea, soft of the wind, & carried away.* *Rom. 4.20.* *Neither did he doubt of the promise of God through unbelife, but was strengthened in faith.* I wil not stand longer on this point which is not denied of any.

Touching the secound part of my reasoun, that faith is a particular perswasion applying things beleued. I prove it thus. The proprietie of faith is to receive the promise, *Gal. 3.14.* and the thing promised, which is Christ with his spirit, *Job.1.12.* Now Christ is received by a particular application, as will appear, if we do but marke the end and vfe of the ministracy of the word, and of the Sacraments. For when God giues any blessing to man, it is to be received by man, as God giueth it. Now God giues Christ, or at the least offereth him, not generally to mankind, but to the feudal and particular members of the Church. In the Lords Supper, as in every Sacrament, there is a relation or analogie between the outward signes, and the things signified. The action of the minister giuing the bread and wine to the hands of particular communicants, representeth Gods action in giuing Christ with his benefits to the same particular communicants. Againe, the action of receiuing the bread and wine particularly, representeth another spirituall action of the beleuing heart, which applieth Christ vnto it selfe, for the pardon of sin and life everlasting. Papists yeld not this: yet if they refuse to maintaine this analogy, they ouerturne the Sacrament, and dissent from Antiquitie.

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Angustine faith, *The body of Christ is ascended into heaven: some may answer, and say, How shall I hold him being absent?* how shall I reach up mine handes to heaven, that I may lay hold of him sitting there? *Send up thy faith, and thou hast laid hold of him.* And what is more common then another saying of his? *What meanest thou to prepare thy belly and teats?* *Believe and thou hast eaten.* Againe, *Eph.3.12.* *Paul* saith, *By Christ we haue boldnesse*

boldnesse and entrance with confidence by faith in him. In which words are set downe two notable effects and fruits of faith boldnesse, and confidence. Boldnesse is, when a poore sinner dare come into the preface of God, not being terrified with the threatnings of the law, nor with the consideration of his owne vnsorthiness, nor with the manifold affaules of the diuell; and it is more then certaintie of Gods fauour. Now whereas Papists answere, that this liberty of boldnes in comming vnto God, proceeds of a general faith, they are farre wide. It is not possible that a general perfwasion of the goodnes and truthe of God, and of his mercie in Christ, shoule breed confidence and boldnesse in the heart of a guilty sinner, and no example can be brought thereof. This general faith concerning the articles of our beleefe, was no doubt in *Cam*, *Sanl*, *Archiphel*, *Indya*, &c in the diuell himselfe: and yet they de-spaired, and some of them made away themselves; and the diuell for all his faith trembleth before God. Wherefore that faith which is the root of these excellent vertues, of boldnes and confidence, must needs be a speciall faith, that is, a large and plentiful perfwasion of the pardon of a mans own sinnes, and of life euera-lasting. Againe, *Heb. 11. 1.* faith is called *hypostasis*, that is, a substance or substance of things hoped for; where faith in the matter of our faltuation, and other like things, is made to go beyond hope for hope waits for things to come, till they haue a being in the person hoping; but faith in present giues a satisfying or being vnto them. This can not be that general faith (of Papists termed *Catholike*) for it comes short of hope, but it must needs be a speciall faith that makes vs vndoubtedly beleeme our owne election, adoption, iustification, and faltuation by Christ. And to this purpose haue some of the fathers said excellently well.

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Agustine saith, *I demand of thee, O sinner, dost thou beleeme Christ or not? thou sayest, I beleeme. What beleeme you? that he can freely forgive thee all thy sinnes? Thou hast that which thou hast beleeme.* *Ambrose* saith, *This is a thing ordained of God, that he which beleeme in Christ, shoulde be saved without any workes, by faith alone freely receiving remission of sins.* And with *Ambrose* I joyne the testimonie of *Hesychius* upon *Leuiticus*, who saith, *God pitying mankind, wher he saw it disdained for the fulfilling of the workes of the law, willed that man should be saved by grace, without the workes of the law.* And grace proceeding of mercie is apprehended by faith alone without workes. Whereas in the two last testimonies, faith is opposed generally to all workes, and is wthalid to apprehend and receive grace and remission of sinnes, they can not be understood of a general, but of a speciall applying faith. *Bernard* hath these wordes, *If thou believest that thy sins cannot be blotted out but by him against whom thou hast sinned, thou dost well, but goe yet further, and beleeme that he pardeth thy sins. This is the testimonie which the holy*

A *Ghost giueth in our hearts, saying, Thy sinnes are forgotten. For so the Apostle thinketh that a man is iustified freely by faith.* Papists being much choked with this place, make answere, that *S. Bern.* doth not say, that we must beleeme the pardon of our sins absolutely without respect of workes, but that he requires the condition of our conuerteration and repentance, as signes whereby this perfwasion is wrought. I answere againe, that he auoucheth plainly the general faith, wherby the points of religion are beleemeed, to be but a beginning or rudiment of faith, and therefore not sufficient, vnsle we follow her, and apply the grace of God to our selues by faith, simply, without respect of any condition performed on mans part. Indeed I grant, that the truth of conuerteration, & other works, are by him mentioned afterward, but that was for this end, to shew how any man may haue a sensible and evident experience by works, as fruits of the pardon of his owne sinnes, & life euera-lasting, which he beleemeuth.

Arg. 3. S. John penned his first epistle that he might shew vnto the Church of God a way how they might ordinarily and fully be assured of the loue of God, and of eternall life: and therefore he affordeth vs many pregnant testimonies for this purpose. *1. Ioh. 2. 3.* *And by this we know that we haue knowne him, if we keepe his commandements;* and *v. 5.* *Hee which keepeth his word, in him is the loue of God trulye accomplished:* by this we know that we are in him. *chap. 3. 10.* *By this are manifested the children of God, and the children of the diuell & v. 19.* By this we know that we are of the triub, & before him we shal make our hearts confident. *cha. 4. 13.* *By this we know that we dwel in him, and be in vs, because hee hath given vs of his spirit.* *chap. 5. 2.* *By this we know that we loue the sonnes of God, when we loue God, and keep his commandements.* *v. 1. 3.* *I haue written these thinges vnto you which beleeme in the name of the sonne of God, that ye may know that you haue life eternall.* To these testimonies, first of all answere is made, that none of them doe necessarily imply a certainty of divine faith; because we are faid to know the things whiche we learn by coniectures. Behold a silly and poore shif. *S. John* saith, *chap. 1. 4.* *The thinges we write vnto you that your ioy may be full.* Now it is but an vncertain ioy that rifteth by conjectural knowledge. Again, this knowledge brings forth confidence and boldnes even before God. *c. 3. v. 19-21.* and therefore it cannot but include an infallible certainty. And to put it out of question that the knowledge here mentioned is the knowledge of divine faith, or as infallible as it is or can be, it is added, *cha. 4. 16.* *And we haue knowne and beleeme the loue which God hath toward us.* Secondly, it is answere, that all these speeches are generall, and not concerning particular men: but it is false: for when *S. John* saith, *we know* he speakes of himselfe, and includes the rest of the Church in the same condition with himselfe. Now he himselfe was fully assured of his owne saluation. For Christ a

little before his departure out of the world, did comfort all his disciples, partly by renewing the promise of life euera-lasting, and of the presence of his spirit vnto them; and partly by praying vnto the Father for their final preservation: so as they could not but be fully resolved of their happy estate, both in this life, and in the life to come.

B *Arg. 4. Abrahams* faith was a full perfwasion wherby he applied the promise vnto himselfe. *Rom. 4. 21.* And this faith of his is an example propounded vnto vs, according to which we are to beleeme: & therefore he is called the *father of the faithfull,* *v. 1. 6.* and *Paul* hauing set downe the nature & effects of this faith, saith, *It was written not only for him, but also for us which beleeme,* *v. 23.* It is objected, that *Abrahams* faith was not of saluation, but it concerned his issue in his old age, as *Paul* saith, *Rom. 4. 18.* *Abraham above hope beleeme that he should be the father of many nations: according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.* *Ans.* We must distinguish the obiect of faith, which is either *principal* or *lesse principal.* Principal, is alwayes Christ with his benefits: lesse principal are other lesse & particular benefits obtained by Christ. As of *Abrahams* faith, the obiect lesse principall was a carnall seed or issue: and the principall obiect most of all respected, as the foundation of all other blessings, was the blest seed Christ Iesus. *Gal. 3. 16.* *To Abraham and his seed were the promises made.* *Hee is not, & to the seeds, as of many, but, and only seed, as of one, which is Christ,* and *v. 29.* *If ye be Christ's, then Abrahams seed.* Thus it is plaine, that issue was neither promised nor desired, but with respect to Christ, who could not haue descended of *Abraham*, if he had bin wholly without seed.

