

NO CROSS, NO CROWN

A Discourse showing the Nature and Discipline of the Holy Cross of Christ, and that, the Denial of Self, and Daily Bearing of Christ's Cross, is the alone Way to the Rest and Kingdom of God.

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1682

PREFACE

READER,

THE great business of man's life is to answer the end for which he lives, and that is to glorify God and save his own soul: this is the decree of Heaven, as old as the world. But so it is, that man mindeth nothing less than what he should most mind, and despiseth to inquire into his own being, its original duty and end; choosing rather to dedicate his days (the steps he should make to blessedness) to gratify the pride, avarice, and luxury of his heart: as if he had been born for himself, or rather given himself being, and so not subject to the reckoning and judgment of a superior power. To this wild and lamentable pass hath poor man brought himself by his disobedience to the law of God in his heart, by doing that which he knows he should not do, and leaving undone what he knows he should do. And as long as this disease continueth upon man he will make his God his enemy, and himself incapable of the love and salvation that He hath manifested, by his Son Jesus Christ, to the world.

If, Reader, thou art such an one, my counsel to thee is to retire into thyself and take a view of the condition of thy soul, for Christ hath given thee light with which to do it; search carefully and thoroughly; thy life is in it; thy soul is at stake. It is but once to be done; if thou abuse thyself in it, the loss is irreparable; the world is not price enough to ransom thee: wilt thou then, for such a world, belate thyself, overstay the time of thy salvation, and lose thy soul? Thou hast to do, I grant thee, with great patience; but that also must have an end: therefore provoke not that God that made thee, to reject thee. Dost thou know what it is? It is Tophet; it is hell, the eternal anguish of the damned. O! Reader, as one knowing the terrors of the Lord, I persuade thee to be serious, diligent, and fervent about thy own salvation. Aye, and as one knowing the comfort, peace, joy, and pleasure of the ways of righteousness too, I exhort and invite thee to embrace the reproofs and convictions of Christ's light and Spirit in thine own conscience, and bear the judgment who hast wrought the sin. The fire burns but the stubble: the wind blows but the chaff: yield up the body, soul, and spirit to Him that maketh all things new; new heavens, and new earth, new love, new joy, new peace, new works, a new life and conversation. Men are grown corrupt and drossy by sin, and they must be saved through fire, which purgeth it away: therefore the word God is compared to a fire, and the day of salvation to an oven; and Christ Himself to a refiner and purifier of silver.

Come, Reader, hearken to me awhile; I seek thy salvation; that is my plot; thou wilt forgive me. A Refiner is come near thee, his grace hath appeared unto thee: it shows thee the world's lusts, and teaches thee to deny them. Receive his leaven, and it will change thee: his medicine, and it will cure thee: He is as infallible as free; without money, and with certainty. A touch of his garment did it of old, it will do it still: his virtue is the same, it cannot be exhausted, for in Him the fulness dwells; blessed be God for his sufficiency. He laid help upon Him, that He might be mighty to save all that come to God through Him: do thou so, and He will change thee: aye, thy vile body like unto his glorious body. He is the great philosopher indeed; the wisdom of God, that turns lead into gold, vile things into things precious: for He maketh saints out of sinners, and almost gods of men.

What rests to us, then, that we must do, to be thus witness of his power and love? This is the Crown, but where is the Cross? Where is the bitter cup and bloody baptism? Come, Reader, be like Him; for this transcendant joy lift up thy head above the world; then thy salvation will draw nigh indeed.

Christ's Cross is Christ's way to Christ's Crown. This is the subject of the following Discourse, first written during my confinement in the Tower of London, in the year 1668, now reprinted with great enlargements of matter and testimonies, that thou, Reader, mayest be won to Christ; and if won already, brought nearer to Him. It is a path, God, in his everlasting kindness, guided my feet into in the flower of my youth, when about twenty-two years of age: then He took me by the hand, and led me out of the pleasures, vanities, and hopes of the world. I have tasted of Christ's judgments and mercies, and of the world's frowns and reproaches: I rejoice in my experience, and dedicate it to thy service in Christ. It is a debt I have long owed, and has been long expected: I have now paid it, and delivered my soul. To my country, and to the world of Christians, I leave it: my God, if He please, make it effectual to them all, and turn their hearts from that envy, hatred, and bitterness, they have one against another, about worldly things; sacrificing humanity and charity to ambition and covetousness, for which they fill the earth with trouble and oppression; that, receiving the Spirit of Christ into their hearts, the fruits of which are love, peace, joy, temperance, and patience, brotherly kindness, and charity, they may in body, soul, and spirit, make a triple league against the world, the flesh, and the devil, the common enemies of mankind; and having conquered them through a life of self-denial, by the power of the Cross of Jesus, they may at last attain to the eternal rest and kingdom of God.

So desireth, so prayeth,

Friendly Reader,

Thy fervent Christian Friend,

WILLIAM PENN

Worminghurst in Sussex

the 1st of the 6th Month, 1682

CHAPTER I

THOUGH the knowledge and obedience of the doctrine of the Cross of Christ be of infinite moment to the souls of men, for that is the only door to true Christianity, and that path the ancients ever trod to blessedness; yet, with extreme affliction let me say, it is so little understood, so much neglected, and, what is worse, so bitterly contradicted by the vanity, superstition, and intemperance of professed Christians, that we must either renounce to believe what the Lord Jesus hath told us, that whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Him, cannot be his disciple (Luke 24: 27); or, admitting that for truth, conclude, that the generality of Christendom do miserably deceive and disappoint themselves in the great business of Christianity, and their own salvation.

2. For, let us never be so tender and charitable in the survey of those nations that entitle themselves to any interest in the holy name of Christ, if we will but be just too, we must needs acknowledge, that after all the gracious advantages of light, and obligations to fidelity, which these latter ages of the world have received by the coming, life, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, with the gifts of his Holy Spirit; to which add the writings, labours, and martyrdom of his dear followers in all times, there seems very little left of Christianity but the name; which, being now usurped by the old heathen nature and life, makes the professors of it but true heathens in disguise. For though they worship not the same idols, they worship Christ with the same heart: and they can never do otherwise, whilst they live in the same lusts. So that the unmortified Christian and the heathen are of the same religion. For though they have different objects to which they do direct their prayers, that adoration in both is but forced and ceremonious, and the deity they truly worship is the god of the world, the great lord of lusts: to him they bow with the whole powers of soul and sense. What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear? And how shall we pass away our time? Which way may we gather wealth, increase our power, enlarge our territories, and dignify and perpetuate our names and families in the earth? Which base sensuality is most pathetically expressed and comprised by the beloved Apostle John in these words: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," which, says he, "are not of the Father, but of the world, that lieth in wickedness" (1 John 2:16).

3. It is a mournful reflection, but a truth no confidence can be great enough to deny, that these worldly lusts fill up the study, care, and conversation of wretched Christendom! and, which aggravates the misery, they have grown with time. For as the world is older, it is worse; and the example of former lewd ages, and their miserable conclusions, have not deterred, but excited ours; so that the people of this seem improvers of the old stock of impiety, and have carried it so much further than example, that instead of advancing in virtue upon better times, they are scandalously fallen below the life of heathens. Their high-mindedness, lasciviousness, uncleanness, drunkenness, swearing, lying, envy, backbiting, cruelty, treachery, covetousness, injustice and oppression, are so common. and committed with such invention and excess, that they have stumbled and embittered infidels to a degree of scorning that holy religion, to which their good example should have won their affections.

4. This miserable defection from primitive times, when the glory of Christianity was the purity of its professors, I cannot but call the second and worst part of the Jewish tragedy upon the blessed Saviour of mankind. For the Jews, from the power of ignorance, and the extreme prejudice they were under to the unworldly way of his appearance, would not acknowledge Him when He came, but for two or three years persecuted. and finally crucified Him in one day. But the false Christians' cruelty lasts longer: they have first, with Judas, professed Him, and then, for these many ages, most basely betrayed, persecuted, and crucified Him, by a perpetual apostasy in manners, from the self-denial and holiness of his doctrine; their lives giving the lie to their faith. These are they that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews tells us. "Crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame" (Heb. 6: 6); whose defiled hearts John in his Revelation styles, "The street of Sodom and Egypt, spiritually so called, where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev.. 11: 8). And as Christ said of old, a man's enemies are those of his own house, so Christ's enemies now are chiefly those of his own profession; they spit upon Him, they nail and pierce Him, they crown Him with thorns, and give Him gall and vinegar to drink (Matt. 27: 34). Nor is it hard to apprehend; for they that live in the same evil nature and principle the Jews did, that crucified Him outwardly, must needs crucify Him inwardly; since they that reject the grace now in their own hearts are one in stock and generation with the hard-hearted Jews, that resisted the grace that then appeared in and by Christ.

5. Sin is of one nature all the world over; for though a liar is not a drunkard, nor a swearer a whoremonger, nor either properly a murderer, yet they are all of a church; all branches of the one wicked root, all of kin. They have but one father, the devil, as Christ said to the professing Jews, the visible church of that age; He slighted their claims to Abraham and Moses, and plainly told them that "he that committed sin was the servant of sin" (John 8:34, 35). They did the devil's work, and therefore were the devil's children. The argument will always hold upon the same reasons, and therefore good still: "His servants ye are," saith Paul, "whom ye obey" (Rom. 6:16); and saith John to the church of old, "Let no man deceive you; he that committeth sin is of the devil" (x1 John 3:7,8). Was Judas ever the better Christian for crying, Hail, Master, and kissing Christ? By no means; they

were the signal of his treachery; the tokens given by which the bloody Jews should know and take Him. He called Him Master, but betrayed Him; he kissed, but sold Him to be killed; this is the upshot of the false Christian's religion. If a man ask them, Is Christ your Lord? they will cry, God forbid else; yes, He is our Lord. Very well; but do you keep his commandments? No, how should we? How then are you his disciples? It is impossible, say they. What! would you have us keep his commandments? No man can. What! impossible to do that without which Christ hath made it impossible to be a Christian? Is Christ unreasonable? Does He reap where He has not sown? Require where He has not enabled? Thus it is, that with Judas they call Him Master, but take part with the evil of the world to betray Him; and kiss and embrace Him as far as a specious profession goes; and then sell Him, to gratify the passion that they most indulge. Thus, as God said of old, they make Him serve with their sins and for their sins too (Isa. 43:24).

6. Let no man deceive his own soul; "grapes are not gathered of thorns, nor figs of thistles" (Matt 7:16): a wolf is not a sheep, nor is a vulture a dove. What form, people, or church soever thou art of, it is the truth of God to mankind, that they which have even the form of godliness, but, by their unmortified lives, deny the power thereof, make not the true, but false church: which, though she entitle herself the Lamb's bride, or church of Christ (Rev. 21:2; 22:17), she is that mystery, or mysterious Babylon, filly called by the Holy Ghost, the mother of harlots and all abominations (Rev. 17:5): because degenerated from Christian chastity and purity, into all the enormities of heathen Babylon; a sumptuous city of old time, much noted for the seat of the kings of Babylon, and at that time the place in the world of the greatest pride and luxury. As she was then, so mystical Babylon is now, the great enemy of God's people.

7. True it is, they that are born of the flesh hate and persecute them that are born of the spirit, who are the circumcision in heart. It seems they cannot own nor worship God after her inventions, methods and prescriptions, nor receive for doctrine her vain traditions, any more than they can comply with her corrupt fashions and customs in their conversation. The case being thus, from an apostate she becomes a persecutor. It is not enough that she herself declines from ancient purity, others must do so too. She will give them no rest that will not partake with her in that degeneracy, or receive her mark. Are any wiser than she, than mother church? No, no: nor can any make war with the beast she rides upon, those worldly powers that protect her, and vow their maintenance against the cries of her dissenters. Apostacy and superstition are ever proud and impatient of dissent: all must conform or perish. Therefore the slain witnesses, and blood of the souls under the altar (Rev. 6:9), are found within the walls of this mystical Babylon, this great city of false Christians, and are charged upon her, by the Holy Ghost in the Revelation. Nor is it strange that she should slay the servants who first crucified the Lord: but strange and barbarous too, that she should kill her husband and murder her Saviour; titles she seems so fond of, and that have been so profitable to her; and that she would recommend herself by, though without all justice. But her children are reduced so entirely under the dominion of darkness, by means of their continued disobedience to the manifestation of the divine light in their souls, that they forget what man once was, or they should now be; and know not true and pure Christianity when they meet it; yet pride themselves upon professing it. Their measures are so carnal and false about salvation, they call good evil and evil good, they make a devil a Christian, and a saint a devil. So that though the unrighteous latitude of their lives be matter of lamentation, as to themselves it is of destruction; yet that common apprehension, that they may be children of God while in a state of disobedience to his holy commandments; and disciples of Jesus though they revolt from his cross, and members of his true church, which is without spot or wrinkle, notwithstanding their lives are full of spots and wrinkles; is, of all other deceptions upon themselves, the most pernicious to their eternal condition. For they are at peace in sin, and under a security in their transgression. Their vain hope silences their convictions, and overlays all tender motions to repentance; so that their mistake about their duty to God is as mischievous as their rebellion against him.

Thus they walk on precipices, and flatter themselves, till the grave swallows them up, and the judgments of the great God break their lethargy, and undeceive their poor wretched souls with the anguish of the wicked, as the reward of their work.

8. This has been, is, and will be the doom of all worldly Christians: an end so dreadful, that if there were nothing of duty to God, or obligation to men, being a man, and one acquainted with the terrors of the Lord in the way and work of my own salvation, compassion alone were sufficient to excite me to this dissuasive against the world's superstitions and lusts, and to invite the professors of Christianity to the knowledge and obedience of the daily Cross of Christ, as the alone way, left by him, and appointed us to blessedness; that they who now do but usurp the name may have the thing, and by the power of the cross, to which they are now dead, instead of being dead to the world by it, may be made partakers of the resurrection that is in Christ Jesus, unto newness of life. For they that are truly in Christ, that is, redeemed by, and interested in Him, are new creatures (Gal. 6:15). They have received a new will; such as does the will of God, not their own. They pray in truth, and do not mock God, when they say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." They have new affections; such as are set on things above (Col. 3:1-3), and make Christ their eternal treasure. New faith (1 John 5:4), such as overcomes the snares and temptations of the world's spirit in themselves, or as it appears through others: and lastly, new works; not of a superstitious contrivance, or of human invention, but the pure fruits of the Spirit of Christ working in them, as love, joy, peace, meekness, long-suffering, temperance, brotherly-kindness, faith, patience, gentleness, and goodness, against which there is no law; and they that have not the Spirit of Christ, and walk not in it, the Apostle Paul has told us, are none of his (Rom. 8:9); but the wrath of God, and condemnation of the law, will lie upon them. For if there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, which is Paul's doctrine; they that walk not according to that Holy Spirit, by his doctrine, are not in Christ: that is, have no interest in Him, nor just claim to salvation by Him: and consequently there is condemnation to such.

9. And the truth is, the religion of the wicked is a lie: "there is no peace," saith the prophet, "to the wicked" (Isa. 48:22). Indeed there can be none; they are reprov'd in their own consciences, and condemn'd in their own hearts, in all their disobedience. Go where they will, rebukes go with them, and oftentimes terrors too: for it is an offended God that pricks them, and who, by his light, sets their sins in order before them. Sometimes they strive to appease Him by their corporeal framed devotion and worship, but in vain; for true worshipping of God is doing his will, which they transgress. The rest is a false compliment, like him that said he would go and did not (Matt. 21:30). Sometimes they fly to sports and company to drown the reprov'er's voice, and blunt his arrows, to chase away troubled thoughts, and secure themselves out of the reach of the disquieter of their pleasures; but the Almighty, first or last, is sure to overtake them. There is no flying his final justice, for those that reject the terms of his mercy. Impenitent rebels to his law may then call to the mountains, and run to the caves of the earth, for protection, but in vain. His all-searching eye will penetrate their thickest coverings, and strike up a light in that obscurity, which shall terrify their guilty souls; and which they shall never be able to extinguish. Indeed, their accuser is with them, they can no more be rid of him than of themselves; he is in the midst of them, and will stick close to them. That spirit which bears witness with the spirits of the just will bear witness against theirs. Nay, their own hearts will abundantly come in against them; and "if our heart condemn us," saith the Apostle John, "God is greater, and knows all things" (1 John 3:20); that is, there is no escaping the judgments of God, whose power is infinite, if a man is not able to escape the condemnation of himself. It is at that day proud and luxurious Christians shall learn that God is no respecter of persons; that all sects and names shall be swallowed up in these two kinds, sheep and goats, just and unjust: and the very righteous must have a trial for it; which made that holy man cry out, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:18). If their thoughts, words, and works must stand the test, and come under scrutiny before the impartial Judge of heaven and earth, how then should the ungodly be exempted? No; we are told by Him that cannot lie, many shall then even cry, "Lord, Lord!" set forth their profession, and recount the works that they have done in his name, to make Him propitious, and yet be rejected with this direful sentence, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I know you not" (Matt. 7:23). As if He had said, Get you gone, you evil doers; though you have professed me, I will not know you; your vain and evil lies have made you unfit for my holy kingdom: get you hence and go to the gods whom you have served; your beloved lusts which you have worshipped, and the evil world that you have so much coveted and adored: let them save you now, if they can, from the wrath to come upon you, which is the wages of the deeds you have done. Here is the end of their work that build upon the sand; the breath of the Judge will blow it down, and woeful will the fall thereof be. Oh! it is now that the righteous have the better of the wicked which made an apostate cry, in old time, "Let me die the

death of the righteous, and let my last end be like unto his" (Numb. 23:10). For the sentence is changed, and the Judge smiles; He casts the eye of love upon his own sheep, and invites them with "Come, ye blessed of my Father" (Matt. 25:34), that through patient continuance in well-doing have long waited for immortality; you have been the true companions of my tribulation and cross, and, with unwearied faithfulness, in obedience to my holy will, valiantly endured to the end, looking to me, the Author of your precious faith, for the recompense of reward that I have promised to them that love me, and faint not: Oh! enter ye into the joy of your Lord, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

10. O Christendom! my soul most fervently prays, that after all thy lofty profession of Christ, and his meek and holy religion, thy unsuitable and unChristlike life may not cast thee at that great assize of the world, and lose thee so great salvation at last. Hear me once, I beseech thee: can Christ be thy Lord, and thou not obey Him? or, canst thou be his servant, and never serve Him? "Be not deceived, such as thou sowest, shalt thou reap" (Gal. 6:7). He is none of thy Saviour whilst thou rejectest his grace in thy heart, by which He should save thee. Come, what has He saved thee from? Has He saved thee from thy sinful lusts, thy worldly affections, and vain conversations? If not, then He is none of thy Saviour. For, though He be offered a Saviour to all, yet He is actually a Saviour to those only that are saved by Him; and none are saved by Him that live in those evils by which they are lost from God, and which He came to save them from.

It is sin that Christ is come to save man from, and death and wrath, as the wages of it; but those that are not saved, that is delivered, by the power of Christ in their souls, from the power that sin has had over them, can never be saved from the death and wrath, that are the assured wages of the sin they live in.

So that look how far people obtain victory over those evil dispositions and fleshly lusts, they have been addicted to, so far they are truly saved, and are witnesses of the redemption that comes by Jesus Christ. His name shows his work: "And thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin" (Matt. 1:21. "Behold," said John, of Christ, "the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). That is, behold Him whom God hath given to enlighten people, and for salvation to as many as receive Him, and his light and grace in their hearts, and take up their daily cross and follow Him; such as rather deny themselves the pleasure of fulfilling their lusts than sin against the knowledge He has given them of his will, or do that they know they ought not to do.

CHAPTER II

BY all which has been said, O Christendom! and by that hotter help, if thou wouldst use it, the lamp the Lord has lighted in thee, not utterly extinct, it may evidently appear, first, how great and full thy backsliding has been, who, from the temple of the Lord, art become a cage of unclean birds; and of a house of prayer, a den of thieves, a synagogue of Satan, and the receptacle of every defiled spirit.

Next, that under all this manifest defection, thou hast nevertheless valued thy corrupt self upon thy profession of Christianity, and fearfully deluded thyself with the hopes of salvation. The first makes thy disease dangerous, but the last almost incurable.

2. Yet, because there is mercy with God that He may be feared, and that He takes no delight in the eternal death of poor sinners, no, though backsliders themselves (Ezek. 18: 20, 23, 24). but is willing all should come to the knowledge and obedience of the Truth, and be saved, He hath set forth his Son a propitiation, and given Him as a Saviour to take away the sins of the whole world. that those that believe and follow Him may feel the

righteousness of God in the remission of their sins, and blotting out their transgressions for ever (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:77; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:24-28; 1 John 2:1,2). Now, behold the remedy! an infallible cure, one of God's appointing; a precious elixir, indeed, that never fails; and that universal medicine which no malady could ever escape.

3. But, thou wilt say, What is Christ? and where is He to be found? and how received and applied. in order to this mighty cure? I tell thee then, first, He is the great spiritual light of the world that enlightens every one that comes into the world; by which He manifests to them their deeds of darkness and wickedness, and reproves them for committing them. Secondly, He is not far away from thee (Acts 17:27), as the Apostle Paul said of God to the Athenians. "Behold," says Christ Himself, "I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and be with me" (Rev. 3:20). What door can this be but that of the heart of man?

4. Thou, like the inn of old, hast been full of guests; thy affections have entertained other lovers; there has been no room for thy Saviour in thy soul. Wherefore salvation is not yet come into thy house, though it is come to thy door, and thou hast been often proffered it, and hast professed it long. But if He calls, if He knocks still, that is, if his light yet shines, if it reproves thee still, there is hope thy day is not over, and that repentance is not yet hid from thine eyes; but his love is after thee still, and his holy invitation continues to save thee.

Wherefore, O Christendom! believe, receive, and apply Him rightly; this is of absolute necessity, that thy soul may live for ever with Him. He told the Jews, "If thou believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins; and whither I go ye cannot come" (John 8:21,24). And because they believed Him not, they did not receive Him, nor any benefit by Him. But they that believed Him received Him; and as many as received Him, his own beloved disciple tells us, "to them gave he power to become the sons of God, which are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12,13). That is, who are not children of God after the fashions, prescriptions, and traditions of men, that call themselves his church and people, which is not after the will of flesh and blood, and the invention of carnal man, unacquainted with the regeneration and power of the Holy Ghost, but of God; that is according to his will and the working and sanctification of his Spirit and word of life in them. And such were ever well versed in the right application of Christ, for He was made to them indeed propitiation, reconciliation, salvation, righteousness, redemption, and justification.

So I say to thee, unless thou believest that He that stands at the door of thy heart and knocks, and sets thy sins in order before thee, and calls thee to repentance, be the Saviour of the world, thou wilt die in thy sins, and where He is gone thou wilt never come. For if thou believest not in Him, it is impossible that He should do thee good, or effect thy salvation; Christ works not against faith, but by it. It is said of old, "He did not many mighty works in some places, because the people believed not in him" (Matt. 13:58; Mark 6:5). So that, if thou truly believest in Him, thine ear will be attentive to his voice in thee, and the door of thine heart open to his knocks. Thou wilt yield to the discoveries of his light, and the teachings of his grace will be very dear to thee.

5. It is the nature of true faith to beget a holy fear of offending God, a deep reverence to his precepts, and a most tender regard to the inward testimony of his Spirit, as that by which his children in all ages have been safely led to glory. For, as they that truly believe receive Christ in all his tenders to the soul, so as true it is that those who receive Him thus, with Him receive power to become the sons of God; that is, an inward force and ability to do whatever He requires; strength to mortify their lusts, control their affections, resist evil motions, deny themselves, and overcome the world in its most enticing appearances. This is the life of the blessed Cross of Christ, which is the subject of the following discourse, and what thou, O man, must take up, if thou intendest to be the disciple of Jesus. Nor canst thou be said to receive Christ, or to believe in Him, whilst thou rejectest his cross. For, as receiving of Christ is the means appointed of God to salvation, so bearing the daily cross after Him, is the only true testimony of receiving Him, and therefore it is enjoined by Him as the great token of discipleship, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

This, Christendom, is that thou hast so much wanted, and the want of which has proved the only cause of thy miserable declension from pure Christianity. To consider which well, as it is thy duty, so it is of great use to thy restoration.

For as the knowledge of the cause of any distemper guides the physician to make a right and safe judgment in the application of his medicine, so it will much enlighten thee in the way of thy recovery, to know and weigh the first cause of this spiritual lapse and malady that has befallen thee. To do which, a general view of thy primitive estate, and consequently of their work that first laboured in the Christian vineyard, will be needful; and if therein something be repeated, the weight and dignity of the subject will bear it, without the need of an apology.

6. The work of apostleship, we are told by a prime labourer in it, was to turn people "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). That is, instead of yielding to the temptations and motions of Satan, who is the prince of darkness or wickedness, the one being a metaphor to the other, by whose power their understandings were obscured, and their souls held in the service of sin, they should turn their minds to the appearance of Christ, the Light and Saviour of the world; who by his light shines in their souls, and reproveth them when they give way thereunto; that so they might become the children of light, and walk in the path of righteousness. And for this blessed work of reformation did Christ endue his apostles with his spirit and power, that so men might not longer sleep in a security of sin and ignorance of God, but awake to righteousness, that the Lord Jesus might give them life; that is, that they might leave off sinning, deny themselves the pleasure of wickedness, and, by true repentance, turn their hearts to God in well-doing, in which is peace. And truly God so blessed the faithful labours of these poor mechanics, yet his great ambassadors to mankind, that in a few years many thousands that had lived without God in the world, without a sense or fear of Him, lawlessly, very strangers to the work of his spirit in their hearts, being captivated by fleshly lusts, were inwardly struck and quickened by the word of life, and made sensible of the coming and power of the Lord Jesus Christ as a judge and lawgiver in their souls, by whose holy light and spirit the hidden things of darkness were brought to light and condemned, and pure repentance from those dead works begotten in them, that they might serve the living God in newness of spirit. So that thenceforward they lived not to themselves, neither were they carried away of those former divers lusts, by which they had been seduced from the true fear of God; but "the law of the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2), by which they overcame the law of sin and death, was their delight, and therein did they meditate day and night. Their regard towards God was not taught by the precepts of men any longer (Isa. 29:13), but from the knowledge they had received by his own work and impressions in their souls. They had quitted their old masters, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and delivered up themselves to the holy guidance of the grace of Christ, that taught them to "deny ungodliness and the world's lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present life" (Titus 2:11,12): this is the Cross of Christ indeed, and here is the victory it gives to them that take it up; by this cross they died daily to the old life they had lived, and by holy watchfulness against the secret motions of evil in their hearts they crushed sin in its conceptions, yea, in its temptations. So that they, as the Apostle John advised them, "kept themselves, that the evil one touched them not" (1 John 4:18).

For the light, which Satan cannot endure, and with which Christ had enlightened them, discovered him in all his approaches and assaults upon the mind; and the power they received through their inward obedience to the manifestations of that blessed light, enabled them to resist and vanquish him in all his stratagems. And thus it was that, where once nothing was examined, nothing went unexamined; every thought must come to judgment, and the rise and tendency of it be also well approved, before they allowed it any room in their minds. There was no fear of entertaining enemies for friends, whilst this strict guard was kept upon the very wicket of the soul. Now the old heavens and earth, that is, the old earthly conversation, and old carnal, that is, Jewish or shadowy worship, passed away apace, and every day all things became new. He was no more a Jew that was one outwardly, nor that circumcision that was in the flesh; but he was the Jew that was one inwardly, and that circumcision which was of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of man, but of God (Rom. 2:28,29).

7. Indeed, the glory of the cross shined so conspicuously through the self-denial of their lives who daily bore it, that it struck the heathen with astonishment; and in a small time so shook their altars, discredited their oracles, struck the multitude, invaded the court, and overcame their armies, that it led priests, magistrates, and generals in triumph after it, as the trophies of its power and victory.

And, while this integrity dwelt with Christians, mighty was the presence, and invincible that power that attended them; it quenched fire, daunted lions, turned the edge of the sword, outfaced instruments of cruelty, convicted judges, and converted executioners (Heb. 11:32-40; Isa. 43:2; Dan. 3:12-30). In fine, the way their enemies took to destroy, increased them; and, by the deep wisdom of God, they who in all their designs endeavoured to extinguish the truth were made great promoters of it (Dan. 6:16-28). Now, not a vain thought, not an idle word, not an unseemly action was permitted; no, not an immodest look, no courtly dress, gay apparel, complimentary respects, or personal honours; much less those lewd immoralities and scandalous vices, now in vogue with Christians, could find either example or connivance among them. Their care was not how to sport away their precious time, but how to redeem it (Eph. v. x5, ~6), that they might have enough to work out their great salvation, which they carefully did, with fear and trembling: not with balls and masks, with playhouses, dancing, feasting, and gaming; no, no; to make sure of their heavenly calling and election was much dearer to them than the poor and trifling joys of mortality. For they having, with Moses, seen Him that is invisible, and found that his loving-kindness was better than life, the peace of his Spirit than the favour of princes--as they feared not Caesar's wrath--so they chose rather to sustain the afflictions of Christ's true pilgrims than enjoy the pleasures of sin that were but for a season; esteeming his reproaches of more value than the perishing treasures of the earth. And if the tribulations of Christianity were more eligible than the comforts of the world, and the reproaches of one than all the honour of the other, there was then surely no temptation in it that could shake the integrity of Christendom.

8. By this short draught of what Christendom was, thou mayest see, O Christendom, what thou art not, and consequently what thou oughtest to be. But how comes it that from a Christendom that was thus meek, merciful, self-denying, suffering, temperate, holy, just, and good, so like to Christ, whose name she bore, we find a Christendom now that is superstitious, idolatrous, persecuting, proud, passionate, envious, malicious, selfish, drunken, lascivious, unclean, lying, swearing, cursing, covetous, oppressing, defrauding, with all other abominations known in the earth?

I lay this down as the undoubted reason of this degeneracy, to wit, the inward disregard of thy mind to the light of Christ shining in thee, that first showed thee thy sins and reprov'd them, and that taught and enabled thee to deny and resist them. For as thy fear towards God, and holy abstinence from unrighteousness, was, at first, not taught by the precepts of men, but by that light and grace which revealed the most secret thoughts and purposes of thine heart, and searched the most inward parts, setting thy sins in order before thee, and reprov'ing thee for them, not suffering one unfruitful thought, word, or work of darkness to go unjudged; so when thou didst begin to disregard that light and grace, to be careless of that holy watch that was once set up in thine heart, and didst not keep sentinel there, as formerly, for God's glory and thine own peace, the restless enemy of man's good quickly took advantage of this slackness, and often surprised thee with temptations, whose suitableness to thy inclinations made his conquest over thee not difficult.

In short, thou didst omit to take up Christ's holy yoke, to bear thy daily cross; thou wast careless of thy affections, and kept no journal or check upon thy actions: but didst decline to audit accounts in thy own conscience, with Christ thy light, the great Bishop of thy soul and Judge of thy works, whereby the holy fear decayed and love waxed cold, vanity abounded, and duty became burdensome. Then up came formality, instead of the power of godliness; superstition, in place of Christ's institution: and whereas Christ's business was to draw off the minds of his disciples from an outward temple, and carnal rites and services, to the inward and spiritual worship of God, suitable to the nature of divinity, a worldly, human, pompous worship is brought in again, and a worldly priesthood, temple, and altar, are re-established. Now it was that the sons of God once more saw the daughters of men were fair (Gen. 6:2), that is, the pure eye grew dim, which repentance had opened, that saw no comeliness out of Christ, and the eye of lust became unclosed again by the god of the

world; and those worldly pleasures that make such as love them forget God, though once despised for the sake of Christ, began now to recover their old beauty and interest in thy affections, and, from liking them, to be the study, care, and pleasure of thy life.

True, there still remained the exterior forms of worship and a nominal and oral reverence to God and Christ, but that was all; for the offence of the holy cross ceased, the power of godliness was denied, self-denial lost, and, though fruitful in the invention of ceremonious ornaments, yet barren in the blessed fruits of the Spirit. And a thousand shells cannot make one kernel, or many dead corpses one living man.

9. Thus religion fell from experience to tradition, and worship from power to form, from life to letter; and, instead of putting up lively and powerful requests, animated by a deep sense of want and the assistance of the Holy Spirit--by which the ancients prayed, wrestled, and prevailed with God--behold a by-rote mumpsimus, a dull and insipid formality, made up of corporeal bowings and cringings, garments and furnitures, perfumes, voices, and music, fitter for the reception of some earthly prince than the heavenly worship of the one true and immortal God, who is an eternal, invisible Spirit.

But thy heart growing carnal, thy religion did so too; and not liking it as it was, thou fashionedst it to thy liking: forgetting what the holy prophet said, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 15:8), and what James saith, "Ye ask, and receive not" (James 4:3). Why? "Because ye ask amiss;" that is, with a heart that is not right, but insincere, unmortified, not in the faith that purifies the soul, and therefore can never receive what is asked: so that a man may say with truth, thy condition is worse by thy religion, because thou art tempted to think thyself better for it, and art not.

10. Well; by this prospect that is given thee of thy foul fall from primitive Christianity, and the true cause of it--to wit, a neglect of the daily Cross of Christ--it may be easy for thee to inform thyself of the way of thy recovery.

For, look at what door thou wentest out, at that door thou must come in; and, as letting fall and forbearing the daily cross lost thee, so taking up and enduring the daily cross must recover thee. It is the same way by which the sinners and apostates become the disciples of Jesus. "Whosoever," says Christ, "will come after me and be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his daily cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 14:27). Nothing short of this will do; mark that! for, as it is sufficient, so is it indispensable; no crown but by the cross, no life eternal but through death; and it is but just that those evil and barbarous affections that crucified Christ afresh should, by his holy cross, be crucified.

CHAPTER III

THE daily cross being then, and still, O Christendom! the way to glory, that the succeeding matter, which wholly relates to the doctrine of it, may come with most evidence and advantage upon thy conscience, it is most seriously to be considered by thee,--

First, What is the Cross of Christ?

Secondly, Where is the Cross of Christ to be taken up?

Thirdly, How and after what manner is it to be borne?

Fourthly, What is the great work and business of the cross? In which, the sins it crucifies, with the mischiefs that attends them, will be at large expressed.

Fifthly and lastly, I shall add many testimonies from living and dying persons of great reputation, either for their quality, learning, or piety, as a general confirmation of the whole tract.

To the first, What is the Cross of Christ.?

1. The Cross of Christ is a figurative speech, borrowed from the outward tree, or wooden cross, on which Christ submitted to the will of God, suffering death at the hands of evil men. So that the cross mystical is that divine grace and power which crosseth the carnal wills of men, and gives a contradiction to their corrupt affections, and that constantly opposeth itself to the inordinate and fleshly appetite of their minds, and so may be justly termed the instrument of man's wholly dying to the world, and being made conformable to the will of God. For nothing else can mortify sin, or make it easy for us to submit to the divine will in things otherwise very contrary to our own.

2. The preaching of the cross, therefore, in primitive times was fitly called by Paul, that famous and skilful apostle in spiritual things, "the power of God," though to them that perish, then, as now, "foolishness." That is, to those that were truly weary and heavy laden, and needed a deliverer, to whom sin was burdensome and odious, the preaching of the cross, by which sin was to be mortified, was, as to them, the power of God, or a preaching of the divine power by which they were made disciples of Christ and children of God; and it wrought so powerfully upon them that no proud nor licentious mockers could put them out of love with it. But to those that walked in the broad way, in the full latitude of their lusts, and dedicated their time and care to the pleasure of their corrupt appetites, to whom all yoke and bridle were and are intolerable, the preaching of the cross was and is foolishness.

3. Well: but then where does this cross appear, and where must it be taken up?

I answer, within: that is, in the heart and soul; for where the sin is, the cross must be. Now all evil comes from within: this Christ taught: "From within," saith Christ, "out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evils come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 8:21-23).

The heart of man is the seat of sin, and where he is defiled he must be sanctified: and where sin lives, there it must die: it must be crucified. Custom in evil hath made it natural to men to do evil; and as the soul rules the body, so the corrupt nature sways the whole man; but still, it is all from within.

4. Experience teaches every son and daughter of Adam to assent to this; for the enemy's temptations are ever directed to the mind, which is within: if they take not, the soul sins not; if they are embraced, lust is presently conceived, that is, inordinate desires; lust conceived, brings forth sin; and sin finished, that is, acted, brings forth death (James 1:15). Here is both the cause and the effect, the very genealogy of sin, its rise and end. In all this, the heart of evil man is the devil's mint, his workhouse, the place of his residence, where he exercises his power and art. And therefore the redemption of the soul is aptly called the destruction of the works of the devil, and bringing in of everlasting righteousness (1 John 3:8; Dan.9:24). When the Jews would have defamed Christ's miracle of casting out devils, by a blasphemous imputation of it to the power of Beelzebub, He says that "no man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, till he first bind the strong man" (Matt. 12:29). Which, as it shows the contrariety that was between Beelzebub and the power by which he dispossessed him, so it teaches us to know that the souls of the wicked are the devil's house, and that his goods, his evil works, can never be destroyed till first he that wrought them, and keeps the house, be bound. All which makes it easy to know where the cross must be taken up, by which alone the strong man must be bound, his goods spoiled, and his temptations resisted, that is within, in the heart of man.

