

his great and generall judgement, to judge all men, and then happy is he that finds not justice, but taste of mercy: and who shall taste of mercy then, but hee that shewed mercy in this world? But if secondly, the holy Ghost meant of Gods presence, then is the argument framed thus; God is present with every man, and at every action, to relieve and judge of it, and either to approve it and reward it, if it be upright, equall and mercifull; or to correct and punish it, if it be extreme, and void of equity: therefore *let your equity be knowne to all men.* Both senses are good, but we will cleave unto the latter. It is then all one as if the holy Ghost had said; Use equity and moderation in your dealings, and remember who is at your elbow, stands by and looks on, ready to judge you for it.

Surely there can be no better reason than this, if it be settled in a mans heart, for a theefe or a cur-purse, if he saw the Judge stand at his elbow, and looke upon him, he would not do evill, he would stay his hand, even because he seeth that the Judge seeth him, who can presently hang him. A strong reason with men, & it keeps even bad men from lewd practises. Consider therefore when the Judge of Judges, the Lord of heaven and earth, stands by and seeth, and marks all thy actions, whether they be towards thy brother, as his is toward thee. This ought to make the greatest man on earth feare how he deales cruelly or hardly with his brother. But worldly men will not be perswaded of this, but when they are laying their plots to deceive their brother, and when by injustice and extremity, they pinch and wring him, they thinke in their hearts God seeth them not, nor do they ever thinke of God, but labour that God may bee out of all their thoughts. This is the cause of all sin in the world: for thence it is that mens hearts are hardened, and that they care not how extremely they deale with men, because they thinke God seeth them not, nor will call them to account for it, and doe with them as they have done with their brother. Hence comes all injustice, cruelty, extremity, suits in Law

for trifles, taking forfeitures of leases, and of bonds, and taking all advantages. Hence comes it, that one man will not spare another one day, nor forgive one fault, nor passe by any infirmity, nor put up the least injury, nor yeild one inch from his right: but if his brother offend never so little, upon never so apparent weaknes, hee shall heare of it on both sides, as they say: and if he deserve it, he shall have his deserts to the full. Thus hearts are hardened, affections are immoderate, bowells of compassion are flur up, love and pity are banished, and in their roomes reigne cruelty, and injustice. Moderation dwells in corners, but extremity is that which beareth away over all the world: what is the cause of all this? Surely, first, because men are untaught, and have not repented of their finnes, and so they feele not that God is moderate and mercifull to them. Secondly, they perswade not themselves that God seeth them; therefore against this blasphemous thought, the root of all evill, and cause of all sinne, arme thy selfe with this reason of the Apostle, and resolve of it, that this is the eternall truth of God, and shall stand for ever, *The Lord is at hand*; and seeth and observeth thee and all thy doings. Therefore as thou wilt escape his mighty and fearfull hand, season thy doings and dealings with moderation: and if thou hadst no conscience nor mercy in thee, yer be mercifull, remembering who seeth thee, and deale moderately and equally in the sight and presence of so moderate, so milde, and so mercifull a God, so mercifull a rewarder of him that deales moderately, and so powerfull a revenger of him that deales hardly and extremely with his brother. Let us then end with the Apostle as we began; *Let your equity and moderation be knowne to all men, for God is at hand.*

And thus much out of Gods word, of Publike and Private Equity; wherein I have not spoken all I might, but given occasion to others, to enter into further consideration thereof.

Trin-uni Deo gloria.

A TREATISE OF Mans Imaginations.

SHEWING,

His naturall evill thoughts.
His want of good thoughts:
The way to reforme them.

Matth. 12. verſe 33.

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good, or else make the tree evill, and his fruit evill.



LONDON,
Printed by JOHN LEGATT.
1631

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFULL SIR THOMAS HOLCROFT KNIGHT, WITH THE VERTVIOVS LADIE ELIZABETH HIS WIFE: Grace and Peace.



That weighty charge of Solomon (Right Worshipfull) to every sonne of wisdom, for the keeping of his heart with all watch and ward, may well persuade us, that some matters of great importance depend thereon: Among many (because my gates may not be great before so small a citie) I will touch one. There is a strange desire, not of earthly, but of spirituall powers, after the possession of mans heart. God saith, My sonne give me thy heart; and to him indeed the right belongs: Yet through mans transgression Satan hath got such hold thereof, that unless it be by divine power, he will not be kept out: and though we heare not Satans voice, yet his dealing bewayes his meaning, that above all things in man he desires the heart. Once he strove about a dead mans body, but doubtlesse his purpose therein was to have set up an idoll for himselfe in the hearts of the living. But what is mans heart that it should be so desired? Surely in substance little, but for imployment almost infinite: It is a Treasure whereunto man bringeth all his actions, good or evil: it is a Temple, wherein is placed either the Arke of God, or Dagon for the devill. Tea it is a Pallace wherein dwelleth, and a Throne whereon sitteth either Christ, or Satan, the King of glory, or the prince of darknesse: and he that keeps possession will there exercise dominion. Neither may wee thinke that one heart will suffice both these; No man can serve two masters: God will have all or none; If any part be shared from him, in high displeasure hee leaves the rest, and so the whole falls to the devill. Now sith the case standeth thus with mans heart, doth it not needly concern every one to know his owne estate in this behalfe; to wit, what kinde of treasury, whose Ten p'le, whose Pallace and Throne his Heart is? that if all be well, he may rejoyce, and so keepe it for the Lord; if otherwise, then seeke redresse betime.

To this purpose serves this present Treatise: wherein is in a glasse may first be scene, the fearfull state of mans naturall heart, full fraught with evill thoughts, void of good consideration, and somost fit for Satan: then after doe these blessed meanes appeare, whereby mans naturall heart may bee reformed, to become the Temple of God, the seat of grace, and a bed of spices for the welbeloved to feed upon. And these are points of that importance, that whosoever neglecteth them, may say farewell grace, and bid adieu to God himselfe: for in his heart, if at all in man, must these be seated.

Now the publishing hereof being committed unto mee, I present the same unto your Worships, and under your protection desire to commend it to the Church of God. It would too much enlarge my gates to annexe the manifold reasons which move me to this choice on your behalfe; onely this I pray, (that seeing it is the first fruits of my labour in this kind wherein I had full power of free choice in my dedication) it may intimate to you both, mine unfained hearts desire of that everlasting good I wish unto your soules: and also reasse in part my thankfull minde for your manifold favours to me, and mine who depend upon you.

Now God Almighty blese your Worships, with your children and familie, according to your severall necessities of his mercy and goodnesse, for soule and body, in this life and for ever. Cambridge, August 20. 1606.

Your Worships in the Lord,

Thomas Pierston.

To the Reader.

Now (good Reader) that for my furtherance in the publishing of this Treatise, I had the Authors owne draught of the platfome of it, besides two perfect Copies of all his Sermons. I have for plainnesse sake divided it into Chapters and Sections: for the better effecting whereof, I was constrained to transpose two of the Ps'es, otherwise I doubt not, but every one that heard is preached, will judge mee to have dealt faithfully with the godly Author. The Lord prosper it to thy good.

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Gen. 8. verse 21.

And the Lord said in his heart, I will henceforth curse the earth no more for mans cause: for the imagination of mans heart is evil even from his youth.

CHAP. I.

The unfolding of the Text, by way of preparation to the Treatise.



N the former part of this Chapter, *Moses* hath faithfully related the drying of the waters after the flood; and *Noahs* sacrificing unto God, with Gods acceptance thereof.

Now in this verse and the next, he recordeth such lawes and decrees as God made with *Noah* touching the reſtauration of nature perished by the flood; as well for the sparing of the creatures from such like destruction, as for the continuance of his providence in needfull times and seasons, meet for their future preservation. These words containe the first of these lawes; wherein we may observe three points; *Moses* his preface to this law; the law it selfe; and the reason thereof.

I. The preface: *And the Lord said in his heart.* These words must not be taken properly, for God hath not an heart as a man hath, neither speake he as a man doth; but hereby is meant, that God determined and set downe with himselfe this law and decree.

In this phrase of speeche, note this one thing: If he had pleased him, God could have spoken to man by a voice, the hearing whereof would have confounded him: but as here we see, he doth abase himselfe, and as it were lay aside his honour and might, and speakech unto us after the manner of men, even to the capacity of the meekest filie. Which reacheth us, that it is the good will and pleasure of God, that not onely the learned, but even the unlettered and most ignorant should know and understand the holy Scriptures: for else he would never have penned them in a phrase, and style that doth so well accord to the capacity of the simple.

II. Point. The decree it selfe: *I will henceforth curse the ground no more for mans cause.* This is the peremptory law of God touching the reſtauration of nature: wherein are contained two things: first, what God hath done; secondly, what God will not doe hereafter. The thing that God hath done, is, the cursing of the earth: for he saith, *I will curse no more*: implying that he once cursed it.

In this observe, that God may truly bee said to be a cause of curses, & to curse his crea-

tures: not onely for that he doth ordaine and decree all curses, but also because he inflicteth them upon the creatures: yet so as the same is alwaies most justly deserved by sin, before it bee inflicted of the Lord. And so must Gods cursing of the earth bee understood in this place, as a fruit of his wrath for the sin of man accordingly God is said directly to create evil. *I. 45. 7.* because whatsoever afflictions, curses, and punishments are in the world, they are ordained and inflicted by God upon the creatures for the sin of man.

This plainly confuteth the common opinion of ignorant people, who hold that all good things, as peace, wealth, joy, and felicity come from God; but all evil, as affliction, calamity, curses, and judgements, come from the devil, and God only suffereth them. This is a most enormous and blind conceit, which filtheth many a soule with much anguish and impatience: for what comfort can he have in the time of trouble, that is perswaded it cometh wholly from the devil, and the hand of God is not therein? Wee therefore must learne to reſigne this opinion, and know that crosses and troubles come from God. This *David* knew well, and therefore when *Simei* cursed him, and railed on him, he forbade *Abishai* to touch him, because (saith he) *2 Sam. 16. 10.* *It may befall, that God hath bid him curse David, to teſtifie his brethren, who most treacherously sold him into Egypt, that the Lord sent him before them.* *Gen. 45. 5.*

Secondly, here consider the impulsive cause that moved God to curse the earth by a flood, it was not in the earth, but in man: *I will henceforth curse the earth no more for mans cause.* That is, for mans finnes. In the new Testament there are two especiall finnes recorded for which God sent this curse: first, *carneall security.* They were choaked with worldly cares, and drowned in earthly pleasures: *In the dayes of Noah, they did eat, and drinke, marrie, and give in marriage.* *Matth. 24. 38.* Secondly, the contempt of the Gospel in the ministry of *Noah*, who preached an hundred and twenty yeares unto them, while the Ark was in building, but they were disobedient, *25 S. Peter* saith, following their owne pleasures and delights. Whereby it appears that these two finnes, *Security, and contempt of the Gospel,*

are most grievous finnes, for these brought destruction, not only upon all mankind, (*Noah* and his family excepted) but even upon all creatures that lived by breath.

Now looke as these finnes were in this old world, even so are they risen in this last age according to the Prophecies of our Saviour *Christ*, *Matth. 24. 6.* *As it was in the dayes of Noah, so shall it be in the dayes of the sonne of man: as it is the state of the whole world, so it is the state of this our Church: most men are drowned in the pleasures of this world, and choaked with the cares thereof: so howsoever they will heare the Gospel preached, yet few apply their hearts to believe the same, shewing forth the power thereof by repentance from dead works, and amendment of life in new obedience. But we must know, that if these two finnes brought a curse, even destruction upon the old world, then no doubt they will bring a fearful curse upon this age, though not by water, yet some other way that shall overthrow the flood: and therefore we must lay these things so on our hearts, that unless we abandon lechurie, and worldly lusts, and withall doe repent and believe at the preaching of the Gospel, wee shall see Gods heavy curse will fall upon us, for it wee match the old world in finne, wee must not looke to come behind them in judgement.*

The second thing in this decree is, what God will not doe hereafter: Namely, *curse the earth any more*: this must bee understood of that particular curse, which the Lord laid on the earth by waters, when he drowned the world: for the generall curses that were laid upon the ground, and on mankind for *Adams* sinne, remaine still, and shall not bee taken quite away till the end of the world: so that the meaning of this law is, that the Lord will no more drowne the whole earth for the sinne of man by a flood.

Here then wee see the cause why the sea being as raging and stirring as ever it was, doth notwithstanding keepe itself within it bounds, and not overflow the world: and why the cloudes being as full of water, as ever they were, do not powre downe more floods upon the earth to destroy it. Surely it is by vertue of this particular law, and decree of God, whereunto the sea and cloudes become obedient, *I will henceforth curse the earth no more.* And here we have just occasion to take knowledge and view of our owne wretched & damnable state, how wee are sold under sinne: for howsoever wee are created blessed, and happy, yet by our fall in *Adam* wee are become far worse than any earthly creature; for each creature in his kind, as the Sunne, the Moone, & Starres, the Sea, and Clouds, and all other obey Gods commandment: but man of all creatures having lawes given him of God to keepe himselfe from breaking the same, and to him it is meane and drinke, by nature to live in the transgression of Gods commandments.

A Thus by comparing our selves with the brute creatures, wee may learne to humble our selves, and to be ashamed when wee see them which wee made to serve us, to goe before us in obedience to the lawes of our Creator.

I. 1. Point. The reason of Gods decree in these words, for the imagination of mans heart is evil, *Gen. 8. 21.* that the first thing that may seeme very strange, that God should no more curse the earth for mans sinne, because the imagination of his heart is evil: In all likelihood God should have said the contrary. *I will still curse the earth, because the imagination of mans heart is evil.* For so he saith, *Gen. 9. 5. 6.* that seeing all the imaginations of the thoughts of mans heart were only evil continually: therefore he would destroy the world from his wrath, and from man to beast, and every creeping thing: How can both these things be? The Lord saith, then will once destroy the world by water, because of the wickedness of the: Imaginations of mans heart: and here he saith, *by no more*: proceeded to, *curse the earth againe and againe*: for the same punishment, because the imaginations of mans heart are evil, even from his youth: as if he should say, I have once drowned the world for the wickedness of mans imaginations: but if I should thus proceed to deale with man according to the wicked imagination of his heart, I must bring every yeare a new flood upon the earth, because I see the frame of mans heart is evil continually.

C Here, then observe, that God in the preservation of mankind, doth temper and moderate his justice by mercy: for if he should deale according to many desert, he should every day bring curses upon him; yea, so soone as a man is borne hee should bee destroyed: but God dealeth not so rigorously, hee minglith mercy with justice, whereby the whole frame of heaven and earth, the state of man and all societies doe stand: that which *Isaiah* prayed for, *(a)* *In justice, or wrath, remember mercy,* the Lord hath performed ever since the flood, yea, since the fall of *Adam*.

There be three great and weighty causes, which moved God to temper justice with mercy for the preservation of mankind, and other creatures: first, that hereby hee might show his patience, and long suffering towards the vessels of wrath, (as the apostle *(b)* speaketh,) that is, towards such as will not repent, that at the last day they may bee most justly condemned: Secondly, that there may be a company of men upon earth which may worship God: for God hath speciall care of his owne glory among men, and therefore tempers justice with mercy in their preservation, that they might glorification. *1. Peter 2. 9. 10.* *There is mercy on pardon, with which that alone might be feared, that is, whereas (O Lord) thou mightest justly have brought downe all men to hell suddenly, yet in mercy thou pardonest the finnes of some, for this end, that they might worship thee,*

1. Heb. 2. 17.

2. Rom. 9. 22.

these: fears being put for worship and obedience. Thirdly, and principally that the elect and chosen of God might be gathered: for God in his eternal counsell and decree hath appointed and set downe certaine number of men, unto whom he will give eternal life, and for their crueltie doth hee spare the whole world from daily destruction: but when that number shall be accomplished, then shall heaven and earth go together, and the world shall be no more.