C Hauing thus alledged some arguments for the truth, I come now to consider the objections of the Papists. *Obiect.* *I. Iob* being a righteous man wanted certainty of grace in himselfe, *Iob. 9. 20.* *If I would iustifie myselfe, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I would be perfect, hee shall judge me wicked: though I were perfect, yet my soule shall not know it.* Again, *v. 28.* *I am afraid of almytys workes, knowing that those whoe not judge me innocent.* *Ans.* *Isaiah* in the former chapter extolled the iustice of God; & *Iob* in this chapter giveth assent thereto, saying, *v. 2.* *I know verily it is so;* and he likewise spends the whole chapter in magnifying the iustice of God: and hauing propounded this end of his speech, hee doth not speak of himselfe, & of his own estate simply, as it is considered in it selfe: but as hee esteemed himselfe, being compared with God, especially then when he entred into a strait examination of his creature. And so must the speech be understood, *If I were perfect, my soule should not know it;* that is, I wil not acknowledge or it stand upon any righteouness of mine owne, when God shall enter into judgement with me. And thus much the very elect Angels, whoe being in possession of heauen, and therefore hauing more then assurance thereof, cannot but say,

A when they are compared with God. Againe, the words according to the original, are commonly of all, and so may well bee tranlated thus: *Am I perfect? I know not my soule, I abhorre my life:* that is, if I think me selfe perfect, I haue no respect to mine owne soule; or thus, I am perfect in respect of you, and I know not my soule, and I abhorre my life, namely, in respect of mine owne vprightnesse. And the other place is thus to be translated, *I feare all my sorowes,* and not all my woes: for this is flat against the Hebrew text, and Popish translators themselves follow it not.

B *Obiect.* *2. Eccles. 9. 1, 2.* *Man knowes not whether he be worthy of loue or hatred.* For all things are kept uncertain till the time to come. *Ans.* First I say, the translatiō is not right: the words are thus in the Hebrew and the Septuic: *No man knoweth loue or hatred, all things are before them.* As for these words (*all things are kept uncertain till the time to come*) are thrust into the text by head and shouders: and *Hierome* hath them not. Secondly, I answere, that the holy Ghost doth not deny simply the knowledge of Gods loue or hatred, as though there could bee no certaine assurance of it in this life. If we understand the words thus, then the argument of the holy Ghost must bee framed on this manner. If loue or hatred were to be knowne, then it must bee knowne by the outward blessings of God: but it cannot be knowne by the outward blessings of God, for al things come alike to all: therefore loue and hatred cannot be knowne. The proposition is false.

C Thus it is plaine, that issue was neither promised nor desired, but with respect to Christ, who could not haue descended of *Abraham*, if he had bin wholly without seed.

D *Hierome* speaks of this text on this manner, that no man knowes loue or hatred, namely, by himselfe; yet that God gives most certaine testimonies therof to men vpon earth. And *serm. 5. de Dedic.* his words are these: *Who knowes if he be worthy of loue or hatred? who knowes the mind of the Lord?* Here both faith and truthe must needs helpe vs, that, that which is hidien in the heart of the Father, may be revealed unto vs by the spirit: and his spirit giueth testimony perfwades our spirit, that we are the *fores of God;* and this perfwasion is caused by his calling, and iustifying vs freely by faith. And *S. Hierome* (though commonly abuised to the contrary) faith no more, but that men cannot know loue or hatred by the present afflictions which they suffer, because they know not whether they suffer them for trial or punishment.

E *Obi. 3. 1. Cor. 4. 3. 4.* *Judge not my selfe, I know nothing by my selfe.* Here *Paul* as not being prierior to his owne estate, refuseth to give any judgement of his righteouness. *Ans.* It is manifest by the words of this spittle, that certain in Corinth, boldly more then wifelz, confuted the Apostles ministerie, and with all disgraced

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it in respect of the ministry of other teachers. Therefore *Paul* in this chapter goes about to make an Apologie for it, speaking nothing of his owne person and the estate thereof before God, but only of his ministrerie and the excellencie thereof. And this is the judgement of *Theodore*, *Aquinas*, and *Lives* vpon this text. And when he saith, *I judge not my sons*, his meaning is, I take not vpon me to judge of what value and price my ministrerie is before God, in respect of the ministrerie of this or that man; but I leave all to God. Here then *Paul* refuseth only to give judgement of the excellencie of his own ministrerie, and in other causes he refuseth not to judge himselfe; as when he said, *I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness*; for he the Lord the righteous iudge shall give me, *2 Tim. 4.8.* And *Chrysostom* on this place faith, that *Paul* refuseth to judge himselfe not simply, but only for this end, that he might restraine others, and teach them moderation. And where *Paul* faith, *I know nothing by myselfe*, the speech is not general, but must be vnderstood of negligences and offences in the compasse of his ministrerie. For he was priuie to himselfe, that in simplicity and godly purenesse, he had his conuersation in the world; *2 Cor. 1.12* & he knew this by himselfe, that nothing should deserue him from the love of God in Christ, *Rom. 8.38.*

Obiect. 4. That we may be iustified there is some what required in vs, namely, faith; & repentence; and where there are wanting, a man cannot be iustified. Now no man can be certaine by the certainty of faith, that he repents of his sins with all his heart, and that he hath such a faith, as God requires at our hands, considering there is no testimony in the word, of our faith and repentence in particular. Therefore no man can be certaine by certainty of faith, that his finnes are pardoned. *Answe.* It is not necessary that any man should be certaine by faith of his faith and repentence; because faith is onely of such things as are not present, whereas faith and repentence are truly present in all that truly belieue and repente, it shall be sufficient if a man may way be vnfallibly certaine that he hath them. And though some men tally perwade themselves that they belieue, yet he that hath true faith indeede, knows that he hath true faith; even as certaintie, as he vnderstands, knows that he vnderstands. *Paul* saith to the Corinthians, *Prove your selves whether ye be in the faith or no*, *2 Cor. 13.5.* hereby giving them to understand, that al which belieue, haue the spirit of discerning, to know certaintie which they close belieue. Again, he saith of himselfe, *2 Tim. 1.12.* *I know whom I have belieued.* And *S. John* saith, *1 epist. 3.24.* *By this we know that his dwells in vs*, by the spirit which he hath given vs; making no question of it, but that hee which hath the spirit, knowes that he hath the same. And testimoynies of men are not wanting in this cause. *Aug. (a) Every one seeth faith to be in his owne heart*; if

a belieues: if not, he feleth it to be wanting. Again, *(b) Abeleuer seeth his owne faith, by which he answereth, that he belieueth without doubt, and (c) he which loueth his brother, more knoweth the loue whereby hee loueth, then his brother whom hee loueth.* Again, whereas it is said, that having faith; yet we know not whether it be sufficient or not. I answer that faith beeing without hypocrisie, is sufficient to salvation, though it be vnrifed. God more respects the truth of our faith, then the perfection thereof. And as the hand of the childe, or of the palse man, though it be feeble, is able to reach out it selfe, and receive a lynes of a Prince; so the faith that is but weake, is able to apprehend and receive Christ with all his benefits.

Obiect. 5. Prov. 28.14. *Blessed is the man that searcheth always*, *Phil. 2.12.* *Work your salvation with fear and trembling.* *Answe.* There is a three-fold feare, one of nature, the feod of grace, the third of affright. Fear of nature is that, wherby the nature of man is troubled with any thing that is hurtfull vnto it, and therefore avoide it. Fear of grace, is that excellent gift which is called the beginning of wisdome, and it is a certaine awe or reverence vnto God, in whose presence we doe whatsoever we doe. Fear of affright, is when men tremble at the judgements of God for their finnes, because they have no hope of mercy. Of these three, the first was good by creation, and therefore it was in our Sauour Christ; but since the fall is defective. The third is a vice, called flauish feare. And the second is that which is commanded in these, and the like places of Scripture: the intent whereof, is to make vs circumspect and fearefull lest we should offend God by any sin, our owne weakenesse considered, and the immunitie judgements of God. And this kinde of fear, as also the first, may stand with certainty of faith, *Rom. 11.20.* *Thou standest by faith, be not high minded but feare.* *Psal. 2.11.* *Serve the Lord in feare, and reioice in trembling.*