5. But in the next place, how and in what manner is the cross to be daily borne?

The way, like the cross, is spiritual: that is, an inward submission of the soul to the will of God, as it is manifested by the light of Christ in the consciences of men, though it be contrary to their own inclinations. For example: when evil presents, that which shows the evil does also tell them they should not yield to it; and if they close with its counsel, it gives them power to escape it. But they that look and gaze upon the temptation, at last fall in with it, and are overcome by it; the consequence of which is guilt and judgment. Therefore, as the Cross of Christ is that spirit and power in men, though not of men, but of God, which crosseth and reproveth their fleshly lusts and affections; so the way of taking up the cross is an entire resignation of soul to the discoveries and requireing of it: not to consult their worldly pleasure, or carnal ease, or interest, for such are captivated in a moment, but continually to watch against the very appearances of evil, and by the obedience of faith, that is, of true love to, and confidence in God, cheerfully to offer up to the death of the cross, that evil part, that Judas in themselves, which, not enduring the heat of the siege, and being impatient in the hour of temptation, would by its near relation to the tempter, more easily betray their souls into his hands.

6. Oh! this shows to every one's experience how hard it is to be a true disciple of Jesus. The way is narrow indeed, and the gate very strait, where not a word, nor not a thought must slip the watch (Matt. 24:42; 25:13; 26:38-41); or escape judgment: such circumspection, such caution, such patience, such constancy, such holy fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). This gives an easy interpretation to that hard saying, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50); those that are captivated with fleshly lusts and affections: for they cannot bear the cross; and they that cannot endure the cross must never have the crown. To reign, it is necessary first to suffer (2 Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17).

CHAPTER IV

BUT fourthly, What is the great work and business of the cross respecting man?

Answer 1. This is indeed of that mighty moment to be truly, plainly, and thoroughly answered, that all that went before seems only to serve for preface to it; and miscarrying in it to be no less than a misguidance of the soul about its way to blessedness. I shall therefore pursue the question with God's help, and the best knowledge He hath given me in the experience of several years' discipleship.

2. The great work and business of the Cross of Christ in man is self-denial; a word of as much depth in itself as of sore contradiction to the world, little understood but less embraced by it, yet it must be borne for all that. The Son of God is gone before us, and, by the bitter cup He drank, and the baptism He suffered, has left us an example that we should follow in his steps, which made Him put that hard question to the wife of Zebedee and her two sons, upon her soliciting that one might sit at his right and the other at his left hand in his kingdom, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" It seems their faith was strong; they answered, "We are able." Upon which He replied, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with;" but their reward He left to his Father (Matt. 20:21-23).

3. What was his cup He drank, and baptism He suffered? I answer, they were the denial and offering up of Himself by the eternal Spirit to the will of God, undergoing the tribulations of his life and agonies of his death upon the cross for man's salvation.

4. What is our cup and cross that we should drink and suffer? They are the denial and offering up of ourselves, by the same Spirit, to do or suffer the will of God for his service and glory, which is the true life and obedience of the cross of Jesus; narrow still, but before an unbeaten way. For when there was none to help, not one to open the seals, to give knowledge, to direct the course of poor man's recovery, He came in the greatness of his love

and strength; and though clothed with the infirmities of a mortal man, being within fortified with the almightiness of an immortal God, He travelled through all the straits and difficulties of humanity, and first, of all others, trod the untrodden path to blessedness.

5. O come! let us follow Him, the most unwearied, the most victorious Captain of our salvation; to whom all the great Alexanders and mighty Caesars of the world are less than the poorest soldier of their camps could be to them. True, they were all great princes of their kind, and conquerors too, but on very different principles. For Christ made Himself of no reputation to save mankind; but these plentifully ruined people to augment theirs. They vanquished others, not themselves; Christ conquered self, that ever vanquished them; of merit therefore the most excellent Prince and Conqueror. Besides, they advanced their empire by rapine and blood, but He by suffering and persuasion; He never by compulsion, they always by force prevailed. Misery and slavery followed all their victories, his brought greater freedom and felicity to those He overcame. In all they did they sought to please themselves; in all He did He aimed to please his Father, who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

It is this most perfect pattern of self-denial we must follow, if ever we will come to glory; to do which let us consider self-denial in its true distinction and extent.

6. There is a lawful and unlawful self: and both must be denied for the sake of Him, who in submission to the will of God counted nothing dear that He might save us. And, though the world be scarcely in any part of it at that pass as yet to need that lesson of the denial of lawful self, that every day most greedily sacrifices to the pleasure of unlawful self; yet to take the whole thing before me, and for that it may possibly meet with some that are so far advanced in this spiritual warfare as to receive some service from it, I shall at least touch upon it.

7. The lawful self which we are to deny is that conveniency, ease, enjoyment, and plenty, which in themselves are so far from being evil, that they are the bounty and blessings of God to us, as husband, wife, child, house, land, reputation, liberty, and life itself; these are God's favours, which we may enjoy with lawful pleasure and justly improve as our honest interest. But when God requires them, at what time soever the lender calls for them or is pleased to try our affections by our parting with them; I say, when they are brought in competition with Him, they must not be preferred, they must be denied. Christ Himself descended from the glory of his Father, and willingly made Himself of no reputation among men, that He might make us of some with God; and, from the quality of thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, He humbled Himself to the poor form of a servant; yea, the ignominious death of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8).

8. It is the doctrine He teaches us in these words, "He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37). Again, "Whoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). And He plainly told the young rich man that if he would have eternal life, he should sell all and follow Him (Mark 10:21,22); a doctrine sad to him as it is to those that, like him, for all their high pretences to religion, in truth love their possessions more than Christ. This doctrine of self-denial is the condition of eternal happiness, "He that will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

9. This made those honest fishermen quit their lawful trades and follow Him, when He called them to it, and others that waited for the consolation of Israel to offer up their estates, reputations, liberties, and also lives, to the displeasure and fury of their kindred and the government they lived under, for the spiritual advantage that accrued to them by their faithful adherence to his holy doctrine. True, many would have excused their following Him in the parable of the feast; some had bought land, some had married wives, and others had bought yokes of oxen, and could not come (Luke 14:18-20); that is, an immoderate love of the world hindered them: their lawful enjoyments, from servants became their idols; they worshipped them more than God, and would not quit them to come to God. But this is recorded to their reproach; and we may herein see the power of self upon the worldly man, and the danger that comes to him by the abuse of lawful things. What, thy wife dearer to thee than thy Saviour! and thy land and oxen preferred before thy soul's salvation! Oh! beware that thy comforts prove

not snares first, and then curses: to overrate them is to provoke Him that gave them to take them away again: come, and follow Him that giveth life eternal to the soul.

10. Woe to them that have their hearts in their earthly possessions, for when they are gone, their heaven is gone with them. It is too much the sin of the greatest part of the world, that they stick in the comforts of it. And it is lamentable to behold how their affections are bemired and entangled with their conveniences and accommodations in it. The true self-denying man is a pilgrim; but the selfish man is an inhabitant of the world: the one uses it, as men do ships, to transport themselves or tackle in a journey, that is, to get home; the other looks no further, whatever he prates, than to be fixed in fulness and ease here, and likes it so well, that if he could, he would not exchange. However, he will not trouble himself to think of the other world, till he is sure he must live no longer in this: but then, alas! it may prove too late; not to Abraham, but to Dives he may go; the story is as true as sad.

11. But, on the other hand, it is not for nought that the disciples of Jesus deny themselves; and indeed, Christ Himself had the eternal joy in his eye: "For the joy that was set before him," says the author to the Hebrews, "he endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2); that is, He denied Himself, and bore the reproaches and death of the wicked; and despised the shame, to wit, the dishonour and derision of the world. It made Him not afraid nor shrink; He contemned it; and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. And to their encouragement, and great consolation, when Peter asked Him, what they should have that had forsaken all to follow Him, He answered them, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:27-29), that were then in an apostasy from the life and power of godliness. This was the lot of his disciples, the more immediate companions of his tribulations, and first messengers of his kingdom. But the next that follows is to all: and "every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matt. 19:29). It was this recompense of reward, this eternal crown of righteousness, that in every age has raised, in the souls of the just, a holy neglect, yea, contempt of the world. To this is owing the constancy of the martyrs, as to their blood, the triumph of the Truth.

12. Nor is this a new doctrine; it is as old as Abraham (Gen. 12.). In several most remarkable instances, his life was made up of self-denial. First, in quitting his own land, where we may well suppose him settled in the midst of plenty, at least sufficiency: and why? Because God called him. Indeed this should be reason enough, but such is the world's degeneracy that in fact it is not: and the same act, upon the same inducement, in any now, though praised in Abraham, would be derided. So apt are people not to understand what they commend; nay, to despise those actions, when they meet them in the people of their own times, which they pretend to admire in their ancestors.

13. But he obeyed: the consequence was, that God gave him a mighty land. This was the first reward of his obedience. The next was, a son in his old age; and, which greatened the blessing, after it had been, in nature, past the time of his wife's bearing of children (Gen. 12:1,2). Yet God called for his darling, their only child, the joy of their age, the son of a miracle, and he upon whom the fulfilling of the promise made to Abraham did depend. For this son, I say, God called: a mighty trial: that which, one would have thought, might very well have overturned his faith, and stumbled his integrity: at least have put him upon this dispute in himself: This command is unreasonable and cruel: it is the tempter's, it cannot be God's. For, is it to be thought that God gave me a son to make a sacrifice of him? that the father should be a butcher of his only child? Again, that He should require me to offer up the son of his own promise, by whom his covenant is to be performed; this is incredible. I say, thus Abraham might naturally enough have argued, to withstand the voice of God, and indulge his great affections to his beloved Isaac. But good old Abraham, that knew the voice that had promised him a son had not forgotten to know it when it required him back again; he disputes not, though it looked strange, and perhaps with some surprise and horror, as a man. He had learned to believe that God, that gave him a child by a miracle, could work another to preserve or restore him. His affections could not balance his duty, much less overcome his faith; for he received him in a way that would let him doubt of nothing that God had promised to him.

To the voice of this Almighty he bows, builds an altar, binds his only son upon it, kindles the fire, and stretches forth his hand to take the knife; but the angel stopped the stroke: Hold, Abraham, thy integrity is proved. What followed? a ram served, and Isaac was his again. This shows how little serves, where all is resigned, and how mean a sacrifice contents the Almighty, where the heart is approved. So that it is not the sacrifice that recommends the heart, but the heart that gives the sacrifice acceptance.

God often touches our best comforts, and calls for that which we most love, and are least willing to part with. Not that He always take it utterly away, but to prove the soul's integrity, to caution us from excesses, and that we may remember God, the author of those blessings we possess, and live loose to them. I speak my experience: the way to keep our enjoyments is to resign them; and though that be hard, it is sweet to see them returned, as Isaac was to his father Abraham, with more love and blessing than before. O stupid world! O worldly Christians, not only strangers, but enemies to this excellent faith! and whilst so, the rewards of it you can never know.

14. But Job presses hard upon Abraham: his self-denial also was very signal. For when the messengers of his afflictions came thick upon him, one doleful story after another, till he was left almost as naked as when he was born; the first thing he did, he fell to the ground, and worshipped that power, and kissed that hand that stripped him; so far from murmuring, that he concludes his losses of estate and children with these words: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). O the deep faith, patience, and contentment of this excellent man! one would have thought this repeated news of rum had been enough to have upset his confidence in God; but it did not; that staid him. But indeed he tells us why; his Redeemer lived; "I know," says he, "that my Redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25,26). And it appeared he did: for He had redeemed him from the world: his heart was not in his worldly comforts: his hope lived above the joys of time and troubles of mortality; not tempted by the one, nor shaken by the other; but firmly believed, that when after his skin worms should have consumed his body, yet with his eyes he should see his God. Thus was the heart of Job both submitted to and comforted in the will of God.

15. Moses is the next great example in sacred story for remarkable self-denial, before the times of Christ's appearance in the flesh. He had been saved when an infant, by an extraordinary providence, and it seems, by what followed, for an extraordinary service: Pharaoh's daughter, whose compassion was the means of his preservation, when the king decreed the slaughter of the Hebrew males (Exod. 1:15,16), took him for her son, and gave him the education of her father's court. His own graceful presence and extraordinary abilities, joined with her love for him, and interest in her father to promote him, must have rendered him, if not capable of succession, at least of being chief minister of affairs under that wealthy and powerful prince. For Egypt was then what Athens and Rome were after, the most famous for learning, art, and glory.

16. But Moses, ordained for other work and guided by a higher principle, no sooner came to years of discretion, than the impiety of Egypt, and the oppressions of his brethren there, grew a burden too heavy for him to bear. And though so wise and good a man could not want those generous and grateful acknowledgments, that became the kindness of the king's daughter to him; yet he had also seen that God that was invisible (Heb. 11:24-27); and did not dare to live in the ease and plenty of Pharaoh's house, whilst his poor brethren were required to make brick without straw (Exod. 5:7,16).

Thus the fear of the Almighty taking deep hold of his heart, he nobly refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and chose rather a life of affliction, with the most despised and oppressed Israelites, and to be the companion of their tribulations and jeopardies, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproaches of Christ, which he suffered for making that unworldly choice, greater riches than all the treasures of that kingdom.

17. Nor was he so foolish as they thought him; he had reason on his side; for it is said, he had an eye to the recompense of reward, he did but refuse a lesser benefit for a greater. In this his wisdom transcended that of the

Egyptians; for they made the present world their choice, as uncertain as the weather, and so lost that which has no end. Moses looked deeper, and weighed the enjoyments of this life in the scales of eternity, and found they made no weight there. He governed himself not by the immediate possession, but the nature and duration of the reward. His faith corrected his affections, and taught him to sacrifice the pleasures of self, to the hope he had of a future more excellent recompense.

18. Isaiah was no inconsiderable instance of this blessed self-denial; who of a courtier became a prophet, and left the worldly interests of the one for the faith, patience, and sufferings of the other. For his choice did not only lose him the favour of men, but their wickedness, enraged at his integrity to God, in his fervent and bold reproofs of them, made a martyr of him in the end, for they barbarously sawed him asunder in the reign of king Manasseh. Thus died that excellent man, and commonly called the Evangelical Prophet.

19. I shall add, of many, one example more, and that is from the fidelity of Daniel; a holy and wise young man, who, when his external advantages came in competition with his duty to Almighty God, relinquished them all; and, instead of being solicitous how to secure himself, as one minding nothing less, he was, to the utmost hazard of himself, most careful how to preserve the honour of God, by his fidelity to his will. And though at the first it exposed him to ruin, yet, as an instance of great encouragement to all that like him will choose to keep a good conscience in an evil time, at last it advanced him greatly in the world; and the God of Daniel was made famous and terrible through his perseverance even in the eyes of heathen kings.

20. What shall I say of all the rest, who counted nothing dear that they might do the will of God, abandoned their worldly comforts, and exposed their ease and safety, as often as the heavenly vision called them, to the wrath and malice of degenerate princes and an apostate church? More especially Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Micah, who, after they had denied themselves, in obedience to the divine voice, sealed their testimony with their blood.

Thus was self-denial the practice and glory of the ancients, that were predecessors to the coming of Christ in the flesh: and shall we hope to go to heaven without it now, when our Saviour Himself is become the most excellent example of it? and that not as some would fain have it, viz. for us, that we need not; but for us, that we might deny ourselves, and so be the true followers of his blessed example (1 Peter 2:21).

21. Whoever therefore thou art that wouldst do the will of God, but faintest in thy desires, from the opposition of worldly considerations, remember I tell thee, in the name of Christ, that he that prefers father or mother, sister or brother, wife or child, house or land, reputation, honour, office, liberty, or life, before the testimony of the light of Jesus in his own conscience, shall be rejected of Him in the solemn and general inquest upon the world, when all shall be judged, and receive according to the deeds done, not the profession made, in this life. It was the doctrine of Jesus, that if thy right hand offend thee, thou must cut it off; and if thy right eye offend thee, thou must pluck it out (Matt. 5:29, 30): that is, if the most dear, the most useful and tender comforts thou enjoyest, stand in thy soul's way, and interrupt thy obedience to the voice of God, and thy conformity to his holy will revealed in thy soul, thou art engaged, under the penalty of damnation, to part with them.

22. The way of God is a way of faith, as dark to sense as mortal to self. It is the children of obedience, who count, with holy Paul, all things dross and dung, that they may win Christ, and know and walk in this narrow way. Speculation will not do, nor can refined notions enter; the obedient only eat the good of this land (Isa. 1:19). They that do his will, says the blessed Jesus, shall know of the doctrine (John 7:17); them He will instruct. There is no room for instruction, where lawful self is lord, and not servant. For self cannot receive it; that which should, is oppressed by self, fearful, and dare not. Oh! what will my father or mother say? How will my husband use me? or finally, What will the magistrate do with me? For though I have a most powerful persuasion, and clear conviction upon my soul, of this or that thing, yet considering how unmodish it is, what enemies it has, and how strange and singular I shall seem to them, I hope God will pity my weakness: if I sink, I am but flesh and blood; it may be hereafter He may better enable me; and there is time enough. Thus selfish, fearful man.

But deliberating is ever worst; for the soul loses in parley: the manifestation brings power with it. Never did God convince people, but, upon submission, He empowered them. He requires nothing without giving ability to perform it: that were mocking, not saving men. It is enough for thee to do thy duty, that God shews thee thy duty; provided thou closest with that light and spirit by which He gives thee that knowledge. They that want power are such as do not receive Christ in his convictions upon the soul, and such will always want it; but such as do, they receive power, like those of old, to become the children of God, through the pure obedience of faith.

23. Wherefore, let me beseech you, by the love and mercy of God, by the life and death of Christ, by the power of his Spirit, and the hope of immortality, that you, whose hearts are established in your temporal comforts, and so lovers of self more than of these heavenly things, would let the time past suffice: that you would not think it enough to be clear of such impieties, as too many are found in, whilst your inordinate love of lawful things has defiled your enjoyment of them, and drawn your hearts from the fear, love, obedience, and self-denial of a true disciple of Jesus. Turn about then, and hearken to the still voice in thy conscience; it tells thee thy sins, and thy misery in them; it gives a lively discovery of the very vanity of the world, and opens to the soul some prospect of eternity, and the comforts of the just that are at rest. If thou adhere to this, it will divorce thee from sin and self: thou wilt soon find that the power of its charms exceeds that of wealth, honour, and beauty of the world, and finally will give thee that tranquility which the storms of time can never shipwreck nor disorder. Here all thy enjoyments are blest, though small, yet great by that presence that is within them.

Even in this world the righteous have the better of it, for they use the world without rebuke, because they do not abuse it. They see and bless the hand that feeds, and clothes, and preserves them. And as by beholding Him in all his works, they do not adore them but Him; so the sweetness of his blessings that gives them is an advantage such have upon those that see Him not. Besides, in their increase, they are not lifted up, nor in their adversities are they cast down: and why? Because they are moderated in the one, and comforted in the other, by his divine presence.

In short, heaven is the throne, and the earth but the footstool of that man that hath self under foot. And those that know that station will not easily be moved; such learn to number their days, that they may not be surprised with their dissolution; and to redeem their time, because their days are evil (Ephes. 5:16); remembering they are stewards, and must deliver up their accounts to an impartial judge. Therefore not to self but to Him they live, and in Him die, and are blessed with them that die in the Lord. And thus I conclude my discourse on the right use of lawful self.

CHAPTER V

I AM now come to unlawful self, which, more or less, is the immediate concern of much the greater part of mankind. This unlawful self is two-fold. First, that which relates to religious worship: secondly, that which concerns moral and civil conversation in the world. And they are both of infinite consequence to be considered by us. In which I shall be as brief as I may, with ease to my conscience, and no injury to the matter.

2. That unlawful self in religion, that ought to be mortified by the Cross of Christ is man's invention and performance of worship to God as divine, which is not so, either in its institution or performance. In this great error those people have the van of all that attribute to themselves the name of Christians, that are most exterior, pompous, and superstitious in their worship; for they do not only miss exceedingly by a spiritual unpreparedness, in the way of their performing worship to God Almighty, who is an Eternal Spirit; but the worship itself is composed of what is utterly inconsistent with the very form and practice of Christ's doctrine,

and the apostolical example. For whereas that was plain and spiritual, this is gaudy and worldly: Christ's most inward and mental, theirs most outward and corporeal: that suited to the nature of God, who is a spirit, this accommodated to the most carnal part. So that, instead of excluding flesh and blood, behold a worship calculated to gratify them: as if the business were not to present God with a worship to please Him, but to make one to please themselves. A worship dressed with such stately buildings and imagery, rich furnitures and garments, rare voices and music, costly lamps, wax candles, and perfumes; and all acted with that most pleasing variety to the external senses that art can invent or cost procure; as if the world were to turn Jew or Egyptian again; or that God was an old man indeed, and Christ a little boy, to be treated with a kind of religious mask, for so they picture Him in their temples, and too many in their minds. And the truth is, such a worship may very well suit such an idea of God: for when men can think Him such a one as themselves, it is not to be wondered if they address Him in a way that would be the most pleasing from others to themselves.

3. But what said the Almighty to such a sensual people of old, much upon the like occasion? "Thou thoughtest I was such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver." But, "to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God" (Psalm 1:21-23). This is the worship acceptable to Him, "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God" (Micah vi. 8). For He that searcheth the heart, and tries the reins of man, and sets his sins in order before him, who is the God of the spirits of all flesh, looks not to the external fabric, but internal frame of the soul, and inclination of the heart. Nor is it to be soberly thought, that He who is "clothed with divine honour and majesty; who covers himself with light as with a garment; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of his chambers in the deep; who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walks upon the wings of the wind; who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire: who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be moved for ever" (Psalm 104:1-5), can be adequately worshipped by those human inventions, the refuge of an apostate people from the primitive power of religion and spirituality of Christian worship.

4. Christ drew off his disciples from the glory and worship of the outward temple, and instituted a more inward and spiritual worship, in which He instructed his followers. "Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem," says Christ to the Samaritan woman, "worship the father; God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:21,24). As if He had said, for the sake of the weakness of the people, God condescended in old time to limit Himself to an outward time, place, temple, and service, in and by which He would be worshipped; but this was during men's ignorance of his omnipresence, and that they considered not what God is, nor where He is; but I am come to reveal Him to as many as receive me; and I tell you that God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth. People must be acquainted with Him as a Spirit, consider and worship Him as such. It is not that bodily worship, or these ceremonial services, in use among you now, will serve, or give acceptance with this God that is a Spirit: no, you must obey his Spirit that strives with you, to gather you out of the evil of the world, that by bowing to the instructions and commands of his Spirit in your own souls, you may know what it is to worship Him as a Spirit; then you will understand that it is not going to this mountain, nor to Jerusalem, but to do the will of God, to keep his commandments, and commune with thine own heart, and sin not; take up thy cross, meditate in his holy law, and follow the example of Him whom the Father hath sent.

5. Wherefore Stephen, that bold and constant martyr of Jesus, told the Jews, when a prisoner at the bar for disputing about the end of their beloved temple, and its services, but falsely accused of blasphemy; "Solomon," said Stephen, "built God an house; howbeit God dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?'" (Acts 7:47-50). Behold a total overthrow to all worldly temples, and their ceremonial appendages. The martyr follows his blow upon those apostate Jews, who were of those times, the pompous, ceremonious, worldly worshippers: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as did your fathers, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). As if He had told them, no matter for your outward temples, rites, and shadowy services, your pretensions to succession in nature from Abraham; and by religion from Moses. You are resisters of the Spirit, gainsayers of its instructions; you

will not bow to his counsel, nor are your hearts right towards God: you are the successors of your fathers' iniquity; and though verbal admirers, yet none of the successors of the prophets in faith and life.

But the prophet Isaiah carries it a little further than is cited by Stephen. For after having declared what is not God's house, the place where his honour dwells, immediately follow these words: "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2). Behold, O carnal and superstitious man, the true worshipper, and the place of God's rest! This is the house and temple of Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; a house self cannot build, nor the art or power of man prepare or consecrate.

6. Paul, that great apostle of the Gentiles, twice expressly refers the word temple to man: once in his epistle to the church of Corinth; "Know ye not," says he, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" (1 Cor. 6:19), and not the building of man's hand and heart. Again, he tells the same people, in his second epistle, "For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said" (2 Cor. 6:16); and then cites God's words by the prophet, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people." This is the evangelical temple, the Christian church, whose ornaments are not the embroideries and furnitures of worldly art and wealth, but the graces of the Spirit: meekness, love, faith, patience, self-denial, and charity. Here it is, that the eternal wisdom, that was with God from everlasting, before the hills were brought forth, or the mountains laid, chooses to dwell; "rejoicing," says Wisdom, "in the habitable part of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. 8:22,23,25,31); not in houses built of wood and stone. This living house is more glorious than Solomon's dead house; and of which his was but a figure, as he, the builder, was of Christ, who builds up a holy temple to God. It was promised of old, that the glory of the latter house should transcend the glory of the former (Hag. 2:9), which may be applied to this: not one outward temple or house to excel another in outward lustre; for where is the benefit of that? But the divine glory, the beauty of holiness in the gospel house or church, made up of renewed believers, should exceed the outward glory of Solomon's temple, which, in comparison of the latter days, was but flesh to spirit, fading resemblance to the eternal substance.

But for all this, Christians have meeting-places, yet not in Jewish or heathen state, but plain, void of pomp or ceremony, suiting the simplicity of their blessed life and doctrine. For God's presence is not with the house, but with them that are in it, who are the gospel church, and not the house. Oh! that such as call themselves Christians knew but a real sanctity in themselves, by the washing of God's regenerating grace, instead of that imaginary sanctity ascribed to places; they would then know what the church is, and where, in these evangelical days, is the place of God's appearance. This made David say, "The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold" (Psalm 40:13). What is the glory that is within the true church, and that gold that makes up that inward glory? Tell me, O superstitious man! is it thy stately temples, altars, tables, carpets, tapestries; thy vestments, organs, voices, candles, lamps, censers, plate and jewels, with the like furniture of thy worldly temples? No such matter; they bear no proportion with the divine adornment of the King of Heaven's daughter, the blessed and redeemed church of Christ. Miserable apostasy that it is! and a wretched supplement in the loss and absence of the apostolic life, the spiritual glory of the primitive church.

7. But yet some of these admirers of external pomp and glory in worship would be thought lovers of the cross, and to that end have made to themselves many. But alas! what hopes can there be of reconciling that to Christianity, that the nearer it comes to its resemblance the further off it is in reality? for their very cross and self-denial are most unlawful self: and whilst they fancy to worship God thereby, they most dangerously err from the true Cross of Christ, and that holy abnegation that was of his blessed appointment. It is true, they have got a cross, but it seems to be in the room of the true one; and so mannerly, that it will do as they will have it that wear it; for instead of mortifying their wills by it, they made it, and use it according to them. So that the cross is become their ensign that do nothing but what they list. Yet by that they would be thought his disciples who never did his own will but the will of his heavenly Father.

8. This is such a cross as flesh and blood can carry, for flesh and blood invented it; therefore not the Cross of Christ, that is to crucify flesh and blood. Thousands of them have no more virtue than a chip: poor empty shadows, not so much as images of the true one. Some carry them for charms about them, but never repel one evil with them. They sin with them upon their backs; and though they put them in their bosoms, their beloved lusts lie there too, without the least disquiet. They are as dumb as Elijah's mock gods (1 Kings 18:27); no life nor power in them: and how should they, whose matter is earthly, and whose figure and workmanship are but the invention and labour of worldly artists? Is it possible that such crosses should mend their makers? surely not.

9. These are yokes without restraint, and crosses that never contradict: a whole cart-load of them would leave a man as unmortified as they find him. Men may sooner knock their brains out with them than their sins; and that, I fear, too many of them know in their very consciences that use them, indeed adore them: and, which can only happen to the false cross, are proud of them too, since the true one leaves no pride, where it is truly borne.

10. For as their religion, so their cross is very gaudy and triumphant; but in what? In precious metals and gems, the spoils of superstition upon the people's pockets. These crosses are made of earthly treasure, instead of teaching their hearts that wear them to deny it: and like men, they are respected by their finery. A rich cross shall have many gazers and admirers: the mean in this, as other things, are more neglected. I could appeal to themselves of this great vanity and superstition. Oh! how very short is this of the blessed cross of Jesus, that takes away the sins of the world.

11. Nor is a recluse life, the boasted righteousness of some, much more commendable, or one whit nearer to the nature of the true cross: for if it be not unlawful as other things are, it is unnatural, which true religion teaches not. The Christian convent and monastery are within, where the soil is encloistered from sin. And this religious house the true followers of Christ carry about with them, who exempt not themselves from the conversation of the world, though they keep themselves from the evil of the world in their conversation. That is a lazy, rusty, unprofitable self-denial, burdensome to others to feel their idleness; religious bedlams, where people are kept lest they should do mischief abroad; patience per force; self-denial against their will, rather ignorant than virtuous: and out of the way of temptation, than content in it. No thanks if they commit not what they are not tempted to commit. What the eye views not, the heart craves not, as well as rules not.

12. The Cross of Christ is of another nature; it truly overcomes the world, and leads a life of purity in the face of its allurements; they that bear it are not thus chained up for fear they should bite; nor locked up lest they should be stolen away: no, they receive power from Christ their Captain, to resist the evil, and do that which is good in the sight of God; to despise the world, and love its reproach above its praise; and not only not to offend others, but love those that offend them: though not for offending them. What a world should we have if everybody, for fear of transgressing, should mew himself up within four walls! No such matter; the perfection of the Christian life extends to every honest labour or traffic used among men. This severity is not the effect of Christ's free spirit, but a voluntary, fleshly humility: mere trammels of their own making and putting on, without prescription or reason. In all which it is plain they are their own lawgivers, and set their own rule, mulct, and ransom: a constrained harshness, out of joint to the rest of the creation; for society is one great end of it, and not to be destroyed for fear of evil; but sin that spoils it, banished by a steady reproof and a conspicuous example of tried virtue. True godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavours to mend it; not to hide their candle under a bushel, but to set it upon a table in a candlestick. Besides, it is a selfish invention; and that can never be the way of taking up the cross, which the true cross is therefore taken up to subject. But again, this humour runs away by itself, and leaves the world behind to be lost; Christians should keep the helm, and guide the vessel to its port; not meanly steal out at the stern of the world, and leave those that are in it without a pilot, to be driven by the fury of evil times, upon the rock or sand of ruin. In fine, this sort of life, if taken up by young people, is commonly to cover idleness, or to pay portions, to save the lazy from the pains of punishment, or quality from the disgrace of poverty; one will not work, and the other scorns it; if aged, a long life of guilt sometimes flies to superstition for a refuge, and, after having had its own will in other things, would finish it in a wilful religion to make God amend.

13. But taking up the cross of Jesus is a more interior exercise: it is the circumspection and discipline of the soul in conformity to the divine mind therein revealed. Does not the body follow the soul, not the soul the body? Do not such consider that no outward cell can shut up the soul from lust, the mind from an infinity of unrighteous imaginations? The thoughts of man's heart are evil, and that continually. Evil comes from within, and not from without: how then can an external application remove an internal cause; or a restraint upon the body, work a confinement of the mind? which is much less than without doors, for where there is least of action, there is most time to think; and if those thoughts are not guided by a higher principle, convents are more mischievous to the world than exchanges. And yet retirement is both an excellent and needful thing; crowds and throngs were not much frequented by the ancient holy pilgrims.

14. But then examine, O man, thy foundation, what it is, and who placed thee there; lest in the end it should appear thou hast put an eternal cheat upon thy own soul. I must confess I am jealous of the salvation of my own kind, having found mercy with my heavenly Father. I would have none to deceive themselves to perdition especially about religion, where people are most apt to take all for granted, and lose infinitely by their own flatteries and neglect. The inward, steady righteousness of Jesus is another thing than all the contrived devotion of poor superstitious man; and to stand approved in the sight of God excels that bodily exercise in religion resulting from the invention of men. And the soul that is awakened and preserved by his holy power and spirit, lives to Him in the way of his own institution, and worships Him in his own Spirit, that is, in the holy sense, life, and leadings of it: which indeed is the evangelical worship. Not that I would be thought to slight a true retirement: for I do not only acknowledge but admire solitude. Christ himself was an example of it: He loved and chose to frequent mountains, gardens, and sea-sides. It is requisite to the growth of piety, and I reverence the virtue that seeks and uses it; wishing there were more of it in the world; but then it should be free, not constrained. What benefit to the mind, to have it for a punishment, and not for a pleasure? Nay, I have long thought it an error among all sorts, that use not monastic lives, that they have no retreats for the afflicted, the tempted, the solitary, and the devout, where they might undisturbedly wait upon God, pass through their religious exercises, and, being thereby strengthened, may, with more power over their own spirits, enter into the business of the world again: though the less the better, to be sure. For divine pleasures are found in a free solitude.

CHAPTER VI

BUT there be others of a more refined speculation, and reformed practice, who dare not use, and less adore, a piece of wood or stone, an image of silver and gold; nor yet allow of that Jewish, or rather Pagan pomp in worship, practised by others, as if Christ's worship were of this world, though his kingdom be of the other, but are doctrinally averse to such superstition, and yet refrain not to bow to their own religious duties, and esteem their formal performance of several parts of worship that go against the grain of their fleshly ease, and a preciseness therein, no small cross unto them; and that if they abstain from gross and scandalous sins, or if the act be not committed, though the thoughts of it are embraced, and that it has a full career in the mind, they hold themselves safe enough within the pale of discipleship and walls of Christianity. But this also is too mean a character of the discipline of Christ's Cross: and those that flatter themselves with such a sort of taking it up will in the end be deceived with a sandy foundation, and a midnight cry. For said Christ, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36).

2. For first, it is not performing duties of religion, but the rise of the performance that God looks at. Men may, and some do, cross their own wills in their own wills: voluntary omission and commission: "Who hath required this at your hands?" (Isa. 1:12), said the Lord of old to the Jews, when they seemed industrious to have served

Him; but it was in a way of their own contriving or inventing, and in their own time and will; not with the soul truly touched and prepared by the divine power of God, but bodily worship only: that, the apostle tells us, profits little. Not keeping to the manner of taking up the cross in worship as well as other things has been a great cause of the troublesome superstition that is yet in the world. For men have no more brought their worship to the test than their sins: nay less; for they have ignorantly thought the one a sort of excuse for the other; and not that their religious performances should need a cross, or an apology.

3. But true worship can only come from a heart prepared by the Lord (Prov. 16:1. This preparation is by the sanctification of the Spirit; by which, if God's children are led in the general course of their lives, as Paul teaches (Rom. 8:14), much more in their worship to their Creator and Redeemer. And whatever prayer be made, or doctrine be uttered, and not from the preparation of the Holy Spirit, it is not acceptable with God: nor can it be the true evangelical worship, which is in spirit and truth; that is, by the preparation and aid of the Spirit. For what is a heap of the most pathetic words to God Almighty; or the dedication of any place or time to Him? He is a Spirit, to whom words, places, and times, strictly considered, are improper or inadequate. And though they be the instruments of public worship, they are but bodily and visible, and cannot carry our requests any further, much less recommend them to the invisible God; by no means; they are for the sake of the congregation: it is the language of the soul God hears, nor can that speak but by the Spirit, or groan aright to Almighty God without the assistance of it.

4. The soul of man, however lively in other things, is dead to God till He breathe the spirit of life into it: it cannot live to Him, much less worship Him, without it. Thus God tells us, by Ezekiel, when in a vision of the restoration of mankind, in the person of Israel, an usual way of speaking among the prophets, and as often mistaken, "I will open your graves," saith the Lord, "and put my spirit in you, and you shall live" (Ezek. 27:12-14). So, though Christ taught his disciples to pray, they were, in some sort, disciples before He taught them; not worldly men, whose prayers are an abomination to God. And his teaching them is not an argument that everybody must say that prayer, whether he can say it with the same heart, and under the same qualifications, as his poor disciples or followers did, or not; as is now too superstitiously and presumptuously practised; but rather as they then, and so we now, are not to pray our own prayers, but his: that is, such as He enables us to make, as He enabled them then.

5. For if we are not to take thought what we shall say when we come before worldly princes, because it shall then be given us; and that "it is not we that speak, but the Spirit of our heavenly Father that speaketh in us" (Matt. 10:19,20); much less can our ability be needed, or ought we to study to ourselves forms of speech in our approaches to the great Prince of princes, King of kings, and Lord of lords. For be it his greatness, we ought not by Christ's command; be it our relation to Him as children, we need not; He will help us, He is our Father; that is, if He be so indeed. Thus not only the mouth of the body but of the soul is shut, till God opens it; and then He loves to hear the language of it. In which the body ought never to go before the soul: his ear is open to such requests, and his Spirit strongly intercedes for those that offer them.