And hereby the way, this third cause of the continuance of nature, must teach us our duty: to wit, that seeing it pleaseth God in mercy to give us liberty to live a space of time in this world, some twentie, some thirty, some forty or fifty yeares, and that for this end, thy herein we might be fitted for his kingdome, when as in the rigor of his justice he might have cast us to hell in our mothers wombe, or so soon as we were borne: we therefore must bee careful not to despise this labour (suffering and patience of God, but rather labour in the feare of God, that it may become (c) *salvation to us*, by our conscionable endeavour in all that means unto the end, as he hath sanctified for the working of the graces of life in the hearts of his children. And thus much for the reason in generall.

CHAP. II. SECT. 1.

The idleness of mans natural cogitations.

THAT wee may the better perceive in this reason the estate of man in respect of his natural Imaginations, the words are more particularly to be unfolded. For the Imaginations of mans heart, &c. The heart in Scripture is taken sundry wayes: sometimes for that fleshy part of man in the middle of the body, which is the fountaine of vitall blood: sometimes for the soule of man, sometimes for the faculties of the soule: and sometime for the middle of any thing, as (a) *the heart of the sea*, (c) *the heart of the earth*, that is, the middle thereof. Here it is taken for the understanding faculty of the soule, whereby man useth reason: which St. Paul call (f) *the spirit of the minde*.

By Imaginations he meaneth the frame, or framing of the heart. And this is taken two wayes: of some, for the natural disposition of the understanding after the fall of man: of others, for that which the minde & understanding by thinking frameth, plotreth, and deviseth, that is, for the effect thereof. We may take it both wayes, yet I rather approve the latter: for (Chap. 6.) the Lord saith, Hee will overthrow all fleshy, and gives this reason, For the frame and thoughts of mans heart is evil continually. Where by thoughts or Imaginations can be nothing else be meant, but that which is devised and plotted in the thoughts of mans heart: so Salomon speaking of an heart which God hateth, saith, It is framing or thinking thoughts of wicked counsell, Prov. 6. 18.

By mans heart, wee must not understand the heart of some particular persons, as of those that lived in the old world alone, but of man generally, man being put for whole kinde.

To say, that is, it imagineth, & thinketh that which is against the law of God: From his child hood, that is, so soon as he beginneth to think, to reason or conceive of any thing, so soon as doth hee imagine and conceive that which is evil: so that the whole meaning is this, *The minde and understanding part of man is naturally so corrupt, that so soon as he can use reason, he doth nothing but imagine that which is wicked, and against the Law of God.* The words thus explained, containe in them two maine points touching the frame of mans heart by nature. The first is,

The Imaginations and counsels of every man is naturally evil.

This appeareth not only in this place, but elsewhere, Rom. 8. 5. *I be wilfulnes of the flesh is not an enemy, but enmity against God.* Again, such as the fountaine is, such are the streames that flow thence: But our mind & understanding, the fountaine of our thoughts, is by nature sinfull, (g) *To be impure, their mindes and consciences are defiled:* And againe, (h) *Of our selves we are not able to thinke a good thought, and therefore the thoughts that come from thence, must needs also be corrupt:* Mans Imagination stands in thoughts: the understanding devileth by thinking: And these thoughts of the Imagination are all naturally wicked: (i) *From the heart* (saith Christ) *proceed evil thoughts:* and Salomon saith, *The thoughts of the wicked* (as all men are by nature) *are an abomination unto the Lord.*

SECT. 2.

How the natural thoughts of man may be knowne.

Seeing that naturall Imagination is practised by evil thoughts, we must something consider of the naturall thoughts of man: And herein handle these two points: First, whether the thoughts of man may be knowne, Secondly, what the naturall thoughts of man be.

For the first there are two wayes to know mans thoughts: either directly without meanes, or indirectly by meanes. The first way is proper to God alone: for no creature in heaven or earth can immediately and directly know the thoughts of man, this Salomon confesseth in his notable prayer to God, 1 King. 8. 39. *Thou only knowest the thoughts of all the children of men.* Jerem. 1. 9. *The hearts are deceitfull and wicked above all things, who can know their secret.* 10. *The Lord search the reins, and try the reins.*

The second way to know mens thoughts is indirectly, and by meanes, which be three; by insinuation from God, by revelation from the Scripture, and by signes. First, by an extraordinary insinuation, so did (R) *Elisba* disclose the king of

2 King. 5. 20.

11. 11. 5. 3.

11. Chron. 17. 14.

11. King. 19. 8.

1. Cor. 14. 25.

11. 11. 11.

11. 11. 11.

5. Tit. 1. 14.

11. 11. 11.

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of Syria counselled to the king of Israel: and by the same meanes, he told his servant (I) *Gehazi* what he did behind his backe, when he took gifts of Naaman the Syrian. And so did (m) *Peter* tell *Ananias* and *Saphira* of their false conveyances with the money that they took for their possession. And yet wee must understand, that when God revealed these secret thoughts to men, it was only in some things, at some times, and for some special causes, whereupon *Nathan* was faine to revoke his counsell, which hee gave to *David* for the building of the house of God, (n) when hee knew the will of God more perfectly. And so was *Eliab* deceived, when he said, *hee was left alone, of all Israel that served God* (o) *God told him, he had reserved seven thousand, that were bowed the knee to Baal, which Eliab knew not.* Secondly, mens thoughts may be knowne by Revelation from Scriptures: for therein that spirit speaks evidently, which knows the frame of the heart: and hence it is, that in the ministry of this word, the thoughts of naturall men are made manifest. Thirdly, mens thoughts are knowne by signes, as speeches, & actions: thus *Peter* knew the (p) *heart of Simon Magus*, and *Paul* the heart of *Elisba*. And thus may any man know the thoughts of another, even as he may know the tree by his fruit, and the fountaine by his stream.

Besides these, there are two other meanes added, whereby to know mens thoughts: one by the Papists, and another by the Altiologists. The Papists say, the Saints in heaven know mens thoughts, not directly of themselves, but by reflection in the glasse of the Trinity. But this is a meer forgery of their own, which *Isiah* never knew, lying thus of the Saints departed (q) *Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel knoweth us not, but thou Lord, art our redeemer.* And the Saints under the Altar crye, *How long Lord, how long, wilt thou not judge & avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* giving us to understand, that they are not so sharpe sighted, as by the glasse of the Trinity to see into the day of the last judgement, and therefore not into the thoughts of mens hearts. So that there are only three wayes to know the thoughts of men; and so they may be knowne.

CHAP. III.

Of mans natural thoughts concerning God.

HAVING found that the thoughts of man may be knowne, wee come now to see what be the natural cogitations of every sinfull man. Although they be almost infinite in themselves, yet they may be reduced to three heads: They either concerne God, or a mans neighbour, or else a mans owne selfe.

Of this thoughts: *There is no God.*

Touching God, there be in man 4. capitall evil thoughts. First, *That there is no God*: which as it is first in order, so is the most notorious and vile damnable thought that can be in a naturall man. And that this is one of the

thoughts of man naturally, appeareth by the expresse testimony of God himselfe, who knoweth the thoughts of man better than man doth (a) *The wicked thinketh always there is no God.* And againe, (b) *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.*

Touching this thought, observe these four points: First, in whom it is: Secondly, how a man by thinking should deny God. Thirdly, what is the fruit of this thought: and fourthly, the examination of our hearts touching this thought.

For the first: we must not thinke that this wicked thought is only in some notorious and hainous sinners: but it is in the corrupt mind & imagination of every man that cometh of *Adam* naturally, not one excepted, save Christ alone: so the *foole* of whom *David* (c) *speakes* must be taken, not for some speciall sinner, but for every man that lives uncleaned, and without repentance, how civil soever his life be otherwise: though some shame restrain his tongue from uttering it, yet by nature his corrupt heart is prone to thinke *there is no God*. This is made evident by Saint *Paul*, (d) *who* going about to prove that all men are sinners by nature, allegeth for his proofe divers testimonies of Scripture, and particularly out of these two Psalms before cited: whereby he gives us to understand, that the *foole* there mentioned, must be understood of every naturall man. But it will be said, that it is ingrained in mans nature to hold & thinke there is a God, and therefore every man doth not deny God in heart. Answer, We must know that these two thoughts, *There is a God*, and *there is no God*, may be, & are both in one & the same heart: the same man, that by the light of nature thinketh there is a God, may by that corruption and darknesse of minde that came by *Adams* fall, thinke there is no God: for two contraries being not in the highest degree, may be in one and the same subject: as light & darknesse in the same house: heate and cold in the same body.

11. Point. How doth a man by thinking deny God in his heart? Answer, Two wayes, first, by turning the true God into an Idol of mans braine: secondly, by placing somewhat that is not God in the room of the true God. For the first, the imagination of every man naturally, without further light from the word of God, doth turne the true God into an Idol: and therefore *Paul* saith of the *Galatians*, that before their vocation (x) *they did service to them which were no gods: and of the Ephesians, that (y) they were without God in the world: even because they did not in their mindes conceive of God aright, and accordingly worship him, though the wife son amongst them did acknowledge one God the Creator of heaven and earth. And therefore David saith plainly, that (z) *all the gods of the Gentiles are idols, & vanities*: nay, as the Apostle saith, *devils*, 1 Cor. 10. 20. *That which**

1. Psal. 10. 4.

1. Psal. 14. 1.

1. In whom this thought is.

1. Psal. 14. 1.

1. Psal. 10. 4.

1. Rom. 9. 3.

How a man by thinking denies God.

1. Gal. 4. 8.

1. Eph. 2. 12.

1. Psal. 96. 4.

1. 1. 1.

the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice unto Devils, and not unto God.

Now mans minde turneth the true God into an Idoll, by three notorious thoughts, which are the roote of many damnable finnes in this life, first, by thinking that *God is present in all places*; whereby God is robbed of his attribute of *Omnipresence*: for the true God being infinite, must bee in all places; which when the heart of man denyeth, it imagineth God to be such a one as he is not, and turneth him into an Idoll. And that man naturally thinketh thus of God, the Scripture is plaine, *Iob 22.12, 13.* wicked men are brought in speaking of God, as though hee were shut up in heaven, and had nothing to do in the world: *I am God on high in the heaven* & behold the height of the firmament how high they are. How should God know? can hee judge? &c. So the Psalmist expresseth the thoughts of the wicked in their practice of sinne, *God hideth away his face, and will never see: and the Lord shall not see.* Psalm 94. 7. Yes, they who seeke the deepe to hide their counsell from the Lord, whose workes are in darkness, say, *Who seeth us? who knoweth us?* Iff. 29. 15. Secondly, by thinking there is no providence of God, whereby he ordereth and disposeth all things in the world particularly: That this is another naturall thought, the Psalmist shewes plainly, bringing in the wicked man saying thus of God, *God hath forgotten, hea hideth his face, and he shall not see.* And the Prophet Zephany brings in the sinner speaking thus of God, that he doth neither good nor evil. Thirdly, by thinking there is no justice in God; this is done when men imagine with themselves, that albeit they proceed in the practice of sinne, yet God will not punish them according to the threatnings of his word. If we doubt whether such an imagination be in mans heart, read, *Deut. 29. 19, 20.* where *Atos* directly forbiddeth the people to say in their hearts, *I shall have peace though I walke in the stubbornness of my heart, this is that (g) blessing of a mans selfe in sinne, which David charged upon the covetous, and wicked.* Thus they sinne that (h) put farre away the evil day, and say, the evil shall not come. Hereby God is robbed of his justice, and made a God of all mercy, such a one as will not punish sinne, and so indeed is made an idol of mans braine.

The second way whereby a man denieth God in thought, is, by placing in the roome of the true God, an idol of his owne braine: This men doe, by thinking some other thing beside the true God, to bee their chiefest good: thus voluptuous men make (i) their belly their god, and covetous men make (k) riches their god, by placing their felicity in pleasure, and in riches: for look what a man thinks to be the best thing in the world for him, that is his god, though it bee the Devil himselfe or any other creature. And for this cause is the Devil called the god of the world, because

the men of this world judge their own courses, wherein they serve the Devil, the best thing in the world for them, yea, farre better than the service of God, and therefore give their hearts thereto: for affection followeth opinion, and that which a man affects most, hee must needs thinke best of: and therefore what a man affecteth most, that maketh herto become his god, so that judging other things beside the true God, to be best for him, hee must needs place them in the roome of the true God, and so in his imagination deny God.

111. Point. What is the fruit of this thought? for thereby we shall best judge, what a cursed thing this is, so thinke there is no God: This thought bringeth forth the most notorious fins that can be, even Atheisme it selfe, which is a sinne whereby men sundry wayes deny God: and it is twofold, either in practice, or in judgement.

Atheisme in practice is that sinne, whereby men deny God in their deeds, lives, and conversations: and so declare this thought: This is a most horrible sinne, and a huge burthen to the whole earth, and yet many that live in the bosome of the Church are foully tainted herewith. This Atheisme in practice hath 3. speciall branches: Hypocrisie, Epicurisme, & Witchcraft. Hypocrisie is a sin whereby men worship the true God, but yet in a false manner, giving unto God the outward action, and hold backe from him the true worship of the heart. Epicurisme is a sinne whereby men contemne God, and give themselves wholly to their pleasures, spending their time in eating, drinking, and other delights, & not seeking or fearing God: and this is the fin of the richer sort in this age. Witchcraft or magicke, is that sinne whereby men renounce the true God, and beake themselves to the side, counsell, and helpe of the Devil, either by himselfe, or in his instruments: this is a large sinne, and a great part of Atheisme, and many are tainted with this sinne, either because they are practitioners of witchcraft, or else do seeke helpe of such.

Atheisme in judgement is that sin, whereby in opinion and perswasion of heart men deny God. And this likewise hath three degrees: first, when men hold, and accordingly worship the true God, Creator of heaven and earth, but yet so, as they conceive of, and worship him otherwise that he hath revealed himselfe in his word. To this first degree we must referre the three great religions of Turke, of the Jew, and of the Papists: for as they stand at this day, they are three great parts of Atheisme.

The Turke worshippeth God the maker of heaven & earth, and likewise reverenceth Christ as man, acknowledging him to bee a Prophet, yea, a more worthy Prophet than his Mahomet: And yet his religion is Atheisme, for he conceiveth of God out of the

The fruit of this thought.

Trinity

Trinity, and to worshipping nothing but an Idoll.

