

FIFTIETH EDITION,

THE PLAIN MAN'S PATHWAY TO HEAVEN; EVERY MAN MAY CLEARLY SEE WHETHER HE SHALL BE SAVED OR DAMNED.

By ARTHUR DENT,

Preacher of the Word of God at South Shoobery in Essex, 1590.

CORRECTED AND MUCH AMENDED; WITH A TABLE OF ALL THE PRINCIPAL MATTERS; AND THREE PRAYERS, NECESSARY TO BE USED IN PRIVATE FAMILIES, HEREUNTO ADDED BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Before morning the Lord brings His judgement to light, he fails not; but the wicked will not learn to be ashamed." Zephaniah 3:5.

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CONTENTS OF THIS DIALOGUE.

It shows Man's Misery in Nature, with the means of recovery.

It sharply inveighs against the Iniquity of the Time, and common Corruption of the World.

It shows the marks of the Children of God, and of the Reprobates, with the apparent signs of Salvation and Damnation.

It declares how hard a thing it is to enter into life, and how few shall enter.

It lays open the ignorance of the World, with the objections of the same.

LASTLY,

It publishes and proclaims the sweet promises of the Gospel, with the abundant mercies of God to all that repent, believe, and truly turn to him.

TO THE READER.

Providential leadings are often pleasing to observe. The reappearing of "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven" came about like this.

A man in Christ, reading "Bunyan's Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," came on the following:

"Soon after this, I changed my condition into a married state, and my mercy was to light on a wife whose father was counted godly. This woman and I, though we came together as poor as might be (not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon between us both), yet this she had for her part, 'The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven,' and 'The Practice of Piety,' which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I would sometimes read with her; wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me; but all this while I met with no conviction. She, also, would be often telling me what a godly man her father was, and how he would reprove and correct vice, both in his house and among Ms neighbours; and what a strict and holy life he lived in his days, both in word and deeds. . . . Wherefore, these books, with the relation, though they did not reach my heart to awaken it about my sad and sinful state, yet they created within me some desires to reform my vicious life, and fall in very eagerly with the religion of the times, that is, to go to church twice a day, and that too with the foremost; and there would very devoutly both say and sing as others did, yet retaining my wicked life."

The reader felt a great desire to see this book, "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven."

IV, TO THE READER.

When the desire was forgotten, unexpectedly he alighted on an old copy, in black letter, without the title-page, and another page. He then remembered the desire, and the book was eagerly purchased.

Years rolled away, and the book had been to the uttermost parts of the earth, and back again.

That God had directed John Bunyan to write the "Pilgrim's Progress," in allegory, through the means of this book, appeared likely; and as savoury meat was in it which is agreeable to the taste of many, a reprint, for the good of the "household," was considered. It was not so favourable to do this abroad; but, returning home again, Mr. Wilson kindly undertook to bring it forth in a new dress. Many efforts were made to find another copy, but in vain; and the Prospectus informed subscribers that, "although it is minus the title-page, and one page, yet all the gold is preserved." A friend in England wrote that he had an incomplete copy, in plain type, and sent the same, containing the dedication by the author, and the missing page. Another servant of Christ also wrote that he had the book, and sent a copy of the title-page.

Thus, from three copies, it now appears entire.

The Lord, the God of Israel add his blessing "To feed the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood," Amen,

In an edition of the "Plain Man's Pathway," published in 1704, it is stated to be the fortieth edition, indicating that one hundred thousand copies of this work had been sold. At a more recent date, we learn that it was again reprinted as the forty-first edition; and from what we have heard concerning other editions, we think it probable that this will be the fiftieth edition. In the old editions, there is no division in the work: though embracing a great variety of topics, the heading of all the chapters were the same. We trust the liberty taken in giving the title to each new subject will prove helpful to the reader, as it will enable him more easily to refer to any particular in the book. The only other liberty taken has been to modernise the spelling: in all other respects it is bona fide as first issued in 1601. The Author, Arthur Dent, was minister of South Shooberry, a village near to Southend, in Essex, but persecuted by Bishop Aylraer for nonconformity. About the year 1584 he endured many troubles from this prelate, for refusing to wear the surplice, and omitting the sign of the cross in baptism. With several of his persecuted brethren, many of whom were suspended and in prison, he thus petitions the lords of the Queen's Council:

"We cheerfully and boldly offer this our humble suit to your honours, being our only sanctuary on earth, next to her Majesty, to which we go in our present necessity; and, most of all, we are encouraged when we consider how richly God has adorned your honours with knowledge, wisdom, and zeal for the

gospel, and with godly care and tender love to those who profess the same. Most humbly, therefore, we ask your honours, with your accustomed favour in all godly and just causes, to hear and to judge of our matters. We have received the charge, as loyal and faithful men, to instruct and teach our people in the way of life; and every one of us hearing this sounded from the God of heaven, 'Woe be to me, if I preach not the gospel!' we have all endeavoured to discharge our duties, and to approve ourselves both to God and man. despite this, we are in great heaviness, and some of us already put to silence, and the rest living in fear; not that we have been, or can be charged, we hope, with false doctrine, or slanderous life; but because we refuse to subscribe that there is nothing contained in the book of Common Prayer contrary to the word of God. We protest, in the sight of God, who searches all hearts, that we do not refuse from a desire to dissent, or from any sinister affection, but in the fear of God, and from the necessity of conscience. The apostle teaches that a person who doubts is condemned if he eats: if a man, then, be condemned for doing a lawful action, because he doubts whether it be lawful; how much more should we incur the displeasure of the Lord, and justly deserve his wrath, if we should subscribe, being fully persuaded that there are some things in the book contrary to his word! If our reasons might be so answered by the doctrine of the Bible, and we could be persuaded that we might subscribe lawfully, and in the fear of God, we would willingly consent. In these and other respects, we humbly crave your honourable protection, as those who from the heart entirely love, honour, and obey her excellent Majesty, and your honours, in the Lord. Giving most hearty thanks to God for all the blessings we have received from him, by your government; constantly praying, night and day, that he will bless and preserve her Majesty and your honours to eternal salvation, your honours' poor and humble supplicants."

In a work of Arthur Dent's, called "The Ruin of Rome, or an Exposition of Revelations," his friend Ezekiel Cultewell, gives the following account of him:

"To give some public testimony of my love towards him, and reverence of the rare grace which we all who enjoyed his sweet society continually saw in him, whose learning his labours show; and whose diligence, yes, extreme and unwearied pains in his ministry, publicly, privately, at home, and abroad, for at least four-and-twenty years, all our country can testify: all Which areing adorned with such special humility, make his name the greater, and our loss the more grievous. I may not leave out this which I avow to be as certain as it is singular that, besides all others his great labours, he had a special care of all the churches night and day, by study and fervent prayer, procuring the prosperity of Zion and the ruin of Rome. And, to end with his blessed end, his

life was not more profitable to others, than his death was peaceable to himself: scarcely a groan was heard, though his fever must have been violent, which despatched him in three days. Having made a pithy confession of his faith, 'This faith,' said he, 'have I preached; this faith have I believed in; this faith I die in; and this faith would I have sealed with my blood, if God had so thought good; and tell my brethren so.' He afterwards said, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness:' and, with his last breath, added, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but your law is exceeding broad.'"

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL SIR JULIUS CESAR, Knight, of the Masters of the Requests to the King's Majesty, Judge of the High Court of Admiralty, and Master of St. Catherine's, wishes all good things in Christ Jesus.

Hating finished, Right Worshipful, and made ready for the press this little Dialogue, I bethought me, since the common manner of all that write any books in this age, is to dedicate the same to one or to other of great place, to whom I might dedicate these my poor labours. At last I resolved that none were more fit than your Worship; both in regard of some affinity in the flesh, as also because of those many abilities with which the Almighty has endued you. Having nothing else to present your Worship with, in token of a thankful heart for your courtesies showed towards me, behold, I here send to you this third fruit of my labours now published. Most humbly asking you to take it in good worth; not weighing the value of the thing, which is of no value, but the simple and good meaning of the giver. This work sharply reproves and convicts the world of sin, and so is likely to find many deadly enemies, which with cruel hatred will most eagerly pursue it to death. Zoilus also, and his fellows, I know will bitterly carp at it. Therefore, it flies to your Worship for protection, and humbly desires to take sanctuary under your wings. Wherefore, I humbly entreat you, to take on you the patronage and defence of it; that by your means it may be delivered both from the calumnious obloquies of evil-disposed persons, and also from the world's malignity; so as it may take no injury. And concerning this little volume, the sum of the matter of it, you shall find in the Epistle to the Reader. As concerning the manner, here is no great matter in learning, wit, are, eloquence, or ingenious invention; (for I have specially respected the common people, whose edification I chiefly aim at) yet there is some which may concern the learned, and give them some contentment. Whatever it be, I leave it with your Worship, asking you to receive it. And so I most humbly take my leave, commending both yourself, your good wife, and your whole family to the merciful protection of the ever living God.

Your Worship's, to command in the Lord,

ARTHUR DENT.

South Shooberry, Essex, April 10, 1601.

EPISTLE TO THE EEADEK..

Gentle Reader, seeing my little Sermon of repentance, some few years since published, has been so well accepted of, I have, for your further good, published this Dialogue, being the third fruit of my labour, wishing to it the like success, that God by it may have the glory, and you who are the reader comfort. I have, in one part of this Dialogue, produced some of the ancient writers, and some of the wise heathen also, to testify on their oath in their own language, and to bear witness of the ugliness of some vices, which we in this age make light of, which I wish may not be offensive to any. In other parts of this work, I do in a manner relinquish them. But in this case I have, in my weak judgement, thought them to be of some good use, to show forth thus much, that if we do not in time repent, forsake our sins, and seek after God, both the ancient Christian fathers, whose eyes saw not that we see, nor their ears heard that we hear, yes, the very heathen also, shall rise up in judgement against us. Let none, therefore, stumble at it; but if any do, let them remember I am in a Dialogue, not in a sermon. I write to all of all sorts; I speak not to some few of one sort. But what is done herein, is not much more than that of the Apostle, "as some of your own poets have said," Acts 17 which is warrantable. One thing, dear Christian, I pray you let me beg of you; that is, that you would not read two or three leaves of this book, and so cast it from you; but that you would read it throughout even to the end; for I do assure you, if there are anything in it worth the reading, it is given in the latter part of it, and most of all towards the conclusion. So do not be discouraged at the harshness of the beginning, but look for smoother matter in the midst, and most smooth in the conclusion and wind-up of all; for this Dialogue has in it, not the nature of a tragedy, which is began with joy, and ended with sorrow; but of a comedy, which is began with sorrow, and ended with joy. This book meddles not at all with any controversies in the Church, or anything in the state Ecclesiastical, but only enters into a controversy with Satan and sin. It is contrived into six principal heads; first, it shows man's misery in nature, with the means of recovery; secondly, it sharply inveighs against the sin of the time, and common corruptions of the world; thirdly, it shows the marks of the children of God, and of the reprobates, together with the apparent signs of salvation and

damnation; fourthly, it declares how hard a thing it is to enter into life, and how few shall enter; fifthly, it lays open the ignorance of the world, with the objections of the same; last of all, it publishes and proclaims the sweet promises of the gospel, with the abundant mercy of God, to all that repent, believe, and truly turn to him. The Author of all blessing give a blessing to it. The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in all good works, sanctify us throughout, amend all our imperfections, and keep us blameless until the day of his most glorious appearing. Amen.

yours, in the Lord,

A. DENT.

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THE PLAIN MAN'S PATHWAY TO HEAVEN.

INTERLOCUTORS.

THEOLOGUS, a man of God.

PHILAGATHUS, An Honest Man.

ASUNETUS, An Ignorant Man.

ANTILEGON, A Critic

MAN'S CORRUPTION & MISERY.

Phil. Well met, good master, Theologus.

Theol. What my old friend, Philagathus! I am glad to see you in good health.

Phil. Are you walking, sir, here all alone in this pleasant meadow?

Theol. yes; for I take some pleasure at this time of the year to walk abroad in the fields for my recreation, both to take the fresh air, and to hear the sweet singing of birds.

Phil. Indeed, sir, it is very comfortable, especially now in this pleasant month of May: and thanks be to God, hitherto we have had a very forward spring, and as

kindly a season as came this seven years.

Theol. God abounds towards us in mercies; Oh that we could abound towards him in thanksgiving.

Phil. I pray you, sir, what time is it?

Theol. I take it to be a little past one; for I came just now from dinner,

Phil. But, behold, yonder come two men towards us: who are they?

Theol. They are a couple of neighbours of the next parish: the one of them is called Asunetus, who is a very ignorant man in God's matters: and the other is called Antilegon, a notable atheist, and critic against all goodness.

Phil. If they are such, it would be good for us to take some occasion to speak of matters of religion; it may be we shall do them some good.

Theol. You have proposed a good idea: I like it well. If therefore you will suggest a subject, and give some questions, I will answer in the best sort I can.

Phil. But stay, sir, lo here they come on us.

Theol. Welcome, neighbours, welcome. How are you Asunetus, and you Antilegon?

Asun. Well, thank God; and we are glad to see you in good health.

Theol. What brings both of you here at this time of the day? There is some occasion I am sure draws you this way.

Asun. Indeed, sir, we have some little business; for we came to talk with one of your parish, about a cow we should buy from him.

Theol. Hath my neighbour a cow to sell?

Antil. We are told he has a very good one to sell; but I am afraid at this time of the year, we shall find her to be dear.

Theol. How dear? what do you think a very good cow may be worth?

Antil. A good cow indeed, at this time of the year, is worth very near four pounds, which is a great price.

Theol. It is a very great price indeed.

Phil. I pray you, Mr. Theologus, leave off this talking of cows, and worldly matters; and let us talk about religion, whereby we may do good, and receive good one of another.

Theol. You say well: but these men's business may requires haste, so as they cannot stay.

Asun. No, sir, we are in no great haste, we can stay two or three hours, for the days are long; if we finish our business by night it will serve our turn well enough.

Theol. Then if you like, we will walk to yonder oak tree, there is a pleasant arbour, and handsome seats, where we may all sit in the shadow, and talk of heavenly matters.

Asun. With a good will, sir.

Phil. Come, then, let us go.

Asun. This is a pleasant arbour indeed, and here are handsome seats.

Theol. Sit you all down, I pray you. Now friend Philagathus, if you have any questions to move of matters of religion, we are all ready to hear you.

Phil. It may be these men are somewhat ignorant of the very principles of religion; and therefore I think it not amiss to begin there, and so to make way for further matters.

Theol. I pray you do so then.

Phil. First, then, I demand of you, in what state all men are born by nature?

Theol. In the state of condemnation, as appears, Eph. 2:3. We are by nature the children of wrath as well as others. And again it is written, "Behold I was born in sin, and in sin has my mother conceived me," Psalm. 2:5.

Plilil. Is it every man's case? Are not dukes and nobles, lords and ladies, and the

great potentates of the earth exempted from it?

Theol. No, surely, it is the common case of all, both high and low, rich and poor, as it is written, "That is man that he should be clean, and the one who is born of a woman, that he should be just?" Job 15:14.

I<sup>^</sup>hil. From whence comes it, that all men are born in so woeful a case?

Theol. From the fall of Adam, who by it had not only wrapt himself, but all his posterity, in extreme and unspeakable misery; as the apostle says, "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners: and by the offence of one, the fault came on all men to condemnation."

Phil. What reason is there that we all should thus be punished for another man's offence?

Theol. Because we were then all in him, and are now all of him: that is we are so descended out of his loins, that of him we have not only received our natural and corrupt bodies, but also by propagation have inherited his foul corruptions, as it were by hereditary right.

Phil. But forasmuch as some have dreamed that Adam by his fall hurt himself only, and not his posterity, and that we have his corruption derived to us by imitation, and not by propagation; therefore I pray you show this more plainly.

Theol. Even as great personages, by committing treason, do not only hurt themselves, but also stain their blood, and disgrace their posterity, for the children of such nobles are disinherited, whose blood is tainted, till they are restored again by act of parliament; even so our blood being tainted by Adam's transgression, we can inherit nothing of right, till we are restored by Christ.

Phil. Does this hereditary infection and contagion overspread our whole nature?

Theol. Yes, truly, it is universal, extending itself throughout the whole man, both soul and body, both reason, understanding, will and affections; for the scriptures assert that we are dead in sins and trespasses, Eph. 2:1; Col. 1:21, 2:13.

Phil. How understand you that?

Theol. Not of the deadness of the body, or the natural faculties of the soul, but of the spiritual faculties,

Phil. Did Adam then lose his nature and destroy it by his fall? or is our nature taken away by his fall?

Theol. Not so. Our nature was corrupted by it, but not destroyed: for still there remains in our nature, reason, understanding, will, and affections, and we are not as a block, or a stock; but by Adam's disobedience we are blemished, maimed, and spoiled of all ability to understand right, or to will and do right. As it is written, "We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. 3:5. And again, "It is God who works in you both the will and the deed; even of his good pleasure," Phil, 2:13. And, as concerning the other point, St. James says, "That all men are made after the similitude of God," James 3:9, meaning by it that there remain some relics and parts of God's image, even in the most wicked men; as reason, understanding, &c. so that our nature was not wholly destroyed.

Phil. Then you think there are some sparks and remnants left in us still of that excellent image of God, which was in our first creation.

Theol. I think so indeed: and it may plainly appear into us in the wise speeches and, writings of heathen poets and philosophers; in all which we may, as by certain ruins, perceive what was the excellent frame and building of man's creation.

Phil. Can a man please God in any thing he does, so long as he continues in the state of nature?

Theol. No, not in any thing: for till we are in the state of grace, even our best actions are sinful; as preaching, prayer, alms deeds, &c. As it is written, "Who can bring a clean thing out of what is unclean?" Job 14:4. The apostle also says, "those who are in the flesh cannot please God," Rom. 13:8; that is, such as are still in their natural corruption. And our Lord Jesus himself says, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Matt, 7:16; meaning by it, that mere natural men can bring forth no fruits acceptable to God.

Phil. This is a very harsh and hard saying; I pray you, for my further instruction, make it more plain.

Theol. Men in the state of nature may do those things which of themselves are



good, but they utterly fail in the manner of doing them: they do them not as they should be done; that is, in faith, love, zeal, conscience of obedience, &c. neither yet with any cheerfulness, delight or feeling, but even as it were, forcing themselves to do the outward actions. Thus did Cain sacrifice, the Pharisees pray, Ananias and Sapphira give alms, and the Jews offer up their oblations and burnt-offering.

Phil. Have men any true sight, or lively and sound feeling of this misery and woeful estate, so long as they are merely natural?

Theol. No, surely, but are altogether blinded and hardened in it, being nothing desirous to come out of it, but greatly please themselves in it, and can hardly be persuaded that they are in any such woeful case; as appears plainly in the example of that ruler, who being commanded or rather required of our Saviour Christ to keep the commandments, answered, "All these have I kept from my youth," Luke xv3. 21. And again, although the church of Laodicea was wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, yet she thought herself rich, increased with goods, and wanting nothing. It follows then, that so long as men are in the state of nature, they have no true sight and feeling of their misery.

Phil. Do you not think that all men being merely natural, are under the curse of the law?

Theol. Yes, certainly; and not only so, but also under the very tyranny and dominion of Satan, though they know it not, see it not, feel it not, or perceive it not; for all that are not in Christ, are under the curse of the law, and the power of darkness and the devil, as appears, Eph, 2:2, where the devil is called the prince that rules in the air, even the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, 2 Cor. 4:4. In another place, he is called the god of this world, who blinds the eyes of all unbelievers. And again, it is said, that all men naturally are in his snare, being taken captive of him at his will, 2 Tim. 2:26.

Phil. Few will be persuaded of that; they will say they defy the devil, and thank God they were never troubled with him.

Theol. Their hot words do nothing amend the matter; for the devil is no more driven away with words, than with holy water, but he sits in the tongues and mouths; No, possesses the very heart and entrails of thousands who say they defy him, and are not troubled with him, as appears manifestly by their particular actions, and the whole course of their life.

Phil. I think, if the devil so inwardly possesses the hearts and consciences of men, they should have some sight and feeling of it.

Theol. The working of the devil in men's souls (being an invisible spirit) is with such inconceivable sleight and crafty conveyance, that men, in the estate of nature cannot possibly feel it, or perceive it: for how can a blind man see, or a dead man feel?

PMI. Show this more plainly.

Theol. Even as a crafty juggler deceives and blinds men's outward senses by the delusions of Satan, that they think they see what they see not, and feel what they feel not: even so the devil so deludes and bewitches our inward senses, and the natural faculties of our souls, that we having a mist cast before our eyes, think we are what we are not, see what we see not, and feel what we feel not. For the deep cunning of Satan lies in this, that he can give us our death's wound, and we shall never know who hurt us.

Phil. Few will believe this to be true.

Theol. True indeed: for few will believe the scriptures: few will believe this, because few feel it: where it is not felt, it can hardly be believed: only the elect feel it, and therefore only the elect believe it. As for all others, they are the very apprentices and bond-slaves of the devil, which is a thousand times worse than to be a galley-slave.

Phil. How long do men continue in this woeful state of nature, being under the curse of the law, and the very slavery of Satan and sin?

Theol. Till they are regenerate and born again, and so brought into the state of g<sup>^</sup>ee: as our Lord Jesus says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John 3:3.

Phil. Do not many die and depart this life, before they are born again, and consequently before they are brought into the state of grace?

Theol. Yes, no doubt, thousands: for many live forty or threescore years in this world, and in the end die, and go out of this life before they know wherefore they come into it: as it is written, "My people perish for want of knowledge."

Phil. What may we think of such?

Theol. I tremble to speak what I think; for surely I do not see how such can be saved. I speak not now of infants and children, whereof some no doubt are saved by virtue of the promise and covenant, through the election of grace.

Phil. It seems then that you think none can be saved, but those only who are born again.

Theol. I think so indeed.

Phil. I pray you tell me what the same regeneration and new birth is, whereof you speak.

Theol. It is a renewing and repairing of the corrupted and decayed estate of our souls. As it is written, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind," Rom. 12:2. And again, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind," Eph. 4:2, 3:

Phil. Explain this more fully.

Theol. Even as the wild olive retains his old nature, till it be grafted into the sweet olive, but afterward is partaker of a new nature; so we, till we are grafted into Christ, retain our old nature, but afterward are turned into a new nature, as it is written, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. 5:17.

Phil. I understand not what you say.

Theol. You must know this, that as there is a natural birth of the whole man, so there is also a spiritual birth of the whole man.

Phil. How is that?

Theol. When as the natural faculties of the soul, as reason, understanding, will and affections, and the members of the body also, are so sanctified, purged, and rectified by grace, that we understand, will, and desire what is good.

Phil. Cannot a man will and desire what is good before he is born again?

Theol. No more than a dead man can desire the good things of this life. For man's will is not free to consent to good till it be enlarged by grace; and an unregenerate man sins necessarily, though not by constraint: for man's

will is free from constraint (for it sins of itself) but not from captivity to sin.

Phil. You speak as if a man could do nothing but sin, till the new work be wrought in him.

Theol. That is my opinion indeed: for a man and his flesh are all one, till he is regenerate; they agree together like man and wife, they join together in all evil, they live and die together: for when the flesh perishes, the man perishes.

Phil. Is not this regeneration a changing or rather a destroying of human nature?

Theol. Nothing less: it is neither an abolishing, nor changing of the substance of body or soul, or any of the faculties of it; but only a rectifying and repairing of them by removing the corruption.

Phil. Is then our natural corruption so purged and quite removed by the power of grace, as that it remains not at all in us, but that we are wholly freed of it?

Theol. Not so. For the relics and remnants of our old nature, which the scripture calls the old man, hang about us, and dwell in us, even until our dying day: as it is plainly proved in the last ten verses of the seventh to the Romans.

Phil. Then you affirm that this new man, or new work of grace and regeneration, is imperfect in this life.

Theol. Yes. For the new creature, or new work of grace, can never be fully fashioned in this life, but is always in fashioning. And as our faith and knowledge in this life are imperfect, so is our regeneration and sanctification.

Phil. You said before that the regeneration or new birth is of the whole man, which seems to imply that the new work of grace is entire and perfect.

Theol. You are mistaken. For although the new birth is universal, and of the whole man, yet it is not entire, perfect, pure, and without mixture of corruption. For it is written, "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh," Gal. 5:17. The apostle also prays that the Thessalonians may be sanctified throughout, in spirit, soul, and body.

Phil. This seems very obscure I pray you make it more plain.

Theol. You must note this, that the new works and the old, flesh and spirit, grace and corruption, are so intermingled together in all the faculties of the soul and body, as that the one ever fights against the other.

Phil. But tell me, I pray you, how you understand this intermingling of grace and corruption in the soul? Do you mean that grace is placed in one part of the soul, and corruption in another, so they are separate?

Theol. No, that is not my meaning, but this, that they are joined and mingled together (as I said) in and throughout the whole man. For the mind, or understanding part, is not one part flesh and another part spirit; but the whole mind is flesh, and the whole mind is spirit, partly one, and partly another. The same is to be said of the will and affections.

Phil. I pray you express it more plainly.

Theol. Even as the air in the dawning of the day is not wholly light, or wholly dark, as at midnight, or at noon day, neither is it in one part light, in another part dark; but the whole air is partly light, and partly dark throughout: and as in a vessel of luke-warm water, the water itself is not only hot, nor only cold, but heat and cold are mixed together in every part of the water: so is the flesh and the spirit mingled together in the soul of man. And this is the cause why these two contrary qualities fight together.

Phil. Out of doubt this doctrine of regeneration is a very great mystery.

Theol. Yes, certainly: it is a secret of secrets, which the wise of this world cannot comprehend.

Phil. Some think that courtesy, kindness, good nurture, good nature, and good education, are regeneration, and that courteous and good-natured men must be saved.

Theol. They are greatly deceived; for these things do not necessarily accompany salvation, but are to be found in such as are altogether profane and irreligious: yet we are to love such good outward qualities, and the men in whom we find them.

Phil. What say you then to learning, wit and policy; are not these things of the essence of religion, and prove a regeneration?

Theol. No, no; for they are external gifts, which may be in the most wicked men, as in papists, heathen poets, and philosophers: yet we are greatly to reverence learned and wise men, although the new and inward work be not as yet wrought; for that is only of God, that is from above.

Phil. The common people attribute much to learning and policy: for they will say, such a man is learned and wise, and knows the scripture as well as any of them all, and yet he not thus and thus.

Theol. It is one thing to know the history and letter of the scriptures, and another thing to believe and feel the power of it in the heart which is only from the sanctifying Spirit, which none of the wise of the world can have.

Phil. It is a common opinion, that if a man hold the truth in judgement, be no papist, or heretic, but leads an honest civil life, then he must of necessity be saved.

Theol. That follows not: for many come so far, who have not the inward touch.

Phil. That seems strange. For many will say, as long as they are neither whore nor thief, nor spotted with such like gross sins, they trust in God they shall be saved.

Theol. They err not knowing the scriptures. For many thousands are in great danger of losing their souls for ever, who are free from such notorious and horrible vices: No, many who in the world are counted good honest men, good true dealers, good neighbours, and good townsmen.

Asun. I pray you, sir, give me leave a little. I have heard all your speech hitherto, and I like reasonably well of it; but now I can forbear no longer, my conscience urges me to speak. For I think you go too far, you go beyond your learning in this, that you condemn good neighbours, and good townsmen. You say, many such men are in danger of losing their souls; but I will never believe it while I live. For if such men be not saved, I cannot tell who shall.

Theol. But you must learn to know out of the scriptures that all outward honesty and righteousness, without the true knowledge and inward feeling of God, avails not to eternal life. As our Saviour Christ says, "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 5:20. It is also written that when Paul preached at Berea, many honest men and honest women believed.

Acts 17:12; that is, such as were outwardly honest, or honest to the world only; for they could not be truly and inwardly honest before they believed. Therefore you see that this outward honesty and civility, without the inward regeneration of the Spirit, avails not to eternal life; and then consequently, all your honest worldly men are in great danger of losing their souls for ever.

Asun. What sound reason can you yield why such honest men should be condemned?

Theol. Because many such are utterly void of all true knowledge of God, and of his word. No, which is more, many of them despise the word of God, and hate all the zealous professors of it. They esteem preachers but as prattlers, and sermons as good tales; they esteem a preacher no more than a shoe-maker: they regard the scriptures no more than their old shoes. What hope is there then, I pray you, that such men should be saved: does not the Holy Spirit say, "How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" Heb. 2:3.

Asun. You go too far you judge too hardly of them.

Theol. Not a whit. For all experience shows, that they mind, dream, and dote of nothing else day and night, but this world, this world's lands and leases, grounds and livings, kine and sheep, and how to wax rich. All their thoughts, words, and works, are of these and such like things; and their actions most manifestly declare that they are of the earth, and speak of the earth; and that there is nothing in them but earth, earth. As for sermons, they care not how few they hear. And for the scriptures they regard them not, they read them not, they esteem them not worth the while: there is nothing more irksome to them; they had rather pick straws, or do any thing, than hear, read, or confer of the scriptures. And as the prophet says, "The word of the Lord is as a reproach to them, that have no delight in it," Jer. 6. 10.

Phil. I marvel much that such men should live so honestly to the world-ward.

Theol. No marvel at all; for many bad men whose hearts are worm-eaten within, yet for some outward and carnal respects, abstain from the gross act of sin; as some for credit, some for shame, some for fear of law, some for fear of punishment; but none for love of God, for zeal, or conscience of obedience. For it is a sure thing, that the wicked may have that spirit which represses; but not what renews.

Phil. It seems then by your speeches that some who are not regenerate do in

some things excel the children of God.

Theol. Most certain it is that some of them in outward gifts, and the outward carriage of themselves, go beyond some of the elect.

Phil. Show me I pray you in what gifts.

Theol. In learning, discretion, justice, temperance, prudence, patience, liberality, affability, kindness, courtesy, good nature, and such like.

Phil. Methinketh it should not be possible.

Theol. Yes, truly. For some of God's dear children, in whom no doubt the inward work is truly and soundly wrought, yet are so troubled and encumbered with a crabbed and crooked nature, and so clogged with some master sin; as some with anger, some with pride, some with covetousness, some with lusts, some one way, some another; all which breaking out in them, so blemish them and their profession that they cannot so shine forth to men as otherwise no doubt they would; and this is their wound, their grief, and their heart smart, and what costs them many a tear, and many a prayer: and yet can they not get the full victory over them, but still they are left in them, as the thorn in the flesh, to humble them.

Phil. Yet love should cover a multitude of such weaknesses in God's children.

Theol. It should do so indeed: but there is great want of love, even in the best; and the worst sort seeing these weaknesses in the godly, run on them with open mouth and take on them to condemn them utterly, and to judge their hearts, saying they are hypocrites, dissemblers, and there is none worse than they.

Phil. But do you not think that there are some counterfeits, even amongst the greatest professors?

Theol. Yes, no doubt there are, and always have been some very hypocrites in the church: but we must take heed of judging and condemning all for some. For it were very much to condemn Christ and his eleven disciples, because of one Judas; or the whole primitive church, for Ananias and Sapphira.

Phil. But I hope you are of this mind, that some regenerate men, even in outward gifts, and their outward carriage, are comparable with any others.



Theol. Without doubt, very many. For they being guided by God's Spirit, and upheld by his grace, walk very uprightly and unblameably towards men.

Phil. Yet there rests one scruple: for it seems very strange to me, that men of so discreet carriage as you speak of, and of so many good parts, should not be saved. It is a great pity such men should be damned.

Theol. It seems so to us indeed; but God is only wise; and you must note that as there are some weaknesses in God's children, which he corrects with temporal chastisements, and yet rewards their faith, love, and inward service and obedience, with eternal life; so there are some good things in the wicked, and those who are without Christ, which God rewards with temporal blessings, and yet punishes them eternally for their unbelief and hardness of heart.

Phil. Now you have reasonably well satisfied me touching the doctrine of regeneration, and the manifold errors and deceits that are in it, and of it I pray you let us now proceed: and first of all tell me, by what means the new birth is wrought?

Theol. By the preaching of the word, as the outward means; and the secret work of the Spirit, as the inward means, 1 Peter, 1:23; John 15:3; Acts 10:44.

Phil. Many hear the word preached and are nothing the better, but rather the worse; what I pray you is the cause of that?

Theol. Men's own incredulity, and hardness of heart; because God in his wrath leaves them to themselves, and deprives them of his Spirit, without which all preaching is in vain: for except the Spirit follow the word into our hearts, we can find no joy, taste, nor comfort in it, Acts 16:14.

Phil. Cannot a man attain to regeneration and the new birth without the word and the Spirit?

Theol. Not at all: for they are the instruments and means whereby God works it.

Asun. Why may not a man have as good a faith to ward God, that hears no sermons, as the one who hears all the sermons in the world?

Theol. Why may not he, who eats no meat, be as fat and as well liking, as the

one who eats all the meat in the world? For is not the preaching of the word, the food of our soul?

Asun. I like not so much hearing of sermons, and reading of the scriptures, except men could keep them better.

Theol. Faithful and honest hearers listen to them, that they may be more able to observe and do. For a man cannot do the will of God before he knows it; and he cannot know it without hearing and reading.

Antil. I wonder what good men get from listening to sermons, and poring so much in the scriptures; or how are they better than others? there are none more full of envy and malice than they. They will do their neighbour a bad turn as soon as any body; and so, in my opinion, they are but a company of hypocrites and precise fools.

Theol. You judge uncharitably. You know little what they feel, or what good God's people get by hearing of his word. For the work of the Spirit in the heart of the elect is very secret and altogether hidden from the world, as it is written, "The wind blows where it lists, and you hear the sound of it, but can not tell where it goes to, or where it comes from; so is every man that is born of the Spirit," John 3:8. And again, "The things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God."

Asun. Tut, tut; what is all this about? If a man say his Lord's prayer, his ten commandments, and his belief, and keep them, and say no harm to anyone, nor do harm to anyone, and do as he would be done to, have a good faith to God ward, and be a man of God's belief, no doubt he shall be saved, without all this running to sermons, and quoting the scriptures.

Theol. Now you pour it out indeed. You think you have spoken wisely. But, alas, you have shown your great ignorance. For you imagine a man may be saved without the word, which is a gross error.

Asim. It is no matter, say you what you will, and all the preachers in the world besides: as long as I serve God, and and say my prayers duly and truly, morning and evening, and have a good faith in God, and put my whole trust in him, and do my true intent, and have a good mind toward God, and a good meaning, although I am not learned, yet I hope it will serve the turn for my soul's health. For that God who made me must save me. It is not you that can save me, for all your learning, and all your scriptures.

Theol. You may very fitly be compared to a sick man, who having his brain distempered with heat, raves, and speaks idly, he cannot tell what. For the Holy Spirit says, "He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abominable," Prov. 28: 9. And again, "He that despises the word, he shall be destroyed," Prov. 13:13. So long therefore as you despise God's word, and torn away your ear from hearing his gospel preached, all your prayers, your fantastical serving God, your good meanings, and your good intents, are to no purpose; but most loathsome and odious in the sight of God: as it is written, "My soul hates your new moons, and your appoints feasts, they are a burthen to me, I am weary to bear them. When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you: and though you make many prayers, I will not hear; for your hands are full of blood," Isa. 1:14, 15. And again the Lord says by the same prophet, "He that kills an ox, is as if he slew a man: the one who sacrifices a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck: the one who offers an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood: and the one who bums incense, as if he blessed an idol," Isa. 66:3; where you see, the Lord tells you his mind touching these matters, that is, that all your prayers, services, good meanings, &c. are abominable to him, so long as you walk in ignorance, profaneness, disobedience, and contempt of the gospel. For he says in the words immediately going before, "To him will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my words," 5:2.

Asun. I grant indeed for those who are idle and have little to do, it is not amiss now and then to hear a sermon, and read the scriptures: but we have no leisure, we must follow our business, we cannot live by the scriptures; they are not for plain folks, they are too high for us, we will not meddle with them. they belong to preachers and ministers.

Theol. Christ says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I give to them them eternal life," John 10:27, 28. So if you refuse to hear the voice of Christ, you are none of his sheep, neither can you have eternal life. And in another place our Lord Jesus says, "He that is of God, hears God's word. So you hear it not, because you are not of God," John 13:47. Paul writing to all sorts of men, both rich and poor, high and low, men and women, young and old, exhorts that "the word of Christ may dwell plenteously in them all, in all wisdom," Col. 3:16. So you see that the apostle would have all sorts of people, that have souls to save, to be well acquainted with the scriptures. Therefore you may as well say you will not meddle with God, with Christ, nor with everlasting life, as to say you will not meddle with the scriptures.

Asun. Well, I cannot read, and so I cannot tell, what Christ or what Paul may say; but this I am sure of, that God is a good man, (worshipped might he is) he is merciful, and that we must be saved by our good prayers, and good serving of God.

Theol. You speak foolishly and ignorantly in all that you say, having no ground for any thing you speak but your own fancy, and your own conceit: and yet you will believe your own fancy against all preachers, and against all that can be spoken out of the word. But I pray you give me leave a little. If a man dream that he shall be a king, and in the morning when he is awake persuades himself it shall be so, may he not be justly laughed at, as having no ground for it? even so may all those who believe their own dreams and phantasies touching salvation; but it is true which Solomon says, "A fool believes everything," Prov. 14:15, that copper is gold, and a counter an angel. And assuredly, great reason there is that he who will not believe God should be given over to believe the devil, his dream, and his fancy.

Asun. I pray you instruct me better then.

Theol. You had need indeed to be better instructed: for the devil has slyly deluded your soul, and cast a mist before your eyes, making you believe the crow is white, and that your estate is good before God, whereas indeed it is most woeful and miserable.

Asun. No, I defy the devil, with all my heart. But I pray you tell me how it comes to pass that I am thus deceived.

Theol. This it is that deceives you, and many others, that you measure yourselves by yourselves, and by others, which is a false ruler. For you seem to lie straight so long as you are measured by yourselves, and by others; but lay the rule of God's word to you, and then you lie altogether crooked.

Asun. What other thing is there that deceives me?

Theol. Another thing that deceives you, is your own heart; for you know not your own heart, but are altogether deceived in it, "For the heart is deceitful above all things," Jer. 17:9. He is a wise man, and greatly enlightened, that knows his own heart. But you are blind, and know not what is within you; but dimly imagine you shall be saved, and hope you know not what of eternal life. And because blindness makes you bold, you will seem to be resolute in words, and say it is a pity he should live, who any whit doubts of his salvation. And

assuredly you speak as you think, and as you know. For ought that you know to the contrary it seems so; though indeed, and in truth it is not so; for you are deluded with a false light. And sometimes, no doubt, you have pricks, gripes, terrors, and inward accusations of conscience, for all your bold and resolute speeches.

Asun. Truly I never heard so much before.

Theol. That is, because you shut your eyes, and stop your ears against God, and all goodness. You are "like the deaf adder, which hears not the voice of the charmer, though he is most expert in charming," Psal. 58:45.

Asun. Well then, if it be so, I would be glad now to learn, if you would teach me. And as you have showed me the means whereby the new birth is wrought, so now show me the certain signs and tokens of it, whereby all men may certainly know that they are sanctified, regenerate, and shall be saved?

Theol. There are eight infallible notes and tokens of a regenerate mind, which may well be termed the eight figures of salvation; and they are these:

A love to the children of God a delight in his word often and fervent prayer zeal of God's glory denial of ourselves patient bearing of the cross, with profit and comfort faithfulness in our calling honest, just, and conscionable dealings in our actions amongst men. 1 John 3:14, 2:5; Psalm cxix; cxlv. 18; Rom. xii. 11; Eev. 3:19; Matt. x6. 24; Job 1:21; Eph. 4:21. 32; Phil. 4:8.

Phil. Now that you have showed us the evident signs of man's salvation: show us also the signs of condemnation.

Theol. The contraries to these are manifest signs of damnation: no love to the children of God no deght in his word seldom and cold prayers coldness in God's matters trusting to our selves impatience under the cross unfaithfulness in our calling dishonest and unconscionable dealing.

JPhil. No doubt, if a man be infected with these, they may be shrewd signs that a man is extremely soul-sick and in a very dangerous case. But are there not yet more evident and apparent signs of condemnation than these?

Theol. Yes, truly. There are nine very clear and manifest signs of a man's condemnation.

Phil. I pray you let me hear what they are.

Theol. Pride, fornication, covetousness, contempt of the gospel, swearing, lying, drunkenness, idleness, oppression.

Phil. These be gross things indeed.

Theol. They may not be unfitly termed the nine Beelzebubs of the world: and the one who has these signs on him is ill a most woeful case.

Phil. What if a man be infected with some two or three of these?

Theol. Whoever is infected with three of them, is in great danger of losing his soul. For all these are deadly venom, and rank poison to the soul: and either the three first, or the three last, or the middle three, are enough to poison the soul, and sting it to death. No, to say the truth, a man had as good gripe a toad, and handle a snake, as meddle with any one of these.

Phil. Is every one of them so dangerous?

Theol. Without doubt. For they are the very plague sores of the soul. If any man have a plague sore on his body, we used to say God's tokens are on him. Lord, have mercy on him. So we may truly say, if any man be thoroughly and totally infected at the heart with any one of these, God's tokens are on his soul. Lord, have mercy on him.

Phil. Many do not think these to be so dangerous matters as you make them, and many there are who make light of them.

Theol. True indeed: for the most part of men are altogether shut up in blindness, and hardness of heart, having neither sight nor feeling of their sins; and so make light of them, thinking there is no such danger.

Phil. It is most certain that men are given to lessen and extenuate their sins; or else, to hide them, and daub them over with many cunning shifts and vain excuses. For men are ever ready to take covert, and will writhe and wreath (like snakes) to hide their sins: yes, if it were possible, to make sin no sin, to make virtue vice, and vice virtue. Therefore I pray you lay open to me, out of the scriptures, the grievousness and ugliness of their sins?

Theol. The stinking filthiness of these sins is so great and horrible that no

tongue or pen of man is sufficient fully to manifest and lay open the same, according to the proper nature and being of it: yet I will do my best to lay them open in some measure, that all men may the more loathe them.

PRIDE.

Phil. I pray you then, first of all begin with pride.

Theol. You say well: for that indeed may well stand in the fore-front, since it is a master-devil, and the master-pock of the soul.

Phil. Show me out of the scriptures that pride is so grievous and loathsome.

Theol. Solomon says, "Everyone that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord," Prov. 6:5; which plainly shows that God detests and abhors proud men. And is it not a fearful thing, think you, to be abhorred of God? And in the same chapter, verse 18, he says, "Pride goes before destruction, and a high mind before a fall;" wherein he shows that pride is the forerunner of some deadly downfall, either by disgracing or displacing; for it is an old and true proverb, "pride will have a fall." And often when men are most lifted up, then are they nearest to it: as the examples of Haraan, Nebuchadnezzar, and Herod, plainly declare. When the milt swells, the rest of the body pines away: even so, when the heart is puffed up with pride, the whole man is in danger of destruction. Moreover, the Holy Spirit says. "The Lord will destroy the house of the proud," Prov. 15:25, Job says of such kind of men, "The spark of his fire shall not shine; fear shall dwell in his house, and brimstone shall be scattered on his habitation," 18:5. 15. And in another place, he says, "The fire which is not blown shall devour him," 20:26. I think, therefore, if there were any spark of grace in us, these terrible speeches of the Holy Ghost might serve to humble us, and pull down our pride; especially as the scriptures affirm that God resists the proud, and sets himself against them; and therefore woe to them: for if God take against a man, who can reclaim him? for he does whatever he will," Job 23:13.

Phil. But tell me, I pray you, when you speak against pride, what pride it is that you mean?

Theol. I mean all pride, both what is inward in the heart, and what breaks out in men's foreheads: I mean what shows itself in men's words and works.

Phil. Do you mean also pride of men's gifts?

Theol. Yes, surely; for there is no pride worse or more dangerous than that. Beware, says one, of spiritual pride, as to be proud of our learning, wit, knowledge, reading, writings, sermons, prayers, godliness, policy, valour, strength, riches, honour, birth, beauty, authority; for God has not given such gifts to men, to the end they should make sale-ware of them, and set them a sunshining, to behold, seeking only themselves with their gifts, the vain praise of the multitude, and applause of the people, so robbing God of his honour, and proudly arrogating to themselves what is due to God, which is the praise of his gifts; but he has given his gifts to another end, namely, that we should use them to his glory, and the good of others (either in church or common-wealth) especially of those which most concern us.

Phil. Yet we see commonly men of greatest gifts are most proud.

Theol. True indeed: for the finest cloth is soonest stained. And as worms engender sooner in soft and tender wood than in what is more hard and knotty, and as moths breed sooner in fine wool than in coarse, even so pride and vain-glory sooner assault an excellent and rare man in all kind of knowledge and virtue, than another of meaner gifts. And therefore pride is said to spring out of the ashes of all virtues: for men will be proud, because they are wise, learned, godly, patient, humble, &c. Pride, therefore, may very fitly be compared to crab apple suckers, which grow out of the root of the very best apple-tree. Therefore to say the truth, this is one of the last engines and weapons the devil uses for the overthrowing of God's own children; even to blow them up with pride as it were with gunpowder. For as we see it come to pass in the siege of strong-holds, when no battery or force of shot will prevail, the last remedy and policy is to undermine it, and blow it up with trains of gunpowder; so when Satan can no way prevail against some excellent servants of God, his last device is, to blow them up with pride, as it were with gunpowder.

Phil. I see it is a special grace of God for men of great gifts to be humble-minded; and he is an old man of a thousand, who excelling in gifts excels in humility; and the more gifts he has, the more humbly he walks; not despising others, but esteeming them better than himself: for commonly, we are the worse of God's gifts, because we have not the right use of them; and again, because they engender so much proud flesh in us, that we had need daily to be cauterised. Therefore God shows great favour and mercy to that man whom he humbles and takes down by afflictions or weaknesses; for otherwise, it is sure proud flesh would altogether overgrow us.



Theol. You have spoken the truth; for the apostle himself confesses that he was tempted and troubled this way, (2 Cor. 12) I would have been puffed up out of measure with the abundance of his revelations; except that God, in great mercy sent him a cooler; that is, a prick in the flesh, (which he calls the messenger of Satan) whereby the Lord cured him of his pride. And even so he cures many of us of our pride, by throwing us to Satan, leaving us to ourselves, and giving us over to commit some gross evil, even to fall down and break our necks; and all to the end he may humble us, tame us, and pull down our pride, which he sees we are heart-sick of It is good for us, therefore, to be humble in the abundance of graces, that we are not proud of what we have, or what we have done. For humility in sin is better than pride in well-doing. It is better to lie humbled for our sins, than proud of well-doing, 2 Chron. 32:31.

Phil. Herein surely appears the great wisdom and mercy of God, that he so graciously brings good out of evil, and turns our afflictions, weaknesses, falls and downfalls to his glory and our good.

Theol. It is most true. For even as of the flesh of a viper is made a sovereign medicine, to cure those who are stung of a viper; and as physicians expel poison with poison; so God, according to his marvellous wisdom, by the weaknesses which remain in us after regeneration, cures other more dangerous diseases; as pride, vain-glory, and presumption. Oh, blessed therefore, be his name for ever, who thus mercifully causes all things to work together for the good of his own people: of whom these things are specially to be understood!

Phil. Is there no cause why men of great gifts should glory in their gifts?

Theol. No, surely, none at all. For the apostle says, "Who separates you? and what have you, that you have not received? If you have received it, why boasts you, as though you hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. 4:7: Where the apostle plainly shows, that no man is to be proud of his gifts, because they are none of his own; he has but receive them to use. We count him worthy to be laughed at as a fool, who having borrowed brave apparel of others, (as a silk gown, a satin doublet, a chain of gold, velvet breeches, &c.) should proudly strut in the streets in them, as if they were his own; even though they are worthy to be chronicled for fools, who are proud of good gifts, which are none of their own. Therefore the prophet Jeremiah says, 9:23, "Thus says the Lord: let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, neither the rich man in his riches; but let him that glories glory in this, that he

understands, and knows me.' To this point also, well says the heathen poet, Theocritus, "No man can escape the punishment of pride, therefore, in greatest prosperity be not puffed up."

Phil. Yet it is a world to see how proud, surly, haughty, stately, and insolent some be, because of their gifts; they think they touch the clouds with their heads, and that the earth not bear them; they take themselves to be petty angels, or some wonderful characters. They despise and disdain all others who have not the like gifts. They contemptuously overlook them, as a lion would overlook a mouse, a king a beggar; or, as we say in a proverb, "as the devil overlooked Lincoln."

Theol. Oh proud dust! Oh haughty worm's meat! If they would bring their hearts before God, and their consciences, thoughts, and affections to be judged by this law, it would soon cool them, and take them down well enough; they should see their wants and imperfections to be so great, that they indeed should have no more cause to boast of their gifts, than the Ethiopian has of his whiteness, because his teeth are white. The Holy Ghost cuts all our combs, and pulls down all pride of flesh, when he says, "How little man understands of God!"

Phil. I pray you, let us proceed to speak of the outward and gross pride of the world: and first of all, tell me what you think of pride in apparel.

Theol. I think it to be a vanity of all vanities, and a folly of all follies; for to be proud of apparel, is, as if a thief should be proud of his halter, a beggar of his rags, a child of his gay toys, or a fool of his bauble.

Phil. Yet we see how proud many (especially women) be of such baubles. For when they have spent a good part of the day in tricking and trimming, pricking and pinning, pranking and pouncing, girding and lacing, and dressing up themselves in most exquisite manner, then out they come into the streets, with their pedlar's shop on their back, and carry their crests very high, taking themselves to be little angels, or at least somewhat more than other women. Where on they so exceedingly swell with pride, that it is to be feared they will burst with it, as they walk in the streets. And truly we may think the very stones in the street, and the beams in the houses shake, and wonder at their monstrous, intolerable, and excessive pride. For it seems that they are altogether a lump of pride, a mass of pride, even altogether made of pride, and nothing else but pride, pride.

Theol. You seem to be very hot in the matter.

Asun. Marry, sir, I like him the better: for the world was never so full of pride as it is nowadays.

Theol. Alas! alas! indeed, who can hold his peace at the pride of this age! What a thing is it, that flesh and blood, worms' meat, dust and ashes, dirt and dung, should so brave it out with their trim clouts, and that in the sight of God, angels and men! For the time will come, when both they, and all their gay clouts shall be buried in a grave: yes, as Job says, 17:13, 14, "The grave shall be their house, and they shall make their bed in the dark. And then shall they say to corruption, you are my father; and to the worm, you are my mother and my sister." What then shall it avail them thus to have ruffled it out in all their bravery, when as suddenly they shall go down to destruction? What did it profit the rich man to be sumptuously clothed, and fare deliciously every day, when his body was buried in the dust and his soul in hell fire?

Asun. I pray you, sir, what say you to these great ruffs, who are borne up with supporters and as it were with post and rail?

Theol. What should I say? but God be merciful to us. For such things draw down the wrath and vengeance of God on us all: and as the apostle says, Col, 3:6, "For such things' sake, the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience," And truly, truly, we may well fear that God will plague us for our abominable pride.