6. But it may be asked, how shall this preparation be obtained?

I answer: By waiting patiently, yet watchfully and intently upon God: "Lord," says the Psalmist, "thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear" (Psalm 10:17); and, says Wisdom, "The preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord" (Prov. 16:1). Here it is thou must not think thy own thoughts, nor speak thy own words, which indeed is the silence of the holy cross, but be sequestered from all the confused imaginations that are apt to throng and press upon the mind in those holy retirements. It is not for thee to think to overcome the Almighty by the most composed matter, cast into the aptest phrase; no, no; one groan, one sigh, from a wounded soul, a heart touched with true remorse, a sincere and godly sorrow, which is the work of God's Spirit, excels and prevails with God. Wherefore stand still in thy mind, wait to feel something that is divine, to prepare and dispose thee to worship God truly and acceptably. And thus taking up the cross, and shutting the doors and windows of the soul against everything that would interrupt this attendance upon God, how pleasant soever the object be in itself, how lawful or needful at another

season, the power of the Almighty will break in, his Spirit will work and prepare the heart, that it may offer up an acceptable sacrifice. It is He that discovers and presses wants upon the soul; and when it cries, it is He alone that supplies them. Petitions, not springing from such a sense and preparation, are formal and fictitious: they are not true; for men pray in their own blind desires, and not in the will of God; and his ear is stopped to them: "but for the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy," God hath said, "I will arise" (Psalm 12:5); that is, the poor in spirit, the needy soul, those that want his assistance. who are ready to be overwhelmed, that feel a need, and cry aloud for a deliverer, and that have none on earth to help: none in heaven but Him, nor in the earth in comparison of Him: "He will deliver," said David, "the needy when he cries, and the poor, and him that has no helper. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight" (Psalm 72:12,14). "This poor man," says he, "cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:6-8), and then invites all to come and taste how good the Lord is; yea, "he will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great" (Psalm 115:13).

7. But what is that to them that are not hungry? "They that be whole need not a physician" (Matt. 9:12); the full have no need to sigh, nor the rich to cry for help. Those that are not sensible of their inward wants, that have not fears and terrors upon them, who feel no need of God's power to help them, nor of the light of his countenance to comfort them, what have such to do with prayer? their devotion is but, at best, a serious mockery of the Almighty. They know not, they want not, they desire not what they pray for. They pray the will of God may be done, and do constantly their own: for though it be soon said, it is a most terrible thing to them. They ask for grace, and abuse that they have: they pray for the Spirit, but resist it in themselves, and scorn at it in others: they request mercies and goodness of God, and feel no real want of them. And in this inward insensibility, they are as unable to praise God for what they have, as to pray for what they have not. "They shall praise the Lord," says David, "that seek him": "for he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry with good things" (Psalm 22:26; 107:9). This also He reserves for the poor and needy, and those that fear God. Let the spiritually poor and the needy praise thy name: ye that fear the Lord, praise Him; and ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him. Jacob was a plain man, of an upright heart: and they that are so, are his seed. And though (with him) they may be as poor as worms in their own eyes, yet they receive power to wrestle with God, and prevail as he did.

8. But without the preparation and consecration of this power, no man is fit to come before God; else it were matter of less holiness and reverence to worship God under the gospel than it was in the times of the law, when all sacrifices were sprinkled before offered; the people consecrated that offered them, before they presented themselves before the Lord (Numb. 8; 19: 2 Chron. 21:36; 30:16,17). If the touching of a dead or unclean beast then made people unfit for temple or sacrifice, yea, society with the clean, till first sprinkled and sanctified, how can we think so meanly of the worship that is instituted by Christ in gospel times, as that it should admit of unprepared and unsanctified offerings? Or, allow that those who, either in thoughts, words, or deeds, do daily touch that which is morally unclean, can, without coming to the blood of Jesus, that sprinkles the conscience from dead works, acceptably worship the pure God; it is a downright contradiction to good sense: the unclean cannot acceptably worship that which is holy; the impure that which is perfect. There is a holy intercourse and communion betwixt Christ and his followers; but none at all betwixt Christ and Belial; between Him and those that disobey his commandments, and live not the life of his blessed cross and self-denial (2 Cor. 6:15,16).

9. But as sin, so formality cannot worship God; no, though the manner were of his own ordination; which made the prophet, personating one in a great strait, cry out, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:6-8). The royal prophet, sensible at this, calls thus also upon God: "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise" (Psalm 51:15-17). He did not dare open his own lips, he knew that could not praise God; and why? "for thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it:" if my formal offerings would serve, thou shouldest not want them; thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a

broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise:" and why? because this is God's work, the effect of his power; and his own works praise Him. To the same purpose doth God Himself speak by the mouth of Isaiah, in opposition to the formalities and lip-worship of the degenerate Jews: "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool, where is the house that ye build to me? and where is the place of my rest? For all these things hath mine hand made. But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:1,2). O behold the true worshipper! one of God's preparing, circumcised in heart and ear, that resists not the Holy Spirit, as those lofty professing Jews did. Was this so then, even in the time of the law, which was the dispensation of external and shadowy performances: and can we now expect acceptance without the preparation of the Spirit of the Lord in these gospel times, which are the proper times for the effusion of the Spirit? By no means; God is what He was; and none else are his true worshippers but such as worship Him in his own spirit: these He tenders as the apple of his eye; the rest do but mock Him, and He despises them. Hear what follows to that people, for it is the state and portion of Christendom at this day: "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations" (Isa. 66:3). Let none say, we offer not these kinds of oblations, for that is not the matter: God was not offended with the offerings, but offerers. These were the legal forms of sacrifice by God appointed; but they not presenting them in that frame of spirit. and under that right disposition of soul that was required, God declares his abhorrence, and that with great aggravation; and elsewhere, by the same prophet, forbids them to bring any more vain oblations before Him; "incense," saith God, "is an abomination to me: your sabbaths and calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." And "when you spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; when you make many prayers, I will not hear you" (Isa. 1:13-15). A most terrible renunciation of their worship; and why? Because their hearts were polluted; they loved not the Lord with their whole hearts, but broke his law, and rebelled against his Spirit, and did not that which was right in his sight. The cause is plain, by the amendment He requires: "Wash ye," says the Lord, "make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil, learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isa. 1:16-17). Upon these terms, and nothing short, He bids them come to Him, and tells them, that" though their sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; and though they be as crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).

So true is that notable passage of the Psalmist, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul; I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. But verily God hath heard me: he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me" (Psalm 66:16-20).

10. Much of this kind might be cited, to show the displeasure of God against his own forms of worship, when performed without his own Spirit, and that necessary preparation of the heart in man, that nothing else can work or give: which, above all other penmen of sacred writ, is most frequently and emphatically recommended to us by the example of the Psalmist, who ever and anon calling to mind his own great slips, and the cause of them, and the way by which he came to be accepted of God, and to obtain strength and comfort from Him, reminds himself to wait upon God. "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day long" (Psalm 25:5). His soul looked to God for salvation, to be delivered from the snares and evils of the world. This shows an inward exercise, and a spiritual attendance, that stood not in external forms, but in inward divine aid.

And truly, David had great encouragement so to do; the goodness of God invited him to do it and strengthened him in it. For, says he, "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock" (Psalm 40:1,2). That is, the Lord appeared inwardly to console David's soul, that waited for his help, and to deliver it from the temptations and afflictions that were ready to overwhelm it, and gave him security and peace. Therefore, he says, "The Lord hath established my goings;" that is, fixed his mind in righteousness. Before, every step he took bemired him, and he was scarcely able to go without falling; temptation on all hands; but he waited patiently upon God: his

mind retired, watchful, and intent to his law and Spirit; and he felt the Lord to incline to him. His needy and sensible cry entered heaven, and prevailed; then came deliverance and rescue to David, in God's time, not David's; strength to go through his exercises, and surmount all his troubles. For which, he tells us, a new song was put into his mouth, even praises to his God (Psalm 40:3). But it was of God's making and putting, and not his own.

Another time, we have him crying thus: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" This goes beyond formality, and can be tied to no lesson. But we may by this see that true worship is an inward work; that the soul must be touched and raised in its heavenly desires by the heavenly Spirit, and that the true worship is in God's presence. When shall I come and appear." Not in the temple, nor with outward sacrifices, but before God in his presence. So that souls of true worshippers see God, make their appearance before Him; and this they wait, they pant, they thirst for. Oh how is the greater part of Christendom degenerated from David's example! No wonder, therefore, that this good man tells us, "Truly my soul waiteth upon God;" and that he gives it in charge to his soul so to do; "O, my soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." As if he had said, None else can prepare my heart, or supply my wants; so that my expectation is not from my own voluntary performance, or the bodily worship I can give Him; they are of no value; they can neither help me, nor please Him. But I wait upon Him for strength and power to present myself so before Him, as may be most pleasing to Him; for He that prepares the sacrifice will certainly accept it. Wherefore in two verses he repeats it thrice: "I wait for the Lord--My soul doth wait--My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." Yea, so intently, and with that unweariedness of soul, that he says in one place, "Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God" (Psalm 69:3). He was not contented with so many prayers, such a set worship, or limited repetition: no; he leaves not till he finds the Lord, that is, the comforts of his presence: which brings the answer of love and peace to his soul. Nor was this his practice only, as a man more than ordinarily inspired; for he speaks of it as the way of worship then amongst the true people of God, the spiritual Israel, and circumcision in heart, of that day; "Behold," says he, "as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until he have mercy on us" (Psalm 123:2). In another place, "Our soul waiteth for the Lord; he is our help and our shield" (Psalm 33:20). "I will wait on thy name, for it is good before thy saints" (Psalm 42:9). It was in request with the truly godly in that day, and the way they came to enjoy God, and worship Him acceptably. And from his own experience of the benefit of waiting upon God, and the saints' practice of those times, he recommends it to others: "Wait upon the Lord; be of good courage, and he will strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). That is, wait in faith and patience, and He will come to save thee. Again, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently upon him." That is, cast thyself upon Him; be contented, and wait for Him to help thee in thy wants; thou canst not think how near He is to help those that wait upon Him: Oh! try and have faith. Yet again, he bids us, "Wait upon the Lord, and keep his way" (Psalm 37:34). Behold the reason why so few profit! they are out of his way; and such can never wait rightly upon Him. Great reasons had David for what he said, who had with so much comfort and advantage met the Lord in his blessed way.

11. The prophet Isaiah tells us, that though the chastisements of the Lord were sore upon the people for their backslidings, yet in the way of his judgments, in the way of his rebukes and displeasure, they waited for Him, and the desire of their soul, that is the great point, was to his name, and the remembrance of Him (Isa. 26:8). They were contented to be chid and chastised, for they had sinned; and the knowledge of Him was so very desirable to them. But what! did He not come at last, and that in mercy too? Yes, He did, and they knew Him when He came, a doctrine the brutish world knows not, "This is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us" (Isa. 25:9). O blessed enjoyment! O precious confidence! here is a waiting in faith which prevailed. All worship not in faith is fruitless to the worshipper, as well as displeasing to God: and this faith is the gift of God, and the nature of it is to purify the heart, and give such as truly believe victory over the world. Well, but they go on: "We have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." The prophet adds, "Blessed are all they that wait upon God:" and why? for "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;" they shall never faint, never be weary (Isa. 30:18; 40:31): the encouragement is great. Oh hear him once more: "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God!

beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him" (Isa. 64:4). Behold the inward life and joy of the righteous, the true worshippers; those whose spirits bowed to the appearance of God's Spirit in them, leaving and forsaking all it appeared against, and embracing whatever it led them to. In Jeremiah's time, the true worshippers also waited upon God (Jer. 14:22): and he assures us, that "the Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him" (Lam. 3:25). Hence it is, that the prophet Hosea exhorts the church then to turn and wait upon God. "Therefore turn thou to thy God; keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually" (Hosea 12:6). And Micah is very zealous and resolute in this good exercise: "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me" (Micah 7:7). Thus did the children of the Spirit, that thirsted after an inward sense of Him. The wicked cannot say so; nor they that pray, unless they wait. It is charged upon Israel in the wilderness, as the cause of their disobedience and ingratitude to God, that they waited not for his counsels. We may be sure it is our duty, and expected from us; for God requires it in Zephaniah: "Therefore wait upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I arise," &c. (Zeph. 3:8). Oh! that all who profess the name of God would wait so, and not offer to arise to worship without Him. And they would feel his stirrings and arisings in them to help and prepare, and sanctify them. Christ expressly charged his disciples, "They should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait till they had received the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 1:4,8), in order to their preparation for the preaching of the glorious gospel of Christ to the world. And though that were an extraordinary effusion for an extraordinary work, yet the degree does not change the kind; on the contrary, if so much waiting and preparation by the Spirit was requisite to fit them to preach to man; some, at least, may be needful to fit us to speak to God.

12. I will close this great Scripture doctrine of waiting, with that passage in John about the pool of Bethesda: "There is in Jerusalem, by the sheepmarket, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches; in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water: for an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had" (John 5:2-4); a most exact representation of what is intended by all that has been said upon the subject of waiting. For as there was then an outward and legal, so there is now a gospel and spiritual Jerusalem, the church of God; consisting of the faithful. The pool in that old Jerusalem, in some sort, represented that fountain, which is now set open in this new Jerusalem. That pool was for those that were under infirmities of body; this fountain for all that are impotent in soul. There was an angel then that moved the water, to render it beneficial; it is God's angel now, the great angel of his presence, that bleaseth this fountain with success. They that then went in before, and did not watch the angel, and take advantage of his motion, found no benefit of their stepping in: those that now wait not the moving of God's angel, but by the devotion of their own forming and timing, rush before God, as the horse into the battle, and hope for success, are sure to miscarry in their expectation. Therefore, as then they waited with all patience and attention upon the angel's motion, that wanted and desired to be cured; so do the true worshippers of God now, that need and pray for his presence, which is the life of their souls, as the sun is to the plants of the field. They have often tried the unprofitableness of their own work, and are now come to the Sabbath indeed. They dare not put up a device of their own, or offer an unsanctified request, much less obtrude bodily worship, where the soul is really insensible or unprepared by the Lord. In the light of Jesus they ever wait to be prepared, retired, and recluse from all thoughts that cause the least distraction and discomposure in the mind, till they see the angel move, and till their beloved please to awake: nor dare they call Him before his time. And they fear to make a devotion in his absence; for they know it is not only unprofitable, but reprobable: "Who has required this at your hand? He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 1:12; 28:16). They that worship with their own can only do as the Israelites, turn their earrings into a molten image, and be cursed for their pains. Nor fared they better that gathered sticks of old, and "kindled a fire, and compassed themselves about with the sparks that they had kindled" (Isa. 1:11); for God told them "they should lie down in sorrow." It should not only be of no advantage, and do them no good, but incur a judgment from Him: sorrow and anguish of soul should be their portion. Alas! flesh and blood would fain pray, though it cannot wait; and be a saint, though it cannot abide to do or suffer the will of God; with the tongue it blesses God, and with the tongue it curses men, made in his similitude. It calls Jesus Lord, but not by the Holy Ghost; and often names the name of Jesus, yea, bows the knee to it too; but departs not from iniquity: this is abominable to God.

13. In short, there are four things so necessary to worshipping of God aright, and which put its performance beyond man's power, that there seems little more needed than the naming of them. The first is, the sanctification of the worshipper. Secondly, the consecration of the offering; which has been spoken to before somewhat largely. Thirdly, what to pray for; which no man knows that prays not by the aid of God's Spirit; and therefore without that Spirit no man can truly pray. This the apostle puts beyond dispute: "We know not," says he, "what we should pray for, as we ought, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities" (Rom. 8:26). Men unacquainted with the work and power of the Holy Spirit are ignorant of the mind of God; and those, certainly, can never please Him with their prayers. It is not enough to know we want; but we should learn whether it be not sent as a blessing, disappointments to the proud, losses to the covetous, and to the negligent stripes; to remove these were to secure the destruction, not help the salvation of the soul.

The vile world knows nothing but carnally, after a fleshly manner and interpretation; and too many that would be thought enlightened are apt to call providences by wrong names, for instance, afflictions they style judgments, and trials, more precious than the beloved gold, they call miseries. On the other hand, they call the preferments of the world by the name of honour, and its wealth happiness; when for once that they are so, it is much to be feared they are sent of God a hundred times for judgments, at least trials, upon their possessors. Therefore, what to keep, what to reject, what to want, is a difficulty God only can resolve the soul. And since God knows better than we what we need, He can better tell us what to ask than we can Him: which makes Christ exhort his disciples to avoid long and repetitious prayers (Matt. 6:7,8); telling them that their heavenly Father knew what they needed before they asked: and therefore gave them a pattern to pray by; not, as some fancy, to be a text for human liturgies, which of all services are most justly noted and taxed for length and repetition; but expressly to reprove and avoid them. But if those wants that are the subject of prayer were once agreed upon, though that might be a weighty point, yet how to pray is of still greater moment than to pray; it is not the request, but the frame of the petitioner's spirit. The what may be proper, but the how defective. As I said, God needs not to be told of our wants by us, who must tell them to us; yet He will be told them from us, that both we may seek Him, and He may come down to us. But when this is done, "To this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word" (Isa. lvi. 2); to the sick heart, the wounded soul, the hungry and thirsty, the weary and heavy laden ones: such sincerity wants a helper.

14. Nor is this sufficient to complete gospel-worship; the fourth requisite must be had, and that is faith; true faith, precious faith, the faith of God's chosen, that purifies their hearts, that overcomes the world, and is the victory of the saints (1 Tim. 1: 5; Acts 15:9; Titus 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:4).

This is that which animates prayer and presses it home, like the importunate woman, that would not be denied; to whom Christ, seeming to admire, said, "O woman, great is thy faith!" (Matt. 15:28). This is of the highest moment on our part, to give our addresses success with God; and yet not in our power neither, for it is the gift of God: from Him we must have it; and with one grain of it more work is done, more deliverance is wrought, and more goodness and mercy received, than by all the runnings, willings, and toilings of man, with his inventions and bodily exercises: which, duly weighed, will easily spell out the meaning why so much worship should bring so little profit to the world, as we see it does, viz. true faith is lost. "They ask, and receive not" (James 4:3); they seek and find not: they knock, and it is not opened unto them: the case is plain: their requests are not mixed with purifying faith, by which they should prevail, as good Jacob's were, when he wrestled with God and prevailed. And the truth is, the generality are yet in their sins, following hearts' lusts, and living in worldly pleasure, being strangers to this precious faith. It is the reason rendered by the deep author to the Hebrews, of the unprofitableness of the word preached to some in those days; "Not being," says he, "mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4:2). Can the minister then preach without faith? No: and much less can any man pray to purpose without faith, especially when we are told, that the "just live by faith" (Heb. 10:38), for worship is the supreme act of man's life; and whatever is necessary to inferior acts of religion must not be wanting there.

15. This may moderate the wonder in any, why Christ so often upbraided his disciples with "O ye of little faith"? yet tells us, that one grain of it, though as little as that of mustard, one of the least of seeds, if true and

right, is able to remove mountains. As if He had said, There is no temptation so powerful that it cannot be overcome: wherefore those that are captivated by temptations, and remain unsupplied in their spiritual wants, have not this powerful faith: that is the true cause. So necessary was it of old, that Christ did not many mighty works where the people believed not; and though his power wrought wonders in other places, faith opened the way; so that it is hard to say, whether that power by faith, or faith by that power, wrought the cure. Let us call to mind what famous things a little clay and spittle, one touch of the hem of Christ's garment, and a few words out of his mouth (John 9:6; Luke 8:43-48), did by the force of faith in the patients: "Believe ye that I am able to open your eyes?" (Matt. 9:28); "Yea, Lord," say the blind, and see. To the ruler, "only believe" (Mark 5:36); he did, and his dead daughter recovered life. Again, "If thou canst believe:" I do believe, says the father, help my unbelief: and the evil spirit was chased away, and the child recovered. He said to one, "Go, thy faith hath made thee whole" (Mark 10:52; and to another, "Thy faith hath saved thee; thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke 7:48,50). And to encourage his disciples to believe, that were admiring how soon his sentence was executed upon the fruitless fig-tree, he tells them, "Verily, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree; but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and cast into the sea, it shall be done: and all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:20-22). This one passage convicts Christendom of gross infidelity; for she prays, and receives not.

16. But some may say, It is impossible to receive all that a man may ask. It is not impossible to receive all that a man, that so believes, can ask (Matt. 19:26). The fruits of faith are not impossible to those that truly believe in the God that makes them possible. When Jesus said to the ruler, "If thou canst believe," He adds, "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). Well, but then some will say, It is impossible to have such faith: for this very faithless generation would excuse their want of faith by making it impossible to have the faith they want. But Christ's answer to the infidelity of that age will best confute the disbelief of this: "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God" (Mark 10:27). It will follow, then, that it is not impossible with God to give that faith; though it is certain that without it, it is impossible to please God: for so the author to the Hebrews teaches (Heb. 11:6). And if it be else impossible to please God, it must be so to pray to God without this precious faith.

17. But some may say, What is this faith that is so necessary to worship, and gives it such acceptance with God and returns that benefit to men? I say, It is a holy resignation to God, and confidence in Him testified by a religious obedience to his holy requirings, which gives sure evidence to the soul of the things not yet seen, and a general sense and taste of the substance of those things that are hoped for; that is, the glory which is to be revealed hereafter. As this faith is the gift of God, so it purifies the hearts of those that receive it. The Apostle Paul is witness that it will not dwell but in a pure conscience (1 Tim. 3:9): he therefore in one place couples a pure heart and faith unfeigned together (1 Tim. 1:5): in another, faith and a good conscience (1 Tim. 1:19). James joins faith with righteousness (James 2.); and John joins faith with victory over the world, "this," says he, "is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

18. The heirs of this faith are the true children of Abraham (Rom.4:12), in that they walk in the steps of Abraham, according to the obedience of faith, which, only, entitles people to be the children of Abraham. This lives above the world, not only in its sin, but righteousness: to this no man comes, but through death to self by the cross of Jesus, and an entire dependence, by Him, upon God.

Famous are the exploits of this divine gift; time would fail to recount them: all sacred story is filled with them. But let it suffice, that by it the holy ancients endured all trials, overcame all enemies, prevailed with God, renowned his truth, finished their testimony, and obtained the reward of the faithful, a crown of righteousness, which is the eternal blessedness of the just.

CHAPTER VII

HAVING thus discharged my conscience against that part of unlawful self, that fain would be a Christian, a believer, a saint, whilst a plain stranger to the Cross of Christ, and the holy exercises of it; and in that briefly discovered what is true worship, and the use and business of the holy cross therein, to render its performance pleasing to Almighty God; I shall now, the same Lord assisting me, more largely prosecute that other part of unlawful self, which fills the study, care, and conversation of the world, presented to us in these three capital lusts, that is to say, pride, avarice and luxury; from whence all other mischiefs daily flow, as streams from their proper fountains; the mortifying of which makes up the other; and indeed a very great part of the work of the true cross; and though last in place, yet first in experience and duty: which done, it introduces, in the room of those evil habits, the blessed effects of that so much needed reformation, to wit, mortification, humility, temperance, love, patience, and heavenly-mindedness, with all other graces of the Spirit, becoming the followers of the perfect Jesus, that most heavenly man.

The care and love of all mankind are either directed to God or themselves. Those that love God above all are ever humbling self to his commands, and only love self in subserviency to Him that is Lord of all. But those who are declined from that love to God are lovers of themselves more than God: for supreme love must centre in one of these two. To that inordinate self-love, the apostle rightly joins proud and highminded (2 Tim. 3:2,4). For no sooner had the angels declined their love, duty and reverence to God, than they inordinately loved and valued themselves; which made them exceed their station, and aspire above the order of their creation. This was their pride, and this sad defection their dismal fall; who are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day of God.

2. Pride, that pernicious evil, which begins the chapter, did also begin the misery of mankind: a most mischievous quality; and so commonly known by its motions and sad effects, that every unmortified breast carries its definition in it. However, I will say, in short, that pride is an excess of self-love, joined with an undervaluing of others, and a desire of dominion over them: the most troublesome thing in the world. There are four things by which it hath made itself best known to mankind, the consequences of which have brought a misery equal to its evil. The first is, an inordinate pursuit of knowledge; the second, an ambitious craving and seeking after power; the third, an extreme desire of personal respect and deference: the last excess is that of worldly furniture and ornaments. To the just and true witness of the eternal God, placed in the souls of all people, I appeal as to the truth of these things.

3. To the first, it is plain, that an inordinate desire of knowledge introduced man's misery, and brought an universal lapse from the glory of his primitive state. Adam would needs be wiser than God had made him. It did not serve his turn to know his Creator, and give Him that holy homage his being and innocency naturally engaged and excited him to; nor to have an understanding above all the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, joined with a power to rule over all the visible creation of God; but he must be as wise as God too. This unwarrantable search, and as foolish as unjust ambition, made him unworthy of the blessings he received from God. This drives him out of paradise: and instead of being lord of the whole world, Adam becomes the wretchedest vagabond of the earth.

4. A strange change! that instead of being as gods, they should fall below the very beasts; in comparison of whom, even God had made them as gods. The lamentable consequence of this great defection has been an exchange of innocency for guilt, and a paradise for a wilderness. But, which is yet worse, in this state Adam and Eve had got another god than the only true and living God: and he that enticed them to all this mischief, furnished them with a vain knowledge, and pernicious wisdom: the skill of lies and equivocations, shifts, evasions, and excuses. They had lost their plainness and sincerity, and from an upright heart, the image in which God had made man, he became a crooked, twining, twisting serpent; the image of that unrighteous spirit, to whose temptations he yielded up, with his obedience, his paradisaical happiness.

5. Nor is this limited to Adam; for all, who have fallen short of the glory of God, are right born sons of his disobedience. They, like him, have eaten of what they have been forbidden: they have committed the things they ought not to have done, and left undone the things they ought to have done.

They have sinned against that divine light of knowledge, which God has given them: they have grieved his Spirit; and that dismal sentence has been executed, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." That is, when thou dost the thing that thou oughtest not to do, thou shall no more live in my favour and enjoy the comforts of the peace of my Spirit, which is a dying to all those innocent and holy desires and affections which God created man with; and he becomes as one cold and benumbed, insensible to the love of God, of his Holy Spirit, power and wisdom, of the light and joy of his countenance and the evidence of a good conscience and the co-witnessing and approbation of God's Holy Spirit.

6. So that fallen Adam's knowledge of God stood no more in a daily experience of the love and work of God in his soul, but in a notion of what he once did know and experience: which being not the true and living wisdom that is from above, but a mere picture, it cannot preserve man in purity; but puffs up, makes people proud, high-minded, and impatient of contradiction. This was the state of the apostate Jews before Christ came; and has been the condition of apostate Christians ever since He came; their religion standing, some bodily performances excepted, either in what they once knew of the work of God in themselves, and which they have revolted from; or in an historical belief, and an imaginary conception and paraphrase upon the experiences and prophecies of such holy men and women of God as in all ages have deserved the style and character of his true children.

7. As such a knowledge of God cannot be true, so by experience we find, that it ever brings forth the quite contrary fruits to the true wisdom. For as this "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated" (James 3:17); so the knowledge of degenerated and unmortified men is first impure: for it came by the commission of evil, and is held in an evil and impure conscience in them that disobey God's laws, and that daily do those things which they ought not to do; and for which they stand condemned before God's judgment-seat in the souls of men: the light of whose presence searches the most hidden things of darkness, the most secret thoughts, and concealed inclinations of ungodly men. This is the science, falsely so called: and as it is impure, so it is unpeaceable, cross, and hard to be entreated; froward, perverse, and persecuting; jealous that any should be better than they; and hating and abusing those that are.

8. It was pride that made Cain a murderer (Gen. 4:8): it is a spiteful quality; full of envy and revenge. What! was not his religion and worship as good as his brother's? He had all the exterior parts of worship; he offered as well as Abel; and the offering of itself might be as good: but it seems the heart that offered it was not. So long ago did God regard the interior worship of the soul. Well, what was the consequence of this difference? Cain's pride stomached it: he could not bear to be outdone by his brother. He grew wrathful, and resolved to vindicate his offering by revenging the refusal of it upon his brother's life: and without any regard to natural affection, or the low and early condition of mankind, he barbarously dyed his hands in his brother's blood.

9. The religion of the apostatized Jews did no better; for, having lost the inward life, power, and spirit of the law, they were puffed up with that knowledge they had: and their pretences to Abraham, Moses, and the promises of God, in that frame, served only to blow them up into an insufferable pride, arrogancy, and cruelty. For they could not bear true vision when it came to visit them; and entertained the messengers of their peace as if they had been wolves and tigers.

10. Yea, it is remarkable, the false prophets, the great engineers against the true ones, were ever sure to persecute them as false; and by their interest with earthly princes, or the poor seduced multitude, made them the instruments of their malice. Thus it was that one holy prophet was sawn asunder, another stoned to death, &c. So proud and obstinate is false knowledge, and the aspirers after it; which made holy Stephen cry out, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as did your fathers, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).

11. The true knowledge came with the joy of angels, singing, "Peace on earth, and good-will toward men" (Luke 2:14); the false knowledge entertained the message with calumnies: Christ must needs be an impostor; and that must prove Him so, to wit, his power of working miracles; which was that which proved the contrary. They frequently sought to kill Him: which at last they wickedly accomplished. But what was the chief motive to it? Why, He cried out against their hypocrisy, the broad phylacteries, the honour they sought of men. To be short, they give the reason themselves in these words, "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him": that is, He will take away our credit with the people: they will adhere to Him, and desert us: and so we shall lose our power and reputation with the multitude.

12. And the truth is, He came to level their honour, to overthrow their Rabbiship, and by his grace to bring the people to that inward knowledge of God, which they, by transgression, were departed from; that so they might see the deceitfulness of their blind guides, who by their vain traditions had made void the righteousness of the law; and who were so far from being the true doctors and lively expounders of it, that in reality they were the children of the devil, who was a proud liar and a cruel murderer from the beginning.

13. Their pride in false knowledge having made them incapable of receiving the simplicity of the gospel, Christ thanks his Father, that He had hid the mysteries of it from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes (Matt. 11:25). It was this false wisdom swelled the minds of the Athenians to that degree, that they, despised the preaching of the Apostle Paul as a vain and foolish thing. But that apostle who, of all the rest, had an education in the learning of those times, bitterly reflects on that wisdom, so much valued by Jews and Greeks: "Where," says he, "is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor. 1:20). And he gives a good reason for it, "that no flesh should glory in his presence" (verse 29). Which is to say, God will stain the pride of man in false knowledge, that he should have nothing on this occasion to be proud of: it should be owing only to the revelation of the Spirit of God. The apostle goes further, and affirms, "That the world by wisdom knew not God" (verse 21): that is, it was so far from a help, that, as men use it, it was a hindrance to the true knowledge of God. And in his first epistle to his beloved Timothy, he concludes thus: "O Timothy! keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so-called" (1 Tim. 6:20). This was the sense of apostolical times, when the divine grace gave the true knowledge of God, and was the guide of Christians.

14. Well, but what has been the success of those ages that followed the apostolical? Any whit better than that of the Jewish times? Not one jot. They have exceeded them; as with their pretences to greater knowledge, so in their degeneracy from the true Christian life: for though they had a more excellent pattern than the Jews, to whom God spoke by Moses his servant, He speaking to them by his beloved Son, the express image of his substance, the perfection of all meekness and humility; and though they seemed addicted to nothing more than an adoration of his name, and a veneration for the memory of his blessed disciples and apostles, yet so great was their defection from the inward power and life of Christianity in the soul, that their respect was little more than formal and ceremonious. For notwithstanding they, like the Jews, were mighty zealous in garnishing their sepulchres, and curious in carving their images; not only keeping with pretence what might be the relics of their persons, but recommending a thousand things as relics, which are purely fabulous, and very often ridiculous, and to be sure altogether unchristian; yet as to the great and weighty things of the Christian law, viz., love, meekness, and self-denial, they were degenerated. They grew highminded, proud, boasters, without natural affection, curious, and controversial, ever perplexing the church with doubtful and dubious questions; filling the people with disputations, strife, and wrangling, drawing them into parties, till at last they fell into blood: as if they had been the worse for being once Christians.

O the miserable state of these pretended Christians! that instead of Christ's and his apostles' doctrine, of loving enemies, and blessing them that curse them, they should teach the people, under the notion of Christian zeal, most inhumanly to butcher one another; and instead of suffering their own blood to be shed for the testimony of Jesus, they should shed the blood of the witnesses of Jesus for heretics. Thus that subtle serpent, or crafty evil spirit, that tempted Adam out of innocency, and the Jews from the law of God, has beguiled the Christians, by

lying vanities, to depart from the Christian law of holiness, and so they are become slaves to him; for he rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience.

15. And it is observable, that as pride, which is ever followed by superstition and obstinacy, put Adam upon seeking a higher station than God placed him in; and as the Jews, out of the same pride, to outdo their pattern, given them of God by Moses upon the mount, taught for doctrines their own traditions, insomuch that those that refused conformity to them ran the hazard of "Crucify, crucify": so the nominal Christians, from the same sin of pride, with great superstition and arrogance, have introduced, instead of a spiritual worship and discipline, that which is evidently ceremonious and worldly; with such innovations and traditions of men as are the fruit of the wisdom that is from below: witness their numerous and perplexed councils and creeds, with "Conform or burn," at the end of them.

16. And as this unwarrantable pride set them first at work to pervert the spirituality of the Christian worship, making it rather to resemble the shadowy religion of the Jews, and the gaudy worship of the Egyptians, than the great plainness and simplicity of the Christian institution, which is neither to resemble that of the mountain, nor the other of Jerusalem; so has the same pride and arrogancy spurred them on, by all imaginable cruelties to maintain this great Diana of theirs. No meek supplications, nor humble remonstrances, of those that kept close to primitive purity in worship and doctrine, could prevail with these nominal Christians to dispense with the imposition of their unapostolical traditions; but as the ministers and bishops of these degenerate Christians left their painful visitation and care over Christ's flock, and grew ambitious, covetous, and luxurious, resembling rather worldly potentates, than the humble-spirited and mortified followers of the blessed Jesus; so almost every history tells us, with what pride and cruelty, blood and butchery, and that with unusual and exquisite tortures, they have persecuted the holy members of Christ out of the world; and that upon such anathemas, as far as they could, they have disappointed them of the blessing of heaven too. These true Christians call martyrs; but the clergy, like the persecuting Jews, have styled them blasphemers and heretics; in which they have fulfilled the prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who did not say, that they should think they do the gods good service to kill the Christians, his dear followers, which might refer to the persecutions of the idolatrous Gentiles; but that they should think they do God good service to kill them (John 16:2): which shows that they should be such as professedly owned the true God, as the apostate Christians have all along pretended to do. So that they must be those wolves, that the apostle foretold, should arise out of themselves, and worry the flock of Christ (Acts 20:29), after the great falling away should commence, that was foretold by him, and made necessary, in order to the proving of the faithful, and the revelation of the great mystery of iniquity.

I shall conclude this head with this assertion, that it is too undeniable a truth, where the clergy have been most in power and authority, and have had the greatest influence upon princes and states, there have been most confusions, wrangles, bloodshed, sequestrations, imprisonments, and exiles: to the justifying of which I call the testimony of the records of all times. How it is in our age I leave to the experience of the living; yet there is one demonstration that can hardly fail us: the people are not converted, but debauched to a degree that time will not allow us an example. The worship of Christendom is visible, ceremonious, and gaudy; the clergy, ambitious of worldly preferments, under the pretence of spiritual promotions; making the earthly revenues of churchmen much the reason of their function; being almost ever sure to leave the present smaller livings, to solicit and obtain benefices of larger title and income. So that with their pride and avarice, which good old Peter foresaw would be their snares, they have drawn after them ignorance, misery, and irreligion upon Christendom.

17. The way of recovery from this miserable defection is to come to a saving knowledge of religion; that is, an experience of the divine work of God in the soul: to obtain which be diligent to obey the grace that appears in thy soul, O man! that brings salvation (Titus 2:11,12); it turns thee out of the broad way into the narrow way; from thy lusts to thy duty; from sin to holiness; from Satan to God. Thou must see and abhor self: thou must watch, and thou must pray, and thou must fast; thou must not look at thy tempter, but at thy preserver; avoid ill company, retire to thy solitudes, and be a chaste pilgrim in this evil world: and thus thou wilt arrive at the knowledge of God and Christ, that brings eternal life to the soul; a well grounded assurance from what a man feels and knows within himself: such shall not be moved with evil tidings.

CHAPTER VIII

BUT let us see the next most common, eminent, and mischievous effect of this evil. Pride does extremely crave power, than which not one thing has proved more troublesome and destructive to mankind. I need not labour myself much in evidence of this, since most of the wars of nations, depopulation of kingdoms, ruin of cities, with the slavery and misery that have followed, both our own experience and unquestionable histories acquaint us to have been the effect of ambition, which is the lust of pride after power.

2. How specious soever might be the pretences of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, against Moses, it was their emulation of his mighty power in the camp of Israel that put them upon conspiracies and mutinies. They longed for his authority, and their not having it was his crime: for they had a mind to be the heads and leaders of the people. The consequence of which was a remarkable destruction to themselves and all their unhappy accomplices (Numb. 16).

3. Absalom, too, was for the people's rights against the tyranny of his father and his king (2 Sam. 15); at least with this pretence he palliated his ambition; but his rebellion showed he was impatient for power, and that he resolved to sacrifice his duty as a son and subject to the importunities of his restless pride; which brought a miserable death to himself and an extraordinary slaughter upon his army.