Against the Religion of the Jewes, at this day is a part of Atheisme: for howsoever they hold one God, and acknowledge the bookes of the old Testament for the Scriptures of God, yet they worship not that God in Christ, and so in stead of the true God, frame an idol in their owne braine: for as Christ (e) saith, *Whoever denies the Son, the same hath not the Father*: so that they wanting Christ, and by consequent the Father also: indeed and truly have no God: but as Christ told the Samaritans (d) *They worship they know not what.*

Thirdly, the religion of the Papists at this day is a part of Atheisme: we must indeed distinguish it from the two former: for in word they acknowledge the Trinity in unity, and unite in Trinitie, and their doctrine of the union of Christs two natures in one person, is according to the Scripture: But yet if we marke the drift and sequell of their doctrine in other points, we shall finde it to be close Atheisme: as may be proved by two reasons: First, because the true God, who is the Creator of heaven and earth, is infinite in Justice, and mercy: but according to the doctrine of the Papists, God is not infinite in Justice, and mercy: and therefore to them is not the true God: for first, Gods Justice according to them, is not infinite: for they (f) teach, that a man by his own proper works of penance (which be finite and imperfect) may truly satisfie God for the guilt of temporal punishment. Secondly, they make the mercy of God imperfect by (g) peeing up the same with mans merits in the worke of Redemption: for Gods mercy is either every way mercy, or no mercy, as Paul saith, (g) *If it be of grace, it is no more of works, or else were grace no more grace, and if it be of works, it is no more grace, or also were works no more works.* Secondly, the Christ of the Papists is a false Christ: this will appeare by plaine reason, out of their doctrine: for first, they spoile Christ of his true manhood by their doctrine of reall presence, wherein they hold that Christs body is not only in heaven, but really and substantially in all places where the sacrifice of the Masse is offered, thus they make it omnipotent, and so quite take away the nature of a body. Secondly, they downgrade Christ from the three offices of his Mediatorship: first, from his *kingly office*, by (h) placing the Pope in his roome and stead, as his deputy in Christs presence: for they give power to the Pope to rule the Catholic Church, and to make lawes to binde mens consciences, which be things proper to Christ alone: wherein they doe as much as if they should take the crowne from Christs head, and set it on the Popes: for to claime regency in the presence of the lawfull Prince, is to proclaim rebellion against the Prince: for commission of vicegerency ceaseth, in

the presence of him that appointeth it: now Christ is always present with his Church, Mar. 28. 20. And therefore the Pope by his claime, must needs thrust Christ out of his office. Secondly, from his *priestly office*, which consisteth in satisfaction, and intercession: Christs satisfaction they nullify by (i) joining therewith the satisfaction of mens works, for thereby they make it imperfect: And they rob him of his intercession, by (k) communicating the same to Saints; yea, they exalt the Virgin Mary farre above Christ in this work, for they pray *he is aske the Father, to command Christ her sonne, by the authority of a mother, to doe thus, and thus for them*, and so make Christ her underling. Thirdly, from his *propheticall office*, by making the Pope the intallible judge of all controversies: vowing, that *they rather desire to know the ancient institution of Christian religion from the Popes mouth, then from holy writ*. Now thus robbing Christ of his offices, they make him a false Christ: and so wanting the Sonne, they cannot have the Father, for (l) *he that hath not the Son, hath not the Father*: and therefore popish religion wanting the Father and the Sonne, cannot be a true religion, but mere coloured Atheisme in judgement.

The second degree of Atheisme in judgement, is when men place some Idoll in the roome of the true God, holding the same for their God; thus did the Gentiles linne in worshipping the Sunne, the Moone, and the Stars, or other creatures.

The third degree is, when a man doth avouch, hold, and maintaine, that there is no God at all, this is the highest degree of Atheisme, and the most notorious sinne: it can be, and all such persons as maintaine this cursed thought, are unworthy the common breath of men; for if that man shall die the death, and that worthily, who shall avouch his lawfull Prince to be no Prince, how much more ought he to dye the death, though he had a thousand lives, that shall affirme the true God to be no god? Thus wee see the fruits of this evil thought, whereby the hynoufelle of it doth plainly appeare.

IV. Point. The examination of our owne hearts, touching this thought, whether it may be found among us or not: doubtlesse every one will labour to cleare himselfe hereof: And the reason wherewith many doe sooth up themselves any such conceits as this, *that there is no God*, but we may easily deceive our selves herein, for a man cannot always discern what be the thoughts of his own heart. There be in man two kinds of cogitation, or as one may say, reasons: the first is a single cogitation, whereby a man simply thinketh, or knoweth, or judgeth this or that, and this is properly called the *minde*. The other is a reflex cogitation or reason, whereby a man judgeth that he knoweth or thinketh this

1 Rhem. on Rom. 8. 17. Ioh. 4.

1 Rhem. on 2 Cor. 1. 11. Ioh. 4. In office becauz of Mariz.

In annot. sup. dist. 40. c. 11. pa. 2. Edit. Greg.

1 John 2. 23.

Examination of this thought.

3 Psal. 10.

Amos 9. 10. 6 Amos 6. 3.

1 Phil. 3. 19. 4 Col. 3. 9.

2 Cor. 4. 4.

1 John 2. 23.

1 John 4. 11.

1 Rhem. Lib. 7. de penit. c. 7.

1 Rhem. on Rom. 8. 17. Ioh. 4.

1 Rhem. on Rom. 11. 6.

1 Rhem. on Ephe. 2. 22. Ioh. 4.

that, and it is commonly called *Conscience*. Now since *Adams* fall, the conscience is corrupted by original sinne, as bee all other powers of mans soule: whence it comes to passe, that conscience cannot doe his duty in giving true testimony concerning mans imaginations: but a man may thinke evil, and yet his conscience not tell him: and therefore wee may not say, because wee feele not these evil thoughts in us, therefore wee have them not, or wee are free from them.

3. Signs of this thought.

M. V. 3.
M. V. 4.
M. V. 6.

But that wee may the better examine our hearts, wee must come to the signs whereby this evil thought is best discerned. *David* in the 1. *Psalm* teacheth downe three signs heretofore: first, *(a) A disordered life*: secondly, *(b) not calling on the name of God by prayer*: thirdly, *(c) commending of them that put their trust in God*. Look where there are to be found, there is this evil thought. *That there is no God*. Now if we examine our selves by these signes we shall finde this wicked thought to be amongst us: for first, many indeed are content to heare Gods word, but where is that man that reformeth his life according to that hee heareth? Certain it is, as their conscience can winnole, few turne unto God unfinedly, few doe break off their course in sinning. Now this unreformed life is an infallible token of this damnable thought.

Secondly, the exercise of prayer and invocation on the name of God, is rare among men: no doubt many a touched heart doth every day unfainedly call on God for grace: but yet generally this is true; men go on from day to day, and from yeare to yeare, and never pray unto God for supply of grace. Indeed men pleade for themselves, that they use to pray: for they say the *Lords Prayer*, the *Credo*, and the *ten Commandments*: but wee must know, that with many, this practice is nothing but a vaine repetition of words: for prayer is an action of the heart, and not the labour of the tongue and lips only: so to say the *Lords Prayer*, is not to pray, for the words thereof may be repeated with the heart of an Atheist.

And thirdly, the contempt of them that put their trust in God, is rare among us: for who is so much scorned and reproached, as he that maketh profession of religion? Now may that complaint be justly taken up by the servants of God, *Isa. 8. 18. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given mee, are as signes and wonders*. And, *He that refrains from evil, makes himselfe a prey to the evil tongue*, *Isa. 53. 12*. Yet let these scoffers know, what ever they be, that seeds of Atheisme doe possess their soules.

To come yet more particularly to the trial of this thought in our selves: *Whosoever denieth the presence of God, denieth God*. Now let the conscience answer, whether wee be not afraid to sinne in the presence of many mortall men, and yet in the presence of God doe

make no bones thereof, so the eyes of men be turned from us. Now what is this, but either fluty to deny the presence of God, or at least to yeeld more feare and reverence to men, than we doe unto God? Again, what is the cause why men use oppression, and injustice, decree, & lying in their worldly affaires? Is it not because this thought of Atheisme doth possess their hearts, that God regards not these outward things? Durst men directly sin against God, in seeking these outward blessings for natural life, if they did rightly relie upon Gods providence, knowing every good gift to come from his bountifull hand? Lastly, let thy conscience speake; doth not thy heart while thou goest on in sinne, say thus unto thee, *God is mercifull, I will breakefast repent, and so shall I escape punishment*? If a man doe wolvberche his owne heart, he shall finde therein this vile thought, which directly overturnes the infinite justice of God, making him a God all of mercy, when as indeed he is as well a God of justice as of mercy. By all which it is more than evident, that naturally this vile thought runs in mans heart, *There is no God*.

Yfe. Hereby then we must learne to see what vile, miserable, and wretched sinners wee are in our selves; though wee had no actual outward finnes, yet this damnable thought maketh us accursed: If a man *(p)urpo*se the King in his heart, the sin is so great and heinous, that the *sones of heaven shall disclaime it*: How horrible then is this sinne, for a man in his thought to *curse God*, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? This therefore must humble us in our selves before the Lord.

Again, hereby wee must be admonished to use all good means whereby we may come to see, and know not only the grosse actual sins of our lives, but especially this damnable thought of our hearts: few there bee that doe it, and therefore we must be earnest with our selves in searching our owne hearts, to finde out this and such like abominations that be in us. And thus much for the first evil thought.

Sec. 2.

Of this thought: the word of God is foolishness.

The second damnable thought of mans naturall heart concerning God, is this: *The word of God is foolishness*. This thought must principally be understood of the Gospell, as *S. Paul* declareth, saying, *(a) It hath pleased God by the foolishnesse of preaching to save them that believe*: where he calleth the Gospell of Christ *foolishnesse*, not that it was so indeed, but because the unconverted *(r) Corinthians*, and other *Grecians*, judged the preaching of Christ crucified, the most foolish thing in all the world. And in the next chapter hee saith, *(s) The naturall man, that is, he that is not essentially called, perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*: to wit, that a man must repent of his sinners, and believe in Christ for the pardon

p Ecc. 1. 12.

(b) Deut. 29. 19.

(c) Isa. 5. 19.

(d) 1 Pet. 3. 14.

Macchiavelles:

Apollas.

(b) Gal. 1. 6.

q 1 Cor. 1. 18.

r ver. 12.

s 1 Cor. 1. 18.

pardon of them, if hee would be saved; they are foolishness unto him. *Nicodemus* answer to Christ maketh this plain, *John. 3. 4.* *How can these things be? without which Christ said no man could enter in the kingdom of heaven*: to be a man *renewed into his mothers womb*, and a birth from thence againe.

This wicked thought must be understood of the law of God also; the heart of man by nature judgeth the threatnings of the law to be untrustin, and so foolishly: hence the Lord by *Moses* forbade the people when they heard the threatnings and curses of the law denounced against them, *(1) To blasse themselves in their hearts, saying, We shall have peace* hereupon hee denounceth a woe to them that deride his judgements threatned, and say, *(1) Let him make speede, let him hasten his way, that wee may see it*. &c. As if they should say, wee do not believe that any such things shall come to passe: like to the mockers of whom *Peter* prophesieth, *(2) Who walke after their lusts and say: Where is the promise of his coming?*

Now that this is a most damnable thought, may appeare by the cursed fruits thereof; for first, hence ariseth that devilish and carnall opinion of furdrie men, that thinke and hold religion to be but humane policie to keepe men in awe, and so use it as a policie device to exercise mens braines to keepe them from sedition, recheerie, and rebellion: Secondly, hence springs all Apostasy, and departing from the faith. The Galarians were a worthy Church planted by the Apostle *Paul*, yet even in his time they began to fall away to another Gospell, which made him to marvell; and the reason was this, *(3) They were not contented with that simplicitie, which is in Christ*, but would joyne with him, the observation of legall ceremonies. The like wee may say of those famous Eastern Churches, as those seven Churches of *Asia*, planted by the Apostles, wherein the truth flourished for a while, but not long after the Apostles times they fell into many damnable heresies, as *Arianisme*, and such like. Yea about fixe hundred yeares after Christ, they embraced the damnable religion of *Mahomet*. In the West parts also, were worthy, and famous Churches planted by the Apostles, and their successors, as in *Italie*, *France*, *Germanie*, *Spaine*, and *England*, who about the same time of fixe hundred yeares after Christ, fell to *Papisme*: which spread it selfe over all Europe and further (some few Churches of Greece excepted,) in which religion men abandon the Gospell of Christ, and betake themselves to another Gospell, by adjoining to the truth of Christ, their owne devices: And this *Papisme*, hath reigned ever since, till now of late, and so hath *Apostasie* taken place in those Churches which the Apostles planted. The cause whereof was in the wicked and unskill hear of man, judging the Gospell foolishnes,

whereupon men were contented to yeeld themselves to any other religion, rather then to that simplicitie of truth, which is in Christ *Iesus*. Where now in England by Gods speciall mercy, hold, and teach the word of God; but if God should alter our religion with the times, the greatest hart of men among us would forsake the truth, & cleave to any other religion, and that only upon this ground, because they judge the Gospell foolishnes: Let any man among us broach an error, or heresie, and it shall have patrons at the first, bee it never so vile and absurd, and protectors afterward. When that british heretic of the family of *Love*, tooke shipping in Germany, & arrived in England (though it be an opinion void of common sense) yet it had applaude amongst us, and was received of many, and would have spread it selfe further, if the preaching of the word, with the care of the Magistrate had not suppressed it. And the reason heret is this; mans minde by nature is full of darknesse; he cannot without Gods speciall grace perceive the things of God, and to he judgeth the Gospell foolishnes, and embraceth error, rather then the truth, yea, *loveth darkness rather than the light, because his deeds are evil*, *John 3. 20*.

For the examination of our hearts touching this bad thought: After due trial we shall finde, that the minds of most among us are posselled herewith: for wee are indeed content to come into the assemblies where God is worshipped, and wee doe submit our selves to the ministry of the word to be taught and instructed: Therein we have our owne personal finnes displayed, and reproved, and withall very fearefull and terrible curses of the law denounced against us for the same, both judgements in this life, judgements in death, & also judgements eternal after this life: Now let the conscience answer, what is the cause when we heare these things, that we be not moved, why are not our hearts touched with griefe and sadnesse, when we heare Gods judgments due unto us for our finnes daily denounced against us? Some indeed there be whose hearts tremble at the word, but small is their number. If a man runne through the streets, and cry fire, fire, our ears are suddenly stricken with great feare: but the Minister of God may stand and cry, fire, fire, the fire of hell which is kindled by the breath of the Lord like a river of *Brimstone*, as the Prophet speaketh, and yet mens hearts are nothing moved: what is the cause that we should be so affected with the burning of an old house by temporal fire, and be not afraid at the voyce of God, which proclaimeth unto us eternall burning with the fire of Gods wrath? Surely the cause is this, our hearts are forefilled with this false imagination, that the curses of the law are foolishnes, & that there be no such torments as the word denounceth. It will not sinke into the heart of a naturall man that his sins are so heinous, and Gods judgements so terrible

Examination for this thought

(1) Isa. 30. 31.

against them, as the word maketh them: And till such time as this damnable thought be taken away, mens hearts will never be touched with the threatnings of the law; this is a barre to stoppe the way to all such passions as the law would worke.

Again, when the Minister of God speaketh of the pardon of sinne, and of eternall life by Christ, who hath his heart melting for joy in regard of this salvation? Though men be called upon to come into the kingdom of heaven, yet few strive to enter in: though we be daily exhorted to repent, yet few turne to the Lord: all which be branches of the Gospell; but men beleve them not, because their hearts be filled with this damnable thought, *The Gospell of Christ is foolishnesse*: When the Iewes were restored from captivity in Babylon, it was as ^(b) *a dreame unto them*: now if that temporall deliverance seemed a dreame, what a dreame will this spirituall deliverance from the captivity of hell and death, to the liberie of the sonnes of GOD in grace and glory, seeme to be? And indeed to a naturall man it seemes foolishnesse that God should become man, and that Christ by death should free men from death, and by suffering the curse of the law, should take away the same from us, and by his righteousness unto life all which notwithstanding be points of the Gospell. This also is the cause why after long teaching there is little turning, or faithfull obedience yielded unto the Gospell; neither will it be better with men, while this evil thought abideth in them.

Use. 1. It is but a truth, that every naturall man thinketh the word of God to be foolishnesse, then we must learne this lesson of the Apostle, ** Hee that seemes to be wise in this world, must become a fool, that he may be wise*, that is, he must be ^(c) *of his owne naturall reason*, and stoppe up the eyes of his naturall minde, like a blinde man, and suffer himselfe wholly to be guided by Gods Spirit in the things of God, that thereby he may be made wise unto salvation.