Ob. 6. Where there is no word, there is no faith. For faith and the word of God be relatives. But there is no word of God that faileth to particular men, *Cornelius*, or *Peter*, or *John*, thy finnes are pardoned, excepting a few persons; as *Mary Magdalene*, and the palse man, &c. Therefore there is no particular faith. *Answe.* Though there be no word set downe in Scripture, touching the saluation of this or that particular man, yet there is set downe that which is equivalent to a particular word, & as much in effect. For the promise of remission of finnes and life everlasting, is given with a commandement, that every man ^a apply the promise to himselfe, as he haue before pronounced; and this is altogether as much, as if every mans particular name had bin put in the promise. I add further, that the promises of the Gospell must be considerd two waies, first, as they are generally set downe in Scripture, without application to any person; secondly, as they are taught and published in the ministrerie of the word; the

^a Read Bernard de Autun.

end

b Epist.
112.
c Lib. 8.
de. Trin.

end whereof is to apply them to the persons of men, partly by preaching, and partly by administering the Sacraments of Baptisme, and the Lords supper, which are scales of righteoues of faith. Now the promise applied, and (as I may say) particularized to the members of the Church, is by the vertue of Gods ordinance as much, as if God himselfe had given the promise particularly, and annexed mens names vnto it. It is further replied, that the promise of remissiō of sinnes is not absolute, but depends vpon the condition of our works. Therefore our certaintie is only conjectural. *Answe.* I answer, that in respect of our owne vñworthinesse, we are not to doubt of our saluation, but to be out of all doubt, yea do despite before the judgement seat of God. For they which are of the workes of the law, are vnder the curse, *Gal. 3.10.* And *Paul* saith of his own workes of grace, *In this I am not iustified*, *1 Cor. 4.4.* And *David* beeing out of all doubt of his own defensed damnation, in regard of his owne vñworthinesse, saith, *Ever not into judgement with thy servants, O Lord, for no selfe shall be iustified in thy sight.* A game, the confederacion of an worthie in our felies, doth not hinder a resolution concerning Gods mercie in Christ. Fortuite faith makes an entrance vnto God with boldnesse, (I say with boldnesse) vnto those persons that are vñworthy in themselues, *Eph. 4.12.* And *Abraham* (whose faith is to be followed of vs) did not vpon the confederacion of his old daid wife, rell his selfe with bare hope vpon a likelihood of the accomplishment of Gods promise, but he belieueth under hope, even against hope, *Rö. 4.18.* Lastly, I answer, that the ground of the former obiectiō is erroneous; namely, that the promise of saluation depends vpon the condition of our works: because the Scripture saith, It is made & accomplished on mans part freely. I grant indeed, that to the preface there is annexed a condition of faith: yet faith must not here be considered as a worke, but as an instrument apprehending Christ with his benefits: and withall, repentence with the fruits thereof, are on our part required; yet no otherwise, but as they are necessary consequēts of faith, & the signes and documents thereof.

Obiect. 8. No man knowes al his finnes; therefore can certaintie know that all his finnes are pardoned, and that he is accepted of God. *Answe.* The ground of this argument is false: namely, that a man cannot be assured of the pardon of his finnes, if some of them be unknown. And to make this manifest, I will lay down a more certaintie ground, which shall be this. As the case is in Repentance, so it is also in faith: but there may be true & sufficient repentence of vñknowne finnes. God indeede requires a particular repentence for particular knowne finnes: but as they be hidden and vñknowne, he accepts a general repentence. An example whereof we haue in *David*, *Psal. 13.12.* *Who knowes, faith he, the errours of this life? then purge me from my secret finnes.* If it were not as I haue said, neither *David*, nor any man else could be saved. For when *David* repented greatly of his murder and adulterie, yet we find not that he repented particularly of his polygamie: which in all likelihood, through the twinge

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and custome of those times, was not then reported to be any sin; specially in the person of a king; and yet because (as we know) he is certainly fau'd this very sin is pardoned. Therefore when God pardons the knowne sinnes of men, whereof they doe in particular repent, he doth withall pardon the rest that are unknowne. And by this it appears, that the ignorance of some hidden sinnes, after a man with diligence hath searched himselfe, cannot prejudece an vnfaulable assurance of the pardon of them all, and of his owne saluation.

Obiect. 10. We pray for the pardon of our owne sinnes, and therefore we are uncertaine of pardon: the man which knowes that he hath pardon, neede not pray for it: I answer first, when we are taught by Christ to pray for the forgiuenesse of our debts, we are put in minde not to seeke the pardon of all our sins, whether past or present; but specially of our present and daily offences, whereby we make our felnes day by day, quiette till such time as wee humble our selues, and repent of them. Secondly, by this petition we are taught to aske the increafe of our affurance; because, though God bestow endless mercie on vs, yet we are skant in receiving of it: our hearts being like a narrow necked vessel, which being cast even into the Ocean sea, receiueth in water only drop by drop.

Obiect. 11. No man can beleue his owne saluation, as he beleues the articles of faith; therefore no man can beleue the pardon of his sins, and his salvation, by an infallible certainty. I answer, first, that every one that looks for salvation by Christ, is bound in conscience as certainly to beleue his owne saluation, & adoption by Christ, as he beleues the articles of faith. Because to the promise of life there is annexed a commandement to beleue & apply it. Secondly, this faith whereby we are to beleue our owne saluation, if we respect the true & proper nature thereof, is as certaine as that faith whereby we beleue the articles of faith. Thirdly, as there be diuers ages in the life of man, so there be diuers degrees and measures of true faith. There is first of all a beginning or rudiment of faith, like the *smoking flaxe* and *bruyed reed*, which Christ will never quench nor bruste. Againe, there is *weake faith*, which beleueth the promise truly, but yet it is perplexed with many doubtings. Lastly, there is *stronge faith*, which hath overcome all doubtings, and is not only for nature certain (as the former is) but also a large and plentiful persuasion of Gods mercie in Christ. Examples of this we have in *Abraham*, *Daniel*, the *Martyrs*, & such like worthy men. Now by the second faith, men do as *certainly* beleue their adoption as the articles, but not so *firmely* and fully. But by the last, perswasion of sinnes is not only as certainly, but also as fully beleueed, as an article of faith.

Obiect. 12. Ancient fathers, the lights of Gods Church, haue alwaies condemned this

A vnfaulable & speciall certainty of faith, which the Protestants hold & maintain. *Anf.* Though we buiid not the doctrine of our religion vpon the iudgements of men, yet we refuse not in this and other points, to bee tried by the Fathers, whose writings well understood, make more for vs then for the Popish religion. And their testimonies commonly alleaged to confute the certainty of speciall faith, are much abuſed. Many of them serue to proue that a man cannot judge and discerne of every particular motion and grace of his heart, of the increase of tuncle graces: & the contrary disafe, of speciall vices and wants; many whereof are hidden from the vnderstanding. *Theodore* in his comment, 1. Cor. 4. I will not, saith he, free my selfe from sinne, but wait the sentence of God: for it often falleth out, that men sinne of ignorance, & thinke to be equal and iust, which the God of alſes to be oþerwise. *Augustine de verbis Dei*, ferm. 23. Peraduenture thou findest nothing in thy conſcience; but he finds something that seeth better. And upon *Pſal. 41.* I know that the iuſtice of my God shall abide, but whether mine ſhal or no, I know not: for the ſaying of the Apolle terrifieth me, He which thinks he ſtrands, let him take heed lest he fall. Here he ſpeakes of his inward rightheousnes, and that, as it is confidered in it ſelfe, without the affiance of God. For he addes afterward, Therfore because there is no ſubſtitutio in me for my ſelfe, berewpon my ſoule is troubled for my ſelfe. *Cibyfōſtōne homil. 87.* on John. I am grieved, left peraduenture ſuppoſing my ſelfe to loſe, I do not loue as before: when I ſeemē constant & courageous unto my ſelfe, I was found but a dafard. These and a thouſand like testimonies proue nothing.

For though a man cannot fully discerne his heart, either in respect of every one of his own ſins, or in respect of every grace; yet this hindereth not, but that he may haue an vnfaulable certainty of his ſaluation, and also a ſufficient gift to discerne his owne faith and repenteance. II. Other places must be underſtood of proud preſumptiō, & of a kind of ſecuritie, in which men dreame of eaſe and libertie, without trouble or temptation. *August. de corrept. & grat. cap. 13.* Who of all the company of the faithful, as long as he liues in this mortal condition, can preſume, that he is of the number of the preſumptiō? And, de bona perſeuſor. cap. 22. No man can be ſecure touching eternall life, till this life be ended. *Bernard. cift. 107.* Having now received the knowledge of hiſelfe in part, he may reioyce in hope: but not in long. *Hieron. Daū. 4.* Let no man boldly preſume to another the pardon of ſinnes. III. Some places anough, that a man cannot be ſure of preſuerance to the end, without ſafes and decaſes in grace; all which we graunt. *August. de ciuit. Dei. lib. 11. cap. 12.* Although the Saints be (3.) certaine of the reward of their perſeuſorance, yet they be not ſure of their perſeuſorance, ſelſe: for what man can know that he ſhall perſeuſe in the practiſe and increase of righteouſnes unto the end, except he be affiſed of it by ſome reaſon. IV. Some places muſt be underſtood

a Make
it well.

of experimental certenty, when the event is accomplished. *Hieron. booke 2. against Pelagians.* Call no man blessed before his end, for as long as we liue here we are in the fight, and as long as we re in the fight, we haue no certen victory. V.