Asun. What say you then to these doubled and redoubled ruffs who are now in common use, long locks, fore tufts, shag hair, and all these new fashions which are devised and taken up every day?

Theol. I say, they are far from that plainness, simplicity, and modesty which has been in former ages: our forefathers knew no such things. It is recorded of William Rufus, some time king of this land, that when his chamberlain brought him a new pair of hose, he demanded of him what they cost: who answered, three shillings. Whereat the king, being somewhat moved, commanded him to prepare him a pair for sixpence. If kings were then thought to exceed that spent more than sixpence on a pair of hose, what is to be thought of many mean men in these our days who spend as much on one pair as the king did on two, when he was thought most of all to exceed? But, alas! alas! we have passed all bounds of modesty and measure: there is no limit with us. Our land is too heavy of this sin. For the pride of all nations, and the follies of all countries are

on us: how shall we bear them? And as for these new fashions, the more new they are the more foolish and ridiculous are they: for with our new fashions we are growing clean out of fashion. If we had as many fashions of our bodies as we have of our attire, we should have as many fashions as fingers and toes. But vain men and women apparently show their vain minds by following so greedily such vain toys and fashions.

Asun. It was never good world since starching and steeling, whalebones and supporters and full moons and hobby-horses, painting and dying, with selling of favour and complexion, came to be in use; for since these came in covetousness, oppression, and deceit have increased. For how else should pride be maintained? And sure it is, within these thirty years these things were not known, nor heard of. And what say you then to painting of faces, laying open of naked breasts, dying of hair, wearing of wigs, and other hair coronets and top-gallants? And what say you to our artificial women, who will be better than God has made them? They like not his handy-work: they will mend it, and have other complexion, other faces, other hair, other bones, other breasts, and other bellies than God made them.

Theol. This I say, that you and I, and all the Lord's people, have great and just cause of mourning, weeping, and lamentation, because such abomination is committed in Israel, Psalm 119:119. David's eyes gushed out with rivers of tears because men kept not God's laws; and an horrible fear came on him because men forsook the law of God. Jeremiah (9:1) sighed in secret, wishing that his head were full of water, and his eyes a fountain of tears, because of the sins of the people. Nehemiah mourned for the transgression of God's people. Lot's just soul was vexed with the unclean behaviour of the Sodomites; and shall we mourn nothing at all for these things? shall we are no whit grieved for the pride of our land? shall we shed no tears for such horrible and intolerable abomination? They are odious in the sight of God and men: the air stinks of them. It is God's marvellous patience that the devil does not carry them away quick, and rid the earth of them; or that fire and brimstone does not come down from heaven and consume them.

Antil. You are too hot in these matters of attire: you make more of them than there is cause.

Asun. I give him thanks. God's blessing on his heart: I shall love him the better while I know him, because he is so earnest against such shameful and detestable pride. Is it not a shame that women, professing true religion, should make themselves such pictures, puppets, and peacocks, as they do? and yet I

hear few preachers in the pulpit speak against it.

Antil. I marvel you should be so earnest in matters of apparel. You know well enough that apparel is an indifferent thing; and that religion and the kingdom of God does not consist in these things.

Theol. I know right well that apparel in its own nature is a thing indifferent; but lewd, wanton, immodest, and offensive apparel is not indifferent; for all such abuse takes away the indifference, and makes them sinful and evil by circumstance; for, otherwise, why should the Lord threaten by his prophet that he would visit the princes, and the king's children, and all such as were clothed with strange apparel, that is the fashions of other countries, Zeph. 1:8. Again; why should the Lord so plague the proud dames and mincing minions of Jerusalem for their pride and vanity in attire, if there were no evil in such kind of abuse? The Lord says thus, in the third of Isaiah, against those proud women, "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-out necks, and with wandering eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and make a tinkling with their feet: therefore shall the Lord make the heads of the daughters of Zion bald, and the Lord shall discover their secret parts. In that day shall the Lord take away the ornament of the slippers, and the calls, and the round tires, the sweet balls, and the bracelets, and the bonnets, the tiers of the head, and the stops, the head-bands, and the tablets, the ear-rings, the rings, and the mufflers, the costly apparel, and the veils, and the wimples, and the cringing pins, and the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the lawns. And instead of sweet savour, there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of dressing of the hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth, and burning in stead of beauty. Then shall her gates mourn and lament: and she, being desolate, shall sit on the ground." Thus we see how terribly the Lord threatens the gallant dames of Jerusalem for their excessive and abominable pride. And this may well be a mirror for the proud minions of our age, who assuredly may well fear the Lord will bring some such judgement on them as he did on the daughters of Jerusalem: for their sin is as great in this kind as was the daughters' of Zion; and God is the same God now that he was then to punish it.

Antil. Tush: never speak so much of these matters of apparel; for we must do as others do, and follow the fashion, or else we shall not be esteemed.

Theol. If you follow them not you shall be more esteemed of God, of his angels, saints, and all good men. As for all others, if you esteem them more than these you show what you are.

Antil. Well, for all that, say you what you will, pride is in the heart, and not in the apparel; for one may be proud of plain apparel, as well as of costly; and some are as proud of their falling bands, and little sets, as others are of their great ruffs.

Theol. You speak foolishly. For how know you that you can judge men's hearts and inward affections? Can you say, when men's and women's apparel is sober, modest, and Christianlike, that they have proud hearts, and are proud of that attire? You go very far, indeed, to judge the heart. You ought to judge charitably of such as go soberly and modestly attired; even that their heart is according to their attire. As for you, we may rather think your heart is vain, light, and foolish; because your attire strongly indicates it; and as the prophet says, "The show of your countenance testifies against you; you declare your sins as Sodom, and hide them not," Isa. 3:9.

Antil. I pray you then set down some rules for apparel out of the scriptures.

Theol. I may well set down what I will; but surely most men and women will do what they wish. For truly it may be thought that many of this age have forsworn God, and his word, and all goodness; for they are come to this point, let God say what he will, they will do what they wish. For as the prophet says, "They have made a covenant with hell, and with death, and are grown to an agreement," Isa. 28: 15. And I think, if God himself should come down from heaven in his own person, and dissuade men and women from this vanity of apparel yet would they still use it, as it were in despite of God and as it were to anger him the more. For they are so extraordinarily enamoured, and so immoderately delighted with it, and do so continually, and altogether dote on it, and are so mad about it, that they will have it, though men and angels, and all the world say No; No, which is more, though they should go to the devil quick with it. And therefore it is but lost labour to speak against it, preach against it, or write against it. It is to plough the sea, or knock at a deaf man's door; for there is no hope of reformation. Only this we gain, that the world is reprov'd and convicted of sin; and these things shall stand in record against them in the last day: so that they may say, they had a fair warning, and that there was a prophet amongst them.

Phil. Yet for all this, I pray you set us down some directions and rules, out of God's holy book, concerning attire. For albeit some be very bad and outrageous in these things, yet there are some others who are well-disposed, and will (no doubt) make some conscience to frame themselves according to the rules of

God's word.

Theol. Well, then, for their sakes who are well-disposed, I will set down some few directions. St. Paul, in 1 Tim. 2:9, wills that "women should array themselves in comely apparel, with shamefacedness and modesty, as becomes women that profess the fear of God: and not with braided hair, or gold or pearls, or costly apparel." The apostle Peter gives like rules also: for he says, 1 Pet. 3:3-6, speaking of Christian matrons, and professors of holy religion, that their apparel must not be outward, that is, not consist so much in outward bravery, (as braided hair, gold put about, &c.) as it must be inward, that the hidden man of the heart may be clothed with a meek and quiet spirit, which is a thing before God much set by. "For after this manner," says he, "in times past, the holy women, who trusted in God, adorned themselves:" as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and such like ancient and grave matrons.

Phil. Wherein does this inward clothing specially consist?

Theol. In four things, which are set down in the forenamed places: that is, shamefacedness, modesty, a quiet spirit, and a meek spirit.

Phil. These be fine suits of apparel, indeed. I would all women would put them on, and never put them off, but wear them continually. For they are the better for wearing, though all other apparel be the worse.

Theol. If women would deck themselves inwardly with these aforesaid virtues, they would be to them as ornaments of gold, and jewels of pearl. "For the women that fears the Lord shall be praised," Prov. 31:30.

Phil. But now I pray you, sir, set down your judgement for outward attire.

Theol. This is all that I can say, touching the point, that it must be as the apostle says: comely, decent, handsome, neat and seemly: not light, not wanton, not lascivious, not immodest, not offensive.

Phil. But who shall judge what is comely, sober, handsome, modest, &c.? For every man and women will say, their apparel is but decent and cleanly, how gallant, brave, and flaunting soever they are.

Theol. Herein the examples of the most godly, wise, grave, and modest men and women are to be followed: for who can better judge what is comely, sober, and modest, than they?

Phil. But we see some, even of the better sort, in this matter are a little infected, run out, and go beyond their bounds.

Theol. The more is the pity. But alas! we see the sway of the time, and the rage of the stream is so violent, that it carries before it whatever is not settled, and very deep-rooted. And some godly and well-disposed persons, whose hearts are not with these things, but with God, are, despite, perforce, carried away with the violence of the wind and tide; whose case, though it cannot be well defended, or excused, yet it is much to be pitied and lamented.

Phil. Have you any further directions touching this point.

Theol. There is one thing yet more to be added, that is, that attire be according to men's places, callings, and degrees. For that is not seemly for one that is seemly for another: that becomes not one man's place that becomes another's: for that is not meet for poor men which is meet for rich men: nor that meet for mean men which is meet for men of note and great place.

Phil. Then you think it lawful for kings, princes, and great personages, to wear pearl, gold, silver, velvet, &c.?

Theol. Without doubt; it is lawful for such in sober manner and measure, to wear the most costly and precious things which the earth can afford: and that, to set out the magnificence, pomp and glory of their places. And therefore such things are in them most comely and decent.

Phil. But now-a-days few will keep within compass, few will know their places: but the most part run beyond their bounds, and leap quite out of their sockets.

Theol. True indeed, for now-a-days, mean gentlewomen, yes, some gentlewomen of their own making, will ruffle it, and brave it out in their attire, like countesses and ladies of honour. Plain folks also, in the country, will flaunt it like courtiers, and like good gentlemen and gentle women: and they seem to say in their hearts, fie of this plainness, we will no more of it, we will not take it as we have done. So that now the old proverb is verified "every Jack will be a gentleman, and Joan is as good as my lady." For now we cannot, by their apparel, discern the maid from the mistress; nor the waiting gentle woman from her lady. And thus we see, in this matter of apparel, how all is out of joint.

Phil. Is there any more to be said in this case?



Theol. There is yet another th3g to be respected in this matter of attire.

Phil. What is that?

Theol. That it be according to men's abilities. For it is sad to consider, how poor men and women, poor hired servants, milk-maids, and such like, go quite beyond their abilities. And more sad, to see what wretched and ill favoured shifts they make to compass these things, so sharp and so eagerly are they set on them.

Phil. Well sir, now you have sufficiently rolled the stone, and at large satisfied us touching the matter of pride, which is the first sign of condemnation; now proceed to the second, which is fornication, and unfold to us out of the scriptures the dangers of it.

Theol. Solomon in his Proverbs, 22:14, says, "That the mouth of a strange woman, or an harlot, is as a deep pit: he, that is a detestation to the Lord, shall fall in it;" wherein he plainly shows, that those whom God detests, and is exceeding angry with, are given over to this vice. And, in another place, 23:27, he says, "A whore is as a deep ditch, and as a narrow pit;" noting by it, that if a man be once fallen in with an harlot, he shall as hardly get out again, as a man that is plunged into a very deep and narrow pit, where he can scarce stir himself. The same Solomon, in the book of Ecclesiastes, 7:26, yields us the reason of it; namely, because she is as nets, snares, and bands; wherein if a man be once taken he is fast enough for getting out. "I find," says he, "more bitter than death, the woman, whose heart is as nets and snares, and her hands as bands. He that is good before God shall be delivered from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her." We therefore plainly see, in what a labyrinth and a dangerous case they are, that are left of God, and given over to fornication and harlots. And therefore it is said, Prov. 6. 25, 26, "Desire not her beauty in your heart; neither let her eyelids catch you. For, by fornication a man is brought to a morsel of bread: and the adulteress hunts for life, which is precious." Again he says, 5:3, 4, "Although the lips of a harlot drop as an honey comb, and the roof of her mouth is softer than oil; yet her latter end is bitter as wormwood, and as sharp as a two-edged sword." All these prudent speeches of the Holy Spirit most evidently show to us, what a fearful thing it is to commit fornication, and so to fall into the hands of whores and harlots. Therefore Job says of the wicked, 36:14, "Their soul dies in youth, and their life among the fornicators."

Phil. You have very well showed, out of God's book, the great danger of

fornication and adultery; and it is greatly to be lamented that men in this age make so light of it as they do, and that it is so common a vice: No, that some (alas, with grief I speak it) profess it, live by it, and prostitute themselves wholly to it.

Theol. Such men and women may justly fear the plaguing hand of God: for the Lord says, by his prophet, "Though I fed them to the full, yet they committed adultery, and assembled themselves by companies in harlots' houses. They rose up in the morning like fed horses; every man neighs after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? (says the Lord) Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Jer. 5:7-9.

Phil. I think, if men were not altogether hardened in this sin, and even past feeling, and past grace, this threatening and thundering of God himself from heaven should terrify them.

Theol. A man would think so indeed: but now we may take up the old complaint of the prophet, Jer. 13:6, "I listened and heard, and lo, no man spoke aright: no man repented of his evil, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to their race, as the horse rushes into the battle."

Antil. Fornication is only a trick of youth; and all men have their imperfections,

Theol. You speak profanely and wickedly; for, shall we count that but a trick of youth for the which the Lord smote three and twenty thousand of his own people in one day? 1 Cor. 10:8. Shall we count that but a trick of youth for the which the Lord threatened David, his own servant, that the sword should never depart from his house? 2 Sam. 12:10. Shall we count that but a trick of youth, for the which Hamor and Shechem, Gen. 34:25, the father and the son, and many other, both men, women, and children, were cruelly murdered by Simeon and Levi, the sons of Jacob? Shall we count that but a trick of youth, for which the Lord slew Hophni and Phineas, the two sons of Eli the priest, in the battle of the Philistines? 1 Sam. 2:22, 4:11. Shall we thus set all at sixes and sevens, and make light of such horrible villainies? Does not the severity of the punishment show the greatness of the sin? Does not the apostle say, "These things came on them for our examples, on whom the ends of the world are come," 1 Cor. 10:11, and yet you pass it over as a trick of youth, as if God were to be dallied with? No, no, "be not deceived; God is not mocked;" those who will not be moved now in hearing, shall one day be crushed in pieces in feeling. And those who now call fornication, a trick of youth, shall one day howl and cry, yell and yelp, for such tricks, with woe and alas that ever they were born.

Antil. Oh! Sir, you must bear with youth: youth you know is frail; and youth will be youthful, when you have said all that you can.

Theol. Yes, but God allows no more liberty to youth, than to age; but binds all, on pain of death, to the obedience of his commandments. The apostle says, "Let the young men be sober minded," Tit. 2:6. David says, "How shall a young man cleanse his way? In guarding it according to your word," Ps. 119:9. The wise man says, Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, Eccl. 12:1. And further adds, that if they will needs follow their lusts, their pleasures, and their own swing, yet in the end he will bring them to judgement, arraign them, condemn them, and tame them in hell-fire well enough.

Phil. Yet we see, men are so violently carried after their lust, and so desperately bent, that they will have the present sweet and pleasure of sin, come of it what will. Come sickness, come death, come hell, come damnation, they are at a point: they will pay the highest price for their lusts. They will purchase their pleasures with the loss of their souls. Oh, woeful purchase! Oh, damnable pleasures!

Theol. Sweet meat will have sour sauce, and a dram of pleasure a pound of sorrow. Such cursed wretches shall at last pay a dear shot for their pleasures. Such desperate wretches shall one day know (to their everlasting woe) what it is to provoke God, and to sin with so high an hand against him. They shall well know, in spite of their hearts, that vengeance is prepared for the wicked, and that there is a God that judges the earth. Let all men therefore take heed in time, "For fornicators and adulterers God will judge," Heb. 13:4. And the apostle says flatly, "That fornicators and adulterers shall not inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. 6:9. "Let therefore no fornicator, or unclean person, be found amongst us, as was Esau," Heb. 12:16. "But let us abstain from fleshly lusts, which fight against the soul," 1 Pet. 2:11. "And let every one know how to possess his vessel in holiness and honour, and not in the lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles, which know not God," 1 Thess. 4:5. Herein let us consider the wise speech of an ancient father (Chrysostom), "Sin, while it is in doing, ministers some pleasure; but when it is committed, the short pleasure of it vanishes away, and long sorrow comes instead of it." Neither let us here reject the saying of a wise heathen, "Shun pleasure, for fear of smart." Sour things follow sweet, and joy heaviness.

Antil. Yet for all this, you shall not make me believe, that fornication is so heinous a matter. You make more of it than it is.

Theol. True indeed. For you, and such as you are, will believe nothing against your lusts, and fleshly delights: and that is the cause why you are deaf on this ear. I will therefore add a word or two more (out of the oracles of God) to what has been spoken. The wise king says, "He that commits adultery with women, destroys his own soul," Prov. 6:32, and so is accessory to his own death, which is no small matter. For we used to say, if a man hung himself, drowned himself, or any manner of way made away with himself, that he was cursed of God, that God's hand was heavy against him, that the devil owed him a shame, and now he has paid it him. And all the country rings of such a strange accident, when, and where it falls out: and the coroner of the country sits on it. How much more may all the world wonder at this, that a man should destroy his own soul, and wittingly and willingly cast away himself for ever! Now the Holy Spirit says, the adulterer does such an act, gives such a venture, and willingly murders himself. Oh, therefore woe to him, that ever he was horn! For sure it is that great crowner of heaven, that crowns whom he will crown, shall one day sit on it, and give judgement. Moreover, as the adulterer sins against his soul, so also he sins against his body after a special manner, as witnesses the apostle, 1 Cor. 6:18. Also, he sins against his goods and outward estate, as the holy man Job testifies, saying, "Adultery is a fire, that devours to destruction, and it will root out all our increase," Job 31:12. Furthermore, he sins against his name, "For the adulterer shall find a wound and dishonour: and his reproach shall never be put away," Prov. 6:33. Item, he sins against his wife; who is his companion and the wife of his covenant. And God says, in the same place, "Let none trespass against the wife of his youth; keep yourselves in your spirit, and transgress not." Last of all, he sins against his children and posterity: as the Lord said to David, "Because you have despised me, and done this, therefore the sword shall never depart from your house. Behold I will raise up evil against you, out of your own house," 2 Sam. 12:10. Now therefore, to conclude this point, we may see how many deadly wounds men make in themselves, by committing of adultery. They wound themselves in their souls they wound themselves in their bodies they wound themselves in their goods they wound themselves in their names they wound themselves in their wives and in their children. What man, except he were stark mad, would thrust himself, in so many places, at once? The adulterer, with his own sin of adultery, makes all these deadly wounds in himself; and it is a hundred to one he will never get them cured, but will die, and bleed to death of them. Lo, thus you see the dangerous quality and condition of this sin. Shall we now therefore make light of it? Shall we say it is but a trick of youth? Shall we smooth over the matter with sweet words, when the Holy Spirit makes it so heinous and capital? Shall we make nothing of what draws down God's wrath on the soul, body, goods,

name, wife, and children? That were an intolerable blindness, and most extreme hardness of heart. An ancient writer has long ago passed sentence on us, who make so light of this sin: for, says he, "Adultery is the very book of the devil; whereby he draws us to destruction." And another godly father says: that "Adultery is like a furnace, whose mouth is gluttony, the flame pride, the sparks filthy words, the smoke an evil name, the ashes poverty, and the end shame." And so we plainly see, that however we regard not this sin, but flatter ourselves in it, yet those, whose eyes the Lord has opened, have in all ages condemned it as most grievous and horrible: yes, the very heathen will rise up in judgement against us, who have spoken and written many things against this filthy and beastly vice.

Phil. Now indeed you have sufficiently branded the vice of adultery, and laid out the ugliness of it, that all men may behold it stark naked and abhor it. If any man, despite all this, will venture on it, he may be said to be a most desperate monster. For what does he else, but, as it were, put his finger into the lion's mouth, and, as it were, take the bear by the tooth? and they may well know what will follow, and what they may look for. Let all men therefore in time take heed to themselves, and to their own souls, as they will answer it at their uttermost peril, at the dreadful day of judgement, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. But now one thing rests; that is, that you should show us the special roots and causes of adultery.

Theol. There are five special causes of it. The first is our natural corruption: for the very spawn and seed of all sin is in our corrupt nature; and this, of all others, is a most inherent sin, as witnesses the apostle James, saying, "When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is perfected, brings forth death," 1:15. The second is gluttony and fulness of bread: for when men have filled their bellies, and crammed their paunches, as full of good cheer, wine, and strong drink, as their skins can hold, what are they meet for, or what mind they else, but adultery and uncleanness? And therefore well says one, "Great nourishment, and gross food, it is the shop of lust." The heathen poet could skill to say, "without meat and drink, lust waxes cold;" and to this effect the wise king says, "That their eyes shall behold strange women, whose hearts are set on wine or belly cheer," Prov. 23:3, 33; and therefore he advises all men, not to look on the wine when it appears red, when it shows his colour in the cup, or stirs very kindly; and that for fear of this after-clap. An ancient writer says to the same purpose, "He that delicately pampers his belly, and yet would overcome the spirit of fornication, is like him that will quench a flame of fire with oil." Therefore to close up this point, sure it is though men pray much, hear and read much, and be otherwise well disposed; yet except they are

abstemious in diet, they will be much troubled with lust. The third cause of adultery is idleness; for when men are lazy, lurkish, and idle, having nothing to do, they lie wide open to adultery, and lust creeps into them. Some historiographers write, the crab fish is very desirous to eat oysters; but because she cannot by force open them, she watches her time when they open themselves to the sun after the tide, and then she putts in her claw, and pulls out the oyster. Even so Satan watches his opportunity against us, that he may infect and breathe into us all filthy lusts, and adulterous desires, when we lie open to him by idleness. Wisely therefore, to this point, said the Greek poet, "Much rest nourishes lust;" and another poet says, "Slothful laziness is the cause of adultery;" and therefore another says, "Refuse idleness, and cut the sinews of lust." The fourth cause of adultery, is wanton apparel; which is a minstrelsy, that pipes up a dance into fornication. But of this enough before. The fifth and last of adultery, is the hope of impunity, or escaping of punishment. For many being blinded and hardened by Satan, think they will never be called to an account for it, and because they can blear the eyes of men, and carry this sin so closely under a cloud, that it shall never come to light, they think all is safe, and that God sees them not; and therefore Job says. Job 24:15, "The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, and says, no eye shall see me;" and in another place, Job 22:13, "How shall God know? can he judge through the dark clouds?" But surely, though the adulterer hides his sin closely and cunningly, yet the time will come when it shall be disclosed, to his eternal shame. "For God will bring every work to judgement, with every secret thought, whither it be good or evil," Eccles. 12:14. For he has set our most secret sins in the light of his countenance," Psalm 90:8. "And he will lighten the things that are hidden in darkness, and make the counsels of the heart manifest," 1 Cor. 4:5. For this cause Job says. Job 10:14, "When I sin you watch me, and will not purge me from my sin."

Phil. Now you have showed us the causes of adultery, I pray you show us the remedies.

Theol. There are six remedies for adultery; which no doubt will greatly prevail, if they are well practised.

Phil. What are they?

Theol. Labour, abstinence, temperance, prayer, restraint of senses, shunning of women's company, and all occasions whatever.

COVETOUSNESS.

Phil. Well, sir, now you have waded deep enough in the second sign of damnation: I pray you let us proceed to the third, which is covetousness. And, as you have laid naked the two former, so I pray you, strip this stark naked also, that all men may see what an ugly monster it is, and so hate it and abhor it.

Theol. I would willingly satisfy your mind; but on this point I shall never do it sufficiently. For no heart can conceive, or tongue sufficiently utter the loathsomeness of this vice. For covetousness is the foulest fiend, and blackest devil of all the rest. It is even great Beelzebub himself. Therefore I shall never be able fully to describe it to you; but yet I will do what I can to strip it, and whip it stark naked. And however that men of this earth, and blind worldlings, take it, to be most sweet, beautiful, and desirable, and therefore embrace it, consider it; and welcome it, as though there were some happiness in it; yet I hope, when I have showed them the face of it in a glass (even the true glass of God's word) they will be no more in such love, but quite out of conceit with it. I will therefore hold out this glass to them. Paul to Timothy brands this sin in the forehead, and bores it in the ear, that all men may know it, and avoid it, when he says, "Covetousness is the root of all evil," 1 Tim. 6:10. Our Lord Jesus also gives us a watch-word to take heed of it, saying, "Take heed and beware of covetousness," Luke 12:15; as if he should say, touch it not, come not near it, it is the very breath of the devil: it is present death, and the bane of the soul. The apostle lays out the great danger of this sin, and grimes the face of it, when he says, "That the end of all such as mind earthly things, is damnation," Phil. 3:19. Let all carnal worldlings, and muckish-minded men lay this to heart, and consider well of it, lest they say one day, I wish I had listened

Phil. Good, sir, lay open to us the true nature of covetousness, and what it is, that we may more perfectly discern it.

Theol. Covetousness is an immoderate desire of having.

Phil. I hope you do not think frugality, thriftiness, and good husbandry to be covetousness.

Theol. Nothing less; for they are things commanded; being done in the fear of God, and with a good conscience.

Phil. Do you not think it lawful also for men to do their worldly business, and to use faithfulness and diligence in their callings, that they may provide for themselves and their families?

Theol. Yes, no doubt. And the rather, if they do these things with calling on God for a blessing on the works of their hands; and use prayer and thanksgiving before and after their labour, taking heed all the day long of the common corruptions of the world, as swearing, cursing, lying, dissembling, deceiving, greedy getting, &c.

Phil. What does covetousness especially consist of?

Theol. In the greedy desire of the mind. For we may lawfully do the works of our calling, and play the good husbands and good housewives; but we must take heed that distrustfulness, and inward greediness of the world do not catch our heart: for then are we set on fire, and utterly undone.

Phil. Since covetousness is especially of the heart, how may we know certainly when the heart is infected?

Theol. There are four special signs of the heart's infection.

Phil. Which are they?

Theol. The first is an eager and sharp set desire of getting. Therefore the Holy Spirit says, "He that hastes to be rich, shall not be unpunished," Prov. 28: 20, 22. And again, "A heritage is hastily gotten at the beginning; but the end of it shall not be blessed," Prov. 20:21. The heathen man also says, "No man can be both justly and hastily rich." The second is a pinching and niggardly keeping of our own, that is, when men, being able to give, will hardly part with any thing, though it be to never so holy and good use. And when at last with much ado, for shame they give something, it comes heavily from them, God knows and scantily. The third is, the neglect of holy duties: that is, when men's minds are so taken up with the love of earthly things, that they begin to slack and cool in matters of God's worship. The fourth and last is, trusting in riches, and relying on them, as though our lives were maintained by them, or consisted only in them; which our Lord Jesus flatly denies, saying, "Though a man have abundance, yet his life consists not in the things that he has," Luke 12:15. These then are four evident signs and tokens, whereby we may certainly discern that men's hearts and entrails are infected with covetousness.

Phil. You have very well satisfied us in this point. Now let us understand the original causes of covetousness.



Theol. There are two special causes of covetousness. The one is the ignorance and distrust of God's providence; the other is the want of tasting and feeling of heavenly things: for till men taste better things they will make much of these, till they feel heaven they will love earth, till they are religious they will be covetous. Therefore the cause is soon espied why men are so sharp set on these outward things, and, so admire riches, worldly pomp, pleasures, and treasures; because they know no better, they never had taste of feeling of those things which are eternal.

Phil. Now as you have showed us the causes of covetousness, so let us also hear of the effects.

Theol. If I once enter into this, I shall be entangled and wound up in a maze, where I know not how to get out again. For the evil effects of this vice are so many, and so great, that I know not almost where to begin, or where to end. despite, I will enter into it, get out how I can.

Phil. If you but give us some taste of them it shall suffice.

Theol. Then will I briefly dispatch things in order. And first of all, I reason from the words of the apostle I spoke before, that if covetousness, and the love of money, be the root of all evil, then it is the root of idolatry, the root of murder, the root of theft, the root of lying, the root of swearing, the root of simony, the root of bribery, the root of usury, the root of all contentions in the church, and the root of all brabbling and brawling in the commonwealth. Moreover, it spreads far and near; it dwells in every house, in every town, in every city; it pries into every corner, it creeps into every heart, it annoys our physicians, it infects our divines, it chokes our lawyers, it wounds our farmers, it harms our gentlemen, it murders our tradesmen, it bewitches our merchants, it stings our mariners. Oh! covetousness, covetousness! it is the poison of all things, the wound of Christianity, the bane of all goodness! For covetousness mars all; it mars all, everywhere, in all places, in all degrees, amongst all persons. It mars marriages; for it couples young to old, and old to young. It mars hospitality, it mars all good housekeeping, it mars alms-deeds, it mars religion, it mars professors, it mars ministers, it mars magistrates, it mars all things. And so what sin so grievous, what evil so odious, what vice so enormous as this? For this cause it was wisely said of one, that all other vices are but factors to covetousness, and serve for porters to fetch and bring in her living. She makes simony her drudge, bribery her drudge, usury her drudge. deceit her drudge, swearing her drudge, lying her drudge. Oh! what a devil incarnate is this, that setts so many vices at work, and has so many factors and underlings to serve

her turn! Are they not in a pretty case, think you, that are infected with this sin? Oh! they are in a most miserable case. It had been good they had never been born. For being alive they are dead, dead I mean in their souls; for covetousness is soul's poison, and soul's bane. Covetousness is the strongest poison to the soul that is. It is a confection of all the spiders, toads, snakes, adders, scorpions, basilisks, and all other the most venomous vermin of the whole world. If the devil can get us to take down but one pennyweight of it, it is enough, he desires no more; for presently we fall down stark dead. Therefore the apostle says, "They that will be rich (he means in all haste, by hook or by crook) fall into temptations and snares, and into many foolish and noisome lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition," 1 Tim. 6:9. For as covetousness is rank poison to the soul, so the apostle compares it to the deep gulf, wherein thousands are drowned; and therefore he adds, in the same place, 5:11, "But you, O man of God, flee these things;" in which words he most gravely advises all the ministers of the word of God to take heed of it. For as it is dangerous to all men, so it is most dangerous and offensive in the preachers of the gospel.

Phil. Indeed it must needs be granted that covetousness is a very grievous sin; yes even a monster with seven heads. Yet for all that, we see in this our iron age, how many of all sorts are infected with it; and how few will give any thing to any holy use. Most men nowadays have nothing to spare for Christ, nothing for his gospel, nothing for his church, nothing for the poor children of God, and needy members of Christ. Christ is a little beholden to them, for they will do nothing for him, no not so much as speak a good word in his cause, or the cause of his poor saints. Every little thing with them is too much for God, and good men. For when they come to giving to holy and necessary uses then they will stick at a penny, and scotch at a groat, and every thing is too much. But to give on themselves, nothing is too much. Nothing is too much for lust, for pleasure, for back, belly, and building; for cards and dice, for whores and harlots, for rioting and revelling, for taverns and brothel-houses; hundreds and thousands are little enough, and too little for their expenses this way. It is sad to consider, what masses of money are spent and spent on these things. But, alas, alas! how heavy an account are they to make in the day of the Lord, who so spend their lands, livings, and revenues! I tremble to think what shall become of them at last. It were well for them, if they might be in no worse case than a crocodile, or a cur dog.

Theol. It is most certain that you say, and we all have great cause to lament it, and to take up the old complaint of the prophet, Jer. 6:13, saying, "From the least of them even to the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness;

and from the prophet even to the priest, they all deal falsely." And another prophet says, "They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with sin. The heads of it judge for rewards, and the priests of it teach for hire, and the prophets of it prophesy for money; yet will they lean on the Lord and say, is not the Lord amongst us? no evil can come to us," Micah 3:10, 11. But these holy prophets, and men of God, fully describe to us the state of our time; wherein, though all be corrupted, yet we bear ourselves stoutly on God, we presume of his favour, because of our outward profession, and say in our hearts, no evil can come to us.

Asun. You say very true, sir. The world was never so set on covetousness, and men were never so greedily given to the world as nowadays. And yet, in truth, there is no cause why men should be so sharp set on this world. For this world is but vanity, and all is but pelf and trash. Fie on this muck!

Phil. Many such men as you are, can give good words, and say, fie on this world; all is but vanity: and yet for all that, in your daily practice you are still set on the world, nor never the more seek after God. You hear the word of God no the more, you read no more, pray no more; which evidently shows that all your fair speeches and protestations, are nothing but hypocrisy. Your heart is not with God, for all this. All is but words: there is no such feeling in the heart. And, therefore, I may justly say to you, as God said to his people, "This people have well said all that they have spoken. Oh! that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments!" Deut. 5:28, 29.

Theol. His words, indeed, are good, if his heart were according. For, all things considered, there is no cause why men should be so given to this world; for they must leave it, when they have done all that they can. As we say, "Today a man, to-morrow none." And as the apostle says, "We brought nothing into this world, and, it is certain, we can carry nothing out," 1 Tim. 6:7: We must all die, we know not how soon: why therefore should men set their hearts on such uncertain and deceptive things? for all things in this world are more light than a feather, more brittle than glass, more fleeting than a shadow, more vanishing than smoke, more inconsistent than the wind. "Doubtless," says the prophet David, "man walks in a shadow, and disquiets himself in vain: he heaps up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them," Ps. 39:6. I wonder, therefore, that these moles and worms of this earth, should so mind these shadowy things, and so dote on them as they do. If they were not altogether hardened and blinded by the devil, they would not be so nearly knit to the clod and the penny as they are: thinking, and always imagining, that there is no happiness but in these things, which are but dung and dross: and at last they will give us

the slip, when we think ourselves most sure of them. The wise king, who had the greatest experience of these things that ever man had, for he enjoyed whatsoever this world could afford, upward and downward, backward and forward, yet could find nothing in them but vanity and vexation of spirit. Moreover, he flatly asserts, that all these things, riches, wealth, honour, pleasures, and treasures, will most notably deceive us in the end, give us the slip and be gone. For he compares riches, and all the glory of this world, to an eagle or hawk, which a man holds on his fist, strokes her, makes much of her, takes great delight and pleasure in her, and says he will not take ten pounds for her: yet all on the sudden she takes her flight, and flies up into the air, and he never sees her more, nor she him. The words of the Holy Spirit are these, "will you cause your eyes to fly after them? (meaning riches). You may see them but they will not be found. For they will make themselves wings like the eagle, which flies up to heaven," Prov. 23:5. From thence we may learn, that though we set our hearts never so much on any thing here below, yet at the last it shall be taken from us, or we from it. therefore, all worldly men do but weave the spider's web, and may fitly be compared to the silly spider, who toils herself, and labours all the week long to finish up her web, that she may lodge herself in it, as in her own house and free hold. But alas, at the week's end, a maid in a moment, with one brush of her broom, dispossesses her of her inheritance which she had purchased with great labour and much ado. Even so, when the men of this world have, with much care and trouble, purchased great lands and revenues, and gathered all that they can; yet on the sudden, death (with one stroke of his direful dart) will make them give up the spirit; and then where are they? It was prettily, therefore, said of a man in the light of nature, "No man has ever lived so happily in this life, but in his life-time many things have befallen him, for the which he had wished rather to die than to live." And assuredly I think there was never any man lived any one day on the face of this earth, but some grief or other either did, or justly might invade his mind ere night; either in the temptations of the world, the flesh or the devil: or in regard of soul, body, goods, or name; in regard of wife, children, friends, or neighbours; in regard of dangers to prince, estate, church, or commonwealth; in regard of casualties and losses by water, by fire, by sea, or by land. What a life therefore is this, that has not one good day in it? Who would desire to dwell long in it? For it lies open every day to manifold miseries, dangers, losses, casualties, reproaches, shame, infamy, poverty, sickness, diseases, colics, agues, toothache, headache, backache, boneache, and a thousand calamities.

Phil. You have very well described to us the vanity of this life, and that no day is free from one sorrow or other, one grief or other; which our Lord Jesus ratifies, in the reason which he brings, why men should not distrust

fully care for to-morrow. "For (says he) sufficient to the day is the evil of it," Matt. 6:34; or, as some read it, "The day has enough with his grief;" wherein he plainly shows, that every day has his sorrow, his evil, his grief, and his thwart. But I pray you proceed further in this point.

Theol. This I say further; that when men have swinked and sweat, carked and cared, moiled and turmoiled, drudged and droiled, by night and by day, by sea and by land, with much care and sorrow, much labour and grief, to rake together the things of this life: yet at last, all will away again, and we must end where we began. For, as Job said, 1:21, "Naked we came into the world, and naked we must go out." For even as a windmill beats itself, makes a great noise, whistles and whisks about from day to day, all the year long; yet at the year's end stands still where it began, being not moved one foot backward or forward; so when men have blustered and blown all that they can, and have even run themselves out of breath, to scrape up the commodities of the earth, yet at last they must, spite of their beards, end where they began; end with nothing, as they began with nothing; end with a winding sheet and began with swaddling clouts. For what is become of the greatest monarchs, kings, princes, potentates, and magnificoes, that ever the world had? Where is Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, Alexander, Caesar, Pompey, Scipio, and Hannibal? Where are the valiant Henrys, and noble Edwards of England? Are they not all gone down to the house of oblivion? Are they not all returned to their dust, and all their thoughts perished? Though they were as gods, yet have they died as a man, are fallen like others. Who now cares for them? who talks of them? who fears them? who regards them? Do not beggars tread on them? Yet, while they lived, they were the lords of the world; they were as terrible as lions; fearful to all men; full of pomp and glory, dignity and majesty. They ploughed up all things, they bare all before them, and who but they? But now they have given up the spirit, and are, as Job says, 30:23, "Gone down to the house appointed for all the living." Their pomp is descended with them, and all their glory is buried in the ashes. They are now covered under a clod, cast out into a vault, made companions to toads, and the worms eat them; and what is become of their souls, is most of all to be feared. Thus we see how all flesh only makes a vain show for a while on this theatre of misery, fetches a compass about, and is presently gone. For as the poet says, first, or last, we must all to the grave.

Asun. You have made a very good speech. It does me good to hear it. I wonder, all these things considered, that men should be so "wholly given to this world as they are. I think the devil has bewitched them. For they shall carry nothing with them when they die, but their good deeds and their ill.

Theol. The grudges and snudges of this world may very fitly be compared to a king's sumpterhorse, which goes laden all the day long, with as much gold and treasure, as he can bear; but at night his treasure is taken from him, he is turned into a sorry dirty stable, and has nothing left him, but his galled back. Even so the rich cormorants and caterpillars of the earth, which here have treasured and hoarded up great heaps of gold and silver, with the which they travel laden through this world, shall in the end be stript out of all, let down into their grave, and have nothing left them but their galled conscience, with the which they shall be tumbled down into the dungeon of eternal darkness.

Pliil. Wherein does the sting and strength of the world especially consist?

Theol. Even as the great strength of Sampson lay in his hair, so the great strength of the world lies in her two breasts: the one of pleasure, the other of profit. For she, like a notable strumpet, by laying out these her breasts, bewitches the sons of men, and allures thousands to her lust. For if she cannot win them with the one breast, yet she gains them with the other: if not with pleasure, then with profit; if not with profit, then with pleasure. He is an odd man of a thousand that sucks not of the one breast or the other. But sure it is, whichever he sucks, he shall be poisoned. For she gives none other milk, but rank poison. The world therefore, is like an alluring Jael, who sits at her door, to entice us to come in and eat of the milk of her pleasures: but when she has once got us in, she is ready, even while we are eating, with her hammer and nail, to pierce through our brains, Judges 4:21.

JPhil. I see plainly, this world is a very strum pet, a strong bait, and a snarling net, wherein thousands are taken. It is very bird lime, which so limes our affections that they cannot ascend upward. It is like the weights of a clock, hanged on our souls, which draws them down to the earth: it nails us fast down to the ground. It mortifies us into clay: it makes us abominable to God. For I remember God made a law, that whatever goes with his breast on the ground, should be abominable to us, Lev. 11: How much more these carnal worldlings, who are fast soldered to the earth!

Theol. The apostle James, seeing into the deep wickedness of this world, and knowing well how odious it makes us in the sight of God, cries out against it, terming it adultery, and all worldlings adulterers; because they forsake Christ, their true husband, and whorishly give their hearts to this world, 4:4, "you adulterers and adulteresses, says he, know you not that the amity of this world, is the enmity of God? Who soever therefore, will be a friend of this world,

makes himself the enemy of God." And who dare stand forth and say, I will be the enemy of God? Who therefore dare be a worldling? for every worldling is the enemy of God. What then will become of you, O you wicked worldlings?

Fjiil. It appears then plainly by the scriptures, that the excessive love of this world, and insatiable desire of having, is a most dangerous thing; and men do not know what, in seeking so greedily after it.

Theol. The heathen man, Sophocles, will rise up in judgement against us: for he says, "Insatiableness is the foulest evil amongst mortal men; but many of our seagulfs and whirlpools think nothing of it." They think it is no sin: they devour and swallow up all; and yet are never satisfied. They will have all, and more than all, and the devil and all. The whole world cannot satisfy their mind: but God must create new worlds to content them. These men are sick with the golden dropsy: the more they have, the more they desire. The love of money increases, as money itself increases. But the scripture says, "He that loves silver, shall not be satisfied with silver," Eccles. 5:10. Oh, therefore, that we would strive earnestly to get out of this gulf of hell, and tread the moon, that is, all worldly things, under our feet, as it is spoken of the church, and that we would set our affections on the things that are above, and not on the things that are beneath: that we would fly an high pitch, and soar aloft as the eagles, looking down at this world, and all things in it, as at our feet, despising it, and treading the very glory of it under our feet, that it may never have more power over us! Rev. 3:1.

Phil. O happy and twice happy are they that can do so! And I ask the Almighty God, give us his Holy Spirit, whereby we may be carried above this world, into the mountains of myrrh, and the mountains of spices. Cant. 4:6. For how happy a thing is it to have our conversation in heaven, that is, to have an inward conversation with God, by much prayer, reading, meditation, and heavenly affections! This, in deed, is to climb up above the world, and to converse in the chambers of peace. Oh, therefore, that we could seriously and thoroughly conceive and consider of this world as it is, that we would well weigh the vanity of it, and the excellency of what is to come, that we might loathe the one and, and love the other; despise the one, and embrace the other: love God more than ever we did, and this world less. For what is this world but vanity of vanities?

Asun. You exceedingly abase what some make their god. You speak contemptuously of what most men have in greatest price and admiration. You disgrace what multitudes would grace. You make light of what

numbers make greatest account of. Let us therefore hear your reasons: show us more fully what it is; describe it to us.

Theol. The world is a sea of glass, a pageant of foolish delights, a theatre of vanity, a labyrinth of error, a gulf of grief, a sty of filthiness, a vale of misery, a spectacle of woe, a river of tears, a stage of deceit, a cage full of owls, a den of scorpions, a wilderness of wolves, a cabin of bears, a whirlwind of passions, a feigned comedy, a delectable frenzy; where is false delight, assured grief, certain sorrow, uncertain pleasure, lasting woe, fickle wealth, long heaviness, short joy

Phil. Now, you have indeed described it to the full, and laid it out, as it were, in bright colours. And a man must be bewitched, or stark mad, who hereafter should set his mind on it. But yet I want to hear a little more of that, which I asked you before, wherein the strength and poison of the world especially consists.

Theol. In this lies a great strength of the world, that it draws down the stars of heaven and makes them fall to the earth, as it is said of the dragon's tail, (Rev. 12:4.) which is ambition, covetousness, and the love of this world. For we may wonder and lament, to see how the love of these things has wounded and overborn many excellent servants of God, both preachers and professors of the gospel: which plainly indicates the strength of it. For it is the strongest and the very last engine, that Satan uses to attack us with, when none other will prevail. For when no temptation could fasten on Christ, he brings forth this last weapon which never fails; "All these things will I give you," Matt. 4:9, showing him the glory of the whole world. So then he, having the experience of this, that it never fails, thought to have overcome Christ himself with it. Here, therefore, lies the very sting and strength of the world and the devil. For whom has he not taken with "all these things will I give you?" whom has he not wounded? whom has he not deceived? whom has he not overthrown? With this he enticed Balaam; with this he beguiled Achau; with this he overthrew Judas; with this he is witched Demas; with this, in these our days, he deceived many of excellent gifts. For assuredly, he is a phoenix amongst men, who is not overcome with this. He is a wonderment in the world, that is not moved with money.

Phil. I am now fully satisfied with this matter. But one thing comes often into my mind; that is, that these miserable worldlings can have no sound comfort in their pleasures and profits: because they have no comfort in God, nor peace in their own consciences.



Theol. You say very true. It is impossible, that men, loving this world, should have any sound comfort in God. For no man can serve two masters, both God and riches. Their case therefore, is very dangerous and fearful, though they never see it, nor feel it: as I will show you by a plain example. Put a case: one of these great rich worldlings should be clothed in velvet and cloth of gold, in most stately manner, and also should be set at his table, furnished with all the dainties of the world; should be attended and waited on by many, in most lordly and pompous manner; should sit in his pleasant dining-chamber, all glittering like gold; should have his first, second, and third service served in, with minstrels and instruments of music, in most royal sort; he sits in his chair, like a king in his throne: yet for all this, if a dagger should be held to his heart all this while, ready to stab him, what pleasure, what joy, what comfort can he have in all the rest? Even so, whatever pomp or pleasures wicked worldlings have here below, yet their guilty and hellish conscience is, as it were, a dagger, held always hard to their heart, so as they can have no sound comfort in any thing. Or let me give it you thus: put this case, a man has committed high treason, and were therefore apprehended, tried, and condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered: what then can comfort him in such a case? can mirth, can music, can gold, can silver, can lands, can livings? No, no: none of all these can help him, or give him any comfort. For the continual thoughts of death so gripe him at the heart, that none of all these can do him any good or mitigate his grief. What then is the thing that may comfort him in this case? Only a pardon, sealed with the king's broad seal, and subscribed with his own hand. For as soon as he has got this, his heavy heart revives, and he leaps for joy. This then assuredly is the very ease of all profane atheists and worldlings, who are not assured of the king of heaven his pardon for their sin: and then, what joy can they have either in their meat, drink, goods, cattle, wines, children, lands, revenues, or anything at all? For the dreadful thoughts of hell, soon cross them inwardly, and quite damp and dash all their mirth. Their own consciences will not be stilled; but in most terrible manner, rise up and give evidence against them, telling them flatly they shall be damned, how merry and jocund soever they seem to be in this world; setting a good face on the matter. For sure it is, that inwardly they have many a cold pull, and many heart gripes. And all their mirth and jollity, is but a giggling from the teeth outward: they can have no sound comfort within. And therefore the wise king says, "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful: and the end of that mirth is heaviness," Prov. 14:13. Likewise says the holy man Job, 27:20, "Terrors of conscience come on the wicked man like waters: in the night a whirlwind carries him away secretly." Eliphaz, the Temanite, makes the same point, saying, "The wicked man is continually as one that travails of child; a sound of fear is in his ears," &c. Job

15:20, 21. Thus then we see, that how soever many carnal atheists, and ungodly persons, seem outwardly to float aloft in all mirth and jollity, bearing it out, as we say, at the breast: yet inwardly they are pinched with terrors, and most horrible convulsions of conscience.

Antil. You have spoken many things very sharply against covetousness: but in my mind, so long as a man covets nothing but his own, he cannot be said to be covetous.

TJieol. Yes, that he may. For not only is he covetous who greedily desires other men's goods; but even he also who over-niggardly and pinchingly holds fast his own, and is such a miser, that he will part with nothing. We see the world is full of such pinch-pennys, that will let nothing go, except it be wrung from them perforce, as a key out of Hercules'\* hand. These gripple muckrakers had as leave part with their blood as their goods. They will pinch their own backs and bellies, to get their god into their chests. And when they had once got him in there, will they easily part with him, trow you? No, no; a man will not part with his god, for no man's pleasure. He will eat pease-bread, and drink small drink, rather than he will diminish his god. Therefore the scripture says, "Eat not the meat of him that has an evil eye; and de sires not his dainty dishes. For as he grudges his own soul, so he will say to you; eat and drink, when his heart is not with you. You shall vomit your morsels which you have eaten and loose your pleasant speeches," Prov. 23:6-8. The old saying is, the covetous man wants as well what he has, as what he has not; because he has no use of what he has. So then you see, there is a great strength of covetousness, in the niggardly keeping of our own.

Antil. Yet, for all this, men must follow their worldly business, and lay up to live. For it is an hard world, and goods are not easy to come by. Therefore men must ply their business, or else they may go to beg or starve.

Theol. I deny not, but that you may follow the works of your calling diligently: so it be in the fear of God, and with a good conscience, as I told you before; but this greediness and gripleness God condemns, and also, his excessive love of money.

Phil. Believe me, I know nobody that hates it; I cannot see but that all men love gold and silver.

Theol. It is one thing to use these things, and another thing to love them and set our hearts on them. For the scripture says, "If riches increase, set not your

heart on them," Psalm 62:10. Saint John also says, 2:15, "Love not this world, nor the things that are in this world." He says not, use not this world; but love not this world. For use it we may; love it we may not. Therefore the apostle says, "That those who use this world, should be as though they used it not," 1 Cor. 7:31, where he allows a sober and moderate use of the things of this life in the fear of God. We must use this world for necessities' sake, as we use meat and drink. For, no more of this world then needs must, for fear of surfeiting. The Holy Spirit says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with things present," Heb. 13:5. Happy is that man therefore, that is well content with his present estate whatever it may be, and carries himself moderately and comfortably in it. For the Spirit says, "There is no profit to a man under the sun: but that he eat and drink, and delight his soul with the profit of his labours. I saw also this, that this is of the hand of God," Eccles. 2:24. In which words, the prudent king says thus much, in effect, "That this is all the good we can attain to in this world, even to take sober and comfortable use of the things of this life, which God bestows on us. And further he asserts, "That thus to use them aright, and with sound comfort, is a very rare gift of God." For as one says, Gregory Nazianzus, "He is a wise man, that is not grieved for the things he has not; but rejoices in the things that he has; using them to God's glory, and his own comfort." So then, I conclude this point, and return you an answer thus: that we may in sober and godly manner, use gold, silver, and the things of this life; but at no hand to overlove them, or give our hearts to them.

Antil. Well, yet for all this, I cannot see but that these preachers and professors, these learned men, and precise fellows, are even as eager of the world, and as covetous as any other.

Theol. Now you show your venomous spirit, against better men than yourself: And I have a fourfold answer for you.

First, I answer, that although godly men may be somewhat overtaken this way, yet they break not so grossly as others.

Secondly, if God leave them sometimes to be overcome of the world, yet he, in his great wisdom and mercy, turns it to their good. For by it he first humbles them and afterward raises them up again. "And so all things work together for good, to those who love God," Rom. 13:28.