Secondly, we must hereby learne to make earnest prayer unto God: for the opening of our eyes, that we may be able to understand the Gospell of Christ, and know the right meaning of that word of salvation: for of our selves we can never understand it, unless the Lord instruct us by his Spirit: ^(d) *No man cometh unto mee, saith Christ, that is, beleeveth, except he be given him of my Father*: But ^(e) *every one that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto mee*. Thus much of this second evil thought.

SECT. 3.

Of this thought, I will not obey Gods word.
From the former ariseth an other most vile thought, in the heart of every naturall man, as a branch of the same; namely, because the word of God is foolishnesse, *Therefore I will*

not performe obedience therunto. That this is the naturall thought of mans, *Job* teacheth plainly for hee bringeth in the wicked (that is, every sinner) saying thus to God, ^(f) *I Despair from mee, wee will not have the knowledge of thy wayes*. This the wicked man saith, not with his mouth, for none is so farre past all shame, that dares thus blasphemously speake against God; but thus he saith in his heart, his affections speake it, when hee purpeth with himselfe, to cutt off the yoke of God, and to live after his owne lust: and therefore they say further, ^(g) *Who is the Almighty that we should serve him?* as if one should say, it is a disgrace to mee to abase my selfe to serve God: I will not doe it. The Prophet *Jeremy* bringeth in, the Lord saying thus to his people, ^(h) *Stand in the waies, and behold, and aske for the old way which is the good way, and walke therein, and ye shall finde rest for your soules*: but in the same place the Iewes answer, *We will not walke in thy waies*. Shall we thinke that they durst thus impudently answer the Lord with open mouths? No surely. But the Prophet in these words setteth downe the purpose of their hearts, who hardened the same obstinately against the word, when they were exhorted to repentance and obedience before the Lord. Our Saviour Christ comprehendeth himselfe to a Noble man that goeth into a farre country, now when he is gone, the citizens of his country send messengers after him to tell him, ⁽ⁱ⁾ *that they will not have him to raigne over them*. Which though it be properly to be understood of the nation of the Iewes, who did indeed say so to our Saviour Christ, yet it may also be extended to all impenitent sinners, who say in their hearts; Christ shall not raigne over us: for so long as a man is uncalled, hee carieth a purpose to live in sin, some in this sinne, and some in that, and so doing, faith in his heart, *God shall not be my God, I will not submit my selfe unto his lawes*. Christ shall not raigne over me. This is plaine and manifest by mens behaviour, when they are reprov'd for their finnes. Tell the covetous man of his avarice, the swearer of his blasphemie, and the drunkard of his drunkennesse, &c. will hee humble himselfe in conscience of his sinne? Nothing lesse: but his heart will swell againe therewith, as his fury and impatience will loone bewray; and the reason is, because hee never thinketh of his owne estate how by creation hee oweth homage unto God, as to his Creator: for his purpose is to goe on in sinne, and when hee is reprov'd for the same, his desire is crossed; which he cannot abide, and therefore rageth; shewing thereby manifestly, that in his heart he saith, *He will not obey Gods commandments*.

For the examination of our hearts touching this thought: whether did wee ever thinke thus without selves; *I will not obey Gods commandments*? Doubtlesse every man will answer for himselfe, that hee abhorres this thought.

Examination
for this thought.

(f) Job. 21. 14.

(g) Jer. 2. 5.

(h) Jer. 6. 18.

(i) Luke. 19. 14.

thought. And yet after just triall it will appear, that generally this thought is rise among us for though we heare the word, and receive the Sacraments the pledges of our salvation, and will be counted the members of Christ, yet what is the cause that there is so little knowledge of God, and obedience to his word? And why doe men in their callings shew forth so small love, so little mercy, justice, & good conscience? The truth is, that though some have these things in them in some measure, yet the body of our people is generally void of these good vertues, and fruits of the spirit: hee that hath but halfe an eye may see it: for where is that religious keeping of the Sabbath that should be? where is that serious performing of worship unto God which ought to be? All which argue, that the heart is corrupt and deceivable, and faith indeed to God, *I will not obey thy word, Lord depart from mee*. What man almost is there that saith with himselfe, *Oh miserable man, what have I done?*

The Use. By this wicked imagination wee may see how hard a thing it is truly & soundly to convert a sinner unto God, and how easily a man may deceive his owne soule, & beguile the world by hypocrisie: for a man by long exercise in the word may have a great measure of knowledge, and withall good wit, and memorie, and with them utterance, and by a common gift of the spirit, be able to teach the word truly, and to conceive prayer to good purpose, and withall have a cankred heart towards God, paynted with this damnable thought, *I will not obey the word of God*: for every man that hath inwardly in him a purpose to live, though but in one sinne, his heart is not upright with God, neither be Gods graces, as faith, and repentance found in his heart: for true repentance is a purpose, and resolution to leave all sinne, and to please God in all things.

SECT. 4.

Of this thought, It is a vaine thing to worship God.

The third wicked imagination, of mans heart concerning God is this: *It is a vaine thing to worship God*. This *Job* sheweth to be true: bringing in the wicked man saying, ^(a) *What profit shall I have if I pray unto God? we must not thinke that hee said thus with his mouth, but in his heart*: And the Prophet *Malachie* bringeth in the Iewes saying, ^(b) *It is a vaine thing to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his commandment, and that we walked humbly before the Lord of hosts?* Yea righteous *David*, a man after Gods owne heart, was overtaken with this evil thought, when hee said, ^(c) *Certainly I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed my hands in innocencie: whereby it is plaine, that this is a naturall evil thought in every man.*

Yet here we must remember, that this evil thought comes not into the minde of man at

all times, but only at such time, when occasion is offered, as namely when a man is called on to the service of God, which upon some occasion hee is desirous to omit: Then will his minde range about for libertie from Gods service, and so will hee betinke himselfe of the wicked mans estate who never loved God, and yet is in better case outwardly than the godly man is: And hereupon hee begins to say in his heart, doubtlesse *It is a vaine thing to serve God*.

For the examination of our hearts touching this thought, after just triall it will be found among us, as the state of all sorts of families will declare. Among the poorer sort you shall see men labour from morning to evening, and take great paines to provide for the world, but in the meane time where is the worship and service of God? where is prayer and thanksgiving, morning and evening? Surely it is neglected, and therefore is it, because they thinke thus in their heart, *So that I may have provision for the world, it is no matter whether I serve God or not*. Come to the rich mans house, & there you shall see them spend their time in eating, drinking, gaming, and such delights, but the worship of God is not regarded, for thus they thinke with themselves, *If they may have their pleasure, all is well*. Come and reason with ordinary men, and exhort them to use the means of salvation, and shew forth love unto religion sincerely: their answer is, *They will doe as they have done, and as their forefathers did before them*, they to us their souls are as good to God-wad as the best: And for ought they see, none are wiser then those that have so much preaching, and therefore they hope to be saved, though they doe not follow it so much. And this also cometh from this evil thought, *It is in vaine to serve God*. Marke also in those places where the Gospell is preached, if any man seeme to make more conscience of sinne, and of serving God then other, they are made a by-word and a mocking stocke, and their profession is turned to their reproach: which argues plainly that mans thought is this, *It is a vaine thing to serve God*. Nay, take a view of the wilde world, and you shall see every where men give themselves to will-worship. No nation is so barbarous as to denie unto God all worship, but doe they give unto him that which he commandeth in his word? Nothing lesse: It is either the mere invention of men, or altogether stained therewith: This is most evident with the Turke, the Iew, and the Papist: yea our common sort of Protestants have their will-worship: for generally they content themselves with the mumbling over the words of the Creede, the Lords Prayer, the ten Commandments, perfwading themselves that by the bare rehearsal of the words, they have sufficiently served God. Now would we know the cause hereof, as also why men are so slacke and cold in prayer, so

Examination
for this thought.

care-

(b) Psal. 126. 1.

* 1 Cor. 3. 18.

* Psal. 19. 18.

(d) Iohn. 6. 36.

(e) Jer. 4. 4.

(c) Psal. 73. 13.

against them, as the word maketh them: And till such time as this damnable thought be taken away, mens hearts will never be touched with the threatnings of the law; this is a barre to stoppe the way to all such passions as the law would worke.

Again, when the Minister of God speaketh of the pardon of sinne, and of eternall life by Christ, who hath his heart melting for joy in regard of this salvation? Though men be called upon to come into the kingdome of heaven, yet few strive to enter in: though we be daily exhorted to repent, yet few turne to the Lord: all which bee branches of the Gospell: but men believe them not, because their hearts bee filled with this damnable thought, *The Gospell of Christ is foolishness*: When the Iherusalem were restored from captivity in Babylon, it was as (*) *a dreame unto them*. now if that temporal deliverance seemed a dreame, what a dreame will this spiritual deliverance from the captivity of hell and death, to the liberie of the sonnes of GOD in grace and glory, seeme to be? And indeed to a naturall man it seemes foolishnesse that God should become man, and that Christ by death should free men from death, and by suffering the curse of the law, should take away the same from us, and by his righteousness should justifie us unto liferall which notwithstanding be points of the Gospell. This also is the cause why after long teaching there is little turning, or faithfull obedience yielded unto the Gospell, neither will it be better with men, while this evil thought abideth in them.

Sect. 1. It is to be a truth, that every naturall man thinketh the word of God to be foolishnesse, then wee must learne this lesson of the Apostle, * *Hee that seemes to be wise in this world, must become a foole, that he may be wise*, that is, he must keepe. At his owne naturall reason, and stoppe up the eyes of his naturall minde, like a blinde man, and suffer himselfe wholly to be guided by Gods Spirit in the things of God, that thereby he may be made wise unto salvation.

Secondly, we must hereby learne to make earnest prayer unto God * for the opening of our eyes, that we may be able to understand the Gospell of Christ, and know the right meaning of that word of salvation: for of our selves we can never understand it, unless the Lord instruct us by his Spirit: (d) *No man cometh unto mee, saith Christ, that is, beleeveth, except it be given him of my Father*: But (e) *one whoe thus hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto mee*. Thus much of this second evil thought.

Sect. 3.

Of this thought, I will not obey Gods word. From the former arising another most vile thought, in the heart of every naturall man, as a branch of the same; namely, because the word of God is foolishnesse, *Therefore I will*

not performe obedience therunto. That this is the naturall thought of many, Job teacheth plainly; for hee bringeth in the wicked (that is, every sinner) saying thus to God, (f) *Draper from mee: wee will not seeke knowledge of thy sayes.* This the wicked man saith, not with his mouth, for none is so farre past all shame, that dares thus blasphemously speake against God; but thus he saith in his heart, his affections speake it, when hee purposeth with himselfe, to cast off the yoke of God, and to stay after his owne lusts: and therefore they say further, (g) *Who is the Almighty that wee should serve him?* as if one should say, it is a disgrace to mee to aske my selfe to serve God: I will not doe it. The Prophet *Jeremy* bringeth in, the Lord saying thus to his people, (h) *Stand in the waies, and behold, and aske for the old way which is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall finde rest for your soules*: but in the same place the Iewes answer, *We will not make in sky maier*. Shall wee thinke that they durst thus so impudently answer the Lord with open mouths? No surely; But the Prophet in these words setteth downe the purpose of their hearts, who hardened the same obstinately against the word, when they were exhorted to repentance and obedience before the Lord. Our Saviour Christ compareth himselfe to a Noble man that goeth into a farre country, now when he is gone, the citizens of his country send messengers after him to tell him, (i) *That they will not have him to raigene over them*. Which though it be properly to be understood of the nation of the Iewes, who did indeed say so to our Saviour Christ, yet it may also be extended to all impenitent sinners, who say in their hearts; Christ shall not raigene over us: for so long as a man is unconverted, hee carrieth a purpose to live in sin, some in this sinne and some in that, and so doing, saith in his heart, *God shall not be my God, I will not submit my selfe unto his lawes. Christ shall not raigene over me*. This is plaine and manifest by mens behaviour, when they are reproved for their sinnes. Tell the covetous man of his avarice, hee sweareth his blasphemie, and the drunkard of his drunkennesse, &c. will hee humbly himselfe in conscience of his sinne?

Nothing lesse: but his heart will swell againe ther, as his fury and impatience will loone betwixt; and the reason is, because hee never thinketh of his owne estate; how by creation hee oweth homage unto God, as to his Creator: for his purpose is to goe on in sinne, and when he is reproved for the same, his desire is crossed; which he cannot abide, and therefore rageth; shewing thereby manifestly, that in his heart he saith, *He will not obey Gods commandments*.

For the examination of our hearts touching this thought: whether did wee ever thinke thus without selves; *I will not obey Gods commandments*? Doubtlesse every man will answer for himselfe, that hee abhorres this thought.

(f) Job. 41. 4.

(g) Jer. 17. 5.

(h) Jer. 6. 18.

(i) Luke. 19. 34.

Examination for this thought.

thoughts. And yet after just triall it will appear, that generally this thought is rise among us for though we heare the word, and receive the Sacraments the pledges of our salvation, and will be counted the members of Christ, yet what is the cause that there is so little knowledge of God, and obedience to his word? And why doe men in their callings shew forth so small love, so little mercy, justice, & good conscience? The truth is, that though some have these things in them in some measure, yet the body of our people is generally void of these good vertues, and fruits of the spirit: hee that hath but halfe an eye may see it: for where is that religious keeping of the Sabbath that should bee? where is that serious performing of worships unto God which ought to be? All which argue, that the heart is corrupt and deceivable, and faith indeed to God, *I will not obey thy word, Lord depart from mee*. What man almost is there that saith with himselfe, *Oh miserable man, what have I done?*

The 5th. By this wicked imagination wee may see how hard a thing it is truly & soundly to convert a sinner unto God, and how easily a man may deceive his owne soule, & beguile the world by hypocrisie: for a man by long exercise in the word may have a great measure of knowledge, and withall good wit, and memorie, and with them utterance, and by a common gift of the spirit, bee able to teach the word truly, and to conceive prayer to good purpose, and withall have a cankered heart towards God, poisoned with this damnable thought, *I will not obey the word of God*: for every man that hath inwardly in him a purpose to live, though but in one sinne, his heart is not upright with God, neither bee Gods graces, as faith, and repentance found in his heart: for true repentance is a purpose, and resolution to leave all sinne, and to please God in all things.

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Examination for this thought.

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* 1 Cor. 3. 18.

* Psal. 119. 18.

(d) John. 6. 36.

(e) Jer. 45.

(a) Job. 21. 15.

(b) Mal. 3. 14.

(c) Psal. 73. 13.

Examination for this thought.

carelesse, and unreverent in hearing Gods word? Surely it is nothing but this vile Imagination bewitching our soules, that it is a vain thing to serve God. This quenchech the spirit, and hindreth all good motions that be in our hearts.

SECT 5.

Of mans thoughts of distrust.