Some places ſpeak of the vncertainty of other mens ſaluation, which we graunt. The author of the booke *de vocat. Gent. 1. class. faith.* We can pronounce of no man before his end, that he ſhall be in the glory of the elect. *August. lib. de perſeuſor. cap. 13.* Men are not with any certen affeſation to anough that others belong to this calling.

VI. Some ſpeak of that certenty which comes by reuolation without the word. *Greg. lib. 6. epift. 22. to Gregoria.* Whereas you add in your epiftles that you will be earnit with me till I write, that it bath bee[n] made knowne unto me that your ſinnes are forgiuen: you haue required a hard and unprofitable thing. Hard, because I am unworthy to whom a reuolation ſhould be made: Unprofitable, because you muſt not be made ſure touching your ſinnes unleſt it be in the laſt day of your life: for then you ſhould not be able to bewile the ſame ſins.

VII. Some places denie unto man that certenty which is proper to God, which is, to discerne in himſelfe all things to come plainly, as they ſhall come to paſſe, without helpe of testimony and outward ſigues. *Bernard. for. 1. de Septuage. Who can say I am of the elect?* I am of the preſumptiō to life: certe[n]ly we haue none as yet, but the affiance of our hope conſerueth us.

Conſider their words with thofe that follow.

For this caſe certane ſigues and manifeſt tokens of ſaluation were giuen, that it may be a thing out of doubt, that he is in the number of the elect in whom theſe ſigues are.

C Thus I haue in ſome part made manifeſt that an vnfaulable certainty of pardon of ſin, and life euerlaſting is the proprieſt of every renewed conſcience. Now therefore I will proceſſe further to conſider how this certenty is caſed and imprinted in the conſcience. The principall agent and beginner thereof, is the holy Ghost, inſilencing the mind and conſcience with ſpirituall and diuine light: and the instrument in this action, is the minifter of the Gopſell, whereby the word of life is applied in the name of God to the peron of every hearer. And this certenty is by little and little conceiued in a forme of reasoning or practicall ſyllogisme framed in the minde by the holy Ghost, on this manner:

D Every one that beleueſ is the childe of God; But I doſt beleue: Therefore I am the childe of God.

The propositiō is made by the minifter of the word in the publicke congreſation: and is nothing elſe but the promife of eternall life applied to the particular hearers. The ſecond part or the assumption is the voice of conſcience regenerat[i]o, or the voice of Gods ſpirit in the ſame. Now papists write & auouch that the assumption is false: but the reaſons which they vſe to proue the ſame, are of ſmall moment. First they alleadge, that many are deceiued in

their perſuasions, thinking they haue that which they haue not: I anſwer againe, that many doe falſely preſume of Gods mercy, and imagine they haue that faith which they haue not: and in all ſuch the assumption is falſe: yet in all them that are chosen to ſaluation & truly called, it is infallibly true. For ſuch as haue received the gift of true faith, haue alſo another gift of diſcerning wherby they ſee and know their owne faith. It is further obiectēd, that *tempytation*, 17. 9. *The heart is deceiſfull and wicked about all things, who can know it?* But the intent of this place is onely to ſhew, that no man can ſearch his heart to the very bottome, to ſee all and every want, infirmitie, and wicked inclination that is therein. For original ſinne wherewiſh the heart of man is tainted, is a proneneſe or diſpoſition to the ſinnes that are or may be. And though men cannot diſcern all their ſinnes, yet many of them are certai[n]ly knowne: why may not then many of the graces of God be certai[n]ly knowne, eſpecially thoſe which bee of the principall, as faith, fanſtification, reuolation. Againe it is alleaged, that *Peter* beleueſ that he was able to lay downe his life for Christs ſake, and yet in deed was not, as the event declared, for when the time came, he denied Chrift. *Anf.* Peter at that time was but weak in faith, and he was much carried away with a confidence of his owne ſtrength, which made him ſpeak thoſe words of preſumption, and though he failed in this one particular action, yet failed not in the principall, that is, in the perſuasion of the pardon of his owne ſinnes and of life euerlaſting. In a word, it is certayne that many perſuade themſelues of Gods mercy, and yet are deceiued; neuertheleſſ all ſuch as doe truly beleue are not deceiued. The holy Ghost maketh them to ſee that in themſelues which by nature they cannot diſcern, as *Paul* ſignified, when he ſaid, I ſpeak the truth I lie not, my conſcience bearing me wiſneſſe by the holy Ghost, *Rom. 9. 1.*

Againe the ſame testimony is giuen otherwife thus.

E Every child of God bath the pardon of his ſinnes, ſaith Gods word.

But I am Gods child: and therfore haue the pardon of my ſinnes, ſaith the renewed conſcience, by the direſion of Gods ſpirit, *Rom. 8. 16.*

G After that this testimony is once begun it is confirmed by the ſame meaſures, as alſo by prayer and the ſacraments. But it may be demanded, how a bodily element, as bread, wine, water, ſhould be able to conſirme a perſuasion of our adoption that is in the conſcience? *Anf.* The element in the ſacrament is an outward ſeale or instrument to conſirme faith, not as a medicine reſtorers and conſirmes health, whether we think on it or not, whether we ſleep or wake, and that by his owne inherent vertue: but by reaſoning in a ſyllogisme made by the good conſcience: the medium thereof bee[n]g the outward ſigne in the

a Reaſon.

Sacrament by means of which sylogisitic the holy Ghost moues & stirres the minde, yea cherifeth & increaseth faith on this manner:

He which witnesseth the elements aright shall receive the promises:

But I doe, or haue syed the elements aright.

Therefore I shall receive the promises.

Whereas presumption and the illusion of Satan vse as well to tell a man that hee is the childe of God, as the true testimonie of regenerate conscience the way to put difference betweene them is this. I. Presumption is naturall and from the very wombe, but this testimonie of conscience is supernaturall. II. Presumption is in them that make no account of the ordinary meane of salvation: This testimonie comes by the reverent & carefull hearing of Gods word. III. Presumption is in them that vse not to call on the name of God; but this testimonie of conscience is ioyned with the spirit of adoption which is the spirit of prayer. IV. Presumption is ioyned with loofe of life, this testimonie brings with it alwaies an happy change and alteration. For hee which hath a good conscience hath also care to keepe good conscience in all things. V. Presumption is peremptory without doubting: whereas the testimonie of conscience is mingled with manifold doublings. *Mark 6. 24. Luk 17. 5.* yea otherwhiles ouercharged with them. *7. 17. 7. 8. VI.* Presumption will give a man the slippe in the time of fickenesse and in the houre of death; but the testimonie of good conscience stickes by him to the end, and even makes him say, *Lord remember now how I walked before thee in truth, and haue done that which is acceptable in thy sight,* *Isa. 38. 3.*

See 3. Of
the duties
of regene-
rate con-
science.

The dutys of conscience regenerate are two in speciall manner to give testimony, and to excuse.

The speciall thing of which conscience giues testimonie, is that we are the chilidren of God, predestinate to life euerlasting. And that appears by these reasons. I. *Rom. 8. 16.* The spirit of God witnesseth together with our spirit that we are the sonnes of God. Now the spirit of man here mentioned is the minde or conscience renewed & sanctified. To this purpose faith *John. 3. 19.* *He that believeth hath a witness in himself,* *1. John. 5. 10. 11.* That which Gods spirit doth testifie to the conscience, the conscience can againe testifie to vs: but Gods spirit doth testifie to the conscience of a man regenerate that he is the child of God. *1. Cor. 2. 12.* Therefore the conscience also doth the same. III. He that is iustified hath peace of conscience. *Rom. 5. 1.* Now there can be no peace in conscience till conscience tell the man which is iustified that he is indeed iustified. IV. That which the conscience may know certenly, it may testifie: but conscience may know certenly without reuelation, the mans election, and adoption as I haue before prooued: therefore it is able to give testimonie of thefe.