Thirdly, I answer, that we live by rules, and not by examples. For even the best of God's people have had their wants and weakness. Therefore we may not frame rules to live by out of the weaknesses of the most excellent servants of God. Wicked, therefore, and impious is their allegation, which put David's adultery. Lot's drunkenness, Peter's fall Abraham's slips, Solomon's sins, &c. for a shelter and defence of themselves in the like sins.

Lastly, I answer that you greatly wound yourself, in your own speech: so far off are you from mending your market any whit by it. For if preachers and other godly men, after many prayers and tears, and much means used, cannot escape scot-free, but sometimes are wounded, and almost over thrown, by the world and the devil; what then shall become of you, who use no means at all, nor any gain striving, but willingly give place to the devil? If the devil did over-master David, Lot, Sampson, Solomon, and other such excellent worthies, alas! what shall become of mere worldlings and atheists? If the most valiant men, and chief captains iu a battle go down, what shall become of the faint-hearted soldiers? and, as St. Peter says, 1 Jn. 4:18, "If the righteous scarce be saved, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear?" So then I take you at the rebound, and return your own weapon on your self, that since godly men cannot escape through this world, without blows, what shall become of those who know not what godliness means?

Antil. Yet, I say once again, that men must live, men must lay up for this world: we cannot live by the scriptures. And as for what you call covetousness, it is but good husbandry.

Theol. I thought, we should have it at last. Now you have paid it home: you are come to the old bias, and as a hare to her old form, and her old covert. For this is the covert and thicket of the world, where they would hide covetousness: but I will do what I can to hunt you out of it, by the scriptures. First, Solomon says, "He that spares more than is right, shall surely come to poverty," Prov. 11:24. So then you see, that covetousness brings poverty. Thus, therefore I reason: what brings poverty is no good husbandry: but covetousness, and too much sparing, brings poverty; therefore it is no good husbandry. The same Solomon says, "He that is given to gain, troubles his own house." That is, the covetous man is an occasion of many evils, in his estate and family. From this scripture I do thus reason: what troubles a man's house, is no good husbandry; but covetousness troubles a man's house: therefore it is no good husbandry. Last of all, the old proverb says, "Covetousness brings nothing home;" and therefore it is no good husbandry. For often we see, that men, for covetousness of more, lose what otherwise they might have had. One of the wise heathens says, (Hesiodus), "evil gain is as bad as loss." But the covetous man seeks wicked gain, and therefore seeks loss: and consequently is no good husband. Another says, (Phocillides), "Unjust gain brings both loss and misery." And therefore it is far enough off from virtue, and all good husbandry. Thus then, I hope, you are so hunted both by God and men, that this covert cannot hide you. And therefore you must out of it, and seek some other shelter; for this will not serve your turn.

Phil. Now I must needs say, you have fully stopped his mouth, and thoroughly ferreted him out of his deep burrow. And it is most certain that you say, that the wise heathen have condemned covetousness, and all unjust gains, which we both practice and defend; and therefore will rise up in judgement against us. But now let us leave the critic for the present.

Phil. I must confess, Theologus, that you have fully entered into the matter of covetousness, yet there is one thing remaining wherein I desire to be satisfied.

Theol. What is that?

Phil. I would gladly know Which are the special remedies against covetousness.

Theol. There are two special remedies against covetousness; that is, contentment, and the meditation of God's providence.

Phil. Let us hear somewhat of contentment out of the scriptures.

Theol. The apostle says, 1 Tim. 6:7, 8, "Having food and raiment, we must therewith be content; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out." The Spirit also says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with your present estate," Heb. 13:5. Again, the apostle says, "He had learned in what estate soever he was, therewith to be content," Phil. 4:11. Note that he says, he had learned; for he had it not of himself. For contentment is the singular gift of God: as it is written; "The righteous eats to the contentment of his soul, but the belly of the wicked shall want," Prov. 13:25. An ancient father says, (Cyril) "We ought to accustom ourselves to live of a little, and to be content; that we may do no wicked or filthy thing for lucre's sake." Another says, (Chrysostom) "He is not poor that has nothing; but the one who desires much. Neither is he rich that has much but the one who wants nothing; for contentment never wants. There is no grief in lacking, but where there is immoderate desire in having. If we will live after nature, we shall never be poor; if after our own appetite, we shall never be rich." Well therefore, said the poet, (Euripedes,) "Wax not rich unjustly, but justly; be content with your own things; abstain from other men's," Thus then we see, that both God himself, the fountain of all wisdom, and men also, both in the state of nature and grace, all jointly advise us to strive for contentment; and then shall we have a sovereign remedy against covetousness.

Phil. Let us hear somewhat of the second remedy against covetousness.

Theol. An earnest thinking Upon the providence of God, is a present remedy against the most foolish and pining carefulness of men for this life. For if we would seriously weigh and deeply consider the provident care that God has had for his children in all ages, touching food and raiment; and how strangely he has provided for them, it might suffice to correct this evil in us, and minister to us a notable preservative against covetousness. We read how wonderfully the Lord provided for his prophet Elijah, in the time of the great dearth and drought, that was in Israel. Did not the Lord command the ravens to feed him, by the river Cherith? did not the ravens bring him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the river? 1 Kings 17. What should I speak how miraculously God provided for Hagar and her infant, when they were both cast out of Abraham's house, and brought to great extremity! even both of them ready to give up the spirit for want of food, Gen. 21:15-21. Did not God help at a pinch, as his manner has always been? did not he send his angel to them, and both comfort them, and provide for them? What should I speak how strangely God provided for his church in the wilderness? Exod. 16:4. Did he not feed them with manna from heaven, and gave them water to drink out of the rock? Exod. 17:6. Hath not our heavenly father made many royal and large promises, that he will provide necessaries for his children? Psalm lxxv3. Shall we not think that he will be as good as his word? Does he not say. Psalm 34:10, "The lions lack, and suffer hunger; but those who seek him, shall want nothing that is good?" Does he not say, v.9, "Fear him all you saints; for nothing is wanting to those who fear him?" Does he not say, Psalm 84:11, "No good thing shall be withheld from those who walk uprightly?" Does he not say. Matt. 6:23, "Our heavenly Father knows that we have need of these things; and that all these things shall be cast on us, if we earnestly seek his kingdom?" Does he not bid us cast all our care on him? 1 Pet. 5:7, "for he cares for all." Does he not bid us, "Take no thought what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or with what we shall be clothed?" Luke 12:29, meaning by it, no distracting or distrustful thought. Does he not say, he will not leave us, nor forsake us? Heb. 12:5. Does he not say, "The Lord is at hand: in nothing be careful?" Phil. 4:5, 6. Are not these large promises sufficient to stay up our faith in; God's providence? shall we think God jests with us? shall we think he means no such matter? shall we imagine he will not keep truth? Oh, it were blasphemy once to think it? for God is true, and all men liars. He is faithful that has promised. His word is more than the faith of a prince: more than ten thousand obligations. Why then do we not rest on it? why go we any further? why do we not take his word? why do we not depend wholly on him? why are we still covetous? why are we still distrustful? why do we dissemble

and deceive? Oh we of little faith! Our Lord Jesus, knowing right well the distrustfulness of our nature, and the deep root it has in us, is not only content to make these large and royal promises to us which were enough; but also strengthens and backs us with many strong reasons, to support our weakness in this behalf. He therefore brings us back, to a due consideration of things. " Consider (says he) the ravens; consider the fowls of the heavens: for they neither sow nor reap, nor carry into barns; and yet God feeds them; they want nothing. Consider the lilies how they grow; they neither labour, nor spin; yet Solomon in all his royalty, was not clothed like one of these," Luke 12:22-30. Oh, therefore, that we would; consider these considers! Oh that we would consider that our life is more worth than meat, and our bodies than raiment! Oh that we would consider, that with all our carking and caring, we can do no good at all; no, not so much as add; one cubit to our stature! Truly, truly, if we would deeply ponder these reasons of our Saviour, and apply them to ourselves, they might serve for a bulwark and sure defence against covetousness. If men would consider how that great King of heaven, who has his way in the whirl wind, and the clouds are the dust of his feet, cares for the little wren, and silly sparrow; how he looks to them, how he tenders them, how he provides for them every day, both breakfast, dinner, and supper: it might serve to correct our distrustfulness. For who ever saw these, or any other soul starve for hunger? so good a father, and so good a nurse have they. And are not we much better than they? has not God more care of us, than of them? yes, truly, a thousand times. For he loves them, but for our sakes: how much more then does he love ourselves? Therefore I say again and again, if we would consider these things, and lay them to heart, they would nip covetousness on the head, and drive it quite out of our hearts. Let us consider, therefore, that God provided for man before man was: then how much more will he provide for man, now that he is? Is he our Father, and will he not provide for us? Is he our King, and will he not regard us? Is he our Shepherd, and will he not look to us? Hath he provided heaven for us, and will he not give us earth? Hath he given us his Son Christ, and shall he not with' him give us all things? Does he provide for his enemies, and will he not provide for his friends? Does he provide for fornicators, and will he neglect his chosen? Does he send his rain, and cause his sun to shine on the unjust, and shall he not on the just? Does he provide for those who are not of the family, and will he not provide for his own family? Will a man feed his hogs, and not care for his servants? or will he care for his servants, and not regard his own children? Oh, then, let us consider these reasons: let us remember, that our heavenly Father has as great care for the preservation of his creatures, as once he had for their creation. Let us therefore remember that our life consists not in these things; but in the providence of God. Let us remember that he who gives the day, will provide for

the things of the day. Let us remember that God always gives to sustain us though not to fill us. Let us remember that God will not famish the souls of the righteous, Prov. 10:3. Let us remember how God never failed his. For who ever trusted in the Lord and was confounded?

Phil. What then is the cause that many want outward things?

Theol. The cause is in themselves, because they want faith. For if we had faith, we could want nothing. "For faith fears no famine," as says an ancient father. And another says, for as much as all things are God's, the one who has God can want nothing: if he himself be not wanting to God. Therefore to have God is to have all things. For if we have him our friend we have enough, we need go no further. For he will make men our friends: yes, he will make angels, and all creatures to be serviceable to us: he will give them a special charge to look to us, to guard us, and to do continual homage to us. Therefore, let us make God our friend, and then have we done all at once that may concern our good, both for this life and a better. But if he stand not our friend; if we have not him on our side; if he back us not, then all other things can do us no good: all is not worth a button. For what is a man the better though he have all things, and be without him who is the author of all things?

Phil. Herein you speak very truly, no doubt. For we see, many have great plenty of outward things; but because they have not God, they can have no true comfort in them, or blessing with them.

Theol. True, indeed; "For man lives not by bread only, (says our Lord Jesus) but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," Matt. 4:4. And again he says, "Though a man have abundance, yet his life consists not in the things that he has," Luke 12:15. For without God's blessing there can be no sound comfort in any thing. We see, by daily experience, how the Lord curses the wicked, though they have abundance. For some, having abundance, yet are visited with continual sicknesses. Some, having abundance, pine away with consumptions. Others, having abundance, die of surfeiting. Others are snatched away by untimely death, in the midst of their jollity. Others are visited with great losses, both by sea and by land. Others are vexed with cursed wives and disobedient children. Some, again, commit murders, and treasons, and so lose all at once. Others are wasted and consumed by the secret curse of God; no man knows how. Some having great riches are given over to the murderer, some to the thief, some to the poisoner. Therefore the wise king says, "There is an evil sickness under the sun; riches reserved to the owners of it, for their evil," Eccles. 5:13. Zophar, also, the Naamathite, says, "When the wicked has



sufficient and enough, he shall be brought into straits," Job 20:22, 23: the hand of every troublesome man shall be on him. When he should fill his belly, God will send on him his fierce wrath, which he shall rain on him instead of his meat. Thus, then, it is clear that man's life and good estate depends not on the abundance of outward things, but only on the blessing and providence of God. For, "His blessing only makes rich, and it brings no sorrow with it," Prov. 10:4. For, "Better is a little to the just, than great abundance to many of the wicked," Psalm 37:16. "Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without equity," Prov. 5:16, and 16:18. Thus, then, I conclude this point: man lives not by bread, but by a blessing on bread; not by outward means, but by a blessing on means. For how can bread, being a dead thing, and having no life in itself, give life to others?

Phil. I do not well understand the meaning of these words: "By every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Theol. by it is meant, the decree, ordinance, and providence of God, who upholds all things, even the whole order of nature; for the scriptures says, "He spake and it was done: he commanded and they were created. Psalm 33:9. In which words we plainly see that God speaks, and it is done; he commands, and all creatures are preserved. For God does all things with a word. He created all with his word; he preserves all with his word; he speaks, and it is done. His words are words of power and authority. Whatever he says, whatever he calls for, it must be done presently, without any delay, there is no withstanding of him. He calls for famine, and behold famine. He calls for plenty, and behold plenty. He calls for pestilence, and behold pestilence. He calls for the sword, and behold the sword. All angels, all men, all beasts, all fishes, all fowls, all creatures must obey him, and be at his beck. He is the greatest commander; his word commands heaven and earth and the sea. All creatures must be obedient to his will, and subject to his ordinance. This is the cause why all things, both in heaven, earth, and the sea, keep their immutable and invariable courses, times and seasons, even because he has charged them so to do. And they must of necessity always, at all times and for ever, obey; for the creatures must obey the Creator. This act of parliament was made the first week of the world, and never since was or can be repealed.

Phil. But, to call you back again to the point we had in hand, resolve me, I pray you, of this: whether many of the dear children of God do not in this life sometimes want outward things, and are brought into great distress?

Theol. Yes, certainly. For Elijah did want, and was in distress. Paul did want,

and was in many distresses. The holy Christians, mentioned in the Hebrews, did want, and were in marvellous distresses. Many of God's dear ones have in all ages wanted, and at this day also want, and are greatly distressed. But this is a most infallible truth, that however God's children may want, and be low brought, yet they are never utterly forsaken, but are helped even in greatest extremities; yes, when all things are desperate, and brought even to the last cast. To this point, most notably speaks the apostle, saying, "We are afflicted on every side, but yet we despair not; we are persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but we perish not," 2 Cor. 4:7, 8. The prophet Jeremiah also says, "The Lord will not for sake for ever: but though he send affliction, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he does not punish willingly, or from his heart, nor afflict the children of men," Lam. 3: The kingly prophet says, "Surely the Lord will not fail his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance," Psalm 94:14. The Lord himself says, "For a moment in my anger, I hid my face from you; but with everlasting mercy have I had compassion on you," Isa. 54:7, 8. So then we may fully assure ourselves, and even write of it, as a most undoubted and sealed truth, that God's children shall never be utterly forsaken in their troubles.

Phil. Since the care and providence of God is so great for his children, as you have largely declared, what then I pray you is the cause, why God suffers his to be brought into so many troubles and necessities?

Theol. Their profit and benefit is the cause, and not their hurt. For he loves them, when he smites them. He favours them, when he seems to be most against them. He aims at their good, when he seems to be most angry with them. He wounds them, that he may heal them. He presses them, that he may ease them. He makes them cry, that afterward they may laugh. He always means well to them, he never means hurt. He is most constant in his love towards them. If he bring them into necessities, it is but for the trial of their faith, love, patience, and diligence in prayer. If he cast them into the fire, it is not to consume them, hut to purge and refine them. If he bring them into great dangers, it is but to make them call on him more earnestly, for help and deliverance. He presses us, that we might cry; we cry, that we may be heard; we are heard, that we might be delivered. So that there is no hurt done; we are worse scared than hurt. Even as a mother, when her child is wayward, threatens to throw it to the wolf, or scares it with some poker or bull beggar, to make it cling more to her and be quiet; so the Lord often shows us the terrible faces of troubles and dangers to make us cleave and cling faster to him; and also to teach us to esteem better of his gifts when we enjoy them, and to be more thankful for them; as health, wealth, peace, liberty, safety, &c. So then,

still we see, here is nothing meant on God's part, but good; as it is written, "All things work together for good, to those who love God." For even the afflictions of God's children are so sanctified to them by the Spirit, that by it they are made partakers of God's holiness. There by they enjoy the quiet fruit of righteousness. by it they attain to a greater measure of joy in the Holy Spirit. by it the world is crucified to them, and they to the world. There by they are made conformable to Christ's death. by it they are kept from the condemnation of the world. by it they learn experience, patience, hope, &c. So that, all things considered, God's children are no losers by their afflictions, but gainers. It is better for them to have them, than to be without them; they are very good for them. For when God's children are chastised, it is as it should be. For to them, the cross is mercy, and loss is gain. Afflictions are their schooling, and adversity their best university. "It is good for me, says the holy man of God, that I have been afflicted, that I might learn your statutes." By his afflictions by it, he learned much, and became a good scholar in God's book, and well seen in his statutes and laws. He grew to great wisdom and judgement by his chastisements. All things turned about, in God's merciful providence, to his everlasting comfort. For I say again, and again, that all things tend to the good of God's chosen people. And therefore, that estate, which God will have his children to be in, is always best for them. Because he, who can best discern what is best, sees it to be best for them: whether be it sickness or health, poverty or plenty, prison or liberty, prosperity or adversity. For sometimes sickness is better for us than health, and poverty than plenty. Are therefore the children of God sick? it is best for them. Are they poor? it is best for them. Are they in any trouble? it is best for them; because their good Father will turn it to the best. He will often cut us short of our lusts and desires; because he sees we will bane ourselves with them. He, in fatherly care, will take the knife from us; because he sees we will hurt ourselves with it. He will keep us short of health and wealth, because he knows we will be the worse for them. He will not give us too much ease and prosperity in this world; for he knows it will poison us. He will not allow us continual rest, like standing ponds; for then he knows we will gather scum and filth. He deals fatherly and mercifully with us in all things, even then seeking our greatest good, when we think he does us most harm. And, to speak all in a word, he brings us into troubles and straits, to this end especially, that he may hear of us. For he right well knows our nature; he is well acquainted with our disposition. He knows we will not come at him, but when we stand in need of him: we care not for him so long as all goes well with us. But if we come into distress, or want any thing that we would fain have, then he is sure to hear of us. As he says by the prophet, "In their affliction, they will seek me early," Hosea 5:15. And another prophet says, "Lord, in trouble have they visited you. They poured out a prayer, when your chastisement was on

them," Isa. 26:16. So then now, I hope, you plainly see the cause why the Lord brings his children into so many troubles and necessities.

Phil. I see it indeed; and I am very well satisfied in it. But let me ask you one thing further. Are God's children always sure to be delivered out of their troubles?

Theol. Yes, truly; and, out of doubt, so far forth, as God sees it good for them. For it is written, "Great are the trouble of the righteous; but the Lord delivers them out of all," Psalm 34:19. St. Peter says, 2 Pet. 2:9, "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation." As if he should say, he is beaten in it, and well seen and experienced in it: so as he can do it easily, and without any trouble at all. It is said of Joseph, being in prison, Psalm 105:19, 20, that, "When his appointed time was come, and the counsel of the Lord had tried him, the king sent and loosed him, the ruler of the people delivered him; "and again the scripture says, "The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The angel of the Lord tarries round about those who fear him, and delivers them," Psalm 34:7, 17. And, in another place, the Lord himself says, concerning the righteous man. Psalm 91:14, 15, "Because he has loved me, therefore I will deliver him. I will exalt him, because he has known my name. He shall call on me in trouble, and I will hear him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and glorify him." So also says Eliphaz the Temanite, Job 5:19, "He shall deliver you in six troubles; and in the seventh, the evil shall not touch you." "Come my people, says the Lord, enter you into your chambers, and shut your doors after you; hide thyself for a very little while, until the indignation pass over," Isa. 26:20, And the prophet says, Obad. 17, "Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob shall possess their hereditary possessions." Almost innumerable places of the scriptures might be quoted, to this purpose; but these may suffice. Therefore let us know for a certainty, that so sure as trouble and affliction are to the children of God, so sure also is deliverance out of the same. As we may write of the one, and make reckoning of it as sure as the coat of our back: so may we also, in God's good time, write of the other, and make full account of it, as sure as the Lord is true. Abraham was in trouble, but delivered. Job in trouble, but delivered. David in great troubles, but delivered. The three children in the furnace, but delivered. Daniel in the lion's den, but delivered. Jonah in the whale's belly, but delivered. Paul in innumerable troubles, but delivered out of them all.

Phil. All this being true, that you say, it follows that God's children are chastised only for their good, and evermore sure of deliverance in his appointed time.

Which being so, I think there is no cause at all why they should be over heavy, or too much cast down in their afflictions.

Theol. Assuredly there is no cause at all; but rather cause why they should rejoice, clap their hands, and sing care away. For can a father for sake his children? a king his subjects? a master his servants? or a shepherd his sheep? Does not Jehovah say, "I will not leave you nor forsake you?" Heb. 13:5. Does not our heavenly Father know, we have need of these things? Hath not God given us his word, that we shall not want outward things. Hath he not said, they shall be cast on us? Why then should we are dismayed? Why should we hang down our heads? Why do we not pluck up our hearts, and Take heart? God is our dear Father; he is our best friend: he is our daily benefactor: he keeps us at his own costs and charges: he grudges us nothing: he think s nothing too much for us. He loves us most dearly: he is most chary and tender over us: he cannot endure the wind should blow on us: he will have us want nothing that is good for us. If we will eat gold, we shall have it. He has given us his faithful promise that, as long as we live, we shall never want. Let us therefore rejoice and be merry: for heaven is ours, earth is ours, God is ours, Christ is ours, all is ours: as the apostle says, "All is yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The world clap their hands, and crow long before it be day, saying, all is theirs: but the children of God may say, and say truly, all is ours. For they have a true title and proper interest, through Christ, in all the creatures. Many are their privileges; great are their prerogatives. They are free of heaven, and free of earth. They are the only free denizens of the world, Christ has purchased for them their freedom. Christ has made them free, and therefore they are free indeed. They are free from sin, free from hell, free from damnation. They are at peace with God, men, and angels. They are peace with them selves. They are at peace with all creatures. They are young princes, angels' fellows, descended of the highest house, of the blood royal of heaven, states of paradise, and heirs apparent to the immortal crown. Therefore God has commanded his angels to guard them, being such young princes as they are: yes, he has given a very straight charge to all his creatures, to look to them, to see to them, that they want nothing, that they take no hurt; so zealous, so chary, so tender is he of them. The angels must comfort Jacob. The whale must rescue Jonah. The ravens must feed Elias. The sun and moon must stay for Joshua. The sea must divide itself, that Moses and his people may pass through. The fire must not burn the three children. The lions may not devour Daniel. All the creatures must change their nature, rather than God's children should not be helped and de livered. Oh, therefore, how great is the happiness of God's chosen! Who can express it? who can utter it? They know not their own happiness: it is hidden from them. Afflictions cloud it, troubles overshadow it,

crosses dim it; and there is an interposition of the earth, between their sight and it. But this is most certain and sure, that the best is behind with the children of God: all the sweet is to come. Their happiness does not appear in this world, "Their life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, then shall they also appear, with him in glory," Col. 3:3, 4. "It does not yet appear, what they shall be: but when he comes, they shall be made like him," 1 John 3:2. Their names are already taken, and entered into the book of life: and one day, they shall be crowned. One day it shall be said to them, "Come you blessed," &c. One day they shall enjoy "his presence, where is fulness of joy; and at whose right hand there is pleasure for evermore," Psalm 16. Therefore let all God's secret ones rejoice, sing and be merry. For however in this world they are despised, trodden under the foot, made nobodies, and walk as shadows; being counted as the very rags of the earth, and the objects of the world: yet the time will come, when their happiness and felicity shall be such, as never entered into the heart of man: it is endless, unspeakable, and inconceivable.

Phil. I now plainly see, that there is no cause why God's people should be too heavy and dumpish in their afflictions. I see, that though they are not free from all afflictions, yet they are free from all hurtful afflictions. For no rod, no cross, no chastisement is hurtful to them: but all, in the conclusion, comes to a blessed issue.

Theol. You have uttered a great, and a most certain truth. For there is no affliction or trial which God imposes on his children, but if they endure it quietly trust in his mercy firmly, and tarry his good pleasure obediently, it has a blessed and comfortable end. Therefore the people of God may well be merry in the midst of their sorrows. They may, with patience and comfort, submit themselves to their Father's corrections; taking them patiently, and even kissing his holy rod, and saying in themselves, since my Father will have it so, I am content; seeing it is his mind, I am willing. As old Eli said, "It is the Lord, let him do what he will," 1 Sam. 3:16. And as David, in like submission, said in a certain case, "Behold, here am I; let him do to me, as it seems good in his own eyes," 2 Sam. 15:26. And in another place he says, "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth: because you, Lord, have done it," Psalm 39:9. Behold, here, then the patience of God's saints, and their humble submission to his most holy will. They know all shall end well; and that makes them glad to think of it. I conclude then, that the children of God are happy, in what state so ever they are: happy in trouble, happy out of trouble, happy in poverty, happy in plenty, blessed in sickness, blessed in health, blessed at home likewise, and abroad, and every way blessed. But on the contrary, the wicked are cursed, in what

state soever they are: cursed in sickness, cursed in health, cursed in plenty, cursed in poverty. cursed in prosperity, cursed in adversity, cursed in honour, cursed in dishonour. For all things work together for their destruction. Nothing does them any good. They are not anything the better, either for God's mercies or judgements. All weathers are alike to them. They are always the same, in prosperity and adversity: they are no changelings. And, as we say, "a good year does not mend them; nor an ill year pare them."

Phil. You have long insisted on the point of covetousness'. Now proceed to the fourth sign of a man's damnation; which is the contempt of the gospel; and lay open both the greatness of the sin, and the danger of it.

Theol. This sin is of another nature than the former. It is a sin against the first table. It touches the person of God himself. For to despise the gospel is to despise God himself; whose gospel it is. If to despise the ministers of the gospel be to despise God and Christ, as our Lord Jesus asserts, Luke 10:16, how much more, then, to despise the gospel itself? Therefore, it is dangerous meddling in this sin. It is to meddle with edged tools, to meddle with princes' matters to touch the ark, to come near the holy mountain: which were all things full of great peril and danger. yes, it is to spill the sacrament. It is "Unclean! Unclean! It is to rail at a king. It is to spit God in the face. It is high treason against the King of Glory. So this sin, of all other, can never be endured; and may, at no hand, be borne with. For can a mortal king endure the contempt of his laws? can he put up with the contempt of his own person? Can he abide any to spit at his sceptre, or to throw a stone at it? No, surely, he will not: therefore, the Holy Spirit says, "He that despises Moses' laws, dies without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he is worthy who treads under foot the Son of God, and counts the blood of the Testament as an unholy thing (by which he was sanctified), and insults the Spirit of grace," Heb. 10:28, 29. And, again, "If they were punished who obeyed not the word spoken by angels, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2:2, 3: "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, how shall we escape if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven?" Heb. 12:25. Therefore, our Saviour Christ says, "That it shall be easier for Sodom in the day of judgement, than for the despisers of the gospel," Luke 10:12. More over, he says, "The queen of the south shall rise up in judgement against all perverse despisers of his word," Matt. 12:42. For she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here." For Christ is greater than Solomon his doctrine and wisdom far more excellent; and therefore their sin is the greater who despise it. They shall never be able to answer it; for the Spirit says, "He that

despises the word shall be destroyed," Prov. 13:13. St. Peter also tells us that the old world, and men of the first age, are now in hell-fire, because they both despised and were disobedient to the doctrine of Christ, which though not personally, yet in his divine Spirit he spake by Noah," 1 Pet. 3:19; 2 Pet. 2:5. So, then, we see clearly God will never take it at our hands that his glorious gospel should be so universally and openly despised as it is.

Phil. You have spoken most truly, and also showed it out of the scriptures, that the contempt of the gospel is a most heinous sin; yet for all that, it is most sad to consider how little men esteem it, and how light they make of it. Many regard it no more than an egg-shell; they think it is not worth a gaily\* halfpenny; they will not go to the door to hear it; they take it to be but a breath from us, and a sound to them; and so the matter is ended. They esteem it but as a noise, or empty sound, in the air; or as a voice afar off, which a man understands not: they never felt the power of it in their hearts. Therefore they prefer their sheep, their farms, their oxen, their profits, their pleasure, yes, everything, before it; they know it not to be any such a precious jewel as it is. Although our Lord Jesus himself compare it to a hidden treasure, and a most precious pearl; yet these filthy swine of the world tread it under foot: for they know not the price of it, though Solomon the wise says, Prov. 3: "All the goods of gold and silver, pearls and precious stones, are not to be compared to it;" yet these beasts, these dogs and hogs of the world despise it. They esteem a cow more than Christ's most glorious gospel. They are like Aesop's cock, which made more account of a barley-corn than all the precious stones in the world; they are like little children, that esteem their rattles more than a bag of gold; they are like the Gadarenes, who esteemed their hogs more than Christ and his gospel; they make nothing of it. They think it not worth the while. Many of them sit idle in the streets even on the Sabbaths. While the gospel is preached in their churches, many are at cards, and tables, in ale-houses. Many, on the Sabbaths, sleep on their beds all afternoon during the sermon. Many will hear a sermon in the morning; and they take that to be as much as God can require from them, and that he is somewhat beholden to them for it; but as for the afternoon, they will hear none; then they go to bowls or tables. These men serve God in the morning, and the devil in the after noon; some run after whores and harlots on the Sabbaths; some run to dancing and bear baiting; some sit on their stalls; some sit in their shops; some by the fire-side; some sit idly in the streets; some go to the stool-ball, and others look on, miserable wretches! monstrous hell-hounds, who so grossly and openly despise the gospel of Christ! What will become of them in the end? Assuredly their damnation sleeps not. A thousand deaths wait for them: they lie open on all sides to the wrath of God. And we may wonder at his marvellous patience, that



he does not throw down balls of fire from heaven, to consume and burn up, both them, their shops, and houses, and even make them examples of his vengeance, for so notorious contempt of such sacred, holy, and high things.

Theol. You have spoken very truly, zealously, and religiously; and I greatly commend you for it. And I must needs affirm the same things. For they cannot be denied. And for my own part, I think the gospel was never so openly despised in any age of a people living under the profession of it, and under a godly and Christian prince as it is in this age. For how soever some make a show of religion, yet they have denied the power of it." They turn the the grace of God into wantonness," as St. Jude says, v. 4. They make the gospel a cloak for their sins. They receive it and embrace it, as it will best stand with their profits and pleasures, their lusts and likings, their credit and policies, and not a jot further. They will practise it at their leisure. "These men profess they know God; but by their works they deny him, and are abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate," Tit. 1:16. This age is full of such carnal Protestants.

Phil. This age, indeed, abounds with many hollow-hearted hypocrites, dissemblers, and time servers; who give the impression of loving the gospel, yet their heart is not with it. Their heart is with atheism; their heart is with popery. They have a pope in their belly; they are church papists. however, now and then, they come to the church, and hear a sermon, and show a good countenance to the preacher; yet their heart goes after covetousness. The Lord complains of this, by his prophet Ezekiel, saying, Ezekiel 33:31-32, "This people will sit before you and hear your words; but they will not do them. For, with their mouths they make jests; and their heart goes after covetousness." God complains of this also, by his prophet Jeremiah, Jer. 7:9-11, "Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and stand before me in this house, whereupon my name is called, and say we are delivered, though we have done all these abominations? Is this house be come a den of thieves, whereupon my name is called? " Where we see how the Lord chides his people, and sharply reprove them for abusing of his temple, worship, and sacrifices; making them a cloak for their sins, and making his house a den of thieves, which should be an assembly of saints. Now all this is a lively description of our time; wherein many use the exercises of the word, prayer, and sacraments, not to kill and mortify sin, but to nourish and shelter their sins. For they blindly imagine, that if they come to the church and pray, and hear the sermon, they are discharged of their sins, though they leave them not. They imagine they have given God his full due; and that, therefore, they may be the more bold to sin afterward. These kind of hypocrites are like rogues, who use medicines, not

to cure sores, but to make sores. These are like the papists, who think if they hear mass in the morning, they may do what they wish all the day after. Theol. I see now, you have very well profited in the knowledge of God, and true religion. You have spoken soundly, and like a man of knowledge in God's matters. For the common sort of people think indeed, that all religion consists in the outward service of God, though their hearts be far from him: to whom God may justly say, "This people draws near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me," Matt. 15:8. Of whom also God may justly take up all his just complaints of his people Israel and Judah; which are so frequent in all the prophets: that is, that he hated their sacrifices, loathed their oblations, detested their incense, despised their new moons, disdained their rams, lambs, and goats; accounting them all but as man's blood, dog's blood, swine's blood; and all, because their hands were full of blood; because they executed not justice and judgement in the gate; because they were not obedient to his will; because their hearts were not with him: because they used or rather abused all these things, as shelters for their sins, Isa. 66:3:

Phil. The great contempt of the ministers of the gospel in this age, strongly indicates the contempt of the gospel itself. For a man cannot love the gospel, and hate the faithful ministers of it. But we see, by sad experience, that the most grave, grey, and learned ministers are had in derision of very base and vile persons. And as Job says, ch. 30:1, "those whose fathers I have refused to set with the dogs of my flock;" they were the children of fools, and the children of villains, who were more vile than the earth, for now every rascal dares scoff and scorn at the grave and ancient fathers and pastors of the church, dares flout them as they walk in the streets, and as they ride by the highways. And though the Holy Spirit gives them glorious and lofty titles, as the stewards of God's own house, disposers of his secrets, distributors of his treasure, keepers of the broad seal, keepers of the keys of heaven, God's secretaries, God's ambassadors, angels; yes, the very glory of Christ," Tit. 1:7; 1 Cor. 4:1; Matt. 16:19; 2 Cor. 5:20; Rev. 3:7; 2 Cor. 13:23; and all this, to express the excellency of their calling, yet these vile varlets and venomous vermin of the earth, dare call them proud prelates, pompous parsons, putrid priests. O monstrous and intolerable impiety! Now it is come to pass, that this most sacred function, which is glorious in the sight of God, and his angels, and in itself most honourable is had in greatest contempt of all callings. For now the earth is full of rank atheists, and mock gods, who scoff at the gospel, and blare out their tongues at all religion. These kind of fellows never dissemble for the matter. They make no show at all, they are no hypocrites, they hide not their sins, but declare them openly, like Sodom. They care not if they never come to the

church: they are too full of it. They live like brute beasts. They think the scriptures are but fables. They rail at the ministers and preachers. They make flat opposition against them, and are notorious mockers and past-graces.

Theol. Of such the apostle St. Peter foretold "that in the last days should come mockers, and such as would live after their own lusts," &c. 2 Pet. 3:3. Of such a godly writer, Calvin says, the word of God is carelessly despised, his promises are counted vain, and his threatenings fables. Of such the poet says,

"Alas, men live, as they should never die:  
Or as though all speech of hell were a stark lie."

Now is also the time wherein the world swans with papists and atheists; and most men live as if there were no God. For now religion is hated, true godliness despised, zeal abhorred, sincerity scoffed at, uprightness loathed, preachers despised, professors disdained, and almost all good men had in derision. For now we may justly complain with the prophet, Is. 14, "judgement is turned backward, and justice stands far off. Truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter. yes, truth fails; and the one who refrains from evil, makes himself a prey." The prophet Micah bewails the times, saying, Micah 7:2, "The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none righteous among men. They all lie in wait for blood: every man hunts his neighbour with a net." The prophet Jeremiah complains of the same evil in his time; namely, that the people were come to be past shame in sinning, Jer. 13:12, "Were they ashamed, says he, when they had committed abomination? No, they were not ashamed, neither could they blush." This is a lively picture, and a true representation of our time. For now we have put on a brow of brass: we are become impudent in sin. "We cannot blush: we cannot be ashamed. We are almost past shame, and past grace. Lord, what will this grow to in the end!

Phil. We may justly fear some great judgement of God to be near us; yes, even to hang over our heads. For the Lord will never leave the contempt of his gospel and his ministry unpunished.

Theol. You have spoken a truth. And we have heard before how the old world was plagued for it. And we read how grievously the Jews were afflicted by the Romans for this sin: as our Lord Jesus did plainly foretell. We read also, that after the Lord had broached the gospel him self, and spread it abroad by his apostles, conquering the world by it (which was signified by the white horse, his rider, his bow, and his crown, Rev. 6:2), and yet shortly after saw that the same began to be despised in the world and made light of; then he did in most

fearful manner plague the earth with wars, blood sheddings, tumults, dearth, famine, and pestilence: which all are signified by the red horse, the black horse, and the pale horse, which appeared at the opening of the second, third, and fourth seal. So likewise undoubtedly, God will severely punish all injuries, wrongs, and contempts, done to his faithful ambassadors, as appears. Rev. 11:5; where it is set down, that if any would hurt the two witnesses with their two olives, and two candlesticks, (whereby is signified the faithful preachers of the gospel, with all their spiritual treasures and heavenly light) fire should proceed out of their mouths, and devour their adversaries. That is, that the fire of God's wrath should consume all that had oppressed them, either by mocks, flouts, railings, slanders, imprisonment, or any other kind of indignity. Of this we have a plain example or two in the scripture. First, we read how fire came down from heaven, and consumed the contemptuous captain and his fifty, at the threatening and calling for of Elijah," 2 Kings 1:10. Secondly, how two bears came from out of the forest, and tore in pieces forty-two younkers who mocked Elisha the prophet of God; calling him bald-head, bald-pate, 2 Kings 2:23. So then, by these examples, it is manifest that how soever the Lord may wink at these things for a time, and make as though he saw them not; yet the time will come, when he will rain fire and brimstone on all the scoffers of his faithful ministers, and despisers of his gospel. All this is plainly declared in the first chapter of the Proverbs: where is showed how the wisdom of God, even Jesus Christ the highest wisdom, cries aloud all abroad in the world, and manifest himself in the open streets; but yet is despised of wicked worldlings and scoffing fools. therefore, says Christ, verse 24-28, "Because I have called, and you refused, I have stretched out my hand, but none would regard: you have hated knowledge, and despised all my counsel; therefore will I laugh at your destruction, and mock when your fear comes on you like sudden desolation, and your destruction like a whirlwind. Then shall they call on me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Here, then, we see is terrible wrath and vengeance threatened from heaven, against all profane despisers of Christ, and his everlasting gospel, or any of the faithful publishers and pro claimers of it. Behold therefore, you despisers, and wonder: consider well what will become of you in the end. Do not think, that the most just God will always put it up at your hands, that you should so manifestly despise both his word and the most zealous preachers and professors of it. No, no; assure yourselves he will be even with you at last. He will smite you both sideways and above: he will dog you and pursue you with his judgements, and never leave following the chase with you till he have destroyed you, and consumed you from off the face of the earth. For remember, I pray you, what he says in Deut. 32, "If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold of judgement, I will execute vengeance on my enemies, and I will reward those who hate me; I

will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall eat the flesh of my adversaries."

Phil. Truly, sir, you may justly fear, that for our great contempt for the gospel, and general coldness both in the possession and practice of it, God will take it from us, and give it to a people that will bring forth the fruit of it.

Theol. We may well fear indeed, lest for our sins, especially our loathing of the heavenly manna, the Lord will remove our candlestick, take away our silver trumpets, let us no more hear the sweet bells of Aaron, cause all vision to fail, . and our Sabbaths to cease, and bring on us that most grievous and sore famine of not hearing the word of the Lord, spoken of by Amos the prophet, 13:8. Then, shall all our halcyon days, and golden years, be turned into weeping, mourning, and lamentation. God, for his infinite mercy's sake, turn it away from us!

Phil. Amen, amen; and let us all pray earnestly, night and day, that those fearful judgements may, according to God's infinite mercies, be held back, which our sins continually cry for; and that his most glorious gospel may be continued to us and our posterity, even yet with greater success.

Asun. No doubt, it is a very great sin to despise the word of God; and I think there is none so bad that will do it: for we ought to love God's word; God forbid else. He that loves not God's word, it is a pity he lives.

Theol. These are but words of course. It is an easy matter to speak good words: and very many will say as you say; but both you, and they, in your practice, plainly show that you make no reckoning of it: you esteem it no more than a dish-clout. I think, if the matter were well tried, you have scarce a bible in your house. But though you have one, it is manifest that you seldom read in it, with any care or conscience; and as seldom hear the word preached. How else could you be so ignorant as you are?

Asun. I grant that I and some others are somewhat negligent in the hearing and reading of the word of God; but you cannot say therefore we despise it.

Theol. Yes, truly. Your continual negligence, and carelessness, indicates a plain contempt. Sure it is, you have no appetite nor stomach to the holy word of God. You had rather do any thing, than either read or meditate in it. It is irksome to you. You read not two chapters in a week. All holy exercises of religion are most bitter and tedious to you. They are as vinegar to your teeth, and smoke in your

eyes. The immoderate love of this world, and of vanity, has, taken away your appetite from all heavenly things. And, whereas you shift it off with negligence, as though that would excuse you, the apostle hits you home when he says, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2:3. Mark that he says, "if we neglect."

Antil. So you think men have nothing else to do but read the scriptures, and hear sermons?

Theol. I do not say so. I do not say you should do nothing else. For God allows you, with a good conscience, and in his fear, to follow the works of your calling: as has been said before. But this I condemn in you, and many others, that you will give no time to private prayers, reading, and meditation in God's word; neither morning nor evening, neither before your business nor after. And, although you have often vacant time enough, yet you will rather give it in vanity, and idle prattling, and gossiping, than in any good exercise of religion. Which plainly shows, that you neither delight in holy things; neither is there any true fear of God before your eyes.

Antil. I tell you plainly, we must attend our business; we may go beg else; we cannot live by the scriptures. If we follow sermons we shall never thrive. What, do you think every man is bound to read the scriptures? Have we not our five wits? Do we not know what we have to do? You would make fools of us belike. But we are neither drunk nor mad.

Theol. That every man, of what condition soever, is bound in conscience to hear and read the word of God, has been showed, and proved in the beginning of our conference. But as for your five wits, they will not serve your turn in these matters; though you had fifteen wits. For all the wit, reason, and understanding of natural men, in God's matters, is but blindness, and mere foolishness. The apostle says, "That the wisdom of the most wise in this world, is not only foolishness with God; but indeed very enmity against God," 1 Cor. 3:19; Rom. 13:7. And again, he says, that "The natural man (with all his five wits.) understands not the things of the Spirit of God; because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor, 2:14. Most prudently to this point Elihu speaks, saying, "There is a spirit in man; but the inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding," Job 27:8.

Antil. I understand not these scriptures; they do not sink into my head.

Theol. I think so, indeed. For the Holy Spirit says, "Wisdom is too high for a

fool," Prov. 24:7:

Antil. What, do you call me a fool? I am no more a fool than yourself.

Theol. I call you not a fool; but tell you what the scripture says; which calls all men, though otherwise never so wise, polite, and learned, very fools, till they are truly lightened, and inwardly sanctified by the Spirit of God; as appears, Titus 3:3, where the apostle affirms that both Titus and himself, before they received the illuminating Spirit of God's grace, were very fools, without wit, and without all sense in God's matters.

Phil. I pray you, good Mr. Theologus, let him alone; for he will never have done criticising. I see he is a notable critic. Let us therefore proceed to speak of the fifth sign of condemnation, which is swearing.

SWEARING.

Theol. Swearing may well, indeed, be called a sign of condemnation. For I think it more than a sign; it is indeed an evident demonstration of a reprobate. For I never knew any man, truly fearing God in his heart, that was an usual and a common swearer.

Phil. I am flat of your mind for that. For it cannot be that the true fear of God, and ordinary swearing should dwell together in one man, since swearing is a thing forbidden by flat statute. And God adds a sore threat to his law, that "he will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain;" but will most sharply and severely punish that man.

Theol. You say true. And God says, moreover, that if we do not fear and dread his glorious and fearful name Jehovah, he will make our plagues wonderful. He says also by his prophet, Malachi 3:5, that he will "be a swift witness against swearers." The prophet Zechariah says, 5:3, 4, that the flying book of God's curse and vengeance shall enter into the house of the swearer, and he shall be cut off. Therefore let all swearers take heed and look to themselves in time; for we see there is a rod in pickle laid up in store for them.

Phil. These threatenings being so great and grievous, and that from the God of heaven himself, one would think should cause men's hearts to tremble, and make them afraid to rap out such oaths as they do; if they were not altogether hardened, past feeling, and past grace.

Theol. True, indeed: but yet we see, by sad experience, how men are given over both to swear, and forswear. For at this day there is no sin more common amongst us than swearing. For many there are who cannot speak ten words, but one shall be an oath. And numbers have got such a wicked custom of swearing that they can by no means leave it: no more than a black can change his skin, or a leopard his spots. For it is made natural to them, through custom; and they have got the habit of it. I truly think, if it were high treason to swear, yet some could not leave swearing. And sure I am, as light as we make of it, that it is high treason against the crown of heaven. Yes, it is a sin immediately against God: even against his own person; and therefore he has forbidden it, in the first table of his law.

Phil. Without doubt, this vice of swearing is of all other sins most rife in this land. For you shall hear little boys and children in the streets rap out oaths in most fearful manner. It would make a man's heart quake to hear them. We may think, they have sucked them out of their mother's breasts; but sure we are, they have learned them from the evil example of their parents. And now-a-days we cannot almost talk with a man, but, in ordinary speech, he will belch out one oath or another.

Tkeol. I will tell you a strange thing, and with great grief I speak it: I truly think there are sworn in this land an hundred thousand oaths every day in the year.

Phil. No doubt, sir, you are within compass. For now almost so many men, so many oaths; excepting some few in comparison. No, I know divers of my own experience, who, if they may be kept in talk, will swear every day in the year an hundred oaths for their parts.

Theol. Oh, what a sad thing is it! We may well take up the old complaint of the prophet Jeremiah, who says, that in his time, "The land did mourn because of oaths." And we may well wonder, that the land sinks not because of oaths: For, if God were not a God of infinite patience, how could he endure his most sacred and glorious name to be so many thousand times blasphemed in one day, and, that, by such miserable wretches as we are?

Phil. We may indeed admire and wonder at the patience and long-suffering of God, that he spares us so long, and gives us so large a time of repentance; but sure it is that the prophet says, that however "the Lord is slow to anger, yet he is great in power, and will not clear the wicked," Nab. 1:3: Though he may wink at their monstrous oaths for a time, yet he forgets them never a whit, but scores them up, and registers them in his book of accounts, so as they stand in



record against them; and, when the great day of reckoning shall come, he will set them all in order before them, and lay them to their charge. Let not wicked swearers and blasphemers therefore think that they shall always escape scot-free, because God lets them alone for a while, and defers their punishment. For the longer God defers, the more terrible will his strokes be when they come. The longer an arrow is held in the bow, the stronger will be the shot when it comes forth. Though God have leaden feet, and comes slowly to execute wrath, yet has he an iron hand, and will strike deadly when he comes. "Though God gives the wicked security for a time (says Job, 24:23) yet his eyes are fixed on all their ways." And in another place he says, 21:30, "The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, and they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." So then the holy man, Job, plainly affirms, that the state and condition of all the rich and wealthy worldlings is, as the condition of an ox that is fatted up against the day of slaughter; for, in the same chapter, he says, v. 13, "They spend their days in wealth, and suddenly go down to hell." But now I pray you nominate the oaths which are so rife and common amongst us.

Theol. There are six oaths, which are, of all other, most rife and common in every man's mouth; and they are these: by my faith— by my troth by our Lady by St. Mary by God as God shall judge me. For you cannot lightly talk with a man, but he will flush out some of these in his ordinary speech.

Asun. Do you count it so great a matter for a man to swear by his faith or his troth?

Theol. Yes, indeed do I; for our faith and our troth are the most precious jewels we have. Shall we then lay them to gage, for every word we speak? It shows we are of small credit; No, very bankrupts. For who but a bankrupt will lay the best jewel in his house to pledge for every small trifle?

Asun. I know a man that will never swear but by cock, or pie, or mouse-foot. I hope you will not say they are oaths; for he is as honest a man as ever brake bread. You shall not hear an oath come out of his mouth.

Theol. I do not think he is so honest a man as you make him; for it is no small sin to swear by creatures. The Lord says by his prophet, Jeremiah 5:7, "They have forsaken me, and sworn by those who are no gods." So then, to swear by creatures, is to forsake God; and I trow you will not say he is an honest man who forsakes God.

Asun. I do not believe that to swear by small things is a forsaking of God.

Theol. You, and such as you are, will believe no more of the word of God than will stand with your fancy. But whatever you believe, or believe not, the word of God stands sure; and no jot of it shall ever be proved false. But this I will say to you, because you think it so small a matter to swear by creatures, that the more base and vile the thing is which you swear by, the greater is the oath; because you ascribe that to a base creature, which is only proper to God: namely, to know our hearts, and to be a discerner of secret things. For whatever a man swears by, he calls it as a witness to his conscience that he speaks the truth, and lies not; which only belongs to God. And, therefore, in swearing by creatures, we rob God of his honour. therefore, to swear by the cross of the money, or by bread, or a mouse-foot, or the fire they call God's angel, or any such like, is a robbing of God of his honour, and an ascribing of that to the creature which is proper only to the Creator.

Asun. What say you then to those who swear by the mass and by the rood?

Theol. Their sin is as great as the other; for it is an heinous thing to swear by idols: as St. Mary, our Lady, by the mass, by the rood, &c. The prophet Amos says, 13:14, "They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and that say, your God, O Dan, lives; even they shall fall, and never rise up again." To swear by the sin of Samaria is to swear by idols; for Samaria was full of idols. Moreover, the Lord threatens by the prophet Zephaniah, 1:5, that he "will cut off those who swear by the Lord, and by Malchom," or by their king. For the idolators called their idol Moloch, their king.

Asun. Seeing you condemn both swearing by creatures, and swearing by idols, what then must we swear by? You would have us swear by nothing belike.

Theol. In our ordinary communication we must not swear at all, either by one thing or another; but, as our Lord teaches us, "our communications must be yes, yes; No, No. For whatever is more than these, comes of evil," Matt. 5:37. And St. James says, 5:12, "Before all things, my brethren, swear not: neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath; but let your yes be yes, and your No, No; lest you fall into condemnation."

Antil. It seems you are an anabaptist. You condemn all swearing; you will have no swearing at all.

Theol. Not so; for though I condemn swearing by creatures, swearing by idols, and all other swearing, yet I allow swearing before a magistrate, and privately

also, in matters of weight and importance, for the further bolting out of the truth. This is warranted from God's own mouth, where he says, "You shall swear, the Lord living, in truth, in judgement, and in righteousness," Jer. 4:2. And in these cases only, the name of God is to be sworn by; as it is written, Deut. 10:20, "You shall fear the Lord your God, and you shall serve him, and shall cleave to him, and shall swear by his name."

Asun. May we not swear by God in our common talk?

Theol. At no hand; for that is to take the name of God in vain, which you know is forbidden. And one of the wise heathens could say thus, "When an oath is laid on you, undertake it for two causes; either to deliver thyself from some grievous crime and accusation, or else to preserve your friends from danger." So then, that heathen man in common talk will not allow any oath, much less to swear by God. Another says, "Avoid an oath, though you swear truly." So then we see vain swearing condemned even by heathens.