The fourth evil thought concerning God, is, a thought of distrust, thus framed in the minde; *God doth not regard me; God will not helpe mee; God will not be mercifull unto mee*: This thought made entrance unto the fall of our first parents: for first *Eve* looked upon the fruit, and saw that it was beautiful, and then entered into her heart a thought of distrust, after this manner; It may be it is not true that God hath said as to concerning this fruit, and it may be God regardeth us not as we thinke he doth, in that he denieth us this fruit; hereupon her will and her affections were carried to the breaking of Gods commandment, and so to the sinning by disobedience, and *Adam* also sinned. When the people of Israel murmured in the wilderness (*a*) *Moses* sinned a sinne, for hee was debarred entrance into the land of Canaan: Now what was *Moses* sinnet for both hee and *Aaron* (*b*) *prayed to the Lord, and checked the people, saying, Heare ye rebels, &c.* And at Gods commandment hee brought water out of the rocke. Surely his sinne was secret, even inward unbelief and distrust in Gods promise, for when hee smote the rocke, hee might thinke thus with himselfe, It may be that God will not now give water out of the rocke; and this seemes the more probable, because he went beyond his commission in smiting thrice upon the rocke, when God bad him only to *speake* (*c*) *unto it*. This evil thought takes hold of religious *David* also:

(*d*) *I said in mine heart, I am cast out of thy sight, as though hee should say*, Heretofore I have found favour with God, but now in mine adversity I am utterly rejected: *Againe* (*e*) *I said in my heart, all men are liars*: that is, when feare of death tooke hold of mee, then I thought that *Samuel* lied unto mee, when hee said I should come to the kingdom over Israel. The children of Israel did often bewray this thought of distrust, when they were pinched with hunger, and famine in the wilderness, they say, (*f*) *Can God provide a table for us in the wilderness? Can hee give bread, and flets for his people? As if they should say, we thinke hee cannot, nor will not*: Yea the Apostle *Peter* was not free from this thought, for when Christ walking on the waters, commanded *Peter* to come unto him, hee came out boldly, & walked towards *Jesus*, but when (*g*) *he saw a nightie wind, he began to sink*: whence came this? Surely from a thought of distrust which he had in his heart, to this effect, *It may be God will not support me in this way walking*: and that this or some such thought was in his heart, appeareth by Christs answer to him, saying,

(*h*) *Ob thou of little faith, why diddest thou doubt? By all which it is evident that this is a naturall thought in the minde of man, which at sometime troubleth the most righteous man that is.*

Now touching this thought of distrust, two things are to be scanned: first, the time when it taketh place in mans minde; and secondly, the danger of it. For the time, this thought doth not alwaies take place in the minde of man, but onely in the time of some danger, affliction, and temptation, and especially in the time of sickness, and in the pangs of death. Thus in his grievous affliction was righteous *Iob* troubled with this thought of distrust: for then hee complained, that *God did hate him and gnash upon him with his teeth, and as his enemy, sharpened his eyes against him*; yea, (*i*) *hee made him as his butte, and made to shew at*. And *David* in a grievous trouble of minde, thus complained: (*k*) *Will the Lord desert himselfe for ever? And will hee shew no more favour? Is his mercy cleane gone for ever? Doubt his promise false for evermore*: *Heath God forgotten to be mercifull? &c.* Whereby appeareth, that in his affliction hee was greatly troubled with this distrustfull thought; and there is no man living, but when trouble & affliction comes, hee shall feele in himselfe these thoughts of distrust. Indeed while peace & ease continue, presumptuous thoughts possesse the minde; but when the daies of peace be gone, & troublesome times approach, then presumptuous thought give place, and thoughts of distrust come in their room and stead.

11. Point. The danger of these thoughts of distrust is very great, as the fruits thereof declare, for hence arise, first, all horrors, and terrors of conscience, all feares, and astonishments of the heart: For when the minde faith (though falsely) *God doth not regard me, God will not save mee*, then the trembling heart is full of horror and dread. Secondly, hence cometh commeth desperation it selfe, whereby men confidently avouch that God hath forsaken them, and cast them off, and that there is no hope of life, but present death, remaining for this: this thought troubleth the minde of the wicked, and of the repentant person also: for desperation is nothing but the strength of this thought of distrust. Thirdly, this weakeneth the foundation of our salvation, which standeth in the certaintie of Gods promises; for this thought of distrust denieth credit to Gods promises, and maketh them uncertaine: Among all other evil thoughts this doth most directly hinder salvation, for it is flat against faith, as water is to fire: for true faith makes a man say with good conscience, (*m*) *Christ died & shed his blood for me, God the Father will be mercifull unto mee, and save mee*: But this distrustfull thought catcheth a man to say the cleane contrarie, *Christ died not for me: God will not save mee*: so that where this thought prevaileth, true faith is not, neither can take place.

(*l*) verfe. 31.

The time of this thought.

(*k*) verfe. 11.

(*l*) Psal. 77. 7.

Fruits of this thought.

(*m*) Gal. 2. 20.

21. Considering the danger of this distrustfull thought is so great, we must be admonished in the feare of God to use all good meanes, while the daies of peace doe last, that it take no place with us in the day of trouble and temptation: The meanes to repell it, are the preaching of the word, and the Sacraments of Baptisme and the Lords Supper.

For the first: the word of God preached is a speciall meanes ordained of God, for the true applying of Gods promises of mercy to our owne soules; and therefore a most souveraine remedie against this thought of distrust, for which the promises of mercy in Christ, are offered unto Gods people in the preaching of the word by a lawfull Minister: it is as much as if Christ himselfe in his owne person should speake unto them, by vertue of Gods ordinance. If God from heaven should say to any man, *meny*, beleeve with thee, hee would beleeve: if God say to *Cornelius*, beleeve thou, and my mercy belongs to thee, *Cornelius* will beleeve: if hee say to *Peter*, beleeve thou, and my mercy belongs to thee, *Peter* will beleeve: and if hee say to *Mary Magdalen*, she will beleeve. Loe here, when the Minister of God, out of Gods word, faith to any man, beleeve thou, and repent thou, and Gods mercy belongs unto thee; it is as much as if the Lord should call him by name particularly, and say unto him, beleeve thou, and repent, and my mercy belongs unto thee: yea it is all one as if God himselfe should say, *I am thy Father and thou art my child*, if thou wilt repent, and beleeve.

The second meanes, which is also very effectuall to cut off this thought of distrust, is Baptisme. If any earthly prince give a pardon to any man, and put the mans name in the pardon, and his owne broad seale unto it, the man will never doubt of his pardon; but beleeve it. Behold, in Baptisme God entereth covenant with miserable wretched man, and herein makes promise of life unto him: yea he puts the mans name in the covenant, sealing the same with his owne seale: and therefore the patic baptized, must beleeve against this thought.

The third meanes, is the Lords Supper rightly administered and received: for therein the bread and wine given to the hand of every communicant by the Minister, are particular pledges & tokens unto them of speciall mercy in Christ. These are the meanes which we must use with all good conscience in the daies of peace, that when troubles come, this thought of distrust may not prevail against us. And thus much of mans naturall evil thoughts against God. Many other might be added hereunto, but these being the principally, I omit the rest.

CHAP. IV.

Of mans naturall thoughts against his neighbour.

NOW wee come to the evil thoughts of mans naturall heart against his neigh-

bour. And to handle them out wee must have recourse to the second Table of the morall law, which hath ten commandments. The first charge of man, forbidding that which man corrupt heart thinketh naturally against his neighbour, for every commandment thereof is spiritual, forbidding not onely the wicked actions, evil words, & gestures, but all corrupt affections, yea all evil imaginations of man against man.

The thoughts of man against his neighbour be of two sorts: either without consent, or with consent. Thoughts without consent, are the very first evil motions of the minde which a man conceiveth against his neighbour, to which hee will never give consent, and these are forbidden in the tenth commandment, *Thou shalt not lust*.

Thoughts with consent of will are such as a man conceiving in his minde, doth withall desire, or purpose in his heart to practise: and these are forbidden in the first, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments; by reason whereof they may gly be reduced to five heads. They are either thoughts of dishonour, against the first commandment; or thoughts of murder, against the sixth; or thoughts of adultery against the seventh; or thoughts of theft against the eighth; or thoughts of disgrace, against the ninth commandment.

SECT. 1.

Of thoughts of dishonour.

First, a thought of dishonour is any thought that tendeth to the contempt and abasing of the person of our neighbour, in respect of our selves. And it is then conceived in our minds, when we thinke thus of all other men besides our selves: *Such and such a man, is farre inferior unto me, a base & contemptible fellow in regard of mee*. Example herof wee have in the Pharisee, a man strict in profession, and zealous in his religion, who cometh to the Temple to pray with the Publican: now marke what he saith, (*b*) *Oh God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, or as this Publican*. Which words proceed from such a proud thought as this, *Lord I thank thee, all other men are farre inferior unto mee: I doe serve farre passe the common sort: this Publican is a base fellow, and no bodie to mee*. If any shall imagine that this thought is not in every man, but in some few proud persons, I answer, it is by nature in every person living without grace: and therefore Saint *Paul* giveth this commandment, *Thou shalt not have in meeknesse should esteeme others better than himselfe*, giving us to understand, that by nature all men thinke best of themselves, and esteeme others farre worse than themselves.

The second, If this thought of dishonour be in all mens hearts, then behold what a palace of all Saranick and damnable pride the heart of man is naturally: it is like unto the table of *Adam*, which hee made of stone, and made others, even kings,

Gal. 3. 19.

Luc. 18. 11.

Phil. 2. 3.

Indg. 7.

(*a*) Num. 20. 12.

(*b*) verfe. 6.

(*c*) verfe. 8.

(*d*) Psal. 3. 21.

(*e*) Psal. 36. 12.

(*f*) Psal. 3. 19.

(*g*) Mat. 14. 30.

to ease his paine, doth under his feet, with their choakes cut off, *And* one is every man by his owne bitter experience, saying, *I saw the wickedness of my brother under his feet, he had bodye under him.* And this is the cause of much strife & hurt in all humane societies: & this causeth many injuries, much seeming, and great contention among men in word and deed.

Now that we may reforme this thought in us, wee must learne to say, *As* did after he had bit off his head, and came to see his shittles: *(c)* *Should I now vilie: and with Abraham, (4)* *Y on but say, and what?* And with David, *I am a worme, and like man, Psal. 131. 6. yet with Paul, (c)* *It is my labour to see the misery by reason of sinne, and that will helpe to pull downe the pride of our hearts.*

Seet 2.

Of murdering thoughts.

The second evill thought of man against his neighbour with consent, is a thought of *Murther*, or of any thing that tendeth thereto. Of this we have particular examples in Scripture. *Deut. 15. 9.* The Lord forbidde the Jewes to have this murdering thought in their hearts: *I will not relieve the poore, I will not doe good unto them:* giving us to understand, that this was the common thought of the Jewes: or else he wold not have forbidden it: yet the Lord doth there let out this thought by two signes, first, an *evillage*, when a man turnes his countenance from the poore, or looketh on them without compassion: secondly, *uncharitable dealing*, when a man will not helpe the poore by gift, according to his abilitie. And because all actions proceede from thoughts, the heart being the fountaine of our deedes, hence it appeareth, that this murdering thought against the poore, is rife in this age: for where is the man that doth pittie the poore, and doth good to them according to his abilitie? nay, the Lords complaint against the Jewes may be fitly applied to our times, in regard of cruelty and oppression: *The spoile of the poore is in your houses: what have ye to doe, that ye beate my People to peeces, and grinde the faces of the poore? Isa. 3. 14-15.*

The second example of a murdering thought, is concerning Gods Church, and it is this, *I will doe some spite or hurt to them that worship God.* For proofe hereof, read *Psal. 74. 8.* David bringeth in the Babylonians, Edomites, &c. saying thus one to another against Gods people the Jewes: *Let us destroy them altogether, and Psal. 83. 4.* *Let us cut them off from being a people.* And let the name of Israel bee no more in remembrance. Now at this was their thought, so is it the thought of all men naturally, for that which was the disposition of *David, Eliab, Achizai, and Amasai*, against Gods Church, is the disposition of all men naturally, for looke how generally the hatred of man is, so generally is the purpose of mischief against those that professe religion: for all

men by nature are haters of Gods Church, and people, so Christ saith to his disciples, *(1)* *Ye shall be hated of all nations for my names sake.* *Yea, who severeth you shall think that hee hath God good service:* and therefore this thought of doing mischief is as general, even in the minde of every man by nature. This further appeareth by the continual persecutions, that hath ever bene raised against Gods poore Church, since the beginning of the world: it began at *Abel*, soon after the giving of the covenant of grace to our first parents, and hath continued to this day, and shall abide unto the end: so that if carnall men could looke into their owne hearts, they should there behold this murdering thought against Gods people. This murdering thought commeth from another wicked imagination, set downe by *S. Peter*: who bringeth in the wicked of this world, *(2)* *Thinking it is a strange thing, that God: children doe not, as they doe, and raven not with them into all excess of riot: living in drunkenness, fornication, and such other abominations:* for this cause doe they conceive hatred, and so will continue, till God give them grace to repent. If any shall say this thought is not general, for *Nabuchadnezzar*, *(3)* an heathen man showed favour to *Daniel*, and highly advanced him: *Tancredius* is true he did so, but that was a worke of Gods speciall providence, who procured him favour, and disposed the Kings heart to affect him, as hee did also the heart of the chiefe

(4) *Ennach, O. otherwise Nabuchadnezzar*, a naturally did nothing but intend mischief against Gods Church, as his rage against the three children did evidently bewray, *Dan. 3. 19.* A third exaple of this murdering thought I adde, which every Minister of Gods word may observe by daily experience, and that is this, when mens faults are particularly rebuked in the ministerie of the word, and the quicker, as it were touched, by applying the word to the conscience, then will the heart of a naturall man, thus conceive of the Minister that reprooveth sinnes: *This man meseeth me, hee hath some spite, and malice against me, that he thus reprooveth my particular faults,* when as the Minister knew them not to be his personall sinnes: but it is the power of the word that ranketh the sinfull heart: this is the fault of all carnall hearers, who will heare quietly till their faults be rebuked, but then they thinke maliciously of the preacher, thus *Herod* dealt with *John Baptiste*, he heard him gladly for a while, *Mark. 6. 20.* but when he was rebuked for his brother *Philipps* wife, then hee cast *John* in prison, *Luk. 3. 19. 20.* And if conscience might bee judge, many an hearer would be found to have an *Herods* heart towards Gods Minister.

Seet 3.

Of thoughts of Adultery, theft, and disgrace.

The third thought of man touching his neigh-

(1) *Mat. 24. 9.*
John. 15. 23.

(2) *1 Pet. 4. 3.*

(3) *Dan. 3. 19.*

(4) *Dan. 1. 19.*

neighbour, is the thought of *Adultery*, which is the thought with consent to any unchastitie. Such a thought had *Israhel*, concerning *Tamar* his daughter in law, when hee judged her an whore, and desired to be with her, *Gen. 38. 8. 16.* And with such thoughts was *Amnon*es heart vexed, that hee fell sicke for his sister *Tamar*, *2. Sam. 13. 2.* This makes a man an Adulterer in heart before God, though actually he commit not the fact, *Mat. 5. 28.*

The fourth is the thought of *Theft*, which is the thought with consent of beguiling or wronging another in his goods or substance. This is that *Imagining of iniquity, and working of wickedness upon their beds, in covering of fields, against which Micah* pronounceth a curse, *Mic. 2. 1.* And this thought also posselth their hearts, that with the wicked Israelites, with the time were come, wherein they might make the *Ephraim*, and the *Shekel* great, *Amos 8. 5.* that is, lessen the measure, and enhance the price, and lighten the weights by deceit.

The fifth evill thought, is a thought of *disgrace*, which some way tendeth to the reproach, and debasing of our neighbours good name, as when a thing is well done, to think and judge it to be ill done, or when a thing is amisse, to judge it worse than it is: Thus *Elis* thought disgracefully of *Hannab*, deeming her to be drunk, saying, *1. Sam. 1. 13. 14.* Put away thy drunkenness, when shee prayed devoutly from a troubled soule to the Lord, *1. Sam. 1. 13.* Thus *Eliab*, *David*: eldest brother, thought disgracefully of *David*, when he shewed himselfe willing to encounter with *Goliath* that reviled the Host of the living God, saying, *1. Sam. 17. 28.* *Thou art the pride and malice of thine heart, that thou art come to see the battell:* when as indeed the Spirit of God put that motion into his heart, to take away the shame from *Israhel*, as the happy event declared plainly. So when our Saviour Christ spake most comfortably to the sicke of the pallee, saying, *Mat. 9. 2.* Be of good comfort, thy sinnes are forgiven thee: then the curdled hearts of the wicked *Pharisees* thought thus in themselves, *This man blasphemeth, v. 4.* And when the gift of the holy Ghost was sent upon the Apostles, causing them to speake strange tongues, to the great admiration of men of divers nations, then some of the malicious Jewes thought they were drunk, saying, *Confusingly, Act. 2. 13.* They were full of new wine. And this thought of disgrace is in every man naturally, bringing forth continually the fruits of disgrace, as *Envy*, *Strife*, *Emulations*, *Dissentions*, and *Debates*: for love thinketh not evil: but naturally true love is wanting in all men: and therefore they cannot but thinke evil of others.