4. Nebuchadnezzar is a lively instance of the excessive lust of pride for power. His successes and empire were too heady for him: so much too strong for his understanding that he forgot he did not make himself, or that his power had a superior. He makes an image, and all must bow to it, or be burnt. And when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to comply, "who," says he, "is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Dan.3.). And notwithstanding the convictions he had upon him, at the constancy of those excellent men, and Daniel's interpretation of his dreams, it was not long before the pride of his power had filled his heart, and then his mouth, with this haughty question, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:30). But we are told that, while the words were in his mouth, a voice from heaven rebuked the pride of his spirit, and he was driven from the society of men to graze among the beasts of the field.

5. If we look into the histories of the world, we shall find many instances to prove the mischief of this lust of pride. I will mention a few of them for their sakes who have either not read or considered them.

Solon made Athens free by his excellent constitution of laws; but the ambition of Pisistratus began the ruin of it before his eyes. Alexander, not contented with his own kingdom, invaded others, and filled with spoil and slaughter those countries he subdued; and it was not ill said by the man, who, when Alexander accused him of piracy, told him to his face that Alexander was the greatest pirate in the world. It was the same ambition that made Caesar turn traitor to his masters, and with their own army, put into his hand for their service, subdue them to his yoke, and usurp the government; which ended in the expulsion of freedom and virtue together in that commonwealth; for goodness quickly grew to be faction in Rome; and that sobriety and wisdom, which ever rendered her senators venerable, became dangerous to their safety: insomuch that his successors hardly left one they did not kill or banish; unless such as turned to be flatterers of their unjust acquisition, and the imitators of their debauched manners.

6. The Turks are a great proof to the point in hand, who, to extend their dominion, have been the cause of shedding much blood, and laying many stately countries waste.

And yet they are to be outdone by apostate Christians; whose practice is therefore more condemnable, because they have been better taught: they have had a master of another doctrine and example. It is true, they call Him Lord still, but they let their ambition reign: they love power more than one another; and to get it kill one

another; though charged by Him not to strike, but to love and serve one another. And, which adds to the tragedy, all natural affection is sacrificed to the fury of this lust: and therefore are stories so often stained with the murder of parents, children, uncles, nephews, masters, &c.

7. If we look abroad into remoter parts of the world, we shall rarely hear of wars; but in Christendom rarely of peace. A very trifle is too often made a ground of quarrel here: nor can any league be so sacred or inviolable that arts shall not be used to evade and dissolve it to increase dominion. No matter who, nor how many are slain, made widows and orphans, or lose their estates and livelihoods; what countries are ruined; what towns and cities spoiled: if by all these things the ambitious can but arrive at their ends! To go no further back than sixty years, that little period of time will furnish us with many wars begun upon ill grounds, and ended in great desolation. Nay, the last twelve years of our time make as pregnant a demonstration as we can furnish ourselves with from the records of any age. It is too tedious, nor is it my business, to be particular: it has been often well observed by others, and is almost known to all. I mean the French, Spanish, German, English, and Dutch wars.

8. But ambition does not only dwell in courts and senates: it is too natural to every private breast to strain for power. We daily see how much men labour their utmost wit and interest to be great, to get higher places, or greater titles than they have, that they may look bigger and be more acknowledged; take place of their former equals, and so equal those that were once their superiors: compel friends, and be revenged on enemies. This makes Christianity so little loved of worldly men; its kingdom is not of this world; and though they may speak it fair, it is the world they love: that without uncharitableness we may truly say, People profess Christianity, but they follow the world. They are not for seeking the kingdom of heaven first, and the righteousness thereof (Matt. 6:33), and to trust God with the rest; but for securing to themselves the wealth and glory of this world, and adjourning the care of salvation to a sick bed, and the extreme moments of life; if yet they believe a life to come.

9. To conclude this head: great is their peace, who know a limit to their ambitious minds; that have learned to be contented with the appointments and bounds of Providence: that are not careful to be great; but, being great, are humble and do good. Such keep their wits with their consciences, and, with an even mind, can at all times measure the uneven world, rest fixed in the midst of all its uncertainties, and as becomes those who have an interest in a better, in the good time and will of God, cheerfully leave this; when the ambitious, conscious of their evil practices, and weighed down to their graves with guilt, must go to a tribunal that they can neither awe nor bribe.

CHAPTER IX

THE third evil effect of pride is an excessive desire of personal honour and respect. Pride therefore loves power, that she might have homage, and that every one may give her honour, and such as are wanting in that expose themselves to her anger and revenge. And as pride, so this evil effect is more or less diffused through corrupt mankind; and has been the occasion of great animosity and mischief in the world.

2. We have a pregnant instance in holy writ, what malice and revenge proud man is capable of, when not gratified in this particular. It had almost cost Mordecai his neck, and the whole people of the Jews their lives, because he would not bow himself to Haman, who was a great favourite to king Ahasuerus. And the practice of the world, even in our own age, will tell us, that not striking a flag or sail, and not saluting certain ports or garrisons, yea, less things have given rise to mighty wars between states and kingdoms, to the expense of much treasure, but more blood. The like has followed about the precedency of princes and their ambassadors. Also the envy, quarrels, and mischiefs that have happened among private persons, upon conceit that they have not been respected to their degree or quality among men, without hat, knee, or title: to be sure, duels and murders not a

few. I was once myself in France>(* Which was before I professed the communion I am now of.) set upon about eleven at night, as I was walking to my lodging, by a person, that waylaid me, with his naked sword in his hand, who demanded satisfaction of me for taking no notice of him, at a time when he civilly saluted me with his hat; though the truth was, I saw him not when he did it. I will suppose he had killed me, for he made several passes at me, or I, in my defence, had killed him, when I disarmed him, as the Earl of Crawford's servant saw, that was by; I ask any man of understanding or conscience, if the whole ceremony was worth the life of a man, considering the dignity of the nature, and the importance of the life of man, both with respect to God his Creator, himself, and the benefit of civil society.

3. But the truth is, the world, under its degeneracy from God, is as much out of the way as to true honour and respect, as in other things: for mere shows, and those vain ones too, are much of the honour and respect that are expressed in the world; that a man may say concerning them, as the apostle speaks of science, that is, they are honours and respects falsely so called; having nothing of the nature of true honour and respect in them: but as degenerate men, loving to be honoured, first devised them, so pride only loves and seeks them, and is affronted and angry for want of them. Did men know a true Christian state, and the honour that comes from above which Jesus teaches, they would not covet these very vanities, much less insist upon them.

4. And here give me leave to set down the reasons more particularly, why I, and the people with whom I walk in religious society, have declined, as vain and foolish, several worldly customs and fashions of respect, much in request at this time of day: and I beseech thee, reader, to lay aside all prejudice and scorn, and with the meekness and inquiry of a sober and discreet mind, read and weigh what may be here alleged in our defence: and if we are mistaken, rather pity and inform, than despise and abuse our simplicity.

5. The first and most pressing motive upon our spirits, to decline the practice of these present customs, pulling off the hat, bowing the body or knee, and giving people gaudy titles and epithets in our salutations and addresses, was that savour, sight and sense of God, by his light and Spirit given us, of the Christian world's apostacy from God, and the cause and effects of that great and lamentable defection. In the discovery of which the sense of our state came first before us, and we were made to see Him whom we pierced, and to mourn for it. A day of humiliation overtook us, and we fainted to that pleasure and delight we once loved. Now our works went beforehand to judgment, and a thorough search was made, and the words of the prophet became well understood by us: "Who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appears? He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap" (Mal. 3:2). And as the apostle said, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:18). "Wherefore," says the Apostle Paul, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11): what to do? To come out of the nature, spirit, lusts, and customs of this wicked world: remembering that, as Jesus has said, "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36).

This concern of mind and dejection of spirit was visible to our neighbours; and we are not ashamed to own that the terrors of the Lord took such hold upon us, because we had long, under a profession of religion, grieved God's Holy Spirit, that reproved us in secret for our disobedience; that as we abhorred to think of continuing in our old sins, so we feared to use lawful things, lest we should use them unlawfully. Our heaven seemed to melt away, and our earth to be removed out of its place; and we were like men, as the apostle said, upon whom the ends of the world were come. God knows it was so in this day; the brightness of his coming to our souls discovered, and the breath of his mouth destroyed, every plant He had not planted in us. He was a swift witness against every evil thought and every unfruitful work; and, blessed be his name, we were not offended in Him, or at his righteous judgments. Now it was that a grand inquest came upon our whole life: every word, thought, and deed was brought to judgment, the root examined, and its tendency considered. "The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16), were opened to our view; the mystery of iniquity in us. And by knowing the evil leaven, and its divers evil effects in ourselves, how it had wrought, and what it had done, we came to have a sense and knowledge of the states of others: and what we could not, nay, we dare not let live and continue in ourselves, as being manifested to us to proceed from an evil principle in the time of man's degeneracy, we could not comply with in others. Now this I say, and that in the fear and presence of the all-

seeing, just God, the present honours and respect of the world, among other things, became burdensome to us; we saw they had no being in paradise, that they grew in the nighttime, and came from an ill root; and that they only delighted a vain and ill mind, and that much pride and folly were in them.

6. And though we easily foresaw the storms of reproach that would fall upon us for our refusing to practise them, yet we were so far from being shaken in our judgment, that it abundantly confirmed our sense of them. For so exalted a thing is man, and so loving of honour and respect, even from his fellow-creatures, that so soon as in tenderness of conscience towards God we could not perform them as formerly, he became more concerned than for all the rest of our differences, however material to salvation. So that let the honour of God and our own salvation do as it will, it was greater heresy and blasphemy to refuse him the homage of the hat, and his usual titles of honour; to deny to pledge his healths, or play with him at cards and dice, than any other principle we maintained: for being less in his view, it seemed not so much in his way.

7. And though it be frequently objected that we seek to set up outward forms of preciseness, and that is but as a green riband, the badge of the party, the better to be known: I do declare, in the fear of Almighty God, that these are but the imaginations and vain constructions of insensible men, that have not had that sense which the Lord hath given us, of what arises from the right and the wrong root in man: and when such censurers of our simplicity shall be inwardly touched and awakened by the mighty power of God, and see things as they are in their proper natures and seeds, they will then know their own burden, and easily acquit us, without the imputation of folly or hypocrisy herein.

8. To say that we strain at small things, which becomes not people of so fair pretensions to liberty and freedom of spirit: I answer with meekness, truth, and sobriety; first, nothing is small that God makes matter of conscience to do, or leave undone. Next as inconsiderable as they are made, by those that object upon us, they are much set by: so greatly as for our not giving them to be beaten, imprisoned, refused justice, &c. To say nothing of the derision and reproach that hath been frequently flung at us on this account. So that if we had wanted a proof of the truth of our inward belief and judgment, the very practice of them that opposed it would have abundantly confirmed us. But let it suffice to us, that "wisdom is justified of her children" (Matt. 11:19); we only passively let fall the practice of what we are taught to believe is vain and unchristian: in which we are negative to forms: for we leave off, we do not set up forms.

9. The world is so set upon the ceremonious parts and outside of things, that it has well beseemed the wisdom of God in all ages to bring forth his dispensations with very different appearances to their settled customs; thereby contradicting human inventions, and proving the integrity of his confessors. Nay, it is a test upon the world: it tries what patience, kindness, sobriety, and moderation they have: if the rough and homely outside of truth stumble not their minds from the reception of it, whose beauty is within: it makes a great discovery upon them. For he who refuses a precious jewel, because it is presented in a plain box, will never esteem it to its value, nor set his heart upon keeping it; therefore I call it a test, because it shows where the hearts and affections of the people stick, after all their great pretence to more excellent things.

10. It is also a mighty trial upon God's people, in that they are put upon the discovery of their contradiction to the customs generally received and esteemed in the world; which exposes them to the wonder, scorn, and abuse of the multitude. But there is a hidden treasure in it: it inures us to reproach, it teaches us to despise the false reputation of the world, and silently to undergo the contradiction and scorn of its votaries; and finally, with a Christian meekness and patience to overcome their injuries and reproaches. Add to this; it weans thee of thy familiars; for being slighted of them as a ninny, a fool, a frantic, &c., thou art delivered from a greater temptation; and that is the power and influence of their vain conversation. And last of all, it lists thee of the company of the blessed, mocked, persecuted Jesus; to fight under his banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil: that after having faithfully suffered with Him in a state of humiliation, thou mayst reign with Him in a state of glorification: who glorifies his poor, despised, constant followers with the glory He had with the Father before the world began (John 17:5). This was the first reason of our declining to practise the before-mentioned honours, respect, &c.

11. The second reason why we decline and refuse the present use of these customs in our addresses and salutations, is from the consideration of their very emptiness and vanity: that there is nothing of true honour and respect in them, supposing them not to be evil. And, as religion and worship are degenerated into form and ceremony, and they are not according to primitive practice neither, so is honour and respect too; there being little of that in the world as well as of the other; and to be sure, in these customs, none that is justifiable by Scripture or reason.

12. In Scripture we find the word honour often and diversely used. First for obedience: as when God saith, "They that honour me" (1 Sam. 2:30); that is, that keep my commandments. "Honour the king" (1 Peter 2:17); that is, obey the king. "Honour thy father and mother" (Exod. 20:12); that is, saith the apostle to the Ephesians, "Obey thy father and thy mother in the Lord, for that is right" (Eph. 6:1,2); take heed to their precepts and advice: pre-supposing always, that rulers and parents command lawful things, else they dishonour themselves to enjoin unlawful things; and subjects and children dishonour their superiors and parents, in complying with their unrighteous commands. Also Christ uses this word so, when He says, "I have not a devil, but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me" (John 8:49); that is, I do my Father's will in what I do, but you will not hear me; you reject my counsel, and will not obey my voice. It was not refusing hat and knee, nor empty trifles: no, it was disobedience; resisting Him that God had sent, and not believing in Him. This was the dishonour He taxed them with; using Him as an impostor, that God had ordained for the salvation of the world. And of these dishonourers there are but too many at this day. Christ has a saying to the same effect: "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; and he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, which hath sent him" (John 5:23); that is, they that hearken not to Christ, and do not worship and obey Him, they do not hear, worship, nor obey God. As they pretended to believe in God, so they were to have believed in Him; He told them so. This is pregnantly manifested in the case of the centurion, whose faith was so much commended by Christ; where, giving Jesus an account of his honourable station, he tells Him he had soldiers under his authority, and when he said to one, Go, he went; to another, Come, he came; and to a third, Do this, he did it (Luke 7:8). In this it was he placed the honour of his capacity, and the respect of his soldiers, and not in hats and legs: nor are such customs yet in use amongst soldiers, being effeminate, and unworthy of masculine gravity.

13. In the next place, honour is used for preferment to trust and eminent employments. So the Psalmist, speaking to God: "For thou hast crowned him with glory and honour": again, "Honour and majesty hast thou laid on him" (Psalm 8:5;21:5); that is, God hath given Christ power over all his enemies, and exalted Him to great dominion. Thus the wise man intimates, when he says, "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, and before honour is humility" (Prov. 15:33). That is, before advancement or preferment is humility. Further, he has this saying, "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool" (Prov. 26:1); that is, a fool is not capable of the dignity of trust, employment, or preferment: they require virtue, wisdom, integrity, diligence, with which fools are unfurnished. And yet if the respects and titles in use amongst us are to go for marks of honour, Solomon's proverb will take place, and doubtless doth, upon the practice of this age, that yields so much of that honour to a great many of Solomon's fools; who are not only silly men, but wicked too; such as refuse instruction, and hate the fear of the Lord (Prov. 13:18); which only maketh one of his wise men.

14. And as virtue and wisdom are the same, so folly and wickedness. Thus Shechem's lying with Dinah, Jacob's daughter, is called (Gem 34:7); so is the rebellion and wickedness of the Israelites in Joshua (Joshua 7:15). The Psalmist expresses thus: "My wounds stink, because of my foolishness" (Psalm 38:5); that is, his sin. And, "The Lord will speak peace to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly" (Psalm 85:8); that is, to evil. "His own iniquities," says Solomon, "shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins: he shall die without instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray" (Prov. 5:22,23). Christ puts foolishness with blasphemy, pride, theft, murders, adulteries, wickedness, &c. (Mark 7:21,22). I was the more willing to add to these passages, to show the difference that there is between the mind of the Holy Ghost, and the notion that those ages had of fools, that deserve not honour, and that which is generally meant by fools and folly in our time; that we may the better understand the disproportion there is between honour, as then

understood by the Holy Ghost, and those that were led thereby; and the apprehension of it, and the practice of those latter ages of professed Christians.

15. But honour is also taken for reputation, and is so understood with us: "A gracious woman," says Solomon, "retaineth honour" (Prov. 11:16); that is, she keeps her credit; and by her virtue maintains her reputation of sobriety and chastity. In another place, "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife" (Prov. 20:3); that is, it makes for his reputation, as a wise and good man. Christ uses the word thus, where He says, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country" (Matt. 13:57); that is, he has credit, and is valued, save at home. The apostle to the Thessalonians has a saying to this effect: "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1 Thess. 4:4); that is, in chastity and sobriety. In all which nothing of the fashions by us declined is otherwise concerned than to be totally excluded.

16. There is yet another use of the word honour in Scripture, and that is to functions and capacities: as, "An eider is worthy of double honour" (1 Tim. 5:17); that is, he deserves double esteem, love, and respect; being holy, merciful, temperate, peaceable, humble, &c., especially one that labours in word and doctrine. So Paul recommends Epaphroditus to the Philippians; "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in honour" (Phil. 2:29); as if he had said, Let them be valued and regarded by you in what they say and teach. Which is the truest, and most natural and convincing way of testifying respect to a man of God; as Christ said to his disciples, "If ye love me ye will keep my sayings." Further, the apostle bids us to honour widows indeed: that is, such women who are of chaste lives and exemplary virtue are honourable.

17. The word honour, in the Scripture, is also used from superiors to inferiors. Which is plain in the instance of Ahasuerus to Haman: "What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" (Esther 6:6). Why, he mightily advanced him, as Mordecai afterwards. And more particularly it is said, that "the Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour" (Esther 8:16); that is, they escaped the persecution that was like to fall upon them, and by the means of Esther and Mordecai, they enjoyed not only peace, but favour and countenance too. In this sense the Apostle Peter advised Christian men "to honour their wives" (1 Peter 3:7); that is, to love, value, cherish, countenance, and esteem them, for their fidelity and affection to their husbands, for their tenderness and care over their children, and for their diligence and circumspection in their families. There is no ceremonious behaviour, or gaudy titles requisite to express this honour. Thus God honours holy men: "Them that honour me," says the Lord, "I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30); that is, I will do good to them, I will love, bless, countenance, and prosper them that honour Me, that obey Me: but they that despise Me, that resist my Spirit, and break my law, they shall be lightly esteemed, little set by or accounted of; they shall not find favour with God, nor righteous men. And so we see it daily among men: if the great visit or concern themselves to aid the poor; we say, that such a great man did me the honour to come and see, or help me, in my need.

18. I shall conclude this with one passage more, and that is a very large, plain, and pertinent one: "Honour all men, and love the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17): that is, love is above honour, and that is reserved for the brotherhood. But honour, which is esteem and regard, that thou owest to all men; and if all, then thy inferiors. But why for all men? Because they are the creation of God, and the most noble part of his creation too; they are also thy own kind: be natural, and assist them with what thou canst; be ready to perform any real respect, and yield them any good or countenance thou canst.

19. And yet there seems a limitation to the command, Honour all men, in that passage of godly David, "Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? he in whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord" (Psalm 15:1,4). Here honour is confined and affixed to godly persons; and dishonour made the duty of the righteous to the wicked, and a mark of their being righteous, that they dishonour, that is, slight or disregard them. To conclude this Scripture inquiry after honour, I shall contract the subject of it under three capacities, superiors, equals, and inferiors: honour, to superiors, is obedience; to equals, love; to inferiors, countenance and help: that is honour after God's mind, and the holy people's fashion of old.

20. But how little of all this is to be seen or had in a poor empty hat, bow, cringe, or gaudy, flattering title, let the truth-speaking witness of God in all mankind judge. For I must not appeal to corrupt, proud, and self-speaking man, of the good or evil of those customs, that, as little as he would render them, are loved and sought by him, and he is out of humour and angry if he has them not.

This is our second reason why we refuse to practise the accustomed ceremonies of honour and respect; because we find no such notion or expression of honour and respect, recommended to us by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures of truth.

21. Our third reason for not using them as testimonies of honour and respect is, because there is no discovery of honour or respect to be made by them: it is rather eluding and equivocating it; cheating people of the honour and respect that is due to them; giving them nothing in the show of something. There is in them no obedience to superiors, no love to equals, no help or countenance to inferiors.

22. We are, we declare to the whole world, for true honour and respect; we honour the king, our parents, our masters, our magistrates, our landlords, one another; yea, all men, after God's way, used by holy men and women of old time: but we refuse these customs as vain and deceitful; not answering the end they are used for.

23. But, fourthly, there is yet more to be said: we find that vain, loose, and worldly people are the great lovers and practisers of them, and most deride our simplicity of behaviour. Now we assuredly know, from the sacred testimonies, that those people cannot give true honour that live in a dishonourable spirit; they understand it not; but they can give the hat and knee, and that they are very liberal of, nor are any more expert at it. This is to us a proof that no true honour can be testified by those customs which vanity and looseness love and use.

24. Next to them I will add hypocrisy, and revenge too. For how little do many care for each other! Nay, what spite, envy, animosity, secret backbiting, and plotting one against another, under the use of these idle respects; till passion, too strong for cunning, breaks through hypocrisy into open affront and revenge! It cannot be so with the Scripture honour: to obey, or prefer a man, out of spite, is not usually done: and to love, help, serve, and countenance a person, in order to deceive and be revenged of him, is a thing never heard of: these admit of no hypocrisy nor revenge. Men do not these things to palliate ill-will, which are the testimonies of quite the contrary. It is absurd to imagine it, because impossible to be done.

25. Our sixth reason is, that honour was from the beginning: but hat-respects and most titles are of late: therefore there was true honour before hats or titles; and consequently true honour stands not in them. And that which ever was the way to express true honour is the best way still; and this the Scripture teaches better than dancing-masters can do.

26. Seventhly, if honour consists in such-like ceremonies, then will it follow that they are most capable of showing honour who perform it most exactly, according to the mode or fashion of the times; consequently, that man hath not the measure of true honour, from a just and reasonable principle in himself, but by the means and skill of the fantastic dancing-masters of the times: and for this cause it is we see that many give much money to have their children learn their honours, falsely so called. And what doth this but totally exclude the poor country people; who, though they plough, till, sow, reap, go to market, and in all things obey their justices, landlords, fathers, and masters, with sincerity and sobriety, rarely use those ceremonies; but if they do it is so awkwardly and meanly, that they are esteemed by a court critic so ill favoured as only fit to make a jest of and be laughed at: but what sober man will not deem their obedience beyond the other's vanity and hypocrisy? This base notion of honour turns out of doors the true, and sets the false in its place. Let it be further considered, that the way or fashion of doing it is much more in the design of its performers, as well as view of its spectators, than the respect itself. Whence it is commonly said, He is a man of good mien; or, She is a woman of exact behaviour. And what is this behaviour but fantastic, cramped postures and cringings, unnatural to their shape; and, if it were not fashionable, ridiculous to the view of all people; and is therefore to the Eastern countries a proverb.

27. But yet, eighthly, real honour consists not in a hat, bow, or title, because all these things may be had for money, for which reason, how many dancing-schools, plays, &c., are there in the land, to which youth is generally sent to be educated in these vain fashions! Whilst they are ignorant of the honour that is of God, and their minds are allured to visible things that perish; and, instead of remembering their Creator, are taken up with toys and fopperies; and sometimes so much worse, as to cost themselves a disinheriting, and their indiscreet parents grief and misery all their days (Prov. 3:9). If parents would honour God in the help of his poor with the substance they bestow on such an education, they would find a far better account in the end.

28. But lastly, we cannot esteem bows, titles, and pulling off of hats, to be real honour, because such-like customs have been prohibited by God, his Son, and servants in days past. This I shall endeavour to show by three or four express authorities.

29. My first example and authority is taken from the story of Mordecai and Haman; so close to this point, that methinks it should at least command silence to the objections frequently advanced against us. Haman was first minister of state, and favourite to king Ahasuerus. The text says that the king set his seat above all the princes that were with him; and all the king's servants bowed and revered Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him; but Mordecai, it seems, bowed not, nor did him reverence (Esther 3: I, 2). This at first made ill for Mordecai; a gallows was prepared for him at Haman's command. But the sequel of the story shows that Haman proved his own invention, and ended his pride with his life upon it. Well now, speaking as the world speaks, and looking upon Mordecai without the knowledge of the success; was not Mordecai a very clown, at least, a silly, morose, and humorous man, to run such a hazard for a trifle?

What hurt had it done him to have bowed to and honoured one the king honoured? Did he not despise the king, in disregarding Haman? Nay, had not the king commanded that respect; and are not we to honour and obey the king? One would have thought he might have bowed for the king's sake, whatever he had in his heart, and yet have come off well enough; for that he bowed not merely to Haman, but to the king's authority; besides, it was but an innocent ceremony. But it seems Mordecai was too plain and stout, and not fine and subtle enough to avoid the displeasure of Haman.

Howbeit, he was an excellent man: he feared God, and wrought righteousness. And in this very thing also he pleased God, and even the king too, at last, that had most cause to be angry with him: for he advanced him to Haman's dignity; and if it could be to greater honour. It is true, sad news first came; no less than destruction to Mordecai, and the whole people of the Jews besides, for his sake; but Mordecai's integrity and humiliation, his fasting, and strong cries to God prevailed, and the people were saved, and poor condemned Mordecai comes, after all, to be exalted above the princes, whether in this or any other respect. They that endure faithful in that which they are convinced God requires of them, though against the grain and humour of the world, and themselves too, they shall find a blessed recompense in the end. My brethren, remember the cup of cold water: "We shall reap if we faint not." And call to mind, that our Captain bowed not to him that told Him, "If thou wilt fall down and worship me, I will give thee all the glory of the world:" shall we bow then? Oh no! Let us follow our blessed Leader.

30. But, before I leave this section it is fit I add, that in conference with a late bishop, and none of the least eminent, upon this subject and instance, I remember he sought to evade it thus: "Mordecai," says he, "did not refuse to bow, as it was a testimony of respect to the king's favourite; but he, being a figure and type of Christ, refused, because Haman was of the uncircumcision, and ought to bow to him rather." To which I replied that, allowing Mordecai to be a figure of Christ, and the Jews of God's people or church; and that as the Jews were saved by Mordecai, so the church is saved by Christ; this makes for me; for then, by that reason, the spiritual circumcision, or people of Christ, are not to receive and bow to the fashions and customs of the spiritual uncircumcision, who are the children of the world; of which such as were condemnable so long ago in the time of the type and figure, can by no means be justifiably received or practised in the time of the anti-type or substance itself. On the contrary, this shows expressly we are faithfully to decline such worldly customs, and not to fashion ourselves according to the conversation of earthly-minded people; but be renewed and changed in

our ways, and keep close to our Mordecai; who having not bowed, we must not bow, that are his people and followers. And whatever be our sufferings or reproaches, they will have an end: Mordecai, our captain, that appears for his people throughout all the provinces, in the king's gate, will deliver us at last; and, for his sake, we shall be favoured and loved of the king himself too. So powerful is faithful Mordecai at last. Therefore let us all look to Jesus, our Mordecai, the Israel indeed; He that has power with God, and would not bow in the hour of temptation, but has mightily prevailed; and therefore is a Prince for ever, and "of his government there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:7).

31. The next Scripture instance I urge against these customs is a passage in Job, thus expressed: "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person; neither let me give flattering titles unto man, for I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing, my Maker would soon take me away" (Job 32:21,22).

The question that will arise upon the allegation of this Scripture is this, viz., What titles are flattering? The answer is as obvious, namely, Such as are empty and fictitious, and make him more than he is: as to call a man what he is not, to please him; or to exalt him beyond his true name, office, or desert, to gain upon his affection; who, it may be, lusteth to honour and respect: such as these--most excellent, most sacred, your grace, your lordship, most dread majesty, right honourable, right worshipful, may it please your majesty, your grace, your lordship, your honour, your worship, and the like unnecessary titles and attributes, calculated only to please and tickle poor, proud, vain, yet mortal man. Likewise to call man what he is not, as my lord, my master, &c., and wise, just, or good, when he is neither, only to please him, or show him respect.

It was familiar thus to do among the Jews, under their degeneracy; wherefore one came to Christ, and said, "Good master, what shall I do to have eternal life?" (Luke 18:18). It was a salutation or address of respect in those times. It is familiar now: good my lord, good sir, good master, do this, or do that. But what was Christ's answer? how did He take it? "Why callest thou me good?" says Christ; "there is none good, save one, that is God" (verse 19). He rejected it that had more right to keep it than all mankind: and why? Because there was one greater than He? and that He saw the man addressed it to his manhood, after the way of the times, and not to his divinity which dwelt within it; therefore Christ refuses it, showing and instructing us that we should not give such epithets and titles commonly to men; for good being due alone to God and godliness, it can only be said in flattery to fallen man, and therefore sinful to be so said.

This plain and exact life well became Him, that was on purpose manifested to return and restore man from his lamentable degeneracy, to the innocency and purity of his first creation; who has taught us to be careful how we use and give attributes unto man by that most severe saying, "That every idle word that man shall speak, he shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36). And that which should warn all men of the latitude they take herein, and sufficiently justifies our tenderness is this, That man can scarcely commit greater injury and offence against Almighty God than to ascribe any of his attributes unto man, the creature of his word, and the work of his hands. He is a jealous God of his honour, and will not give his glory unto another. Besides, it is so near the sin of the aspiring fallen angels that affected to be greater and better than they were made and stated by the great Lord of all, and to entitle man to a station above his make and orb, looks so like idolatry (the unpardonable sin under the law) that it is hard to think how men and women professing Christianity, and seriously reflecting upon their vanity and evil in these things, can continue in them, much less plead for them; and least of all reproach and deride those that through tenderness of conscience cannot use and give them. It seems that Elihu did not dare to do it; but put such weight upon the matter as to give this for one reason for his forbearance, to wit: "Lest my Maker would soon take me away": that is, for fear God should strike me dead, I dare not give man titles that are above him, or titles merely to please him. I may not, by any means, gratify that spirit which lusteth after such things. God is to be exalted, and man abase. God is jealous of man's being set higher than his station: He will have him keep his place, know his original, and remember the rock from whence he came: that what he has is borrowed; not his own but his Maker's, who brought him forth and sustained him; which man is very apt to forget: and lest I should be accessory to it by flattering titles, instead of telling him truly and plainly what he is, and using them as he ought to be treated, and thereby provoke my Maker to

displeasure, and He in his anger and jealousy should take me soon away, or bring sudden death and an untimely end upon me, I dare not use, I dare not give such titles unto men.

32. But if we had not this to allege from the Old Testament writings, it should and ought to suffice with Christians, that these customs are severely censured by the great Lord and Master of their religion; who is so far from putting people upon giving honour one to another, that He will not indulge them in it, whatever be the customs of the country they live in: for He charges it upon the Jews as a mark of their apostacy: "How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" where their infidelity concerning Christ is made the effect of seeking worldly and not heavenly honour only. And the thing is not hard to apprehend, if we consider that self-love and desire of honour from men is inconsistent with the love and humility of Christ. They sought the good opinion and respect of the world; how then was it possible they should leave all and follow Him, whose kingdom is not of this world; and that came in a way so cross to the mind and humour of it? And that this was the meaning of our Lord Jesus is plain: for He tells us what that honour was they gave and received, which He condemned them for, and of which He bid the disciples of his humility and cross beware. His words are these, and He speaks them not of the rabble but of the doctors, the great men, the men of honour among the Jews: "They love," says He, "the uppermost rooms at feasts" (Matt. 23:6), that is, places of greatest rank and respect; and "greetings" (Mark 12:38,39), that is, salutations of respect, such as pulling off the hat, and bowing the body are in our age, in the market-places, viz. in the places of note and concourse, the public walks and exchanges of the country. And lastly, "they love," says Christ, "to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi:" one of the most eminent titles among the Jews. A word comprehending an excellency equal to many titles, it may stand for your grace, your lordship, right reverend father, &c. It is upon these men of breeding and quality that He pronounces his woes, making these practices some of the evil marks by which to know them, as well as some of the motives of his threatenings against them. But He leaves it not here: He pursues this very point of honour above all the rest in his caution to his disciples; to whom He gave in charge thus: "But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called masters; but he that is greatest amongst you shall be your servant: and whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased" (Matt. 23: 8-12). Plain it is that these passages carry a severe rebuke, both to worldly honour in general, and to those members and expressions of it in particular, which, as near as the language of Scripture and customs of that age will permit, do distinctly reach and allude to those of our own time; for the declining of which we have suffered so much scorn and abuse, both in our persons and estates. God forgive the unreasonable authors of it!

33. The Apostle Paul has a saying of great weight and fervency, in his epistle to the Romans, very agreeable to this doctrine of Christ; it is this: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1,2). He wrote to a people in the midst of the ensnaring pomp and glory of the world. Rome was the seat of Caesar, and the empire; the mistress of invention. Her fashions, as those of France now, were as laws to the world, at least at Rome: whence it is proverbial: *Cure fueris Romæ, Romano vivito more--* "When thou art at Rome, thou must do as Rome does." But the apostle is of another mind; he warns the Christians of that city that they be not conformed; that is, that they do not follow the vain fashions and customs of this world, but leave them. The emphasis lies upon this, as well as upon conformed; and it imports, that this world, which they were not to conform to, was the corrupt and degenerate condition of mankind in that age. Wherefore the apostle proceeds to exhort those believers, and that by the mercies of God, the most powerful and winning of all arguments, that they would be transformed; that is, changed from the way of life customary among the Romans; and prove what is that acceptable will of God. As if he had said, Examine what you do and practise; see if it be right, and that it please God; call every thought, word, and action to judgment (John 3:21); try whether they are wrought in God or not; that so you may prove or know, what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

34. The next Scripture authority we appeal to, in our vindication, is a passage of the Apostle Peter, in his first epistle written to the believing strangers throughout the countries of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and

Bithynia; which were the churches of Jesus Christ in those parts of the world, gathered by his power and spirit: it is this: "Gird up the loins of your mind; be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance" (1 Peter 1:13,14). That is, be not found in the vain fashions and customs of the world, unto which you conformed in your former ignorance; but as you have believed in a more plain and excellent way, so be sober and fervent, and hope to the end: do not give out; let them mock on; bear ye the contradiction of sinners constantly, as obedient children, that you may receive the kindness of God, at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And therefore does the apostle call them strangers, a figurative speech, people estranged from the customs of the world, of new faith and manners; and so unknown of the world: and if such strangers, then not to be fashioned or conformed to their pleasing respects and honours, whom they were estranged from: because the strangeness lay in leaving that which was customary and familiar to them before. The following words prove he used the word strangers in a spiritual sense: "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Peter 1:17); that is, pass the time of your being as strangers on earth in fear; not after the fashions of the world. A word in the next chapter further explains his sense, where he tells the believers that they are a peculiar people; to wit, a distinct, a singular and separate people from the rest of the world: not any longer to fashion themselves according to their customs. But I do not know how that could be, if they were to live in communion with the world, in its respects and honours, for that is not to be a peculiar or separate people from them, but to be like them, because conformable to them.

35. I shall conclude my Scripture testimonies against the foregoing respects, with that memorable and close passage of the Apostle James against respect of persons in general after the world's fashion: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons: for if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel: and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place [or, well and seemly, as the word is]; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:1-4). That is, they knew they did amiss: "If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors" (James 2:8, 9). This is so full there seems nothing left for me to add, or others to object. We are not to respect persons, that is the first thing: and the next thing is, if we do, we commit sin, and break the law: our own peril be it. And yet perhaps some will say that by this we overthrow all distinction amongst men, under their divers qualities, and introduce a reciprocal and relational respect in the room of it: but if it be so, I cannot help it, the Apostle James must answer for it, who has given us this doctrine for Christian and apostolical. And yet One greater than he told his disciples, of whom James was one, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them," &c. "But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:25-27). That is, he that affects rule, and seeks to be uppermost, shall be esteemed least among you. And to say true on the whole matter, whether we regard those early times of the world, that were antecedent to the coming of Christ or soon after, there was yet a greater simplicity than in the times in which we are fallen. For those early times of the world, as bad as they were in other things, were great strangers to the frequency of these follies: nay, they hardly used some of them, at least very rarely. For if we read the Scriptures, such a thing as my lord Adam, though lord of the world, is not to be found; nor my lord Noah neither, the second lord of the earth; nor yet my lord Abraham, the father of the faithful; nor my lord Isaac, nor my lord Jacob; but much less is my lord Paul, &c., to be found in the Bible; and less your holiness, or your grace. Nay, among the Gentiles, the people wore their own names with more simplicity, and used not the ceremony of speech that is now practised among Christians, nor yet anything like it. My lord Solon, my lord Phocion, my lord Plato, my lord Aristotle, my lord Scipio, my lord Fabius, my lord Cato, my lord Cicero, are not to be read in any of the Greek or Latin stories, and yet they were some of the sages and heroes of those great empires. No, their own names were enough to distinguish them from other men, and their virtue and employment in the public service were their titles of honour. Nor has this vanity yet crept far into the Latin writers, where it is familiar for authors to cite the most learned and the most noble, without any addition to their names, unless worthy or learned: and if their works give it them, we make no conscience to deny it them. For instance: the Fathers they only cite thus: Polycarpus, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Tertullian, Origen, Arnobius, Lactantius, Chrysostom, Jerome, &c.