Againe, the regenerate conscience giueth

A testimonie of a certaine kinde of righteousness, beeing a vnseparabla companion thereto: and for this cause, it is called of some the right consciencie of a good conscience. Now this righteousness is nothing else, but an unfaid, earnest, and constant purpose with indeauerour answerable thereto, not to sin in any thing, but in all things what soeuer to please God & doe his wil. *Heb. 1. 3. 18. Pray for us, for we are assured that we haue godconscience in all things, desirous to liue honestely.* *2. Cor. 1. 12. Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity & godly purenesse, and not in fleshly wisedome we haue had our conuersation in the world.* *1. Cor. 4. 4. I know nothing by my selfe. Lord remeber now how I have walked before thee with an upright heart, and haue done that which is acceptable in thy sight.*

Eti. 38.3

I adde this clause, *in all things*, because that obedience which is the signe or fruit of good conscience, of which also it giues testimonie, is general, shewing it selfe in all and every commandement of God. Philosophers haue said that iustice is vniuersal, because he which hath it hath all vertues. But it is more truly said of this Christian righteousness or new obedience, that it is vniuersall, & that he which can performe true obedience in one commandement, can do the same in all. *Act. 23. 1.* Men and brethren, I haue in all good conscience serued God till this day. *Fsal. 119. 6.* Then haile I not be confounded when I shall haue respect to al thy commandements. *Act. 24. 16.* In the meane season I endeauour my selfe, or, take paines to haue a conscience without offence towards God, and towards men.

This shewes that there is a great number of men professeing the Gospell that want good conscience. For though they shew themselves very forward and willing to obey God in many things, yet in some one thing or other, they vle to follow the swing of their owne wils. Many are diligent to frequent the place of Gods worship, to heare the word preached with liking, to receiue the Sacraments at times appointed, and to approve of any good thing: all this is very commendable; yet these men often, when they depart home from the congregation say in effect on this manner; Religion stay thou here at the Church doore till the next Sabbath. For if we looke into their private conuersations, the government of their families, or their dealings in their particular callings, we shall with griefe see much disorder and little conscience. It is a common practise with sicke men when they make their wils on their death beds, in the very first place to command their bodies to the graue, and their soules to God that gaue them in hope of a better resurrection: and all this is well done; but afterward they bequeath their goods gotten by fraud, oppresyon, and forged cauillation to their owne friends and children, without making any recompence or satisfaction. But, alas, this shoulde not be so: for obedience that goes with good conscience must be performed to all Gods commandments without

exception:

exception: & if it be done but to some alone, it is but counterfeit obedience: and he that is guilty in one is guilty in all.

As a regenerate conscience giues testimonie of our newe obedience; so doth it also by certaine sweete motions stire men forward to performe the same. *Psal. 1. 6. 7. My reynes (that is, the minde and conscience enlightened by the spirit of God) teach me in the night season, Esa. 30. 21.* And thine ears shall haue a word behind shee saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it, when thou turnest to the right hand, and when thou turnest to the left.* Now this word is not only the voice of Paftours & teachers in the open ministerie, but also the voice of renued conscience inwardly by many secret cogitations subbing them that are about to sin. A Christian man is not only a Priest and a prophet, but also a spirituall king, euin in this life: and the Lord in mercie hath vouchfashed him this honour, that his conscience renewed within him, shall bee his solliciter to put him in mind of al his affaires and dutys which he is to performe to God: yea it is the controller to see all things kept in order in the heart, which is the temple and habitation of the holy Ghost.

The second office in conscience regenerate is to excuse, that is, to cleare and defend a man euin before God against all his enemies both bodily and ghostly. *Psal. 7. 8. Judge thou me, O Lord, according to my righeounesse, and according to mine innocencie in me.* Again. 26. 1, 2. *Judge me O Lord, for I haue walked in mine innocencie.* &c. *Prove me, O Lord, andrie me, examine my reynes & my heart.* That the conscience can doe this, it specially appears in the conflict & combat made by it against the duell, on this manner.

The duell begins and disputes thus. Thou, O wretched man, art a most grieuous sinner: therefore thou art but a damned wretch. The conscience answereith and saith: I know that Christ hath made a satisfaction for my sins, and freed me from damnation. The duell replieth againe thus: Though Christ hath freed thee from death by his death; yet thou art quite barred from heauen, because thou never diddest fullfill the law. The conscience answereith: I know that Christ is my righteousnesse and hath fullfilled the law for me. Thirdly, the duell replies and saith, Christ benefits belong not to thee, thou art but an hypocrite and wantest faith. Nowwher a man is driven to this strait, it is neither wit, nor learning, nor fauour, nor honour, that can repulse this contention, but only the poore conscience directed & sanctified by the spirit of God, which boldly & constantly answereith, *I know that I believe.*

And though it be the office of the conscience after it is renued principally to excuse, yet doth it also in part accuse. When *David* had numbered the people, *his heart smote him,* *2. Sam. 24. 10.* Job saith in his affliction that *God did write bitter things against him, and made me posseſſe the sinnes of his youth,* *Job. 1. 3. 26.* The reason hereof is, because the whole man & the

conscience is onely in part regenerate, & therefore in some part remains still corrupt.

Neither must it seeme strange that one and the same conscience shoulde both accuse & excuse, because it doth it not in one and the same respect. It excuseth, in that it affreth a man that his preson stands righteous before God, and that he hath an indeauerour in the general course of his life to please God: it accuseth him for his particular slips, and for the wants that be in his good actions.

If any shal demand why G O D doth not perfectly regenerate the conscience & cause it only to excuse, the answer is this. God doth it for the preventing of great mischiefe. When the Israelites came vnto the land of Canaan, the Cananites were not at the first wholly displaced. Why? *Moses* rendreth the reason; Left wilde beasts come and inhabit some parts of the land that were dispeopled, and more annoy them then the Cananites. In like manner God remeys the conscience; but so as it shall still accuse when occasion serueth; for the preventing of many daungerous sinnes which like wilde beasts would make haunce of the foule.

Thus much of good conscience: now follows euill conscience: and that is so called partly because it is defiled and corrupted by originall sinne, and partly because it is euill, that is, troublesome and painefull in our tente and feelings as all sortes, calamities, & miseries are called euill. And though conscience bee thus tearemed euill, yet hath it some respects of general goodnesse, in as much as it is an instrument of the execution of divine iustice: because it serueth to accuse them before God, which are iutly to be accused.

It hath spread it selfe ouer mankindes as generally as originall sin: and therfore it is to be found in all men that come of *Adam* by ordinary generation. The properties of it, with all the power it hath to accuse and condemne, and thereby to make a man afraid of the presence of God, and to cause him to flee from God as from an enemy. This the Lord signified when *Peter* saw some little glimmering of the power and Majestie of G O D in the great draught of fish, he fell on his knees and said to Christ, *Lord, geue from me, for I am a sinfull man.*

Euell conscience is either dead or stirring. Dead conscience is that, which thought it can doe nothing but accuse, yet commonly it lies quiet, accusing little or nothing at all.

The causes why conscience lyeth dead in all men, either more or lesse, are many. I. Defect of reason or vnderstanding in crazed brains. II. Violence & strength of affections, which as a cloud do ouer-cast the minde, and as a gulfe of water swallow vp the iudgement and reason: and therefore hinder the conscience from accusing, for when reason cannot doe his part, then conscience doth nothing. For example: some one in his rage behaues himselfe like a madde man, and willingly commits any mis-

Exod. 23.
29.

See 4. Of
euill
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science.

Gen. 3. 9.

Luk. 5. 8.

Dead &
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Consci-
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Scared
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chiefe without any controlment of conscience; but when choler is down, he begins to be ashamed and troubled in himselfe, notwithstanding by grace, but evn by the force of his naturall conscience, which when affliction is calmed begins to stirre, as appeareth in the example of *Cain*. III. Ignorance of Gods will and errors in judgement, cause the conscience to be quiet, when it ought to accuse. This we finde by experiance in the death of obstinate heretickes, which suffer for their damnable opinions without checke of conscience.

Dead conscience hath two degrees. The first is the flambering or the benummed conscience; the second is the scared conscience.

The *benummed* conscience is that, which doth not accuse a man for any tyme, vñlesse it bee grievous or capitall; and not alwayes for that but only in the tyme of some grievous sicknesse or calamitie. *Ioseph* brethren were not much troubled in conscience for their villanie in selling their brother, till afterward when they were afflicted with famine and distresed in Egypt, *Gen.* 42, 21. This is the conscience that commonly reignes in the hearts of drousty Protestants, of all carnall and luke-warme godspellers, and of such as are commonly rearmed ciuil honest men, whose apparent integrity wil not free them from guiltie consciences.