Wee fee the five evill thoughts of mans naturall heart against his neighbour, touching which, two things are yet further to be scanned, to wit, when these evill thoughts do arise in the minde, and in whom they are. For the first: it is true, that they do not at all times

arise in mens mind, but then only when occasion is given: for mans heart is like tinder or dry wood, which burnes not of itselfe, but so soone as fire is put to it, then presently it kindleth, when you come to talke with a naturall man, it may be for the present, he thinke not to lie, but give him occasion to lie, and then hee soone bekinke himselfe thereof, and will not spare to utter it, if it may make for his advantage. And the like we may say of Malice, Adultery, Theft, Disgrace, or any other sinne against our neighbour: Doe but minister occasion thereto: to the naturall heart of man, and hee thinketh of them, and without Gods grace restraining, or renewing him, will bring forth the same in action.

The second point, In whom are all these evill thoughts? Answer. In all men naturally without exception, all they be received by Gods speciall grace: Yea, the truth is, these thoughts doe every where abound, for looke what men doe practice, that list of all they thinke, for the thought is the beginning of every action: But in the world all sinnes a practice the second Table doe abound, as the practice of Dishonour, of Murther, Adultery, Theft, and Disgrace: and therefore these evill thoughts from whence these actions come, must needs be common.

Yfe. By this we may see what a huge masse of corruption the naturall heart of man is, without Gods speciall grace: for thoughts of dishonour make a mans heart a pallee of pride, like the table of *Adonibezek*: Also thoughts of cruelty make mans heart a slaughter-house: Thoughts of Adultery make it a most filthy stew: Thoughts of Theft make it to become a den of thieves, wherein all manner of fraud, and bad dealing is plotted & devised: and lastly, thoughts of Disgrace make it a fountaine of backbiting, debate, slander, and reviling: And therefore howsoever the outward life may be ordered civilly, yet without Gods grace mans heart is most vile: and those that please their good nature, and good meaning are here contented, for naturally the heart stunketh all evill against his neighbour.

CHAP. V.

Of mans naturall thoughts concerning himselfe.

Seet 1.

Mans proud thoughts of his owne excellency.

The third kinde of mans naturall evill thoughts, are such as concerne himselfe, and they are principally foure.

The first may be fitly termed a thought of pride, whereby every man naturally thinks himselfe most excellent, and farre to exceede

Isa. 14. 13.

a Zeph. 2. 15.

b Luke 18. 11.

c The heretical
Church of
Rome.
d Rev. 18. 7.The danger of
this thought.Fruits of in-
ward pride.

all other men whatsoever: thus the Prophet *Eloj* brings in Babylon speaking in her heart, that is, thinking, *I will ascend into heaven, and exalt my throne above the heights of the stars of God, as if she should think with her selfe, I am far more excellent than any other whatsoever, & therefore I am to be exalted from the earth to heaven, and to be matched with God himselfe.* And the Prophet *Zephany* brings in Ninive speaking thus in her heart, *(A) I am, and there is none beside me. And so the proud Pharisee in his private & secret prayer to God, saith, (B) I thank thee Lord that I am not as other men,* meaning that he is more excellent. And the whore of Babylon *(C)* is brought in saying of her selfe, *(d) As if a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no mourning.* All which places shew this to be the nature of man, to exalt himselfe in his owne heart, above all others. If any shall say, hereby no more can bee provid. But that this thought is in some proud and insolent persons: I adde therefore, that as our first Parents in the beginning did learne that proud lesson of the devil, *Te shall be as gods:* so wee being in their loynes when they sinned, and descending from them by ordinary generation, doe together with our nature receive that corruption from them; whereby wee thinke thus proudly of our selves, that *wee save excell others, and are as little gods on earth, unequalled of others.* Indeed the most will say for themselves, we doe abhorre this proud thought, neither did we ever finde it to be in us: But we must know, that the lesse wee discern it in our selves, the more it reigneth in our hearts; and the more we discern it, and bewaile it, the lesse place it taketh in us.

Now touching this thought of pride, two things must be observed: the *danger*, and the *highest degree* of it. For the *danger* of this thought, The outward affecting of strange fashions in apparel is a wonderfull pride; But the most vile and wretched pride of all is that spiritual pride of the heart, whereby a man despiseth all other, in regard of himselfe, and thinketh himselfe farre better than any. This I manifest by sundry reasons: as first, from the fruits of this inward pride, for hence doe flow many damnable finnes in mens lives and conversations: as first, *Ambition*, whereby men are not content with that estate, wherewith God hath blessed them: but doe seeke by all means to be advanced to higher dignitie and estate. Secondly, *Presumption*, whereby men dare encrope things beyond their calling, and above their power, taking upon them more than they are able to doe. Thirdly, *boasting*, whereby a man speaketh of himselfe more than is seemely, and exalteth himselfe above his desert. Fourthly, *Hypocrisie* when a man pretendeth he hath that grace and religion, which indeed he hath not, or else maketh shew of more grace than is truly in him. Fifthly, *Obstinacy*, when a man per-

sisteth in an error, and will not yeeld to the truth, though it bee manifested unto him. Sixthly, *Contention*, whereby men strive one against another in word or deed, without reason. And lastly, *Affliction of Novelties*, especially in outward attire, for when a man conceiveth so highly of himselfe, then will he thinke no manner of attire good enough to beautifie, and adorne his body; and so begins to devile, and affect strange and forraine attire.

Secondly, the *danger* heretofore appeareth hence, that where this thought of pride reigneth, (as it doth in all men naturally) there the spirit of grace dwelleth not: *Mary* in her long faith well, *Luke 1. 58.* God entereth the Imaginations of the proud: that is, of those which have this conceit of their owne excellency above others: and Saint *James*, *1. 4.* *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble:* yea, thus saith be that is high and excellent, *Isa. 57. 15.* *Peace shall inhabit eternally, while mine is the holy One: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble: But he that lifteth up himselfe, his pride is not right in him, Hab. 1. 4.*

Thirdly, such is the danger of this sinne, that when all other finnes die in a man, this thought of pride dyeth not: nay, when other finnes are mortified, and Gods graces come in stead thereof, yet this will then revive, and make the graces of God matter whereof to worke as when an ignorant person attaines to some knowledge, his pride will take occasion from that gift of God, to puffe up the heart: yea, when a man in true humility of heart, shall renounce the actions of pride, yet then will pride bee working for this is a fruit of pride, to thinke well of ourselves, because we are not proud.

I I. Point. The highest degree of this pride is, when a man thinketh himselfe to be equall with God. This is a most notorious, nay, an abominable height of pride, and yet the truth is, some men have come hereunto. Thus the king of *Babel* thought of himselfe, when he said in his heart, *Eloj. 14. 14.* *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, and will be like the most high.* It may seeme strange that men should thinke thus of themselves; but wee must know, that men may doe it two wayes: first, when they think they have power of themselves, whereby they are able to match or countervaille the power of God: so thought *Nebuchadnezzar*, when he said, *Dan. 2. 12.* *Who is that God that can deliver you out of my hand?* Such a thought had proud *Pharisee* in his heart, when he said to *Moses*, & *Aaron*, *Exod. 5. 2.* *Who is the Lord, that I should heare his voice, and let Israel go?* Secondly, when they take to themselves Gods honour, and thinke it to be due to them: Thus did *Herod*, *(C)* when by silence he approved the blasphemous voyce of the people, who cried un-

The height of
this thought.

a A. 1. 11.

Belle Rom.
Fustell. 4.

to him, the voyce of God, and not of man. And thus Antichrist sitting in the Temple of God, *2 Thess. 2. 4.* *Exalts himselfe above all that is called God, or worshipped.* Now that man of sin, is the Pope of Rome; for howsoever in word he humble himselfe, and call himselfe the servant of servants; yet indeed through the pride of his heart, hee sitteth as God; taking unto himselfe that honor which is proper to God: for he claimeth power to prescribe new rules of Gods worship, to forgive finnes, to make lawes to binde the conscience properly, yea, to open and shut heaven, and to dispose at his pleasure of earthly kingdomes; he taketh upon him, to dispense with the morall law, and with Apostollicall constitutions: all which belong to God alone, and none dare claime them to belong unto him, but hee that matcheth himselfe with God; and this is the highest degree of pride.

The 2^o. By this every man may see what hee is of himselfe, what a cursed and proud nature he carrieth about with him: for every man naturally when occasio is offered, thinks highly of himselfe, and basely of others in regard of himselfe. Let us therefore take notice of this Satanicall pride that is in our nature, and strive against it, for who would not bee ashamed to say with the proud Pharisee, *I thank thee Lord, I am not as other men, & coe with the arrogant Jewes, Stand apart, touch me not, I am holier than thou. Isa. 65. 5.*

Seet. 3.
Mans thought of his owne righteousness.

The second evill thought concerning a mans selfe, is this, *I am sufficiently righteous, and I need no repentance.* That this is the thought of every man naturally, appeareth by the Lords commandment to the people of *Israel*, forbidding them to fly in their hearts, when they were placed in the promised land, that for their owne righteousness, the Lord brought them into possession, *Deut. 9. 4.* Whereby hee gives unto us to understand two things: First, that as the Jewes did there, so every man thinkes himselfe to be righteous: And secondly, hee thinkes, that God doth give his blessings unto him for his owne righteousness: for the Lord useth not to forbid such a thought as men naturally have not in them: so in like manner when *Jeremy* rebuked the people for their finnes, they said, *Jer. 2. 35.* *They were innocents and justifies, they had not sinned.* And the Church of *Laodicea* saith: thus of her selfe, *Rev. 3. 17.* *I am rich and need nothing: that is, I abound in spiritual graces. This is the thought of the proud Pharisee, who trusts in himselfe, thus hee saith, *Luk. 18. 9, 10.* and therefore braggeth unto God, that he is not such and such; but he doth this and that, he fasteth, he gives almes, heaith himselfe, & cand in plaine termes his heart saith thus, *I am righteous, I need no repentance:* But of such Christ saith, when hee said, *Mat. 23. 12.* *Hee calleth himselfe righteous, but sinneth more.* And again, *Luk. 18. 9, 10.* *For none of you,**

that joy shall be in heaven for one sinner that converteth, more than for ninety & nine just men which need no amendment of life: where wee must observe, that Christ meaneth not, that there are indeed some so righteous, that they need no amendment; but hee speaks according to the opinion which some have of themselves; to wit, that they are righteous, and need no repentance, by all which it is more than manifest, that this is a naturall thought of a man concerning himselfe.

This evill thought reigneth in our age and time, as all the former doe: for come to an ignorant man, that hath not bene instructed in religion, reason with him touching his estate, and aske him; whether he can keepe the law of God, or not? he will answer, he can; he loveth the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himselfe: Aske him how he looks to be saved, his answer is, by his owne righteousness, and for his owne goodnesse. If due examination were made, this would be found to be the thought of many that live in the Church among us: and there is none by nature free from this thought.

Hereby then we may see, that the thoughts of every man, be he what he will, are plaine Papistry, for Popery is naturally: One chiefe pillar and ground thereof is justification, and salvation by works; which opinion every man brings with him from his mothers wombe. And so it is in the point of merit, men naturally thinke they receive the good things which they have from God, for their owne righteousness.

Secondly, hence it appeareth, that it is a matter of great difficulty, to bring a man thoroughly to renounce his owne righteousness, and soandly and heartily to embrace true religion, and the righteousness of Christ by faith. This is no lesse than the change of nature; and yet this must every man doe, that will be saved, hee must become walking in himselfe, that he may be dead in Christ; which is impossible to nature, as to change water into fire, and therefore men have made us beware how they pass off the duty, neglect the means in which GOD sheweth his power in working this change in the hearts of his Elect.

Thirdly, hence we see the evident cause of that Antiposteron course of the world, which most men take in spending themselves, and strength some for riches, others for honours and pleasures; and in the means while they consume no time for religion, to seeke Gods favour in Christ, and the graces of the Spirit: it may be they will afford a good word unto religion, but yet they regard it not in respect of other things; and while the behaviour of some few, but of all soules and degrees, is more neglected. Now let us see heretofore this cursed evill thought, whereby many have made themselves, *They be righteous, and need no repentance.* And till this thought

Examination
for this
thought.

eternall due unto sin. This thought was wanting in the men of the old world, though *Noah* preached unto them an 120. years of the general deluge, yet the consideration of it took no place in their hearts; & therefore it is said, *Mat. 24. 38, 39. They knew nothing till the flood came and took them all away from the want of this thought it came to passe, that Lot's sonnes in law thought their father had but mocked, when he told them that God would destroy Sodom, Gen. 19. 14.* Hence it was that the *Rich* soe blest himselfe in his heart, saying, *Luk. 12. 19. Soules, sleepe, take thine ease,* & never be thought himselfe of any danger, till it was said unto him, *Q. soules, this night will they fetch away thy soule, v. 20* And this I think this thought is wanting at this day, seeing Christ hath said, *Matth. 24. 37. As it was in the dayes of Noe, so shall it be at the coming of the sonne of man.*

The third good thought wanting.

Thirdly, a man naturally doth never bestink himselfe of his owne sinnes; he hath no purpose of heart seriously to examine his life past, or to repent of such finnes as he findeth in him: This appeares by the Lords owne complaint against the Jewes, who were so farr from turning from their finnes, that not one would say in his heart, *Jer. 3. 6. What have I done? nay* which they had committed too fottish Idolatry, *Isa. 44. 16, 17, 19. 20. In making an idol god of one part of a tree, with the other part whereof they had refast their meate, & warmed themselves; yet they considered not this in their hearts, neither had they knowledge or under standing to say, I have burnt halfe of it in the fire, I have baked bread upon the coales thereof, I have refast of flesh, and eaten it: shall I make the residue thereof an abomination?*

The fourth good thought wanting.

Fourthly, a natural man doth not consider what duty and service he owes to God: his minde is wholly bar to his own waies, but the Lords talents lies hid in the ground wrapped up in a napkin, *Mat. 25. 18.* Hereof the Lord complains against the Jewes, *Jer. 5. 14. That they say not in their hearts, let us feare the Lord our God; hence it was that the Jewes virgin, Mat. 25. 38. did contempe themselves with the blasing lampes of an outward profession, and never be thought themselves of that oyle of grace, which God required in all thes, that would enter with Christ into his bridechamber, till it was too late; and the flight serving of God at this day, declares the generall want of this consideration.*

Self. 3.