Asun. yes, but for all that we must swear; men will not believe us else.

Theol. Neither yet will they believe you any whit the more for your swearing. For it manifestly appears, that thousands make no conscience at all of it. They make no more conscience of it than of cracking nuts; and therefore what wise man will believe them, though they swear never so much? But if you would make conscience always to speak the truth, from your heart, without any oaths at all, you should be better believed of all honest and wise men, than otherwise with a thousand oaths.

Antil. It is the custom to swear.

Theol. But a wicked and devilish custom.

Antil. I hope, sir, we may swear as long as we swear truly, and swear by nothing but what is good.

Theol. It has been answered before, that in vain matters you may not swear at all.

Antil. As long as we do no worse than that, I hope God will hold us excused.

Theol. God will not hold you excused when you break his commandments, and continue so doing.

Antil. What say you then, to them, that swear wounds and blood, and such like, in a bravery, thinking that it sets out their speech very well?

Theol. Hell gapes for them. And they shall know one day what it is to blaspheme God.

Antil. What may we think of such as swear by God's life, God's soul, God's body, God's heart?

Theol. That their cause is most woeful and dangerous: and I quake at the naming of them. They are most horrible, monstrous, and outrageous blasphemies: enough to make the stones in the street to crack, and the clouds to fall on our heads. And we may think, that all the devils in hell are in a readiness to carry such blasphemous villains headlong into that lake which burns with fire and brimstone for ever.

Antil. Do you find in the scriptures that God will so severely punish swearers?

Theol. Yes, truly. For besides what has been spoken before, we have divers other examples: first, of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria who, for his outrageous blasphemies against the God of heaven, was in most fearful and tragic manner slain by his own sons, Adramelech and Sharezer, 2 Kings 19:35; and that in the temple, when he was worshipping his idol god, Nisroch. And yet, behold a more fearful example of God's wrath, against blasphemers, in 1 Kings xx. 29, 30, where we read that an hundred thousand of the Aramites were slain by the Israelites, in one day, for blaspheming of God; and seven and twenty thousand being left, and flying into the city of Aphek for refuge, were all slain, by the fall of an huge great wall. What should I here speak how the seven sons of Saul, the king of Israel, were hanged up before the Lord in Mount Gibeah, for the breach of the oath made to the Gibeonites long before? 2 Sam. 21: In these examples we may plainly see that the just God, even in this life, sometimes will be revenged of blasphemers, and oath breakers; and, therefore, the very heathen in all ages have been very careful for the performing of oaths; as Pharaoh, king of Egypt, willed Joseph to go up into the land of Canaan, to bury his father, according to his oath made to his father.

Phil. Methinkes these so terrible and fearful examples of God's vengeance, against swearers and blasphemers, should strike some terror into the hearts of our blasphemers.

Theol. One would think so indeed, if any thing could do it. But, alas! they are so hardened in it, and in all other sin, that nothing can move them; except, peradventure, there were a law made that every swearer and blasphemer should hold his hand a quarter of an hour in boiling lead. This, or some such like severe law, might peradventure curb them a little, and make them bite in their oaths. But otherwise, they will never fear anything till they are in hell-fire, when it will be too late to repent.

Phil. What may be the cause of this so often and great swearing? for surely it is no inherent and inbred sin in our nature, as some of the other sins be.

Theol. No, truly. But these three I judge to be the cause of it: custom, want of admonition, want of punishment.

Phil. What then are the remedies for it?

Theol. The remedies are these: disuse, prayer, friendly admonition, some sharp law.

LYING.

Phil. Well, sir, we have heard enough of swearing, I pray you proceed to the next sign of damnation, which is lying.

Theol. Swearing and lying are very near relations; for the one who is a common swearer is for the most part a common liar also. For the one who makes no conscience of swearing, will make no conscience of lying. And as the Lord hates the one, so also he hates the other. And as he punishes the one, so he will punish the other. Therefore Solomon says, "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord," Prov. 12:22. St. John says, "Outside shall be dogs, enchanters, fornicators, murderers, and whoever loves or makes lies," Rev. 22:15. Again, the same holy man of God says, "That liars shall have their part and portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death," Rev. 21:8.

Phil. These scriptures, which you quote, manifestly declare that God abhors liars, and has reserved great torments for them. There for, the princely prophet David says that he would banish all liars out of his house. "He that tells lies (says he) shall not remain in my sight," Psalm 101:7: A lying tongue is one of the six things God hates and his soul abhors, Prov. 6:17. Yet for all this we see the sad experience, how many have even taught their tongues to lie, (as the

prophet says, Jer. 9) and there is no truth in their lips. This vice is almost as common as swearing. For it is hard to find a man that will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth from his heart, in simplicity and plainness, at all times, in all places, and amongst all persons, without all glossing or dissembling, either for fear, gain, flattery, men-pleasing, hiding of faults, or any sinister respect at all. Where, I say, is this man to be found? I would fain see him. I would fain look on such a man. It would do my heart good to behold him. I would rejoice to set my eyes on such a man.

Theol. Such a man as you speak of is hardly to be found among the sons of men. they are black swans in the earth; they are white crows; they are rare birds. For there are very few that will speak the truth from their heart: yet some such I hope there be. But, for the most part, and amongst the greater sort, lying, dissembling, and fraud, bear all the sway. There is no truth, no honesty, no conscience, no simplicity, no plain dealing, amongst men in these most corrupt times. Faith and truth are parted clean away. And as the kingly prophet says, "The faithful are failed from among the children of men. They speak deceitfully every one with his neighbour; flattering with their lips, and speak with a double heart," Psalm 12. Men nowadays study the art of lying, flattering, fawning, glossing, and dissembling: they have a heart and a heart. They have honey in their mouth, and gall in their heart. Their tongues are as soft as butter and oil; but their hearts are full of bitterness, poison, and wormwood. They are full of outward courtesy and civility, full of court holy water, when there is no truth nor plainness in their inward affection. They will speak you fair when they would cut your throats. They will show you a good countenance, when they would eat your heart with garlic. In outward show, they will carry themselves plausibly, when their hearts are full of venom and malice. This viperous brood do but watch their times and opportunities till they can get a man on the hip; and then they will sting him, and work their malice on him. These fawning curs will not bark till they bite. They will lurk and lie close till they spy their vantage, and then they will show themselves in their kind: then they will hoist a man, and turn him over the perk if they can. These men are like the waters, which are most deep, when they are most calm; like a dangerous rock, hidden under a calm sea; or, as the heathen say, "like the Siren's song, which is the sailor's wreck;" like the fowler's whistle, which is the bird's death; like the hidden bait, which is the fishes' bane; like the harpies, which have virgin's faces, and vulture's talons; or like the hyena, which speaks like a friend, and devours like a foe; or, as the scripture says, like Joab, (2 Sam. 20:10,) the captain of the host, who spake kindly to Amasa, another captain, and kissed him, when presently he stabbed him; or like the Herodians, and Pharisees' servants, who came to our Lord Jesus with many fawning

insinuations, calling him good master, and telling him that he was the plain truth, that he taught the way of God truth, he regarded no man's person, and many "good morrows," and all this gear, when indeed, their purpose was to entangle him in his words, and to entrap him, that they might catch advantage against him, and so cut his throat, and hit him with a hatchet. This is what the wise man says, Prov. 29:5, "A man that flatters his neighbour, spreads a net for his feet." And again, "As silver dross, overlaid on an earthen pot: so are fawning lips, and an evil heart." And in another place he says, "He that bears hatred, will counterfeit with his lips: but he lays up deceit in his heart. When he speaks fair, trust him not. For there are seven abominations in his heart. He will cover hatred by deceit: but his malice shall be discovered in the congregation," Prov. 26:23-26. In another place he pronounces a curse on all these hollow-hearted hypocrites, and mealy-mouthed flatterers; for says he, "to him that blesses his friend, with a loud voice in the morning, rising up early, a curse shall be imputed," Prov. 27:14

Phil. You have very well described the condition of the men of this age, who have faces, countenances, and tongues, but no hearts; who profess lying and dissembling: who say, he cannot live that cannot dissemble; who have fair faces, and false hearts; who have forgotten that plain honesty is the best policy.

Theol. The Holy Spirit, often in the Proverbs of Solomon, calls all unregenerate men fools; or, as it is in the Hebrew, men without hearts; because they have no heart to God, no heart to his word, no heart to his children, no heart to godliness, no heart to any thing that is good. They are without an honest heart, an upright heart, a plain heart. They are all in words; nothing in deeds. They promise mountains, and perform mole-hills. They will speak well of religion, and practise nothing. They will give fair words to their friends, and do just nothing for them.

Phil. The world is full of these masked counterfeits; and lying and dissembling did never more abound.

Theol. It is too true that lying and dissembling are most rife, and over-common vices amongst all sorts of men; but, especially, it overflows and abounds in shopkeepers and servants. For both these make a trade and occupation of it; they can do no other but lie. It cleaves to them as the nail to the door.

Phil. I do certainly know some shopkeepers who (to utter their bad wares, and to blind the eyes of the simple) trade in lying, all the day long, from sun to sun; from the opening of the shop and windows, to the shutting of the same. And

what is their life, if customers come in apace, but swearing, lying, dissembling, and deceiving? They will lie as fast as a dog will trot, as we say. It is a wonder, that their shops and all their wares do not fire over their heads, for their so common, so lewd, and so abominable lying; and that against their own knowledge, against their conscience, against God, against their neighbour, against heaven and earth, men and angels.

Theol. True it is, we may marvel at the long suffering of God in this behalf. But this is to be noted, that God does not immediately punish all notorious sinners in this life; but reserves thousands to the judgement of the great day. In this life he only culls out some few, whom he smites for the example of others, that they might fear and tremble, and learn by other men's harms to beware. Therefore, even in this life, we see before our eyes, some liars, some drunkards, some whore mongers, some swearers, some misers of the world, some ruffians, and cut-throats, struck down by the revenging hand of God. But whereas God smites one of these, in this life he lets a hundred escape. For if he should punish all offenders in this life, to what purpose should the judgement to come serve? If he should punish none, then we should think there were no God, or that he were shut up idle in heaven, and would do neither good nor evil, nor once meddle in the matters of the earth, as some epicures have dreamed. Therefore, to avoid both these extremities, God in his heavenly wisdom has thought good to mete with some even in this world.

Phil. I am of this mind, that the goods men get by swearing, lying and deceit, will never last.

Theol. You are not deceived; for God will blow on all such evil-gotten goods, and they shall put it in a bottomless purse, as the prophet says, Hag. 1:6. The Holy Spirit, in the Book of Proverbs, has many excellent sayings to this effect: as chap. 13:11, "The riches of vanity shall be diminished, but he who labours with the hand shall increase them." Again, "He that deals with a deceitful hand shall be come poor: but the hand of the diligent makes rich." Prov. 10:4. In another place he says, "The deceitful man does not roasts what he has caught in hunting," Prov. 12:27. That is, he shall not long enjoy or taste the prey he has got by fraud; for either one trouble or other will come on him, that he shall not be able to possess, or take delight in the spoil. Therefore it is said, "'The bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel," Prov. 20:17. That is, in the end the crafty person shall meet with many troubles; for either his conscience will upbraid him and check him, or vengeance will plague him for his deceit. The fears, cares, and sorrows, which he shall have, shall be as it were so many sharp stones, to set his teeth on edge,



and to vex him. Wherefore, instead of meat, he shall feed on gravel; and instead of wheat, on pebble stones. Small pleasure is taken in the end in goods ill-gotten, or livings unlawfully come by. For the Holy Spirit has passed sentence on them that they shall never prosper.

Phil. It sometimes falls out that they prosper for a time; but as we say, the third heir shall never enjoy them. For God will curse them in our posterity; and our children's children shall feel the smart of our sins. Therefore, the holy man Job says, 28:14, "The offspring of the wicked shall not be satisfied with bread." For out of doubt, God will bless only what is got with a good conscience in the works of our calling; and it shall remain blessed to us and our posterity. Therefore, the Spirit says, "The just man that walks in his uprightness is blessed, and blessed shall his children be after him," Prov. 20:7: But God will not bless, but curse what is got with an evil conscience; as swearing, lying, dissembling, deceiving, &c.

Theol. Some ancient writers have spoken very prudently to this point; for one says, (Jerome) "Unjust gain has long sorrow and short joy. Another says, (Augustine) Choose loss rather than filthy lucre. For the one will grieve you but once; the other, for ever. A third says, (Bernard.) "It is better to be honestly poor, than wickedly rich. For the one moves pity, the other reproof. One of the wise heathen also says, "We may not wax rich unjustly;" but live of just things; which he calls holy things.

Phil. Have we not examples in the scriptures of such as have been punished for lying?

Theol. Yes. For we read how the Gibeonites, for their lying and dissembling, were made drudges and slaves to the Israelites. Josh. 9:23. Gehazi, also, the servant of Elisha the prophet, for his lying and covetousness together, was smitten with a most grievous leprosy, 2 Kings, 5:Ananias and Sapphira his wife, for their lying and dissembling, were stricken down stark dead, by the immediate hand of God, at the rebuke of Peter, Acts 5:5, Zophar, one of Job's friends, speaking of these kind of men, says, "They shall suck the gall of asps, and the viper's tongue shall slay them. They shall flee from the iron weapons, and a bow of steel shall strike them through," Job 20:16, 24. Now then, by all these examples, we may plainly see how greatly God abhors lying and dissembling.

Phil. Oh, therefore, that we could follow the counsel of the apostle, who says. Col. 3:9, "Lie not one to another: seeing that you have put off the old man, with

his works." And again, Eph. 4:25, "Cast away lying, and speak every one the truth to his neighbour." The manner of speech the apostle uses is very forcible, implying this much, that we should in a kind of disdain or detestation, cast it away, and throw it from us, as a filthy, stinking and wrung out rag, hanging about a man's neck; which he suddenly snatches away, and hurls into the fire, as being ashamed that ever it should be seen or known. Would to God, therefore, that we were come to such a detestation and loathing of lying, that we would even spit at it, and cry fie on it, and all that use it! Oh that we could hate it as the devil, who is the father of it; and as hell-fire, which is the reward of it! Oh that we were come but so far as the heathen man who says, (Homer, Iliad 3.) "I hate him as the gates of hell who has one thing in his tongue, and another in his heart!"

Antil. Yet for all this we find in the scriptures that even some of the godly have been taken tardy in lying, and yet have not sinned in so doing; as Abraham, Jacob, Kahab, the midwives of Egypt; and, therefore, why may we not do so too?

Theol. I told you before that you may not make the weaknesses of God's people rules for you to live by; and further, I answer that all these did offend in their lying. Some of them, indeed, I grant, are commended for their love to the church, and charitable affections to God's people, but none of them simply for lying; which is a thing condemned even by the heathen; for says one of them, "Lying corrupts the life of many;" and every wise and godly man hates lying.

Antil. But may we not lie now and then for advantage?

Theol. No, truly: neither is there any good advantage to be got that way; for when you have made up your accounts, all charges deducted, and all expenses defrayed, your clear gains will be very small. For by your wilful and customary lying you gain inward grief, and lose true joy; you gain short pleasure, and lose perpetual glory; you gain hell, and lose heaven; you make the devil your friend, and God your enemy. Now then, reckon your gain.

Phil. I pray you, let us grow towards a conclusion of this point, and show us briefly the chief causes of lying.

Theol. The chief causes of lying are these: custom, fear, covetousness, the devil.

Phil. What be the remedies?

Theol. The remedies be these: disuse, godly boldness, contentment, earnest prayer.

## DRUNKENNESS.

Phil. You have spoken enough of the vice of lying to cause all such to abhor it and forsake it, as have any drop of grace, or spark of God's fear in them; but as for those who are filthy, let them be more filthy. Now, I pray you, speak your judgement of the seventh sign of condemnation, which is drunkenness.

Theol. It is so brutish and beastly a sin that a man would think it should not need to be spoken against; but that all reasonable men should even abhor it, and quake to think of it; for it is a most swinish thing: it makes of a man a beast; it takes away the heart of man from all goodness, as witnesses the prophet Hosea, 4:11, "fornication, wine, and new wine, take away their heart." For what heart, what stomach, what appetite can fornicators and drunkards have to any thing that is good? either to hear or read the word of God, or to pray or to meditate in the same? Alas! they are far from it; far from God; and far from all grace and goodness. therefore the prophet Joel says, 1:5, "Awake you drunkards; weep and howl you drinkers of wine." yes, the mighty God of heaven pronounces a woe against them, saying, Isa. 5:11, "Woe to those who rise up early to follow drunkenness; and to those who continue until night, till the wine inflame them." Our Lord Jesus himself gives us a caveat to take heed of it, Luke 21:34, "Take heed, says he, that your hearts are not overcome with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life; and so that day come on you unawares." Thus you hear how Christ himself, and sundry of the prophets, thunder down from heaven against this gross beastliness which now abounds and reigns amongst the sons of men.

Phil. True indeed; but yet nothing will make men leave it, for it is a most rife and over-common vice. We see many that think themselves somebodies, and as we say no small fools, who yet will be overtaken with it; and by it lose all their credit and reputation with all wise men: yes, prove themselves to be but swine and brute beasts, as the Holy Spirit asserts, saying, "Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging; whosoever is deceived in it is not wise," Prov. 20:1.

Theol. The wise king, in the same book, most notably and fully describes to us the inconveniences and mischiefs which accompany drunkenness, and follow drunkards at the heels, "To whom is woe? to whom is sorrow? to whom is strife? to whom is babbling? to whom are wounds without cause? to whom is the redness of the eyes? Even to those who tarry long at the wine: to those who

go and seek out mixed wine," Prov. 23:29. In the same chapter he says, v. 20, 21, "Be not of the number of those who are bibbers of wine, nor of those who glut themselves with flesh; for the drinker and the feaster shall become poor: and the sleeper shall be clothed with rags." Moreover he says, v. 33, "Their eyes shall behold strange women:" and that "they shall be like him that lies in the midst of the sea, and sleeps on the top of the mast." In all these speeches, the Holy Spirit, in most lively manner, describes to us the properties of drunkards; even their staggering, their reeling, their snorting, their senseless sensuality. Behold, then, what be the cursed fruits and events of drunkenness, even these which follow: woe, alas! grief, misery, beggary, poverty, shame, lusts, strife, babbling, brawling, fighting, quarrelling, surfeiting, sickness, diseases, swinish sleeping, security, and sensuality. So then, I conclude that drunkenness is a vice more appropriate for a hog than any reasonable man; and, as one says, "It is the metropolitan city of all the province of vices." Well, therefore, says the heathen writer (Demosthenes), "When the wine is in, a man is as a running coach without a coachman."

Phil. Let us hear what executions have been done on drunkards in former ages, that now men may learn to take heed by their examples.

Theol. Ammon, one of David's ungracious children, being drunk, was slain by his brother Absalom. Benhadad, king of Syria, being drunk, was discomfited by Ahab, king of Israel. Elah, king of Israel, being drunk, was slain by Zimri his servant, and captain of his chariots; who also succeeded him in the kingdom. Lot, being drunk, committed incest with his own daughters; and therefore was punished in his posterity. Thus we see, what executions have been done, even on kings, for this kind of sin. Therefore, let man learn, once at last, to shun vice, and embrace virtue; and as the apostle says, to make an end of their salvation in fear and trembling. For all our shifts and starting holes will serve us to no purpose in the end: but when we have wandered hither and thither, never so much, yet at the last we must be fain to be shut up in God's wrath.

Antil. What I pray you, do you make it so great a matter if a man be a little overtaken with drink, now and then? There is no man but he has his faults: and the best of us all may be amended. If neighbours meet together, now and then, at the ale-house, and play a game at maw, for a pot of ale, meaning no hurt, I take it to be good fellowship, and a good means to increase love amongst neighbours, and not so heinous a thing as you make it.

Theol. I see you would fain make fair weather of it, and smooth over the matter with sweet words, as though there were no such great evil in it; but however

you mince it, and blanch it over, yet the apostle says flatly, "That drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. 6:10. I think this one sentence is enough to amaze and strike through the hearts of all drunkards in the world: for it is as much in effect, as if the apostle had said, all drunkards are notorious reprobates, and hell-hounds branded of Satan, and devoted to perpetual destruction and damnation; but you say you mean no hurt. I answer, whatever you mean, your actions are naught, and your fellowship as had; for what good meaning can you have? or what good fellowship call you it, for poor labouring men, artificers, and such like, to sit idly all the day long in taverns and ale-houses, mis-spending their time and their money in gaming, rioting, swearing, staring, embezzling, bibbing, brawling, and brabbling? There is no true fellowship in it: it is mere impiety; if we may call it impiety, for poor men to live idly, dissolutely, neglecting their callings, while their poor wives and children sit crying at home for bread, being ready to starve, to beg, or to steal. I pray you speak your conscience, what good fellowship is there in this?

Antil. Yet, for all that, there are some who abstain from ale-houses, and yet are as bad as any other; for they will backbite and slander their neighbours: they will do them a shrewd turn as soon as any other: they are envious, they censure us, and disdain our company: yet we think ourselves as good as they, for all their shows of holiness.

Theol. You speak more than you know, or can justify, against some better than yourself; but, if it were so, you should but justify one sin by another a lesser by a greater; which is to no purpose.

Antil. Will you then condemn all good fellowship?

Theol. No, no; I greatly allow godly and Christian fellowship; and acknowledge it to be one of the chief comforts we have in the world. I know we are commanded to love brotherly fellowship; but as for your pot-companionship, I hate it, and abhor it; for it is written, "He that follows the idle shall he filled with poverty." And again, "He that keeps company with banqueters shames his father." And in another place, "He that loves pastime shall be a poor man: and the one who loves wine and oil shall not be rich."

Phil. Good Mr. Theologus, talk no more with him: but let us draw near to the wind-up of this matter; and tell us, in a word, Which are the chief causes of drunkenness.

Theol. The causes are these: ill company, alehouses, idleness, a wicked humour.

Phil. Which are the true remedies?

Theol. The remedies are these: avoiding of ill company, shunning of ale-houses, labour in our callings, a good course of life,

Phil. Well sir, you have waded far enough in this point: let us now come to the eighth sign of condemnation, which is idleness.

Theol. Concerning idleness, this I say briefly, that it is mother to all vice, and evil stepmother to all virtue: yes, it is the mother of all enormities: it is the mother of fornication, the mother of pride, the mother of theft, the mother of drunkenness, the mother of ignorance, the mother of error, the mother of poverty, the mother of slandering and backbiting, prattling and gossip ping, brawling, scolding, quarrelling, and what not? Idleness was one of the principle sins of Sodom, as the prophet Ezekiel testifies, 16:49, "Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, and in her daughters." Solomon is very plentiful in this matter; for, says he, "The sluggard lusts and has not," Prov. 13:4. And again, "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can give a sensible reason," 26:16. That is, he takes himself the wisest of many, because he spares his body, when others take pains, he says, "Yet a little sleep, yet a little slumber, yet a folding of the hands: and his poverty comes like a traveller (that is unawares), and his necessity like an armed man" (that is strongly). Then he folds his hands together, and eats his own flesh, Eccles. 4:5. For, he hides his hand in his bosom: and it wearies him to put it to his mouth again, Prov. 26:15. In another place the Holy Spirit says, "The slothful man will not plough, because of winter: therefore he shall beg in summer, and have nothing," 20:4. Again, "The slothful man is brother to him that is a great waster," 18:9. Moreover, it is said, that "The sluggard turns himself on his bed, as the door on the hinges," 26:14; that is, he keeps his bed, as if he were fastened to it. And, because the spirit will abound in this point, it is further written of the slothful man that he says, 5:13, "A huge lion is in the way: I shall be slain in the streets." That is, when any good matter is in hand, as preaching, praying, reading, giving to the poor, &c. then he draws back, he shrinks into the shell, he finds one excuse or another. Then profit and pleasure, business and idleness, matters at home and matters abroad, company, and a thousand occasions will He in his way, as so many lions, to let and hinder him. So then, we see how lively and plentifully the holy scriptures paint out the lazy lubbers of this world, and sons of idleness, who are as hardly drawn to any good thing as a bear to the stake. As for the duties of religion, they go as lively and as

cheerful about them as a thief goes up the ladder, to be executed for his theft.

Phil. I plainly see that this sin of idleness is a very gross evil, and the root of many vices: yet, for all that, there are a great number who think they were born to live idly, as many young gentlemen, and such like, who imagine they came into the world for no other purpose but to hunt and hawk, card and dice, riot and revel, and to spend their days in pleasure and vanity. Again, there are many lazy lozels, and luskish youths, both in towns and villages, who do nothing all the day long but walk in the streets, sit on the stalls, and frequent taverns and ale houses. Many rich citizens, especially women, ordinarily lie in bed till nine of the o'clock, and then, forsooth, rise and make themselves ready to go to dinner; and, after they have well dined, they spend the rest of the day, and a good part of the night also, in playing, prattling, babbling, cackling, prating, and gossiping. Fie of this idle life! Many profane serving men also falsely suppose that they were born only to game, riot, swear, whore, ruffle it, and roist it out, and to spend their time in mere idleness. But of all these, well said the heathen philosopher (Aristotle), "both God and man hate the idle person."

Theol. It is a sad thing to see so many men and women live so idly and so unprofitably as they do. For, alas! there are too many who follow no honest calling, live to no use, nobody is the better for them. They do no good, neither to the church or commonwealth. They are like drone bees: they are unprofitable burdens of the earth. God has no use of them; the church no good, the commonwealth no benefit, their neighbours no profit, the poor no relief. They imagine they came into the world to do nothing but eat and drink, and sleep, and rise up to play. They think they should spend their time in dicing and dancing, in fornication and bravery, in gluttony and belly-cheer; in pigging themselves, like hogs of Epicurus' herd; in pampering their paunches, and cramming their bellies; in fattening themselves like boars in a frank, till they are well brawned; and, as Job says, till their bones be full of marrow, their faces strut with fatness, and they have collops in their flank. Oh, what a beastly life is this! Fie on it; fie on it. It is more meet for epicures than Christians; for swine, than for men; for Sardanapalus, and Heliogabalus, and such like belly-gods, than for the professors of the gospel. But of all such, Job says enough, "They spend their days in pleasure, and suddenly go down to hell."

Phil, But may it not be allowed to lords and ladies, gentlemen and gentlewomen, and other great ones, to live idly, since they have money to maintain it.

Theol. God allows none to live idly, but all, great and small, are to be employed one way or other, either for the benefit of the church or commonwealth, or for the good government of their own households, or for the good of towns and parishes, and those amongst whom they converse, or for the succour and relief of the poor, or for the furtherance of the gospel, and the maintaining of the ministry, or for one good use or other. To these ends, our wits, our learning, our reading, our skill, our policy, our wealth, our health, our wisdom, and authority, are to be referred; knowing this, that one day, we shall come to give an account of our bail-wick,\* and to be reckoned with, for the employment of our talents. For this cause, Job says, 5:7, "That man is born to travail as the sparks fly upward." And God has laid this on Adam, and all his posterity, "In the sweat of your brow, you shall eat your bread." Some set down four causes, why every man should labour diligently in his calling: First, to bear the yoke laid on all mankind; by the Lord; secondly, to get the necessaries of this life; thirdly, to live to the profit of human society; lastly, to avoid evil thoughts and actions. St. Paul finds great fault with some in the church of Thessalonica, because they walked inordinately, that is, idly, and out of lawful calling: and therefore concluded, that such as would not labour should not eat. So then, we plainly see that God allows idleness in none. For when we are idle, as has been showed before, we lie open to the devil and his temptations; and he gets within us and prevails against us. While David tarried idly at home in the beginning of the year, when kings used to go forth to the battle, he was soon overtaken with those two foul sins of adultery and man-slaughter. So long as Sampson warred with the Philistines he could never be taken or overcome: but after he gave himself to idleness and pleasure, he not only committed fornication with the strumpet Delilah, but also was taken of his enemies, and his eyes miserably put out. These examples show what a dangerous sin idleness is; therefore, the Holy Spirit sends us to school, to the little creature, the ant, to learn of her both to avoid idleness, and also to use wisdom and prudence in our actions, "Go to the ant, O sluggard, behold her ways, and be wise: for she having no guide, task-master, nor ruler, prepares her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in harvest," Prov. 6:6. And in good sooth it is wonderful to observe, what infinite pains and unwearied labour, that silly creature takes in summer that she may be well provided for against winter. Let us, therefore, learn wisdom from her example; and let us set before our eyes the looking-glass of all creatures. Let us consider how the birds fly, the fishes swim, the worms creep, the heavens turn, the elements move, the sea ebbs and flows incessantly: yes, the earth itself, which is the most heavy and unwieldy creature of all, yet never ceases his working, bringing forth his burden in summer, and labouring inwardly all the winter, in concocting and digesting his nourishment for the next spring. Thus we see how all creatures are diligently and painfully exercised in their kinds;



and therefore it is a great shame for us to live idly, carelessly, and dissolutely. Let us therefore learn, once at last, to fly sloth, and every one to live faithfully, diligently, and industriously in our several callings. So shall we both keep Satan at the staves' end, and also much sin out of our souls which, otherwise, idleness will force in on us.

Phil. I must needs confess that idleness is a gross vice in whomsoever it is found. But specially, in my judgement, it is most odious in magistrates and ministers.

Theol. That is so in truth; for they ought to be the guides, governors, shepherds, and watchmen over the people of God. And therefore, for them to neglect their duties and charges is a most horrible thing, since it concerns the hurt of many. Therefore, well says the heathen poet (Homer, Iliad ii.), "A magistrate or a minister may not be lazy and slothful, to whom the nursing of the people is given in charge, and of whom many things are to be cared for;" What a sad thing, therefore, is it when magistrates are profane, irreligious, popish, vicious, and negligent in the duties of their calling? And how much more sad is it when ministers neglect their studies, slack preaching and prayer, and give up themselves, some to covetousness, some to pride, some to husbandry, some to other worldly affairs, and some to spend their time idly in taverns, ale-houses, gaming, rioting, and lewd company? Would to God, therefore, that both these kinds of public persons would cast off idleness and sloth; and with diligence, faithfulness, care, and conscience, perform the duties of their places. For it is an excellent thing for any to be a good man in his place: as a good magistrate that rules well, that governs wisely, who favours good men and good causes, and defends them; who also sets himself against bad men and bad causes, and punishes them sharply and severely; who, moreover, maintains virtue, even of a very love he bears to it in his heart; and punishes vice of a very zeal and hatred against it; and not for his credit only, or to please some, or because he must needs do it, and can do no less, or for any such sinister respect; but even of a love to God, a care of his glory, a conscience of duty, and a fervent zeal against sin. So, likewise, it is a notable thing for a minister to be a good man in his place; to be studious in the law of God; diligent and painful in preaching; and that of a love to God, a zeal of his glory, deep pity and compassion to wards the souls of the people, seeking by all means possible to win them to God; carrying himself in all his actions amongst them wisely, religiously, unblameably, and inoffensively. So again, it is a worthy thing to be a good rich man, who does much good with his riches, who keeps a good house, relieves the poor, ministers to the necessity of the saints, and gives cheerfully, and with discretion, where need is. So also, it is a commendable

thing to be a good neighbour, or a good townsman; by whom a man may live quietly, peaceably, joyfully and comfortably. And lastly, to be a good poor man: that is, humble, lowly, dutiful, painful, ready to help, and ready to please. Oh, I say this is a most excellent and glorious thing, when every man keeps his standing, his range, and his rank; when all men, with care and conscience, perform the duties of their places; when the husband does the duty of a husband, and the wife of a wife; when the father does the duty of a father, and the child of a child; when the master does the duty of a master, and the servant of a servant; when every man sets God before his eyes in doing those things that especially belong to him. For herein consists the honour of God, the glory of the prince, the crown of the church, the fortress of the commonwealth, the safety of cities, the strength of kingdoms, and the very preservation of all things.

Antil. You have said well in some things. But yet I do not see, but that rich men and women may live idly, since they have enough to maintain it; for may not a man do with his own what he wants?

Theol. No, truly. For you may not take your own knife, and cut your own throat with it: neither may you take your own axe, and kill your own child with it. Therefore, that reason is naught. Albeit therefore wealthy men and women have great plenty of all things, so as they need not to labour; yet let them be profitably employed some other way. Let them exercise themselves in one good thing or other. If they can find nothing to do, let them give themselves much to private prayers and reading of the scriptures, that they maybe able to instruct and exhort others. Or else let ladies and gentlewomen do as that good woman Dorcas did: that is, buy cloth, cut it out, work it, make shirts, shifts, coats, and garments, and give them to the poor, when they have so done. For it is said of Dorcas, that she was a woman full of good works and alms-deeds, which she did. She was a merciful and tender hearted woman; she was the poor man's friend; she clothed the poor and naked; she knew it was a sacrifice acceptable to God. Oh that the wealthy women of our land would follow the example of Dorcas! But, alas! these days bring forth few Dorcasses, Acts 9:36-39.

Phil. As you have showed us the causes of the former evils; so now, I pray you, show the causes of this also.

Theol. The causes of idleness are: evil examples, bad education, living out of calling.

Phil. Show us also the remedies.

Theol. The remedies are: good education, labour in youth, good examples, diligence in a lawful calling.

Phil. Now, then, let us come to the last sign of condemnation, which is oppression; and I ask you, good sir, speak your mind of it out of the scriptures.

Theol. It is so infinite a matter that I know not where to begin, or where to make an end of it; it is a bottomless sink of most grievous enormities. I shall enter into a labyrinth where I shall not know how to get out again; but since you are desirous to hear something of it, this I say, that it is a most cruel monster, a bloody vice, a most ugly and hideous fiend of hell. The scriptures, in very many places, cry out on it, arraigning it, adjudging it, and condemning it down to hell. They also thunder and lighten on all those who are stained and corrupted with this vice, calling them by such names and giving them such titles as are taken from the effects of this sin, and most fit for oppressors; as namely, "That they grind the faces of the poor; that they pluck off their skin from them, and their flesh from their bones; that they eat them up as they eat bread," Isa. 3:15; Amos 13:6; Micah 3:2; Psalm 14:4. These are those who strive to devour all, like savage beasts, and to get the whole earth into their hands either by hook or by crook, by right or by wrong, by oppression, fraud, and violence. These caterpillars and cormorants of the earth are like the whale fish, which swallows up quick other little fishes; they are like the lion, that devours other beasts; they are like the falcon, which seizes, plumes, and preys on other fowls. These greedy wolves devour all, and swallow up the poor of the land; therefore, the prophets of God thunder out many great woes against them. First, the prophet Isaiah says, 5:8, "Woe to those who join house to house, and field to field, till there are no place for the poor to dwell in; that they may be placed by themselves in the midst of the earth." Secondly, the prophet Jeremiah says, 22:13, "Woe to him that builds his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers without equity," &c. Thirdly, the prophet Micah says, 2:2, "Woe to those who covet fields, and take them by violence; and so oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage." Fourthly, the prophet Habbakuk, 2:12, cries out, saying, "Woe to him that builds a town with blood, and erects a city by sin." St. James also most terribly threatens these kind of men, saying, 5:1-3, "Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come on you. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you; and shall eat your flesh as it were fire." Lastly; St. Paul says flatly, 1 Cor. 6:10, "That extortioners shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Thus we see how many fearful woes and threats are denounced from heaven against these pestilent cut-throats of the earth.

Phil. And all little enough; for they are steeped in their sin, and the stain of it is so soaked into them, as it will hardly ever be washed out. True it is, that you said, that these cruel oppressing blood-suckers are the most pernicious and pestilent vermin that creeps on the face of the earth; and yet, I think, there were never more of them than in these days. For now the wicked world is full of such as do sundry ways bite, pinch, and nip the poor, as we see by every day's sad experience; but you can speak more of it than I; therefore, I pray you, lay open the sundry kinds of oppression used in these days.

Theol. There is oppression by usury, by bribery, by racking of rents, by taking excessive fines; oppression in bargaining, in letting of leases, in letting of houses, in letting of grounds, in binding poor men to unreasonable covenants, in thrusting poor men out of their houses, in hiring poor men's houses over their heads, in taking of fees; oppression by lawyers, by church officers, by engrossers, by forestallers; oppression of the church, of the ministry, of the poor; oppression of widows, oppression of orphans; and thus we see how all swarm with oppressions, and nothing but oppressions, oppressions.

Phil, In truth, this is a most cruel and oppressing age wherein we live; yes, a very iron age. It seems that the great ones mind nothing else: they are altogether set on oppression; they dote and dream of it, they find sweet in it, and therefore they are mad of it; as Solomon says, Eccles. 7:7, "Oppression makes a wise man mad." It seems therefore, that this vice is of such marvellous force, that it can bereave men of their wits, and make men stark mad of getting goods by hook or by crook, they care not how, nor from whom; so they have it. Yet, no doubt, the wise God has enacted many good laws for the suppressing of this evil, and threatens to carry them out himself; and especially his law provides for the safety of the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger. But you, Mr. Theologus, can repeat the statutes better than I, because you are a professed divine; therefore, I pray you, let us hear them from you.

Theol. In the twenty-second chapter of Exodus, God made this law following: "You shall not trouble an widow or fatherless child; if you vex or trouble such, and so he call and cry to me, I will surely hear his cry. Then shall my wrath be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless," Exodus 22: Again, he says, Deut. 14:14, 15, "You shall not oppress an hired servant that is needy and poor, but you shall give him his hire for his day; neither shall the sun go down on it, for he is poor, and therewith sustains his life, lest he cry against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you." Moreover, the Lord says, "You shall do no injury to a stranger, for you

were strangers in the land of Egypt." And God himself threatens that he will be "a swift witness against those who keep back the hireling's wages, and vex the widow and the fatherless," Mal. 3:5. The apostle says, "Let no man oppress or defraud his brother in any matters; for the Lord is an avenger of all such things," 1 Thes. 4:6. Solomon also says, "If in a country you see the oppression of the poor, and the defrauding of justice and judgement, be not astonished at the matter, for the one who is higher than the highest regards; and there are higher than they," Eccles. 5:8. All these holy statutes and laws, enacted and provided against oppressors, plainly show what care the Lord has for his poor, distressed, and desolate people.

Phil. But these oppressing hell-hounds are such as care for nothing. No law of the Almighty can bridle them; nothing can fear them; nothing will restrain them. They have made a covenant with hell and death. They are frozen in the dregs; they are past feeling; and, as Job says, "These are they that abhor the light, they know not the ways of it, neither continue in the paths of it." Their hearts are as hard as the adamant. Nothing can move them; nothing can work on them. There is a great crying out everywhere of the stone in the kidneys, which indeed is a great torment to the body (but there is no complaining of the stone in the heart; I mean, a stony heart; which is the sorest disease that possibly can fall into the soul of man) and yet in these times it grows very rife. For men's hearts are as hard as brass, and as the nether millstone, as the scripture says. For many, especially of these unmerciful and oppressing tyrants, say in their hearts, "God will do neither good nor evil," Zeph. 1:12. Therefore they put the evil day far from them, and approach to the seat of sin. They are at ease in Zion; they lie on beds of ivory, and stretch themselves on their beds; and eat the lambs of the flock, and the calves out of the stall. They sing to the sound of the viol; they invent instruments of music, like David. They drink wine in bowls, and no man is sorry for the affliction of Joseph" (Amos 6:3-6); that is, the troubles of God's people. The prophet Isaiah, 5:12, also complains of these kind of men, saying, "They regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the work of his hands." And another prophet says, "They say in their hearts God has forgotten; he hides away his face, and will never see. They are so proud, that they seek not for God. They think always, there is no God; his judgements are far out of their sight. Their ways always prosper; and therefore they say in their hearts, tush, we shall never be moved, nor come in danger."

Theol. You have spoken very well, touching the steeliness and hardness of these men's hearts, who are so unmerciful to their poor neighbours, that almost none can live by them. They so disturb and disquiet all things, that poor men can dwell in no rest by them. Therefore truly says the wise king, "A mighty

man molests all, and both hires the fool, and hires those that pass by." But the poor man speaks with prayers; that is, by the way of entreaty and supplications. For the poor are afraid of them. They quake when they see them; as the beasts quake at the roaring of the Lion. Many poor farmers, poor husbandmen, poor herdsmen, poor labourers, poor widows, and hirelings, quake and tremble, when these greedy wolves come abroad. And, as Job speaks, 24:4, "The poor of the earth hide themselves together." For, alas! in their hearts they cannot abide the sight of them; they had as leave meet the devil as meet them, for fear of one displeasure or another. For either they fear that they will warn them out of their houses, or parley about more rent and straighter covenants, or beg away their best kine, or borrow their horses, or command their carts, or require a week's work of them, and never pay them for it, or a twelve months' pasture for a couple of geldings, or that they will make one quarrel or another to them, or one mischief or another. So that these poor souls cannot tell what to do, nor which way to turn them, for fear of these cruel termagants. They are even weary of their lives; for they have no remedy for these things, but even to bear it off with head and shoulders. Therefore, they often wish they were out of the world, and that they were buried quick. They say, if any will knock them on the head, they will forgive him. Oh most piteous case! Oh sad to hear of it! These poor silly creatures have to drudge and moil all the year long, in winter and summer, in frost and snow, in heat and cold, to provide their rents that they may be able to pay their cruel landlord at his day: for else, how shall they be able to look him in the face? Yet, their rent is so racked, that all that they can do, is little enough to pay it. And when that is paid, alas! the poor man, and his wife, and his children, have little left to take to, or to maintain themselves with; they are fain to gnaw of a crust, to fare hardly, and to go thinly clad. Sometimes they have victuals, and sometimes none. The poor children cry for bread. Poor widows, also, and poor fatherless children, are found weeping and mourning in their houses, and in their streets. So that now we may with Solomon, "Turn and consider all the oppressions that are wrought under the sun," Eccles. 4:1, We may behold the tears of the oppressed, and none comforts them. For the mighty ones wrong the weaker; even as the stronger beasts push and harm the feebler. These griping oppressors pinch the poor even to the quick. They pluck away from the fatherless and widows the little they have. If there is but a cow, or a few sheep left, they will have them. If there is a little commodity of house or land, oh what devices they have to wind it in, and to wring it away! These tyrants will go as nigh as the bed they lie on. They know well enough the poor men are not able to wage law with them: and therefore they may do what wrong they will, and show what cruelty they wish. Hence comes the tears of the oppressed; hence comes the weeping and wailing of the poor. But, alas! poor souls, they may well

weep to ease their hearts a little; but there is none to comfort them: remedy they can have none. But yet assuredly the everlasting God looks on them, and will be revenged. For the cries of the poor, the fatherless, and the widows, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, who is an avenger of all such things, yes, a strong revenger, as Solomon says, "Enter not into the field of the fatherless; for their revenger is strong. He himself will plead their cause against you," Prov. 23:10, 11. And again he says, "Rob not the poor, because he is poor; neither tread down the afflicted in the gate: for the Lord pleads their cause, and will spoil their soul that spoil them," Prov. 22:22. We see then, that the most just God will be revenged on these unmerciful tyrants. He will not always put up these wrongs and injuries done to the poor. In the eighth chapter of the prophet Amos, he swears by the excellency of Jacob, that he will never forget any of their works. And again, he says, by his prophet Jeremiah, "Shall I not be avenged on such a nation as this? "Surely he will set his face against them, to root them out of the earth. For indeed they are not worthy to crawl on the face of the earth, or to draw breath amongst the sons of men. It is written in the book of Psalms, 21:12, that God will set their fellows opposite against him, as a butt to shoot at that he will put them apart and the strings of his bow shall he make ready against their faces. Be astonished at this, you heavens; and tremble, you earth. Hear this, O you cruel landlords, unmerciful oppressors, and blood-suckers of the earth. You may well be called blood-suckers: for you suck the blood of many poor men, women, and children: you eat it, you drink it, you have it served in at your sumptuous tables every day, you swallow it up, and live by it; and, as Job says, 24:5, "The wilderness gives you and your children food;" that is, you live by robbing and murdering. But woe, woe! to you that ever you were born. For the blood of the oppressed, which you have eaten and drunk, shall one day cry for speedy vengeance against you; as the blood of Abel cried against Cain. Their blood shall witness against you in the day of judgement; and the tears of many poor starved children, orphans, and widows shall cry out against you. Was the Lord revenged of Ahab, for his cruel and unjust dealing with poor Naboth, and shall he not be revenged of you? Did the dogs lap the blood of Ahab, and shall you escape? No, no; you shall not escape. "The Lord will be a swift witness against you:" as he says in Malachi. Was the Lord angry with the rich of his people, for oppressing the poor (so as the cry of the people and of their wives, against their oppressors, was heard of the Almighty) and do you think, you shall escape scot-free? Does not the like cause bring forth the like effect? the like sin, the like punishment? Know therefore for a certainty, that the Lord has coffers full of vengeance against you, and one day he will unlock them, and bring them forth in the sight of all men. Know also, that the timber of your houses, and the stones of your walls, which you have built by oppression and blood, shall cry against you in the day of the Lord's

wrath, as the prophet Habakkuk, 2:11, tells you, "The stone (says he) shall cry out of the wall; and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." Where the prophet tells you, that the walls of your houses built in blood shall cry out loud and shrill, and play the choristers in that behalf; so as they shall answer one another on either side. The one side sings, behold blood: the other, behold murder. The one side behold deceit: the other, behold cruelty. The one behold piling and poling: the other, behold covetousness. The one, behold robbery: the other, behold penury. And thus you see how the stones and timber of your houses shall descant on you. And however you put on your brazen brows, and harden your hearts against these threatenings of the most terrible God and Lord of Hosts; yet one day, you shall (spite of your hearts) whether you like it or not, be brought forth to judgement; you shall once come to your reckoning, you shall at last be arrested, remanded, and tried at the bar of God's tribunal before the great Judge of all the world. Then sentence shall pass against you; even that most dreadful sentence, "Go you cursed into hell-fire, there to be tormented with the devil and his angels for ever." Oh then, woe, woe to you! "For what shall it profit a man to win the whole world, and lose his own soul?" says our Lord Jesus. Surely even as much, as if one should win a farthing, and lose an hundred you sand pounds: For, if he shall be cast into hell fire, who has not given of his own goods righteously gotten, as our Saviour asserts; where then shall he is cast that has stolen other men's goods? And if he shall be damned that has not clothed the naked, what shall become of him that has made naked those who were clothed? Oh, therefore, repent in time, O you cruel oppressors; seek the Lord whilst he may be found; call on him while he is near; lay aside your savage cruelty; visit the fatherless and widow in their distress; deal your bread to the hungry; help them to their right who suffer wrong; deal mercifully with your tenants; rack not your rents any more: pinch not the poor souls, for whom Christ died; pity them I say, but pinch them not; deal kindly and friendly with them; remember your great accounts; consider the shortness of your days, and the vanity of your life: rend your hearts, and not your clothes. Turn to the Lord with all your heart, with weeping, fasting, and mourning: prevent God's wrath with a sacrifice of tears; pacify his anger with the calves of your lips and with a contrite spirit; be grieved for what is past, and amend what is to come. Stand it out no more at the sword's point against God; for it will not boot you to strive: he is too strong for you. Your only wisdom is to come in. Come in, therefore, come in you rebellious generation; submit yourselves to the great King, humble yourselves under his mighty hand; cast down your swords and targets; yield to your God. So shall you escape the vengeance to come; so shall God accept you, have mercy on you, receive you to favour, grant you a general pardon for all your rebellions, and admit you into the number of his faithful and loyal subjects,



Pliil. I conceive, by what you have said, that goods gained by oppression and cruelty, will never prosper long. For oppressors coin their money on their neighbour's skins. How then can it be blessed?

Theol. You have spoken a truth. For, as it has been showed before, that those goods which are gotten by swearing and lying are cursed: so all these that are gotten by oppression and violence are more cursed. Therefore the Lord says by his prophet Jeremiah, 17:11, "As the partridge gathers the young which she has not brought forth, so the one who gathers riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days: and at his end shall be a fool, and his name shall be written in the earth."

Phil. Would to God our magistrates and governors would take speedy order for the remedying of these things; and for the redressing of such grievous enormities as are amongst us; or that they themselves would step in, and deliver the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor.

Theol. Job was an excellent man for such matters. For it is said of him, 29:17, "That he brake the jaws of the unrighteous man, and plucked the prey out of his teeth;" where we see, how Job was the means to deliver the innocent, and to pull the lamb out of the lion's claws. Moreover, it is written of him in the same chapter, that "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came on him, and that he caused the widow's heart to rejoice: that he was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and the father to the poor; and when he knew not the cause, he sought it out diligently." Oh, what a notable man was this! Oh, that we had many Jobs in these days! Wise Solomon most gravely advises us all to follow Job's example in this behalf. "Deliver (says he) those who are oppressed and drawn to death. For should you withdraw thyself from those who go down to the slaughter." Prov. 24:11, 12. Would to God that this holy counsel were well weighed and practised amongst us!

Phil. I marvel much, with what face these cruel oppressors can come before God in his holy temple, to pray, and offer up their sacrifices to him. For we see, many of them though they have such foul hands and foul hearts, as we have heard; yet for all that, will most impudently presume to come to the Church and pray; or at least, when they are laid in their beds at nights, and half asleep, then will they tumble over their prayers, or be pattering some paternosters.

Theol. Alas, alas! poor souls; all that they do in matters of God's worship is but

hypocrisy, and dissimulation; for in truth, they care not for God, they love him but from the teeth outward; their mouths are with him, but their heart goes after covetousness, and their hands are full of blood. And therefore God abhors both them and their prayers; for he says, "Though they stretch out their hands, yet will I hide my eyes from them; and though they make many prayers, yet will I not hear them. For their hands are full of blood," Isa. 1:15. Moreover the Holy Spirit says, "He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer is abominable," Prov. 28:9. David says, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, God will not hear my prayer," Psalm 66:18. It is also affirmed, John 9:31, that, "God hears not sinners:" that is, stubborn and careless sinners. So then, we may clearly see, by all these testimonies of holy writ, what account God makes of the prayers of oppressors, and all other profane and ungodly men; namely, that he hates them, and abhors them, as most loathsome and odious in his sight.

Phil. Now in conclusion, show us the causes of oppression.

Theol. The causes are these: cruelty, covetousness, hard-heartedness, an evil conscience, the devil.

Phil. Let us hear also the remedies.

Theol. The remedies are these: pity, contentment, tender affections, a good conscience, much prayer.

#### THE DREADFUL EFFECTS OF Sm ON INDIVIDUALS AND UPON NATIONS.

Phil. Now, sir, as you have at large uttered your mind, concerning these gross corruptions of the world, and have plainly and evidently proved them to be the deadly poison of the soul, so also, I pray you, satisfy us in this, whether they are not hurtful also to the body, goods, and name.

Theol. I have dwelt the longer in these common vices of the world, because almost all sorts of men are stained with one or other of them; and therefore they can never be enough spoken against. "For the whole world lies in them," as St. John testifies, 1 Jn. 5:19. If men therefore, could be recovered of these diseases, no doubt there would be a ready passage made for the abundance of grace; and we should have a most flourishing church and commonwealth; but as long as these do he in the way, there is small hope of greater mercies and blessings to be poured on us; or that ever we shall come to have an inward conversation with God. For these vices blind our eyes, burden our hearts, and as the prophet Jeremiah says, 5:25, "hinder many things from us." But touching

your petition, I must needs grant, that as these vices are the very bane of the soul, and most certain signs of condemnation, so are they very dangerous to the body, goods, and name; yes, and to the whole land, both church and commonwealth.