Such a conscience is to bee taken heede of, as beeing most dangerous. It is like a wilde beast, which so long as he lies a sleepe seemes very tame and gentle, and hurteth no man; but when he is roued, he then awakes and flies into a mans face, & offers to pull out his throat. And so it is the manner of a dead conscience, to lie still and quiet evn through the course of a mans life: and hereupon a man would thinke (as most doe) that it were a good conscience indeed; but when si-keneſſe or death approacheth, it beeing awaked by the hand of God, beginnes to stand upon his legges, and shewes his fierce eyes, & offers to rend out even the very throat of the soule. And heare Poets knowing this right wel, have comparred euil conscience to Furies pursuing men with fire-brads.

The *scared* conscience is that, which doth not accuse for any sinne, no for great sinnes. It is compared by *Paul*, I. *Tim.* 4, 3 to the part of a mans bodie which is not only bereft of fense, life, & motion by the gangrene, but also is burnt with a fearing yron: & therefore must needs bee vterly palt all feeling.

This kind of conscience is not in all men, but in such persons as are become obitinate heretickes and notorious malefactours. And it is not in the by nature, but by an increase of the corruption of nature; & that by certaine steps and degrees. For naturally every man hath in him blidness of minde, and obstinacie or forwardnes of heart, yet lo, with the blidness and ignorance of minde, are oynd some remnantes of the light of nature, shewing vs what is good and euill. Now the heart of man beeing exceedingly obitinate & peruerse, car-

rieth him to comit sins evn against the light of nature & common sense; by practise of such sins the light of nature is extinguished: & then commeth the *reprobate minde*, which iudgeth euill good, & good euill; after this follows the *scared conscience*, in which there is no feeling or remorse: & after this comes an *exceeding gree-
dines* to all manner of sin, *Eph.* 4, 19. *Rom.* 1, 28.

Here it may be demanded, how mens consciences shall accuse them in the day of iudgement, if they be thus benummed and feared in this life. Answ. It is said, *Rev.* 20, 12 that at the laſt judgement all ſhall bee brought before Christ, & that the books then ſhall be opened; among theſe bookeſ no doubt conſcience is one. Wherefore though a dead conſcience in this life be as a cloſed or ſealed booke (because it doth either little or nothing accuse), yet after this life, it ſhall be as a booke laid open because God ſhall iudgith it, and to ſtirre it vp by his mighty power, that it ſhall be able to reueale & diſcouer al the ſins that a man ever committed.

Stirring conſcience, is that which doth ſenſi-
tively either accuse or excuse. And it hath four
diſferences.

The first, which accuſeth a man for doing euill. This muſt needs be an euil conſcience. Because to accuse is not a proprieſ that belongs to it by creation, but a defect that followeth after the fall. And if the conſcience which truly accuſeth a man for his ſins, were a good conſcience, then the wort man that is, might haue a good conſcience; which cannot be.

When the acuſation of the conſcience is more forcible and violent, it is called a *wounded* or *troubled conſcience*: which though of it ſelfe it be not good nor any grace of God; yet by the goodness of God it ſerueth often to be an occation or preparatiō to grace; as a needle, that drawes the thread into the cloth, ſome meaneſſ whereby the clothe is ſeweth together.

The ſecond, is that which accuſeth for doing well. And it is to bee found in them that are given to idolatry and ſuperflitiō. As in the Church of Rome: in which, becauſe mens conſciences are infirme & intangled with humane traditions, many are troubled for doing that which is good in it ſelfe, or at the leaſt a thing indifferent. As for example: let a priēt omit to say masse & to ſay his canonical hours, his conſcience will accuſe him therfore; though the omitting of the canonical hours & of the ido- latrous masse, be indeed by Gods word no ſin.

The third, is the conſcience which excludeth for doing that which is euill. This alſo is to be found in them that are given to Idolatry and ſuperflitiō. And there is a particular example hereof, Job 16, 2. *Te a time that come, that who ſouer heldeſt you, will think that he doth God good ſervice*. Such is the conſcience of Popish traitours in theſe daies, that are neuer touched at all, though they intend and enterprize horriblie villanies, and be put to death therfore.

The fourth, is that which excuseth for well doing ſome times, and in ſome particular

actions

actions of carnall men. When *Abimelech* had taken *Sarab* from *Abraham*, God ſaid unto him in a dreame, *I know that thou diddest this with an upright minde*, *Gen.* 20, 6. This may be termed^a good conſcience, but is indeede otherwife. For though it doe truly excuse in one particular action, yet because the man in whom it is, may be vngenerate and as yet out of Christ, and because it doth accuse in many other matters; therefore it is no good conſcience. If all the vertues of naturall men are indeed but certayne^b beauiful ſins, and their righteouſneſſe but a carnall righteouſneſſe; then the conſcience alſo of a carnall man, though it excuse him for well doing, is but a carnal conſcience.

CHAP. IIII. *Mans diue touching conſcience.*

Mans diue concerning conſcience is Two-fold. The first is, if we want good conſcience about all things to labour to obtaine it: for it is not given by nature to any man, but comes by grace.

For the obtaining of good conſcience, three things muſt bee procured; a preparation to good conſcience; the applying of the remedie; the reformation of conſcience.

In the preparation, four things are required. The first, is the knowledge of the law, and the particular commandments thereof, whereby we are taught what is good, what is bad; what may be done, and what may not be done.

The men of our daies, that they may haue the right knowledge of the law, muſt lay aside many erroneous and foolish opinions, which they hold flat against the trae meaning of the law of God; otherwife they can neuer be able to diſcern between ſin and no ſinne. Their ſpeciall & common opinions are theſe: I. That they can loue God with al their hearts, & their neighbors as themſelues; that they feare God aboue all, and truſt in him alone; & that they euer did fo. II. That to rehearſe the Lords prayer, the beleefe, and ten commandments, (without understanding of the words, and without affectiō) is the true & whole worship of God. III. That a man may feeke to wizar, & foot-fayres without offence, because God hath provided a value for every fore. IV. That to ſwear by good things and in the way of truth, is not a ſin. V. That a man going about his ordinary affaires at home or abroad on the Sabbath day, may as well ferue God as they which heare all the ſermons in the world. VI.

That religion & the practice therof, is nothing but an affiſed preſcience: that concurſing the roote of euill, is nothing but worldineſſe; that pride is nothing but a care of honesty and cleaneſſe: that ſingle fornication is nothing but the tricke of youth; that fwearing and blaſpheming argue the courageous minde of a braue gentleman. VII. That a man may doe with his own what he wil, & make as much of it as he can; Hence arife all the frauds and bad practiſes in traffike betweene man and man.

The ſecond thing required, is the knowldge^c of the iudicall ſentencē of the law, which reſolutely pronouceth that a culpe is due to man for every ſin, *Gal.* 3, 10. Very few are reſolved of the truthe of this point, and very few doe vnaſtained beleue it, because mens minds are poſſeſſed with a contrarie opinion, that though they ſinne againſt God, yet they haue ſcape death and damnation. *David* ſaith, *The wicked man* (that is, every man naturally) *bleſſeth himſelfe, Pſ. 10, 3; & he maketh a league with hell and death, Eſay 28, 15.* This appeareth alſo by experiance. Let the minifters of the Gofpel reprooue ſin, and denouce Gods iudgements againſt it according to the rule of Gods word, yet men will not ſteare, ſtones will almoſt as ſoon mooue in the wals, and the pillars of our Churches, as the flimic hearts of men. And the reaſon hereof is, because their minds are foreſtalled with this abſurd conceit, that they are not in danger of the wrath of God, though they offend. And the opinion of our common people is hereunto anſwerable, who thinke that if they haue a good meaning, and doe no man any hurt, God will haue them excused both in this life and in the day of iudgement.

The third, is a iuft and ſerious examination of the conſcience by the law, that wee may ſee what is our elate before God. And this is a dutie vpon which the Prophets ſtand very much. *Lă. 3, 40. Man ſuffereſt for his ſinnes, let us ſearch and triue our hearts, and turne againe to the Lord, Zeph. 1, 8. Faine your claes for you, O nation, not worthy to be beloved.* In making examination wee muſt ſpecially take notice of that which doth now lie or may hereafter lie vpon the conſcience. And after due examination hath bin made, a man comes to a knowledge of his ſin in particular, and of this wretched and miſerable elate: who one enters into his houſe at midnight, he finds or fees nothing out of order: but let him come in the day time when the Sun ſhineth, and then he ſhall elſe many faults in the houſe, and the very moates that lie vp and downe: fo let a man ſearch his heart in the ignorance and blidneſſe of his minde, he will ſtraightway think all is well; but let him once begin to ſearch himſelfe with the light & lanterne of the law, & he ſhall find many roule corners in his heart, & heaps of ſins in his life.