The fruits of this want of good consideration.
Henceforward we must know, that this want of good consideration is a grievous will, and a moche sinne, from whence, as from a foundation, issues out corruptions and transgressions, both of heart and life, do issue forth first, hereby we are disabled from yielding unto God that obedience of heart, which his law requires; for how can we love the Lord with all our thought and minde, and our neighbour as our selves, *Luk. 10. 27.* as God commands, when as naturally our hearts are void of all good

thoughts towards God, & towards our neighbours? Again, whence comes sinning with an high hand, when men sinne, and will sinne? whence comes it, that men bleis themselves in their sins, & flatter themselves in their own eyes, while they go on in sinne, but from want of consideration of Gods presence, & of Gods judgements? This *Abraham* knew well, and therefore said of the people of Gerar, *Gen. 20. 11. Because they wanted the feare of God, that is, al consideration of Gods presence, & of Gods judgements, therefore they would kill him for his wives sake.* Whence also comes that insensibility, whereby men addid themselves wholly to the profits, pleasures & honors of this world, never minding heaven or hell, but from want of consideration of their duty to God? If men did use to call themselves to account for their finnes, or did let before their eyes the judgements of God due unto them, it could not be that there should bee such want of contrition towards God, or of compassion towards their brethren, as every where abounds. And the like might be said of many other capital sins, all which proceed from the want of good consideration. Where by the way wee may observe, that our common people doe farr deceive themselves in this persuasion of themselves, *That by nature they have good hearts, and good meaning.* If you charge them with the sins of their lives, they will straightway pleade their good intention, and say, though they sometimes faile in action, yet they mean well alwayes. But the truth is, naturally *well meaning, and good consideration,* in spiritual things is altogether wanting: And therefore while men doe sooth up themselves in their good meaning, they deceive their owne hearts through ignorance of their naturall estate: and they must know, that they can never come unto Christ; that they might have life, till they bee quite gone out of themselves, in regard of such conceits.

CHAP. VII.

The use of the former doctrine.

Self. 1.

That the Scripture is the word of God.

Having seen what evil thoughts be in every man naturally, and what good thoughts be wanting in him; it follows now to make some use of this doctrine concerning mans naturall imaginations; which is this. The first use shall be against all such, who think the Scripture to be mere prophesie, whereby man to keepen in awe. For we need not knowe, that the holy Scripture is the device of man, but the very word of the everliving God, *1. Joh. 1. 9.* as one of the former doctrine: The Scripture is his generall

will, that all the imaginations of every natural man are evil, & that continually. Now it doth not only affirme this in general, but declares it also in particulars; for elsewhere it sheweth what those particular evil thoughts be, which the naturall minde of man frameth concerning God, his neighbour, and himselfe. Again, the same Scripture saith in general, *That good thoughts and considerations, are naturally wanting in every man; & elsewhere it declareth in particular what those good thoughts be which enter not into the minde of a natural man: both these have bin plainly shewed out of the word of God.* Now hereupon it doth necessarily follow, that the Scripture is the word of God: for let the coming Aethiack shew whence it is that the Scripture doth declare mans thoughts, hee cannot say, of man for no man knoweth the thoughts of another; nay he cannot finde out his owne thoughts: neither can he ascribe it to any Angell good or bad; for the minde of man is hid from them; they know not mans thoughts. It remaineth therefore, that as God alone is the searcher of the hearts, so that scripture which declareth unto man what be his thoughts, is the only word of the same God: Indeed God used man for his instrument, in the penning and delivery of the Scripture, but hee himselfe by his Spirit is the sole author thereof.

Self. 2.

That man hath no free will to good by nature.

The second use shall be against the Papists, who ascribe to man will a natural power to that which is truly good, as by it selfe to cooerke with Gods grace in the first act of mans conversion. But the charge of evil here laid up on the frame of mans naturall heart by God himselfe, doth teach us otherwise: for looke how farr the frame of the mind, which is the principal part of the soule, is corrupt for thoughts & imaginations, so farr is the will, the inmost part of the soule, corrupt in willing. But the minde is naturally to corrupt that it cannot thinke a good thought, and therefore adverserly the will by nature is so corrupt, that it cannot will that which is truly good: as it can be said, that man hath libertie of will in humane actions, and in civil duties. *As for the hart, by nature such actions proceeding from a corrupt foundation, are sinnes in every mans hart, howsoever for the sinners of the lawes they may bee called good, being such as God himselfe hath ordained.*

Self. 3.

Of the thoughts preventing and suppressing.

The third use shall be for admonition

to them, to whom is committed the education of youth, as *Parents, Masters, Tutors, &c.* that seeing the imaginations of mans heart are evil from the youth, therefore they must all joine hand in hand be to stop up, or at least to lessen this corrupt fountain. Parents must sow the seedes of grace into the minds of their young children, that if it were possible, even at their mothers breast they might be nourished in the faith. Thus deale *Law and Eunice* with their young *Timothy*: for *Paule* saith, *(5) He learned the holy Scriptures from an infant.* Then as their children grow in defecation and use of reason, they must bee (*6*) nurtured in religion, and have the grounds thereof by often repetition driven into their hearts for this is the best meane to free their minds, though not altogether from naturall imaginations, yet from the force and payson thereof. (*7*) *folles* is bound to the breast of a child, but the rodde of teaching, that is, instruction with correction, will drive it away from him: yea, when as the child is set at libertie make his mother ashamed, yet will (*8*) the sonne that is well instructed, give his father rest, and yield delight unto his soule. Further, where Parents leave, there Masters and Tutors must take hold, building up that good foundation which is laid to their hand, that by them also the stream of mans naturall imaginations, may bee stopped: yea, though parents should neglect this duty towards their owne children, as too many doe at this day, yet each godly Master, if he desire to have Gods Church in this house, must instruct his family, as (*9*) *Abraham* did, and labour for circumcision of heart both to his children and servants, even as (*10*) *Abraham* did circumcise not only his selfe, but also his wife, and his servants bought for money. Both Parents and Masters are careful to prevent diseases, and to break off sicknesses at the beginning in their children and servants, which by the continuance might bring bodily death, oh they how careful ought they to be, to stoppe beeing the course of naturall imaginations. In them, which without the speciall grace of God, will bring eternall condemnation both to soule and bodie? And the rather must this court be taken in youth, and that blisfully, because custome, when it is good or evil, is a second nature: *(11) Each a child is brought up in the way of the Lord, but when he is old he will not depart from it.* But, (*12*) *can the blacke Altare change his holding, or the Separd his pots? (13) when the Ass doe yare this is accustomed to doe even so.* therein the vices beeth established, as like the officers of the house, by longer continuance they grow more inveterate. *(14) All that have beene in the Scriptures, either for their owne private or for the publique good, must feeke by prayer 18. God for the sanctification of their minds from all ungodly thoughts, that being life unto themselves, they be not vaine in their imaginations. David a man according*

(1) Tim. 3. 15.

(2) Eph. 6. 4.

(3) Prov. 22. 3.

(4) Prov. 26. 1.

(5) Ibid. 27.

(6) Gen. 18. 9.

(7) Gen. 17. 13.

(8) Jer. 13. 23.

(9) Jer. 13. 23.

(10) Jer. 13. 23.

(11) Jer. 13. 23.

(12) Jer. 13. 23.

(13) Jer. 13. 23.

(14) Jer. 13. 23.

we must often use elevation of minde & heart to heaven, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of his Father. Thus did David, *Psalm 15. 1. Uncover, O Lord, will I lift up my soul:* And Paul, saying of himselfe, and other Christians, *Phil. 3. 10. That they had their conversation in heaven* signifieth thus much, that not onely their studies and meditations, but also their desires in the world were heavenly. *Stair Ladder* bids us draw neerer to God, *1. 4. 8. Now which way should a poore wretch here below draw neerer to God, but by lifting up his heart to the throne of grace in heaven, that so God in mercy may draw neerer unto him by grace?* The Lord hath infiltrated in his Church the use of his last Supper, wherein the giving and receiving of bread & wine doth represent and seal up unto us our communion and participation of the body and blood of Christ given for our redemption: Now the principall action on our behalfe therein required, is this *Elevation of the heart unto God*, as well for the contemplation of Gods infinite mercy in Christ, and of Christs endless love to us, as for the application of his merits to our owne soules by the hand of faith: as also for the spiritual resignation of our selves in soules and bodies, by way of thankfulness for him that hath redeemed us. Finally, touching this *Elevation* we must remember, that it ought to bee our continual and ordinary action unto God: for as it is with him that keepe a clocke, unless he doe every day wind up the weights, which are always going downward, the clock will stand: so if earth with us, our hearts are ever drawing towards the earth, and the things here below, by reason of that *body of sinne*, which hangeth on so fast, and presseth downe, *1. Thess. 5. 23.* and therefore we must endeavour by Gods grace continually to lift them up to heaven: The Apostle bids us, *Pray continually*, *1. Thess. 5. 17.* that we should doe nothing else but pray, but his meaning is, that we should everday be so fit to cessation is offered, lift up our hearts unto God. But of all other, there be three speciall times wherein we must use this heavenly *Elevation*: first, in the morning by prayer, thanksgiving, or both: before the cogitations of our earthly affaires come into our minds; that so we may give unto God the first fruits of our thoughts every day. Secondly, in the evening before we sleepe downe to rest, that so we who knoweth when he layeth downe himselfe to sleepe, whether ever he shall live againe alive? Thirdly, at any other time of the day, wherein we receive any blessing from God, whether spirituall, or corporall, or both: and in all manner of any of his gifts, or graces: so feeling every good gift comes from him, it is not reason we should give this glory to his name: to lift up our hearts to his throne of graces, whomever we receive or expect the same from his bountifull hand.

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Sect. 4.

Of the assistance of our particular reconciliation with God.

Fourthly, for the reformation of our thoughts, we must labour to be assured in our hearts by Gods Spirit, of our particular reconciliation with God in Christ. This is that knowledge of the love of God which possesseth knowledge, for which Paul, *Eph. 3. 14, 19. Bowled his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the bowels of the Ephesians: in regard thereof Paul esteemed all things losse, yea, to be dross and dung, Phil. 3. 8.* Now when this assurance is felted in our hearts, it will purge not onely the affections, but also the first motions and thoughts of our mindes. *He that hath in himselfe this hope* (saith Saint *(a)* John) *purgeth himselfe, as Gods pure*. For when a man shall be truly persuaded in his heart, that of a vile sinner, even the child of wrath, he is made the childe of God, and a vessel of honour acceptable to God, and enjoying his love and favour in Christ, then will he reason thus with himselfe: hath God of his endless mercy vouchsafed to receive me into his grace and favour, that otherwise I should have beene a firebrand of hell for evermore? oh then, how should I suffer my minde, my will, and affections, to bee any longer the instruments of sinne, whereby I should please so gracious a God; and cut my selfe out of his love and favour? nay, but I will employ my soule which he hath redeemed with all the powers and faculties thereof, as Weapons of righteousness for the advancement of his glory.

Sect. 5.

Of spirituall consideration.

Lastly, if we would reforme our thoughts, we must give ourselves to spirituall consideration or meditation. By spirituall consideration I mean any action of the minde renewed and sanctified, whereby it doth seriously thinke on those things which may further salvation. This consideration I call spirituall, to distinguish it from earthly plotting and, whereby men shew themselves wise and provident for the things of this life, though in the matters of God, which concern eternall salvation, they be blinde and ignorant. Also I say it must bee an action of a sainte renewed and sanctified, because the regenerate man purgeth out all things of the spirit of God, *1. Cor. 6. 11.* they feede themselves with pure words, and therefore this consideration gives his minde unto the things of heaven.

Now the chief end of this rule will plainly appear by the fourfold practice of it in the Prophet *David*, who was no more than a layman, but he that he had every meditation of himselfe upon God, *(a)* God himselfe: *(b)* himselfe: *(c)* the sinners of his time: *(d)* his own prayers: and *(e)* continually on Gods words: Now

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Sect. 2.

The consideration of Gods judgements.

The second consideration touching God, is, of his judgements, nor onely those which were done of olde, and are recorded in the Scripture, or other histories, but even his least judgements which we behold or heare to fall upon Kingdomes, Townes, particular houses and persons, must we carefully lay unto our hearts. Of the want hereof the Lord complaineth among his people, saying, *Jer. 2. 2. 1. The whole land is in waste, because no man setteth his mind on it: giving us to understand, that the neglect of due consideration of Gods judgement, brought desolation to the whole land, and therefore the want thereof is a maine and grievous sinne, bringing further judgements with it.*

GOD hath sundry times sent his judgements among us generally by plague, and famine; and particularly on sundry families, & persons: but who regardeth them? Wherefore unless we will double Gods judgements upon us, let us remember our duty, and seriously thinke upon them. And that this consideration may be profitable unto us, we must doe three things, first, we must carefully observe, make, and remember them: *Psalm 119. 52. I remember thy judgement of old, O Lord.* The Lords people were much wanting therein, as *Psalm 77. 11, 12.* Secondly, we must apply them to our owne persons in particular, so as the thought thereof may make us afraid, though they befall others. When *Habakkuk 3. 16.* in a vision saw the judgements of God which were to come upon the Chaldeans, the consideration thereof was so powerful with him, that it made him tremble and quake: In a family, when the father beareth his servants, the child seeth hand when one child is beaten, then all the rest cry: even so when God our Father powreth downe his judgements, though upon the heathen, yet we must feare; but when any of his children are afflicted, it must likewise sore to our hearts. Thirdly, we must make use of Gods judgements, that light upon others, by applying them to our selves. When certaine men brought newes to our Saviour Christ of an heavy judgement upon some Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their owne sacrifices, *Luke 13. 1, 2, 3.* arising from our Saviours labours to bring them that told him, to make use thereof for their owne good, saying, that thereby they ought to bee moved to repentance for they that were slain, were no greater sinners than the rest: and therefore except they who told that newes did amend their lives, they should also perishe. So that whosoever we see or heare of any judgement of GOD upon others, we must thereby bee moved to repent: and thus doing, we shall come to a right

sanctifying this duty by prayer, as it is plaine he did continually, *Psalm 19. 14. Let the meditation of my heart, O Lord, be acceptable in thy sight*, hence it came to passe that he professed, *Psalm 119. 113. An hatred unto vaine inventions*, which are the proper effects of an unreformed mind: and on the contrary, by this godly practice, *Psalm 119. 99. He got more understanding than his teachers*: yea, he attained to this excellent state of a renewed minde, that he reines, whereby hee means the most secret part of his soule, taught him in the night season, *Psalm 119. 6. 7.* And in reason wee may perceive the truth hereof; for seeing contraries do mutually expell one another, what can bee more effectuall to purge the mind of evil thoughts, than to exercise the same with spirituall considerations? for when through the blessing of God, these shall take place, the other must needs be gone: in regard whereof it shall not be amiss somewhat to insinuate in the handling of them.

CHAP. IX.

Of spirituall considerations concerning God.

Sect. 1.

Of the consideration of Gods presence.

Spiritual considerations serving for the reformation of our thoughts, doe either concerne God, or our selves. That which concerneth God containeth many branches, but I will insinuate in foure especially. First, touching Gods presence, whereby a man doth thinke and so resolve himselfe, that wheresoever he is, he stands before God, and that all his thoughts, words, and deeds, are naked in Gods sight, *David* hath been filled with this consideration, when he penned the 139. Psalm, for that whole Psalm from the beginning to the end, serveth to expresse this holy cogitation of Gods presence: the like impression must wee labour to have in our hearts touching Gods presence: for it is the most notable means, to cleane the heart from evil thoughts, to restrain the will and affections from wicked delights, and to keepe in order the whole man, causing him to stand in awe of Gods commandments. *David* saith, *Psalm 139. 7. To beare of the Lord is cleane*; meaning thereby, that that man which hath the feare of God in his heart, arising from this consideration of Gods presence, hath a cleane and pure heart. This consideration also is a notable means of comfort in the time of trouble and danger: hence *David* saith, *Psalm 138. 4. Though I walke through the valley of the shadow of death, I will feare none evil: for the Lords with me*: and hence it was, that, *Psalm 138. 6. He would not be afraid for some shadow of the people that should rise up against him.*

right consideration of Gods Iudgements.

Sect. 3.

The consideration of Gods word.