Phil. Show us out of the scriptures what danger they bring to the body?

Theol. The Lord our God says, "That if we will not obey him nor keep his commandments, but break his covenant, he will appoint over us hasty plagues, consumptions, and the burning ague, to consume the eyes, and to make the heart heavy," Lev. 26: So also he says, " That if we will not obey his voice, to observe all his commandments and ordinances, that then he will make the pestilence cleave to us, until he have consumed us; that he will smite us with fever, with the bots of Egypt, with the emerods, with the scab, and with the itch, that also he will smite us with madness, and with blindness, and with astonishment of heart," Deut. 28: So then, you see what great evils the Lord threatens to inflict on our bodies in this life, for these and such like sins. But on the contrary the Holy Spirit says, "Fear God, and depart from evil: so health shall be to your belly, and moisture to your bones," Prov. 3:7, 8.

Phil. What evil do these fore-named sins bring on us in our goods and outward estate?

Theol. They cause God to curse us all in that we set our hand to, as plentifully appears in the fore-named chapters, where the Lord says thus, "If you will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, cursed shall you be in the town, cursed also in the field, cursed shall be your basket and your store, cursed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your land, and the increase of your kine, and the flocks of your sheep; cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed also when you go out. The Lord shall send on you cursing, trouble, and shame, in all that you sett your hand to; and further he says, "That he will break the staff of their bread; that ten women shall bake their bread in one oven, and they shall deliver their bread again by weight; and shall eat and not be satisfied." So you see that these sins will draw down God's wrath on us and all that we have.

Phil. What hurt do these sins do to our good name?

Theol. They bring reproach, shame, and infamy on us, and cause us to be abhorred and despised of all good men; they utterly blot out our good name. For as virtue makes men honourable and reverend, so vice makes men vile and

contemptible. This is set down where the Lord threatens Israel, that for their sins and disobedience he will make them a proverb and common talk; yes, a reproach and astonishment amongst all people. In sundry other places of the prophets, he threatens for their sins to make them a reproach, a shame, an hissing, and nodding of the head to all nations.

Phil. I truly think, that as sin generally stains every man's good name, which all are chary and tender of, so especially it blots those who are in high places, and of special note, for learning, wisdom, and godliness.

Theol. You have spoken most truly, and agreeable to the scriptures; for the scriptures says, "As a dead fly causes the apothecary's ointment to stink, so does a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour." Where Solomon shows, that if a fly get into the apothecary's box of ointment, and die, and putrefy in it, she mars it, though it be never so precious; even so, if a little sin get into the heart, and break out in the forehead of a man of great fame for some singular gifts, it will blear him, though he is never so excellent.

Phil. Show this, I pray you, more plainly,

Theol. We observe this in all experience, that if a nobleman be a good man, and have many excellent parts in him of courtesy, patience, humility, and love of religion; yet if he is covetous, the common people will have their eye altogether on that; and they will say, such a nobleman is a very good man, but for one thing: he is exceedingly covetous, oppresses the poor men, and deals hardly with his tenants, keeps no house, does little good in the country where he dwells; and this is what mars all. Moreover, let a judge, a justice, or a magistrate, be endued with excellent gifts of prudence, policy, temperance, liberality, and knowledge in the law, yet if they are given to anger, or taking of bribes, oh, how it will grieve them amongst the people! for they will say, he is a worthy man indeed, but there is one thing in him that mars all: he is an exceedingly angry and furious man; he is as angry as a wasp; he will be in a rage for every trifle; he will fret and fume if you do but blow on him; and beside this, he is a very corrupt man: he is a great taker of bribes; he loves well to be bribed; he will do any thing for bribes. Furthermore, if any preacher be a man of great gifts, the common people will say of him, oh! he is a worthy man indeed, an excellent scholar, a profound divine, a singular man in a pulpit; but yet for all that he has a shrewd touch which mars all; he is an exceedingly proud man; he is as proud as Lucifer; he has very great gifts indeed, but I warrant you he knows it well enough; for he carries his crest very high, and looks very sternly and disdainfully on all other men. He is immeasurably puffed

up with pride, and thinks that he touches the clouds with his head. Thus, therefore, we see how the dead flies mar all, and how some one sin disgraces a man that otherwise excels.

Phil. What is the cause why some one sin so blots and smites the most excellent men?

Theol. The reason of it is, because such men are a candle, set on a candlestick, or rather on a scaffold or mountain, for all men to be hold and look on; and sure it is, they have a thousand eyes on them every day; and that not only gazing on them, but also prying very narrowly into them, to spy out the least mote that they may make a mountain of it. For, as in a clean white paper, one little spot is soon noted, but in a piece of brown paper twenty great blurs scarce discerned; even so in noblemen, judges, magistrates, justices, preachers, and professors, the least spot or speck is soon seen into; but amongst the baser sort, and most gross livers, almost nothing is espied or regarded.

Phil. Since the eyes of all men are bent and fixed on men as are of some note, therefore, they had need very heedfully to look to their steps, that they may take away all advantage from those who seek advantage.

Theol. Yes, truly. And furthermore, they had need to pray with David always, "Direct my steps, O Lord, in your word; and let none sin have dominion over me;" and again, "Order my doings, that my footsteps slip not: uphold me in my integrity;" for if such be never so little given to swearing, to lying, to drink, or to women, it is espied by and by; and therewith their credit is cracked, their fame overcast, their glory eclipsed, and the date of their good name presently expired.

FMI. Now as you have showed what great hurt these sins bring on our souls, bodies, goods, and names; so also, I pray you, show what danger they bring on the whole land.

Theol. Without doubt they pull down the wrath of God on us all, and give him just cause to break all in pieces, and utterly to subvert and overthrow the good estate both of church and commonwealth; yes, to make a final consumption and desolation of all; for they are the very firebrands of God's wrath, to kindle his anger and indignation on us. For the apostle says, "For such things the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience," Col. 3:6.

Pliil. Declare to us, out of the scriptures, how the Lord in former times has

punished whole nations and kingdoms for these and such like sins.

Theol. In the fourth of Hosea, the Lord tells his people, that he has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, and the reason is added, because there was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and whoring, they break out, and blood touches blood. Therefore shall the land mourn; and every one that dwells in it shall be cut off". Here then we see what it is will incense God against us, and cause us all to mourn. So likewise the Lord threatens, by his prophet Amos, 13:4-8, "That for cruelty and oppression of the poor, he would plague the whole land. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwells in it?" Again, the Lord says by his prophet Jeremiah, 7:19, 20, "'Do they provoke me to anger, and not themselves, to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus says the Lord, behold my anger and my wrath shall be poured on this place, on man, and beast, on the tree of the field, and on the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and not be quenched.'" Again the Lord says, "If you will not hear these words, I swear by myself, says the Lord, that this house shall be waste, and I will prepare destroyers against you, every one with his weapons, and they shall cut down your chief cedar trees, and cast them in the fire." Likewise the Lord threatens, by his prophet Ezekiel, 5:7, "Because you have not walked in my statutes, nor kept my judgements; therefore behold, I, even I, come against you, and will execute judgement in the midst of you, even in the sight of nations; and I will do in you that I never did before, neither will I do any more the like because of all your abominations. For, in the midst of you, the fathers shall eat their sons, and the sons shall eat their fathers." Again, by the same prophet, the Lord says, 7:23-27, "The land is full of the judgement of blood, and the city full of cruelty. Wherefore, I will bring the most wicked of the heathen, and they will possess their houses. I will also make the pomp of the mighty to cease, and the holy places shall be defiled. When destruction comes, they shall seek peace, and not have it. Calamity shall come on calamity, and rumour on rumour. Then shall they seek a vision of the prophet, but the law shall perish from the priests, and counsel from the ancient. The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people in the land shall be troubled. I will do to them according to their ways, and according to their judgements will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the Lord." Last of all, the Lord says by his prophet, "Hear, earth! behold, I will cause a plague to come on this people, even the fruit of their own imaginations, because they have not taken heed to my words, nor to my law; but cast it off." Almost innumerable places to this purpose are to be found in the writings of the prophets; but these may suffice to prove the main point: that is, that the just God punishes whole nations and kingdoms for the sins and rebellions of it.

Phil. Since all these sins (for which the Lord executed such universal punishments on his own people) abound and overflow in this land, may we not justly fear some great plague to fall on us? and the rather, because our transgressions increase daily, and grow to a full height and ripeness; so as it seems the harvest of God's vengeance draws near, and approaches.

Theol. We may indeed justly fear and tremble. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, how shall he spare us? If he spared not his own people, what can we look for? If he spared not the natural branches, how shall he spare us who are wild by nature? Are we better than they? Can we look to be spared, when they were punished? Are not our sins as many and as great as theirs? Does not the same cause bring forth the same effect? Is the arm of the Lord shortened? or is not God the same just God, to punish sin now, that he was then? Yes, yes, assuredly. And therefore we have great cause to mourn and lament, to quake and tremble; because there is a naked sword of vengeance hanging over our heads. Thus did Jeremiah, 4:19, thus did Amos, 5:6, thus did Habakkuk, 7:16, when they plainly saw the imminent wrath of God approaching on the people of Israel and Judah.

Phil. I think we may the rather doubt and fear because the punishment of these forenamed vices is neglected by the magistrate. For commonly, when they that bear the sword of justice, do not draw it out to punish notorious offenders and malefactors, the Lord himself will take the matter into his own hands, and be revenged in his own person, which is most dreadful and dangerous; "for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. 10:31.

Theol. You have spoken a truth: for if those who are God's deputies and vicegerents in the earth, do their duties faithfully in punishing vice and maintaining virtue, in smiting the wicked and favouring the godly, then assuredly evil shall be taken out of Israel, God's wrath prevented, and his judgements intercepted; as it is written, Ps. 106:30, "Phineas stood up and executed judgement, and the plague was stayed." But if they (for fear, favour, affection, gain, flattery, bribery, or any other sinister respect) will be too sparing and remiss in punishing of gross offenders, and be rather ready to smite the righteous; then they exceedingly provoke God's wrath against the land, and against themselves.

Phil. One thing I greatly lament, that there are either none at all, or very slender censures, either by the civil or ecclesiastical authority, for divers of these forenamed vices: as pride, covetousness, oppression, lying, idleness,

swearing, &c.

Theol. It is a thing to be lamented indeed. For where do we see a proud man punished, a covetous man punished, an oppressor punished, a swearer punished, a liar punished, an idle person punished? Now, because they know they cannot or shall not be punished, therefore they are altogether hardened, and emboldened in their sins; as the wise man says, Eccl. 13:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the children of men are fully set in them to do evil."

Phil. One thing I much muse at, wherein also I desire to be further satisfied, that is what is the cause that under so godly a prince, so many good laws, and so much good preaching and teaching, there should despite be such an excess and overflowing of sin, in all estates.

Theol. The causes of it are divers and manifold. But I will nominate four especial ones in my judgement: The first is man's natural corruption, which is so strong as almost nothing can bridle it; the second is ill-precedents and external provocations to evil; the third is the want of teaching in many congregations of the land, by reason whereof many know not sin to be sin; the last reason is the corruption and negligence of some such as are in authority.

Phil. Does not this inundation and overflowing of sin, with the impunity of the same, prognosticate great wrath against us?

Theol. Yes, undoubtedly, as has in part been showed before. And there are divers other presages of wrath, though not of the same kind, which are these: ingratitude for the gospel the abuse of our long peace our general security our secret idolatries our ripeness in all sin our abuse of all God's mercies our abuse of his long patience the coldness of professors— our not profiting by former judgements; as pestilence, famine, death, and the shaking of the sword.

Phil. This last I take to be a special token of approaching vengeance, that we have not profited by former warnings.

Theol. True indeed: for it is an ordinary thing with God, when men will not profit by mild corrections, and common punishments, then to lay greater on them; and when a former trouble does us no good, we are to fear a final consuming trouble. For so we read in the prophecy of Hosea, 5:12, 14; that at the first, God was to Ephraim as a moth, and to Judah as rottenness, but



afterwards, when as they did not profit by it, he was to Ephraim as a lion, and to Judah as a lion's whelp. So the Lord says, in another place, that if they will not come in and yield obedience at the first call of his wrath, then he will punish them seven times more. Lev. 26:18. But if they continue in their stubbornness, then he threatens to bring seven times more plagues on them, according to their sins. If by all these they would not be reformed, but walk stubbornly against him, then he threatens yet seven times more for their sins; and the fourth time, yet seven times more, v. 21, 24, 28. The proof of it we have in the book of the Judges, where we read, how the people of Israel, for their sins, were in subjection to the king of Aram, Naharim, eight years; afterward, because they profited no thing by it, but returned to their old sins, therefore they served Eglon, king of Moab, eighteen years. After that again, for their new sins and provocations, the Lord gave them up into the hands of Midian seven years. After all this, for the renewing of their sins, the Lord sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, who grievously vexed and oppressed them, for the space of eighteen years. Last of all, we read that when neither famine nor pestilence could cause them to return to him, then he delivered them up to the sword of their enemies, and held them in bondage and captivity three score and ten years. After all this, when they were delivered out of captivity and returned home safely to their own nation, and enjoyed some good time of peace and rest, yet at last they fell to renewing of their sins, and therefore the Lord plagued them most grievously by the divided Greek empire, even by Magog, and Egypt, Seleucidae, and Lachish, and that by the space almost of three hundred years. And this is what the prophet Hosea foretold, 3:4, "That the children of Israel should remain many days without a king, and without a prince, without an offering, and without an image, without an ephod, and without teraphim."

Phil. You have very largely laid open this last token of vengeance; that is, that God at the first heats us on the coat, but if we continue in sin he will whip us on the bare skin, and if men will not yield at the first gentle stroke, then he will strike harder and harder, till he have broken our stout stomachs and made our great hearts come down. Therefore it is good yielding at the first, for we shall get nothing by our sturdiness against him. We only cause him to double his strokes, and strike us both sideways and above: for he cannot endure that we should grumble against him with stubborn sullenness. But now to the point: since there are so many presages and fore signs of God's wrath, I pray you show what it is that stays the execution and very downfall of the same.

Theol. The prayers and tears of the faithful are the special mean that stay the hand of God from striking of us; for the prayers of the righteous are of great

force with him, even able to do all things. St. James says, 5:16, "The prayer of a righteous man avails much, if it be fervent," and brings the example of Elias to prove it; for, says he, "Though Elias was a man subject to the like passions that we are, yet was he able by his prayers both to open and shut the heavens." Abraham, likewise, prevails so far with God, by his prayers for Sodom, that if there had been but ten just men found in it, it had been spared. The Almighty God says, in the 15th chap, of Jeremiah, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my affection could not be towards this people;" which plainly shows that Moses and Samuel might have done much with him, had he not been so fully bent against his people for their sins, as he was. So likewise he says in the prophecy of Ezekiel, 14:14, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were amongst them, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness;" which also shows, that if there had been any possible entreating of him for the land, these three men might have done it; but now he was resolutely determined to the contrary. In respect therefore, that the zealous preachers, and true professors of the gospel so much prevail with God by their prayers, they are said to be the defence and strength of kingdoms and countries, of churches and commonwealths; as it is said of Elijah, that he was the chariot of Israel and the horseman of it. Elisha also was surrounded with a mountain full of horses and chariots of fire. And sure it is that Elijah and Elisha are not only the chariots and horsemen of Israel, but also by their prayers they cause God himself to be a wall of fire round about it; as the prophet says, Ezekiel 20:30, "The Lord God says, I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land; that I might not destroy it, but I found none." Which shows that if there had been but some few to have stood in the breach, he would have spared the whole land. This also appears more plainly in the prophecy of Jeremiah, 5:1, where the Lord says, "Run to and fro by the streets of Jerusalem, behold and enquire in the open places of it, if you can find a man, or if there are any that executes judgement and seeks the truth, and I will spare it." Oh then, mark and consider what a man may do; yes, what one man may do, what an Abraham may do, what a Moses may do, what an Elijah may do, what a Daniel, what a Samuel, what a Job, what a Noah may do. Some one man, by reason of his high favour with the Eternal, is able some times to do more for a land, by his prayers and tears, than many prudent men by their counsel, or valiant men by their swords. Yes, it evidently appears, in the sacred volume of the Holy Spirit, that some one poor preacher, being full of the spirit and power of Elijah, does more in his study (either for offence or defence; either for the turning away of wrath, or the procuring for mercy) than a camp-royal, even forty thousand strong; or as the Spirit speaks. Cant. 3:7, "Though they all have their swords girded to their thighs, and be of the most valiant men in Israel." All this is clearly proved in one

verse of the book of the Psalms, 106:23, where the prophet, having reckoned up the sins of the people, adds, "Therefore the Lord was minded to destroy them, had not Moses (his chosen) stood in the breach to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them." See, therefore, what one man may do with God. Some one man so binds the hands of God, that when he should strike, he has no power to do it, as it is said of Lot, Gen. 19:22, "I can do nothing till you come out." See how the Lord says he can do nothing, because he will do nothing. He wittingly and willingly suffers his hands to be manacled and bound behind him, for some few's sake, which he makes more account of than all the world besides; so precious and dear are they in his sight. Likewise it is written, that the Lord was exceedingly incensed against the Israelites for their idolatrous calf, which they made in Horeb; yet he could do nothing because Moses would not let him; and therefore he falls to entreating of Moses, Exod. 27, that Moses would let him alone, and entreat no more for them. Oh, (says the Lord to Moses) "Let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against this people, and that I may consume them." Thus we see that except Lot go out of the city, and Moses let him alone, he can do nothing. Oh the profoundness and altitude of God's mercy towards mankind! Oh the height and depth, length and breadth of his love towards some! Oh that the most glorious and invisible God should so greatly respect the sons of men! "For what is man, that he should be mindful of him? Or the son of man that he should regard him?" Let us, therefore, that are the Lord's remembrancers, give him no rest, nor let him alone until we have some security, and good assurance from him, that he will turn away from us the wrath we most justly have deserved; that he will spare us and be merciful to us. yes, and as the prophet says, Isa. 62:7, "Let us never leave him, nor give him over, till he repair and set up Jerusalem, the praise of the world:" lest for default of it, that be charged on us, which was charged on the head of some of the prophets in Israel, that they were like the foxes in the waste places, that they had not risen up in the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel. For nowadays, alas! we have many hedge-breakers few hedge makers; many openers of gaps few stoppers; many breakers of breaches to let in the floods of God's wrath on us; but very few that, by true repentance, go about to make up the breach, and to let down the sluices, that the gushing streams of God's vengeance may be stopped and stayed.

Phil. I do now plainly see that there are some in high favour with God, and, as we say, greatly in his books; since his love is so great to them, that for their sakes he spares thousands.

Theol. It is written in the Proverbs of Solomon, that the righteous in a land are the establishment of the king's throne; and the wicked the overthrowing of the

same. The words are these, 25:4, "Take away the dross from the silver, and there will proceed a vessel for the finer. Take away the wicked from the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness." Likewise, in another place the wise man affirms, that the righteous are the strength and bulwark of cities, towns, and corporations, but the wicked are the weakening and undoing of all, 29:8, "Scornful men," says he, "set a city on fire, but the wise turn away wrath." To this purpose, most excellent is that saying of Eliphaz, in Job 22:30, "The innocent shall deliver the land, and it shall be preserved by the pureness of their hands." We read in the book of Chronicles, that when the Levites and the priests were cast out by Jeroboam, they came to Jerusalem, and all such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came with them. And then, afterward, it is said, they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon mighty. By all these testimonies, it is evident that princes, kingdoms, cities, towns, and villages, are fortified by the righteous in it; and for their sakes also great plagues are kept back. Which one of the heathen well saw into, as appears by his words, which are these: "When God means well to a city, and will do good to it, then he raises up good men; but when he means to punish a city or country, and do ill to it, then he takes away the good men from it."

Phil. It is very manifest by all that you have said, that the wicked fare the better every day in the year, because the righteous dwell amongst them.

Theol. All experience teaches it, and the scriptures plentifully assert it; for did not churlish Laban fare the better for Jacob his kinsman? Does he not acknowledge that the Lord had blessed him for his sake? Did not Potiphar fare the better for godly Joseph? Does not the scripture say, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph his sake? And that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hands? Did not Obbedom fare the better for the ark? Did not the seventy-and-six souls that were in the ship with Paul, speed all the better for his sake? Did not the angel of God tell him in the night that God had given to him all that sailed with him? for, otherwise, a thousand to one, they had been all drowned. Therefore, the children of God may very fitly be compared to a great piece of cork, which, though it be cast into the sea, having many nails fastened in it, yet it bears them all up from sinking, which otherwise, would sink of themselves. What shall we say then, or what shall we conclude, but that the ungodly are more beholden to the righteous than they are aware of?

Phil. I think if it were not for God's children, it would go hard with the wicked. For, if they were sorted and shoaled out from amongst them, and placed by

themselves, what could they look for, but wrath on wrath, and plague on plague till the Lord had made a final consumption of them, and swept them like dung from the face of the earth.

Theol. Sure it is, all creatures would frown on them. The sun would unwillingly shine on them, or the moon give them any light. The stars would not be seen of them, and the planets would hide themselves. The beasts would devour them, the fowls would pick out their eyes. The fishes would make war against them, and all creatures in heaven and earth would rise up in arms against them. yes, the Lord himself from heaven would rain down fire and brimstone on them.

Phil. Tet for all this, it is a wonder to consider how deadly the wicked hate the righteous, and almost in every thing oppose themselves against them, and that in most virulent and spiteful manner. They rail and slander, scoff and scorn, mock and mow at them, as though they were not worthy to have on the earth. They esteem every pelting rascal, and prefer every vile varlet before them. And though they have their lives and liberty, their breath and safety, and all that they have else by them, yet, for all that, they could be content to eat their hearts with garlic; so great, so fiery, so burning and hissing hot is their fury and malice against them.

Theol. They may very fitly be compared to a moth that frets in pieces the same cloth wherein she is bred; or to a certain worm or canker, that corrodes and eats through the heart of the tree that nourishes her; or to a man that stands on a bough in the top of a tree where there is no more, and yet, with an axe chops it off, and falls down with it and breaks his neck. Even so the fools of this world do what they can to chop asunder the bough that upholds them, but they may easily know what will follow.

Phil. I see plainly they are much their own foes, and stand in their own light, and indeed know not what they do. For the benefit they receive by such is exceeding great, and therefore by their mangling of them, they merely hold the stirrup to their own destruction.

Theol. Now to apply these things to ourselves, and to return to the first question of this argument, may we not marvel that our nation is so long spared, considering that the sins of it are so horrible and outrageous as they are?

Phil. We may justly marvel at the wonderful patience of God. And we may well

think that there are some in the land who stand in the breach, being in no small favour with his Highness, since they so much prevail.

Theol. The merciful preservation of our most gracious king, who is the breath of our nostrils the long continuance of our peace, and of the gospel the keeping back of the sword out of the land, which our sins pull on us the frustrating of many plots and subtle devices which have been often intended against our state yes, and the life of his Majesty's most royal person make me to think that there are some strong pleaders with God, for the public good of us all.

Phil. You may well think so, indeed; for, by our sins, we have forfeited, and daily forfeit, into God's hands, both our king, our country, our peace, our gospel, our lives, our goods, our lands, our livings, our wives, our children, and all that we have: but only the righteous (who are so near about the king, and in so high favour) step in, and earnestly entreat for us, that the forfeitures may be released, and that we may have a lease, in parley, of them all again; or at least a grant of further time. But I pray you, sir, are not we to attribute something, concerning our good estate, to the policy of the land, the laws established, and the wisdom and counsel of our prudent governors?

Theol. Yes, assuredly, very much; as the ordinary and outward means, which God uses for our safety. For though the apostle Paul had a grant from God for the safety of his own life, and all that were with him in the ship, yet he said, Acts 27:31, "Except the mariners abide in the ship, we cannot be safe;" showing by it, that to faith, and prayers, the best and wisest means must be joined. We are therefore, on our knees every day, to give thanks to God for such good means of our safety, as he has given us.

Phil. Well then, as the prayers of the righteous have been hitherto great means, both for the averting and turning away of wrath and the continuance of favour; so show, I pray you, what is the best course to be taken, and what in sound wisdom is to be done, both to prevent future dangers, and to continue God's favours and mercies still on us.

Theol. The best and surest course, that I can consider or conceive of, is, to repent heartily for sins past, and to reform our lives in time to come, to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call on him while he is near: to forsake our own ways, and our own imaginations, and to turn to him with all our hearts, with weeping, with fasting, and with mourning; as the prophet Joel advises, "For our God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great

kindness, and repent s him of the evil." All the prophets counsel us to follow this course, and plainly teach, that if we all (from the highest to the lowest) meet the Lord with sincere repentance, and offer him the sacrifice of a contrite spirit, undoubtedly he will be pacified towards us, and be merciful to our transgressions. This is most plainly set down in the 7th of Jeremiah, where the Lord says thus to his people, "If you amend and redress your ways, and your works: if you execute judgement between a man and his neighbour, and oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed no innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your destruction; then will I let you dwell in this place; even in the land I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever." So likewise he says by the same prophet, 22:3, "Execute judgement and righteousness, and deliver the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor, and vex not the fatherless, the widow or the strangers; do no violence, nor shed innocent blood in this place: for if you do this thing, then shall the kings sitting on the tin-one of David, enter in by the gates of this house, and ride on chariots and on horses, both he, and his servants, and his people;" and again, 3:22, "O you disobedient children, return, and I will heal your rebellion." The Lord also says by his prophet, Isaiah 1:19, "If you consent and obey you shall eat the good things of the land; but if you refuse and be rebellious, you shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." The prophet Hosea, 6:1, says, "Come, let us return to the Lord, for he has spoiled, and he will heal us; he has wounded us, and he will bind us up;" and again, 14:1, "O Israel, return to the Lord, for you have fallen by your sin, and I will heal your rebellion, and will love you freely; for my anger is turned away from you: I will be as the dew to Israel, he shall grow as the lily, and fasten his root as the tree of Lebanon; his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree; and his smell as Lebanon." The prophet Micah, 6:8, tells us what is good for us, and what is our best course, and what the Lord requires at our hands; namely, these four things: to do justly, to love mercy, to humble ourselves, and to walk with our God. The prophet Amos, 5:14, gives the same counsel, saying, "Seek the Lord, and you shall live; seek good, and not evil; hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgement in the gate; it may be, that the Lord of Hosts will be merciful to the remnant of Joseph;" also, the Lord himself says, "If this nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their wickedness, I will repent of the plague I thought to bring on them," Jeremiah 18:8. Thus we plainly see what advice and counsel the prophets and holy men of God give to us. The sum of all is this, that if we truly repent and turn to him with all our hearts, studying to obey him, and walk in his ways, then he will grant us any favour that we will require at his hands; for, even as woolpacks, and other soft matter beats back, and damps the force of all shot; so penitent, melting, and soft hearts, beat back the shot of God's wrath, and turn away his

vengeance from us. Moreover, we may observe in all experience, that when potentates are offended, or any great man has conceived a displeasure against a poor man, that then he must run and ride, send presents, use his friends, break his sleeps, and never be quiet till he have pacified him. Even so must we deal with our God, seeing he has taken a displeasure against us. Oh, therefore, that we would speedily use all possible means to pacify his wrath! Oh that we would, with one heart and voice, every one of us, from the highest to the lowest, humble ourselves before our God, forsake our former evil ways, be grieved for that we have done, and purpose never to do the like again! Oh that it might go to the hearts of us, that we have so often and so grievously offended so loving a God, and so merciful a Father! Oh that we would awake once at last, and rouse up our drowsy hearts, and ransack our sleepy consciences, crying out against our sins, that our sins might never cry out against us! Oh that we would judge ourselves, accuse ourselves, indict ourselves, and condemn ourselves; so should we never be adjudged, accused, indicted, or condemned of the Lord! Oh that all hearts might sob, all souls might sigh, all loins might be smitten with sorrow, all faces gather blackness, and every man smite himself on the thigh, saying, what have I done? Oh that magistrates, ministers, and commoners, would purpose and vow, and even take a bond to themselves, that from henceforth, and from this day forward, they would set their hearts to seek the Lord; and that they would wholly give up themselves to his obedience! Oh that all men, women, and children, would fear God and keep his commandments; would refuse evil, and do good; would study to please God in all things, and to be fruitful in all good works; making conscience to perform the duties of their general callings, and duties of their special callings; duties of the first table, and duties of the second table; that so God might be sincerely worshipped, his name truly revered, his Sabbaths religiously observed; and that every man would deal kindly, mercifully, justly, and up rightly with his neighbour; that there might be no complaining, no crying in our streets! Oh! I say again and again, that if all of us, of what estate, degree, or condition soever, would walk in the paths of' our God, then doubtless we should live and see good days; all future dangers should be prevented, our peace prolonged, our state established, our king preserved, and the gospel continued. Then should we still enjoy our lives, our goods, our lands, our livings, our wives, our children, our houses and tenements, our orchards and gardens; yes, as the prophet says, we should eat the good things of the land, spending our days in much comfort, peace, and tranquillity; and leave great blessings to our children and posterity, from age to age, from generation to generation.

Phil. You have fully answered my question, and well satisfied me in it, out of the scriptures: yet I pray you give me leave to add one thing to that, which you



have at large set down. The Lord says by the prophet Amos, 4:6-11, that for their sins and rebellions, he has given them cleanness of teeth: that is, dearth and scarcity; and yet they did not turn to him. Also he withheld the rain from them, and punished them with drought, and yet they did not turn to him. Moreover he smote their corn, their great gardens, their orchards, vineyards, fig-trees, and olive-trees, with blasting and mildew, and the palmer-worm devoured them; and yet they did not return to him. Last of all, he smote them with pestilence, and with the sword, and overthrew them, as he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and they were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet, for all this, they did not turn to him. "You have not turned to me, says the Lord." But now to come to the point. Out of this I gather, that if we multiply our transgressions, God will multiply his plagues on us; but on the contrary, if we would sincerely turn to the Lord our God with all our hearts, all plagues should be stayed, all dangers prevented: and no evil should fall on us. For because they would not turn, therefore he smote them. If therefore they had turned, he would not have smote them, But now I pray you briefly conclude this point, and declare in few words, what it is that most materially concerns our peace, and public good.

Theol. These few then briefly I take to be things which belong to our peace: Let Solomon execute Joab and Shimei. Let John and Elijah slay the priests and prophets of Baal. Let Aaron and Eleazar minister before the Lord faithfully. Let Jonas be cast out of the ship. Let Moses stand fast in the gap, and not let down his hands. Let Joshua succeed him. Let Cornelius fear God, and all his household. Let Tabitha be full of good works, and alms-deeds. Let Deborah judge long in Israel, prosper, and be victorious. Let us all pray that the light of Israel may not be quenched. And this I take to be the sum of all that belongs to our peace.

Phil. The sum of all our conferences hitherto, as I remember, may be reduced to these few heads: first, man's natural corruption has been laid open; secondly, the horrible fruits of it; thirdly, their evil effects and workings, both against our souls and bodies, goods, name, and the whole land: lastly, the remedies of all. Now therefore I would grow to some conclusion of what you touched on by the way, and made some mention of; namely, the signs of salvation and damnation; and declare to us plainly, whether the state of a man's soul, before God, may not by certain signs and tokens, be certainly discerned even in this life?

Theol. Besides what have been before mentioned, we may add these nine: reverence of God's name; keeping his Sabbaths; truth; sobriety; industry; compassion; humility; chastity; contentment.

Phil. These indeed, I grant, are very good signs: but yet all of them are not certain. For some of them be in the reprobates.

Theol. What say you then to St. Peter's signs, which are set down in the first chapter of his Second Epistle? which are these eight: faith; virtue; knowledge; temperance; patience; godliness; brotherly-kindness; love. St. Peter says, "If these be in us, and abound, they will make us neither idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus;" which is as much as if he had said, They will make us sound and sincere professors of the gospel.

Phil. All these, I grant, are exceeding good signs and evidences of a man's salvation; but yet some of them may deceive; and an hole may be picked in some of these evidences. I would, therefore, hear of some such demonstrative and infallible evidences as no lawyer can find fault with; for I hold that good divines can as perfectly judge of the assurances and evidences of men's salvation, as the best lawyer can judge of the assurances and evidences whereby men hold their lands and livings.

Theol. You have spoken truly in that; and would to God all the Lord's people would bring forth the evidences of their salvation, that we might discern of them.

Phil. Set down, then, Which are the most certain and infallible evidences of a man's salvation, against which no exception can be taken.

Theol. I judge these to be most sound and infallible: assured faith in the promises; sincerity of heart; the spirit of adoption; sound regeneration and sanctification; inward peace; groundedness in the truth; continuance to the end.

Phil. Now you come near the quick, indeed; for, in my judgement, none of these can be found truly in any reprobate. Therefore, I think no divine can take exception against any of these. Theol. No, I assure you; no more than a lawyer can find fault with the tenure of men's lands, when as both the title is good and strong by the law, and the evidences of it are sealed, subscribed, delivered, conveyed, and sufficient witness on the same, and all other signs and ceremonies in the delivering and taking possession of it according to strict law observed. For if a man have these forenamed evidences of his salvation, sure it is, his title and interest to heaven is good, by the law of Moses and the prophets I mean the word of God. God himself subscribes to them; Jesus Christ

delivers them as his own deed; the Holy Spirit seals to them; yes, the three great witnesses which bear record in the earth; that is, water, blood, and the Spirit; all witness the same.

Phil. Now, you have very fully satisfied me touching this point; and one thing more I gather out of all your speech, that is, that you think a man may be assured of his salvation, even in this life.

Theol. I, do think so, indeed. For the one who knows not in this life that he shall be saved, shall never be saved after this life; for St. John says. 1 Jn 3:2, "Now are we made the sons of God."

Phil. But because many doubt of this, and the papists altogether deny it, therefore I pray you to confirm it to us out of the scriptures.

Theol. The apostle says, 2 Cor. 5:1, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be destroyed, we have a building given us of God: that is, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens." Mark that he says, both he and the rest of God's people, certainly knew, that heaven was provided for them. "For the Spirit of adoption bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." And again, the same apostle says, 2 Tim. 4:8, "From henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all those who love his appearing." Here we see that he knew there was a crown prepared for him, and for all the elect. And the same Spirit who assured it to Paul, assures it also to all the children of God. For they all have the same Spirit, though not in the same measure. St. John says also, 1 Jn. 2:2-3, "Hereby we are sure we know him; if we keep his commandments." In which words, he tells us thus much; that if we sincerely endeavour to obey God, there is in us the true knowledge and fear of God; and consequently, we are sure we shall be saved. St. Peter says, "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." Wherefore should the apostle exhort us to make our election sure, if none could be sure of it? In the second of the Ephesians, the apostle says flatly, "that in Christ Jesus we already sit together in the heavenly places." His meaning is not, that we are there already in possession; but we are as sure of it, as if we were there already. The reasons of it are these: Christ our head is in possession; therefore he will draw all his members to him, as he him self says. Secondly, we are as sure of the thing we hope for, as of what we have. But we are sure of what we have, which is the work of grace; therefore we are sure of what we look for, which is the crown of glory. Many other places of the holy scriptures might referred to in this regard: but I suppose these may suffice.

Phil. As you have showed this by the scriptures, so also show it yet more plainly, by evident reason out of the same.

Theol. How can a man in truth call God his Father (when he says, "Our Father in heaven,") and yet doubt, whether he is his Father or no? For if God indeed be our Father, and we his children, how can we perish? how can we be damned? Will a father condemn his own children? or shall the children of God be condemned? No, no; "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. And, who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies, who can condemn?" Rom. 13:1, 33-34. It is therefore most certain and sure, that all such as in truth call God their Father, and have God for their Father, shall be saved. Again, how can a man say, in truth and feeling, that he believes the forgiveness of sin, and yet doubt whether he shall be saved? For if he is fully persuaded that his sins are forgiven, why should he not be saved? Moreover, as certainly as we know that we are called, justified, and sanctified; so certainly we know we shall be glorified. But we know the one certainly, and therefore the other.

Asun. I will never believe, that any man can certainly know in this world, whether he shall be saved, or damned; but all men must hope well, and be of a good belief.

Theol. No, we must go further than hope well. We may not venture our salvation on uncertain hopes; as, If a man should hope it would be a fair day tomorrow: but he cannot certainly tell. No, no. We must in this case, being of such in finite importance as it is, grow to some certainty, and full resolution. We see worldly men will be loath to hold their lands and leases uncertainly, having nothing to show for them. They will not stand to the courtesy of their landlords, nor rest on their good wills. They will not stay on uncertain hope. No; they are wiser than so. "For the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light." They will be sure to have something to show. They will have it under seal. They will not stay on the words and promises of the most honest men, and best landlords. They cannot be quiet till they have it in white and black, with sound counsel on their title; and every way made as sure to them, as any law of the land can make it. Are then the children of this world so wise in these inferior things, and shall not we be as wise in matters of ten thousand times more importance? Are they so wise for earth, and shall not we be as wise for heaven? Are they so wise for their bodies, and shall not we be as wise for our souls? Shall we hold the state of our immortal inheritance by hope well; and have no writings, nor evidences, no

seal, no witnesses, nor any thing to show for it? Alas, this is a weak tenure, a broken title, a simple hold indeed.

Asun. Yet for all that a man cannot be certain.

Theol. Yes, St. John tells us, we may be certain; for he says, "Hereby we know we dwell in him, and he in us; because he has given us of his Spirit," 1 Jn 4:13. He says not, we hope; but we know certainly. For the one who has the Spirit of God, knows certainly he has it; and the one who has faith, knows that he has faith; and the one who shall be saved, knows he shall be saved. For God does not work so darkly in men's hearts by his Spirit, but that they may easily know whether it be of him or no, if they would make a due trial. Again, the same apostle says, 5:10, "He that believes in the Son of God, has the witness in himself;" that is, he has certain testimonies in his own conscience that he shall be saved; for we must fetch the warrant of our salvation from within ourselves, even from the work of God within us. For look, how much a man feels in himself the increase of knowledge, obedience, and godliness, so much the more sure he is that he shall be saved. A man's own conscience is of great force this way, and will not lie or deceive; for so says the wise man, Prov. 27:19, "As water shows face to face, so does the heart man to man; that is, the mind and conscience of every man tells him justly, though not perfectly, what he is. For the conscience will not lie, but accuse or excuse a man being instead of a thousand witnesses. The apostle also says, 1 Cor. 2:11, "No man knows the things of man, but the spirit of a man that is in him." And again, the scripture says, Prov. 20:7, "Man's soul is, as it were, the candle of the Lord; whereby he searches all the depths of the heart." So then, it is a clear case that a man must have recourse to the work of God's grace within him, even in his own soul; for by it he shall be certainly resolved one way or another; for even as Rebecca knew certainly, by the striving and stirring of the twins in her womb, that she was conceived and quick of child; so God's children know certainly, by the motions and stirrings of the Holy Spirit within them, that they have conceived Christ, and shall undoubtedly be saved.

Phil. I pray you, let us come to the groundwork of this certainty of salvation, and speak somewhat of that.

Theol. The ground-work of our salvation is laid in God's eternal election, and in respect there of it stands fast and unmoveable; as it is written, 2 Tim. 2:19, "The foundation of God stands fast;" and again, v. 13, "He is faithful that has promised, though we cannot believe, yet he abides faithful." So then, as we know it certainly in ourselves, as the result of election; so it stands most firm in

respect of God, and his eternal and immutable decree. And a thousand weaknesses, No, all the sins in the world, nor all the devils in hell, cannot overthrow God's election; for our Lord Jesus says, John 6. 37, "All that the Father has given me, shall come to me;" and again, v. 39, "This is the Father's will that has sent me: that of all he has given me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again at the last day;" and in another place, our Saviour Christ says, John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to take them out of my Father's hand." We ought, therefore, to be as sure of our salvation as of any other thing God has promised, or which we are bound to believe; for to doubt of it, in respect of God's truth, is blasphemous against the immutability of his truth.

Phil. But are there not some doubts, at some times, even in the very elect, and in those who are grown to the greatest persuasion?

Theol. Yes, truly; for the one who never doubted, never believed; for whosoever believes in truth, feels sometimes doubtings and waverings. Even as the sound body feels many grudgings of diseases, which if he has not health, he could not feel; so the sound soul feels some doubtings, which if it were not sound, it could not so easily feel; for we feel not corruption by corruption, but we feel corruption by grace; and the more grace we have, the more quick are we in the feeling of corruption. Some men of tender skins, and quick feeling, will easily feel the slightest feather, in softer manner laid on the ball of their hands; which others, of more slow feeling and hard flesh, cannot so easily discern. So then it is certain, that although the children of God feel some doubtings at sometimes, yet they do not impair the certainty of their salvation; but rather indicate a perfect soundness and health of their souls; for when such little grudgings are felt in the soul, the children of God oppose against them the certainty of God's truth and promises, and so do easily overcome them. For the Lord's people need no more to fear them, than the one who rides through the streets on a lusty gelding, with his sword by his side, needs to fear the barking and bawling of a few little curs and whappets.

Phil. Show yet more plainly how, or in what respects, the child of God may both have doubtings, and yet be fully assured.

Theol. Even as a man set in the top of the highest steeple in the world, and so fast bound to it that he cannot fall though he would yet, when he looks downward, he fears, because man's nature is not acquainted nor accustomed

to mount so high in the air, and to behold the earth so far beneath but when he looks upward and perceives himself fast bound and out of all danger, then he casts away all fear: even so, when we look downward to our selves, we have doubts and fears; but when we look upward to Christ, and the truth of his promises, we feel ourselves quite sure, and cease to doubt any more.

Phil. Declare to us what is the original of these doubts and fears, and from whence they spring in the children of God.

Theol. They spring from the imperfection of our sanctification, and from that strife which is in the very mind of the elect between faith and infidelity; for these two mightily fight together in the regenerate, and strive to over-master and over-shadow one another; by reason whereof sometimes it happens through unbelief, that the most excellent servants of God may fall into fits and pangs of despair, as Job and David, in their temptations, did. And even in these days, also, some of God's children at sometimes are shrewdly handled this way, and brought very low, even to death's door; but yet the Lord in great mercy restores them, both from total and final despair. Only they are humbled and tried by these sharp fits for a time, and that for their great good. For as we use to say, that an ague in a young man is a sign of health; so these burning fits of temptations in the elect, for the most part, are signs of God's grace and favour; for, if they were not of God, the devil would never be so busy with them.

Phil. Is it not mere presumption, and an overmuch trusting to ourselves, to be persuaded of our salvation?

Theol. Nothing less. For the ground of this persuasion is not laid in ourselves, or any thing within us, or without us; but only in the righteousness of Christ, and the merciful promises of God. For is it any presumption for us to believe what God has promised, Christ has purchased, and the Holy Spirit has sealed? No, it is not any presumption; but a thing we all stand bound to, as we will answer it at the dreadful day of judgement. As for ourselves we freely confess that in God's sight we are but lumps of sin and masses of all misery; and cannot of ourselves move hand or foot to the furtherance of our salvation; "But being justified by faith, we are at peace with God," and fully persuaded of his love and favour toward us, in Christ.

Phil. Cannot the reprobates and ungodly be assured of their salvation?

Theol. No; for the prophet says, "There is no peace to the wicked," Isa. 17. 21. Then I reason thus: those who have not the inward peace cannot be assured;

but the wicked have not the inward peace; therefore they cannot be assured. Steadfast faith in the promises brings assurance; but the wicked have not steadfast faith in the promises; therefore they cannot be assured. The Spirit of adoption assures; but the wicked have not the spirit of adoption; therefore they cannot be assured. To conclude, when a man feels in himself an evil conscience, blindness, profaneness, and disobedience, he shall, in despite of his heart, sing this sorrowful song, I know not whether I shall be saved or damned.

Phil. Is not the doctrine of the assurance of salvation a most comfortable doctrine?

Theol. Yes, doubtless. For except a man be persuaded of the favour of God, and the forgiveness of sins, and consequently of his salvation, what comfort can he have in any thing? Besides this, the persuasion of God's love towards us, is the root of all our love and cheerful obedience towards him; for, therefore, we love him and obey him, because we know he has loved us first, and written our names in the book of life. But, on the contrary, the doctrine of the papists, who would have men always doubt and fear in a servile sort, is most hellish and uncomfortable. For so long as a man holds that, what encouragement can he have to serve God? what love to his Majesty? what hope in the promises? what comfort in trouble? what patience in adversity?

Antil. Touching this point, I am flat of your mind. For I think truly a man ought to be persuaded of his salvation. And for my own part, I make no question of it. I hope to be saved, as well as the best of them all. I am out of fear for that; for I have such a steadfast faith in God, that if there should be but two in the world saved, I hope I should be one of them.

Theol. You are very, confident, indeed. You are persuaded before you know, I would your ground were as good as your vain confidence. But who so bold as blind Bayard r Your hope is but a fancy, and as a sick man's dream. You hope you cannot tell what. You have no ground for what you say; for, what hope can you have to be saved, when you walk in no path of salvation? What hope can a man have to come to London speedily, that travels nothing that way, but quite contrary? What hope can a man have to reap a good crop of corn, that uses no means neither ploughs, sows, nor harrows? What hope can a man have to be fat and well liking of his body, that seldom or never eats any meat? What hope can a man have to escape drowning, who leaps into the sea? Even so, what hope can you have to be saved, when you walk nothing that way, when you use no means, when you do all things contrary to the same? For, alas! there is



nothing in you of what the scriptures affirm must be in all those that shall be saved. There are none of the forenamed signs and tokens in you. You are ignorant, profane, and careless. God is not worshipped under your roof. There is no true fear of God in yourself nor in your household. You seldom hear the word preached. You content yourself with an ignorant minister. You have no prayers in your family, no reading, no singing of psalms, no instructions, exhortations, admonitions, or any other Christian exercises. You make no conscience of the observation of the Sabbaths; you use not the name of God with any reverence; you break out sometimes into horrible oaths and cursings; you make an ordinary matter of swearing by your faith, and your troth. Your wife is irreligious; your children dissolute and ungracious; your servants profane and careless. You are an example in your own house of all atheism and conscienceless behaviour. You are a great gamester, a rioter, a spendthrift, a drinker, a common ale-house hunter; and, to conclude, given to all vice and naughtiness. Now then, I pray you tell me, or rather let your conscience tell me, what hope you can have to be saved, so long as you walk and continue in this course? Does not St. John say, 1 Jn. 1:6, "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we are liars?" Does not the same apostle assert, that such as say "They know God, and keep not his commandments, are liars?" 2:4. Again, does he not say, 3:8, 10, "He that commits sin is of the devil;" and "Who soever does not righteousness, is not of God?" Does not our Lord Jesus flatly tell the Jews, who bragged that Abraham was their father, that they were of their father the devil, because they did his works? Does not the apostle Paul say, "His servants we are to whom we obey; whether it be of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?" Rom. 6:16. Does not the scripture say, "He that does righteousness, is righteous?" 1 Jn 3:7. Does not our Lord Jesus affirm, that "Not everyone that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who does the will of my Father in heaven?" Matt. 7:21. Therefore, I conclude, that as your whole course is carnal, careless, and dissolute, you can have no warrantable hope to be saved.

Phil. I truly think that this man's case, which now you have laid open, is the case of thousands.

Theol. yes, doubtless of thousand thousands the more is the pity.

Asun. Soft and fair, sir; you are very round indeed: soft fire makes sweet malt. I hope you know we must be saved by mercy, and not by merit. If I should do all myself, wherefore serves Christ? I hope that what I cannot do, he will do for me; and I hope to be saved by Jesus Christ as well as the best of you all.

Theol. Oh, now I see which way the game goes. You would fain make Christ a cloak for your sins. You will sin that grace may abound. You will sin frankly, and set all on Christ's score. Truly there are many thousands of your mind, who, hearing of God's abundant mercy in Christ, are by it made more bold to sin; but they shall know one day, to their cost, what it is so to abuse the mercy of God. The apostle says, "The mercy and loving-kindness of God should lead us to repentance," Rom. 2:4; but we see it leads man to further hardness of heart. The prophet says, "With him is mercy, that he may be feared;" but many by it are made more secure and careless. But to come nearer the mark: you say you hope to be saved by Jesus Christ; and I answer, that if those things be found in you, which the scriptures assert to be in all that shall be saved by him, then you may have good confidence and assured hope; otherwise not. Now the scriptures thus determine it, and set it down, that if a man be in Christ, and look to be saved by him, he must be endued with these qualities following: first, he must be "a new creature," 2 Cor. 5:17; secondly, he must live, "not after the lusts of men, but after the will of God," 1 Peter 4:2; thirdly, he must be "zealous of good works," Tit. 2:14; fourthly, he must "die to sin, and live to righteousness," Rom. 6:11; fifthly, he must be "holy and unblameable," Col. 1:12; sixthly, he must "so walk as Christ has walked," John 2:6; seventhly, he must "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts," Gal. 5:24; eighthly, he must "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. 13:1; last of all, he must "serve God in righteousness and true holiness all the days of his life," Luke 1:75. Lo, then, what things are required of all that shall be saved by Christ. Now, therefore, if these things be in you in some measure of truth, then your hope is current, sound, and good; otherwise, it is nothing worth: for in vain do men say they hope to be saved by Christ, when as they walk dissolutely. The reason of it is, because the members must be suitable to the head; but Christ our head is holy; therefore, we his members, must be holy also; as it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." Other wise, if we join profane and unholy members to our holy head Christ, we make Christ a monster. As if a man should join to the head of a lion, the neck of a bear, the body of a wolf, and the legs of a fox; were it not a monstrous thing? would it not be a monstrous creature? Even such a thing they go about, who would have swearers, drunkards, whore mongers, and such like, to be the members of Christ, and to have life and salvation by him. But since you so much presume of Christ, I pray you, let me ask you a question.

Antil. What is that?

Theol. How do you know that Christ died for you particularly, and by name?

JMU. Christ died for all men, and therefore for me.

Theol. But all men shall not be saved by Christ: how, therefore, do you know that you are one of those who have special interest in Christ, and shall be saved by his death?

Antil. This I know, that we are all sinners, and cannot be saved by any other than by Christ.

Theol. Answer directly to my question. How do you know in yourself, and for yourself, that you are one of the elect, and one of those for whom Christ died?

Antil. I know it by my good faith in God; because I put my whole trust in him, and in none other.

Theol. But how know you that you have faith? or how shall a man know his faith?

Antil. I know it by this, that I have always had as good a meaning, and as good a faith to Godward as any man of my calling, and that is not book learned. I have always feared God with all my heart, and served him with my prayers.

Theol. Tush! now you go about the bush, and hover in the air. Answer me to the point: how do you know, certainly and assuredly, that Christ died for you particularly, and by name?

Antil. You would make a man mad. You put me out of my faith; you drive me from Christ. But if you go about to drive me from Christ, I will never believe you; for I know we must be saved only by him.