The fourth, is a ſorrow in reſpect of the punishment of ſimes: aring of the three former actions. And though this forrow be no grace, for it beſals as wel the wicked as the godly: yet may it be an occation of grace, because by the apprehencion of Gods anger, we come to the apprehencion of his mercy. And it is better that conſcience ſhould grieve and wound vs and doe his wort against vs in this life, while remedy may be had, then after this life, when remedy is paſt.

Thus much of preparation: now folowes the remedie, & the applicatiō of it. The remedie is nothing elſe but the blood or merits of Chrift who ſpecially in conſcience fel the wrath

Mark. 1.1.
34.

Heb. 5.7.

of God, as when he said, *My soule is heavy vnto death:* and his agony was not so much paine & torment in boode, as the apprehension of the feare and anger of God in conscience; and when the holy Ghost saith, *That he offered vnto God prayers with strong cries, & was heard from feare,* he directly notes the diffresse & anguish of his most holy conscience for our sins. And as the blood of Christ is an all-sufficient remedie, so is it also the alone remedie of all sores and wounds of conscience. For nothing can stanch or stay the terrors of conscience, but the blood of the immaculate Lambe of God: noting can satisfie the judgement of the conscience, much leſſe the moſt ſcure judgement of God, but the onely ſatisfaction of Christ. In the application of the remedie, two things are required: the Gospell preached, and faith the Gospell is the hand of God, that offreth grace to vs: & faith is our hand whereby we receive it.

That we indeed by faith may receive Christ with all his benefits, we must put in practice 2. lessons. The firſt is, vntainedly to humble our ſoules before God for all our wants, breaches, and wounds in conſcience: which, being vnto vs a Paradise of God, by our default we haue made as it were a little hell within vs. This humiliation is the beginning of all grace & religion: pride and good conſcience can neuer goe together. And thus as haue knowledge in religion and many other good gifts without humiliation, are but vnbidded, vnmortified, and vreformed perſons. This humiliation containeth in it two duties, the firſt is confeſſion of our ſins, especially of thoſe that lie vpon our conſcences: wherewith muſt be ioyned the accuting and condenming of our ſoules: for then we put conſcience out of office, and diſpatch that labour before our God in this life, which conſcience would perorme to our eternall damnation after this life. The ſecond duty is Deprecation, which is a kind of prayer made with groanes and deſires of heart, in which we intreat for nothing but for the pardon of our ſins, and that for Chrifts ſake, ſtill ful time as the conſcience be pacified.

To this humiliation ſtanding on these two parts, excellent promises of grace and life certaingly are made. *Prov. 28. 13. He that bi-deth his ſins, ſhall not proſper: but he that conſefeth and forſaketh them, ſhall find mercy.* *I. Job 1. 9. If we acknowledge our ſins, he is faithful and iuft to forgive us our ſins: and to cleaſe vs from all unrighteouſnes.* *Luk. 1. 53. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and ſent the rich empty away.* Which are alſo veriſied by experience in sundry examples. *2 Sam. 12. 1. 3. David ſaid to Na-than, I have ſinned againſt the Lord. And Nathan ſaid to David, The Lord alſo hath put away thy ſin.* *2 Chro. 32. 13. When Manasseh was in tribulation he praide to the Lord his God, and humbled himſelf greatly before the God of his fathers, & praide unto him: and God heareth his prayer.* *Luk. 23. 42. And the thief ſaid to Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Then Jesus ſaid*

A unto him. *Verily I ſay unto thee, to day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradise.* By theſe and many other places it appears, that when a man doth truly humble himſelf before God, he is at that instant reconciled to God, and hath the pardon of his ſins in heaven; and ſhall afterward have the auſteſure thereof in his owne conſcience.

The ſecond leſon is, when we are touched in conſcience for our ſins, not to yeeld to natural doubtings and diſtrit: but to reſift the fame, & to indeavour by Gods grace to reſolute our ſoules that the promifes of ſalutio by Christ, belong to vs particularly: because to doe thus much, is the very commandement of God.

The third thing is, the reformation of conſcience; which is, when it doth ceaſe to accuse and terrife, and begins to execute & teſtifie vnto vs by the holy Ghost, that we are the children of God, and haue the pardon of our ſins. And this will doe after that men haue ſeriously humbled themſelves, and prayed earnestly and conſtantly with ſighes and groanies of ſpirit for reconciliation with God in Christ. For then the Lord will ſend downe his ſpirit into the conſcience by a ſweete and heauenly teſtimony, to affreſe vs that we are at peace with God.

To us wee ſee how good conſcience is gotten: & because it is ſo pretious a iewell, I wiſh all perſons, that as yet never laboured to get good conſcience, now to begin. Reasons to induce men there may be theſe: I. You ſeeke day & night from yeare to yeare for honours, riches, and pleaſures, which ye muſt leaue be-hinde you: muſh more therefore ought you to ſeek for renewed & reformed conſcences, conſidering that conſcience will be with you in this life, in death, at the laſt judgement, and for euer. II. He that wants a conſcience purged in the blood of Christ, can never haue any true and laſting comfort in this life. Suppoſe a man arrayed in cloath of tuffe, ſet in a chaire of eſtate, before him a table furnished with all dainty prouision: his ſervants, Monarchs and Princes; his riches the chiefest treasures and kindegdomes in the world: but withall ſuppoſe one ſtanding by, with a naked ſword to cut his throat, or a wild beaſt ready cuer and anion to pull him in peeces: now, what can we ſay of this mans ſituate, but that all his hapineſſe is nothing but woe and miſery? And ſuch is the estate of all men that abounding with riches, honours, and pleaſures, carry about them an euil conſcience, which is a ſword to ſlay the foule, or a rauenous beaſt ready to ſucke the blood of the ſoule, & to rend it in peeces. III. He which wants good conſcience can do nothing but ſinne: his very eating and drinking, his ſleeping & waking, and all he doth, turns to ſinne: the conſcience muſt ſiſt be good, before the action can be good; if the roote be corrupt, the fruits are anwerable. IV. An euil conſcience is the greateſt enemy a man can haue, because it doth execute all the parts of judgement againſt him. It is the Lords ſergeant: God neede not ſend out proſec-

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by any of his creatures for man: the conſcience within man will arreſt him, and bring him before God. It is the Taylor to keepe man in priſon bolts and yrons, that he may bee forth coming at the day of Judgement. It is the witneſſe to accufe him, the Judge to condenme him, the hang-man to execute him, & the flauſhings of the fire of hell to torment him. Again, it makes a man to be an enemy to God: because it accufeſhim to God, & makes him fly from God, as Adam did when he had ſinned. Alſo it makes a man to be his owne enemy, in that it doth cauſe him to lay violent hands vpon himſelf, & become his own hangman, or his own cut throat. And on the contrary, a good conſcience is a mans best friend: when all men intreat him hardly, it will ſpeak him faire and comfort him: it is a continual feaſt, and a paſſaide vpon earth. V. The Scripture ſheweth, that they which never ſeeke good conſcience, haue terrible ends. For either they die blocks, as *Nabal* did; or they die desperatly, as *Cain, Saul, Achitophel, Judas*, VI. We muſt conſider often the terrible day of judgement, in which every man muſt receive according to his doings. And that we may then be abſolved, the beſt way is to ſeek for a good conſcience; for if our conſcience be euill, and condenme vs in this life, God will muſh more condenme vs. And whereas we muſt paſſe thorough three judgments; the judgement of men, the judgement of our conſcience, and the laſt judgement of God: we ſhall neuer be ſtrengthened againſt them, and cleared in them all, but by the ſeeking of a good conſcience.

After that a man hath got good conſcience, his ſecond duty is to keepe it. And as in the governing the ſhip on the ſea, the Pilot holding the helme in his hand, hath alwaies an eye to the compaſſe; ſo we likewife, in the ordering of our liues and conuerſations, muſt alwaies haue a ſpeciall regard to conſcience.

That we may keepe good conſcience, wee muſt doe two things: avoid the impediments thereof, and vfe conuenient preferuatiōns.