The third consideration concerning God, is of his word. David smaketh it the property of a blessed man *Psal. 1. 2. to meditate in the law of God day and night*; and he professeth of himselfe, that it was his meditation continually: *Psal. 119. 97.* yes, oftentimes hee promisseth to (a) meditate in Gods precepts, to (b) delight in Gods statutes. This is (c) *Maries* practise that she kept in her heart sundry things which Iesus spake. And so ought every child of God, high or low, daily and continually to meditate in the word of God. But, alas, this duty is little knowne, and lesse practised: men are so farre from meditating in Gods word that they are ignorant of it. Among many families you shall scarce finde the booke of God; and such as have it, for the most part, do little use it. The statutes of the land are by very many searched out diligently, but in the meane time the statutes of the Lord are little regarded: oh that men knew the sweet comfort of the Scriptures, *Rom. 15. 4.* then certainly they would account their meditation therein, *Ier. 15. 16.* The joy and rejoycing of their hearts.

Now the right consideration of Gods word consists in three things: first, we must observe the true sense and meaning of that which we heare, or read. Secondly, we must marke what experience wee have had of the truth of the word in our owne persons; as in the exercises of Repentance, and Invocation of Gods name, and in all our Temptations: this is a speciall point in this meditation, without which the former is nothing. Thirdly, we must consider how farre forth we have bene answerable to Gods word in obedience, and wherein we have bene defective by transgressions. Again, in the word of God, there be both commandments, and promises: The consideration of Gods commandment, is a notable meane to direct, and moderate, not onely our words, and deeds, but also our secret thoughts and desires: for if before we think, before we will, or speak any thing, we would first consider that God commands us to thinke, to will, and speake thus and thus, this would mightily stay, and suppress in us all corrupt thoughts and desires, all evil words and actions. The promises of God likewise duly considered would greatly further us in good thoughts: for to them that thinke on good things, shall be mercy and truth, *Prov. 14. 22.* The cause then why many that know the will of God, so much faile in particular obedience, is because that with their knowledge they doe not joyne this serious consideration of Gods commandments, and promises, and apply the same to their occasions.

Sect. 4.

The consideration of Gods workes.

The fourth consideration concerning God, is of his workes: for as David saith, *Psal. 11. 2.* The workes of the Lord are great, and ought to be sought out of all that love him. This consideration bindeth us to enquire, and search what be the workes of God toward us, his workes of creation, his providence, preservation, with all other his workes of mercy and justice in us; and upon us, whether ordinary, or extraordinary: The Prophet *Esaie* denounceth a war against those that had the Harpe, and Violl, Tymbrill and Pipe, and wine in their feasts, and regarded not the workes of God, *we considered the workes of his hands*; *Isai. 5. 12, 13.* whereby we may see, that the neglect hereof, is a grievous sinne, and yet it is the common sinne of this age.

Now for the better performance of this duty we must thus proceed: first, wee must consider our creation, how the Lord gave us being, when we were nothing, and how hee made us reasonable creatures, and not brute beasts; yes, he created us in his owne Image, when as he might, if it had so pleased him, have made us Toades and Serpents. Secondly, wee must consider his good providence over us, how he hath preserved our life from time to time, and saved us from many dangers. And his great patience must not be forgotten, how he hath spared us from the righteous judgements of our sinne: he might have cast us into hell in our mothers wombe, or so soon as wee were borne for our original sinne, but he hath given us a large time of repentance. Here also we must consider his exceeding favour in the time and place of our birth, and life: hee might have suffered us to have bene borne among Infidels; but behold we were borne in the bosome of Gods Church: he might have deprived us of the meane of our salvation, his holy word and Sacraments, but in his tender mercy hee hath vouchsafed them unto us, to bring our soules to life. He might have hardened our hearts against his favour, *Isa 63. 17.* And blinded our eyes against his light, *Rom 11. 8.* but yet hee hath enlightened our minds to know his truth, and softened our hearts, causing us to cry unto him for the pardon of our sinnes: he might have given us up to a reprobate sense, *Romans 1. 28.* when we swerved from his testimonies, and regarded not the knowledge of his will: but loe, as a loving Father hee hath often chastised us for our profits, that we might be partakers of his holynesse, *Heb. 12. 10.* Hee might have left us comfortlesse under the reproach of the wicked, but he hath vouchsafed us his Spirit, for our everlasting Comforter. Thus must we duly consider of all these wonderful workes of God towards us, and not like the men of this

this world, thinke on nothing but pastimes, the honours, and commodities; This will be a notable meane to keepe our hearts from exceeding thoughts: for whose heart will not relent towards his God, that so many wayes hath called of his bounty towards him? yes, this consideration will be an exceeding stay and comfort to our soules in the day of trouble, and distresse: So *Solomon* saith, *Eccles. 7. 19, 20.* Behold the workes of God, and in the day of affliction consider: A naturall man cannot away with trouble, if sorrowes increase upon him, he is ready to make away himselfe, which comes of this, that hee cannot consider the workes of God, for hee that can rightly meditate on Gods goodnesse towards him in all his workes, shall be able with patience to support his soule under the greatest crosse. A practise hereof we may see in David, who being in a most grievous temptation, so as hee cryed out, *Psal. 77. 8.* Is the Lords mercy cleane gone? hath he forgotten to be mercifull? &c. did yet recover himselfe by the consideration of Gods former workes of mercy, and of his wonders of old, whereof hee had experience in his owne person, *verſe 12, 13.*

CHAP. X.

Of spiritual considerations which concerne our selves.

Sect. 1.

The consideration of our owne personall sinnes.

THE considerations which respect our selves, are sixe: First, we must consider our owne personall sinnes as well the corruptions of our hearts, as the actuall transgressions of our lives. This was Davids practise, *Psal. 1. 19. 59. I considered my wayes* (saith he) *and turned my feet into thy testimonies.* The Iewes likewise in their great affliction, stirred up themselves to this duty, saying one to another, *Lam. 3. 40.* Come let us search, and try our wayes, and turne againe unto the Lord.

In this consideration of our sinnes, wee must do three things: First, seriously to call to minde in what manner we have sinned; whether of ignorance, or of knowledge, of weakness through infirmity, or of wilfulness through presumption. Secondly, wee must duly weigh the greatness of our particular sinnes, even of the least of them, remembering this, that by every sinne wee commit Gods infinite majesty is displeased, and his justice violated. Thirdly, we must consider the number of our sinnes; which wee shall neede attain unto by searching out our thoughts, our wills, and affections, our words, and actions, all which being diligently observed, will make us cry out, that they be in number

as the haire of our head, and the sands by the sea shore. *Quest.* But what if a man have truly repented him of his sinnes, must hee still use this consideration of them? *Anſw.* Yes verily, although hee be assured of the pardon of them: so did David after *Nathan* told him that his sinnes are forgiven; hee penned the 51. *Psalme*, and when hee was high in Gods favour, hee prayed still for the pardon of the sin of his youth, *Psal. 51. 7.* For howsoever God in mercy put our sins out of his remembrance, upon our true repentance, yet we must never put them out of our remembrance, so long as we live in this world; because the consideration of them, though they be pardoned, is a notable meane both to move us to renew our repentance, and also to make us watchfull against sinne in time to come.

Sect. 2.

Of mans misery through his sinnes.

Secondly, we must consider the misery into which every one is plunged by nature through Adams fall, and his owne sin. This was Iob meditation, saying *Iob 14. 2.* *Man that is borne of a woman, hath but a short time to live, hee is full of misery*; and so goeth on most notably, describing the misery of man; yea, this was *Salamons* consideration in the whole booke of *Ecclesiastes*, from the beginning to the end.

Now that this consideration may take place in our hearts, we must enter into a particular view of this our naturall misery: the principall branches whereof be these: first, a separation from all fellowship with God: for as *Isay* saith, *Isa. 59. 2.* Our sinnes have separated betweene God and us; and this is the speciall part of mans misery. Secondly, societie and fellowship with the damned spirits, the devils and his angels; standing in this, that man by nature beareth the image of the devill, and withall performeth service unto him in the practice of lying, injustice, cruelty, and all manner of sinne. Thirdly, all manner of calamities in this life, as ignorance in good name, paines and diseases in the bodie, losses, and dammages in friends, and in all temporal blessings whatsoever. Fourthly, The burrow of a guilty conscience, which is in it selfe the beginning of hell torments; for it is our accuser unto God, our Iudge to give sentence against us, and the very hang-man of our soules to condemne us eternally. Fifthly, The second death, which is the full apprehension of the eternal fury of the wrath of God, both in body and soule eternally. This consideration must be often used of every man, to move him to repentance, and it is very effectuall thereunto: for if we doe but consider how a man for the paine of one tooth, will be so grieved, that he could wish with all his heart to be out of the world, that his paine were ended: oh then, how great shall we thinke the

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apprehension of the full wrath of God to bee feazing not upon one little member onely; but upon the whole man, both body & soule; and that for ever? No tongue can expresse, nay, no heart can conceive the greatness of this error, and therefore it must be an occasion both to begin, and increase true repentance in us daily.

Sect. 3.

Of our owne particular temptations.

Thirdly, we must consider our *owne particular temptations* wherewith we are most assaulted through the malice of Satan, & our owne corruption. *Be sober and watch* (saith Peter, 1 Pet. 5. 8) *for your adversary the devil goeth about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom he may devour.* This was Pauls practice towards the incontinuous men, whom hee had enjoyed to be excommunicate, for after hee gave direction that hee should bee received into the Church againe, *lest hee were swallowed up of over much heavinesse, and so Satan should circumvent them:* for (saith hee, 2 Cor. 2. 7, & 11.) *we are not ignorant of his enterprises.* If forraigne enemies should seeke the invasion of our land, not onely our Magistrates, but every ordinary man, well affected to his Country, would bebinke himselfe what coase were the weakest, that thither present defence might be lent, to keepe out the enemies; even so, seeing the devill doth assault us daily, we must enter into serious consideration of our thoughts, wils, and affections, and see in what part we be most weak, and in what inclination Satan may most easily prevale against us, which we shall best espye by observing the finnes of our lives; and thus will make us aime our selves against him by Gods grace, even in the weakest parts, that he breake not into our hearts, to the ruine of our soules.

This consideration concerneth all men, not onely the disolute and fittill, but even those that have received most grace. It were infinite to goe through all the temptations of Satan: consider this one for all, whereby he kills many a soule. Through the whole course of mens lives, he laboureth to fill their hearts with carnall security, and to bring them to neglect the ordinary means of salvation. This done, hee seekes to keepe them in this estate all their life long: but in the end he takes another course; for when death approacheth, then hee seekes to strike their mindes with oblivion of Gods mercies, and to fill their soules with terrors in regard of their finnes, and of Gods judgements due unto them; that so bereaving them of all hope of mercy, hee may bring them to final desperation. Wee therefore being fore-warned of his deadly fraud, must seriously bebinke our selves of this temptation, and cast with our

(selves every day how to avoid it. This wee shall doe if wee shake off carnall security, and negligence in the means of our salvation; and provide berimes for the assurance of Gods love and favour, that when death shall come, we may bee free from the terror of an evill conscience, and have strong hope and consolation in Christ Iesus.

Sect. 4.

Of our particular end.

Fourthly, wee must consider our *particular end.* The Lord complains of the want hereof in his owne people: *Ob that they were wise, then would they consider this; they would consider their latter end.* (Deut. 32. 29.) In this consideration three points must be observed: first, that the time of death is uncertaine, no man knoweth when hee must die: secondly, that the place is uncertaine, no man knows where hee must die: thirdly, that the manner of his death is uncertaine, none knoweth by what death he shall glorifie God; and therefore that we may not deceive our selves, we must think that most fearefull and grievous ends may befall us, in regard of the bodily paine and torment, even then when wee little feare or suspect any such thing. This consideration will bee a notable means to stirre up our hearts, either to begin, or renew our repentance; when wicked *Abah* heard of his fearefull end, he was humbled, 1 King. 21. 17. and the *Ninevites* being told of their sudden destruction, repented in sack-cloth and ashes, and turned to the Lord, Ion. 3. 5. 6.

Sect. 5.

Of our strict account at the last day.

Fifthly, wee must often consider with our selves, & that most seriously, of that *straight account and reckoning of all our thoughts, words, and actions, which we must make unto God at the last day of judgement.* This is the principall consideration of all, and the want hereof a fearefull sinne, arguing great negligence, ignorance, blindness of minde, and hardnelle of heart: if a traveller come into an Inne, having but one penny in his purse, and call for all manner of dainty fare and provision, spending sumptuously, will not all men judge him void of all consideration, such hee hath nothing to pay, when his account is to bee made? Lo, this, or worse is most mens case, who in this life pursue their profits and pleasures, with all eagernesse, they care not how, never regarding the reckoning which they must make unto God, at his terrible day of accounts with all the world: and therefore though the former considerations will not, yet let this take place in our hearts, to move

move us to a daily fore-hand reckoning with God in the practice of true repentance, and to employ the good gifts and blessing we receive from God, like good servants, unto the best advantage of his glory, that when this account is to be made, wee may give it with joy, and not with feare. And that this consideration is effectuell to this purpose, *Salomon* teacheth in using it as his farewell with disolute youth, with whom otherwayes he hath little hope to prevaile; saying, *Eccle. 11. 9. Rejoyce thou yong man, sake thy pleasure in thy youth; yet know, that for all this thou must come to judgement.* But how powerful it is with Gods child, we may see in *Paul*, *Act. 24. 10.* who professed of himselfe, that in regard of this account, hee endeavoured to have alway a cleare conscience towards God, and towards men.

Sect. 6.

Of our present estate towards God.

Lastly, wee must seriously consider of our *present estate towards God*; whether we be in the state of sinne, or in the state of grace; whether we belong to the kingdome of darkness, or be true members of the kingdome of Christ: it is not enough to be in the Church, but wee must be sure wee be of the Church; for many *Wolves & Goates* be in Gods fold; *They went out from us.* (saith *S. Iohn*, 1 *Ioh. 2. 19.*) *but they were not of us:* and therefore *Paul* advileth to this consideration, saying, 2 *Cor. 13. 5. Prove your selves, whether you be in the faith or not.* The want hereof was the fearefull sinne of the *foolish virgins*, *Matth. 25. 3.* who contented them-

(selves with a shew of religion, having the *blazing lamps of outward profession*; and laboured not for that *style of true grace*, which might enlighten their soules to the fruition of Gods glory: yet, this is the common sinne of this age, men blasse themselves in their good meaning, saying they hope well, and doe not thoroughly search, whether they bee true members of Gods Church or not: Now if after triall it appeare, that true faith and repentance bee wanting in us, which are the scales of adoption in Gods children, then with all good confidence, we must use the means appointed of God, to obtaine these graces for our assurance, the comfort hercof will bee so precious unto our soules, that we shall abhorre to admit such wicked imaginations into our minds, as any way tend to deprive vs of it.

These are the considerations which respect our selves; whereunto if we give our mindes in a constant course, as also to the former which concerne the Lord, observing withall the rules before prescribed, through Gods blessing upon our endeavor, we shall undoubtedly finde by good experience, *That evil thoughts shall not prevaile against us:* but being reformed in our cogitations, we shall find out of our mindes, as from a cleane fountaine, such streames of good words and workes, through the whole course of our lives, as shall redound to the glory of our God, the good of our brethren, and the consolation of our owne soules, through Iesus Christ our Lord, to whom with the father, and the holy Ghost, bee praise in his Church for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.

WILLIAM PERKINS
HIS PROBLEME

OF

The forged Catholicisme, or Vniversallitie of
the Romish Religion.

And it is a counter-poyson against IODOCVS
COCCIVS his Thesaurus Catholicus.

AND

An Introduction to young Students in the reading of the Fathers.



LONDON,
Printed by JOHN LEGATT:
1631