Theol. I go not about to drive you from Christ, but to drive you to Christ: for how can I drive you from Christ, seeing you never came near him? how can I drive you out of Christ, seeing you were never in him? But this is what deceives you and many others, that you think you believe in Christ, because you say you believe in Christ; as though faith consisted in words, or as though a man had faith because he says so. If everyone that says he has faith, has faith; and every one that says he believes in Christ, believes; then who will not have faith? who will not believe? But, in truth, your faith, and the faith of many others, is nothing else but a mere imagination. But all this while you have not answered my question touching your particular knowledge of Christ.

Antil. I can answer you no otherwise than I have answered you; and I think I have answered you sufficiently.

Theol. No, no; you falter in your speech: your answer is not worth a button; you speak you know not what; you are altogether befogged and benighted in this question. But if there were in your heart the true knowledge and lively feeling of God, then I am sure you would have yielded another and a better answer then you would have spoken something from the sense and feeling of your own heart, and from the work of God's grace within you; but, because you can yield no sound reason that Christ died for you particularly, and by name, therefore I suspect you are none of those who have proper interest in him, and in whom his death takes effect indeed.

Phil. I think this question would gravel a great number; and few there are that can answer it aright.

Theol. It is most certain. I know it by sad experience that not one of an hundred can soundly and sufficiently answer this question; none, indeed, but only those in whom the new work is wrought, and do, by the inward work of the Spirit, feel Christ to be theirs. I have talked with some who are both witty, sensible, and learned, who, despite, when they have been brought to this very point and issue, have stuck sore at it, and staggered very much: and however they might by wit and learning shuffle it over, and, in a plundered sort speak reason; yet had they no feeling of what they said, and therefore no assurance: and consequently as good never a whit, as never the better. It is the sanctifying Spirit that gives feeling in this point; and therefore, without the feeling of the operation of the same Spirit, it can never be soundly answered. Thus then, I close up this whole matter: as the vine branch cannot live and bring forth fruit, except it abide in the vine: no more can we, except we abide in Christ, and be truly grafted into him by a lively faith. None can have any benefit by him, but they only who dwell in him. None can live by Christ, but those who are changed into Christ. None are partakers of his body, but those who are in his body. None can be saved by Christ crucified, but those who are crucified with Christ. None can live with him being dead, but those who die with him being alive. Therefore, let us root downward in mortification, that we may shoot upward in sanctification. Let us die to sin, that we may live to righteousness. Let us die while we are alive, that we may live when we are dead.

Asun. If none can be saved by Christ, but only those who are so qualified as you speak of, then Lord have mercy on us; then the way to heaven is very strait indeed, and few at all shall be saved; for there are few such in the world.

Theol. You are not deceived; for, when all comes to all, it is most certain that few shall be saved; which I will show to you, both by scripture, reason, and examples.

Asun. First, then, let us hear it proved by the scriptures.

Theol. Our Lord Jesus says, "Enter in at the strait gate: for, it is the wide gate and broad way that leads to destruction; and many there are who go in thereat; because the gate is strait, and the way narrow, that leads to life, and few there are that find it," Matt. 7:13. Again he says, "Many are called, but few are chosen," 20:16. In another place, we read of a certain man who came to our Saviour Christ, and asked him whether few should be saved. To whom our Lord Jesus answered thus, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say to you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able," Luke 13:24. In which answer, then, our Saviour does not answer his question directly, either negatively or affirmatively; yet he plainly insinuates by his speeches that few shall be saved. For, first, he bids us to strive earnestly; noting by it, that it is a matter of great strife against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Secondly, he affirms, that the gate is very strait; noting, that, none can enter in, without struggling, and almost breaking their shoulder bones. Lastly, he says, that many who seek to enter in, shall not be able; noting by it, that even of those who seek, many shall step short; because they seek him not aright. Isaiah also says, "Except the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and had been like Gomorrah." The apostle also says, from the prophet, "That the Lord will make a short account in the earth, and gather it into a short sum, with righteousness." These scriptures, I think, are sufficient to prove that few shall be saved.

Asun. Now let us hear your reasons.

Theol. If we come to reason, we may rather wonder that any should be saved, than so few shall be saved. For we have all the lets and hindrances that may be, both within us and with out us. We have, as they say, the sun, moon, and seven stars against us. We have all the devils in hell against us, with all their horns, heads, marvellous strength, infinite wiles, cunning devices, and deep temptations. Here runs a sore stream against us. Then have we this present evil world against us, with her innumerable baits, snares, nets, gins, and grins to catch us, fetter us, and entangle us. Here have we profits and pleasures, riches and honour, wealth and preferment, ambition and covetousness. Here comes in a camp royal of spiritual and invisible enemies. Lastly, we have our flesh, that is, our corrupted nature against us; we have ourselves against ourselves. For

we ourselves are as great enemies to our salvation, as either the world or the devil. For, our understanding, reason, will, and affections, are altogether against us. Our natural wisdom is an enemy to us. Our concupiscences and lusts minister strength to Satan's temptations. They are all in league with Satan against us. They take part with him in every thing against us and our salvation. They fight all under his standard, and receive their pay of him. This then goes hard on our side, that the devil has an inward party against us; and we carry always within us our greatest enemy, who is ever ready, night and day, to betray us into the hands of Satan; yes, to unbolt the door, and let him in to cut our throats. Here then we see an huge army of dreadful enemies, and a very legion of devils, lying in ambush against our souls. Are not we therefore poor wretches in a most pitiful case, who are thus betrayed and besieged on every side? All things then considered, may we not justly marvel that any shall be saved? For who sees not, who knows not, that you sand thousands are carried headlong to destruction, either with the temptations of the world, the flesh, or the devil? But yet, further, I will show, by another very manifest and apparent reason, that the number of God's elect on the face of the earth are very few in comparison; which may thus be considered; first, let there are taken away from amongst us all papists, atheists, and heretics; secondly, let there are taken out all vicious and notorious evil livers, as swearers, drunkards, fornicators, worldlings, deceivers, cozeners, proud men, rioters, gamesters, and all the profane multitude; thirdly, let there are refused and sorted out, all hypocrites, carnal protestants, vain professors, backsliders, deceivers, and cold Christians; let all these I say, be separated, and then tell me how many sound, sincere, faithful and zealous worshippers of God will be found among us. I suppose we should not need the are of arithmetic to number them: for I think there would be very few in every village, town, and city: I doubt they would walk very thinly in the streets, so as a man might easily tell them as they go. Our Lord Jesus asks a question in the gospel of St. Luke 18:8, saying, "Do you think, when the Son of man Comes, that he shall find faith on the earth?" to the which we may answer, surely very little.

Ajsun. Now, according to your promise, show this thing also by examples!

Theol. In the first age of the world, all flesh had so corrupted their ways that God could no longer bear them, but even vowed their destruction by the overflowing of waters. When the flood came, bow few were found faithful? Eight persons only were saved by the ark. How few righteous were found in Sodom, and the cities adjoining; but one poor Lot and his family? How few believers were found in Jericho, but one Rahab? How few of the old Israelites entered into the land of promise, but two, Caleb and Joshua? The rest could not

enter in, because of unbelief. The true and invisible church was small, during the government of the Judges; as appears plentifully in that book. In Elijah's time, the church was so small that it did not appear. In the reign of the kings of Israel and Judah, the sincere worshippers were very few; as appears by all the prophets. During the captivity, the church was as the moon under a cloud, she was driven into the wilderness where she hid herself. During the persecutions of the Greek empire, by Gog, Magog, and Egypt, they were fewest of all. In Christ's time, what a foolish company he began with! How were all things corrupted by the priests, scribes, and pharisees! In the beginning of the apostle's preaching there were few believers. After the first six hundred years, what an eclipse was in the church during the height of antichrist's reign! How few true worshippers of God were in the world, for the space of almost seven hundred years! Since the gospel was broached and spread abroad, how few believe! and as the prophet says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" Thus then you see it is apparent, both by scripture, reason, and examples of all ages, that the number of the elect is very small; and, when all comes to all, few shall be saved.

Phil. I pray you tell us how few, and to what scantling they may be reduced: whether one of a hundred, or one of a thousand, shall be saved?

Theol. No man knows that, neither can I give you any direct and certain answer to it; but I say that, in comparison of the reprobate, there shall be but a few saved; for all that profess the gospel are not the true church before God: there are many in the church who are not of the church.

Phil. How do you prove that?

Theol. Out of the ninth to the Romans, where the apostle says, v. 6, "All are not Israel, that are of Israel;" and again, Isaiah cries concerning Israel, "Though the number of the children of Israel were as the sand of the sea, yet but a remnant shall be saved," 5:27.

Phil. How do you balance it in the visible church? or in what comparison do you take it? Let us hear some estimate of it. Some think one of a hundred; some but one of a thousand shall be saved.

Theol. Indeed, I have heard some learned and godly divines give such conjectures; but for that matter I can say nothing to it; but only let us observe the comparison of the Holy Spirit between a remnant and the sand of the sea, and it will give some light into the matter.

Phil. Does not the knowledge of this doctrine discourage men from seeking after God?

Theol. Nothing less. But rather it ought to awake us, and stir up in us a greater care of our salvation, that we may be of the number of Christ's little flock, who make an end of their salvation in fear and trembling.

Phil. Some make light of all these matters; others say, as for the life to come, that is the least matter of an hundred to be cared for. As for that matter, they will leave it to God, even as pleases him, they will not meddle with it; for they say, God that made them must save them. They hope they will do as well as others, and make as good shift as their neighbours,

Theol. It is sad that men should be so careless, and make so light of what, of all other things, is most weighty and important; for it shall not profit a man to win the whole world, and lose his own soul, as the author of all wisdom testifies.

Asun. I pray you, sir, under correction, give me leave to speak my mind in this point: I am an ignorant man; pardon me if I speak amiss, for a fool's bolt is soon shot.

Theol. Say on.

Asun. I think that God is stronger than the devil; therefore I cannot believe that he will suffer the devil to have more than himself; he will not take it at his hands; he loves mankind better than so.

Theol. You carnally imagine that God will wrestle and strive with the devil about the matter. As for God's power it never crosses his will; for God can do nothing against his will and decree, because he will not.

Asun. Yes, but the scripture says, "God will have all men saved."

Theol. That is not meant of every particular man, but of all sorts some. Some Jews, some Gentiles, some rich, some poor, some high, some low, &c.

Asun. Christ died for all; therefore, all shall be saved.

Theol. Christ died for all, in the sufficiency of his death, but not in efficacy to



life; for only the elect shall be saved by his death; as it is written, "This is my blood in the new testament, which is given for you," meaning his disciples and chosen children. And, again, Christ, being consecrated, is made "the author of salvation to all that obey him."

Asun. God is merciful; and, therefore, I hope he will save the greatest part, for his mercy's sake.

Theol. The greatest part shall perish; but all that shall be saved shall be saved by his mercy; as it is written, "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens." And, again, "It is not in him that wills, or in him that runs, but in God that shows mercy," Rom. 9:16. Therefore, though God be infinite in mercy, and Christ infinite in merit, yet none shall have mercy but only the vessels of mercy.

Antil. Can you tell who shall he saved, and who shall be damned? Do you know God's secrets? When were you in heaven? When spake you with God? I am of the mind that all men shall be saved; for God's mercy is above all his works. Say you what you will, and what you can, God did not make us to condemn us.

Theol. You are very peremptory indeed: you are more bold than wise; for Christ says few shall be saved; you say all shall be saved. Whether, then, shall we believe Christ or you?

Antil. If there should come two souls, one from heaven and another from hell, and bring us certain news how the case stood, then I would believe it indeed.

Theol. Put case: two souls of the dead should come the one from heaven, the other from hell I can tell you now, certainly, what they would say, and what news they would bring.

Antil. What, I pray you?

Theol. They would say there are few in heaven and many in hell heaven is empty and hell is full.

Antil. How know you that? how know you they would say so?

Theol. I am sure, if they speak the truth, they must needs say so.

Antil. Must they needs? Why, I pray you, must they needs say so?

Theol. Because the word of God says so; because Moses and the prophet-s says so: "If you win not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will you believe though one, though two, though an hundred should rise from the dead."

Antil. Yes, but I would.

Theol. I pray you, let me ask you a question: whether you think that God and his word, or the souls of dead men, are more to be credited?

Antil. If I were sure that God said so then I would believe it.

Theol. If his word say so, does not he say so? Is not he and his word all one?

Antil. Yet, for all that, if I might hear God himself speak it, it would move me much.

Theol. You show yourself to be a notable infidel. You will not believe God's word without signs and miracles, and wonders from the dead.

Antil. You speak as though you knew certainly that hell is full. You but speak at random; you cannot tell: you were never there to see. But for my own part, I believe there is no hell at all, but only the hell of a man's conscience.

Theol. Now you show yourself in kind what you are. You say you believe no hell at all; and I think, if you were well examined, you believe no heaven at all, neither God nor devil.

Antil. Yes; I believe there is an heaven, because I see it with my eyes.

Theol. You will believe no more than you see; "but blessed is the one who believes and sees not," John 20:29. You are one of the rankest atheists that ever I talked with.

Antil. You ought not to judge; you know not men's hearts.

Theol. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. You have sufficiently revealed your heart by your words; for the tongue is the key of the mind. As for prejudging, I judge you only by your fruits, which is lawful; for we may justly say it is a bad tree which brings forth bad fruit, and the one who does wickedly is a wicked man; but it is you, and such as you are, that will take

on you to judge men's hearts; for though a man's outward actions be religious and honest, yet you will condemn him; and, if a man gives himself to the word and prayer, reforms his family, and abstains from the gross sins of the world, you will by and by say he is an hypocrite. And thus you take on you to judge men's hearts, as though you knew with what affection these things are done.

Antil. I confess I am a sinner; and so are all others for aught I know. There is no man but he may be amended. I pray God send us all of his grace, that we may please him, and get to heaven at last.

Theol. Now you would shuffle up altogether, as though you were as good as the best, and as though there were no difference of sinners; but you must learn to know that there is great difference of sinners; for there is the penitent, and the impenitent sinner; the careful, and the care less sinner; the sinner whose sins are not imputed, and the sinner whose sins are imputed; the sinner that shall be saved, and the sinner that shall be damned. For it is one thing to sin of frailty, another thing to live in it, dwell in it, and trade in it, (as the Holy Spirit speaks) to suck it in, as the fish sucks water, and to draw it to us with cart ropes and and cords of vanity, Isa. 5:18. To conclude, therefore, there is as great difference between a sinner and a sinner, as between light and darkness; for, though God's children be sinners, in respect of the remnants of sin within them, yet the scriptures call them just and righteous, be cause they are justified by Christ, and sanctified by his grace and Holy Spirit. And for this cause it is, that St. John says, "He that is born of God sins not," 3:6-9.

Antil. What, I pray you, did you never sin?

Theol. Yes, and what then? what are you the better?

Antil. You preachers cannot agree amongst yourselves; one says one thing, and another says another thing; so that you bring the ignorant people into a Perplexity;\* and they know not on which hand to take.

Theol. The preachers, God be thanked, agree very well together in all the main grounds of religion, and principal points of salvation; but if they dissent in some other matters, you are to try the spirits whether they are of God or no; you must try all things, and keep what is good.

Antil. How can plain and simple men try the spirits and doctrines of the preachers?

Theol. Yes; for the apostle says, 1 Cor. 2:15, "The spiritual man discerns all things;" and St. John says to the holy Christians, 2:27, "You have received an ointment from that Holy One, and know all things," that is, all things necessary to salvation; those, therefore, who have the Spirit of God, can judge and discern of doctrines, whether they be of God or no.

Antil. I am not book-learned, and therefore I cannot judge of such matters; as for hearing of sermons, I have no leisure to go to them; I have somewhat else to do; let those who are bookish, and hear so many sermons, judge of such matters; for I will not meddle with them, they belong not to me.

Theol. Yet for all that, you ought to read the scriptures, and hear the word of God preached, that you may be able to discern between truth and falsehood in matters of religion.

Antil. You think none can be saved without preaching; and that all men stand bound to frequent sermons; but I am not of your mind in that.

Theol. Our Lord Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice;" and again, he says, "He that is of God, hears God's words; you therefore hear it not, because you are not of God;" you see therefore how Christ Jesus makes it a special note of God's child, to hear his word preached.

Antil. But I think we may serve God well enough without a preacher; for preachers are but men, and what can they do? A preacher is a good man, so long as he is in the pulpit; but if he is out of the pulpit, he is but as another man.

Theol. You speak contemptuously of God's messengers, and of God's sacred ordinance; but the apostle fully answers your objection, saying, Rom. 10: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and how can they hear without a preacher." In which words, the apostle tells us flatly, that you can neither have faith, nor serve God aright, without preaching.

Antil. When you have preached all that you can, you can make the word of God no better than it is; and some put in and put out what they wish; the scriptures are but men's inventions, and they made the scriptures.

Theol. We preach not to make the word better, but to make you better; as for putting in and putting out, it is a mere untruth; and whereas you say the scriptures were made by men, it is blasphemy once to think it; and you are

worthy to receive your answer at Tyburn.

Antil. Now I see you are hot: I perceive, for all your godliness, you will be angry.

Theol. I take it to be no sin to be angry against sin; for your sin is very great, and who can bear it?

Antil. All this while you speak much for preaching, but you say nothing for prayer. I think there is as much need of prayer as preaching; for I find in the scriptures, "Pray continually," but I find not preach continually.

Theol. No man denies but that prayer is most needful, always to be joined to preaching and all other holy exercises, for it is the handmaid to all; but yet we prefer preaching above it, because preaching is both the director and whetstone of prayer; yes, it stirs us aright in all spiritual actions and services whatever, without which we can keep no certain course, but are ever ready to err on this hand, or that. Now, whereas you say you find "Pray continually," but not preach continually, you might, if you were not wilfully blind, find also preach continually; for the apostle says, 2 Tim. 4:2, "Be instant: preach the word in season, and out of season:" that is always, as time and occasion shall serve.

Antil. You extol preaching, but you say nothing for reading. I believe you condemn reading.

Theol. Does the one who highly commends gold condemn silver? I ingenuously confess that both public and private reading of the scriptures are very necessary and profitable, and would to God it were more used than it is; for it is of singular use, both to increase knowledge and judgement, and also to make us more fit to hear the word preached. For such men as are altogether ignorant of the history of the bible can hear the word with small profit or comfort.

Phil. It seems that this man neither regards the one nor the other; because, for ought that I can see, he cares not greatly if the scriptures were burnt.

Antil. Oh sirrah, you speak out of turn; you may speak when you are bidden. Who made you a judge? You are one of his disciples, and that makes you to speak on his side.

Phil. No sir, I hope I am Christ's disciple, and no man's; but assuredly, I cannot hold my peace at your vile criticising, and most blasphemous speeches.

Antil. I cry your mercy, sir; you seem to be one of these scripture-men; you are all of the Spirit: you are so full of it, that it runs out at your nostrils.

Phil. You plainly show yourself to be a scoffing Ishmaelite.

Antil. And you do plainly show yourself to be one of these folk of God who know their seats in heaven.

Phil. I pray God be merciful to you, and give you a better heart. For I see you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of sin.

Antil. You think there is none good but such as yourself, and such as can please your humour. You will, forsooth, be all pure; but, by God, there are a company of pure knaves of you,

Theol. No, now you manifestly show of what spirit you are; for you both swear and rail with one breath.

Antil. God forgive me! why did he anger me, then? There are a company of such controllers as he in the world, that nobody can be quiet for them.

Theol. I perceive a little thing will anger you, since you will be angry with him for speaking the truth.

Antil. What has he to do with me? He is more busy than needs. Why does he say I am in a bad case? I will not come to him to learn my duty. If I have faults he shall not answer for them; I shall answer for my own faults, and every tub shall stand on his ow<sup>n</sup> bottom: let him meddle with that he has to do with.

Theol. You are too impatient; you take matters at the worst. We ought friendly, and in loye, to admonish one another; for we must have a care one of another's salvation. I dare say for him that he speaks both of love and compassion towards you.

Antil. I care not for such love; let him keep it to himself What does he think of me? does he suppose that I have not a soul to save as well as he, or that I have no care of my salvation? I would he should know that I have as great care for my salvation as he, though I make no such outward show; for all is not gold that glisters. I have as good a meaning as he, though I cannot utter it.

Theol. These words might well be spared. I hope you will be pacified, and amend your life, and draw nearer to God hereafter.

Antil. Truly, sir, you may think of me what you please; but, I assure you, I have more care that way than all the world wonders at, I thank God for it. I say my prayers every night when I am in my bed; and if good prayers will do us no good, God help us. I have always served God duly and truly, and had him in my mind. I do as I would be done to; I keep my church, and tend my prayers while I am there; and, I hope, I am not so bad as this fellow would make me. I am sure, if I be bad, I am not the worst in the world: there are as bad as I: If I go to hell, I shall have fellows, and make as good shift as others,

Theol. You think you have spoken wisely, but I like not your answer; for your words smell strongly both of ignorance, pride, and unbelief. For, first, you justify yourself in your faithless and ignorant worshipping of God; and, secondly, you justify yourself by comparison with others, because others are as bad as you, and you are not the worst in the world.

Antil. Now I know you speak of ill-will; for you never had any good opinion of me.

Theol. I would I could have as good an opinion of you as I desire, and that I might see that wrought in you which might draw my love and liking towards you; and as for ill will, the Lord knows I bear you none. I desire your conversion and salvation with my whole heart; and I would think myself happy if I might save your soul with the loss of my right arm.

Antil. I hope I may repent; for the scripture says, when a sinner repents, God will have mercy on him; therefore, if I may have space and grace, and time to repent before death, and to ask God forgiveness, and say my prayers, and cry God mercy, I hope I shall do well enough.

Theol. You speak as though repentance were in your power, and at your commandment, and that you can put it into your own heart when you wish; and that makes you, and many others, presume of it three hours before death. But you must know that repentance is the rare gift of God; and it is given but to a few. For God will know him well that he bestows repentance on, since it is proper only to the elect. It is no word matter. It is not attained without many and fervent prayers, and much hearing, reading, and meditating in the word of God. It is not so easy a matter to come by, as the world judges. It is not found but of those who seek it diligently, and beg it earnestly. It is no ordinary three

hours' matter. Cry God mercy a little, for fashion, will not do it. Cursory saying of a few prayers a little before death avails not; for, though true repentance be never too late, yet late repentance is seldom true. Herein delays are dangerous; for the longer we defer it the worse is our case. The further a nail is driven in with a hammer, the harder it is to get out again. The longer a disease is let run, the harder it is to cure. The deeper a tree is rooted, the harder it is to pluck up again. The longer we defer the time of our repentance, the harder it will be to repent; and therefore it is dangerous driving it off to the last cast. For an ancient father says, (Augustine) "we read but of one that repented at the last, that no man should presume: and yet of one, that none might despair." Well then, to conclude this point, I would have you to know, that the present time is always the time of repentance; for time past cannot be recovered, and time to come is uncertain.

Antil. Sir, in my opinion, you have uttered some very dangerous things, and such as were enough to drive a man to despair.

Theol. What be they, I pray you?

Antil. There are divers things; but one thing most of all sticks in my stomach, and that is, the small number that shall be saved, as you I say: but I can hardly be persuaded that God made so many thousands to cast them away when he has done. Do you think that God has t made us to condemn us? will you make him to I be the author of condemnation?

Theol. Nothing less; for God is not the cause of men's condemnation, but themselves; for every man's destruction comes of himself; as it is written, Hosea 13:9, "O Israel, your destruction is of thyself." For God in great mercy, uses all possible means to save souls; as he says by the prophet, Isaiah 5:4, "What could I have done more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?" but to come nearer to your question: I deny that God has created the most part of men only and solely to perdition, as the proper end which he aimed at in creating them; but he has created all things for the praise of his glory, as it is written, Prov. 16:4, "He has I created all things for himself, and the wicked also for the evil day." Then it follows, that the cause and end why the wicked were created, neither was nor is only the destruction of his creature, but his own praise and glory; that that only might appear and shine forth in all his works. Yet certain it is, that God, for just causes, albeit unknown and hidden to us, has rejected a great part of men. The causes, I say, of reprobation are hidden in the eternal counsel of God, and known to his godly wisdom only. They are secret and hidden from us; reserved in his eternal wisdom to be revealed at the



glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus. His judgements, says the scriptures, are as a great deep, and his ways past finding out. It is as possible for us to comprehend the ocean sea in a little dish, as to comprehend the reason of God's counsel in this behalf.

Antil. What reason, justice, or equity is there that sentence of death should be passed on men before they are born, and before they have done good or evil?

Theol. I told you before that we can never comprehend the reason of God's proceeding in this behalf, yet we must know that his will is the rule of righteousness, and must be to us instead of a thousand reasons; for whatever God wills, inasmuch as he wills it, is to be holden just. We cannot conceive the reason of many natural things, and things subject to sense, as the motion of the celestial bodies, their inconceivable swiftness, their matter and substance, their magnitude, altitude, and latitude. We cannot thoroughly find out the cause of the thunder, lightning, winds, earthquakes, ebbing and flowing of the sea, and many other things under the sun. How then can we possibly ascend up into the privy chamber and council-house of God, to sift and search out the bottom of God's secrets, which no wit or reach of man can any way attain to? Let us therefore learn in God's fear to reverence what we cannot in this life comprehend. This one thing I must say to you, that what soever God decrees, yet he executes no man till he have ten thousand times deserved it. For between the decree and the execution of it, Comes sin in us, and most just causes of condemnation.

Antil. If God has decreed men's destruction, what can they do? who can resist his will? why then is he angry with us? For all things must needs come to pass according to his decree Mid determination.

Theol. First, I answer you with the apostle. Rom. 9:20, "man, who are you to plead against God! Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why have you made me thus? Hath not the potter power of the clay, to make of the same lump one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?" Moreover, I answer, that God's decree does not enforce the will of man, but it works and moves of itself. It has in itself the beginning of evil motion, and sins willingly. Therefore, though the decree of God imposes a necessity on all secondary causes, so as they must needs be framed and disposed according to the same, without compulsion or constraint, for they are all carried with their voluntary motion. Even as we see the weight of a clock, being the first mover, causes all the other wheels to move, but not to move this way or that way, for in that they move some one way and some another, it is of themselves I mean of their own frame.

So God's decree moves all secondary causes, but does not take away their own proper motion; for God is the author of every action, but not of any evil in any action. As the soul of man is the original cause of all motion in man, as the philosophers dispute, but yet not of lame and impotent motion, for that is from another cause, that is, some defect in the body; so I say, God's decree is the root and first cause of motion, but not of defective motion, that is from ourselves. Likewise that a bell sounds, the cause is in him that rings it, but that it jars, the cause is in itself. Again, that a instrument sounds, is in him that plays on it, but that it jars is in itself, that is in its own want of tuning. So then, to shut up this point, all instruments and middle causes are so moved of God, being the first mover, that he always does well, holily, and justly in his moving. But the instruments moved are carried in contrary motions, according to their own nature and frame. If they are good they are carried to what is good, but if they are evil, they are carried to evil. So that, according to the double beginning of motion and will, there is a double and divers work and effect.

Antil. But how is it that man of himself, that is of his own free motion, wills what is evil?

Theol. From the fall of Adam, whereby his will was corrupted.

Antil. Who was the cause of Adam's fall?

Theol. The devil, and the deprivation of his own will.

Antil. How could his will incline to evil, it being made good, and he being made good?

Theol. He and his will were made good, yet mutably good; for to be immutably good is proper only to God; and Adam so stood that he might fall, as the event declared.

Antil. Was not the decree of God the cause of Adam's fall?

Theol. No, but the voluntary inclination of his will to evil. For Adam's will was neither forced, nor by any violence of God's purpose, compelled to consent; but he, of free will and ready mind, left God and joined with the devil. Thus then I determine that Adam sinned necessarily, if you respect the decree or event, but if you respect the first mover and inherent cause, which was his own will, then he sinned voluntarily and contingently; for the decree of God did not take away his will or the contingency of it, but only order and dispose it; therefore, as a

learned writer (Beza) says, "He sinned willingly, and of his own motion." And therefore no evil is to be attributed to God, or his decree.

Antil. How then do you conceive and consider of the purpose of God in all these things?

Theol. Thus, that God decreed with himself at once, that there should be a world; that Adam should be created perfect; that he should fall of himself; that all should fall with him; that he would save some of the lost race; that he would do it of mercy through his Son; that he would condemn others for sin.

Antil. But how do you prove the decree of reprobation? that is, that God has determined the destruction of thousands before the world was.

Theol. The scriptures calls the reprobates, Rom. 9:22, "The vessels of wrath prepared to destruction." The scriptures says, 1 Thes. 5:9, "God has not appointed us to wrath;" therefore it follows; that some are appointed to wrath. The scriptures says, 1 Pet. 2:8, of the reprobates, "That they were ordained to stumble at the word." The scriptures says, "They were of old ordained to this condemnation, Jude 4.

Antil. But how do you answer this? "God wills not the death of a sinner," Ezek, 18; therefore he has predestined none to destruction.

Theol. God wills not the death of a sinner simply and absolutely, as it is the destruction of his creature, but as it is a means to declare his justice and to set forth his glory.

Antil. God foresaw and foreknew that the wicked would perish through their own sin, but yet he did not predestine them to it.

Theol. God's prescience and foreknowledge cannot be separated from his decree; for whatever God has foreseen and foreknown in his eternal counsel, he has determined the same shall come to pass; for as it appertains to his wisdom to foreknow and foresee all things, so it belongs to his power to moderate and rule all things according to his will.

Antil. What do you call prescience in God?

Theol. Prescience in God is that whereby all things abide present before his eyes, so that to his eternal knowledge nothing is past, nothing to come, but all

things are always present. And so are they present, that they are not as conceived imaginations, forms, and motions, but all things are always so present before God that he sees them in their verity and perfection.

Antil. How can God justly determine of men's destruction before they have sinned?

Theol. This objection has been answered in part before; for I told you that God condemns none but for sin, either originally only, or else both original and actual; for however he does in himself, before all time, determine the reprobation of many, yet he proceeds to no execution, till there are found in us both just deserts and apparent cause. Therefore they deal unsoundly and foolishly which confound the decree of reprobation with damnation itself, since sin is the cause of the one, and only the will of God of the other.

Phil. Well, sir, since we are so far proceeded in this question, by the occasion of this man's objections and cavils, I pray you now, as you have spoken much of reprobation and the causes of it, so let us hear somewhat of election and the causes of it; and show us out of the scriptures that God has before all worlds chosen some to eternal life.

Theol. Touching the decree of election there are almost none that make any doubt of it, therefore small proof shall serve for this point. Only I will confirm it by one or two testimonies out of the holy scriptures. First, the apostle says, Eph. 1:3, 4, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ, as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." You see the words are very plain and pregnant for this purpose. Another confirmation is taken out of the 8th chap, to the Romans, in the 29th verse, "Those whom he knew before he also predestined to be like the image of his own Son, that he might be the first-born of many brethren."

Phil. Which are the causes of election?

Theol. The causes of election are to be found only in God himself. For his eternal election depends neither on man, neither yet on anything that is in man, but is purposed in himself, and established in Christ, in whom we are elected. This is fully proved in these words, Eph. 1:5, 6, "Who has predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glory, by which he has made us freely

accepted in his Beloved." Where we see the apostle tells us, that his free grace and the good pleasure of his will, are the first motives or moving causes of our election.

Phil. But the papists find the first motive of election in man's merits and foreseen works; for, say they, God foresaw who would repent, believe, and do well, and thus he chose them.

Theol. But they are greatly deceived. For I say, again and again, that there was nothing in us which ever moved God to set his love on us and choose us to life, but he found the cause in himself; as it is written, Rom. 9:18, "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens;" and again, v. 16, "It is neither in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in God that shows mercy." The Lord himself, in Deut. 7:7, also testifies that he chose his people, not for any goodness in them, but only because he loved them; and bore a special favour to them. So, then, it is a certain truth that God's eternal predestination excludes all merits of man, and all power of his will, by it to attain eternal life; and that his free mercy and undeserved favour is both the beginning, the middle, and the end of our salvation: that is to say, all is of him, and nothing of ourselves.

Phil. So then, does faith depend on election, or election on faith? that is, whether God chose us because we believe? or whether we believe, because we are chosen?

Theol. Out of all doubt, both faith and all fruits of faith depend on election. For we believe, because we are elected, and not elected, because we believe; as it is written, "So many as were ordained to everlasting life believed," Acts 13:48.

Antil. If men be predestined before they are born, to what purpose serve all precepts, admonitions, laws, &c.? It forces not how we live; for neither our godly or ungodly life can alter the purpose of God.

Theol. This is a very wicked and carnal objection, and shows a vile and dissolute mind in those who use it. But I would wish such men to consider the end of our election, which is that we should lead a godly life; as it is plainly set down in the first to the Ephesians, where the apostle says, v. 3, 4, "God has chosen us before the foundation of the world." But to what end? that we should live as we wish? No, no, says he, "But that we should be holy and unblameable before him in love." Again, he says, Rom. 8:29, "We are predestined to be made like the image of his Son;" that is, to be holy and

righteous; for most certain it is that we can judge nothing of predestination but by the results, that is, by our calling, justification, and sanctification; for when once we feel the work of grace within us, that is, that we are washed by the new birth, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, finding in ourselves an sincere hatred of sin, and love of righteousness, then are we sure, and out of all doubt, that we are predestined to life; and it is even as much as if God had personally appeared to us, and whispered us in the ear, and told us that our names are taken and written in the book of life: "For, whom he has predestined, them has he called; and whom he has called, them he has justified; and whom he has justified, them he has glorified," verse 30, Now, therefore, till we feel these marks of election wrought in us, we can be at no certainty in this point; neither are we to take any notice of it, or middle in it; but we must strive, according to that power and faculty we have, to live honestly and civilly, waiting on God till he have mercy on us, and give us the true touch. As for those who are careless and dissolute, setting all at six and seven, there is small hope that they are elected, or ever shall be called.

Antil. I think the preaching and publishing of this doctrine of predestination has done much hurt; and it had been good it had never been known to the people, but utterly concealed; for some it drives to despair, and others it makes more secure and careless.

Theol. You are in a great error, for this doctrine is a part of God's revealed truth, which he would have known to his people; and, in good sooth\*, it is of very great and comfortable use to the children of God against all the assaults of the devil, and temptations of desperation whatsoever; for, when a man has once in truth felt, by the effects, that God has chosen him to life, then though the devil lie sore at him, and the conscience of sin and his own frailties most vehemently assault him, yet he knows certainly that the eternal purpose and counsel of God is immutable; and that because his salvation is not grounded on himself, nor his own strength, but on the unchangeable decree of God, which is a foundation unmoveable, and always standing sure and firm; therefore, let the devil and sin do what they can, yet he shall be upheld in righteousness and truth, and, as it were, born up in the arms of God, even to the end; for whom God loves, to the end God loves them. Moreover, when once the Lord's people perceive, by their sanctification and new birth, both that the Lord has rejected and reprobated so many thousand thousands, and made choice of them to be heirs of his most glorious kingdom, being in themselves of the same mould and making that others are, and that he has done all this of his free grace and undeserved mercy towards them, oh how it ravishes their hearts with the love of him! Again, how frankly and cheerfully they serve him! how willingly and

faithfully they obey him! yes, how are those wholly en wrapt and in flamed with the desire of him! for it is the per suasion and feeling of God's love toward us that draws up our love to him again, as St. John says, 4:19, "We love him, because he loved us first." Moreover, it is said of Mary Magdalene "That she loved much, because she was much forgiven;" for, after she felt her many and great sins finely pardoned, her affections were kindled with the love and obedience of Christ. So likewise the church in the Canticles, after she had been in the banqueting house of all spiritual grace, and felt the banner of Christ's love displayed on her, she was enwrapt therewith, and cried out, as it were in a swoon, "That she was sick of love." So again, when Christ put in his hand by the hole of the door, that is, touched the very inward parts of her heart, by his Spirit, then her heart yearned, and her she was deeply affectionate towards him. This is it which St. Paul prays for on his knees, that it may be granted to the Ephesians, "That they may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length, height and depth of God's love towards us, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, and to be filled with all the fulness of the God." Thus you then see the great and comfortable use of this doctrine of election, both in that it ministers strength and comfort against all temptations; as also because it constrains us to love God, and of very love to fear him and obey him.

Phil. Well, sir, I think now you have spent time enough in answering the objections and cavils of Antilegon; in all which I observe one thing, that there is no end of criticising and objecting against the truth; and that a man may object more in an hour than a learned man can well answer in a day.

Theol. You say truth; and the reason of it is because men have sin in them out of measure, and the Spirit of God but in measure; therefore they can by the one object, and conceive more against the truth, than by the other they shall be able to answer and say for it.

Phil. It appears, indeed, that errors be infinite, and objections innumerable, and that there is no end of men's criticising against God's sacred truth. It is good for us, therefore, to be thoroughly settled in the truth, that we are not entangled or snarled with any cavils, or sophistications whatever; but I truly think, despite all his objections and exceptions, that he in his conscience desires, with Balaam, to die the death of the righteous, and to be as one of them whom he seems to despise.

Theol. I am so persuaded too; for this is the triumph that virtue has over vice, that, where she is most hated, there she is often desired and wished for. And

this is the great punishment that God brings on the wicked, as says the poet, "That they shall see virtue and pine away, having no power to follow it."

Phil. Now let us return to the point we were in hand with before we fell into these objections and cavils, which was concerning the small number of those who shall be saved; and as you have showed us many reasons of it, so proceed to speak yet more to that point.

Theol. As I have showed you various difficulties, both within us and without us, which keep us back from God, and hold us fast in our sins; so now, to all that has been said before, I will add nine great hindrances to eternal life, which may not unfitly be termed nine bars out of heaven, and nine gates into hell.

Phil. Which are they?

Theol. they are these: infidelity presumption of God's mercy, example of the multitude, long custom of sin, long escaping of punishment, hope of long life conceit ill company, evil example of ministers.

Phil. These, indeed, be strong bars out of heaven, and wide gates into hell. I pray you, therefore, prove them out of the scriptures, and lay them forth somewhat more largely.

Theol. The first, which is infidelity, is proved out of the fourth chapter to the Hebrews, where it is written, "Unto us was the gospel preached, as to them; but the word which they heard profited them not, because it was not mixed with faith in those that heard it;" and again, "They could not enter in, because of unbelief." Here we see that unbelief barred the old people from entering into the land of promise, which was a figure of God's eternal kingdom; and sure it is that the same unbelief bars out thousands of us; for many will believe nothing but their own fancies; they will not believe the word of God, especially when it is contrary to their lusts and likings, profits and pleasures. Though things be manifestly proved to their faces, and both the chapter and the verse showed them, yet they will not believe; or though they say they believe, yet will they never go about the practice of anything, but reply against God in all their actions; and, for the most part, when God says one thing they will say another; when God says yes, they will say No; and so give God the lie. Some again will say, if all be true that the preachers say, then God help us. Thus you see how infidelity bars men out of heaven, and cast them into hell.



Phil. Let U8 hear of the second gate, which is presumption of God's mercy.

Theol. This is set down in the twenty-ninth chapter of Deuteronomy, where the Lord says thus, "When a man hears the words of this curse, and yet flatters himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, although I walk according to the stubbornness of my own heart (thus adding drunkenness to thirst, that is, one sin to another,) the Lord will not be merciful to him, but the wrath of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man; and every curse that is written in this book shall light on him, and the Lord shall put out his name from under heaven." Here we see how the mighty God thunders down on such as go on in their sins, presuming of his mercy, and saying in their hearts, if I may have but a "Lord have mercy on me," three hours before death I care not. But it is just with God, when those three hours come, to shut them up in blindness and hardness of heart, as a just plague for their presumption; therefore the prophet David, seeing the grievousness of this sin, prays to be delivered from it, "Keep me, Lord, (says he) from presumptuous sins; let them not reign over me," Psalm 59. Let all men, therefore, take heed of presumptuous sins: for though God be full of mercy, yet will he show no mercy to those who presume of his mercy; but they shall once know, to their cost, that justice goes from him as well as mercy.

Phil. Let us come to the third gate, which is the example of the multitude.

Theol. This is proved in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, v. 2, where the Lord says flatly, "You shall not follow a multitude to do evil." In another place, the Lord says, Lev. 18:3, "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwelt, shall you not do; and after the manner of the land of Canaan, whither I will bring you, shall you not do, neither walk in their ordinances." Against this law the children of Israel offended when they said, in the stubbornness of their heart, to the prophet Jeremiah, 44:16, 17, "The word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord we shall not hear. But we will do whatever goes out of our own mouth; and we will do as we have done, both we and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem." Note here how they altogether refuse the word of the Lord, and how to follow the example of the multitude. We see, in these our days, by sad experience, how thousands are violently carried down this stream, and for defence of it some will say, "Do as the most men do, and the fewest will speak of you;" which is a very wicked speech, for if we will follow the course of the most we shall have the reward of the most, which is eternal perdition. Let us, therefore, take heed of bending with the sway; for the sway of the world weighs down all things that can be spoken out of the word of God, and opens a

very wide passage into hell.

Phil. Proceed to the fourth gate into hell, which is the long custom of sin.

Theol. This is noted by the prophet Jeremiah to be a very dangerous thing; for he says, 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may you also do good, which are accustomed to do evil:" noting there by that it is as hard a matter to leave an old custom of sin as to wash an Ethiopian white, or to change the spots of a leopard, which, because they are natural, are most impossible: so, when men through custom have made swearing, lying, adultery, and drunkenness, as it were natural to them, oh how hard it is to leave them! for custom makes another nature, and takes away all sense and feeling of sin.

Phil. Let us hear of the fifth gate, which is the long escaping of punishment.

Theol. This is asserted by the wise man in these words, Eccles, 13:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the children of men are set in them to do evil;" where he shows that one cause why men are so hardened in their sins is because God winks at them, and lets them alone, not punishing them immediately after they have sinned; for if God should strike down one, and rain fire and brimstone on another, and cause the earth to swallow up the third, then men would fear indeed. But it has been showed before that God takes not that course; but though he meet with some in this life, yet he lets thousands escape; and that makes them more bold, thinking they shall never come to their answer; even as an old thief, which has a long time escaped both prison and gallows, thinks he shall always so escape, and therefore goes boldly on in his thefts. But let men take heed; for, as the proverb says, "Though the pitcher goes long to the well, yet at last it comes broken home;" so, though men escape long, yet they shall not escape always; for there will come a day of reckoning, a day that will pay it home for all. Thus you see how impunity leads numbers to destruction; that is, when men are let alone, and neither smitten by the hand of God nor punished by the law of the magistrate.

Phil. Let us come to the sixth gate, which is the hope of long life.

Theol. This is affirmed by our Lord Jesus concerning that rich worldling who, when he felt the world come in on him with full stream, said he would pull down his barns and build greater, and say to his soul, "Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years. Live at ease, eat, drink, and take your pastime,"

Luke 12:19. But our Saviour calls him fool, for flattering himself in security, and promising to himself long life. Moreover, he plainly told him that the same night he should make a miserable end in hell. Note, I pray you, how Jesus Christ, the fountain of all wisdom, calls this man a fool, and yields a reason of it, that is because he gathered riches to himself, and was not rich in God: he had great care of this life, and none at all for what is to come. So then, it follows that all such are right fools indeed, and may be chronicled for fools, however wise they may be taken and reputed in the world, which have much care for their bodies, and none for their souls: great care for this life, and little for what is to come. Well, let all such profane worldlings as dream and dote of long life, and therefore defer the day of their repentance and conversion to God, take heed by this man's example that they reckon not without their host, and be suddenly snatched away in the midst of all their pleasures and gaieties: as Job says, 21:23, 24, "Some die in their full strength, being in all ease and prosperity; their breasts run full of milk, and their bones run full of marrow;" we see, therefore, how dangerous a thing it is for men to flatter and reassure themselves with hope of long life.

Phil. Proceed to the seventh gate, which is conceit.

Theol. This is, indeed, a very broad gate into hell; for the scripture says, "Do you see a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of such a one." And again, "The fool is wiser in his own eyes, than seven men that can give a sensible reason," Prov. 26:12, 16. The Holy Spirit, we see, affirms that such as are puffed up with an overweening of their own gifts are farthest of all others from the kingdom of heaven; for they despise the wisdom of God to their own destruction. They hold scorn to be taught; they will say they know as much as all the preachers can tell them; for, what can all the preachers say more than this? we are all sinners we must be saved by Christ we must do as we would be done to. There is no more but do well, and have well, &c. Alas! poor souls, they look aloft; they are desperately puffed up with conceit, not knowing that they are poor, naked, blind, and miserable, Rev. 3:17. These men trust altogether to their own wit, learning, policy, riches, and great reputation in the world; and because all men crouch to them, and clap their hands at them, therefore they swell like turkey cocks, set up their feathers, and draw their wings on the ground, with a kind of snuff and disdain of all men, as if they were the only people of the world. Moreover, when men praise them for their gifts, sooth them, and applauded to them, then is it a wonder to see how they stretch themselves up, as though they would take their flight and mount up into the clouds. But let all insolent and conceited men hearken to the woe that is pronounced against them, by the eternal King of glory, saying, "Woe to those

who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight," Isa. 5:21. Again, let them hearken to the counsel of God, which says, "Trust to the Lord with all your heart, but lean not to your own wisdom. Be not wise in your own eyes; but fear God and depart from evil," Prov. 3:5. These silly conceited fools think that because they have the measure of this life, and can cunningly compass the things of this world, and go through with them, therefore they can compass heaven also by their fine wits and deep devices; but, alas! poor wretches, they are greatly and grossly deceived; "For the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; and he catches the wise in their own craftiness," 1 Cor. 3:19. And again the Lord says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will cast away the understanding of the prudent," 1 Cor. 1:19. Let not these men, therefore, stand too much in their own light: let them not trust to their own policies; for they are all but as an ice of one night's freezing, which will deceive those who trust to it. Let them, therefore, become fools themselves, that God may make them wise. Let them deny themselves, that God may acknowledge them; let them be humbled in themselves, that God may exalt them. For assuredly, there is no use after this life, of the exquisite wisdom of the flesh; it all ends when we end. For how dies the wise man? even as dies the fool, says the Holy Spirit, Eccles. 2:16; and where all worldly wisdom ends, there all heavenly wisdom begins. Thus, therefore, we see what a wide gate into hell conceit is, and how many enter in thereat,

Phil. Now, let us understand of the eighth gate into hell, which is ill company.

Theol. The Spirit of God, foreseeing the great danger of this, and knowing how ready we are to be carried away with ill company, gives us most earnest warning to take heed of it as a most dangerous thing. "Enter not (says he) in the way of the wicked; and walk not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, go not by it, turn from it, and pass by," Prov. 4:14, 15. The reason of it is yielded in another place, where it is said, "A companion of fools shall be destroyed," 13. 20. Let men, therefore, take heed of ill company; for many by it have been brought to the gallows, and have confessed on the ladder that ill company has brought them to it, and therefore have admonished all by their example to take heed, and beware of, lewd company. Moreover, the scriptures says, "He that follows vain companions shall be filled with poverty," Prov. 28: 19; and again, in the same chapter, "He that keeps company with banqueters, shames his father." Let us, therefore, with David say, "I am a companion of all those who fear God and keep his commandments," Psalm 119:63. And, on the contrary, let us say with him, "I have not haunted with vain persons. neither kept company with the dissemblers. I hate the assembly of the evil, and have not companied with the wicked," Psalm 26:4. Let us, therefore, by David's example, shun the

company of the wicked; for as a man is so is his company. It is the surest note to discern a man by; for, as all unlike things are unsociable, so all like things are sociable. Herein let us beware we deceive not ourselves with vain words, and an opinion of our own strength; as if we were as strong as Christ, and could not be drawn away with any company. No, no; we are more apt to be drawn than to draw: to be drawn to evil by others, than to draw others to good; therefore, God says by his prophet, Jeremiah, 15:19, "Let them return to you, but return not you to them." Undoubtedly, he is an odd man that is not made worse with ill company, For can a man touch pitch and not be defiled therewith? Can a man carry coals in his bosom and not be burnt? Daily and sad experience shows that many of those who think themselves strong, are this way most grievously disgraced. Let a man think, therefore, he never abandons evil, till he abandon ill company; for no good is concluded in this parliament; for ill company is the suburbs of hell. Furthermore, it is to be observed that some, on admonitions and some inward prickings of their own conscience, leave their sins until they have new provocations, and until they come amongst their old wild companions and sin companions; and then are they carried back again to their old bias, and return to their folly as a dog returns to his vomit. For we see some, which otherwise are of good natures and dispositions, most pitifully and violently carried away with ill company; for even as green wood of itself is unapt to burn, yet being laid on the fire with a great deal of dry wood, it burns as fast as the rest; so many toward youths, which of themselves are not so prone to evil as others, yet with this violent stream and blustering tempest of ill company, are carried clean away.

Phil. Let us come to the last gate, which is the evil example of ministers.

Theol. It grieves me, and I am almost ashamed to speak of this point; for is it not a woeful and sad thing that any such should be found amongst the sons of Levi? Is it not a shameful thing that the ministers of Christ should be of a scandalous conversation? for if the eye be dark, how great is the darkness? If they are examples of all evil to the flock, which should be patterns, lights, and examples of all goodness, must it not needs strengthen the hands of the wicked, so as they cannot return from their wickedness? But this is an old disease and evil sickness which has always been in the church. The prophet Jeremiah most grievously complains of it in his time, and says, 23:14, that "from the prophets of Jerusalem is wickedness gone forth into all the land; for both the prophet and the priest do wickedly. I have seen, (says he) in the prophets of Jerusalem, filthiness; they commit adultery, and walk in lies; they strengthen also the hands of the wicked, that none can return from his wickedness; they are all to me as Sodom, and the inhabitants of it as

Gomorrah." And in the ninth verse of the same chapter, he shows that it was no pleasure or joy to him so publicly to reprove them; but that he did it with exceeding grief, as being forced thereunto, both in regard of God's glory, and the good of his church. His words are these, "my heart breaks within me, because of the prophets; and all my bones shake." Moreover, in the same chapter is set down how the Lord would feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall, and sundry other ways plague them for their flatteries, seductions, corrupt doctrine, and evil example of life.

Phil. Most certain it is that the evil example of ministers, and especially of preachers, is very dangerous and offensive: for by it thousands are hardened in their sins. For men will say, such a minister and such a preacher does thus and thus, and therefore, why may not we do so too? They are learned, and know the word of God; therefore, if it were evil, I hope they would not do it; for they should be lights to us, and give us good examples; therefore, since they do such things, we cannot tell what to think, or what to say to it, they bring such simple folks as we are into perplexity.