More modern writers: Damascen, Rabanus, Paschasius, Theophylact, Bernard, &c. And of the last age: Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Beza, Zuinglius, Marlorat, Vossius, Grotius, Dalleus, Amyralldus, &c. And of our own country: Gildas, Beda, Alcuinus, Horn, Bracton, Grosteeed, Littleton, Cranmer, Ridley, Jewel, Whitaker, Seldon, &c. And yet I presume this will not be thought uncivil or rude. Why then is our simplicity (and so honestly grounded too, as conscience against pride in man, that so evilly and perniciously loves and seeks worship and greatness) so much despised and abused, and that by professed Christians too, who take themselves to be the followers of Him that has forbidden these foolish customs, as plainly as any other impiety condemned in his doctrine? I earnestly beg the lovers, users, and expecters of these ceremonies, to let this I have written have some consideration and weight with them.

36. However, Christians are not so ill-bred as the world think: for they show respect too: but the difference between them lies in the nature of the respect they perform, and the reasons of it. The world's respect is an empty ceremony, no soul nor substance in it: the Christian's is a solid thing, whether by obedience to superiors, love to equals, or help and countenance to inferiors. Next, their reasons and motives to honour and respect are as wide one from the other: for fine apparel, empty titles, or large revenues are the world's motives, being things her children worship: but the Christian's motives are the sense of his duty in God's sight: first to parents and magistrates, and then to inferior relations: and lastly to all people, according to their virtue, wisdom, and piety; which is far from respect to the mere persons of men, or having their persons in admiration for reward: much less on such mean and base motives as wealth and sumptuous raiment.

37. We shall easily grant, our honour, as our religion, is more hidden; and that neither are so discernible by worldly men, nor grateful to them. Our plainness is odd, uncouth, and goes mightily against the grain; but so does Christianity too, and that for the same reasons. But had not the heathen spirit prevailed too long under a Christian profession, it would not be so hard to discern the right from the wrong. Oh that Christians would look upon themselves with the glass of righteousness; that which tells true, and gives them an exact knowledge of themselves! And then let them examine what in them, and about them, agrees with Christ's doctrine and life; and they may soon resolve, whether they are real Christians, or but heathen christened with the name of Christians.

SOME TESTIMONIES FROM ANCIENT AND MODERN WRITERS IN FAVOUR OF OUR BEHAVIOUR

38. Marlorat, out of Luther and Calvin, upon that remarkable passage I just now urged from the Apostle James, gives us the sense those primitive reformers had of respect to persons in these words, viz. "To respect persons here is to have regard to the habit and garb: the apostle signifies, that such respecting of persons is so contrary to true faith, that they are altogether inconsistent: but if the pomp, and other worldly regards prevail, and weaken what is of Christ, it is a sign of a decaying faith. Yea, so great is the glory and splendour of Christ in a pious soul, that all the glories of the world have no charms, no beauty, in comparison of that, unto one so righteously inclined. The apostle maketh such respecting of persons to be repugnant to the light within them, insomuch as they who follow these practices are condemned from within themselves. So that sanctity ought to be the reason or motive of all outward respect; and that none is to be honoured, upon any account but holiness." Thus much Marlorat. But if this be true doctrine, we are much in the right in refusing conformity to the vain respects of worldly men.

39. But I shall add to these, the admonition of a learned ancient writer, who lived about 1200 years since, of great esteem, namely, Jerome, who, writing to a noble matron, Celentia, directing her how to live in the midst of her prosperity and honours, amongst many other religious instructions, speaks thus: "Heed not thy nobility, nor let that be a reason for thee to take place of any; esteem not those of a meaner extraction to be thy inferiors; for our religion admits of no respect of persons, nor doth it induce us to repute men, from any external condition, but from their inward frame and disposition of mind: it is hereby that we pronounce men noble or base. With God, not to serve sin is to be free; and to excel in virtue is to be noble. God has chosen the mean and contemptible of this world, whereby to humble the great ones. Besides, it is a folly for any to boast his gentility, since all are equally esteemed by God. The ransom of the poor and rich cost Christ an equal expense of blood.

Nor is it material in what state a man is born; the new creature hath no distinction. But if we will forget how we all descended from one Father; we ought at least perpetually to remember that we have but one Saviour."

40. But since I am engaged against these fond and fruitless customs, the proper effects and delights of vain and proud minds, let me yet add one memorable passage more, as it is related by the famous Casaubon, in his discourse of Use and Custom, where he briefly reports what passed between Sulpitius Severus and Paulinus, bishop of Nola (but such an one as gave all to redeem captives; whilst others of that function, that they may show who is their master, are making many both beggars and captives, by countenancing the plunder and imprisonment of Christians, for pure conscience to God); he brings it in thus: "He is not counted a civil man now, of late years amongst us, who thinks it much, or refuseth to subscribe himself servant, though it be to his equal or inferior." Yet Sulpitius Severus was once sharply chid by Paulinus for subscribing himself his servant, in a letter of his, saying, "Take heed, hereafter, how thou, being from a servant called into liberty, dost subscribe thyself servant unto one who is thy brother and fellow-servant; for it is a sinful flattery, not a testimony of humility, to pay those honours to a man, and a sinner, which are due to the one Lord, and one Master, and one God." By this we may see the sense of some of the more apostolical bishops, about the civilities and fashions so much reputed with people that call themselves Christians and bishops, and who would be thought their successors. It was then a sin, it is now an accomplishment: it was then a flattery, it is now respect: it was then fit to be severely reprov'd; and now, alas! it is to deserve severe reproof not to use it. O monstrous vanity! How much, how deeply, have those who are called Christians revolted from the plainness of the primitive days, and practice of holy men and women in former ages! How are they become degenerated into the loose, proud, and wanton customs of the world which knows not God; to whom use hath made these things, condemned by Scripture, reason, and example, almost natural! And so insensible are they of both their cause and bad effects, that they not only continue to practise them, but plead for them, and unchristianly make a very mock of those who cannot imitate them. But I shall proceed to what remains yet further to be said in our defence, for declining another custom, which helps to make us so much the stumbling-block of this light, vain, and inconsiderate age.

CHAPTER X

THERE is another piece of our nonconformity to the world that renders us very clownish to the breeding of it, and that is, thou for you, and that without difference or respect to persons; a thing that to some looks so rude it cannot well go down without derision or wrath. But as we have the same original reason for declining this, as the foregoing customs, so I shall add what to me looks reasonable in our defence; though it is very probable height of mind, in some of those that blame us, will very hardly allow them to believe that the word reasonable is reconcileable with so silly a practice as this is esteemed.

2. Words of themselves are but as so many marks set and employed for necessary and intelligible mediums, or means, whereby men may understandingly express their minds and conceptions to each other: from whence comes conversation. Now, though the world be divided into many nations, each of which, for the most part, has a peculiar language, speech, or dialect, yet have they ever concurred in the same numbers and persons, as much of the ground of right speech. For instance: I love, thou lovest, he loveth, are of the singular number, importing but one, whether in the first, second, or third person: also we love, ye love, they love, are of the plural number, because in each is implied more than one. Which undeniable grammatical rule might be enough to satisfy any that have not forgotten their accidence, that we are not beside reason in our practice. For if thou lovest, be singular, and you love, be plural; and if thou lovest signifies but one; and you love, many; is it not as proper to say, thou lovest, to ten men, as to say, you love, to one man? Or, why not, I love, for we love: and we love, instead of I love? Doubtless it is the same, though most improper, and in speech ridiculous.

3. Our next reason is: if it be improper or uncivil speech, as termed by this vain age, how comes it that the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman authors, used in schools and universities, have no other? Why should they not be a rule in that, as well as other things? And why, I pray then, are we so ridiculous for being thus far grammatical? Is it reasonable that children should be whipped at school for putting you for thou, as having made false Latin; and yet that we must be, though not whipped, reproached, and often abused, when we use the contrary propriety of speech?

4. But in the third place, it is neither improper nor uncivil, but much otherwise; because it is used in all languages, speeches, and dialects, and that through all ages. This is very plain: as for example, it was God's language when He first spake to Adam, viz. Hebrew: also it is the Assyrian, Chaldean, Grecian, and Latin speech. And now among the Turks, Tartars, Muscovites, Indians, Persians, Italians, Spaniards, French, Dutch, Germans, Polonians, Swedes, Danes, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, as well as English, there is a distinction preserved, and the word thou is not lost in the word which goes for you. And though some of the modern tongues have done as we do, yet upon the same error. But by this it is plain, that thou is no upstart, nor yet improper, but the only proper word to be used in all languages to a single person; because otherwise all sentences, speeches, and discourses may be very ambiguous, certain, and equivocal. If a jury pronounce a verdict, or a judge a sentence, three being at the bar, upon three occasions, very differently culpable, and should say, You are here guilty and to die; or innocent, and discharged; who knows who is guilty or innocent? May be but one, perhaps two; or it may be, all three: therefore our indictments run in the singular number, as Hold up thy hand: thou are indicted in the name of, &c., and for that thou, not having the fear of God, &c. And it holds the same in all conversation. Nor can this be avoided but by many unnecessary circumlocutions. And as the preventing of such length and obscurity was doubtless the first reason for the distinction, so cannot that be justly disused till the reason be first removed; which can never be whilst two are in the world.

5. But this is not all; it was first ascribed in way of flattery to proud popes and emperors, imitating the heathen's vain homage to their gods; thereby ascribing a plural honour to a single person: as if one pope had been made up of many gods, and one emperor of many men; for which reason, you only to be used to many, became first spoken to one. It seems the word thou looked like too lean and thin a respect; and, therefore, some bigger than they should be would have a style suitable to their own ambition: a ground we cannot build our practice on; for what began it only loves it still. But supposing you to be proper to a prince, it will not follow it is to a common person. For his edict runs, We will and require. because, perhaps, in conjunction with his council: and therefore you to a private person is an abuse of the word. But as pride first gave it birth, so hath she only promoted it. Monsieur, sir, and madame were originally names given to none but the king, his brother, and their wives, both in France and England; yet now the ploughman in France is called monsieur, and his wife madame: and men of ordinary trades in England, sir, and their wives, dame--which is the legal title of a lady, or else mistress--which is the same with madame in French. So prevalent hath pride and flattery been in all ages, the one to give and the other to receive respects, as they term it.

6. But some will tell us, custom should rule us; and that is against us. But it is easily answered, and more truly, that though in things reasonable or indifferent, custom is obliging or harmless, yet in things unreasonable or unlawful, she has no authority. our custom can no more change numbers than genders, nor yoke one and you together, than make a man into a woman, or one into a thousand. But if custom be to conclude us, it is for us: for as custom is nothing more than ancient usage, I appeal to the practice of mankind, from the beginning of the world through all nations, against the novelty of this confusion, viz. you to one person. Let custom, which is ancient practice and fact, issue this question. Mistake me not: I know words are nothing, but as men give them a value or force by use; but then if you will discharge thou, and that you must succeed in its place, let us have a distinguishing word instead of you to be used in speech to many: but to use the same word for one and many, when there are two, and that only to please a proud and haughty humour in man, is not reasonable in our sense: which we hope is Christian, though not modish.

7. But if thou to a single person be improper or uncivil, God Himself, all the holy fathers and prophets, Christ Jesus, and his apostles, the primitive saints, all languages throughout the world, and our own law proceedings

are guilty; which, with submission, were great presumption to imagine. Besides, we all know it is familiar with most of our authors to preface their discourses to the reader in the same language of thee and thou: as, Reader, thou art desired, &c. Or, Reader, this is written to inform thee of the occasion, &c. And it cannot be denied that the most famous poems dedicated to love or majesty are written in this style. Read of each in Chaucer, Spenser, Waller, Cowley, Dryden, &c. Why then should it be so homely, ill-bred, and insufferable in us? This, I conceive, can never be answered.

8. I doubt not at all that something altogether as singular attended the speech of Christ and his disciples, for I remember it was urged upon Peter in the high priest's palace, as a proof of his belonging to Jesus, when he denied his Lord: "Surely," said they, "thou art also one of them: for thy speech betrayeth thee" (Matt.26:73). They had guessed by his looks but just before that he had been with Jesus; but when they discoursed with him, his language put them all out of doubt: surely then he was one of them, and he had been with Jesus. Something it was he had learned in his company that was odd and observable; to be sure, not of the world's behaviour. Without question, the garb, gait, and speech of his followers differed, as well as his doctrine, from the world; for it was a part of his doctrine it should be so. It is easy to believe they were more plain, grave, and precise, which is more credible from the way which poor, confident, fearful Peter took to disguise the business; for he fell to cursing and swearing--a sad shift. But he thought that the likeliest way to remove the suspicion that was most unlike Christ. And the policy took; for it silenced their objections, and Peter was as orthodox as they. But though they found him not out, the cock's crow did; which made Peter remember his dear suffering Lord's words: and he went forth, and wept bitterly that he had denied his Master, who was then delivered up to die for him.

9. But our last reason is of most weight with me, and because argumentum ad hominem, it is most heavy with our despisers, which is this: it should not therefore be urged upon us, because it is a most extravagant piece of pride in a mortal man to require or expect from his fellow-creature a more civil speech or grateful language than he is wont to give to the immortal God and his Creator in all his worship to Him. Art thou, O man, greater than He that made thee? Canst thou approach the God of thy breath and great Judge of thy life with thou and thee, and when thou risest off thy knees scorn a Christian for giving to thee, poor mushroom of the earth, no better language than thou hast given to God but just before? An arrogancy not to be easily equalled! But again, it has either too much or too little respect; if too much, do not reproach and be angry, but gravely and humbly refuse it; if too little, why dost thou show to God no more? Oh whither is man gone! To what a pitch does he soar! He would be used more civilly by us than he uses God; which is to have us make more than a God of him: but he shall want worshippers of us, as well as he wants the divinity in himself that deserves to be worshipped. Certain we are that the Spirit of God seeks not these respects, much less pleads for them, or would be wroth with any that conscientiously refuse to give them. But that this vain generation is guilty of using them, to gratify a vain mind, is too palpable. What capping, what cringing, what scraping, what vain, unmeant words, most hyperbolical expressions, compliments, gross flatteries, and plain lies, under the name of civilities, are men and women guilty of in conversation! Ah, my friends! whence fetch you these examples? What part of all the writings of the holy men of God warrants these things? But, to come nearer to your own profession, is Christ your example herein, whose name you pretend to bear; or those saints of old that lived in desolate places, of whom the world was not worthy (Heb. 11:38): or do you think you follow the practice of those Christians that, in obedience to their Master's life and doctrine, forsook the respect of persons, and relinquished the fashions, honour, and glory of this transitory world; whose qualifications lay not in external gestures, respects, and compliments, but in a meek and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:4), adorned with temperance, virtue, modesty, gravity, patience, and brotherly kindness; which were the tokens of true honour, and only badges of respect and nobility in those Christian times? Oh! no. But is it not to expose ourselves both to your contempt and fury, that we imitate them, and not you? And tell us, pray, are not romances, plays, masks, gaming, fiddlers, &c., the entertainments that most delight you? Had you the Spirit of Christianity indeed, could you consume your most precious little time in so many unnecessary visits, games, and pastimes; in your vain compliments, courtships, feigned stories, flatteries, and fruitless novelties, and what not; invented and used to your diversion, to make you easy in your forgetfulness of God: which never was the Christian way of living, but entertainment of the heathen that knew not God? Oh! were you truly touched with a sense of your sins, and in any measure born

again; did you take up the cross of Jesus and live under it, these, which so much please your wanton and sensual nature, would find no place with you. This is not seeking the things that are above (Col. 3:1), to have the heart thus set on things that are below; nor working out your own salvation with fear and trembling, to spend your days in vanity. This is not crying with Elihu, "I know not to give flattering titles to men; for in so doing my Maker would soon take me away." This is not to deny self, and lay up a more hidden and enduring substance, an eternal inheritance in the heavens, that will not pass away. Well, my friends, whatever you think, your plea of custom will find no place at God's tribunal: the light of Christ in your own hearts will overrule it; and this Spirit, against which we testify, shall then appear to be what we say it is. Say not I am serious about slight things; but beware you of levity in serious things.

10. Before I close, I shall add a few testimonies from men of general credit, in favour of our nonconformity to the world in this particular.

Luther, the great reformer, whose sayings were oracles with the age he lived in, and of no less reputation now, with many that object against us, was so far from condemning our plain speech, that in his *Ludus*, he sports himself with you to a single person as an incongruous and ridiculous speech, viz. *Magister, vos estis iratus? Master, are you angry?* As absurd with him in Latin, as *My masters, art thou angry?* is in English. Erasmus, a learned man, and an exact critic in speech, than whom I know not any we may so properly refer the grammar of the matter to, not only derides it, but bestows a whole discourse upon rendering it absurd: plainly manifesting that it is impossible to preserve numbers if you, the only word for more than one, be used to express one: as also, that the original of this corruption was the corruption of flattery. Lipsius affirms of the ancient Romans, "The manner of greeting now in vogue was not in use amongst them." To conclude: Howell, in his *History of France*, gives us an ingenious account of its original; where he not only assures us that "anciently the peasants thou'd their kings, but that pride and flattery first put inferiors upon paying a plural respect to the single person of every superior, and superiors upon receiving it." And though we had not the practice of God and man so undeniably to justify our plain and homely speech, yet, since we are persuaded that its original was from pride and flattery, we cannot in conscience use it. And however we may be censured as singular by those loose and airy minds that, through the continual love of earthly pleasures, consider not the true rise and tendency of words and things; yet to us whom God has convinced by his light and Spirit in our hearts of the folly and evil of such courses, and brought into a spiritual discerning of the nature and ground of the world's fashions, they appear to be fruits of pride and flattery: and we dare not continue in such vain compliances to earthly minds, lest we offend God, and burden our consciences. But having been sincerely affected with the reproofs of instruction, and our hearts being brought into a watchful subjection to the righteous law of Jesus, so as to bring our deeds to the light (John 3:19-21), to see in whom they are wrought, if in God or not; we cannot, we dare not conform ourselves to the fashions of the world that pass away; knowing assuredly, that "for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36).

11. Wherefore, reader, whether thou art a night-walking Nicodemus, or a scoffing scribe; one that would visit the blessed Messiah, but in the dark customs of the world, that thou mightest pass as undiscerned, for fear of bearing his reproachful cross; or else a favourer of Haman's pride, and countest these testimonies but a foolish singularity; I must say, Divine love enjoins me to be a messenger of truth to thee, and a faithful witness against the evil of this degenerate world, as in other, so in these things; in which the spirit of vanity and lust hath got so great a head, and lived so long uncontrolled, that it hath impudence enough to term its darkness light, and to call its evil offspring by the names due to a better nature, the more easily to deceive people into the practice of them. And truly, so very blind and insensible are most of what spirit they are, and ignorant of the meek and self-denying life of holy Jesus, whose name they profess; that to call each other Rabbi, that is, master; to bow to men, which I call worship; and to greet with flattering titles, and to do their fellow-creatures homage; to scorn that language to themselves that they give to God, and to spend their time and estate to gratify their wanton minds; the customs of the Gentiles, that knew not God, pass with them for civility, good-breeding, decency, recreation, accomplishments, &c. Oh that man would consider, since there are but two spirits, one good the other evil, which of them it is that inclines the world to these things; and whether it be Nicodemus or Mordecai in thee, that doth befriend these despised Christians, which makes thee ashamed to disown that openly in

conversation with the world, which the true light hath made vanity and sin to thee in secret! Or if thou art a despiser, tell me, I pray thee, what dost thou think thy mockery, anger, or contempt doth most resemble, proud Haman or good Mordecai? My friend, know that no man hath more delighted in, or been prodigal of those vanities called civilities than myself; and could I have covered my conscience under the fashions of the world, truly I had found a shelter from showers of reproach that have fallen very often and thick upon me; but had I, with Joseph, conformed to Egypt's customs, I had sinned against my God and lost my peace. But I would not have thee think it is a mere thou or title simply or nakedly in themselves we boggle at, or that we would beget or set up any form inconsistent with sincerity or true civility, there is but too much of that; but the esteem and value the vain minds of men do put upon them, that ought to be crossed and stripped of their delights, constrain us to testify so steadily against them. And this know, from the sense God's Holy Spirit hath begotten in us, that that which requires these customs, and begets fear to leave them, and pleads for them, and is displeased if not used and paid, is the spirit of pride and flattery in the ground; though frequency, use, or generosity may have abated its strength in some: and this being discovered by the light that now shines from heaven in the hearts of the despised Christians I have communion with, necessitates them to this testimony; and myself, as one of them and for them, in a reproof of the unfaithful who would walk undiscerned, though convinced to the contrary; and for an allay to the proud despisers, who scorn us as a people guilty of affectation and singularity. For the eternal God, who is great amongst us, and on his way in the earth to make his power known, will root up every plant that his right hand hath not planted. Wherefore let me beseech thee, reader, to consider the foregoing reasons, which were mostly given me from the Lord, in that time when my condescension to these fashions would have been purchased at almost any rate; but the certain sense I had of their contrariety to the meek and self-denying life of holy Jesus, required of me my disuse of them, and faithful testimony against them. I speak the truth in Christ; I lie not: I would not have brought myself under censure and disdain for them, could I, with peace of conscience, have kept my belief under a worldly behaviour. It was extremely irksome to me to decline, and expose myself; but having an assured and repeated sense of the original of these vain customs, that they rise from pride, self-love, and flattery, I dared not gratify that mind in myself or others. And for this reason it is, that I am earnest with my readers to be cautious how they reprove us on this occasion; and do once more entreat them that they would seriously weigh in themselves, whether it be the spirit of the world or of the Father, that is so angry with our honest, plain, and harmless thou and thee: that so every plant that God our heavenly Father hath not planted in the sons and daughters of men may be rooted up.

CHAPTER XI

BUT pride stops not here; she excites people to an excessive value and care of their persons: they must have great and punctual attendance, stately furniture, rich and exact apparel. All which help to make up that pride of life that John tells us is not of the Father, but of the world (1 John 2:16). A sin God charged upon the haughty daughters of Zion (Isa. 3:16), and on the proud prince and people of Tyrus (Ezek. 22 & 28.). Read these chapters, and measure this age by their sins, and what is coming on these nations by their judgments. But at the present I shall only touch upon the first, viz. the excessive value people have of their persons; leaving the rest to be considered under the last head of this discourse, which is luxury, where they may be not improperly placed.

2. That people are generally proud of their persons is too visible and troublesome; especially if they have any pretence either to blood or beauty; the one has raised many quarrels among men, and the other among women, and men too often for their sakes and at their excitements. But to the first: What a pother has this noble blood made in the world:--antiquity of name or family, whose father or mother, great grandfather, or great grandmother was best descended or allied; what stock or what clan they came of:--what coat of arms they gave:--which had, of right, the precedence! But methinks nothing of men's folly has less show of reason to palliate it.

3. For, first, what matter is it of whom any one is descended that is not of ill fame: since it is his own virtue that must raise, or vice depress him? An ancestor's character is no excuse to a man's ill actions, but an aggravation of his degeneracy: and since virtue comes not by generation, I neither am the better nor the worse for my forefather; to be sure, not in God's account, nor should it be in man's. Nobody would endure injuries the easier, or reject favours the more, for coming by the hand of a man well or ill descended. I confess it were greater honour to have had no blots, and with an hereditary estate, to have had a lineal descent or worth; but that was never found: no; not in the most blessed of families upon earth, I mean Abraham's. To be descended of wealth and titles fills no man's head with brains or heart with truth: those qualities come from a higher cause. It is vanity then and most condemnable pride for a man of bulk and character to despise another of less size in the world and of meaner alliance for want of them: because the latter may have the merit, where the former has only the effects of it in an ancestor: and though the one be great by means of a forefather, the other is so too, but it is by his own: then, pray, which is the braver man of the two?

4. Oh, says the person proud of blood, It was never a good world since we have had so many upstart gentlemen! But what should others have said of that man's ancestor, when he started first up into the knowledge of the world? For he and all men and families, aye, and all states and kingdoms too, have had their upstarts, that is, their beginnings. This is being like the true church, because old, not because good: for families to be noble by being old, and not by being virtuous. No such matter: it must be age in virtue, or else virtue before age; for otherwise a man should be noble by the means of his predecessor, and yet the predecessor less noble than he, because he was the acquirer: which is a paradox that will puzzle all their heraldry to explain. Strange! that they should be more noble than their ancestor that got their nobility for them! But if this be absurd, as it is, then the upstart is the noble man: the man that got it by his virtue; and those are only entitled to his honour that are imitators of his virtue: the rest may bear his name from his blood, but that is all. If virtue then give nobility, which heathen themselves agree, then families are no longer truly noble than they are virtuous. And if virtue go not by blood, but by the qualifications of the descendants, it follows blood is excluded: else blood would bar virtue; and no man that wanted the one should be allowed the benefit of the other: which were to stint and bound nobility for want of antiquity, and make virtue useless.

No, let blood and name go together; but pray let nobility and virtue keep company, for they are nearest of kin. It is thus profited by God Himself, that best knows how to apportion things with an equal and just hand. He neither likes nor dislikes by descent; nor does He regard what people were, but are. He remembers not the righteousness of any man that leaves his righteousness (Ezek. 18:26); much less any unrighteous man for the righteousness of his ancestor.

5. But if these men of blood please to think themselves concerned to believe and reverence God in his holy Scriptures, they may learn that "in the beginning he made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon all the earth" (Acts 17:26); and that we all descended from one father and mother. A more certain original than the best of us can assign. From thence go down to Noah, who was the second planter of the human race, and we are upon some certainty for our forefathers. What violence has reaped or virtues merited since, and how far we that are alive are concerned in either, will be hard for us to determine but a very few ages off us.

6. But, methinks it should suffice to say, our own eyes see that men of blood, out of their gear and trappings, without their feathers and finery, have no more marks of honour by nature stamped upon them, than their inferior neighbours. Nay, themselves being judges, they will frankly tell us, they feel all those passions in their blood, that make them like other men, if not further from the virtue that truly dignifies. The lamentable ignorance and debauchery that now rages among too many of our greater sort of folks is too clear and casting an evidence in the point: and pray tell me of what blood are they come?

7. Howbeit, when I have said all this, I intend not, by debasing one false quality, to make insolent another that is not true. I would not be thought to set the churl on the present gentleman's shoulder; by no means; his rudeness will not mend the matter. But what I have written is to give aim to all where true nobility dwells, that every one may arrive at it by the ways of virtue and goodness. But for all this, I must allow a great advantage to the

gentleman, and therefore prefer his station: just as the Apostle Paul, who after he had humbled the Jews, that insulted the Christians with their laws and rites, gave them the advantage over all other nations in statutes and judgments. I must grant that the condition of our great men is much to be preferred to the ranks of our inferior people. For, first, they have more power to do good; and if their hearts be equal to their ability, they are blessings to the people of any country. Secondly, the eyes of the people are usually directed to them; and if they will be kind, just, and hopeful, they shall have their affections and services. Thirdly, they are not under equal straits with the inferior sort; and consequently they have more help, leisure, and occasion to polish their passions and tempers with books and conversation. Fourthly, they have more time to observe the actions of other nations: to travel and view the laws, customs, and interests of other countries, and bring home whatsoever is worthy or imitable. And so an easier way is open for great men to get honour; and such as love true reputation will embrace the best means to it. But because it too often happens that great men do but little mind to give God the glory of their prosperity, and to live answerable to his mercies; but on the contrary, live without God in the world, fulfilling the lusts thereof, his hand is often seen, either in impoverishing or extinguishing them, and raising up men of more virtue and humility to their estates and dignity. However, I must allow that among people of this rank there have been some of them of more than ordinary virtue, whose examples have given light to their families. And it has been something natural for some of their descendants to endeavor to keep up the credit of their houses in proportion to the merit of their founder. And to say true, if there be any advantage in such ascent, it is not from blood, but education: for blood has no intelligence in it, and is often spurious and uncertain; but education has a mighty influence and strong bias upon the affections and actions of men. In this the ancient nobles and gentry of this kingdom did excel: and it were much to be wished that our great people would set about to recover the ancient economy of their houses, the strict and virtuous discipline of their ancestors, when men were honoured for their achievements, and when nothing more exposed a man to shame, than being born to a nobility that he had not a virtue to support.

8. Oh! but I have a higher motive. The glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, which having taught this northern isle, and all ranks professing to believe in it, let me prevail upon you to seek the honour that it has brought from heaven, to all the true disciples of it, who are indeed the followers of God's Lamb, that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Receive with meekness his gracious word into your hearts, that subdues the world's lusts, and leads in the holy way to blessedness. Here are charms no carnal eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor heart perceived, but they are revealed to such humble converts by his Spirit. Remember you are but creatures, and that you must die, and after all be judged.

9. But personal pride ends not in nobility of blood; it leads folks to a fond value of their persons, be they noble or ignoble; especially if they have any pretence to shape or beauty. It is admirable to see how much it is possible for some to be taken with themselves, as if nothing else deserved their regard, or the good opinion of others. It would abate their folly if they could find in their hearts to spare but half the time to think of God and their latter end, which they most prodigally spend in washing, perfuming, painting, patching, attiring, and dressing. In these things they are precise, and very artificial; and for cost they spare not. But that which aggravates the evil is that the pride of one might comfortably supply the need of ten. Gross impiety that it is, that a nation's pride should not be spared to a nation's poor! But what is this for at last? Only to be admired, to have reverence, draw love, and command the eyes and affections of beholders. And so fantastic are they in it, as hardly to be pleased too. Nothing is good, or fine, or fashionable enough for them: the sun itself, the blessing of heaven, and comfort of the earth, must not shine upon them, lest it tan them; nor the wind blow, for fear it should disorder them. O impious nicety! Yet while they value themselves above all else, they make themselves the vassals of their own pride; worshipping their shape, feature, or complexion, whichsoever is their excellency. The end of all which is but too often to excite unlawful love, which I call lust, and draw one another into as miserable as evil circumstances: in single persons it is of ill consequence; for if it does not awaken unchaste desires, it lays no foundation for solid and lasting union: the want of which helps to make so many unhappy marriages in the world: but in married people the sin is aggravated; for they have none of right to please but one another; and to affect the gaiety and vanity of youth is an ill sign of loving and living well at home: it looks rather like dressing for a market. It has sad effects in families: discontents, partings, duels, poisonings, and other infamous murders.

No age can better tell us the sad effects of this sort of pride than this we live in; as, how excessively wanton, so how fatal it has been to the sobriety, virtue, peace, and health of families in this kingdom.

10. But I must needs say, that of all creatures, this sort of pride does least become the old and homely, if I may call the ill-favoured and deformed so; for the old are proud only of what they had, which shows, to their reproach, their pride has outlived their beauty, and, when they should be repenting, they are making work for repentance. But the homely are yet worse, they are proud of what they never had, nor ever can have: nay, their persons seem as if they were given for a perpetual humiliation to their minds; and to be proud of them is loving pride for pride's sake, and to be proud, without a temptation to be proud. And yet in my whole life I have observed nothing more doting on itself: a strange infatuation and enchantment of pride! What! Not to see right with their eyes, because of the partiality of their minds? This self-love is blind indeed. But to add expense to the vanity, and to be costly upon that which cannot be mended, one would think they should be downright mad; especially if they consider, that they look the homelier for the things that are thought handsome, and do but thereby draw their deformity more into notice, by that which does so little become them.

But in such persons' follies we have a specimen of man; what a creature he is in his lapse from his primitive image. All this, as Jesus said of sin of old, comes from within (Matt. 15:11-20); that is the disregard that men and women have to the word of their Creator in their hearts (Deut. 30:14; Rom. 10: 8); which shows pride and teaches humility, and self-abasement, and directs the mind to the true object of honour and worship; and that with an awe and reverence suitable to his sovereignty and majesty. Poor mortals! But living dirt! Made of what they tread on: who, with all their pride, cannot secure themselves from the spoil of sickness, much less from the stroke of death! Oh! did people consider the inconstancy of all visible things, the cross and adverse occurrences of man's life, the certainty of his departure and eternal judgment, it is to be hoped they would bring their deeds to Christ's light in their hearts (John 3:20,21), and they would see if they were wrought in God, or not, as the beloved disciple tells us from his dear Master's mouth. Art thou shapely, comely, beautiful--the exact draught of a human creature? Admire that Power that made thee so. Live an harmonious life to the curious make and frame of thy creation; and let the beauty of thy body teach thee to beautify thy mind with holiness, the ornament of the beloved of God. Art thou homely or deformed? magnify that goodness that did not make thee a beast; and with the grace that is given unto thee, for it has appeared unto all, learn to adorn thy soul with enduring beauty. Remember the King of heaven's daughter, the church, of which true Christians are members, is all glorious within. And if thy soul excel, thy body will only set off the lustre of thy mind. Nothing is homely in God's sight but sin; and that man and woman that commune with their own hearts and sin not; who, in the light of holy Jesus, watch over the movings and inclinations of their own souls, and that suppress every evil in its conception, they love the yoke and Cross of Christ, and are daily by it crucified to the world, but live to God in that life which outlives the fading satisfactions of it.

CHAPTER XII

TO conclude this great head of pride, let us briefly see, upon the whole matter, what is the character of a proud man in himself, and in divers relations and capacities. A proud man then is a kind of glutton upon himself; for he is never satisfied with loving and admiring himself; whilst nothing else, with him, is worthy either of love or care; if good enough to be the servant of his will, it is as much as he can find in his heart to allow: as if he had been only made for himself, or rather that he had made himself. For as he despises man, because he cannot abide an equal, so he does not love God, because he would not have a superior: he cannot bear to owe his being to another, lest he should thereby acknowledge one above himself. He is one that is mighty big with the honour of his ancestors, but not of the virtue that brought them to it; much less will he trouble himself to imitate them. He can tell you of his pedigree, his antiquity, what estate, what matches; but forgets that they are gone, and that he must die too.

2. But how troublesome a companion is a proud man! Ever positive and controlling; and if you yield not, insolent and quarrelsome: yet at the upshot of the matter, cowardly; but if strongest, cruel. He feels no more of other men's miseries than if he were not a man, or it were a sin to be sensible. For not feeling himself interested, he looks no further; he will not disquiet his thoughts with other men's infelicities; it shall content him to believe they are just: and he had rather churlishly upbraid them as the cause, than be ready to commiserate or relieve them. So that compassion and charity are with him as useless as humility and meekness are hateful.

3. A proud man makes an ill child, servant, and subject; he contemns his parents, master, and prince; he will not be subject. He thinks himself too wise or too old to be directed; as if it were a slavish thing to obey; and that none were free that may not do what they please; which turns duty out of doors and degrades authority. On the other hand, if he be a husband, or father, or master, there is scarcely any enduring: he is so insufferably curious and testy that it is an affliction to live with him; for hardly can any hand carry it even enough to please him. Some peccadillo about his clothes, his diet, his lodging, or attendance quite disorders him; but especially if he fancies any want of the state and respect he looks for. Thus pride destroys the nature of relations: on the one side learns to contemn duty; and on the other side, it turns love into fear, and makes the wife a servant, and the children and servants slaves.

4. But the proud man makes an ill neighbour too, for he is an enemy to hospitality: he despises to receive kindness, because he would not show any, nor be thought to need it. Besides, it looks too equal and familiar for his haughty humour. Emulation and detraction are his element; for he is jealous of attributing any praise to others, where just; lest that should cloud and lessen him, to whom it never could be due; he is the man that fears what he should wish, to wit, that others should do well. But that is not all; he maliciously miscalls their acts of virtue, which his corruptions will not let him imitate, that they may get no credit by them. If he wants any occasion of doing mischief, he can make one: either they use him ill, or have some design upon him; the other day they paid him not the cap and knee: the distance and respect he thinks his quality, parts, or merits do require. A small thing serves a proud man to pick a quarrel; of all creatures the most jealous, sullen, spiteful, and revengeful: he can no more forgive an injury, than forbear to do one.

5. Nor is this all: a proud man can never be a friend to anybody. For besides that his ambition may always be bribed by honour and preferment to betray that relation, he is unconvertible; he must not be catechised and counselled, much less reprov'd or contradicted; no, he is too covetous of himself to spare another man a share, and much too high, stiff, and touchy: he will not away with those freedoms that a real friendship requires. To say true, he contemns the character; it is much too familiar and humble for him: his mighty soul would know nothing besides himself and vassals to stock the world. He values other men, as we do cattle, for their service only; and if he could, would use them so; but as it happens, the number and force are unequal.

6. But a proud man in power is very mischievous; for his pride is the more dangerous by his greatness, since from ambition in private men it becomes tyranny in him: it would reign alone; nay live so, rather than have competitors: *Aut Caesar aut nullus*. Reason must not check it, nor rules of law admit it; and either it can do no wrong, or it is sedition to complain of the wrong that it does. The men of this temper would have nothing thought amiss they do; at least, they count it dangerous to allow it to be so, though so it be; for that would imply they had erred, which it is always matter of state to deny: no, they will rather choose to perish obstinately than, by acknowledging, yield away the reputation of better judging to inferiors, though it were their prudence to do so. And indeed, it is all the satisfaction that proud great men make to the world for the miseries they often bring upon it, that, first or last, upon a division, they leave their real interest to follow some one excess of humour, and are almost ever destroyed by it. This is the end pride gives proud men, and the ruin it brings upon them, after it has punished others by them.