Impediments of good conſcience, are either in vs or forth of vs. In vs, our owne ſins and corruptions. When mens bodies lie dead in the earth, there breed certayne wormes in them, whereby they are conſummed. For of the fleſh come the wormes that conſume the fleſh: but vniſte we take great heed, out of the ſins and corruptions of our hearts, there will breed a worme a thouſand fold more terrible, even the worme of conſcience that neuer dieth; which will in a lingring manner waſt the conſcience, the foule, and the whole man; because he ſhall alwaies dying, and neuer dead. These ſins are ſpecially three; ignorance, vnmortified afſections, worldly luſts.

Touching the firſt, namely ignorance, it is a great and vniual impediment of good conſcience. For when the mind erreth or miſconceiueſt, it doth miſlead the conſcience, & deceiue the whole man. The way to auoyd this impe-

diment is, to do our indeauerour that we may daily increaſe in the knowledge of the word of God, that it may dwell in vs plentifullly: to this end we muſt pray with *David*, that he would open our eies, that we might understand the wonders of his law: and withal, we muſt daily ſearch the ſcriptures for underſtāding, as men vſe to ſearch the mines of the earth for gold ore. *Prov. 2. 4.* Laſtly, we muſt labour for ſpiritual wiſdom, that we might haue the right vfe of Gods word in euery particular action: that being by it directed, we may diſcern what we may with good conſcience do or leaue vndone.

The ſecond impediment, is viſitid and vi-mortified afflictions: which if they haue their ſwing, as wild horſes ouerturne the chariot with men and all, ſo they ouerturne and ouercarry the judgement and conſcience of man: and therefore when they haue rule, good conſcience takes no place. Now to prevent the danger that comes hereby, this course muſt be followed. When we would haue a word or a kniſe not to hurt our ſoules, or others, we turne the edge of it. And ſo, that we may prevent our affections from hurting & annoyning the conſcience, we muſt turne the course of them, by directing them from our neighbours to our ſoules and our own ſins, or by inclining them to God and Christ. For example: choller and anger directs it ſelfe upon every occaſion againgnt our neigbour, and thereby greatly indamageth the conſcience. Now, the course of it is thus: when we begin to be diſpleaſed, and to be angry with our ſoules for our owne ſins, Our loue for vpon the world is hurtfull to the conſcience, but when we once begin to ſet our loue on God in Christ, and to loue the blood of Christ aboue all the world, then contraſtrivit it is a furtheraſe of good conſcience.

The third impediment, is worldly luſts, that is, the loue and exceeding deſire of riches, ho-

nours, pleaſure. Every man is as *Adam*, his good conſcience is his paradise; the forbidden fruit is the ſtrōg deſire of these earthly things; the ſerpent is the old enemy the diuell; who if he be muſt be ſuffered to intagle vs with the loue of the world, wil ſtraiſtway put vs out of our paradise, and barre vs from all good conſcience. The remedie is to leaue the leſon of *Paul, Phil. 4. 12*, which is, in every estate in which God ſhall place vs, to be content, ef-fering euermore the preſent condition the beſt for vs all. Now that this leſon may be learned, we muſt further labour to be reſolved of Gods ſpeciall prouidence toward vs, in every caſe and condition of liue: and when we haue to well profit in the ſchoole of Christ, that wee can ſee and acknowledge Gods prouidence and goodneſſe, as well in ſickneſſe as in health, in pouerſtie as in wealth, in hunger as in fulneſſe, in liue as in death, we ſhall be very well content, whatſoever any way befalls vnto vs.

The preferuatiōns of good conſcience are two, the firſt, is to preferene and cheriſh that fauorit faith whereby we are perſuaded of our recon-

a Confession
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stat cursum
proprio
peccandi.

reconciliation with God in Christ, for this is the root of good conscience, as hath bin shewed. Now this faith is cherished and confirmed by the daily exercise of invocation and repentance: which besto humble our selues, to bewaile and confess our sinnes to God, to condemne our selues for them, to pray for pardon and strength against sinne, to praise God, and give him thanks for his daily benefits. And by the vnsainted and serious practise of these duties, repentance and faith are daily renewed and confirmed. The second preferrature, is the maintaining of the righteounesse of a good conscience; which righteounesse (as I have said) is nothing else but a constant indeator and desire to obey the will of God in all things. That this righteounesse may be kept to the end, we must practise three rules. The first is, that we are to carrie in our hearts a purpose never to sinne against God in any thing; for where a purpose is of committing any sinne wittingly and willingly, there is neither good faith nor good conscience. The second is, to walke with God as Esroch did, Gen 5.24, which is to order the whole course of our liues, as in the presence of God, desirous to approve all our doings ever unto him. Now this preferration, that whereforever we are, we do stand in the presence of God, is a notable means to maintaine sincerie. Gen 17.1. *I am God all sufficient, walke before me & be perfect.* And the want of this, is the occasion of many offences: as Abraham said: because I thought surely the feare of God is not in this place, they will slay me for my wifes sake, Gen. 20. 11. The third rule is, carefully to walke in our particular callings, doing the duties thereof to the glory of God, to the good of the common wealth, and the ecclisiation of the Church: avoyding therein fraud, covetousnesse, and ambition, which cause men oftentimes to set their coniences on the teaters, and make them stretch like cheuerill.

Thus we see how good conscience may bee preferred. Reasons to induce hereunto are, many. 1. Gods strait commandement. 1. Tim. 1. 19. *Keape faith and good conscience.* And Prov. 4. 23. *Keep thine heart with all diligence.* II. The good conscience is the most tender part of the foule, like to the apple of the eye; which being pierced by the leat pin that may bee, is not only blenched, but also loofeth his sight. Therefore, as God doth to the eye, so must we deale with the conscience. God giues to the eye certaine lids of flesh, to defend and cover it from outward iniuries: and so must we vs meanes to avoyd whatsoeuer may offend or annoy conscience. III. Manifold benefit redound vnto vs in keeping good conscience. First, so long as we haue care to keep it, we keepe and enjoy all other gifts of Gods spirit. Good conscience and the rest of Gods graces, are as a paire of turtle doves, when the one feedes, the other feedeth, wher the one likes not, the other likes not, wher the one dies, the other dies: so where good conscience is maintained, there are many other ex-

A
cellent gifts of God flourishing: & where conscience decaies, they also decay. Againe, good conscience giues alacrity vnto vs, & boldnesse in calling on Gods name, 1. Job. 3.21. *If our heart condemne vs not, wee haue boldnesse towards God.* Thirdly, it makes vs patient in afflictions, and comforts vs greatly: and when by reason of the grievousnesse of our affliction, we are constrained to kneele on both knees and take vp our crose, regenerate conscience as a sweet companion, or like a good Simon, laies to his shoulder, & helps to beare one end of it. Lastly, when one can comfort vs, it will be an amiable comforter, and a friend speaking sweetly vnto vs, in the very agony and pang of death.

B
IV. Not to preferre the conscience without spot, is the way to desperation. It is the policie of the diuell, to vs meanes to cast the conscience into the sleepe of security, that hee may the more easilly bring man to his owne destruction. For as diases, if they be long neglected become incurable, so the conscience much and often wounded, admitts little or no comfort. Neither will it alwaies boote a man after many years, to fay at the last cast, Lord be mercifull to me, I haue sinned. Though some be received to mercy in the time of death, yet farre more perish in desperation, that liue in their sinnes wittingly & willingly, against their owne conscience. Pharaoh, Saul, and Iudas cryed all peccans, I haue sinned against God yet Pharaoh is hardened more and more, and despairith: Saul goeth on in his sinne and despairith: Iudas mad away himselfe. And no maruell, for the multitude of sins oppret the coniences, and make the heart to overflow with such a measure of griefe, that it can fatten no affiance in the mercy of God. Lastly, they that shall negligē to keep good conscience, procure many lurtis, and dangers, & judgements of God to the selues. When a ship is on the sea, if it be not wel governed, or if there be a breach made into it, it drawes water, and sinkes: and so both men, and wares, and all in likelihood are cast away. Now we are all passengers, the world is an huge sea, through which we must passe: our ship is the conscience of every man, 1. Tim. 1.19. and 3.12. the wares are our religion and ecclisiation, and al other gifts of God. Therefore it stands vs in hand to alwaies at the helme, and to carry our ship with as even a courfe as possibly we can, to the intended port of happiness, which is the ecclisiation of our selues. But if so be it we growe carelesse & make breaches in the ship of conscience, suffering it to dash vpon the rocks of sin, it is a thousand to one, that we in the end shall cast away our selues and all we haue. And in the meane season as conscience decaies, so proportionally all graces and goodnesse goe from vs: Gods commandements begin to be vyle vnto vs; the knowledge thereof, as also faith, hope, and the invocation of Gods name, decay. Experience sheweth that men of excellent gifts by vsing bad conscience, lose them all.

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