Theol. Oh that I could, with the prophet Jeremiah, quake and shake to think of these matters! Oh that I could mourn as a dove, in penning of it! Oh that I had in the wilderness a cottage, and could with Job be a brother to the dragons, and a companion to the ostriches, whilst I have any thoughts of those things! Oh that I could weep and mourn without sin, before I yield you an answer. For weep indeed I may, but answer I cannot. Alas, with much grief I speak it, all is too true that you say: and herein the people have a vantage against us, if I may call it vantage. But let this be my answer, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Matt. 15:14. Blind guide? and blind people, shall perish together. If because we are wicked they shall be more wicked, then both they and we shall bum in hell-fire together. Then, let them reckon their gains and see what they have got. They have small cause so to triumph over us; for by it their market is never a whit amended: let them take this for answer. And let us that are the ministers of Christ, and preachers of the gospel, look narrowly to ourselves, and make straight steps to our feet; for, if we tread never so little awry, we may see how many eyes are on us. Let us, therefore, with David pray continually, "Order my goings, O Lord, that my footsteps slip not. For when my foot slipped, they rejoiced against me." And as for the people, let them follow the example of those which walk blamelessly, as God be thanked, some such there are, and let them fly the examples of such as are offensive. So shall God have more glory, and they more peace in their own hearts. Thus have we heard what a wide gate is opened into hell by the evil example of ministers, and especially of preachers.

## THE SIN AND DANGER OF IGNORANCE: WITH THE VAST IMPORTANCE OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY AS A REMEDY.

Phil. Well, since there are so many bars out of heaven and so many gates into hell, it is a very hard matter to break through all these bars, and so to enter into life; and as hard a matter to miss all these gates and escape hell. He quits him well that can do it.

Theol. True indeed; and as hard a thing as this is, so hard a thing is it for flesh and blood to enter into the kingdom of heaven; and yet most men make light of it, and think it is the easiest matter of a hundred.

Asun. As hard as it is, yet I hope by the grace of God I shall be one of those who shall enter in; for, so long as I do as I would be done to, and say nobody no harm, nor do nobody no harm, God will have mercy on my soul. And I doubt not but my good deeds shall weigh against my evil deeds, and that I shall make even with God at my latter end; for, I thank God for it, I have always lived in his fear, and served him with a true intent; therefore I know that so long as I keep his commandments, and live as my neighbours do, and as a Christian man ought to do, he will not damn my soul.

Theol. Can you then keep God's commandments?

Asun. As near as God will give me grace.

Theol. No, but I ask you whether you keep them or no?

Asun. I say, to keep them as near as I can, I do my true intent. Though I keep them not all, yet I am sure I keep some of them.

Theol. Because you say you keep some of them, I pray you let me be so bold with you as to examine you in the particulars. You know the first commandment is this, "You shall have none other gods in my sight." How can you say you keep this?

Asun. I am out of all fear of it; for I never worshipped any God but one. I am fully persuaded there is but one God.

Theol. What say you to the second commandment? "You shall make to thyself no graven image," &c.

Asun. I never worshipped any images in my life: I defy them. I know they cannot help me, for they are but stocks and stones.

Theol. What say you to the third commandment? which is this, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain," &c.

Asun. No certainly, I was never counted a swearer in my life, but I have feared God always of a child, and have had a good faith in him ever since I could remember. I would be sorry else.

Theol. What say you then to the fourth commandment? "Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath-day," &c.

Asun. No, for that matter, I keep my church as well as any man in the parish where I dwell, and mind my prayers as well when I am there. I thank God for it, though I say it myself, I have been always well given, and have loved God's word with all my heart; and it does me good to hear the epistles and gospels read every Sunday by our vicar.

Theol. Tell me, what say you to the fifth commandment? which is, "Honour your father and your mother," &c. do you keep this?

Asun. I have always loved and obeyed my father and mother from my heart; I hope there is nobody can accuse me for that, and I am sure if I keep any commandment it is this; for when I was a boy everybody said that I was well behaved, and a good child; therefore, if I should not keep this commandment, it would be a great grief to me, and go as near my heart as anything that came to me this seven years.

Theol. What say you to the sixth commandment? "You shall not kill."

Asun. It were strange if I should not keep that.

Theol. What say you to the seventh? "You shall not commit adultery."

Asun. I thank God for it, I was never given to women; God has always kept me from that, and I hope will so still.

Theol. What say you to the eighth? "You shall not steal."



Asun. I am neither pimp nor thief.

Theol. What say you to the ninth? "You shall not bear false witness," &c.

Asv/n. I defy all false witness-bearing from my heart.

Theol. What say you to the last? "You shall not covet," &c.

Asun. I thank God for it, I never coveted any man's goods but my own.

Theol. Now, I perceive you are a wonderful man; you can keep all the commandments. You are like that blind ruler which said to Christ, Matt. xix. 20, "All these things have I kept from my youth." I perceive now, indeed, that it is no marvel though you make so light of preaching, for you have no need of it: you are whole, you need not the physician; you feel no misery, and therefore you care not for mercy; for where misery is not felt, there mercy is not regarded; but I see you need no Saviour.

Asun. You say not well in that: I need a Saviour, and it is my Lord Jesus that must save me, for he made me.

Theol. What! need you a Saviour since you are no sinner?

Asun. Yes, believe me, I am a sinner; we are all sinners; there is no man but he sinns.

Theol. How can you be a sinner since you keep all the commandments?

Asun. Yes, I am a sinner for all that.

Theol. Can you both be a sinner and be without sin too? for the one who keeps the commandments is without sin! which you say you do. But I see how the case stands, that a great number of such ignorant and sottish men as you are will in general say you are sinners, because your conscience tells you so; but when it comes to particulars, you know not how you sin, nor wherein. I pray you, therefore, let me lead you through the commandments again, and deal with you in particulars, that I may bring you to the sight of your sin. How say you, therefore, do you on your knees, every morning and evening, give God thanks for his particular mercies, and manifold favours towards you? And do you call much on him privately, and much also with your family? Answer me, plainly and simply.

Asun. I cannot say so.

Theol. Then you have broken the first commandment, which charges us to give God his due worship, whereof prayer and thanksgiving are a part; so then, here, at the very entrance, you are found guilty. Further, I demand of you whether you never had any by-thoughts in your prayers, and your heart has not been on other matters, even then while you were in prayer.

Asun. I cannot deny that: for it is a very hard matter to pray without by-thoughts.

Theol. Then, by your own confession, you have broken the second commandment, which commands the right manner of God's worship; that is, that as we must worship God, so we must do it in faith, love, zeal, and pure affections. So that here you are guilty also, because when you pray your mind is of other matters, and you do it not in sincerity and truth. Further, I demand of you whether you never swore by your faith, or truth, or by our lady, St. Mary, and such other oaths?

Asun. Yes, by St. Mary have I; I must confess it.

Theol. We need no further witness. Your very answer proves it, for your answer is an oath; therefore, here also you are guilty, because you swear by idols. Further, I demand of you whether you ever travelled to fairs on the Sabbath-day, or make bargains on that day, or take journeys, or talk of worldly matters, neglecting holy duties?

Asun. Yes, God forgive me, I have.

Theol. Then you are guilty of the breach of the fourth commandment, which charges us, on pain of death, to spend the Sabbath-day in holy and religious duties, both publicly and privately. Further, I demand whether you instruct your wife, children, and servants in the true knowledge of God, and pray with them or no?

Asun. I am sure you would have me speak the truth; I must needs confess I do not, neither am I able to do it.

Theol. Then you are guilty of the breach of the fifth commandment, which commands all duties of superiors to inferiors, and of inferiors towards their

superiors, whereof prayer and instructions are apart. Moreover, I demand whether you were never angry or no?

Asun. Yes, a hundred times in my days. And I think there is nobody but will be angry at one time or other, especially when they have cause.

Theol. Then you have broken the sixth commandment, which charges us to avoid wrath, anger, malice, desire of revenge, and all such like forerunners to murder. Further, I ask you whether you ever looked on a woman with a lust in your heart?

Asun. Yes, for I think there is no man free from thoughts that way. I had thought thoughts had been free.

Theol. No, thoughts are not free before God; for God knows our thoughts, and will punish us, arraign us, and condemn us for thoughts. Men know not thoughts, and therefore can make no laws against thoughts; but because God is privy to all our most secret thoughts, therefore he has made laws against them, and will condemn them. Therefore, I conclude that if you have nourished adulterous thoughts in your heart you are guilty of the breach of the seventh commandment, which forbids all secret thoughts and provocations to adultery. But further, I demand whether you ever pilfered, purloined or stole some small things from your neighbour: as pasture, poultry, conies, apples, and such like?

Asuii. I cannot clear myself in these things, for I had thought they were no sin.

Theol. Then have you broken the eighth commandment, and stand guilty of eternal death; for God in his commandment charges us to have as great care of our neighbour's goods as of our own; and not to injure him in any manner of way, in thought, word, or deed; therefore, all deceit, pilfering, oppressing, and all unjust dealing with our neighbour's goods, is here condemned. Moreover, let me ask you whether you ever lied, or deceived?

Asun. Yes, assuredly.

Theol. Then you have broken the ninth commandment, wherein God charges us, both in witness-bearing and all other matters, to speak the plain truth from our heart, without lying or dissembling. Last of all, I demand whether you did never in your heart desire something that was not your own: as your neighbour's house, or ground, kine, or sheep, &c. thus displaying the discontentment of your heart?

Asun. I am as guilty in this as in any thing, for, God forgive me, I have often desired and lusted after this and that, which was none of my own, and so have revealed my discontentment.

Theol. Then I perceive, by your own confession, that you are guilty of the breach of all the commandments.

Asun. I must confess it; for I see now more into that than ever I did. I never heard so much before in my life, nor was ever asked any such questions as you ask me. I had thought many of those things you asked me were not sins at all.

Theol. I could have convicted you in a thousand other particulars, wherein you daily and hourly break the law of God. But my purpose was only to give you a taste of some particular transgressions, and with that some little light by the way into the meaning of the law, that by it you might be brought to some better sight of yourself, and might a little perceive in what case you stand before God; and by that little conceive a great deal more.

Asun. Well, now I plainly see that I have been deceived, and am not in so good estate before God as I thought I had been. Moreover, I see that thousands are out of the way which think they are in a good case before God; whereas, indeed, they are in blindness and in their sins. But, Lord have mercy on us, I now plainly see that I am far from keeping the commandments; and I think no man keeps them.

Theol. You may take your oath of that, I war rant you; for neither Saint Paul, David, or the virgin Mary, could ever keep any one of the commandments. I am glad you begin to see into the law of God, and to have some taste that way; for, as a man's knowledge and insight is into the law, so is the knowledge and insight into himself. He that has a deep insight into the law of God, has also a deep insight into himself. He that has no sight into the law, can have no insight into himself; for the law is that glass wherein we behold the face of our souls before God. The apostle says, Rom. 3:20, "By the law Comes the knowledge of sin;" therefore, those which are altogether ignorant of the law, and never behold themselves in this glass, commit an hundred sins a day, which they know not of; and therefore are not grieved for them; for how can a man be grieved for what he knows not? but now further, I pray you, give me leave to ask you some more questions of the principles of religion, to the end that you, knowing and feeling your ignorance, may be humbled therewith, bewail it in time, and seek after the true know ledge of God. But yet, by the way, I will ask

Antilegon a question or two; because I desire to understand what knowledge he has in the grounds of religion. Tell me, therefore, Antilegon, what was the reason why Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost?

Antil. I could answer you, but I will not; what authority have you to examine me? show your commission; when I see your warrant I will answer you; in the meantime you have no right to examine me; mind your own business.

Theol. I perceive you are not only ignorant, but wilful and obstinate, and refuse all instructions; therefore I will leave you to God, and to your galled conscience; but, I pray you, Asunetus, answer that question: what think you, what is the reason that Christ was conceived by the' Holy Spirit?

Asun. Believe me, sir, that is an hard question; you may ask a wise man that question, for I cannot answer it.

Theol. What say you then to this, who was Christ's mother?

Asun. Mary, sir; that was our blessed lady.

Theol. What was Pontius Pilate?

Asun. I am somewhat ignorant, I am not book-learned; but if you will have my simple opinion, I think it was the devil; for none but the devil would put our sweet Saviour to death.

Theol. What is the holy catholic church, which you say you do believe?

Asun. The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins.

Theol. What do you pray for when you say "your kingdom come?"

Asun. I pray that God would send all us of his grace, that we may serve him, and do as we ought to do, and keep us in a good mind towards God, and to have him much in our mind; for some, God bless us, have nothing but the devil in their mind: they do nothing in God's name.

Theol. What is a Sacrament?

Asun. The Lord's Supper.

Theol. How many sacraments are there?

Asun. Two.

Theol. Which are they?

Asun. Bread and wine,

Theol. What is the principle end of your coming to receive the sacrament?

Asun. To receive my Maker.

Theol. What is the principal use of a sacrament?

Asun. The body and blood of Christ.

Theol. What profit and comfort have you by a sacrament?

Asun. In token that Christ died for us.

Theol. I can but pity you for your ignorance; for it is exceeding gross and palpable. Your answers are to no purpose, and reveal a wonderful blindness and senselessness in matters of religion. I am sorry that now I have not time and leisure to let you see your folly and extreme ignorance, as also to lay open to you the sense and meaning of the articles of the faith, the Lord's prayer, and the sacraments, and all the other grounds of Christian religion.

Asun. What course would you wish me to take, that I may come out of ignorance, and attain to the true knowledge of God?

Theol. Surely I would wish you to be diligent in hearing of sermons, and reading the scriptures, with prayer and humility. Also, that you would peruse catechisms, and other good books; and especially Farel's Grounds of Religion, and works of the two worthy servants of God, Master Gyffard and Master Perkins, and other men's that have done great service to the church, and for whom thousands are bound to give God thanks. If you take this course, you shall by God's grace, within a short time, grow to some good measure of knowledge, in all the main grounds of Christian religion.

Phil. I had not thought any man had been so ignorant as I now perceive this man is.

Theol. Yes, truly; there are thousands in his case; and I know by experience that many will use the very same answers, or at least very little differing.

Phil. I warrant you if you had questioned with him of kine, or sheep, purchasing of lands, taking of leases, or any other matter under the sun, you should have found him very ripe and ready in his answers.

Theol. I am so persuaded too; for let a man talk with worldly men of worldly matters, and their answer is comes easily. They will talk very freshly with you of such matters, if it be all the day long; for they have a deep insight into earthly things, and delight to talk of them, being never weary; for it is their joy their, meat, and their drink. But come once to talk with them of God's matters, as of faith, repentance, regeneration, &c., you shall find them the truest dullards and dunces in the world; for, when speech is had of these things, they are so befogged that they cannot tell where they go, nor what they say.

Phil. In my judgement, such men's case is very pitiful and dangerous. And so is this man's case also, if God does not very speedily pull him out of it.

Theol. Very true; for God says, Hosea 4:6, "My people perish for want of knowledge." Our Lord Jesus says that ignorance is the cause of all errors: "you err, says he, not knowing the scripture, nor the power of God," Matt. 22:29. The apostle says that ignorance alienates us from the life of God; for, says he, "The Gentiles were darkened in the cogitation, being strangers from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them," Eph. 4:18. So then, it is clear that ignorance is not the mother of devotion, as the papists assert; but it is the mother of error, death, and destruction, as the scriptures affirms. Our Lord, foreseeing the great danger of ignorance, how by it thousands are carried headlong into hell, admonishes all men to search the scriptures, John 5:39, which testify of him; that so they might get out of the most dangerous gulf of ignorance, where multitudes have fallen into. Therefore, the noble men of Berea are commended by the Holy Spirit, Acts 17:11, because they received the word with all readiness; and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Oh therefore, that men would earnestly seek after the knowledge of God in time, and, as the prophet says, "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him whilst he is near," Isa. 4:6.

Phil. I see that all ignorance in matters of faith is dangerous; but I think wilful ignorance is of all others most dangerous.

Theol. Wilful ignorance, no doubt, is a plain prognostication, and demonstrative argument of eternal death; for it is a most horrible and fearful thing for men to refuse instructions, despise counsels, harden their hearts, stop their ears, and close up their eyes against God. This is the very upshot of our decay.

Phil. I pray you, what do you call hardness of heart?

Theol. A hard heart is what is neither moved with God's mercies, nor scared with his judgements; neither fears the law, nor regards the gospel; neither is helped by threatening, nor softened by chastening; which is ungrateful for God's benefits, and disobedient to his counsels; made cruel by his rods, and dissolute by his favours; shameless in filthiness, and fearless to perils; rude to men and reckless to God; forgetful of things past, negligent in things present, and improvident in things to come.

Phil. Lay forth yet more plainly the state of ignorant and hard-hearted men; and show how sad it is.

Theol. If a man be outwardly blind we pity him, and say, there goes a poor blind man; but if he is both blind and deaf, do we not more pity him? and say, oh, in how miserable a case is that man! but if he is both blind, deaf, and dumb, do we not most of all pity him? and say, oh, that man is in a most woeful taking, and in a most pitiful plight! How much more then are they to be pitied, which, as concerning their souls, are both blind, deaf, and dumb? for the diseases of the soul are far more dangerous, and more to be pitied than those of the body. Would it not pity a man's heart to see a poor sheep in a lion's mouth, whilst he tears him, rents him, and pulls him in pieces? Even such is the case of ignorant men in the claws of the devil; for the devil has them under him, rides them at his pleasure, and tears their souls in pieces! Oh, that we had eyes to see these things, hearts to feel them, and affections to be thoroughly moved with them, even to mourning and tears.

Phil. Few think that ignorant men are in so woeful case as you speak of; for they think that ignorance will excuse them; and some will say they are glad they have so little knowledge; for if they should have much knowledge of their master's will, and do it not, they shall be beaten with many blows; but now, being ignorant, they think all is safe.

Theol. God willed his people to offer sacrifice for their sins of ignorance, Lev. 4; therefore, ignorance is a sin, and excuses no man: and as for the state of their



souls before God, it is most miserable; if we could see into their souls as we see their bodies; for, assuredly, there are multitudes which ruffle it out in velvets and silks, and most brave and glittering outsides, but inwardly are full of filthiness and sin; they have fine and delicate bodies, but most ugly, dark, and filthy souls. If a man could see into their souls as he does into their bodies, he would stop his nose at the stink of them; for they smell rank of sin in the nostrils of God, his angels, and all good men.

Phil. Then I perceive by your speech that the case of all ignorant and profane men is fearful in the sight of God, and that all good men are to pity them, and pray for them.

Theol. If two blind and deaf men should walk in a beaten path that leads to a great deep pond wherein they are likely to be drowned, if they go forward, and two men afar off should whoop to them, and will then not go forward lest they be drowned; yet they neither seeing any man, nor hearing any man, go forward and are drowned: would not this be a sad sight? Even so it is with all the ignorant, blind, and deaf souls of the world: for they cast no perils, but walk on boldly to destruction; and though the preachers of the gospel whoop never so loud to them, or give them never so many warnings and caveats to take heed; yet they, being inwardly blind, see nothing; and spiritually deaf, hear no thing; and therefore go on forward in their sins and ignorance, till they suddenly fall into the pit of hell. Put case also, two great armies should' pitch in a field, and fight a main battle on a plain, and that some man should stand on the top of a mountain hard by, and behold all, and should see with his own eyes how thousands and ten thousands went to wreck, and fell down on every side as thick as hail, the whole plain swimming in blood; and should also hear the groaning of soldiers wounded, and the sorrowful sighs and groaning of many captains and colonels giving up the spirit; would not this be a most woeful sight? Even so, when we clearly see Satan wound and murder thousand thousands souls, is it not a far more tragic and sad sight? and ought it not even to kill our hearts to behold it? but, alas! men have no eyes to see into these things; and yet certain it is, that Satan continually, and in most fearful manner, massacres innumerable souls. Thus have I showed you the woeful estate of profane and ignorant men.

Phil. If it be so, you that be ministers and preachers of the gospel, and have taken on you the cure and charge of souls, have need to look about you, and to do what you can to save souls; and, as good shepherds, in great pity and compassion, to labour to pull them out of the paws of this roaring lion, which goes about continually seeking whom he may devour.

Theol. It stands on us, indeed, very seriously and carefully to look to it, as we will answer it at the dreadful day of judgement; for it is no small matter that we have taken in hand, which is, to care for the flock which Christ has bought with his blood. Would to God therefore that we would leave striving about other matters, and strive together all about this who can pull most out of the kingdom of Satan, sin, and ignorance who can win most souls and who can perform best service to the church. This were a good strife indeed, and would to God that we might once at last with joined forces go about it, and with one heart and hand, join together to build up God's house. If through our own follies the work has been hindered, or any breach made, let us in wisdom and love labour to make it up again. If there has been any declining and coldness, let us now at last revive: let us stir up ourselves, that we may stir up others. Let us be zealous and fervent in spirit, that we may through God's grace put life into others, and rouse up this dead, declining, and cold age wherein we live: so shall God be glorified, his church edified, his saints comforted, his people saved, his throne erected, and the kingdom of the devil overthrown.

Phil. What think you were the best course to effect this which you speak of?

Theol. This is a thing that must be exceedingly laboured in of us which are the ministers and preachers of the gospel. And here is required diligence and, as we say, double diligence; for the people are every where ignorant. Some are stones, altogether incapable of instruction: others are contrary and wilful. Some will receive the doctrine, but not the practice: some again are altogether set on peevishness and criticising. So that a man were better take on him the charge of keeping wolves and bears than the charge of souls; for it is the hardest thing in the world, to reform men's disorders, and to bring them into order; to pull men's souls out of the kingdom of Satan, and to bring them to God. It is as we say, an endless piece of work, an infinite toil, a labour of all labours: I quake to think of it. For, men are so obstinate and incorrigible that they will be brought into no order: they will come under no yoke. They will not be ruled by God, nor bridled by his word. They will follow their own swing. They will run after their own lusts and pleasures. They will kick and spurn if they are reprov'd. They will rage and storm if you go about to curb them, and restrain them of their wills, likings, and liberties. They will have their wills, and follow their old fashions, say what you will, and do what you can. Is it not, think you, a busy piece of work, to smooth and square such timber logs, so full of knots and knobs? Is it not a tedious and irksome thing to think on? and would it not kill a man's heart to go about it? for, how hard a thing is it to bring such into frame as are so far out of frame!

Phil. Well sir, you can but do your endeavour, and commit the success to God. You can but plant and water: let God give the increase. You are ministers of the letter, but not of the Spirit. You baptise with water, but not with the Holy Spirit. If you therefore preach diligently, exhort, admonish, and reprove, publicly and privately: studying by all good example of life, and seeking with all good zeal, care, and conscience, to do your utmost to reduce them from their evil ways; I take it, you are discharged, though they remain stubborn and incorrigible; for you know, what the Lord says by his prophet, "If you admonish them and give them warning, then you shall be discharged, and their blood shall be required at their own hands," Ezek. 33.

Thiel. You have spoken the truth; and, therefore, since some must needs take on them this so great a charge, it will be our best course to labour much with them in catechising and private instructions, and that in most familiar and plain manner, for much good has been done, and is done this way. The ignorant sort must be much laboured on this way: and so, no doubt, much good may be done; "For, in all labour there is profit," Prov. 14:23. Herein, we that are the ministers of Christ must be content to be abased, and to teach the poor ignorant people in most plain manner, asking them many easy questions, and often questioning with them in most plain and loving manner, till we have brought them to some taste and smack of the principles of the Christian religion. We must not be ashamed to use repetitions and tautologies, and tell them one thing twenty times over and over again; here a line, and there a line; here a little, and there a little; precept on precept, as the prophet speaks, Isa. 28:10. I know right well nothing goes more against the stomach of a scholar, and him that is learned indeed, than to do thus. It is as irksome and tedious as to teach ABC: some can, at no hand, endure it. But truly, truly, I find now, after long experience, that if we will do any good to these simple and ignorant souls, we must enter into this course, and we may not be ashamed of it; for, it will be our crown and our glory to win souls, however we are abased. Let us, therefore, be well content to stoop down, that Christ may be exalted. Let us be abased, that God may be honoured. Let us do all things in great love to Christ, who has said, "If you love me, feed, feed, feed my flock," John 21:15-17. Let us, therefore, testify our love to him by feeding his flock. Let us do all things in great love and deep compassion towards the poor souls that go astray. As it is said that our Lord Jesus was moved to pity, and his heart yearned, to see the people as sheep without a shepherd; let it likewise move us thoroughly, and make our hearts bleed, to see so many poor sheep of Christ wandering and straying in the mountains, and wilderness of this world, caught in every bramble, and hanged in every bush, ready to be devoured of the wolf. Thus

have I showed you, what course, in my judgement, is best to be taken, for the delivering of poor ignorant souls out of the captivity of Satan and sin.

Phil. Now, as you have declared what course is best to be followed of your part, which are the ministers and preachers of the gospel; so I pray you show what is best to be done of us, which are the people of God.

Theol. The best counsel that I can give you, if it were for my life, is to be much exercised in the word of God, both in the hearing, reading, and meditation of it; and also to purchase to yourself the sincere ministry of the gospel, and to make conscience to live under it, esteeming your self happy if you have it, though you want other things; and unhappy if you have it not, though you have all other things. For it is a peerless pearl, an incomparable jewel; for the purchasing whereof, we are advised by our Lord Jesus to sell all that we have, rather than to go without it, Matt. 13. 44. Again, our Saviour Christ gives the same counsel to the church of Laodicea, in these words, "I counsel you to buy of me gold tried by the fire, that you may be rich: and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that your filthy nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that you may see," Rev. 3:18; where you see the word of God is compared to most precious gold, whereby we are made spiritually rich; and to glittering attire, with which our naked souls are clothed; and to an eye-salve, with which our spiritual blindness is cured. We are advertised also by Jesus Christ, whose counsel is ever the best, that we should buy these things, whatever they cost us. The same counsel also gives wise Solomon, saying, "Buy the truth, but sell it not," Prov. 23:23. So then you see, the counsel I give you is not my own, but the counsel of Jesus himself, and Solomon the wise; and who can, or who dare, except against their counsel?

Asun. Is your meaning that men must of necessity frequent preaching of the word? will not bare reading serve the turn?

Theol. I told you before that reading is good, profitable, and necessary, but yet it is not sufficient. We must not content ourselves with that only; but we must go further, and get to ourselves the sound preaching of the gospel, as the chief and most principal means which God has ordained and sanctified for the saving of men; as it is plainly set down, 1 Cor. 1:21, "When as the world, by wisdom, knew not God, in the wisdom of God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save those who believe." The meaning of it is that when as men, neither by natural wisdom, nor the contemplation of the creatures, could sufficiently attain to the true knowledge of God the Lord, according to his heavenly and in finite wisdom, thought of another course;

which is to save men by preaching, which the world counts foolishness. And by the way, note that' the preaching of the word is not a thing of human invention; but it is God's own device, and came first out of his wisdom as the best and nearest way to save men's souls. Wise Solomon, also, in the book of the Proverbs, 29:18, tells us that the preaching of God's word, which is called vision, using the word of the prophets, which called their sermons visions, is not a thing that may be spared, or that we may be at choice whether we have it or no; but he makes it to be of absolute necessity to eternal life; for he says, "Where vision fails, the people are left naked." So indeed, it is in the original; but the old translation gives us the sense, thus, "Where the word of God is not preached there the people perish." Then you see that Solomon strikes it dead, in telling us that all those who are without preaching of the word are in exceeding danger of losing their souls. Oh that men could be persuaded of this! Saint Paul also says that faith comes by hearing the word preached; for he says, Rom. 10:14, "How can they hear, without a preacher?" If faith come by hearing the word preached, then I reason thus no preaching, no faith; no faith, no Christ; no Christ, no eternal life, for eternal life is only in him. Let us then put them together, thus: take away the word, take away faith; take away faith, take away Christ; take away Christ, and take away eternal life. So then it follows, take away the word and take away eternal life. Or we may read them backward, thus: if we will have heaven, we must have Christ; if we will have Christ, we must have faith; if we will have faith, we must have the word preached. Then it follows thus: if we will have heaven, we must have the word preached. Then I conclude, that preaching generally, and for the most part, is of absolute necessity to eternal life; as meat is of absolute necessity for the preservation of our bodies; as grass and fodder are of absolute necessity for the upholding of the life of beasts; and water of absolute necessity for the life of fishes. Then, this being so, men are with great care and conscience to hear the gospel preached, to frequent sermons, to resort much to God's house and habitation, where his honour dwells; with David to say, Psalm 27. 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I will require: even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life; to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to visit his holy temple." With godly Mary to say, Luke 10:42, "One thing is necessary; and so choose the better part." With the poor cripple of Bethesda, John 5:7, to wait for the moving of the waters by the angel, that his impotency may be cured: I mean that we should tie ourselves to the first moving of the spiritual waters of life, by the preachers of the gospel, that our spiritual impotency may be helped and relieved. For the ministry of the gospel is that golden pipe whereby and where, through the goodness of God, all the sweetness of Christ, and all heavenly graces are derived to us. Which was shadowed in the law by the pomegranates in the skirts of Aaron's garments, and the golden bells between

them round about: that is "a golden bell and a pomegranate; a golden bell and a pomegranate," Exod. 28:34. The golden bells signified the preaching of the gospel, and the pomegranates the sweet savour of Christ's death; noting by it, that the sweet savour of Christ's death, and all the benefits of his passion, should be spread abroad by the preaching of the gospel. Thus you see, that if ever men purpose to be saved, they must make more account of the preaching of the gospel than they have done; and not think, as most men do, that they may be without it, and yet do well enough. And some had as leave be without it as have it; for it only disquiets them, and trouble their consciences; but woe be to such.

Phil. Yet we see, where the word is soundly preached there are many bad people; and the reasons of it, in my opinion, are two; the one, that God takes his Holy Spirit from many in hearing the word, so that their hearing is made unfruitful; the other, that the devil has an hundred devices to hinder the effectual working of the word, so as it shall do no good at all, nor take any effect in multitudes of men. But you, master Theologus, can better lay open this matter than I: I pray you therefore speak something of it.

Theol. The sleights of Satan, in this behalf, are more and more sly than I or any man else, can possibly discover. For who is able to descry, or in sufficient manner, to lay open the deep subtleties, and most secret and sinful suggestions of the devil in the hearts of men: he is so cunning a craftmaster this way that none can perfectly trace him. His workings, in the hearts of men, are with such close and hidden deceits, and most methodical and crafty conveyances, that none can sufficiently find them out; but yet, notwithstanding, I will reveal so much as I know, or can conceive of his dealings with men that hear the word, that he may steal it out of their hearts, and make it fruitless and unprofitable. First of all, he bestirs him and labours hard to keep men fast asleep in their sins, that they may have no care at all of their salvation; and therefore dissuades them from hearing, or reading the word at all, lest they should be awaked. If this will not prevail, but that they must needs hear, then his craft is to make their hearing unprofitable, by sleepiness, dullness, by thoughts, conceit, and a thousand such like. If this will not serve the turn, but that the word gets within them, and works on them, so as by it they grow to some knowledge and understanding of the truth, then he practises another way, which is, to make them rest themselves on their bare knowledge, and so become altogether conscience less. If this will not suffice, but that men fall to doing, and leave some sins, especially the gross sins of the world, and do some good, then he persuades them to trust to those doings without Christ, and to think themselves well enough, because they do some good, and leave some evil.

If this be not enough, but that men attain to the true justifying faith which apprehends Christ, and rests on his merits, then he devises how to blemish the beauty of their faith, and weaken their comfort, through many frailties and wants, yes, gross downfalls, and rank evils: so as they shall be but spotted and leprous Christians. If this weapon will not work, but that Christians join all good virtues with their faith, and abundantly shine forth in all fruits of righteousness, then he casts about another way: which is, to daunt and damp them with discouragements: as poverty, necessity, sickness, reproaches, contempts, persecutions, &c. If none of all these will do the deed, but that men constantly believe in Christ, and patiently and joyfully endure all afflictions, then his last refuge is to blow them up with gunpowder: that is to puff them up with a pride of their gifts, graces, and strength, and so to give them an utter overthrow while they do not walk humbly, and give God the praise of his gifts. Thus have you a little taste of Satan's cunning, in making the word unfruitful amongst us.

Asun. I pray you, good sir, seeing I am ignorant and unlearned, give me some particular directions out of the word of God, for the good guiding and ordering of my particular actions, in such sorts as that I may glorify God in the earth, and after this life be glorified of him for ever.

Theol. It were an infinite thing to enter into all particulars; but briefly do this: first, seek God earnestly in his word; pray much; in all things give thanks; refuse evil, and do good; fear God, and keep his commandments; reform yourself, and your household; love virtue, and virtuous men; keep company with the godly, and avoid the society of the wicked. Live soberly, justly, and holily, in the present evil world. Speak always graciously, and beware of filthy communications. Recompense to no man evil for evil; but recompense evil with good. Be courteous and pitiful towards all men. Take heed of swearing, cursing, and banning. Beware of anger, wrath, and bitterness. Praise your friend openly; reprove him secretly. Speak no evil of those who are absent, nor of the dead. Speak evil of no man; speak always the best, or at least, not the worst. Reverence God's name, and keep his Sabbaths. Avoid all the signs of condemnation, and labour after all the signs of salvation. Above all things, take heed of sin, for that is the very cut throat of the soul, and bane of all goodness. Tremble therefore, and sin not. For if you sin, mark what follows; God sees, his angels bear witness; the conscience pricks; death smites, if not in this life, then with woe, and alas! when it is too late: therefore take heed in time; take heed, I say, of sin. Sin hardens the heart, Heb. 3:13; sin gnaws the conscience, 1 Sam. 25:31; sin fights against the soul, 1 Peter 2:11; sin brings forth death, James 1:15; sin makes ashamed, Rom. 6:21; sin procures all plagues of body

and soul, Deut. 28: Behold, therefore, the evil effects of sin: for this cause, Zophar, the Naamathite, speaks very wisely to Job, saying, 11:15, "When you shall lift your face out of your sin, you shall be strong, and shall not fear; you shall forget all sorrow; you shall remember it as the waters that are past;" where Zophar plainly shows that the avoiding of sin is our strength, and the committing of it our weakening; according to that of Solomon, Prov. 10:29, "The way of the Lord is the strength of the upright man." Therefore, walk in the way of God, and take heed of the ways of sin; for God punishes every sin his way; some one way, and some another; and no sin can escape unpunished; for because God is just, therefore he must needs punish sin in all men, though in divers manners: as the wicked, in their own persons; the godly, in Christ. Beware of it, therefore, and flatter not yourself in your sins. Remember how every disobedience and every transgression has had a just recompense of reward. God has, in all ages, matched the causes with the effect; that is, sin with the punishment of sin. The Israelites, for breaking the first commandment, in making other gods, were often smitten by the hand of God. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, for the breach of the second commandment, in offering strange fire on God's altar, were consumed with fire. He that blasphemed and transgressed the third commandment, was stoned to death. He that brake the fourth commandment, in gathering sticks on the Sabbath, was likewise stoned. Absalom, transgressing the fifth commandment, was hanged in his own hair. Cain, transgressing the sixth, in slaying his brother Abel, was branded with the mark of God's wrath. Shechem, the son of Hamor, transgressing the seventh, in defiling Dinah the daughter of Jacob, was slain by Simeon and Levi, the sons of Jacob. Achan, sinning against the eighth commandment, in stealing the wedge of gold, and the Babylonish garment, was stoned to death. Ananias and Sapphira, sinning against the ninth commandment, in lying and dissembling, were suddenly smitten with death. Ahab, transgressing the tenth commandment, in coveting and discontentment, was eaten by dogs. Or if you will have only original sin forbidden, then infants are therefore punished with death, Rom. 5:14. Thus we see there is no dallying with God; but if we sin, we are as sure to be jerked for it, as the coat is on our back. Therefore let us not deceive ourselves nor make light of sin; for sin is no scarecrow, and we shall one day find it so. And however we make light of some sins, yet, in every deed, all sin is odious in the sight of God, yes all sin is heinous and capital, in this respect, that it is against a person of infinite being; it is against God himself; it is against the highest majesty. For the greatness of the person offended enhances and increases the greatness of the sin: as for example, if a man rail at a justice of peace, he shall be stocked; if he rail at one of his majesty's privy council, he shall be imprisoned; but if he rail at his own majesty, he shall be hanged. So then, you see how a sin is increased by the dignity of the person



offended. Now then, since all mortal princes are but dust in the sight of God, and he is a person of infinite and incomparable majesty, how heinous and how grievous a thing is it, in any wise, or after any sort to sin against his most royal and sacred person! Well then, to grow to some conclusion, this I advise you; as to shun all vice, so to embrace all virtue; as to put off the old man, so to put on the new man. Remember, often and always, what shall become of you after this life, and where you shall be forty years hence in hell or in heaven. Look well to that in time; and therefore so live that you may live always. Consider often in your secret cogitations what you have been; what you

Asun. Your counsel is very good. I pray God give me grace to follow it; and so to live that I may please God, and go to heaven in the end.

Theol. You must take heed you speak not these words of course, and for fashion's sake, having no settled purpose in your heart to follow these directions. For there are numbers that can skill to give good words, but they will do nothing. They think they highly please God with their good words, and that God will take them for payment; as though God regarded words. They would fain go to heaven, but they will take no pains, they will leave no sins, they will not forgo their lusts and pleasures: they would have the reward of God's children, but they will not do the works of God's children; they would have the sweet, but none of the sour; they would have the crown, but they will fight never a stroke; they would fain come to Canaan, but they are loth to travel that long and dangerous way, which leads to it. Therefore, these men, being the sons of idleness, will stop short in the end, of that they looked for; for the Spirit says, Prov. 13:4, "The sluggard lusts, but his soul has nought." We must therefore leave bare words, and come to deeds; for our Lord Jesus says, Matt. 7:21, "Not every one that says Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father which is in heaven;" where we see Christ, in plain terms, excludes out of his kingdom all those whose religion consists only in good words and smooth speeches, but make no conscience to practise the commandments of God. David, having made some good preparation for the building of the temple, and perceiving his son Solomon to have stuff and provision enough to perfect and finish it, most wisely encourages him to the work, in these words: "Up, and be doing, and the Lord shall be with you," 1 Chron. 22:16. Oh that men would follow this counsel of David! that they would up, and be doing; and not sit still, and do nothing: that they would leave words and countenances, and set on the practice of God's law; and study, with all care and conscience, to be obedient to his will. Then, assuredly, God would be with them, and bless them; and much good would come of it; for the scriptures says, Prov. 14:23, "In all labour there is profit, or

increase, but the talk of the lips only brings want."

Phil. Most men's minds are so wholly drowned in the love of this world, that they have no heart to obey God, nor any delight in his commandments.

Theol. The greatest part of men are like the Gadarenes, which esteemed their swine more than Christ. As we see in these our days, how many make more account of their kine and sheep than of the most glorious gospel of Christ! They highly esteem dung, and despise pearls. They are careful for trifles, and regard not the things of greatest moment; and, therefore, may very fitly be compared to a man who, having his wife and children very sick, utterly neglects them, and is altogether careful for the curing of his hogs.

CHRIST'S COMING TO judgement.

Phil. We have somewhat digressed from the matter we had in hand: I pray you, therefore, if you have any more matter of good counsel to give to Asunetus, that you would presently deliver it.

Theol. I have little more to say, save only I would advise him often to remember, and much to muse, of these nine things: The evil he has committed the good he has omitted the time he has misspent the shortness of this life the vanity of this world the excellency of the world to come death, than which nothing is more terrible the day of judgement, than which nothing is more fearful hellfire, than which nothing is more intolerable.

Phil. This is short and sweet indeed: you have touched some of these points before in these our conferences; but I am very desirous to hear somewhat more of the two last, which yet have not been touched.

Theol. Since you are desirous, I will briefly deliver to you what I have received from the Lord. First, concerning the day of judgement, I find in the volume of God's book that it shall be very terrible and dreadful, for "The Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," Matt. 24:30. St. Peter says, 2 Pet. 3:10, "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a noise, the elements shall melt with heat, and the earth, with the works that are in it, shall be burnt up." The apostle tells us that at the coming of Christ all the whole world shall be of a light fire; and that all castles, towers, pleasant buildings, gold, silver, velvet, silks, and all the glittering hue, glory, and beauty of this world shall be consumed to powder and ashes; for he says plainly, "The heavens and the earth

which are now, are reserved to fire, against the day of judgement, and of the destruction of ungodly men," v. 7: Moreover, he strongly proves, that as the world was once destroyed by water, so the second time, in the end of it, it shall be destroyed by fire. The apostle Paul witnesses the same thing; for he says, 2 Thess. 1:7, "Christ shall come from heaven, with all his mighty angels, in flaming fire." And in another place, 1 Thess. 4:16, he notes the terror of his coming to judgement, saying, "He shall come with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God." We see, by experience, that the coming of mortal princes to any place, is with great pomp and glory, They have great trains and troops behind them and before them. They are accompanied with many nobles; gallant lords and pleasant ladies attend on them. The sword-bearer, trumpeters, and harbingers go before; many flaunting and stately personages follow after. Now then, if the coming of mortal princes be so pompous and glorious, how much more glorious shall the coming of the Son of Man be, in whose sight all mortal princes are but dust? The scriptures affirm that his second coming to judgement, shall be with such resplendent and unspeakable glory, that even the most excellent creatures shall blush at it; for "The sun shall be darkened; the moon shall not give her light; and the stars shall fall from heaven," Matt. 24:29; meaning by it, that the most glorious and bright-shining creatures shall be clouded and obscured by the inconceivable brightness of Christ's coming. Moreover, is noted to us the error of Christ's coming in this, that immediately before it the very sea shall quake and tremble, and in his kind cry out; for it is said, Luke 21:25, 26, "That the sea shall roar, and make a noise in most sorrowful and lugubrious manner, and men's hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which shall come on the world; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Oh what shall become of swearers, drunkards, fornicators, and such like, in that day! they shall seek to creep into a hole, to hide their heads; they shall then cry woe and alas, that ever they were born! they shall wish that they never had been born, or that their mother had born them toads. And, as it is said in the Apocalypse, "They shall say to the mountains and rocks fall on us, and hide us from the presence of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who can stand?" Rev. 6:16, 17. We see, therefore, that the coming of Christ shall not be lowly, as in his first visitation; but it shall be most terrible, princely, and glorious. And as the scriptures affirm that his coming shall be with great terror and dread, so also they show that it shall be very sudden and unlooked for; for "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night," 1 Pet. 3:10; "As the travail that comes on a woman," 1 Thess. 5:2, 3; "As a snare shall it come on all those who dwell on the face of the earth," Luke 21:35: that is, it shall suddenly catch and entangle all men, wherever they are in the world. As the earthquake, which was some twenty years ago, took the

world by surprise, when they were not expecting it; so shall the coming of the Son of Man to judgement take the world by surprise; for few there are that think of any such matter. Since, therefore, the second appearance of Christ shall be with such suddenness, let us fear and tremble; for all sudden things are to be feared.

Phil. Well, sir, as you have showed us the terror and suddenness of Christ's coming, so show us the purpose and end of his coming.

Theol. The principal end of his coming shall be to keep a general audit, to call all men to an account, to have a reckoning of every man's particular actions, and to reward them according to their deeds; as it is written, Matt. 16:27, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels: and then shall he give to every man according to his deeds." Again, the apostle says, 2 Cor. 5:10, "We must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things which are done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or evil." Here we plainly see that the end of Christ's coming shall be to judge every man according to his works; that is, as his works shall declare him, and testify of John and of his faith. In another place, the apostle says, 2 Thess. 1:7-9, "That the end of his coming shall be to render vengeance to those who know not God, and which obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; which shall be punished with everlasting perdition from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;" Woe, then, to two sorts of men! the ignorant and the disobedient; for, the apostle says flatly, they both shall be damned. I think both the ignorant and disobedient, and all other profane men, should tremble to think of this that Christ shall come to render vengeance to them. If we certainly knew that the Spaniard should invade our nation, overrun it, and make a conquest of it that he should shed our blood, destroy us, and massacre us, yes, that we should see our wives, our children, our kindred, and dear friends slain before our faces, so as their blood should stream in the streets, what a fear and terror would it strike into us! We would quake to think of it. Shall we not, then, be much more afraid of the damnation of our souls? shall we not tremble to think that Christ shall come to take vengeance? If the lion roar, all the beasts of the field tremble; and shall not we are afraid of the roaring Lion of the tribe of Judah? But, alas, we are so hard-hearted, and so rocked asleep in the cradle of security, that nothing can move us, nothing can awake us.

Phil, j^ow, as you have showed us the terror and end of Christ's coming, so also declare the manner of it.

Theol. The manner of it is this, that the whole world shall be cited to appear personally at the general assizes, before the great Judge. No man shall be admitted to appear by his attorney, but all must appear personally. None shall be suffered to put in sureties, but all must come in their own persons, Without bail or main prize; as it is written, 2 Cor. 5:10, "We must all appear," high and low, rich and poor, king and beggar, one and other; as it is plainly set down in the 20th chapter of the Revelation, where the Spirit says, "I saw the dead, both great and small, stand before God; and the sea gave up the dead which were in her, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." So, then, it is clear that all, without exception, shall make their appearance at the great and dreadful assizes. Oh what a great day will that be when as the whole world shall appear together at once! If a king marry his son, and invited other kings, emperors, dukes, and nobles, to the marriage, with all their pomp and train, we use to say oh what a marriage! what a meeting! what a do! what a great day will there are! but when the universal world shall be assembled together, not only all monarchs, kings, and princes, but all others that ever have been from the beginning of the world, all that are and shall be, what a day will that be! No marvel, therefore, that the scriptures call it the day of God, and the great day of the Lord! Now then, when all flesh is come together, to make their personal appearance, then shall the Son of God ascend to his tribunal seat, with great majesty and glory; for a "fiery stream shall issue, and come forth before him; thousand thousand angels shall accompany him, and minister to him; and ten thousand thousand shall stand before him; the judgement shall be set, and the books opened," Dan. 7:10. All the saints also, and true worshippers of God, shall attend him, and accompany him to his judgement seat; and not only so but they shall sit on the bench and throne with him, as it is written, 1 Cor, 6:2,3, "The saints shall judge the world; they shall judge the angels;" ' ' that is the devils, the angels of darkness. Our Lord Jesus himself asserts the same thing, when he said to his disciples, and in them to all true Christians, "Truly, I say to you, that when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his majesty, you which followed me in the regeneration, shall sit on twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel," Matt. 19:28; that is, the saints of God shall bear witness that the judgement of Christ, and sentence of condemnation which he passes against all unbelievers, is according to justice and equity. Thus then, we see how Christ shall be accompanied to his throne; and with what glory and majesty he shall ascend to it. Experience teaches that when mortal judges hold their sessions and general assizes, they are brought to the bench and judgement seat with pomp and terror; for the sheriff of the shire, and holbard-men, with many justices of peace, and trains of others, accompany them to the bench. Then, with how much more glory and majesty shall the Son of God be brought into his royal throne! Thus, then, Christ being set on his judgement

seat, all the ungodly shall be convened before him, and he shall stand over them with a naked sword in his hand. The devil shall stand by them on the one side, to accuse them; and their own conscience, on the other side; and the gaping gulf of hell, underneath them, ready to devour them. Then shall the books be opened; not any books of paper and parchment, but the books of men's consciences. For every man's sins are written and recorded in his conscience, as it were in a register book. Then will God bring every work to judgement, with every secret thought, and set them in order before all the reprobates. Then "will God lighten the things that are hidden in darkness, and make the counsels of the heart manifest," 1 Cor. 4:5. Then shall all the ungodly be tried, convicted, and hold, up their hands at the bar of Christ's tribunal seat, and shall cry guilty. Then shall that most dreadful sentence of death and condemnation be pronounced against them by the most righteous Judge, Matt. 25:41, "Go, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh sorrowful sentence! oh heavy hearing! Whose heart does not tremble at these things? whose hair does not stand on his head? for then shall thousands, which in this world have flourished as the cedars of Lebanon, be cast down for evermore; and shall drink, as a just recompense for their sin, of the bitter cup of God's eternal wrath and indignation, in the kingdom of darkness, and in the fearful presence of Satan, and all the cursed enemies of God's grace.

Phil. Well, now, as you have declared to us the terror, the suddenness, the end, and the manner of Christ's coming to judgement; so lastly, show to us the right use of all these things.

Theol. St. Peter tells and teaches us the right use of all; for, says he, 2 Peter 3:11, "Seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy behaviour and godliness?" as if he should say, since the heavens shall pass away with a noise, the elements shall melt with heat, and the earth, with the works that are in it, shall be burnt up; since also the coming of Christ shall be with great terror, to a fearful end, and in fearful manner, oh how ought we to excel in goodness! So then, St. Peter tells us, that the true use of all is this, that hereby we are brought nearer to God, even to be more obedient to his will, and to walk in all his commandments, making conscience of all our ways, and studying to please God in all things, and to be fruitful in all good works, Living soberly, justly, and holily in this present evil world, and showing forth the virtues of him which has called us out of darkness to this marvellous light; so that we may be prepared against the day of his appearing, that it may not take us tardy; for our life ought to be a continual meditation of death; we should always live as if we should die, or that our bed should be our

grave; we must live continually as if Christ should come to judgement presently; as it is reported of a godly man in the primitive church, that whether he ate or drank, or whatever he did, he thought always he heard the trumpet of the Lord, with these words, "Arise, you dead, and come to judgement." If it were certainly known that Christ would come to judgement the next midsummer day; oh what an alteration would it make in the world! how men would change their minds and affections! who would care for this world? who would set his heart to riches? who would regard brave apparel? who durst deceive or oppress? who durst be drunk? who durst swear, lie, and commit adultery? No, would not all men give up themselves to the obedience of God? would not all serve him diligently? would not all men and women flock to hear sermons? would they not give themselves to prayer and reading? would they not repent them of their sins? would they not cry for mercy and forgiveness? See then, what the knowledge of a certain day approaching would effect; and ought we not to do all these things with as great a care and zeal seeing the day is uncertain? for who knows whether Christ will come this month or the next, this year or next? He himself says. Matt. 24:44, Be ready; watch; for in the hour that you think not of, will the Son of man come." We think he will not come this year, nor next year, nor this hundred years. It may be, therefore, that he will come suddenly on us; we know not how soon. For in an hour that we little think of, will he come. Therefore, our Saviour says, in the 13th chapter of Mark, v. 33, "Take heed, watch and pray; for you know not when the time is;" and in the gospel of St. Luke, 21:34, he says, "Take heed that your hearts be not overcome with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come on you unawares; for as a snare shall it come on all those who dwell on the face of the earth." We hear, therefore, how many watch-words and caveats our Saviour gives us, when he says, Be in readiness, awake, take heed, watch and pray, and look about you, lest that day come suddenly on you, and take you napping. It stands us all therefore on, to be at an hour's warning, on pain of death, and as we will answer it at our uttermost peril.

Phil. Proceed to speak of the torments of hell.