7. But above all things, pride is intolerable in men pretending to religion, and of them in ministers; for they are names of the greatest contradiction. I speak without respect or anger to persons or parties; for I only touch upon the bad of all. What shall pride do with religion, that rebukes it? Or ambition with ministers, whose very office is humility? And yet there are but too many of them, that, besides an equal guilt with others in the fleshly pride

of the world, are even proud of that name and office which ought always to remind them of self-denial. Yea, they use it as the beggars do the name of God and Christ, only to get by it: placing to their own account the advantages of that reverend profession, and thereby making their function but a political handle to raise themselves to the great preferments of the world. But Oh then! how can such be his ministers that said, "My kingdom is not of this world"? (John 18:36). Who, of mankind, more self-conceited than these men? If contradicted, as arrogant and angry, as if it were their calling to be so. Counsel one of them, he scorns you: reprove him, and he is almost ready to excommunicate you: "I am a minister and an elder:" flying thither to secure himself from the reach of just censure, which indeed exposes him the more to it: and therefore his fault cannot be the less, by how much it is worse in a minister to do ill, and spurn at reproof, than an ordinary man.

8. Oh! but he pleads an exemption by his office: what! Shall he breed up chickens to pick out his own eyes? Be rebuked or instructed by a layman or parishioner? A man of less age, learning, or ability? No such matter: he would have us believe that his ministerial prerogative has placed him out of the reach of popular impeachment. He is not subject to vulgar judgments. Even questions about religion are schism: believe as he says: it is not for you to pry so curiously into the mysteries of religion: never good day since laymen meddle so much with the minister's office. Not considering, poor man, that the contrary is most true: not many good days since ministers meddled so much in laymen's business. Though perhaps there is little reason for this distinction, besides spiritual gifts, and the improvement of them by a diligent use of them for the good of others.

Such good sayings as these, Be ready to learn: answer with meekness: let every man speak as of the gift of God that is in him: if anything be revealed to him that sits by, let the first hold his peace: be not lords over God's heritage, but meek and lowly; washing the feet of the people, as Jesus did those of his poor disciples;--are unreasonable and antiquated instructions with some clergy, and it is little less than heresy to remind them of these things; a mark of great disaffection to the church in their opinion. For by this time their pride has made them the church, and the people but the porch at best; a cipher that signifies nothing, unless they clap their figure before it: forgetting, that if they were as good as they should be, they could be but ministers, stewards, and under-shepherds; that is, servants to the church, family, flock, and heritage of God: and not that they are that church, family, flock, and heritage, which they are only servants unto. Remember the words of Christ, "Let him that would be greatest be your servant" (Matt. 20:26).

9. There is but one place to be found in the holy Scripture, where the word Clerus can properly be applied to the church, and they have got it to themselves; from whence they call themselves the clergy, that is, the inheritance or heritage of God. Whereas Peter exhorts the ministers of the gospel not to be lords over God's heritage, nor to feed them for filthy lucre (1 Peter 5:2,3). Peter, belike, foresaw pride and avarice to be the ministers' temptations; and indeed they have often proved their fall: and to say true, they could hardly fall by worse. Nor is there any excuse to be made for them in these two respects, which is not worse than their sin. For if they have not been lords over God's heritage, it is because they have made themselves that heritage, and disinherited the people; so that now they may be the people's lords, with a salvo to good old Peter's exhortation.

And for the other sin of avarice, they can only avoid it, and speak truth thus; that never feeding the flock, they cannot be said to feed it for lucre: that is they get the people's money for nothing. An example of which is given us, by the complaint of God Himself, from the practice of the proud, covetous, false prophets of old, that the people gave their money for that which was not bread, and their labour for that which did not profit them (Isa. 60:2): And why? Because then the priest had no vision; and too many now despise it.

10. But, alas! when all is done, what folly, as well as irreligion, is there in pride! It cannot add one cubit to any man's stature: what crosses can it hinder? What disappointments help, or harm frustrate? It delivers not from the common stroke; sickness disfigures, pain mis-shapes, and death ends the proud man's fabric. Six feet of cold earth bounds his big thoughts; and his person, that was too good for any place, must at last lodge within the straight limits of so little and so dark a cave: and he who thought nothing well enough for him is quickly the entertainment of the lowest of all animals, even worms themselves. Thus pride and pomp come to the common end; but with this difference, less pity from the living, and more pain to the dying. The proud man's antiquity

cannot secure him from death, nor his heraldry from judgment. Titles of honour vanish at this extremity; and no power or wealth, no distance or respect, can rescue or insure them. As the tree falls, it lies; and as death leaves men, judgment finds them.

11. Oh! what can prevent this ill conclusion? And what can remedy this woeful declension from ancient meekness, humility, and piety, and that godly life and power which were so conspicuous in the authority of the preachings and examples of the living of the first and purest ages of Christianity? Truly, nothing but an inward and sincere examination, by the testimony of the holy light and spirit of Jesus, of the condition of their souls and minds towards Christ, and a better inquiry into the matter and examples of holy record. It was his complaint of old, "that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). If thou wouldst be a child of God, and a believer in Christ, thou must be a child of Light. O man, thou must bring thy deeds to it and examine them by that holy lamp in thy soul, which is the candle of the Lord, that shows thee thy pride and arrogancy, and reproves thy delight in the vain fashions of this world. Religion is a denial of self; yea, of self-religion too. It is a firm tie or bond upon the soul to holiness, whose end is happiness; for by it men come to see the Lord. The pure in heart, says Jesus, see God (Matt. 5:8): he that once comes to bear Christ's yoke is not carried away by the devil's allurements; he finds excelling joys in his watchfulness and obedience. If men loved the Cross of Christ, his precepts and doctrine, they would cross their own wills which lead them to break Christ's holy will and lose their own souls in doing the devil's. Had Adam minded that holy light in Paradise more than the serpent's bait, and stayed his mind upon his Creator, the rewarder of fidelity, he had seen the snare of the enemy, and resisted him. Oh! do not delight in that which is forbidden. Look not upon it, if thou wouldst not be captivated by it. Bring not the guilt of sins of knowledge upon thy own soul. Did not Christ submit his will to his Father's, and for the joy that was set before Him, endure the cross and despise the shame (Heb. 12:2) of a new and untrodden way to glory? Thou also must submit thy will to Christ's holy law and light in thy heart, and for the reward He sets before thee, to wit, eternal life, endure his cross, and despise the shame of it. All desire to rejoice with Him, but few will suffer with Him, or for Him. Many are the companions of his table; not many of his abstinence. The loaves they follow, but the cup of his agony they leave: it is too bitter, they like not to drink thereof. And divers will magnify his miracles, that are offended at the ignominy of his cross. But, O man, as He, for thy salvation, so thou, for the love of Him, must humble thyself (Phil. 2:7), and be contented to be of no reputation, that thou mayst follow Him, not in a carnal, formal way, of vain man's tradition and prescription, but as the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, doth express it, in a new and living way (Heb. 10:19,20), which Jesus had consecrated, that brings all that walk in it to the eternal rest of God: whereunto He Himself is entered, who is the holy and only blessed Redeemer.

CHAPTER XIII

I AM come to the second part of this discourse, which is avarice or covetousness, an epidemic and a raging distemper in the world, attended with all the mischiefs that can make men miserable in themselves, and in society; so near akin to the foregoing evil, pride, that they are seldom apart: Liberality being almost as hateful to the proud, as to the covetous, I shall define it thus: Covetousness is the love of money or riches (Ephes. 5:3,5): which, as the apostle hath it, "is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6: 9,10). It branches itself into these three parts: first, desiring of unlawful things; secondly, unlawful desiring of lawful things; and lastly, hoarding up or unprofitably withholding the benefit of them from the relief of private persons, or the public. I shall first deliver the sense of Scripture, and what examples are therein afforded against this impiety: and next, my own reasons, with some authorities from authors of credit. By which it will appear, that the working of the love of riches out of the hearts of people is as much the business of the Cross of Christ, as the rooting out of any one sin that man is fallen into.

2. And first, of desiring, or coveting of unlawful things: it is expressly forbidden by God Himself, in the law He delivered to Moses upon Mount Sinai, for a rule to his people the Jews to walk by: "Thou shalt not covet," said God, "thy neighbour's house: thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's" (Exod. 20:17). This God confirmed by thunderings and lightnings, and other sensible solemnities, to strike the people with more awe in receiving and keeping of it, and to make the breach of these moral precepts more terrible to them. Micah complains in his time, "They covet fields, and take them by violence" (Micah 2:2); but their end was misery. Therefore was it said of old, "Woe to them that covet an evil covetousness;" this is to our point. We have many remarkable instances of this in Scripture; two of which I will briefly report.

3. David, though otherwise a good man, by unwatchfulness is taken; the beauty of Uriah's wife was too hard for him, being disarmed, and off from his spiritual watch. There was no dissuasive would do; Uriah must be put upon a desperate service, where it was great odds if he survived it. This was to hasten the unlawful satisfaction of his desires, by a way that looked not like direct murder. The contrivance took; Uriah is killed, and his wife is quickly David's. This interpreted David's covetousness. But went it off so? No, his pleasure soon turned to anguish and bitterness of spirit: his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow: the waves went over his head (Psalm 51; 77; 42:7): he was consumed within him: he was stuck in the mire and clay; he cried, he wept: yea, his eyes were as a fountain of tears (Psalm 69:2,14). Guiltiness was upon him, and he must be purged; his sins washed white as snow, that were red as crimson, or he is undone for ever. His repentance prevailed: behold, what work this part of covetousness makes! What evil! What sorrow! Oh that the people of this covetousness would let the sense of David's sorrow sink deep into their souls, that they might come to David's salvation! Restore me, saith that good man: it seems he once knew a better state: yes, and this may teach the better sort to fear, and stand in awe too, lest they sin and fall. For David was taken at a disadvantage; he was off his watch, and gone from the cross; the law was not his lamp and light, at that instant; he was a wanderer from his safety, his strong tower, and so surprised: then and there it was the enemy met him, and vanquished him.

4. The second instance is that of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21): it was coveted by Ahab and Jezebel: that, which led them to such an unlawful desire, found means to accomplish it. Naboth must die, for he would not sell it. To do it they accuse the innocent man of blasphemy, and find two knights of the post, sons of Belial, to evidence against him. Thus, in the name of God, and in show of pure zeal to his glory, Naboth must die; and accordingly was stoned to death. The news of which coming to Jezebel, she bid Ahab arise and take possession, for Naboth was dead. But God followed both of them with his fierce vengeance. "In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth," said Elijah, in the name of the Lord, "shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine; and I will bring evil upon thee, and take away thy posterity;" and of Jezebel, his wife and partner in his covetousness and murder, he adds, "The dogs shall eat her flesh by the walls of Jezreel." Here is the infamy and punishment due to this part of covetousness. Let this deter those that desire unlawful things, the rights of others: for God, that is just, will certainly repay such with interest in the end. But perhaps these are few; either that they do not, or dare not show it, because the law will bite if they do. But the next part hath company enough, that will yet exclaim against the iniquity of this part of covetousness; and, by their seeming abhorrence of it, would excuse themselves of all guilt in the rest: let us consider that.

5. The next, and most common part of covetousness is the unlawful desire of lawful things; especially of riches. Money is lawful, but the love of it is the root of all evil. So riches are lawful, but they that pursue them fall into divers temptations, snares, and lusts; He calls them uncertain, to show their folly and danger that set their hearts upon them. Covetousness is hateful to God; He hath denounced great judgments upon those that are guilty of it. God charged it on Israel of old, as one of the reasons of his judgments: "For the iniquity of his covetousness," saith God, "was I wroth and smote him" (Isa. 57:7). In another place, "Every one is given to covetousness, and from the prophet to the priest, every one dealeth falsely" (Jer. 6:13); "therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them" (Jer. 13:10). In another place God complained thus: "But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness" (Jer. 22:17). By Ezekiel, God renews and repeats his complaint against their covetousness: "And they come to thee as the people cometh, and sit before thee as my people; they hear thy words, but will not do them; with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth

after their covetousness" (Ezek. 33:31). Therefore God, in the choice of magistrates, made it part of their qualification to hate covetousness; foreseeing the mischief that would follow to that society or government where covetous men were in power; that self would bias them, and they would seek their own ends at the cost of the public. David desired that his heart might not incline to covetousness, but to the testimonies of his God (Psalm 19:36). And the wise man expressly tells us, "He that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days" (Prov. 28:16): making a curse to follow it. And it is by Luke charged upon the Pharisees as a mark of their wickedness: and Christ, in that evangelist, bids his followers "take heed and beware of covetousness"; and He giveth a reason for it that carrieth a most excellent instruction in it; "for," said He, "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15): but He goeth further; He joins covetousness with adultery, murder, and blasphemy (Mark 7:21,22). NO wonder then if the Apostle Paul is so liberal in his censure of this evil: he placeth it with all unrighteousness, to the Romans (Rom.1:29); to the Ephesians he writeth the like, adding, "Let not covetousness be so much as named among you" (Eph.5:3): and bids the Colossians mortify their members: and names several sins, as fornication, uncleanness, and such like, but ends with "covetousness: which," saith he, "is idolatry" (Col. 3: 5). And we know there is not a greater offence against God: nay, this very apostle calls "the love of money the root of all evil;" "which," said he, "whilst some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. For they that will be rich fall into temptations, and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts. O man of God," said he to his beloved friend Timothy, "flee these things, and follow after righteousness, faith, patience, and meekness" (1 Tim. 6:9-11).

6. Peter was of the same mind; for he maketh covetousness to be one of the great marks of the false prophets and teachers that should arise among Christians, and by that they might know them, "who," saith he, "through covetousness shall with reigned words make merchandise of you" (2 Peter 2:3). To conclude, therefore, the author to the Hebrews, at the end of his epistle, leaves this, with other things, not without great zeal and weight upon them: "Let," says he, "your conversation be without covetousness" (Heb. 13:5); he rests not in this generality, but goes on, "and be content with such things as ye have; for God hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." What then? Must we conclude that those who are not content, but seek to be rich, have forsaken God? The conclusion seems hard; but yet it is natural; for such, it is plain, are not content with what they have; they would have more: they covet to be rich, if they may: they live not with that dependence and regard to Providence to which they are exhorted, nor is godliness, with content, great gain to them.

7. And truly it is a reproach to a man, especially to a religious man, that he knows not when he hath enough; when to leave off; when to be satisfied: that notwithstanding God sends him one plentiful season of grain after another, he is so far from making that the cause of withdrawing from the traffic of the world, that he makes it a reason for launching further into it; as if the more he hath, the more he may. He therefore reneweth his appetite, bestirs himself more than ever, that he may have a share in the scramble, while anything is to be got: this is as if cumber, not retirement; and gain, not content, were the duty and comfort of a Christian. Oh that this were better considered! for by not being so observable nor obnoxious to the law, as other vices are, there is more danger for want of that check. It is plain that most people strive not for substance, but for wealth. Some there be that love it strongly, and spend it liberally when they have got it. Though this be sinful, yet more commendable than to love money for money's sake; that is one of the basest passions the mind of man can be captivated with; a perfect lust, and a greater, and more soul-defiling one, there is not in the whole catalogue of concupiscence. Which considered, should quicken people into a serious examination, how far this temptation of love of money hath entered them; and the rather because the steps it maketh into the mind are almost insensible, which renders the danger greater. Thousands think themselves unconcerned in the caution, and yet are perfectly guilty of the evil. Now can it be otherwise, when those that have, from a low condition, acquired thousands, labour yet to advance, yea, double and treble those thousands; and that with the same care and contrivance by which they got them? Is this to live comfortably, or to be rich? Do we not see how early they rise; how late they go to bed? How full of the change, the shop, the warehouse, the customhouse; of bills, bonds, charter-parties, &c., they are? Running up and down, as if it were to save the life of a condemned innocent. An insatiable lust, and therein ungrateful to God, as well as hurtful to men, who giveth it to them to use, and not to love: that is, the abuse. And if this care, contrivance, and industry, and that continually, be not from the love of money in those that

have ten times more than they began with, and much more than they spend or need, I know not what testimony man can give of his love for anything.

8. To conclude: It is an enemy to government in magistrates; for it tends to corruption. Wherefore those that God ordained were such as feared Him and hated covetousness. Next: It hurts society, for old traders keep the young ones poor: and the great reason why some have too little, and so are forced to drudge like slaves to feed their families, and keep their chin above the water, is, because the rich hold fast and press to be richer, and covet more, which dries up the little streams of profit from smaller folks. There should be a standard, both as to the value and time of traffic; and then the trade of the master to be shared among his servants that deserve it. This were both to help the young to get their livelihood, and to give the old time to think of leaving this world well, in which they have been so busy, that they might obtain a share in the other, of which they have been so careless.

9. There is yet another mischief to government: for covetousness leads men to abuse and defraud it, by concealing or falsifying the goods they deal in: as bringing in forbidden goods by stealth: or lawful goods, so as to avoid the payment of dues, or owning the goods of enemies for gain; or that they are not well made, or full of measure; with abundance of that sort of deceit.

10. But covetousness has caused destructive feuds in families; for estates falling into the hands of those whose avarice has put them upon drawing greater profit to themselves than was consistent with justice, has given birth to much trouble, and caused great oppression; it too often falling out, that such executors have kept the right owners out of possession with the money they should pay them.

11. But this is not all: for covetousness betrays friendship; a bribe cannot be better placed to do an ill thing, or undo a man. Nay, it is too often a murderer both of soul and body; of the soul, because it kills that life it should have in God: where money masters the mind, it extinguishes all love to better things: of the body, for it will kill for money, by assassinations, poisons, false witness, &c. I shall end this head on covetousness, with the sin and doom of two covetous men, Judas, and Simon the sorcerer.

Judas's religion fell in thorny ground: love of money choked him. Pride and anger in the Jews endeavoured to murder Christ; but till covetousness set her hand to effect it, they were all at a loss. They found Judas had the bag, and probably loved money; they would try him, and did. The price was set, and Judas betrays his Master, his Lord, into the hands of his most cruel adversaries. But to do him right he returned the money, and to be revenged on himself, was his own hangman. A wicked act, a wicked end. Come on, you covetous: what say you now to brother Judas? was he not an ill man? did he not act very wickedly? Yes, yes: would you have done so? No, no: by no means. Very well; but so said those wicked Jews of stoning the prophets, and that yet crucified the beloved Son of God; He that came to save them, and would have done it, if they had received Him, and not rejected the day of their visitation. Rub your eyes well, for the dust is got into them; and carefully read in your own consciences, and see if, out of love to money, you have not betrayed the Just One in yourselves, and so are brethren with Judas in iniquity. I speak for God against an idol; bear with me. Have you not resisted, yea, quenched the good Spirit of Christ in your pursuit after your beloved wealth? Examine yourselves, try yourselves; know ye not your own selves: if Christ dwell not, if He rule not, and be not above all beloved in you, ye are reprobates: in an undone condition! (2 Cor. 13:5).

12. The other covetous man is Simon the sorcerer, a believer too: but his faith could not go deep enough for covetousness (Acts. 8:9--24). He would have driven a bargain with Peter: so much money for so much Holy Ghost; that he might sell it again, and make a good trade of it; corruptly measuring Peter by himself, as if he had only a better knack of cozening the people than himself, who had set up in Samaria for the great power of God, before the power of God in Philip and Peter undeceived the people. But what was Peter's answer and judgment? "Thy money," says he, "perish with thee; thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." A dismal sentence. Besides, covetousness tends to luxury, and rises often out of it: for from having much, they spend much, and so become poor by luxury: such are covetous to

get, to spend more, which temperance would prevent. For if men would not, or could not, by good laws well executed, and a better education, be so lavish in their tables, houses, furniture, apparel, and gaming, there would be no such temptation to covet earnestly after what they could not spend: for there is but here and there a miser that loves money for money's sake.

13. Which leads to the last and basest part of covetousness, which is yet the most sordid, to wit, hoarding up, or keeping money unprofitably, both to others and themselves too. This is Solomon's miser, that makes himself rich, and hath nothing (Prov. 13:7): a great sin in the sight of God. He complained of such as had stored up the labours of the poor in their houses; he calls it their spoils, and it is a grinding of the poor, because they see it not again. But he blesseth those that consider the poor, and commandeth every one to open freely to his brother that is in need (Psalm 41:1; Deut. 15:7,8); not only he that is spiritually, but naturally so; and not to withhold his gift from the poor. The apostle chargeth Timothy, in the sight of God, and before Jesus Christ, that he fail not to "charge them that are rich in this world, that they trust not in their uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth liberally; and that they do good with them, that they may be rich in good works" (1 Tim. 6:17,18). Riches are apt to corrupt; and that which keeps them sweet and best is charity: he that uses them not gets them not for the end for which they are given, but loves them for themselves, and not their service. The miser is poor in his wealth: he wants for fear of spending; and increases his fear with his hope, which is his gain; and so tortures himself with his pleasure; the most like to the man that hid his talent in a napkin, of all others, for this man's talents are hid in his bags out of sight, in vaults, under boards, behind wainscots: else upon bonds and mortgages, growing but as underground; for it is good to none.

14. The covetous man hates all useful arts and sciences as vain, lest they should cost him something the learning: wherefore ingenuity has no more place in his mind than in his pocket. He lets houses fall, to prevent the charge of repairs: and for his spare diet, plain clothes, and mean furniture, he would place them to the account of moderation. O monster of a man! that can take up the cross for covetousness, and not for Christ.

15. But he pretends negatively to some religion too; for he always rails at prodigality, the better to cover his avarice. If you would bestow a box of spikenard on a good man's head; to save money, and to seem righteous, he tells you of the poor: but if the poor come, he excuses his want of charity with the unworthiness of the object, or the causes of his poverty, or that he can bestow his money on those that deserve it better; who rarely opens his purse till quarter-day for fear of losing it.

16. But he is more miserable than the poorest; for he enjoys not what he yet fears to lose; they fear not what they do not enjoy. Thus he is poor by overvaluing his wealth: but he is wretched that hungers with money in a cook's shop: yet having made a god of his gold, who knows, but he thinks it unnatural to eat what he worships?

17. But, which aggravates the sin, I have myself once known some that to get money have wearied themselves into the grave; and to be true to their principle, when sick would not spare a fee to a doctor, to help the poor slave to live; and so died to save charges: a constancy that canonizes them martyrs for money.

18. But now let us see what instances the Scripture will give us in reproof of the sordid hoarders and hidiers of money. A good-like young man came to Christ, and inquired the way to eternal life: Christ told him he knew the commandments: he replied he had kept them from his youth: it seems he was no loose person, and indeed such are usually not so, to save charges. And "yet lackest thou one thing," saith Christ; "sell all, distribute it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me" (Matt. 19:20,21). It seems Christ pinched him in the sore place; He hit the mark, and struck him to the heart, who knew his heart; by this He tried how well he had kept the commandment "to love God above all." It was said, the young man was very sorrowful, and went his way; and the reason which is given is, that he was very rich. The tides met, money and eternal life: contrary desires: but which prevailed? Alas! his riches! But what said Christ to this? "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" He adds, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:23,24): that is, such a rich man, to wit, a covetous rich man, to whom it is hard to do good with what he has: it is more than a miracle: Oh who

then would be rich and covetous! It was upon these rich men that Christ pronounced his woe, saying, "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation here" (Luke 6:24). What! none in the heavens? No, unless you become willing to be poor men, can resign all, live loose to the world, have it at arm's end, yea, under foot; a servant and not a master.

19. The other instance is a very dismal one too: it is that of Ananias and Sapphira. In the beginning of the apostolical times, it was customary for those who received the word of life to bring what substance they had and lay at the apostles' feet: of these Josus, surnamed Barnabas, was exemplary. Among the rest, Ananias and his wife Sapphira, confessing to the truth, sold their possession, but covetously reserved some of the purchase-money from the common purse to themselves, and brought a part for the whole, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter, a plain and bold man, in the majesty of the Spirit, said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost; and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3,4). But what followed this covetousness and hypocrisy of Ananias? Why, "Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost." The like befel his wife, being privy to the deceit their avarice had led them to. And it is said that "great fear came upon all the church, and those that heard of these things:" and also should on those that now read them. For if this judgment was shown and recorded that we should beware of the like evils, what will become of those who, under the profession of Christianity, a religion that teaches men to live loose from the world, and to yield up all to the will and service of Christ, and his kingdom, not only retain a part, but all: and cannot part with the least thing for Christ's sake? I beseech God to incline the hearts of my readers to weigh these things. This had not befallen Ananias and Sapphira, if they had acted as in God's presence, and with that entire love, truth, and sincerity that became them. Oh that people would use the light that Christ has given them, to search and see how far they are under the power of this iniquity! For would they but watch against the love of the world, and be less in bondage to the things that are seen, which are temporal, they would begin to set their hearts on things above, that are of an eternal nature. Their life would be hid with Christ in God, out of the reach of all the uncertainties of time, and troubles, and changes of mortality. Nay, if people would but consider how hardly riches are got, how uncertainly they are kept, the envy they bring; that they can neither make a man wise, nor cure diseases, nor add to life, much less give peace in death; no, nor hardly yield any solid benefit above food and raiment (which may be had without them), and that if there be any good use for them, it is to relieve others in distress; being but stewards of the plentiful providences of God, and consequently accountable for our stewardship; if, I say, these considerations had any room in our minds, we should not thus post to get, nor care to hide and keep such a mean and impotent thing. Oh that the Cross of Christ, which is the Spirit and power of God in man, might have more place in the soul, that it might crucify us more and more to the world, and the world to us; that, like the days of paradise, the earth might again be the footstool, and the treasure of the earth a servant, and not a god to man!--Many have written against this vice; three I will mention.

20. William Tindal, that worthy apostle of the English reformation, has an entire discourse, to which I refer the reader, entitled "The Parable of the wicked Mammon." The next is--

21. Peter Charron, a famous Frenchman, and in particular for the book he wrote of wisdom, hath a chapter against covetousness; part of which take as followeth: "To love and affect riches is covetousness: not only the love and affection, but also every over-curious care and industry about riches. The desire of goods, and the pleasure we take in possessing them, are grounded only upon opinion: the immoderate desire to get riches is a gangrene in our soul, which with a venomous heat consumeth our natural affections, to the end it might fill us with virulent humours. So soon as it is lodged in our hearts, all honest and natural affection, which we owe either to our parents, our friends, or ourselves, vanisheth away: all the rest, in respect of our profit, seemeth nothing; yea, we forget in the end, and condemn ourselves, our bodies, our minds, for this transitory trash: and as our proverb is, We sell our horse to get us hay. Covetousness is the vile and base passion of vulgar fools, who account riches the principal good of a man, and fear poverty as the greatest evil; and not contenting themselves with necessary means, which are forbidden no man, weigh that which is good in a goldsmith's balance, when nature hath taught us to measure it by the ell of necessity. For what greater folly can there be

than to adore that which nature itself hath put under our feet, and hidden in the earth, as unworthy to be seen; yea, rather to be contemned, and trampled under foot? This is that which the sin of man hath only torn out of the entrails of the earth, and brought unto light to kill himself. We dig out the earth, and bring to light those things for which we would fight: we are not ashamed to esteem those things most highly which are in the lowest parts of the earth. Nature seemeth even in the first birth of gold, after a sort, to have presaged the misery of those that are in love with it; for it hath so ordered the matter, that in those countries where it groweth there groweth with it neither grass nor plant, nor other thing that is worth anything: as giving us to understand thereby, that in those minds, where the desire of this metal groweth, there cannot remain so much as a spark of true honour and virtue. For what thing can be more base than for a man to degrade, and to make himself a servant and a slave to that which should be subject unto him? Riches serve wise men, but command a fool: for a covetous man serveth his riches, and not they him: and he is said to have goods as he hath a fever, which holdeth and tyrannizeth over a man, not he over it. What thing more vile than to love that which is not good, neither can make a good man? Yea, is common, and in the possession of the most wicked in the world; which many times perverts good manners, but never amends them: without which, so many wise men have made themselves happy; and by which so many wicked men have come to a wicked end. To be brief: what thing more miserable, than to bind the living to the dead, as Mezentius did, to the end their death might be languishing, and the more cruel; to tie the spirit unto the excrement and scum of the earth; to pierce through his own soul with a thousand torments, which this amorous passion of riches brings with it; and to entangle himself with the ties and cords of this malignant thing, as the Scripture calls them, which doth likewise term them thorns and thieves, which steal away the heart of man, snares of the devil, idolatry, and the root of all evil? And truly he that shall see the catalogue of those envies and molestations which riches engender into the heart of man, as their proper thunderbolt and lightning, they would be more hated than they are now loved. Poverty wants many things, but covetousness all: a covetous man is good to none, but worse to himself." Thus much of Charron, a wise and great man. My next testimony is yielded by an author not unlikely to take with some sort of people for his wit; may they equally value his morality, and the judgment of his riper time.

22. Abraham Cowley, a witty and ingenious man, yieldeth us the other testimony: of avarice he writeth thus: "There are two sorts of avarice, the one is but a bastard kind, and that is a rapacious appetite of gain; not for its own sake, but for the pleasure of refunding it immediately through all the channels of pride and luxury. The other is the true kind, and properly so called, which is a restless and insatiable desire of riches, not for any further end or use, but only to hoard and preserve, and perpetually increase them. The covetous man of the first kind is like a greedy ostrich which devoureth any metal, but it is with an intent to feed upon it, and in effect, it maketh a shift to digest and excern it. The second is like the foolish chough, which loveth to steal money only to hide it. The first doth much harm to mankind, and a little good to some few: the second doth good to none; no, not to himself. The first can make no excuse to God or angels, or rational men, for his actions: the second can give no reason or colour, not to the devil himself, for what he doth: he is a slave to mammon without wages. The first maketh a shift to be beloved, aye, and envied too, by some people: the second is the universal object of hatred and contempt. There is no vice hath been so pelted with good sentences, and especially by the poets, who have pursued it with satires and fables, and allegories and allusions, and moved, as we say, every stone to fling at it; among which I do not remember a finer correction than that which was given it by one line of Ovid's:--

' Multa Luxuriæ desunt, omnia avaritiæ,'

which is,

' Much is wanting to luxury, all to avarice.'

"To which saying I have a mind to add one member, and render it thus: poverty wants some, luxury many, avarice all things. Somebody saith of a virtuous and wise man, that having nothing, he hath all. This is just his antipode, who having all things, yet hath nothing.

' And O! what man's condition can be worse

Than his, whom plenty starves, and blessings curse?

The beggars but a common fate deplore,

The rich poor man's emphatically poor.'

"I wonder how it cometh to pass that there hath never been any law made against him: against him do I say? I mean for him. As there are public provisions made for all other madmen, it is very reasonable that the king should appoint some persons to manage his estate, during his life, for his heirs commonly need not that care, and out of it to make it their business to see that he should not want alimony befitting their condition; which he could never get out of his own cruel fingers. We relieve idle vagrants and counterfeit beggars, but have no care at all of these really poor men, who are, methinks, to be respectfully treated, in regard of their quality. I might be endless against them, but I am almost choked with the super-abundance of the matter. Too much plenty impoverisheth me, as it doth them." Thus much against avarice, that moth of the soul, and canker of the mind.

CHAPTER XIV

I AM now come to the other extreme, and that is luxury, which is an excessive indulgence of self, in ease and pleasure. This is the last great impiety struck at in this discourse of the holy Cross of Christ, which indeed is much the subject of its mortifying virtue and power. A disease as epidemical as killing: it creeps into all stations and ranks of men: the poorest often exceeding their ability to indulge their appetite; and the rich frequently wallowing in those things that please the lusts of their eye and flesh, and the pride of life: as regardless of the severe discipline of Jesus, whom they call Saviour, as if luxury, and not the cross, were the ordained way to heaven. What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and what shall we put on? once the care of luxurious heathen is now the practice of, and which is worse the study of pretended Christians. But let such be ashamed, and repent; remembering that Jesus did not reproach the Gentiles for those things, to indulge his followers in them. They that will have Christ to be theirs must be sure to be his; to be like-minded, to live in temperance and moderation, as knowing the Lord is at hand. Sumptuous apparel, rich unguents, delicate washes, stately furniture, costly cookery, and such diversions as bails, masques, music-meetings, plays, romances, &c., which are the delight and entertainment of the times, belong not to the holy path that Jesus and his true disciples and followers trod to glory. No. "Through many tribulations," says none of the least of them, "must we enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). I do earnestly beseech the gay and luxurious, into whose hands this discourse shall be directed, to consider well the reasons and examples here advanced against their way of living; if happily they may come to see how remote it is from true Christianity, and how dangerous to their eternal peace. God Almighty, by his grace, soften their hearts to instruction, and shed abroad his tender love in their souls, that they may be overcome to repentance, and to the love of the holy way of the cross of Jesus, the blessed Redeemer of men. For they cannot think that He can benefit them, while they refuse to lay down their sins for

the love of Him that laid down his life for the love of them. Or that He will give them a place in heaven, that refuse Him any in their hearts on earth. But let us examine luxury in all its parts.

2. Luxury has many parts; the first that is forbidden by the self-denying Jesus, is gluttony, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink?--for after these things do the Gentiles seek "(Matt. 6:31,32): as if He said, The heathen, such as live without the true God, whose care is to please their appetite more than to seek God and his kingdom: you must not do so, but "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). That which is convenient for you will follow: let everything have its time and order.

This carries a serious reprehension to the luxurious eater and drinker, who is taken up with an excessive care of his palate, what shall he eat, and what shall he drink: who being often at a loss what to have next, therefore has an officer to invent, and a cook to dress, disguise, and drown the species, that it may cheat the eye, look new and strange; and all to excite an appetite, or raise an admiration. To be sure there is great variety, and that curious and costly; the sauce, it may be, dearer than the meat; and so full is he fed, that without it he can scarce find out a stomach; which is to force a hunger, rather than to satisfy it. And as he eats, so he drinks: rarely for thirst, but pleasure; to please his palate. For that purpose he will have divers sorts, and he must taste them all: one, however good, is dull and tiresome; variety is more delightful than the best; and therefore the whole world is little enough to fill his cellar. But were he temperate in his proportions, his variety might be imputed rather to curiosity than luxury. But what the temperate man uses as a cordial, he drinks by full draughts, till inflamed by excess, he is fitted to be an instrument of mischief, if not to other persons, yet always to himself, whom perhaps at last he knows not: for such brutality are some come to, they will sip themselves out of their own knowledge. This is the lust of the flesh, that is not of the Father, but of the world; for upon this comes in the music and dance, and mirth, and the laughter, which is madness (Eccl. 2:2); that the noise of one pleasure may drown the iniquity of another, lest his own heart should deal too plainly with him. Thus the luxurious live: they forget God, they regard not the afflicted. Oh that the sons and daughters of men would consider their wantonness and their iniquity in these things! How ill do they requite the goodness of God in the use and abuse of the plenty He yields them! How cruel are they to his creatures, how lavish of their lives and virtue, how thankless for them: forgetting the Giver, and abusing his gifts, and despising counsel, and casting instruction behind them! They lose tenderness and forget duty, being swallowed up of voluptuousness, adding one excess to another. God rebuked this sin in the Jews, by the prophet Amos: "Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" (Amos 6:3-6). These, it seems, were the vices of the degenerate Jews, under all their pretence to religion; and are they not of Christians at this day? Yea, they are, and these are the great parts of luxury struck at in this discourse. Remember the rich man, with all his sumptuous fare, went to hell: and the apostle pronounces heavy woes upon those "whose god is their belly: for such glory in their shame" (Phil. 3:19).

Christ places these things to the courts of worldly kings, not his kingdom: making them unseemly in his followers: his feast, therefore, to the multitude, which was his miracle, was plain and simple; enough, but without curiosity or art of cookery: and it went well, for they were hungry; the best and fittest time to eat. And the apostle, in his directions to his much-beloved Timothy, debases the lovers of worldly fulness; advising him to godliness and content as the chiefest gain: adding, "and having food and raiment, let us therewith be content" (1 Tim. 6: 6,8). Behold the abstemious, and most contented life of those pilgrims, the sons of heaven, and immortal offspring of the great power of God; they were in fasts and perils often, and ate what was set before them; and in all conditions learned to be contented. O blessed men! O blessed spirits! Let my soul dwell with yours for ever.

3. But the diseases which luxury begets and nourishes make it an enemy to mankind; for besides the mischief it brings to the souls of people, it undermines health, and shortens the life of man, in that it gives but ill

nourishment and so leaves and feeds corrupt humours, whereby the body becomes rank and foul, lazy and scorbutic; unfit for exercise, and more for honest labour. The spirits being thus loaded with ill flesh, and the mind effeminated, a man is made inactive, and so useless in civil society; for idleness follows luxury, as well as diseases. These are the burdens of the world, devourers of good things, self-lovers, and so forgetters of God: but which is sad, and yet just, the end of those that forget God, is to be turned into hell (Psalm 9:17).