Theol. Concerning the torments of hell, I note three things, which I will briefly speak of, and they are these: the extremity, perpetuity, and remedilessness of it. First, touching the extremity of it, it stands specially in these three things: first, that it is a separation from all joy and comfort of the presence of God; secondly, that it is an eternal fellowship with the devil and his angels; thirdly, it is a feeling of the horrible wrath of God, which shall seize on body and soul, and shall feed on them, as fire does on pitch and brimstone, for ever. The scriptures note the extremity of it, in calling it "a lake, that bums with fire and

brimstone for ever;" in saying "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" in affirming that "their worm dies not," meaning the worm that gnaws their conscience, or their torment of conscience; "and the fire never goes out," in terming it "Tophet, which is deep and large, and the burning of it is fire and much wood," and that "the breath of the Lord, as a river of brimstone, kindle it." All these things be terrible to our senses, and yet can they not fully express the thing as it is indeed. For no heart can conceive, or tongue express, the greatness and extremity of the torments of hell. As the joys of heaven never entered into the heart of man, no more did the torments of hell. All the torments and troubles that fall on men in this life are but as sparkles of the furnace of God's total wrath. All fires are but, as it were, pictures of fire in comparison of hell-fire; for, as one writes, "hell fire is so extremely hot that it will bum up a man seven mile before he come at it;" yet the reprobates, being always in it, shall never be consumed of it. As the salamander is always in the fire, and never consumes; so the wicked shall be always in the fire of hell, and never consume; for hell is a death always living, and an end always beginning. It is a grievous thing to a man that is very sick to lie on a feather-bed how much more on a hot gridiron! but how, most of all, to burn always in hell-fire, and never be consumed. Another extremity of it consists in this, that the torments of hell are universal, that is, in every member at once; head, eyes, tongue, teeth, throat, stomach, back, belly, heart, sides, &c. All punishments of this life are particular: for some are pained in their head, some in their back, some in their stomachs, &c.; yet some particular pains are such as a man would not suffer to gain all the world; but for a man to be tormented in all parts at once, what sight more sad! who could but take pity of a dog in the street in that case! Thus, then, we see that the extremity of hell-torments is greater than can be conceived or uttered; for who can utter what is incomprehensible? we can go no further in comprehending what is incomprehensible than to know it to be incomprehensible.

Phil. As you have shown us the extremity of hell-torments, so now proceed to the perpetuity.

Theol. The scriptures set forth the perpetuity of hell torments in saying they are for ever: the wicked shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone for ever. The fire never goes out. When as many hundred thousand years are expired as there are stones by the seaside, yet still there are so many more to come; for what has no end can never come to an end. If all the arithmeticians in the world were set to work to do nothing but number all the days of their life, even the greatest numbers that they could possibly set down, and should in the end add all their numbers together; yet could they never



come anything near to that length of time wherein the wicked shall be tormented. If the whole circumference of the heavens were written about with figures of arithmetic, from the east to the west, and from the west to the east again; yet could it not contain that infinite time and innumerable years, wherein all unbelievers shall suffer eternal torture; for, in things infinite, time has no place; for time is the measure of those things which are subject to measure. Therefore, because hell torments are infinite, they cannot be measured by any time, neither can what is infinite be diminished; for if you subtract from what is infinite, ten thousand thousand millions of millions, yet it is hereby nothing diminished or made less. Put this case a man should once in an hundred thousand years, take a spoonful of water out of the great ocean sea, how long would it be ere he had so emptied it? Yet shall a man sooner empty the sea, by taking out a spoonful once in a hundred thousand years, than the damned soul shall have any ease; therefore, a certain writer says, "If a damned soul might be tormented in hell but a thousand years, and then have ease, there were some comfort in it, for then there would be hope it would come to an end;" but, says he, this word "ever" kills the heart. Oh consider this you that forget God! Oh you carnal worldlings, think on this in time! For if you will not now be moved in hearing, you shall be then crushed in pieces in feeling. What avails it to live in all possible pleasures, and carnal delights here, for some sixty years, and then to suffer this eternal torment? What shall it profit a man to win the whole world, and lose his own soul? they are more than mad which will risk their souls for a little profit and a few stinking pleasures. But this is the nature of men: they will have the present sweet, come of it what will, though they pay never so dear it, though they go to the highest price, though they lose their souls for it. Oh the unspeakable blindness and madness of the men of this world! The devil has put out their eyes, and therefore leads them where he wants; for who cannot lead a blind man where he wants? Nahash, the Ammonite, would make no covenant with the Israelites, but on condition that he might put out all their right eyes, 1 Sam. 11:2; so the devil covenants with all the wicked to put out both their eyes, that he may lead them directly into hell.

Phil. Now sir, a word or two more of the remorselessness of hell-fire.

Theol. The scriptures affirm that as the torments of hell are extreme, so they are without all hope of remedy; as it is written, Ps. 64:8, "A man can by no means redeem his brother; he cannot give his ransom to God; so precious is the redemption of the soul and the continuance for ever." To this purpose Abraham said to the rich man, being in hell torments, Luke 16:26, "Between you and us there is a great gulf set, so that those who would go from hence to you cannot, neither can they come from thence to us." Our Lord Jesus also says, "What shall

a man give for the recompense of his soul?" where our Saviour plainly affirms that there is no ransom or recompense, though never so great, to be given for a damned soul. For the soul being in hell can never be released: it is past remedy. No means whatever can do any good. No gold, no silver, no friends, no riches, no power, no policy, no flattery, no bribery, no reach, no fetch or device can prevail one jot. For a man being once in hell has no remedy. He is in close prison, he is shut up under the hatches for ever; there is no getting out again: he must suffer perpetual imprisonment. He cannot bring a writ of false imprisonment, because he is laid in by the most righteous and just Judge, who cannot possibly do any wrong but he must be by it. For being there once he is there for ever. If all the angels in heaven should entreat for a damned soul; if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should make great suit; if all the prophets, apostles, and martyrs should be continual solicitors of Christ for release; if the father should make request for his son, or the mother for her daughter; yet can none of these be heard, they must all have the repulse. For the sentence of Christ cannot be reserved; his decree is irrevocable. The due consideration of these things may make all hearts to tremble, and all knees to tremble. In the troubles and afflictions of this life, though a man come in never so great dangers, yet he may wind out again, by one means or another, by money or friendship, or rewards, or such means: but in hell-fire this is what gripes, and makes the heart despair, that there is no remedy at all to be used. If we should ask of a damned soul, or an afflicted conscience, what they would give for the ease and redemption of their souls, they would answer, the whole world: however, secure worldlings and wicked atheists (which see nothing, nor feel nothing) make nothing of it. Here, by the way, let us consider the greatness of the loss of a man's soul, which we shall the better perceive and see into if we can aright value and prize the soul. If therefore it be demanded what is the price of the soul? or what is it worth? our Lord Jesus answers, that it is more worth than all the world; for, says he. Matt. 16:26, "What shall it profit a man to win all the world and lose his soul?" Therefore the soul of the poorest beggar is worth more than all the world. Then I reason thus, if the soul be more worth than all the world, than the loss of it is greater than the loss of the whole world; for indeed it is a loss of all losses, an unrecoverable loss. If a man should have his house burnt over his head, and all that he has consumed in one night, it were a great loss if a merchant-venturer should lose twenty thousand pounds in one venture, in one ship, or as they say, in one bottom, it were a very great loss if a king should lose his crown and kingdom, it were an exceeding great loss but the loss of the soul is a thousand times more than all these; it is a matter of infinite importance. If a tenant be cast out of the favour of his landlord, it is a matter of grief if a nobleman's secretary be cast out of favour with his lord, so that he takes a pitch against him, it is a matter of great sorrow if a nobleman

himself be disgraced, and cast out of all favour with his prince, that was in great favour, it is a heart smart, to be separated from God, to be shut out of his favour, and to be cast away from his presence, and the presence of his angels, is a matter of infinite more pain and torment. Mark then, and behold, what a thing it is for a man to lose his soul! Oh therefore that men would be wise in God's fear, that they would look out in time, and make provision for their souls. Now then, to close up this whole point, the sum of all that has been said is this: that the torments of hell are endless, easeless, and remediless.

#### CONVICTION AND CONVERSION; GOSPEL CONSOLATIONS; AND CONCLUSION.

Asun. The laying open of these doctrines of hell fire, and the judgement to come, makes me shake and tremble; I am by it much perplexed; I feel great terror in my conscience; I am afraid I shall be damned.

Antil. Damned, man! what, speak you of damning? I am ashamed to hear you say so; for it is well known that you are an honest man, a quiet liver, a good neighbour, and as good a townsman as any is in the parish where you dwell, and you have always been so reputed and taken. If you should be damned, I know not who should be saved.

Asun. I regard not your flatteries; I believe God; I believe his word; I believe those things which Mr. Theologus has spoken out of the holy scriptures, pointing me both to the chapter and the verse, and whether it be more meet that I should believe the scriptures or your compliments, judge you. No, no! now I clearly see, by the glass of God's law, that my state is wretched and miserable; for I have lived in sin and ignorance all the days of my life, being utterly void of all religion and true knowledge of God. I am not the man indeed that you and others take me for; for, though outwardly I have lived honestly to the world, yet inwardly I have not lived religiously to Godward.

Antil. Tut, tut! now I see you are in a melancholy humour; if you will go home with me I can give you a speedy remedy, for I have many pleasant and merry books, which if you should hear them read, would soon remedy you of this melancholy passion: I have the Court of Venus, the Palace of Pleasure, Bevas of Southampton, Ellen of Rummin, the merry Jest of the Friar and the Boy, the pleasant Story of Clem of the Clough, Adam Bell, and William of Cloudesley, the odd tale of William, Richard, and Humfry, the pretty conceit of John Splinter's last Will and Testament; which are all excellent and singular books against heart-qualms, and to remove such dumpishness as I see you are now fallen into.

Asun. Your vain and frivolous books of tales, jests, and lies, would more increase my grief, and strike the print of sorrow deeper into my heart.

Antil. No, if you be of that mind, I have done with you.

Phil. I pray you, if a man may be so bold with you, how came you by all these good books? I should have said so much trash and rubbish.

Antil. What matters it to you? what right have you to ask me these things? But I pray you, sir, what mean you to call them trash and rubbish?

Phil. Because they are no better. they are pleasant gear, trim stuff: they are good to kindle a fire, or to scour a hot oven with; and shall I tell you my opinion of them? I thus think that they were devised by the devil, seen and allowed by the pope, printed in hell, bound up by hobgoblin, and first published and dispersed in Rome, Italy, and Spain; and all to this end, that by it men might be kept from reading the scriptures; for as a lapwing with her busy cry draws men away from her nest, so the popish generation, by these fabulous devices, draw men from the scriptures.

Antil. Ah, sir, I see now, a fool's bolt is soon shot! you are more precise than wise! the vicar of St. Fool's shall be your spiritual father. What! tell you me of your opinion? I neither regard you nor your opinion: there are wiser men than you who both read, allow, and take pleasure in these books.

Theol. Let him alone, good Philagathus, for you see what he is; there is no end of his crossing and criticising; but the one who is ignorant, let him be ignorant; and the one who is filthy, let him be more filthy. Let us now turn our speech to Asunetus, for I see he is heavy-hearted, and troubled in his mind. How do you, Asunetus? how do you feel yourself? I think you are very sad.

Asun. I am the better for you, sir, thank God: I never knew what sin meant till this day. It has pleased God now to give me some sight and feeling of it: I am greatly distressed in my conscience to think what I have been. The remembrance of my former sins strikes a horror into me. When I consider how ignorantly and profanely, and how far off from God I have lived all my life, it stings and gripes me to the heart. I now see what I never saw, and feel what I never felt: I plainly see, that if I had died in that state wherein I have lived all my life, I should certainly have been condemned, and should have perished for ever in my sin and ignorance.

Theol. I am very glad that God has opened your eyes, and given you the sight and feeling of your misery, which indeed, is the very first step to eternal life. It is a great favour and special mercy of God towards you, that he has so touched your heart; you can never be thankful enough for it. It is more than if you had a million of gold given you. It is the only rare privilege of God's elect, to have the eyes of their souls opened, that they may see into heavenly and spiritual things: as for the world, it is just with God to leave them in their blindness.

Asun. I feel the burden of my sins, I am greatly grieved for them, I am weary of them, I am sorry that ever I sinned against God, or that I should be such a wretch as to incur his displeasure, and provoke his Majesty against me; but I pray you, good Mr. Theologus, since you are a spiritual physician, and I am sick of sin, that you would minister to me out of God's word, some spiritual physic and comfort.

Theol. Truly, I must needs think that the promises of mercy and forgiveness of sin made in the gospel, belong to you, and that Jesus Christ is yours: you are truly interested in him, and have a proper right to him; for he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. You now feel yourself to be a sinner, you are grieved for your sins, you are weary of them; therefore Jesus Christ is for you, all the benefits of his passion belong to you. Again, he says, Matt. 19:12, "The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." But you acknowledge yourself to be sick of sin, therefore Christ Jesus will be your physician he will swaddle you, and lap you he will bind up all your sores he will heal all your wounds he will anoint them with the oil of his mercy he will smile on you and show you a joyful countenance he will say to you, your sins are forgiven. In him you shall have rest and peace to your soul; through him you shall have ease and comfort; for he takes pity of all such as mourn for their sins, as you do. He bids you, and all that are in your case, to come to him, and he will help you. "Come to me," says he. Matt. 11:28, "all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you." You are one of those who are bid to come, for you are weary of your sins, you feel the burden of them. Christ is altogether for such as you are. He regards not the world, that is, the profane and unregenerate men; he bids not them come, he prays not for them; "I pray not for the world," says he, John 17:9; they have no part nor interest in him; they have nothing to do with him, nor with his merits and righteousness. He is only for the penitent sinner, and such as mourn for their sins; he is a pillow of down to all aching heads, and aching consciences. Be of good comfort, therefore, fear nothing; for assuredly Christ and all his righteousness is yours; he will clothe

you with it; he will never impute your sins to you, or lay any of them to your charge, though they are never so many or so great; he will forget them and forgive them; as he says by his prophet, Isa. 1:18, "Though your sins were as crimson, they shall be made as white as snow; though they were red like scarlet, they shall be as wool." And again, he says by the same prophet, 44:22, "I have put away your transgressions as thick clouds, and your sins as a mist." By another prophet he says, Mic. 7:19, "He will lay aside our iniquities, and cast all our sins into the bottom of the sea." Again, he says by the prophet Isaiah, 43:25, "I, even I, am the one who puts away your iniquities for my own sake, and will not remember your sins;" and yet more sweetly he speaks to us by the prophet Jeremiah, 3:12, saying, "Turn again to me, and I will not let my wrath fall on you, for I am merciful, and will not always keep my anger;" and again, by the prophet Hosea, 11:9, he says, "I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath; I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man." Take heart, therefore; comfort yourself with these promises; you have cause to rejoice, seeing God has wrought in you a dislike and a grief for your sins, which is a certain token that your sins shall never hurt you; for sins past cannot hurt us, if sins present do not like us. You are grown to a hatred and dislike of your sins; you mourn under the burden of them; therefore you are blessed; for "blessed are they that mourn." Why therefore should you be so heavy and sad? Remember what St. John says, 1 John 2:1, "If any man sin, we have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the reconciliation for our sins." St. Paul says, Rom. 3:2-5, "That Jesus Christ is set forth to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood." Again, the Holy Spirit says, Heb. 7:25, "He is perfectly able to save all those that come to God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for us." The apostle says, 1 Cor. 1:30, "He is made of God for us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption:" mark that he says all is for us, all is for his church, and for every member of his church, and therefore for you. Christ is made of God righteousness, sanctification, and redemption for you. Christ is your Mediator and your High Priest, and has offered up the everlasting sacrifice, even for you, that he might pay your ransom, and redeem you from all sin: "By his own blood has he entered once into the holy place, and obtained eternal redemption for you," Heb. 10:12. Christ is not entered into the holy places which are made with hands, which are similitudes of the true sanctuary; but is entered into the very heaven, to appear now in the sight of God for you. The apostle says, 2 Cor. 5:21, "He has made him to be sin for you, that knew no sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in him;" Gal. 3:13, "Christ was made a curse for you, that he might redeem you from the curse of the law." Oh, therefore, how happy are you that have such a Mediator and High Priest. Rest therefore wholly on him, and on that perfect, eternal, and propitiatory sacrifice he has once offered. Apply Christ, apply his merits, apply

the promises to yourself, and to your own conscience, so shall they do you good and bring great comfort to your soul. For put case ^you had a most excellent and sovereign salve, which would cure any wound it were laid to, yet if you should lock it up in your chest, and never apply it to your wound, what good could it do you? even so the righteousness and merits of Christ are a spiritual salve, which will cure any wound of the soul: but if we do not apply them to our selves by faith they can do us no good. You must therefore apply Christ, and all the promises of the gospel to yourself by faith, and stand fully persuaded that whatever he has done on the cross, he has done for you particularly: for what is justifying faith but a full persuasion of God's particular love to us in Christ? A general and confused knowledge of Christ and of his gospel avails not to eternal life. Labour therefore to have the true use of all these great and precious promises; stick fast to Christ, for through him only we have remission of sins and eternal life. "To him all the prophets give witness," says St. Peter, "that through his name, all that believe shall receive remission of their sins," Acts 10:43 where the apostle tells us, that if a grand jury of prophets were called to testify of the way and means to eternal life, they would all with one consent bring in a verdict, that remission of sins and eternal life are only in Christ. Let us hear the foreman speak, and one or two of the rest, "for in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word stand." The prophet Isaiah says, "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was broken for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was on him, and with his stripes we are healed." This great prophet, we see, plainly affirms that Christ suffered for our sins, and by his suffering we are saved. The prophet Jeremiah testifies the same thing, saying, 23:5, "Behold, the days come," says the Lord, "that I will raise to David a righteous branch; and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the name whereby they shall call him, the Lord our righteousness." This prophet trumps with the other, for he says, that Christ is the righteous branch, and that he is our righteousness, which is all one as if he had said our sins are pardoned only through him, and through him we are made righteous. Moreover, he affirms that Judah and Israel, that is, the church, shall be saved by him. The prophet Zechariah, that I may speak it with reverence, tells the same tale, word for word. He announces the same thing with the other two prophets, for he says, 13:1, "In that day a fountain shall be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness:" the meaning of the prophet is, that in the days of Christ's kingdom, the fountain of God's mercy in Christ should be opened, and let out to wash away the sins and uncleanness of the church. So then, we see that these three great witnesses all agree in this that through Christ only we are washed from our sins, and through him only

we are made righteous. Seeing then that eternal life is only in the Son, therefore, "He that has the Son has life." Be of good courage therefore, Asunetus, for no doubt you have the Son, and therefore eternal life: fear not your sins, for they cannot hurt you; for as all the righteousness of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the most righteous men that ever lived on the face of the earth if it were yours, could do you no good without Christ; so all the sins in the world can do you no hurt, being in Christ; "For there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus," Rom. 13:4. Pluck up a good heart, therefore; be no more heavy and sad; for if you be found in Christ, clothed with his perfect righteousness, being made yours through faith what can the devil say to you? what can the law do? They may well hiss at you, but they cannot sting you; they may grin at you, but they cannot hurt you; for "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies; who shall condemn? It is Christ who is dead, or rather who is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God, and makes request for us," Rom. 13:33. "Rejoice in the Lord, therefore, and again I say, rejoice," Phil. 4:4. For greater is the one who is in you than the one who is in the world: our Lord Jesus is stronger than all. None can pluck you out of his hands: he is a strong Mediator; he has conquered all our spiritual enemies; he has overcome hell, death, and damnation; "He has led captivity captive; he has spoiled principalities and powers, and has made an open show of them, and triumphed over them in his cross," Col. 2:15; he has most triumphantly said, "O death, I will be your death; grave, I will be your destruction," Hos. 13:14; "O death, where is your sting? hell, where is your victory?" 1 Cor. 15:52. Seeing then you have such a Mediator and High Priest, as has conquered the hellish army and subdued all infernal power, what need you to doubt? what need you to fear any more? Moreover, you are to understand, and to be persuaded, that God's mercy is exceeding great towards penitent sinners, and all such as mourn for their transgressions, according as he says, "Whenever a sinner repents of his sins from the bottom of his heart, he will put them all out of his remembrance." The prophet David most lively and fully describes to us the merciful nature of God in the 103rd Psalm, where he says, "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger, and of great kindness; he will not always chide, neither keep his anger for ever; he has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heaven is above the earth, so great is his mercy towards those that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so has the Lord compassion on those who fear him. For he knows whereof we are made; he remembers that we are but dust." The history of the lost son most notably sets forth the wonderful mercy of God towards penitent sinners. There is showed how the Lord embraces, tender, and makes much of such poor sinners as have



broken and contrite hearts for their sins; for it is said, Luke 15, that when the father saw his repenting son a great way off, he had compassion on him, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and clothed him with the best robe, put it on him, put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and caused the fat calf to be killed for him. Even so, the everlasting Father rejoices at the conversion of any of his lost sons; yes, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God for one sinner that converts. Moreover, the Lord most lively expresses his merciful nature and disposition, in this, that he is very loth we should perish and willingly east away ourselves. Therefore, often in the holy scriptures, he mourns for us, bewails our wretchedness, and takes up many pitiful complaints, and lamentations for us, saying, "Oh that my people had hearkened to me, and Israel had walked in my ways," Ps. 81:13; and again, "Oh that you hadst hearkened to my commandments; then had your prosperity been as the flood, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea," Isa. 43:18; again, he mourningly complains by his prophet Hosea, saying, 6:4, "Ephraim, what shall I do to you? Judah, how shall I entreat you?" And in another place, "What could I do more to my vineyard that I have not done? Mark here, how compassionately the Almighty God yearns over us, and even as it were bleeds on our wounds. The apostle also notes the rich mercy, and marvellous love of God to mankind in this, that he asks us, and prays us by the ministers of the gospel, that we would be reconciled to him: the words are these, 2 Cor. 5:"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God was asking you through us, we pray you in Christ's stead, that you be reconciled to God." Is it not a strange thing that the omnipotent God should fall to entreating of us poor wretches? It is all one as if a king should entreat a beggar, whom he may will and command; but the abundant mercy of God towards mankind most of all consists in this, that he has given his only Son for us, when we were his enemies; as it is written, John 3:16, "God so loved the world, that he has given his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Again, Rom. 5:8, "God sets out his love towards us, seeing that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him; for if when we were enemies we were reconciled, to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." In all this then we may clearly behold the infinite mercy of God towards us poor sinners; for is it not a great matter that the Son of God should take our nature on him, should be so abased as he was, and should humble himself to death, even to the death of the cross? Phil. 2:8; for as the shadow of the dial went back ten degrees that Hezekiah might receive length of days, and much happiness; so Christ, the sun of righteousness has gone back many degrees, that we might have eternal life. His humiliation, therefore, is our exaltation; his sufferings our joy; his death our life; for we

have no other remedy or refuge but only his merits and righteousness. He is our city of refuge, whither we must fly, and where we must take sanctuary he is the balm of Gilead, whereby our souls are cured; he is that pool of Bethesda, where every man may be cured of whatever disease he has he is the river of Jordan, where Naaman may wash away all his leprosy he is that pelican, who, by picking a hole in his own breast, restores his young to life again by his blood. Yet one thing we must note by the way, which has been partly touched before, that all the mercy of God, and merits of Christ, are to be restrained only to the elect only to the true members of the church as plainly appears in the 103rd Psalm, where the mercies of God, which there are largely described, are restrained only to those who fear him, keep his covenant, and think on his commandments to do them. And touching Christ, it is said that he is a Prince and a Saviour to Israel; and that he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Again, it is written, that Christ being consecrate, was made "the author of eternal salvation to those who obey him." None do or can obey him, but only the elect; therefore, he is the author of salvation only to the elect; and, consequently, the profane world, whatever they say, whatever they brag and boast, have no true title or interest in him. This thing was figured in the law, in this, that the mercy seat, which was a type of God's mercy in Christ, and the ark, which was a figure of the church, were, by the express commandment of God, fitted each to other, both in length and breadth; for as the ark was two cubits and a half long, and a cubit and a half broad, just so was the mercy seat, Exod. 25:10, 17; noting by it that the mercy of God in Christ should only be fitted to his church, and belong only to the church, so as not one without the church should be saved; for the one who has not the church for his mother cannot have God for his father. Lastly, we are to observe, that as God is infinite in mercy, and of great compassion towards penitent sinners, so also is he most constant in the course of his mercies towards his children; and, therefore, one of the Psalms, 86, has this line, "His mercy endures for ever; his mercy endures for ever; his mercy endures for ever;" noting by it both the constancy and eternity of God's mercy. To the same purpose, it is thus written, Lam. 3:22, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed; it is because his compassions fail not." Let us know, therefore, that God, as touching his mercy to his children, is of a most constant and unchangeable nature; as he says, "I am the Lord, I change not;" for if God were of a changeable nature, as we are, and subject to passions, then were we in a most miserable case. Then must he needs smite us down, and take vengeance of us every day, and every hour in the day; because we provoke him every day, and every hour in the day. But the God of heaven is not as a man, that he should be subject to passions and affections; he is of a most constant and immutable nature; for though we provoke him every day with new sins, yet he is so far off from taking revenge, that the next day he

rewards us with new mercies, and breaks through all our unkindness, to show kindness to us, and through all our naughtiness to do us good. All our weaknesses cannot make him break off with us, or cease to love us he is content to take us with all faults; and to love us dearly, though we have great faults he regards not our weaknesses, though we are often wayward and elvish, yet, for all that, he loves us nevertheless. Even as a loving mother, though her young suckling cry all night, and be exceeding wakeful and wayward, so as she cannot rest an hour in the night; yes, though she endure much heartache and trouble with it, yet in the morning, when she arises, she loves it nevertheless, and dandles it, plays with it, smiles and laughs on it; so the God of all mercies, whose love towards us far passes the love of mothers, though we grieve and lament our case. Even as a loving and wise husband, though his wife have many weaknesses, yet knowing that she loves him dearly, and that her heart is with him, he is well content to wink at all her faults, to hide them, to bear with them, yes, and to make nothing of them, loving her nevertheless for them; so our dear husband and spouse, Jesus Christ, because he knows we love him, and that he has our hearts, is content to bear with all our weaknesses, and to make light of them. For this cause it is that he says to his spouse in the Canticles, 4:1, 7, though she was black and full of weaknesses, "Behold, you are fair, my love; behold, you are fair; you are all fair, my love; there is no spot in you." Mark that he calls his church fair, all fair, and without spot; not because she was so in herself, but because she was made so in him; and, assuredly, the eternal God, beholding her in his Son, so esteems and accounts of her; for as the one who beholds any thing through a red glass takes it to be red, as is the colour of the glass; so God the Father, beholding us in his Son, takes us to be of the same nature and quality that he is: that is, perfectly righteous; for this cause it is that he loves us, and setts his heart on us, and will not be removed from us; for his love to his children is always one and the same, although we have not always the like sight and feeling of it; as the moon is always the same in substance and quality, though sometime it seems to us to be wasted, into a very small scantling. Let us know then, to our great comfort, that the love of God towards us, in his dear Son, is constant and always alike, and that he will not disgrace us, or shake us off for some weaknesses, no, nor yet for many weaknesses; for the merciful God accepts his children because their general care is good, and the leaning of their life tends to righteousness, although they may fail greatly in many ways. Two or three fevers do not prove a diseased body; nor two or three good days a sound body; even so, some few weaknesses do not indicate a wicked man; nor two or three good, actions a good man; but we must have an eye to the certain and settled course of a man's life. Even as men are truly said to walk in a way when they go in it, although sometimes they trip and stumble; so God's children walk in the way of

righteousness, although sometimes they stumble, and step out of it; or sometimes be violently haled out of it by thieves; for Satan and the violence of our lusts, often hail us out of the way, but we must get into it again as soon as we are escaped. Now then, to conclude, and draw to an end, since God is so infinitely merciful and constant in his mercy since such great and precious promises are made to us in Christ since the Lord does not regard our weaknesses when our hearts are with him therefore, Asunetus, take heart; let nothing trouble you; fear not the assaults of the devil; regard not his temptations; for assuredly your sins are forgiven. Christ is yours, heaven is yours, and all the promises of life and salvation belong to you; so as you need not to doubt. You cannot miscarry, your name is written in the book of life.

Asun. I am greatly comforted and cheered with your words: your preaching of the gospel, and laying open of God's abundant mercy in Christ, and of the promises, exceedingly revive me, and even as it were put new life into me: they are as sack and sugar to my soul, and more sweet than the honey and the honey-comb; they are as physic to my sick soul, and as ointment to my spiritual wounds. I now begin to see what misery is in man, and what mercy is in God. And I know, by woeful experience, that where misery is not felt there mercy is not regarded; but now it has pleased God to give me some feeling of my own wretchedness and misery, and yet with good comfort in his mercy. For, I thank God for it, I begin now to grow to some persuasion, that the promises belong to me, my sins are forgiven, and that I am one of those who shall be saved.

Theol. I greatly rejoice that God has according to his rich mercy wrought this good work in you. I do, from the bottom of my heart, give him the praise and glory of it. Happy are you that ever you were born, in whom God has wrought so gracious a work. It is of his high favour and special mercy towards you, for it is only the privilege and prerogative royal of God's own children, truly to repent and believe. I ask God, therefore, to increase your faith, and to fill you full of joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Antil. The sun draws low, Asunetus, it is time for you and me to be going.

Phil. Indeed the night will approach by and by; and therefore we must of necessity break off.

Theol. Since it is so, we will here cease, and go no further.

Asun. Sir, I will now take my leave of you. I can never be thankful enough for all

the good instructions and comforts I have heard from you this day; I hope I shall remember some of them whilst I live: I therefore praise God for you, and for your counsel, and for this day which I hope shall be the first day of my repentance, and true conversion to God.

Theol. The Lord for his infinite mercies' sake grant it. And I most humbly ask the Almighty God to establish you with his free Spirit, that you may proceed and go forward in a Christian course to the end.

Phil. I pray you, good Mr. Theologus, pardon my boldness; for you see I have been very bold to propound many questions to you, wherein you have fully satisfied me, to the great joy and comfort of my soul. I therefore praise God for you, and I hope I shall never forget some things which you have uttered. But I will now commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build further.

Theol. Farewell, good Philagathus, The Lord bless you, and keep you in all your ways; and the God of Heaven preserve us all, and continue us in his fear to the end. All glory be given to God!

#### A MORNING PRAYER: TO BE USED IN PRIVATE FAMILIES.

O LORD our God, and heavenly Father! we, your unworthy children, here come to your most holy and heavenly presence, to give you praise and glory for all your great mercies and manifold blessings towards us; especially for that you have preserved us this night past from all the dangers and fears of it have given us quiet rest to our bodies, and brought us now safely to the beginning of this day and dost now afresh renew all your mercies on us, as the eagle renews her bill, giving us all things abundantly to enjoy as food, raiment, health, peace, liberty, and freedom from many miseries, diseases, casualties, and calamities which we are subject to in this life every minute of an hour: and not only so, but also for vouchsafing to us many good things, not only for necessity, but even for delight also. But, above all, dear Father, we praise your name for the blessings of a better life; especially for your most holy word and sacraments, and all the good we enjoy by it for the continuance of the gospel amongst us for the death of your Son, and all that happiness we have by it; also, because you have chosen us to life before we were, and that of your mere goodness and undeserved favour towards us; and have called us in your appointed time, justified us by your grace, sanctified us by your Spirit, and adopted us to be your own children, and heirs apparent to the great crown. Lord, open our eyes every day more and more to see and consider of your great and marvellous

love to us in all these things; that, by the due consideration of it, our hearts may be drawn yet nearer to you even more to love you, fear you, and obey you; that, as you are enlarged towards us in mercy, so we may be enlarged towards you in thanksgiving; and as you dost abound towards us in goodness, so we may abound towards you in obedience and love. And since, dear Father, you are never weary of doing us good, despite all our unworthiness and wickedness, let the consideration of your great mercy and fatherly kindness towards us, even, as it were, force our hearts, and compel us to come into your most glorious presence with new songs of thanks giving in our mouths. We pray you, most merciful God, to forgive us all our ingratitude, unkindness, profaneness, and great abusing of all your mercies, and specially our abuse and contempt of your gospel, together with all other the sins of our life, which, we confess, are innumerable, and more than can be reckoned up, both in omission of good things and commission of evil. We most humbly entreat you to set them all over to the reckoning which your Son Christ has made up for them on his cross, and never to lay any of them to our charge, but freely forget all and forgive all; nail down all our sins and iniquities to the cross of Christ, bury them in his death, bathe them in his blood, hide them in his wounds, let them never rise up in judgement against us. Set us free from the miseries that are on us for sin, and keep back the judgements to come, both of soul, body, goods, and good name. Be reconciled to us in your dear Son, concerning all matters past, not once remembering or repeating to us our old and abominable iniquities; but accept us as righteous in him, imputing his righteousness to us, and our sins to him. Let his righteousness satisfy your justice for all our unrighteousness, his obedience for our disobedience, his perfection for our imperfection. Moreover, we humbly ask your good Majesty to give us the true sight and feeling of our manifold sins, that we may not be blinded in them through de light, or hardened in them through custom as the reprobates are; but that we may be even weary of them, and much grieved for them, labouring and striving by all possible means to get out of them. Good Father, touch our hearts with true repentance for all sin. Let us not take any delight or pleasure in any sin, but however we fall through frailty, as we fall often, yet let us never fall finally, let us never lie down in sin, nor continue in sin; but let us get on our feet again, and turn to you with all our hearts; and seek you whilst you may be found, and whilst you dost extend grace and mercy to us. Lord, increase in us that true and lively faith whereby we may lay sure hold on your Son Christ, and rest on his merits altogether. Give us faith assuredly to believe all the great and precious promises made in the gospel, and strengthen us from above, to walk and abound in all the true and sound fruits of faith. Let us walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Let us feel the power of your Son's death killing sin in our mortal bodies, and the power of his resurrection raising us up to newness of

life. Let us grow daily in the sanctification of the Spirit, and the mortification of the flesh. Let us live holily, justly, and soberly, in this present evil world, showing forth the virtues of you in all our particular actions; that we may adorn our most holy profession, and shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation amongst whom we live, being gainful to all by our lives and behaviour, and offensive to none. To this end, we pray you fill us with your Spirit and all spiritual grace: as love, wisdom, patience, contentment, meekness, humility, temperance, charity, kindness, and affability; and stir us up to use prayer and watchfulness, reading and meditation in your law, and all other good means whereby we may grow and abound in all heavenly virtues. Bless us in the use of the means from day to day; make us such as you would have us to be, and such as we desire to be, working in us both will and deed, purpose and power; for you, Lord, are all in all, you will have mercy on whom you will have mercy, and whom you will you harden. Have mercy on us, therefore, dear Father, and never leave us to ourselves, nor to our own wills, lusts, and desires, but assist us with your good Spirit, that we may continue to the end in a righteous course; that so at length we may be received into glory, and be partakers of that immortal crown which you have laid up for all that love you, and truly call on you. Let your wrath fall on the kingdom of the beast, and let their riches, wealth, credit, and authority dry up every day more and more, as the river Euphrates. Let it pity you, Father, to see your own spouse sit as a deformed and forlorn woman here below, weeping and mourning with her hair about her neck; having lost all her beauty and comeliness: cheer her up dear Father, glad her with the joy of your countenance, and so deck her and trim her up, that you may delight in her, as a bride groom in his bride. Specially we entreat you to have mercy on your church in this land; intend good to us and not evil; give us not over into the hands of the cruel Spaniard, as our sins have deserved. Scatter, we pray you, Lord, the devices, and break the plots of all such as have plotted the overthrow and utter subversion of this church and commonwealth. Bless this church more and more, with the continuance of true religion amongst us. For your great name's sake, and infinite mercies' sake, deal graciously and favourably with us, and our posterity. Turn from us that vengeance which is due to us for our sins. For you see how sin prevails, and the wicked go away with the goal. Atheism over spreads everywhere, and popery seems to get ahead again. Now, therefore, dear Father, we most humbly ask you to take order speedily for the remedying and repressing of these manifold disorders and grievous enormities that are amongst us. Be entreated of your poor children to be good to this English nation. Hear the cries of your elect: hear the mourning of those who mourn in Sion. Let the cries of your children cry down all the cries of the sins of the land, and be reconciled to us in the multitude of your compassions, so that you may still continue a most ine angels

encamp about him, and let your holy hand be always over him; keep him from treasons, and deliver him from the treacheries of his enemies: give him to see what belongs to his peace, and give him a heart earnestly bent to set on the practice of the same: give him all graces necessary for his peace, and necessary for his salvation: continue his government peaceable and prosperous amongst us: and as you have made him the breath of our nostrils, and a gracious instrument for the saving of many thousand souls, so let his own soul be saved in the day of your Son Christ. Bless his majesty's most honourable privy counsellors, and give such good success to all their counsels and policies in matters of state, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Bless all the nobility; work in them a care to glorify your name in their places; make them faithful to you, and faithful to the land. Direct with your good Spirit all such as bear the sword of justice, that they may draw it out to punish the wicked, and to defend the godly, and that they may, with all good care and conscience, discharge the duties of their places. Increase the number of faithful and zealous ministers in your church. Send your gospel to those places where it is not, and bless it where it is. Remember them in your mercy, Lord, that are under any cross or affliction be comfortable to them, heal up their wounds, bind up their sores, put all their tears into your dies into your hands, for this day, and the rest of our life, praying you to take care and charge of us; keep us from all evil; watch over us for our good; let your angels encamp about us; let your holy hand be over us, and keep us in all our ways, that we may live to your praise and glory here on earth, keeping faith and a good conscience in all our actions; that after this life we may be crowned of you, for ever in your kingdom. Grant these things, good Father, to us here pre sent, and to all your absent; praying you in special favour to remember our friends and kinsfolks in the flesh, all our good neighbours and well-wishers, and all those for whom we are bound to pray by nature, by deserts, or any duty whatsoever, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator; to whom with you, and the Holy Spirit, be given all praise and glory, both now, and for evermore.  
Amen.

#### AN EVENING PRAYER, TO BE USED IN PRIVATE FAMILIES.

O Eternal God, and our most loving and dear Father! we, your unworthy children, here fall down at the foot of your great Majesty, acknowledging from our hearts, that we are altogether unworthy to come near you, or to look towards you: because you are a God of infinite glory, and we are most vile and abominable sinners, such as were conceived and born in sin and corruption, such as have inherited our father's corruptions, and also have actually transgressed all your holy statutes and laws, both in thoughts, words, and



deeds, before we knew you; and since, secretly and openly, with ourselves and with others. Our particular sins are more than can be numbered; for who knows how often he offends? But this we must needs confess against ourselves, that our hearts are full of pride, covetousness, and the love of this world; full of wrath, anger, and impatience; full of lying, dissembling, and deceiving; full of vanity, hardness, and profaneness; full of infidelity, distrust, and self-love; full of lust, uncleanness, and all abominable de sires; yes, our hearts are the very sinks of sin, and dunghills of all filthiness. And besides all this, we omit the good things we should do; for there are in us great wants of faith, of love of zeal, of patience, of contentment, and of every good grace; so as you have just cause to proceed to sentence of judgement against us. as most damnable transgressors of all your holy commandments: yes, such as are sunk in our rebellions and have many times and often committed high treason against your Majesty; and therefore, you may justly cast us all down into hell-fire, there to be tormented with Satan and his angels for ever. And we have nothing to except against your Majesty for so doing: since you would only be dealing with us according to justice and our deserts. So, dear Father, we appeal from your justice to your mercy; most humbly entreating you to have mercy on us, and freely to forgive us all our sins past, both new and old, secret and open, known and unknown, and that for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator. And we pray you, touch our hearts with true grief and sincere repentance for them, that they may be a matter of continual sorrow and heart-smart to us, so as nothing may grieve us more than this, that we have offended you, being our special friend and Father. Give us, therefore, dear Father, every day more and more sight and feeling of our sins, with true humiliation under the same. Give us also that true and lively faith whereby we may lay sure hold on your Son Christ, and all his merits, applying the same to our own souls; so as we may stand fully persuaded that whatever he has done on the cross, he has done for us particularly, as well as for others. Give us faith, good Father, constantly to believe all the sweet promises of the gospel, touching remission of sin and eternal life, made in your Son Christ. O Lord, increase our faith, that we may altogether rest on the promises, which are all yes and amen. yes, that we may settle ourselves, and all that we have wholly on them: our souls, bodies, goods, name, wives, children, and our whole estate, knowing that all things depend on your promises, power, and providence; and that your word supports and bears up the whole order of nature. Moreover, we entreat you, O Lord, to strengthen us from above to walk in every good way, and to bring forth the fruits of true faith in all our particular actions, studying to please you in all things and to be fruitful in good works, that we may show forth to all men, by our good behaviour, whose children we are; and that we may adorn and beautify our most holy profession by walking in a Christian course, and in all the sound

fruits and practice of godliness, and true religion. To this end, we pray you, sanctify our hearts by your Spirit, yet more and more: sanctify our souls and bodies, and all our corrupt natural faculties, as reason, understanding, will, and affections, so as they may be fitted for your worship and service, taking a delight and pleasure in it. Stir us up to use prayer, watchfulness, reading, and meditation in your law, and all other good means whereby we may profit in grace and goodness from day to day. Bless us in the use of the means, that we may daily die to sin, and live to righteousness: draw us yet nearer to you: help us against our manifold wants. Amend our great imperfections, renew us inwardly more and more, repair the ruins of our hearts, aid us against the remnants of sin. Enlarge our hearts to run the way of your commandments, direct all our steps in your word, let no sin have dominion over us. Assist us against our special weaknesses and master sins, that we may get the victory over them all, to your glory, and the great peace and comfort of our own consciences. Strengthen us, good Father, by your grace and Holy Spirit, against the common corruptions of the world, as pride, fornication, covetousness, contempt of your gospel, swearing, lying, dissembling, and deceiving. Dear Father, let us not be overcome of these filthy vices, nor any other sinful pleasures and foolish delights, with which thousands are carried headlong to destruction. Arm our souls against all the temptations of this world, the flesh, and the devil; that we may overcome them all through your help, and keep on the right way to life, that we may live in your fear, and die in your favour, that our last days may be our best days, and that we may end in great peace of conscience. Furthermore, dear Father, we entreat you not only for ourselves, but for all our good brethren, your dear children scattered over the face of the whole earth, most humbly asking you to bless them all, to cheer them up, and glad them with the joy of your countenance, both now and always. Guide them all in your fear, and keep them from evil, that they may praise your name. In these dangerous days, and declining times, we pray you, Lord, raise up nursing fathers, and nursing mothers to your church. Raise up also faithful pastors, that your cause may be carried forward, truth may prevail, religion may prosper, your name only may be set up in the earth, your Son's kingdom advanced, and your will accomplished. Set thyself against all adversary power, especially that of Rome, antichrist, idolatry, and atheism: curse and cross all their counsels, frustrate their devices, scatter their forces, overthrow their armies. When they are most wise, let them be most foolish; when they are most strong, let them be most weak. Let them know, that there is no wisdom nor counsel, power nor policy, against you, the Lord of Hosts. Let them know that Israel has a God, and that you who are called Jehovah, are the only ruler over all the world. Arise, therefore, O most mighty God, and maintain your own cause against all your enemies; smite through all their loins, and bow down their backs; yes, let them

all be confounded, and turned backward that bear ill-will to Sion. Let the patient abiding of the righteous be joy; and let the wicked be disappointed of their hope. But of all favour, we entreat you, O Lord, to show special mercy to your church in this land wherein we have. Continue your gospel amongst us yet with greater success, purge your house daily more and more, take away all things that offend. Let this nation be a place where your name may be called on, and an harbour for your saints. Show mercy to our posterity, dear Father, and have care of them, that your gospel may be left to them as a most holy inheritance. Defend us against foreign invasion, keep out idolatry and popery from amongst us. Turn from us those plagues which our sins cry for; for the sins of this land are exceeding great, horrible, and outrageous, and give you just cause to make us examples of your vengeance to all nations: that by how much the more you have lifted us up in great mercy and long peace, by so much the more you should press us down in great wrath and long war. Therefore, dear Father, we most humbly entreat you, for your great name's sake, and for your infinite mercies' sake, that you would be reconciled to this land, and discharge it of all its the horrible sins. Drown them, Lord, in your infinite mercy through Christ, as it were in a bottomless gulf, that they may never rise up in judgement against us. For although our sins be exceeding many and fearful, yet your mercy is far greater. For you are infinite in mercy: but we cannot be infinite in sinning. Give us not over into the hands of the idolaters, lest they should blaspheme your name and say, where is their God in whom they trusted? But rather, dear Father, take us into your own hands, and correct us according to your wisdom: for with you is mercy, and deep compassion. Moreover, we most humbly ask your good Majesty, to bless our most gracious king James, and to show much mercy to him in all things. Guide him in your fear, and keep him in all his ways, working in his soul sincere sorrow for sin, true faith in the promises, and a great care to please you in all things, and to discharge the duties of his high place, in all zeal of your glory, and faithfulness towards your Majesty: that as you have crowned him here in earth, so he (spending his days here below in your fear) may after this life, be crowned of you for ever in the heavens. We ask you also, to bless his majesty's most honourable privy counsellors. Counsel them from above, let them take advice of you in all things; that they may both consult, and resolve of such courses as may be most for your glory, the good of the church, and the peace of this our commonwealth. Bless the nobility, and all the magistrates in the land, giving them all grace to execute judgement and justice, and to maintain truth and equity. Bless all the faithful ministers of the gospel, increase the number of them, increase your gifts in them: and so bless all their labours in their several places and congregations, that they all may be instruments of your hand to enlarge your Son's kingdom, and to win many souls to you. Comfort the

comfortless with all needful comforts. For get none of yours that are in trouble; but as their afflictions are, so let the joys and comforts of your Spirit be to them; and so sanctify to all yours, their afflictions and troubles, that they may tend to your glory, and their own good. Give us thankful hearts for all your mercies, both spiritual and corporeal: for you are mercy merciful to us in the things of this life, and infinitely more merciful in the things of a better life. Let us deeply ponder and weigh all your particular favours towards us; that by the duly considering them, our hearts may be gained yet nearer to you, and that we may both love and obey you, because you are so kind and loving to us; that even your love towards us may draw our love towards you, and that because mercy is with you, you may be feared. Grant these things good Father, and all other needful graces for our souls or bodies, or any of yours throughout the whole world, for Jesus Christ's sake. In whose name, we further call on you, as he has taught us in his gospel, saying, "Our Father in heaven," &c.

A PRAYER TO BE USED AT ANY TIME, BY ONE IN PRIVATE.

Lord, my God, and heavenly Father! I, your most unworthy child, here in your sight freely confess that I am a most sinful creature, and damnable transgressor of all your holy laws and commandments: that as I was born and bred in sin, and stained in the womb, so have I continually brought forth the corrupt and ugly fruits of that infection and contagion, wherein I was first conceived, both in thoughts, words, and works. If I should go about to reckon up my particular offences, I know not where to begin, or where to make an end; for they are more than the hairs of my head, yes, far more than I can possibly feel or know; for who knows the height and depth of his corruption? who knows how often he offends? You only, O Lord, know my sins, who know my heart: nothing is hidden from you, you know what I have been, and what I am; yes, my conscience accuses me of many and grievous evils, and I daily feel by woeful experience how frail I am, how prone to evil, and how untoward to all goodness. My mind is full of vanity, my heart full of profaneness, my affections full of deadness, dullness and drowsiness in matters of your worship and service; yes, my whole soul is full of spiritual blindness, hardness, unprofitableness, coldness, and security; and in very deed I am altogether a lump of sin, and a mass of all misery; and I have forfeited your favour, and incurred your high displeasure, and have given you just cause to frown on me, to give me over, and leave me to my own corrupt will and affections.. But, O my dear Father, I have learned from your mouth, that you are a God of mercy, slow to wrath, and of great compassion and kindness towards all such as groan under the burden of their sins. Therefore, extend your great mercy towards me a poor sinner, and give me a general pardon for all my offences; seal it in

the blood of your Son, and seal it to my conscience by your Spirit, assuring me more and more of your love and favour towards me, and that you are a reconciled Father to me. Grant that I may, in all time to come, love you much because much is given, and of very love fear you and obey you. O Lord, increase my faith, that I may steadfastly believe all the promises of the gospel made in your Son Christ, and rest on them altogether. Enable me to bring forth the sound fruits of faith and repentance in all my particular actions. Fill my soul full of joy and peace in believing. Fill me full of inward comfort and spiritual strength against all temptations; give me yet a greater feeling of your love and manifold mercies toward me; work in my soul a love of your Majesty, a zeal of your glory, an hatred of evil, and a desire of all good things. Give me victory over those sins which you know are strongest in me. Let me once at last make a conquest of the world and the flesh. Mortify in me whatever is carnal: sanctify me throughout by your Spirit; knit my heart to you for ever, that I may fear your name. Renew in me the image of your Son Christ daily more and more. Give me a delight in the reading and meditation of your word. Let me rejoice in the public ministry of it. Cause me to love and reverence all the faithful ministers of your gospel. Sanctify their doctrines to my conscience; seal them in my soul; write them in my heart; give me a soft and melting heart, that I may tremble at your words, and be always much affected with godly sermons. Let not my sins hold back your mercies from me, nor my unworthiness stop the passage of your grace. Open my eyes to see the great wonders of your law. Reveal your secrets to me; be open-hearted towards me your unworthy servant. Hide nothing from me that may make for your glory, and the good of my soul. Bless all means to me which you use for my good. Bless all holy instructions to my soul. Bless me at all times, both in hearing and reading your word. Give me the right use of all your mercies and corrections, that I may be the better for them. Let me abound in love to all your children. Let my heart be very nearly knit to them, that where you lovest most there I may love most also. Enable me to watch and pray, that I enter not into temptation; give me patience and contentment in all things. Cause me to love you more and more, and the world less and less. So draw my mind upward, that I may despise all transitory things. Let me be so enwrapt and ravished with the sight and feeling of heavenly things, that I may make a base reckoning of all earthly things. Let me use this world as though I used it not. Let me use it but for necessity, as meat and drink. Let me not be carried away with the vain pleasures and foolish delights of it. Good Father, work your good work in me, and never leave me, nor forsake me, till you have brought me to true happiness. O, dear Father, make me faithful in my calling, that I may serve you in it, and be always careful to do what good I may in any thing. Bless me in my outward estate. Bless my soul, body, goods, and name. Bless all that belongs to me. Bless my goings out and

comings in. Let your countenance be lifted up on me, now and always: cheer me up with the joys and comforts of your Spirit; make me thankful for all your mercies. For I confess that you are very kind to me in all things. For in you I live, move, and have my being; of you I have my welfare and good being; you are a daily friend, and special good benefactor to me. I have at your cost and charges. I hold all of you in chief, and I find that you are never weary of doing me good: your goodness towards me is unceasing. Oh, I can never be thankful enough to you for all your mercies, both spiritual and corporeal. But in such measure as I am able, I praise your name for all, asking you to accept of my thanksgiving, in your Son Christ, and to give me a profitable use of all your favours, that by it my heart may be fully drawn to you. Give me, O Father, to be of such a good nature and disposition, that I may be won by gentleness and fair means, as much as if you gave me many lashes. Pardon all my ingratitude, unkindness, and great abusing of your mercies, and give me grace to use them more to your glory in time to come. Strengthen me, dear Father, thus to continue praising and glorifying your name here on earth; that after this life, I may be crowned by you for ever in your kingdom. Grant these petitions, most merciful God, not only to me, but to all your dear children throughout the whole world, for Jesus Christ's sake; in whose name I further call on you, saying, as he has taught me, "Our Father in heaven," &c.

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