4. But there is another part of luxury that has great place with vain man and woman, and that is the gorgeousness of apparel, one of the most foolish, because most costly, empty, and unprofitable excesses people can well be guilty of.

5. Nor is it otherwise with recreations, as they call them; for these are nearly related. Man was made a noble, rational, grave creature; his pleasure stood in his duty, and his duty in obeying God: which is to love, fear, adore, and serve Him; and in using the creation with true temperance and godly moderation; as knowing well that the Lord, his judge, was at hand, the inspector and rewarder of his works. In short, his happiness was in his communion with God: his error was to leave that conversation, and let his eyes wander abroad to gaze on transitory things. If the recreations of the age were as pleasant and necessary as they are said and made to be, unhappy then would Adam and Eve have been, that never knew them. But had they never fallen, and the world been tainted by their folly and ill example, perhaps man had never known the necessity or use of many of these things. Sin gave them birth, as it did the other; they were afraid of the presence of the Lord, which was the joy of their innocency, when they had sinned; and then their minds wandered, sought other pleasures, and began to forget God; as He complained afterwards by the prophet Amos, "They put far away the evil day: they eat of the fat of the flock: they drink wine in bowls: they anoint themselves upon beds of ivory: they chant to the sound of the viol, and invent unto themselves instruments of music, like David," not heeding or remembering the affliction and captivity of poor Joseph (Amos 6:3-6): him they wickedly sold, innocency was quite banished, and shame soon began to grow to custom, till they were grown shameless in the imitation. And truly, it is now no less a shame to approach primitive innocence by modest plainness, than it was matter of shame to Adam that he lost it, and became forced to tack fig-leaves for a covering. Wherefore in vain do men and women deck themselves with specious pretences to religion, and flatter their miserable souls with the fair titles of Christian, innocent, good, virtuous, and the like, whilst such vanities and follies reign. Wherefore to you all, from the eternal God, I am bound to declare, you mock Him that will not be mocked, and deceive yourselves (Gal. 6:7); such intemperance must be denied, and you must know yourselves changed, and more nearly approached to primitive purity, before you can be entitled to what you do now but usurp; for none but those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God (Rom. 8:14); which guides into all temperance and meekness (Gal. 5:23).

6. But the Christian world, as it would be called, is justly reprovably, because the very end of the first institution of apparel is grossly perverted. The utmost service that clothes originally were designed for, when sin had stripped them of their native innocence, was, as hath been said, to cover them, therefore plain and modest; next, to fence out cold, therefore substantial; lastly, to declare sexes, therefore distinguishing. So that then necessity provoked to clothing, now, pride and vain curiosity; in former times some benefit obliged, but now, wantonness and pleasure: then they minded them for covering, but now, that is the least part; their greedy eyes must be provided with gaudy superfluities: as if they made their clothes for trimming, to be seen rather than worn; only for the sake of other curiosities that must be tacked upon them, although they neither fence from cold, nor distinguish sexes; but signally display their wanton, fantastic, full-fed minds, that have them.

7. Then the recreations were to serve God, be just, follow their vocations, mind their flocks, do good, exercise their bodies in such a manner as was suitable to gravity, temperance and virtue; but now that word is extended to almost every folly; so much are men degenerated from Adam in his disobedience; so much more confident and artificial are they grown in all impieties; yea, their minds, through custom, are become so very insensible of the inconveniency that attends the like follies, that what was once mere necessity is now the delight, pleasure, and recreation of age. How ignoble is it, how ignominious and unworthy of a reasonable creature! Man, who is endued with understanding, fit to contemplate immortality, and made a companion (if not superior) to angels, that he should mind a little dust, a few shameful rags; inventions of mere pride and luxury; toys so apish and

fantastic, entertainments so dull and earthly, that a rattle, a baby, a hobby-horse, a top, are by no means so foolish in a simple child, nor unworthy of his thoughts, as are such inventions of the care and pleasure of men! It is a mark of great stupidity that such vanities should exercise the noble mind of man, and image of the great Creator of heaven and earth.

8. Of this many among the very heathen of old had so clear a prospect that they detested all such vanity, looking upon curiosity in apparel, and that variety of recreations now in vogue and esteem with false Christians, to be destructive of good manners, in that it more easily stole away the minds of people from sobriety to wantonness. idleness, effeminacy, and made them only companions for the beast that perishes: witness these famous men, Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristides, Cato, Seneca, Epictetus, &c., who place true honour and satisfaction in nothing below virtue and immortality. Nay, such are the remains of innocence among some Moors and Indians in our times, that if a Christian (though he must be an odd one) fling out a filthy word, it is customary with them, by way of moral, to bring him water to purge his mouth. How much do the like virtues and reasonable instances accuse people professing Christianity, of gross folly and intemperance! Oh that men and women had the fear of God before their eyes; and that they were so charitable to themselves, as to remember whence they came, what they are doing, and to what they must return: that so more noble, more virtuous, more rational and heavenly things might be the matters of their pleasure and entertainment; that they would be once persuaded to believe how inconsistent the folly, vanity, and conversation they are mostly exercised in, really are with the true nobility of a reasonable soul; and let that just principle, which taught the heathen, teach them; lest it be found more tolerable for heathen than such Christians, in the day of account. For if their shorter notions, and more imperfect sense of things could yet discover so much vanity; if their degree of light condemned it, and they, in obedience thereunto, disused it, doth it not behove Christians much more?

9. Again: these things, which have been hitherto condemned have never been the conversation or practice of the holy men and women of old times, whom the Scriptures recommend for holy examples, worthy of imitation. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were plain men, and princes, as graziers are, over their families and flocks. They were not solicitous for the vanities so much lived in by the people of this generation, for they pleased God by faith. The first forsook his father's house, kindred, and country; a true type or figure of that self-denial all must know, that would have Abraham to their father. They must not think to live in those pleasures, fashions, and customs they are called to leave; no, but part with all hopes of the great recompense of reward, and that better country which is eternal in the heavens (Heb. 11:26,16; 2 Cor. 5:1). The prophets were generally poor; one a shepherd, another a herdsman, &c. They often cried out unto the full-fed wanton Israelites to repent, to fear and dread the living God, to forsake the sins and vanities they lived in; but they never imitated them. John the Baptist, the messenger of the Lord, preached his embassy to the world in a coat of camel's hair, a rough and homely garment (Matt. 3:4). Nor can it be conceived that Jesus Christ himself was much better apparelled, who, according to the flesh, was of poor descent, and in life of great plainness; insomuch that it was usual in a way of derision to say, "Is not this Jesus, the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3). And this Jesus tells his followers that as for "soft raiment, gorgeous apparel and delicacies, they were for kings' courts" (Luke 7:25): implying, that He and his followers were not to seek after those things; but seems thereby to express the great difference that was betwixt the lovers of the fashions and customs of the world, and those whom He had chosen out of it. And He did not only come in that mean and despicable manner Himself, that He might stain the pride of all flesh, but therein became exemplary to his followers, what a self-denying life they must lead, if they would be his true disciples. Nay, He further leaves it with them in a parable, to the end that it might make the deeper impression, and that they might see how inconsistent a pompous, worldly-pleasing life is with the kingdom He came to establish and call men to the possession of: and that is the remarkable story of Dives, who is represented first, as a rich man (Luke 16:19-31); next as a voluptuous man in his rich apparel, his many dishes, and his pack of dogs; and lastly, as an uncharitable man, or one who was more concerned to please the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, and fare sumptuously every day, than to take compassion of poor Lazarus at his gate: no, his dogs were more pitiful and kind than he. But what was the doom of this jolly man, this great rich man? We read it was everlasting torment; but that of Lazarus, eternal joy with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. In short, Lazarus was a good man, the other a great

man: the one poor and temperate, the other rich and luxurious: there are too many of them alive; and it were well, if his doom might awaken them to repentance.

10. Nor were the twelve apostles, the immediate messengers of the Lord Jesus Christ, other than poor men, one a fisherman, another a tent-maker and he that was of the greatest, though perhaps not the best employment, was a custom gatherer (Matt. 14:18; 9:9; Acts 18:3). So that it is very unlikely that any of them were followers of the fashions of the world: nay, they were so far from it, that, as became the followers of Christ (1 Cor. 4:9-14), they lived poor, afflicted, self-denying lives; bidding the churches to walk as they had them for examples (Phil. 3:17; 1 Peter 2:21). And to shut up this particular, they gave this pathetic account of the holy women in former times, as an example of godly temperance (1 Peter 3:3,4), namely, that first they did expressly abstain from gold, silver, plaited hair, fine apparel, or such like; and next, that their adornment was a meek and quiet spirit, and the hidden man of the heart, which are of great price with the Lord; affirming that such as live in pleasure are dead whilst they live (1 Tim. 5:6): for that the cares and pleasures of this life choke and destroy the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:14), and quite hinder all progress in the hidden and divine life. Wherefore we find that the holy men and women of former times were not accustomed to these pleasures and vain recreations; but having their minds set on things above, sought another kingdom, which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit: who, having obtained a good report, and entered into their eternal rest, therefore their works follow, and praise them in the gates (Rom. 14:17; Heb. 11:2; 4:9; Rev. 14:13).

CHAPTER XV

BUT such excess in apparel and pleasure was not only forbidden in Scripture, but it was the ground of that lamentable message by the prophet Isaiah to the people of Israel: "Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet; therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts; in that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments, and their caul [or net-works, in the Hebrew], and their round tires like the moon; the chains and the bracelets, and the mufflers; the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and ear-rings, the rings and nose-jewels; the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins; the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods and the veils; and it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell, there shall be a stink; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth, and burning instead of beauty: thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war; and her gates shall lament and mourn, and she being desolate, shall sit upon the ground" (Isa. 3:16-26). Behold, O vain and foolish inhabitants of England and Europe, your folly and your doom! (*The very practice, and garb, and vanity of this age being as liable to the wrath of God, which hangs over England and Europe, and is ready to be executed on their rebellions inhabitants.) Yet read the prophet Ezekiel's vision of miserable Tyre, what punishment her pride and pleasure brought upon her; and amongst many other circumstances these are some: "These were thy merchants in all sorts of things; in blue clothes and brodered work, and in chests of rich apparel, emeralds, purple, fine linen, coral and agate, spices, with all precious stones, and gold, horses, chariots," &c.; for which hear part of her doom: "Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, and all thy company, which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the sea in the day of thy ruin; and the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee; and their merchants hiss at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and shalt be no more" (Ezek. 27). Thus hath God declared his displeasure against the luxury of this wanton world. Yet further the prophet Zephaniah goes, for thus he speaks: "And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel" (Zeph. 1:8). Of how evil consequence was it in those times, for the greatest men to give themselves the liberty of following the vain customs of other nations; or of changing the usual end of clothes, or apparel, to gratify foolish curiosity!

2. This did the Lord Jesus Christ expressly charge his disciples not to be careful about: insinuating that such as were could not be his disciples: for, says He, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? for after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things: but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:31-33). Under which of eating, and drinking, and apparel, He comprehends all external things whatsoever; and so much appears, as well because they are opposed to the kingdom of God and his righteousness, which are invisible and heavenly things, as those very matters He enjoins them not to be careful about, are the most necessary, and the most innocent in themselves. If then, in such cases, the minds of his disciples were not to be solicitous, much less in foolish, superstitious, idle inventions, to gratify the carnal appetites and minds of men, so certain it is that those who live therein are none of his followers, but the Gentiles; and as He elsewhere says, "The nations of the world who know not God" (Luke 12:22-33). If now then the distinguishing mark between the disciples of Jesus and those of the world is that one minds the things of heaven and God's kingdom, that "stands in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17); being not careful of external matters, even the most innocent and necessary: and that the other minds eating, drinking, apparel, and the affairs of this world, with the lusts, pleasures, profits, and honours that belong to it; be you intreated for your souls' sakes, O inhabitants of England, to be serious, to reflect awhile upon yourselves what care and cost you are at of time and money, about foolish, nay, vicious things: so far are you degenerated from the primitive Christian life. What buying and selling, what dealing and chaffering, what writing and posting, what toil and labour, what noise, hurry, bustle, and confusion, what study, what little contrivances and overreachings, what eating, drinking, vanity of apparel, most ridiculous recreations; in short, what rising early, going to bed late, expense of precious time is there about things that perish! View the streets, shops, exchanges, plays, parks, coffee-houses, &c., and is not the world, this fading world, written upon every face? Say not within yourselves, How otherwise should men live and the world subsist? The common, though frivolous objection. There is enough for all. Let some content themselves with less: a few things, plain and decent, serve a Christian life. It is lust, pride, avarice, that thrust men upon such folly: were God's kingdom more the exercise of their minds, these perishing entertainments would have but little of their time or thoughts.

3. This self-denying doctrine was confirmed and enforced by the apostles in their example, as we have already shown; and in their precepts too, as we shall yet evince in those two most remarkable passages of Paul and Peter; where they do not only tell us what should be done, but also what should be denied and avoided: "In like manner I will, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel; with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array (then it seems these are immodest) but which becometh women professing godliness, with good works" (1 Tim. 2:9,10). Absolutely implying, that those who attire themselves with gold, silver, brodered hair, pearls, costly array, cannot in so doing be women professing godliness; making those very things to be contrary to modesty, and consequently that they are evil, and unbecoming women professing godliness. To which the Apostle Peter joins another precept after the like sort, viz., "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel:" what? then. "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3-5). And as an inducement, he adds: "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves." Which doth not only intimate that both holy women were so adorned, and that it behoves such as would be holy, and trust in the holy God, to be so adorned; but, also, that they who used those forbidden ornaments were the women and people in all ages, that, for all their talk, were not holy, nor did trust in God. Such are so far from trusting in God that the Apostle Paul expressly says, that "she that liveth in pleasure is dead whilst she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6). And the same apostle further enjoined, that Christians should have their conversations in heaven, and their minds fixed on things above (Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1-4); "walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in envy and strife" (Rom. 13:13): "let not fornication, uncleanness, or covetousness be once named among you: neither filthiness, nor foolish talking nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5:3,4): "let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29); but "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to

fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). And "grieve not the Holy Spirit" [intimating such conversation doth] (Eph. 4:30): but "be ye followers of God, as dear children: walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:1,15).

4. By this measure yourselves, O inhabitants of this land, who think yourselves wronged, if not accounted Christians: see what proportion your life and spirit bear with these most holy and self-denying precepts and examples. Well, my friends, my soul mourns for you; I have been with and among you; your life and pastime are not strangers to my notice; and with compassion, yea, inexpressible pity, I bewail your folly. Oh that you would be wise! Oh that the just principle in yourselves would be heard! Oh that eternity had time to plead a little with you! Why should your beds, your glasses, your clothes, your tables, your loves, your plays, your parks, your treats, your recreations, poor perishing joys, have all your souls, your time, your care, your purse, and consideration? Be ye admonished, I beseech you, in the name of the living God, by one that some of you know hath had his share in these things, and consequently time to know how little the like vanities conduce to true and solid happiness. No, my friends, God Almighty knows, and would to God, you would believe and follow me, they end in shame and sorrow. Faithful is that most holy One, who hath determined that every man and woman shall reap what they sow: and will not trouble, anguish, and disappointment be a sad and dreadful harvest for you to reap, for all your misspent time and substance, about superfluities and vain recreations? Retire then; quench not the Holy Spirit in yourselves; redeem your precious abused time: frequent such conversation as may help you against your evil inclinations; so shall you follow the examples, and keep the precepts of Jesus Christ, and all his followers; for hitherto we have plainly demonstrated, that no such way of living, as is in request among you of the land, ever was, or can be truly Christian.

5. But the best recreation is to do good: and all Christian customs tend to temperance, and some good and beneficial end; which more or less may be in every action (1 Peter 1:15; Heb. 10:25; 1 Peter 4:9-11; Matt. 25:36,37). For instance, if men and women would be diligent to follow their respective callings; frequent the assemblies of religious people; visit sober neighbours to be edified, and wicked ones to reform them; be careful in the tuition of their children, exemplary to their servants; relieve the necessitous, see the sick, visit the imprisoned; administer to their infirmities and indispositions, endeavour peace amongst neighbours: also, study moderately such commendable and profitable arts, as navigation, arithmetic, geometry, husbandry, gardening, handicraft, medicine, &c.; and that women spin, sew, knit, weave, garden, preserve, and the like housewife and honest employments, the practice of the greatest and noblest matrons, and youth, among the very heathen: helping others, who for want are unable to keep servants, to ease them in their necessary affairs; often and private retirements from all worldly objects, to enjoy the Lord: secret and steady meditations on the divine life and heavenly inheritance; which to leave undone and prosecute other things, under the notion of recreations, is impiety; it is most vain in any to object, that they cannot do these always, and therefore why may not they use these common diversions? for I ask, what would such be at? what would they do? and what would they have? They that have trades have not time enough to do half of what hath been recommended. And as for those who have nothing to do, and indeed do nothing, which is worse, but sin, which is worst of all, here is variety of pleasant, of profitable, yea, of very honourable employments and diversions for them. Such can with great delight sit at a play, a ball, a masque, at cards, dice, &c., drinking, revelling, feasting, and the like, an entire day; yea, turn night into day, and invert the very order of the creation, to humour their lusts (Amos 6:3-8); and were it not for eating and sleeping, it would be past a doubt, whether they would ever find time to cease from those vain and sinful pastimes, till the hasty calls of death should summon their appearance in another world: yet do they think it intolerable and hardly possible, for any to sit so long at a profitable or religious exercise.

6. But how do these think to pass their vast eternity away? "For as the tree falls, so it lies" (Eccl. 11:3). Let none deceive themselves, nor mock their immortal souls with a pleasant, but most false and pernicious dream, that they shall be changed by a constraining and irresistible power, just when their souls take leave of their bodies; no, no, my friends, "what you sow, that shall you reap" (Gal. 6:4-9): if vanity, folly, visible delights, fading pleasures, no better shall you ever reap than corruption, sorrow and the woeful anguish of eternal disappointments. But alas! what is the reason that the cry is so common, Must we always dote on these things? Why most certainly it is this, they know not what is the joy and peace of speaking and acting, as in the presence

of the most holy God that passeth such vain understandings (Eph. 4:18-20): darkened with the glories and pleasures of the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4); whose religion is so many mumbling and ignorantly devout said words, as they teach parrots; for if they were of those whose hearts are set on things above, and whose treasure is in heaven, there would their minds inhabit, and their greatest pleasure constantly be: and such who call that a burden, and seek to be refreshed by such pastimes as a play, a morrice-dance, a punchinello, a ball, a masque, cards, dice, or the like, I am bold to affirm, they not only never knew the divine excellency of God and his truth, but thereby declare themselves most unfit for them in another world. For how is it possible that they can be delighted to eternity with that satisfaction, which is so tedious and irksome for thirty or forty years, that, for a supply of recreation to their minds, the little toys and fopperies of this perishing world must be brought into practice and request? Surely, those who are to reckon for every idle word (Matt. 12:36), must not use sports to pass away that time which they are commanded so diligently to redeem, considering no less work is to be done than making their calling and election sure (Eph. 5:16; Phil. 3:14; 2 Peter 1:10; Col. 4: 5): much less study to invent recreations for their vain minds, and spend the greatest part of their days, and months, and years therein, not allowing a quarter of that time toward the great concernment of their lives and souls, for which that time was given them.

7. There is but little need to drive away that, by foolish divertisements, which flies away so swiftly of itself; and, when once gone, is never to be recalled. Plays, parks, balls, treats, romances, music, love-sonnets, and the like, will be a very invalid plea, for any other purpose than their condemnation who are taken and delighted with them, at the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. O my friends! these were never invented, but by that mind which had first lost the joy and ravishing delights of God's holy presence. So that we conclude first that of those many excellent employments already mentioned as worthy to possess such minds as are inclined to these vanities, there is store enough of time, not only to take up their spare hours, but double so much, and that with great delight, diversion, and profit, both to themselves and others; were they but once weaned from vain and fruitless fopperies, and did they but consider, how great the satisfaction, and how certain the rewards are, which attend this, and the other life, for such universal benefits and virtuous examples. The second conclusion is, that what is alleged by me can be displeasing and ungrateful to none, but such as know not what it is to walk with God, to prepare for an eternal mansion, to have the mind exercised on heavenly and good things, to follow the examples of the holy men and women of former happy ages: such as know not Christ's doctrine, life, death, and resurrection, but only have their minds fastened to the flesh, and by the objects of it are allured, deceived, and miserably ruined: and lastly, that despise heaven, and the joys that are not seen, though eternal, for a few perishing trifles that they do see; though they are decreed to pass away. How these are baptized with Christ, into his holy life, cruel sufferings, shameful death, and raised with Him to immortal desires, heavenly meditations, a new divine life, growing into the knowledge of heavenly mysteries, and all holiness, even unto the measure of the stature of Jesus Christ, the great example of all (Rom. 6:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12,13; Eph.4:13): how, I say, these resemble most necessary Christian qualifications, and what share they have therein, let their consciences tell them upon a serious inquiry in the cool of the day.

8. But in the next place, such attire and pastimes do not only show the exceeding worldliness of people's inclinations, and their very great ignorance of the divine joys; but by imitating these fashions, and frequenting these places and diversions, not only much good is omitted, but a certain door is open to much evil to be committed: as first, precious time, that were worth a world on a dying bed, is lost: money that might be employed for the general good, vainly expended; pleasure is taken in mere shame; lusts are gratified; the minds of the people alienated from heavenly things, and exercised about mere folly; and men become acceptable by their trims and the à-la-modeness of their dress and apparel; from whence respect to persons doth so naturally arise (James 2:1-9), that to deny it is to affirm the sun shines not at noonday; nothing being more notorious than the cringing, scraping, sipping, and madaming of persons, according to the gaudiness of their attire: which is detestable to God, and so absolutely forbidden in the Scriptures, that to do it is to break the whole law, and consequently to incur the punishment thereof. Next, what great holes do the like practices make in men's estates! How are their vocations neglected, young women deluded, the marriage-bed invaded, contentions and family animosities begotten, partings of man and wife, disinheriting of children, dismissing of servants! On the other hand, servants made slaves, children disregarded, wives despised and shamefully abused, through the

intemperance of their husbands; which either puts them upon the same extravagance, or laying such cruel injustice to heart, they pine away their days in grief and misery. But of all these wretched inventions, the playhouses, like so many hellish seminaries, do most perniciously conduce to these sad and miserable ends; where little besides frothy, wanton, if not directly obscene and profane humours are represented, which are of notoriously ill consequence upon the minds of most; especially the youth that frequent them. And thus it is that idle and debauched stages are encouraged and maintained; than which scarcely a greater abomination can be thought on of that rank of impieties, as will anon particularly be shown; and truly nothing but the excessive pleasure people take therein could blind their eyes from seeing it.

9. But lastly, the grand indisposition of mind in people to solid, serious, and heavenly meditations, by the almost continual, as well as pleasant rumination in their minds, of those various adventures they have been entertained with, which in the more youthful can never miss to inflame and animate their boiling and airy constitutions. And in the rest of the common recreations of balls, masques, treats, cards, dice, &c., there are the like opportunities to promote the like evils. And yet further; how many quarrels, animosities, nay, murders too, as well as expense of estate and precious time, have been the immediate consequences of the like practices! In short, these were the ways of the Gentiles that knew not God, but never the practice of them that feared Him (Eph. 4:17-25): nay, the more noble among the heathen themselves, namely, Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato, Antisthenes, Heraclitus, Zeno, Aristides, Cato, Tully, Epictetus, Seneca, &c., have left their disgust to these things upon record, as odious and destructive, not only of the honour of the immortal God, but of all good order and government; as leading into looseness, idleness, ignorance, and effeminacy, the great cankers and bane of all states and empires. And the pretended innocency of these things steals away their minds from that which is better, into the love of them; nay, it gives them confidence to plead for them, and by no means will they think the contrary. But why? because it is a liberty that feeds the flesh and gratifies the lustful eye and palate of poor mortality: wherefore they think it a laudable condition to be no better than the beast, that eats and drinks but what his nature doth require; although the number is very small of such, so very exorbitant are men and women grown in this present age: for either they do believe their actions are to be ruled by their own will; or else at best, that not to be stained with the vilest wickedness is matter of great boasting: and indeed it is so in a time when nothing is too wicked to be done. But certainly, it is a sign of universal impiety in a land, when not to be guilty of the sins the very heathen loathe, is to be virtuous, yes, and Christian too, and that to no small degree of reputation: a dismal symptom to a country! But is it not to be greatly blinded, that those we call infidels should detest those practices as infamous which people that call themselves Christians cannot or will not see to be such, but gild them over with the fair titles of ornaments, decency, recreation, and the like? Well, my friends, if there were no God, no heaven, no hell, no holy examples, no Jesus Christ, in cross, doctrine, and life, to be conformed unto; yet would charity to the poor, help to the needy, peace amongst neighbours, visits to the sick, care of the widow and fatherless, with the rest of those temporal good offices already repeated, be a nobler employment, and much more worthy of your expense and pains. Nor indeed is it to be conceived, that the way to glory is smoothed with such a variety of carnal pleasures; for then conviction, a wounded spirit, a broken heart, a regenerate mind (Prov. 18:14; Psalm 51:17; Matt. 5:4; Luke 6:25; Rom. 2:7; Psalm 40: 8; Rom. 7:22; Heb. 11:13-16; Rom.1:25-30); in a word, immortality, would prove as mere fictions as some make them, and others therefore think them: no, these practices are for ever to be extinguished and expelled all Christian society. For I affirm, that to one who internally knows God, and hath a sense of his blessed presence, all such recreations are death; yea, more dangerously evil, and more apt to steal away the mind from the heavenly exercise, than grosser impieties. For they are so big they are plainly seen; so dirty they are easily detected: which education and common temperance, as well as constitution in many, teach them to abhor: and if they should be committed, they carry with them a proportionable conviction. But these pretended innocents, these supposed harmless satisfactions (Job 1:4), are more surprising, more destructive; for as they easily gain an admission by the senses, so the more they pretend to innocency the more they secure the minds of people in the common use of their evil consequences, that with a mighty confidence they can plead for them.

10. But as this is plainly not to deny themselves (1 John 2:15-17), but on the contrary, to employ the vain inventions of carnal men and women, to gratify the desire of the eye, the desire of the flesh, and the pride of life (all which exercise the mind below the divine and only true pleasure, or else, tell me what does), so be it known

to be such, that the heavenly life and Christian joys are of another kind, as hath already been expressed: yea, that the true disciples of the Lord Christ must be hereunto crucified as to objects and employments that attract downwards, and that their affections should be raised to a more sublime and spiritual conversation, as to use this world, even in its most innocent enjoyments, as if they used it not. But if they take pleasure in anything below, it should be in such good offices as before mentioned, whereby a benefit may redound in some respect to others: in which God is honoured over all visible things, the nation relieved, the government bettered, themselves rendered exemplary of good, and thereby justly entitled to present happiness, a sweet memorial with posterity, as well as to a seat at his right hand, where there are joys and pleasures for ever (Job 36:7; Psalm 5:12; Prov. 10:7,11); than which there can be nothing more honourable, nothing more certain, world without end.

CHAPTER XVI

BUT the luxury opposed in this discourse should not be allowed among Christians, because both that which invents it, delights in it, and pleads so strongly for it, is inconsistent with the true spirit of Christianity; nor doth the very nature of the Christian religion admit thereof. For therefore was it, that immortality and eternal life were brought to light, that all the invented pleasures of mortal life, in which the world lives, might be denied and relinquished: and for this reason it is, that nothing less than immense rewards and eternal mansions are promised, that men and women might therefore be encouraged willingly to forsake the vanity and fleshly satisfactions of the world, and encounter with boldness the shame and sufferings they must expect to receive at the hand of, it may be, their nearest intimates and relations.

For if the Christian religion had admitted the possession of this world in any other sense than the simple and naked use of those creatures, really given of God for the necessity and convenience of the whole creation; for instance, did it allow all that pride, vanity, curiosity, pomp, exchange of apparel, honours, preferments, fashions, and the customary recreations of the world, with whatever may delight and gratify their senses; then what need of a daily cross; a self-denying life; working out salvation with fear and trembling; seeking the things that are above; having the treasure and heart in heaven; no idle talking, no vain jesting, but fearing and meditating all the day long; undergoing all reproach, scorn, hard usage, bitter mockings, and cruel deaths? What need these things? And why should they be expected in order to that glorious immortality and eternal crown, if the vanity, pride, expense, idleness, concupiscence, envy, malice, and whole manner of living among the called Christians, were allowed by the Christian religion? No, certainly; but as the Lord Jesus Christ well knew in what foolish trifles and vain pleasures, as well as grosser impieties, the minds of men and women were fixed, and how much they were degenerated from the heavenly principle of life, into a lustful of unlawful seeking after the enjoyments of this perishing world, nay, inventing daily new satisfactions to gratify the carnal appetites, so did He not less foresee the difficulty that all would have to relinquish and forsake them at his call, and with what great unwillingness they would take their leave of them, and be weaned from them. Wherefore to induce them to it, He did not speak unto them in the language of the law, that they should have an earthly Canaan, great dignities, a numerous issue, a long life, and the like: no, rather the contrary, at least to take these things in their course; but He speaks to them in a higher strain; namely, He assures them of a kingdom and a crown that are immortal, that neither time, cruelty, death, grave, or hell, with all its instruments, shall ever be able to disappoint or take away from those who should believe and obey Him. Further, that they should be taken into that near alliance of loving friends, yea, the intimate divine relation of dear brethren, and co-heirs with Him of all celestial happiness, and a glorious immortality. Wherefore, if it be recorded that those who heard not Moses were to die, much more they who refuse to hear and obey the precepts of this great and eternal Rewarder of all that diligently seek and follow Him.

2. And therefore it was that He was pleased to give us, in his own example, a taste of what his disciples must expect to drink deeply of, namely, the cup of self-denial, cruel trials, and most bitter afflictions: He came not to

consecrate a way to the eternal rest, through gold, and silver, ribbons, laces, prints, perfumes, costly clothes, curious trims, exact dresses, rich jewels, pleasant recreations, plays, treats, balls, masques, revels, romances, love-songs, and the like pastimes of the world: no, no, alas! but by forsaking all such kinds of entertainments, yea, and sometimes more lawful enjoyments too; and cheerfully undergoing the loss of all on the one hand, and the reproach, ignominy, and the most cruel persecution from ungodly men on the other. He needed never to have wanted such variety of worldly pleasures, had they been suitable to the nature of his kingdom: for He was tempted, as are his followers, with no less bait than all the glories of the world: but He commanded to seek another country, and to lay up treasures in the heavens that fade not away; and therefore charged them never to be much inquisitive about what they should eat, drink, or put on, "because," saith He, "after these things the Gentiles," that know not God, "do seek" (Matt. 6:19-33); (and Christians that pretend to know Him too), but "having food and raiment, therewith to be content" (1 Tim. 6:6-11); He, I say, that enjoined this doctrine, and led that holy and heavenly example, even the Lord Jesus Christ, bade them that would be his disciples take up the same cross, and follow Him (Luke 14:26,27,33).

3. Oh who will follow Him? Who will be true Christians? We must not think to steer another course, nor to drink of another cup, than hath the Captain of our salvation done before us (Heb. 2:10): no, for it is the very question He asked James and John, the sons of Zebedee of old, when they desired to sit at his right and left hand in his kingdom, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (Matt. 20:22). Otherwise no disciples, no Christians. Whoever they are that would come to Christ, and be right Christians, must readily abandon every delight that would steal away the affections of the mind, and exercise it from the divine principle of life, and freely write a bill of divorce for every beloved vanity; and all, under the Sun of Righteousness is so, compared with Him.

4. Objection 1. But some are ready to object who will not seem to want Scripture for their lusts, although it be evidently misapplied. The kingdom of God stands not in meats, or in drink, or in apparel, &c. Answer. Right; therefore it is that we stand out of them. But surely you have the least reason of any to object this to us, who make those things so necessary to conversation, as our not conforming to them renders us obnoxious to your reproach; which how Christian, or resembling it is of the righteousness, peace, and joy in which the heavenly kingdom stands, let the just principle in your own consciences determine. Our conversation stands in temperance, and that stands in righteousness, by which we have obtained that kingdom, your latitude and excess have no share or interest in. If none, therefore, can be true disciples but they that come to bear the daily cross, but those who follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:10; 1 Peter 4:13; Titus 2:11-13; John 1:9; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:4), through his baptism, afflictions, and temptations; and that none are so baptized with Him but those whose minds are retired from the vanities in which the generality of the world live, and become obedient to the holy light and divine grace with which they have been enlightened from on high, and thereby are daily exercised to the crucifying of every contrary affection, and bringing of immortality to light; if none are true disciples but such, as most undoubtedly they are not, then let the people of these days a little soberly reflect upon themselves, and they will conclude that none who live and delight in these vain customs and this un-Christ-like conversation can be true Christians, or disciples of the crucified Jesus: for otherwise, how would it be a cross; or the Christian life matter of difficulty and reproach? No, the offence of the cross would soon cease, which is "the power of God to them that believe" (Gal. 5:11; 1 Cor. 1:18); that every lust and vanity may be subdued, and the creature brought into a holy subjection of mind to the heavenly will of its Creator. For therefore has it been said, that Jesus Christ was and is manifested, that by his holy self-denying life and doctrine, and by the immortality He brought and daily brings to light, He might stain the glory of their fading rests and pleasures (1 Cor. 1:27-29); that having their minds weaned from them, and being crucified thereunto, they might seek another country, and obtain an everlasting inheritance: for "the things that are seen are temporal" (2 Cor. 4:18), and those they were, and all true Christians are, to be redeemed from resting in: but the things that are not seen are eternal; those they were, and all are to be brought to, and have their affections chiefly fixed upon.

5. Wherefore a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is to have his mind so conversant about heavenly things, that the things of this world may be used if they were not: that having such things as are necessary and

convenient, he be therewith content, without the superfluity of the world (1 Tim. 6:8); whereby the pleasure that in times of ignorance was taken in the customs and fashions of the world may more abundantly be supplied in the hidden and heavenly life of Jesus: for unless there be an abiding in Christ, it will be impossible to bring forth that much fruit (John 15:4,7,8), which He requires at the hand of his followers, and wherein his Father is glorified. But as it is clear that such as live in the vanities, pleasures, recreations, and lusts of the world, abide not in Him, neither know Him, for they that know Him depart from iniquity; so is their abiding and delighting in those bewitching rallies, the very reason why they are so ignorant and insensible of Him: Him who continually stands knocking at the door of their hearts (Rev. 3:20); in whom they ought to abide, and whose divine power they should know to be the cross on which every beloved lust and alluring vanity should be slain and crucified; that so they might feel the heavenly life to spring up in their hearts, and themselves to be quickened to seek the things that are above; that when Christ shall appear, they might appear with Him in glory, who is over all, God blessed for ever (Col. 3:1; Rom. 9:5). Amen.

CHAPTER XVII

NEXT, those customs and fashions, which make up the common attire and conversation of the times, do eminently obstruct the inward retirement of people's minds, by which they may come to behold the glories of immortality: who, instead of fearing their Creator in the days of their youth, and seeking the kingdom of God in the first place (Eccl. 12:1), expecting the addition of such other things as may be necessary and convenient (Luke 12:30, according to the injunctions of God and the Lord Jesus Christ; as soon as they can do anything, they look after pride, vanity, and that conversation which is most delightful to the flesh (Jer. 18:18-20), which becomes their most delightful entertainment: all which do but evidently beget lustful conceptions, and inflame to inordinate thoughts, wanton discourses, lascivious treats, if not at last to wicked actions. To such it is tedious and offensive to speak of heaven or another life. Bid them reflect upon their actions, not grieve the Holy Spirit, consider of an eternal doom, prepare for judgment; and the best return that is usual is reproachful jests (Eph. 5:3,4), profane repartees, if not direct blows. Their thoughts are otherwise employed: their mornings are too short for them to wash, to smooth, to paint, to patch, to braid, to curl, to gum, to powder, and otherwise to attire and adorn themselves (Psalm 12:2; Isa. 5:12; 59:3,4); whilst their afternoons are as commonly bespoke for visits and for plays; where their usual entertainment is some stories fetched from the more approved romances; some strange adventures, some passionate amours, unkind refusals, grand impediments, importunate addresses, miserable disappointments, wonderful surprises, unexpected encounters, castles surprised, imprisoned lovers rescued, and meetings of supposed dead ones; bloody duels, languishing voices echoing from solitary groves, overheard mournful complaints, deep-fetched sighs sent from wild deserts, intrigues managed with unheard-of subtlety; and whilst all things seem at the greatest distance, then are dead people alive, enemies friends, despair turned to enjoyment, and all their impossibilities reconciled: things that never were, nor are, nor ever shall or can be, they all come to pass. And as if men and women were too slow to answer the loose suggestions of corrupt nature; or were too intent on more divine speculations and heavenly affairs, they have all that is possible for the most extravagant wits to invent; not only express lies, but utter impossibilities to very nature, on purpose to excite their minds to those idle passions, and intoxicate their giddy fancies with swelling nothings but airy fictions: which not only consume their time, effeminate their natures, debase their reason, and set them on work to reduce these things to practice, and make each adventure theirs by imitation: but if disappointed,—as who can otherwise expect from such mere phantasms? the present remedy is latitude in the greatest vice. And yet these are some of their most innocent recreations, which are the very gins of Satan, to ensnare people; contrived most agreeable to their weakness, and in a more insensible manner mastering their affections by entertainments most taking to their senses. On such occasions it is their hearts breed vanity, and their eyes turn interpreters to their thoughts, and their looks whisper the secret inflammations of their intemperate minds (Prov. 7:10-21);

wandering so long abroad, till their lascivious actings bring night home, and load their minds and reputations with lust and infamy.

2. Here is the end of their fashions and recreations, to gratify the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16); clothes that were given to cover, now want a covering for their shameful excess; and that which should remind men of lost innocency, they pride and glory in: but the hundredth part of these things cost man the loss of Paradise, that now make up the agreeable recreation, aye, the accomplishment of the times. For as it was Adam's fault to seek a satisfaction to himself, other than what God ordained; so it is the exercise, pleasure, and perfection of the age, to spend the greatest portion of their time in vanities, which are so far from the end of their creation, namely, a divine life, that they are destructive of it.

3. Were the pleasures of the age true and solid, Adam and Eve had been miserable in their innocency, who knew them not: but as it was once their happiness, not to know them in any degree, so it is theirs, that know Christ indeed, to be by his eternal power redeemed and raised to the love of immortality: which is yet a mystery to those who live and have pleasure in their curious trims, rich and changeable apparel, nicety of dress, invention and imitation of fashions, costly attire, mincing gaits, wanton looks, romances, plays, treats, balls, feasts, and the like conversation in request: for as these had never been, if man had stayed at home with his Creator, and given the entire exercise of his mind to the noble ends of his creation; so certain it is, that the use of these vanities is not only a sign that men and women are yet ignorant of their true rest and pleasure. but it greatly obstructs and hinders the retirement of their minds, and their serious enquiry after those things that are eternal. Oh that there should be so much noise, clutter, invention, traffic, curiosity, diligence, pains, and vast expense of time and estate, to please and gratify poor vain mortality! And that the soul, the very image of divinity itself, should have so little of their consideration. What, Oh what more pregnant instances and evident tokens can be given, that it is the body, the senses, the case, a little flesh and bone covered with skin, the toys, fopperies, and very vanities of this mortal life and perishing world, that please, that take, that gain them; on which they dote; and think they never have too much time, love, or money to bestow upon them!

4. Thus are their minds employed; and so vain are they in their imaginations, and dark in their understandings, that they not only believe them innocent, but persuade themselves they are good Christians all this while; and to rebuke them is worse than heresy (Luke 8:14; Prov. 1:30; 10:17; 12:1; 15:14; Isa. 58:1-10; Jer. 14:19-21; Matt. 6:7). Thus are they strangers to the hidden life; and by these things are they diverted from all serious examination of themselves: and a forced zeal of half-an-hour's talk in other men's words, which they have nothing to do with, is made sufficient; being no more their states, or at least their intention, as their works show, than it was the young man's in the Gospel, that said he would go, and did not. But alas! why? Oh there are other guests! What are they? Pharamond, Cleopatra, Cassandra, Clelia; a play, a ball, a spring-garden; the park, the gallant, the exchange, in a word, the world. These stay, these call, these are importunate, and these they attend, and these are their most familiar associates. Thus are their hearts captivated from the divine exercise; nay, from such external affairs, as immediately concern some benefit to themselves, or needy neighbours; pleasing themselves with the received ideas of those toys and fopperies into their loose and airy minds; and if in all things they cannot practise them, because they want the means of it, yet as much as may be, at least to dote upon them, be taken with them, and willingly suffer their thoughts to be hurried after them. All which greatly indisposes the minds, and distracts the souls of people from the divine life and principle of the holy Jesus; but, as it hath been often said, more especially the minds of the younger sort: to whom the like divertisements (Jer. 2: 5), (where their inclinations being presented with what is very suitable to them, they become excited to more vanity than ever they thought upon before), are incomparably dearer than all that can be said of God's fear, a retired life, eternal rewards, and joys unspeakable and full of glory: so vain, so blind, and so very insensible are men and women, of what truly makes a disciple of Christ (Rom. 13:11,12; Matt. 15:7-14). O! that they would ponder on these things, and watch against, and come out of all these vanities, for the coming of the Lord, lest being unprepared, and taken up with other guests, they enter not into his everlasting rest.

5. That which further manifests the unlawfulness of these numerous fashions and recreations is, that they are either the inventions of vain, idle, and wanton minds, to gratify their own sensualities, and raise the like wicked

curiosity in others, to imitate the same; by which nothing but lust and folly are promoted: or the contrivances of indigent and impoverished wits, who make it the next way for their maintenance: in both which respects, and upon both which considerations, they ought to be detested. For the first licenses express impiety, and the latter countenances a wretched way of livelihood, and consequently diverts from more lawful, more serviceable, and more necessary employments. That such persons are both the inventors and actors of all these follies cannot be difficult to demonstrate: for were it possible that any one could bring us father Adam's girdle, and mother Eve's apron, what laughing, what fleering, what mocking of their homely fashions would there be! Surely their tailor would find but little custom, although we read, it was God Himself that made them coats of skins (Gen. 3:21). The like may be asked of all the other vanities, concerning the holy men and women through all the generations of holy writ. How many pieces of ribbon, and what feathers, lace-bands, and the like, did Adam and Eve wear in Paradise, or out of it? What rich embroideries, silks, points, &c. had Abel, Enoch, Noah, and good old Abraham? Did Eve, Sarah, Susannah, Elizabeth, and the Virgin Mary use to curl, powder, patch, paint, wear false locks, or strange colours, rich points, trimmings, laced gowns, embroidered petticoats, shoes with slip-slaps laced with silk or silver lace, and ruled like pigeons' feet, with several yards, if not pieces of ribbons? How many plays did Jesus Christ and his apostles recreate themselves at? What poets, romances, comedies, and the like did the apostles and saints make, or use to pass away their time withal? I know, they bid all redeem their time, to avoid foolish talking, vain jesting, profane babblings, and fabulous stories (Eph. 5:1-5,15,16; 2 Tim. 2:16, 22; Matt. 25:13; Phil. 2:12,13; Col. 3:1,2,5) as what tend to ungodliness: and rather to watch, to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, to flee foolish and youthful lusts, and to follow righteousness, peace, goodness, love, charity; and to mind the things that are above as they would have honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life.

6. But if I were asked, whence came they then? I could quickly answer, From the Gentiles, that knew not God; for some amongst them detested them, as will be shown; they were the pleasures of an effeminate Sardanapalus, a fantastic Miracles, a comical Aristophanes, a prodigal Charaxus, a luxurious Aristippus; and the practices of such women as the infamous Clytemnestra, the painted Jezebel, the lascivious Campaspe, the immodest Posthumia, the costly Corinthian Laïs, the most impudent Flora, the wanton Egyptian Cleopatra, and most insatiable Messalina: persons whose memotics have stunk through all ages, and that carry with them a perpetual rot: these, and not the only self-denying men and women in ancient times, were devoted to the like recreations and vain delights. Nay, the more sober of the very heathen themselves, and that upon a principle of great virtue, as is by all confessed, detested the like folly and wanton practices. There is none of them to be found in Plato, or in Seneca's works; Pythagoras, Socrates, Phocion, Zeno, &c., did not accustom themselves to these entertainments. The virtuous Penelope, the chaste Lucretia, and the grave Cornelia, with many others, could find themselves employment enough among their children, servants, and neighbours; they, though nobles, next to their devotion, delighted most in spinning, weaving, gardening, needlework, and such like good housewifery, and commendable entertainment: who, though called heathen, expressed much more Christianity in all their actions than do the wanton, foolish people of this age, who, notwithstanding, will be called Christians. But above all, you play-mongers, whence think you, came your so passionately beloved comedies; than which, as there is not any one diversion that is more pernicious, so not one more in esteem, and fondly frequented? Why, I will tell you: their great-grandfather was a heathen, and that not of the best sort: his name was Epicharmus. It is true, he is called a philosopher, or a lover of wisdom; but he was only so by name; and no more in reality than the comedians of these times are true Christians. It is reported of him by Suidas, a Greek historian, that he was the first man who invented comedies; and by the help of one Phormus, he made also fifty fables. But would you know his country, and the reason of his invention? his country was Syracuse, the chief city in Sicily, famous for the infamy of many tyrants; to please and gratify the lusts of some of whom, he set his wits to work. And do not you think this an ill original? And is it less in any one to imitate, or justify the same, since the more sober heathen have themselves condemned them? Nay, is it not abominable, when such as call themselves Christians do both imitate and justify the like inventions? Nor had the melancholy tragedies a better parentage, namely, one Thespis, an Athenian poet; to whom they also do ascribe the original of that impudent custom of painting faces, and the counterfeit, or representation of other persons, by change of habit, humours, &c., all which are now so much in use and reputation with the great ones of the times. To these let me add that poetical amoroso, whom an inordinate passion of love first transported to those poetical raptures of admiration, indeed sordid

effeminacy, if not idolatry; they call him Alcman or Alcina, a Lydian: he, being exceedingly in love with a young woman of his own country, is said to have been the first person that gave the world a sight of that kind of folly, namely, love stories and verses; which have been so diligently imitated by almost all nations ever since in their romances.

7. Objection 2. I know that some will say, But we have many comedies and tragedies, sonnets, catches, &c., that are on purpose to reprehend vice, from whence we learn many commendable things. Though this be shameful, yet many have been wont, for want of shame or understanding, or both, to return me this for answer. Now I readily shall confess, that amongst the heathen it was the next remedy against the common vices to the more grave and moral lectures of their philosophers, of which number I shall instance two: Euripides, whom Suidas calls a learned tragical poet, and Eupolis, whom the same historian calls a comical poet. The first was a man so chaste, and therefore so unlike those of our days, that he was called one that hated women, that is, wanton ones, for otherwise he was twice married; the other he characterises as a most severe reprehender of faults. From which I gather, that their design was not to feed the idle lazy fancies of people, nor merely to get money; but since by the means of loose wits the people had been debauched, their work was to reclaim them, rendering vice ridiculous, and turning wit against wickedness. And this appears the rather, from the description given, as also that Euripides was supposed to have been torn in pieces by wanton women; which doubtless was for declaiming against their impudence: and the other, being slain in the battle betwixt the Athenians and Lacedæmonians, was so regretted, that a law was made that never after such poets should be allowed to bear arms: doubtless it was because in losing him they lost a reprover of vice. So that the end of the approved comedians and tragedians of those times was but to reform the people by making sin odious: and that not so much by a rational and argumentative way, usual with their philosophers; as by sharp jeers, severe reflections, and rendering their vicious actions shameful, ridiculous, and detestable; so that for reputation sake they might not longer be guilty of them: which is to me but a little softer than a whip or a bridewell. Now if you that plead for them will be contented to be accounted heathen, and those of the more dissolute and wicked sort too, that will sooner be jeered than argued out of your sins, we shall acknowledge to you that such comedies and tragedies as these may be serviceable; but then, for shame, abuse not the name of Jesus Christ so impudently as to call yourselves Christians, whose lusts are so strong, that you are forced to use the low shifts of heathen to repel them to leave their evils not for the love of virtue, but out of fear, shame, or reputation. Is this your love to Jesus, your reverence to the Scriptures, that through faith are able to make the man of God perfect? Is all your prattle about ordinances, prayers, sacraments, Christianity and the like, come to this: that at last you must betake yourselves to such instructors as were by the sober heathen permitted to reclaim the most vicious of the people that were amongst them? And such remedies too as below which there is nothing but corporal punishment?

8. This is so far from Christianity that many of the nobler heathen, men and women, were better taught, and better disposed; they found out more heavenly contemplations, and subjects of an eternal nature to meditate upon. Nay, so far did they outstrip the Christians of these times, that they not only were exemplary by their grave and sober conversations; but for their public benefit the Athenians instituted the Gynæcosmi, or twenty men, who should make it their business to observe the people's apparel and behaviour; that if any were found immodest, and to demean themselves loosely, they had full authority to punish them. But the case is altered; it is punishable to reprove such; yes, it is matter of the greatest contumely and reproach. Nay, so impudent are some grown in their impieties, that they sport themselves with such religious persons: and not only manifest a great neglect of piety, and a severe life by their own looseness, but their extreme contempt of it, by rendering it ridiculous, through comical and abusive jests on public stages. Which, how dangerous it is, and apt to make religion little worth in the people's eyes, besides the demonstration of this age, let us remember that Aristophanes had not a readier way to bring the reputation of Socrates in question with the people, who greatly revered him for his grave and virtuous life and doctrine, than by his abusive representations of him in a play; which made the airy, wanton, unstable crowd rather part with Socrates in earnest than Socrates in jest. Nor can a better reason be given why the poor Quakers are made so much the scorn of men, than because of their severe apprehensions of sin and vanity, and their self-denying conversation, amidst so great intemperance in all worldly satisfactions; yet can such libertines all this while strut and swell for Christians, and strut it out against precept and example; but we must be whimsical, conceited, morose, melancholy, or else heretics, deceivers, and what

not? O blindness! Pharisaical hypocrisy! As if such were fit to be judges of religion; or that it were possible for them to have a sight and sense of true religion, or really to be religious, whilst darkened in their understandings by the god of the pleasures of this world; and their minds so wrapped up in external enjoyments, and the variety of worldly delight: no, in the name of the everlasting God, you mock Him, and deceive your souls; for the wrath of the Almighty is against you all, whilst in that spirit and condition; in vain are all your babbles and set performances, God laughs you to scorn; his anger is kindling because of these things: wherefore be ye warned to temperance, and repent.

9. Besides, this sort of people are not only wicked, loose, and vain, who doth invent and act these things: but by your great delight in such vain inventions you encourage them therein, and hinder them from more honest and more serviceable employments. For what is the reason that most commodities are held at such excessive rates, but because labour is so very dear? And why is it so, but because so many hands are otherwise bestowed, even about the very vanity of all vanities? Nay, how common is it with these mercenary procurers to people's folly, that when their purses begin to grow low, they shall present them with a new and pretendedly more convenient fashion; and that perhaps before the former costly habits shall have done half their service; which either must be given away, or new vamped in the cut most à-la-mode. O prodigal, yet frequent folly!

10. Objection 3. I know I am coming to encounter the most plausible objection they are used to urge when driven to a pinch, viz.: But how shall those many families subsist whose livelihood depends upon such fashions and recreations as you so earnestly decry? I answer: it is a bad argument to plead for the commission of the least evil that never so great a good may come of it: if you and they have made wickedness your pleasure and your profit, be ye content that it should be your grief and punishment till the one can learn to be without such vanity, and the others have found out more honest employments. It is the vanity of the few great ones that makes so much toil for the many small: and the great excess of the one occasions the great labour of the other. Would men learn to be contented with few things, such as are necessary and convenient (the ancient Christian life), all things might be at a cheaper rate, and men might live for little. If the landlords had less lusts to satisfy, the tenants might have less rent to pay, and turn from poor to rich, whereby they might be able to find more honest and domestic employments for their children than becoming sharpers and living by their wits, which is but a better word for their sins. And if the report of the more intelligent in husbandry be credible, lands are generally improvable ten in twenty: and were there more hands about more lawful and serviceable manufactures, they would be cheaper, and greater vent might be made of them, by which a benefit would redound to the world in general; nay, the burden lies the heavier upon the laborious country, that so many hands and shoulders as have the lust-caterers of the cities should be wanting to the plough and useful husbandry. If men never think themselves rich enough, they may never miss of trouble and employment; but those who can take the primitive state and God's creation for their model may learn with a little to be contented; as knowing that desires after wealth do not only prevent or destroy true faith, but, when got, increase snares and trouble. It is no evil to repent of evil: but that cannot be whilst men maintain what they should repent of: it is a bad argument to avoid temperance, or justify the contrary, because otherwise the actors and inventors of excess would want a livelihood; since to feed them that way is to nurse the cause instead of starving it. Let such of those vanity hucksters as have got sufficient, be contented to retreat, and spend it more honestly than they got it; and such as really are poor, be rather helped by charity to better callings: this were more prudent, nay Christian, than to consume money upon such foolish toys and fopperies. Public workhouses would be effectual remedies to all these lazy and lustful distempers, with more profit and a better conscience. Therefore it is that we cannot, we dare not square our conversation by the world's: no, but by our plainness and moderation to testify against such extravagant vanities; and by our grave and steady life to manifest our dislike, on God's behalf, to such intemperate and wanton curiosity: yea, to deny ourselves what otherwise perhaps we lawfully could use with a just indifferency, if not satisfaction; because of that abuse that is amongst the generality.

11. Objection 4. I know that some are ready further to object: Hath God given us these enjoyments on purpose to condemn us, if we use them? Answer: But to such miserable, poor, silly souls, who would rather charge the most high and holy God with the invention or creation of their dirty vanities than want a plea to justify their own practice, not knowing how, for shame, or fear, or love to throw them off; I answer: that what God made for

man's use was good, and what the blessed Lord Jesus Christ allowed or enjoined, or gave us in his most heavenly example, is to be observed, believed and practised (Luke 8:14; 12:28-31). But in the whole catalogue the Scriptures give of both, I never found the attires, recreations, and way of living, so much in request with the generality of the Christians of these times: no certainly, God created man a holy, wise, sober, grave, and reasonable creature, fit to govern himself and the world: but divinity was then the great object of his reason and pleasure; all external enjoyments of God's giving being for necessity, convenience, and lawful delight, with this proviso too, that the Almighty was to be seen, and sensibly enjoyed and revered in every one of them. But how very wide the Christians of these times are from this primitive institution is not difficult to determine, although they make such loud pretensions to that most holy Jesus, who not only gave the world a certain evidence of a happy restoration by his own coming, but promised his assistance to all that would follow Him in the self-denial and way of his holy cross (John 8:12; 15:7,8; 17:20); and therefore hath so severely enjoined no less on all, as they would be everlastingly saved. But whether the minds of men and women are not as profoundly involved in all excess and vanity, as those who know Him not any further than by hearsay; and whether being thus banished the presence of the Lord, by their greedy seeking the things that are below, and thereby having lost the taste of divine pleasure, they have not reigned to themselves an imaginary pleasure, to quiet or smother conscience, and pass their time without that anguish and trouble which are the consequences of sin, that so they might be at ease and security while in the world, let their own consciences declare (Rom. 2:8,9). Adam's temptation is represented by the fruit of a tree (Gen 3:6), thereby intimating the great influence external objects, as they exceed in beauty, carry with them upon our senses: so that unless the mind keep upon its constant watch, so prevalent are visible things that hard it is for one to escape being ensnared in them (Mark 13:33-37); and he shall need to be only sometimes entrapped, to cast so thick a veil of darkness over the mind, that not only it shall with pleasure continue in its fetters to lust and vanity, but proudly censure such as refuse to swear them, strongly pleading for them, as serviceable and convenient: that strange passion do perishing objects raise in those minds where way is made, and entertainment given to them. But Christ Jesus is manifested in us, and hath given unto us a taste and understanding of Him that is true; and to all such a proportion of his good Spirit, as is sufficient would they obey it, to redeem their minds from that captivity they have been in to lust and vanity, and entirely ransom them from the dominion of all visible objects, and whatsoever may gratify the desires of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15,16); that they might be regenerated in their minds, changed in their affections, and have their whole hearts set on things that are above, where moth nor rust can never pass, nor enter to harm or destroy.

12. But it is a manifest sign of what mould and make the persons are, who practise and plead for such shameful Egyptian rags, as pleasures. It is to be hoped that they never knew, or to be feared they have forgotten, the humble, plain, meek, holy, self-denying, and exemplary life, which the eternal Spirit sanctifies all obedient hearts into; yea, it is indubitable that either such always have been ignorant, or else they have lost sight of that good land, that heavenly country, that blessed inheritance they once had some glimmering prospect of (Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 5:8-11,15,16). Oh that they would but withdraw a while, sit down, weigh and consider with themselves where they are, and whose work and will they are doing! that they would once believe the devil hath not a stratagem more pernicious to their immortal souls than this of exercising their minds in the foolish fashions and wanton recreations of the times! Great and gross impieties beget a detestation in the opinion of sober education and reputation; and therefore, since the devil rightly sees such things have no success with many, it is his next, and most fatal design to find some other entertainments that carry less of infection in their looks (though more of security, because less of scandal), and more of pleasure in their enjoyment, on purpose to busy and arrest people from a diligent search and inquiry after those matters which necessarily concern their eternal peace (Eph. vi. ~2--9): that, being ignorant of the heavenly life, they may not be induced to press after it; but being only formally religious, according to the traditions and precepts of others, proceed to their common pleasures, and find no check therefrom, their religion and conversation for the most part agreeing well together, whereby an improvement in the knowledge of God, going on from grace to grace, growing to the measure of the stature of Jesus Christ Himself (Eph. 6:12,13), is not known; but as it was in the beginning at seven, so it is at seventy; nay, not so innocent, unless by reason of the old saying, "Old men are twice children."

Oh! the mystery of godliness, the heavenly life, the true Christian, are another thing. Wherefore we conclude that as the design of the devil, where he cannot involve and draw into gross sin, is to busy, delight, and allure the minds of men and women by more seeming innocent entertainments, on purpose that he may more easily secure them from minding their duty and progress, and obedience to the only true God, which is eternal life (John 17:3); and thereby take up their minds from heavenly and eternal things; so those who would be delivered from these snares should mind the holy, just, grave, and self-denying teachings of God's grace and Spirit in themselves, that they may reject, and for ever abandon the like vanity and evil (Titus 2:11-15); and by a reformed conversation condemn the world of its intemperance: so will the true discipleship be obtained: for otherwise many enormous consequences and pernicious effects will follow. It is to encourage such impious persons to continue and proceed in the like trades of feeding the people's lusts; and thereby such make themselves partakers of their plagues, who, by continual fresh desire to the like curiosities, and that way of spending time and estate, induce them to spend more time in studying how to abuse time; lest, through their pinching and small allowance, those prodigals should call their father's house to mind: for whatsoever they think, more pleasant baits, alluring objects, grateful entertainments, cunning emissaries, acceptable sermons, insinuating lectures, taking orators, the crafty devil has not ever had, by which to entice and ensnare the minds of people, and totally to divert them from heavenly reflections and divine meditations, than the attire, sports, plays, and pastimes of this godless age, the school and shop of Satan, hitherto so reasonably condemned.

CHAPTER XVIII

BUT should these things be as indifferent, as they are proved perniciously unlawful; for I never heard any advance their plea beyond the bounds of mere indifferency; yet so great is their abuse, so universal the sad effects thereof, like to an infection, that they therefore ought to be rejected of all; especially those whose sobriety hath preserved them on this side of that excess, or whose judgments, though themselves be guilty, suggest the folly of such intemperance. For what is an indifferent thing, but that which may be done, or left undone? Granting, I say, this were the case, yet do both reason and religion teach that when they are used with such an excess of appetite as to leave them would be a cross to their desires, they have exceeded the bounds of mere indifferency, and are thereby tendered no less than necessary. Which being a violation of the very nature of the things themselves, a perfect abuse enters; and consequently they are no longer to be considered in the rank of things simply indifferent, but unlawful.

2. Now that the whole exchange of things, against which I have so earnestly contended, are generally abused by the excess of almost all ages, sexes, and qualities of people, will be confessed by many who yet decline not to conform themselves to them; and to whom, as I have understood, it only seems lawful, because, say they, the abuse of others should be no argument why we should not use them. But to such I answer, That they have quite forgotten, or will not remember, they have acknowledged these things to be but of an indifferent nature; if so, and vanity never urged more, I say, there can be nothing more clear than since they acknowledge their great abuse, that they are wholly to be forsaken: for since they may as well be let alone as done at any time, surely they should then of duty be let alone when the use of them is an abetting the general excess, and a mere exciting others to continue in their abuse, because they find persons reputed sober to imitate them, or otherwise give them an example (Phil.3:17). Precepts are not half so forcible as examples.

3. Every one that pretends to seriousness ought to inspect himself, as having been too forward to help on the excess, and can never make too much haste out of those inconveniences that by his former example he encouraged any to; that by a new one he may put a seasonable check upon the intemperance of others. A wise parent ever withdraws those objects, however innocent in themselves, which are too prevalent upon the weak senses of his children, on purpose that they might be weaned: and it is as frequent with men to bend a crooked stick as much the contrary way, that they might make it straight at last. Those that have more sobriety than

others should not forget their stewardships, but exercise that gift of God to the security of their neighbours. It was murdering Cain that rudely asked the Lord, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9). For every man is necessarily obliged thereto; and therefore should be so wise as to deny himself the use of such indifferent enjoyments as cannot be used by him without too manifest an encouragement to his neighbour's folly.

4. God hath sufficiently excited men to what is said; for in the case of the brazen serpent (2 Kings 18:3,4), which was a heavenly institution and type of Christ, He with great displeasure enjoined it should be broken to pieces, because they were too fond and doting upon it. Yes, the very groves themselves, however pleasant for situation, beautiful for their walks and trees, must be cut down: and why? Only because they had been abused to idolatrous uses. And what is an idol but that which the mind puts an over-estimate or value upon? None can benefit themselves so much by an indifferent thing as others by not using that abused liberty.

5. If those things were convenient in themselves, which is a step nearer necessity than mere indifferency, yet when by circumstances they become prejudicial, such conveniency itself ought to be put off; much more what is but indifferent should be denied. People ought not to weigh their private satisfactions more than a public good; nor please themselves in too free a use of indifferent things, at the cost of being so really prejudicial to the public as they certainly are, whose use of them, if no worse, becomes exemplary to others, and begets an impatience in their minds to have the like. Wherefore it is both reasonable and incumbent on all to make only such things necessary as tend to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), and to employ their freedom with most advantage to their neighbours. So that here is a two-fold obligation; the one not to be exemplary in the use of such things, which though they may use them, yet not without giving too much countenance to the abuse and excessive vanity of their neighbours. The other obligation is, that they ought so far to condescend to such religious people, who are offended at these fashions, and that kind of conversation as to reject them (Rom. 14:1-23).

6. Now those who, notwithstanding what I have urged, will yet proceed; what is it but that they have so involved themselves and their affections in them, that it is hardly possible to reform them; and that for all their many protestations against their fondness to such fopperies, they really love them more than Christ and his Cross? Such cannot seek the good of others, who do so little respect their own. For, after a serious consideration, what vanity, pride, idleness, expense of time and estates have been and yet are! How many persons debauched from their first sobriety, and women from their natural sweetness and innocency to loose, airy, wanton, and many times more enormous practices! How many plentiful estates have been overrun by numerous debts; chastity ensnared by accursed lustful intrigues; youthful health overtaken by the hasty seizure of unnatural distempers, and the remaining days of such spent upon a rack of their vice's procuring, and so made slaves to the unmerciful but necessary effects of their own inordinate pleasures! in which agony they vow the greatest temperance, but are no sooner out of it, than in their vice again (Lam 4:5; Job 21:13,14; Psalm 55:23; 37:10; Eccl. 8:12; Psalm 37:1,2; Prov. 2:22).

7. That these things are the case, and almost innumerable more, I am persuaded no ingenuous person of any experience will deny: how then, upon a serious reflection, any that pretend conscience, or the fear of God Almighty, can longer continue in the garb, livery, and conversation of those whose whole life tends to little else than what I have repeated, much less join with them in their abominable excess, I leave to the just principle in themselves to judge (Jer. 16:5-9). No, surely! this is not to obey the voice of God, who in all ages did loudly cry to all, Come out of--of what?--the ways, fashions, converse, and spirit of Babylon (Isa. 3:13-16; Jer. 1:8; 15:6,7; Amos 6:3-7). What is that." The great city of all these vain, foolish, wanton, superfluous, and wicked practices, against which the Scriptures denounce most dreadful judgments; ascribing all the intemperance of men and women to the cup of wickedness she hath given them to drink: whose are the things indifferent, if they must be so. And for witness, John in his revelation says, in her description, how much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her. And the kings of the earth, who have lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament her; and the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth her merchandise any more; the merchandise of gold, and silver, .and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and thyine-wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all

manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men (Rev. 18:7,9,11-13). Behold the character and judgment of luxury; and though I know it hath a further signification than what is literal, yet there is enough to show the pomp, plenty, fulness, idleness, ease, wantonness, vanity, lust, and excess of luxury that reign in her. But at the terrible day who will go to her exchange any more? Who to her plays? Who will follow her fashions then? And who shall traffic in her delicate inventions? Not one; for she shall be judged. No plea shall excuse or rescue her from the wrath of the Judge; for strong is the Lord who will perform it (Rev. 18:8). If these reasonable pleas will not prevail, yet however I shall caution such in the repetition of part of Babylon's miserable doom: mind, my friends, more heavenly things hasten to obey that righteous principle which would exercise and delight you in that which is eternal; or else with Babylon, the mother of lust and vanity, the fruits that your souls lust after shall depart from you, and all things which are dainty and goodly shall depart from you, and you shall find them no more: O Dives! No more (Rev. 18:14). Lay your treasures, therefore, up in heaven, O ye inhabitants of the earth, where nothing can break through to harm them (Luke 12:33,34); but where time will shortly be swallowed up of eternity.

8. But my arguments against these things end not here: for the contrary most of all conduces to good; namely, temperance in food, plainness in apparel, with a meek, shame-faced, and quiet spirit, and that conversation which doth only express the same in all godly honesty: as the apostle saith, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, but rather giving of thanks: for let no man deceive you with vain words, because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Col. 4:5, 6; 1 Thess. 4:11,12; 1 Peter 3¹⁻⁴; Eph. 4:29; 5:3-6; 1 Tim. 4:12; Phil. 3:16-20). And if men and women were but thus adorned after this truly Christian manner, impudence would soon receive a check, and lust, pride, vanity, and wantonness find a rebuke (2 Peter 2:12; Prov. 31:23-31; James 2:2-9). They would not be able to attack such universal chastity or encounter such godly austerity: virtue would be in credit, and vice afraid and ashamed, and excess not dare to show its face. There would be an end of gluttony and gaudiness of apparel, flattering titles, and a luxurious life (2 Peter 3:11; Psalm 26:6); and then primitive innocency and plainness would come back again, and that plain-hearted, downright, harmless life would be restored, of not much caring what we should eat, drink, or put on (Luke 12:22-30), as Christ tells us the Gentiles did, and as we know this age daily does, under all its talk of religion; but as the ancients, who with moderate care for necessaries and conveniences of life, devoted themselves to the concerns of a celestial kingdom, and more minded their improvements in righteousness than their increase in riches; for they laid their treasure up in heaven (Matt. 25:21), and endured tribulation for an inheritance that cannot be taken away.

9. But the temperance I plead for is not only religiously but politically good: it is the interest of good government to curb and rebuke excesses: it prevents many mischiefs. Luxury brings effeminacy, laziness, poverty, and misery (Prov. 10:4; Eccl. 10:16-18); but temperance preserves the land. It keeps out foreign vanities, and improves our own commodities: now we are their debtors, then they would be debtors to us for our native manufactures. By this means, such persons who by their excess, not charity, have deeply engaged their estates, may in a short space be enabled to clear them from those incumbrances which otherwise, like moths, soon eat out plentiful revenues. It helps persons of mean substance to improve their small stocks, that they may not expend their dear earnings and hard-got wages upon superfluous apparel, foolish May-games, plays, dancings, shows, taverns, ale-houses, and the like folly and intemperance, of which this land is more infested, and by which it is rendered more ridiculous than any kingdom in the world: for none I know of is so infested with cheating mountebanks, savage morrice-dancers, pick-pockets, and profane players and stagers, to the slight of religion, the shame of government and the great idleness, expense, and debauchery of the people: for which the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, and the judgments of the Almighty are at the door, and the sentence ready to be pronounced, "Let him that is unjust be unjust still" (Rev. 22:11; Eccl. 12:1). Wherefore it is that we cannot but loudly call upon the generality of the times, and testify both by our life and doctrine against the like vanities and abuses, if possibly any may be weaned from their folly, and choose the good old path of temperance, wisdom,

gravity, and holiness, the only way to inherit the blessings of peace and plenty here, and eternal happiness hereafter.

10. Lastly, supposing we had none of these foregoing reasons justly to reprove the practice of the land in these particulars; however, let it be sufficient for us to say, that when people have first learned to fear, worship, and obey their Creator, to pay their numerous vicious debts, to alleviate and abate their oppressed tenants; but above all outward regards, when the pale faces are more commiserated, when the famished poor, the distressed widow, and helpless orphan, God's works and your fellow-creatures, are provided for; then, I say, if then, it will be time enough for you to plead the indifferency of your pleasures. But that the sweat and tedious labour of the husbandman, early and late, cold and hot, wet and dry, should be converted into the pleasure, ease, and pastime of a small number of men; that the cart, the plough, the flail, should be in that continual severity laid upon nineteen parts of the land to feed the inordinate lusts and delicious appetites of the twentieth, is so far from the appointment of the great Governor of the world, and God of the spirits of all flesh, that, to imagine such horrible injustice as the effects of his determinations, and not the intemperance of men, were wretched and blasphemous. As on the other side, it would be to deserve no pity, no help, no relief from God Almighty, for people to continue that expense in vanity and pleasure, whilst the great necessities of such objects go unanswered: especially since God hath made the sons of men but stewards to each other's exigencies and relief. Yea, so strict is it enjoined, that on the omission of these things, we find this dreadful sentence partly to be grounded, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," &c. (Matt. 25:34-41). As on the contrary, to visit the sick, see the imprisoned, relieve the needy, &c. are such excellent properties in Christ's account, that thereupon He will pronounce such blessed, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," &c. (Matt. 25:34-41). So that the great are not, with the leviathan in the deep, to prey upon the small, much less to make a sport of the lives and labour of the lesser ones, to gratify their inordinate senses.

11. I therefore humbly offer an address to the serious consideration of the civil magistrates, that, if the money which is expended in every parish in such vain fashions as wearing of laces, jewels, embroideries, unnecessary ribbons, trimmings, costly furniture, and attendance, together with what is commonly consumed in taverns, feasts, gaming, &c., could be collected into a public stock, or something in lieu of this extravagant and fruitless expense, there might be reparation to the broken tenants, workhouses for the able, and alms-houses for the aged and impotent. Then should we have no beggars in the land, the cry of the widow and the orphan would cease, and charitable relief might easily be afforded towards the redemption of poor captives, and the refreshment of such distressed Protestants as labour under the miseries of persecution in other countries: nay, the Exchequer's needs, on just emergencies, might be supplied by such a bank: this sacrifice and service would please the just and merciful God; it would be a noble example of gravity and temperance to foreign states, and an unspeakable benefit to ourselves at home.

Alas! why should men need persuasions to what their own felicity so necessarily leads them? Had these vitiosos of the times but a sense of heathen Cato's generosity, they would rather deny their carnal appetites than leave such noble enterprises unattempted. But that they should eat, drink, play, game, and sport away their health, estates, and, above all, their irrevocable precious time, which should be dedicated to the Lord as a necessary introduction to a blessed eternity, and than which, did they but know it, no worldly solace could come in competition: I say, that they should be continually employed about these poor low things, is to have the heathen judge them in God's days, as well as Christian precepts and examples condemn them. And their final doom will prove the more astonishing, in that this vanity and excess are acted under a profession of the self-denying religion of Jesus, whose life and doctrine are a perpetual reproach to the most of Christians. For He was humble, but they are proud; He forgiving, they revengeful; He meek, they fierce; He plain, they gaudy; He abstemious, they luxurious; He chaste, they lascivious; He a pilgrim on earth, they citizens of the world: in fine, He was meanly born, poorly attended, and obscurely brought up; He lived despised, and died hated of the men of his own nation. O you pretended followers of this crucified Jesus! examine yourselves, try yourselves, know you not your own selves; if He dwell not, if He rule not in you, that you are reprobates? (2 Cor. 13: 5) Be ye not deceived, for God will not be mocked (at last with forced repentances), such as you sow, such you must reap (Gal. 6:7,8). I beseech you to hear me, and remember you were invited and entreated to the salvation of God. I

say: as you sow, you reap: if you are enemies to the Cross of Christ--and you are so if you will not bear it, but do as you list, and not as you ought--if you are uncircumcised in heart and ear, and you are so, if you will not hear, and open to Him that knocks at the door within, and if you resist and quench the Spirit in yourselves, that strives with you to bring you to God (and that you certainly do who rebel against its motions, reproofs, and instructions), then you sow to the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, and of the flesh will you reap the fruits of corruption, woe, anguish, and tribulation (Rom. 2:8,9), from God, the Judge of quick and dead, by Jesus Christ. But if you will daily bear the holy Cross of Christ, and sow to the Spirit; if you will listen to the light and grace that comes by Jesus, and which He has given to all people for salvation, and square your thoughts, words, and deeds thereby, which leads and teaches the lovers of it to deny all ungodliness and the world's lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world, then may you with confidence look for the blessed hope and joyful coming, and glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-13). Let it be so, O you Christians, and escape the wrath to come! Why will you die? Let the time past suffice: remember, that No Cross, No Crown. Redeem then the time, for the days are evil (Eph. 5:16), and yours are but very few. Therefore gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, fear, watch, pray, and endure to the end; calling to mind for your encouragement and consolation, that all such as through patience and well-doing wait for immortality (Rom. 2:7) shall reap glory, honour, and eternal life in the kingdom of the Father: whose is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.