A treatise of divine meditation, by that faithful servant of Jesus Christ Mr. John Ball, late minister of the Gospel at Whitmore in Staffordshire. Published by Simeon Ashe, preacher of the Gospel at Austin's, London.

Ball, John (1585-1640)

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Project Note

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The source of this document is the Early English Books Online (EEBO-TCP) website. Those books were transcribed in a character for character manner and can be very cumbersome to read since there was no standard spelling during that time. Many spelling variations such as "unlesse", "vnlesse", and "vnles" regularly appear.

This project was conceived to clean up those books as much as possible and make them more accessible to the interested reader, leading to the creation of a massive list of variant spellings and their corrections. This was used to clean up the text, but is of course only as complete as the list itself. Because of the nature of the original transcription, some words have missing characters or places where the original language (e.g., Greek) was not transcribed. This effort does not change that. Be aware that the original transcription can also be faulty and in some cases entire sentences may be missing.

Although this is no substitute for a properly compared, proofed, and scholarly edition, I believe that the result is a document which is far more accessible, particularly for searching for terms using standard spelling. The document has been cleaned and presented in what I hope is a pleasing and useful format for the vast majority of Christian brothers and sisters who just want access to read these spiritually nourishing works.

However, a word of warning: The Puritans were a very diverse group of people and their age was characterized with godliness, but also much upheaval, disputation and strife. They disagreed on many doctrines and some of these works contain less orthodox or Scriptural views than others. The reader is strongly advised to read with discernment, particularly if it is unknown whether author is trustworthy.

This project took a huge amount of time and skill to bring to fruition. I would particularly like to thank David Jonescue for the initial list of Puritans he found on EEBO and the concept behind this project as well as the continuous, unceasing efforts toward seeing this

complete. Without his labor, this would not be available. Alex Sarrouf was invaluable in providing the initial list of over 7,000 spelling variations he had identified and corrected, as well as continuing to review more than 18,000 additions to that list for any typos.

Logan West
(with David Jonescue and Alex Sarrouf)
Project Puritas

A TREATISE OF DIVINE Meditation, By that Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ Mr. JOHN BALL, Late Minister of the Gospel at Whitmore in Staffordshire.

Published by Simeon Ashe, Preacher of the Gospel at Austin's, London.

Josh. 1.8. This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Gen. 24.63. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide.

LONDON, Printed for H. Mortlock, at the Phoenix in St. Paul's Church-yard, near the Little North-door. 1660.

TO THE Christian Reader,

THis Treatise of Divine Meditation was penned long since, by that faithful servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. John Ball, who therein intended the benefit of some private friends only. But Copies thereof being dispersed into many hands, good people of sundry ranks and qualities, upon the perusal of it, were very desirous to have it printed, for more public use: And because it was known unto many, that this my worthy friend, had committed all his Manuscripts to my trust, that nothing might pass to the Press, without my approbation, I was importuned, as by others, so by the five Reverend Brethren, who subscribed, and sent the Epistle prefixed, that I might receive incoucouragement by their Testimony, to own the publication of it.

The subject matter is needful and profitable, and the language, with the method and manner of handling it doth speak Mr. Ball the Author. My leisure hath not given me leave, with seriousness to read over this discourse, yet upon the credit of the forementioned able Ministers of Christ, who have perused it, I hope that it will be serviceable to thy soul; Which is the desire, and shall be the prayer of

Thy Friend and Servant in Christ, Sim. Ashe.

Aug. 9. 1660.

TO THE Christian Reader.

Reader,

THere is no duty more neglected amongst Christians, than this of Meditation: whence it is, that though the heads of many are swelled with notions, yet their hearts are very empty of grace and good affections. A Treatise therefore of Meditation, which would remove obstructions, and open the passages between the brain and heart, could never be more seasonable or necessary than in these days, wherein there is Multum scientiae, & parum conscientiae: men being much taken up with speculative controversial matters, to find them discourse; but little meditating upon plain and practical truths, to affect their hearts, and amend their lives. It is a sad and a strange thing, that there should be more light in the world, an increase of knowledge, and less heat, a decay of love; that there should be so much profitable preaching, and yet no more profiting amongst the hearers: one cause whereof doubtless is, the omission of this duty. We must read and consider, hear and consider, if we would get good by what we read and hear: without Meditation Truths are devoured, not digested. And as leanness of soul is to be seen in many through sinful rejection, and casting away of wholesome food; so the like is to be seen in others, that are fed with such food, for want of good concoctiō

This little Tractate of the eminently learned, judicious, and godly Mr. Ball, is to teach the Art of Divine Meditation, to help thy spiritual digestion, wouldest thou take in the advice herein contained, thou shouldest find thy soul growing and thriving by it.

Indeed it is a thousand pities that anything of this Reverend Author (human frailty excepted) should die with him; though this small piece hath seemed to lie buried in oblivion hitherto, 'tis now risen, as from the dead, to admonish us of a necessary duty, & will again rise in judgment against them, that shall still continue their sinful and shameful omission of it.

Though it be posthumous, yet thou mayest be confident it is not spurious: were the person in whose hands this Copy lay, as well known to others as to us, they would desire no more satisfying evidence than his affirming (as he did) that he received it from the Reverend Authors own hand.

Thou hast here the substance of the original Copy, without any further alteration, than what the oversight of the Transcriber, here and there made necessary. And though there may be wanting somewhat of that accurateness in this piece, which was in others prepared for the Press by the Authors own hand, yet they who are acquainted with his other works, will clearly see a great resemblance between this and them.

As to the doctrine herein contained, 'tis useful and excellent, and that which few have so practically handled: but they who look for quaintness of expression, more than the quickening of their affections, and right ordering of their conversations, must turn away their eyes; this was not written for them; The excellency of Rules lieth in their fitness to direct in necessary duties, and those which this book affords, have more of solidity than luster, of use than show.

Let us entreat thee therefore not only to read over this Tractate, but to live it over, lest thou shouldest mistake the end of its publication. And do not think this holy exercise is such a grievous task, as that thou shouldest be afraid of it; 'tis such a duty, as after a little experience thou wilt find to be not so much a burden, as a spiritual recreation; and that to press thee to the practice of it, is in effect, but to persuade thee to delight thy self with sitting to the fire, when thou art benumbed with cold, or to please and refresh thyself with food, when thou art ready to perish with hunger, nay, such sensitive refreshments are not to be compared with these spiritual delights of getting a dead cold heart warmed, a starved soul nourished by digesting its food by Divine Meditation. The greatest difficulty will be in thy first setting to this duty, which when once thou art acquainted with, thou wilt be angry with thyself, that thou either knewest, or began it no sooner.

Courteous Reader, we cannot take our leave of thee, till we have once more entreated thee to set to this duty. If thou wouldest be blessed in all thy enterprises or concernments with the blessings of God, Josh. 1.8. If thou wouldest have thy understanding enlightened with the knowledge of God, thy affections inflamed with the love of God, thy heart established with the promises of God, thy solitariness cheered up with the company of God, thy afflictions mitigated with the comforts of God; and if thou wouldest have thy thoughts, words and works regulated by the command of God, pray and consider, pray and meditate.

So advises Thy Servants in the Lord Jesus

- Sa. Cotes.
- Will. Reynolds.
- John Whitlock.
- Robert Smalley.
- John Armstrong.

August 9. 1660.

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A TREATISE OF Divine Meditation,

Quest.

WHat doth the word Meditation signify?

Answ. Those two words in the Original, which our Translators render, to Meditate; signify,

Primarily to meditate, [unspec 1] commune, or discourse with ones self, or which is the same, to imagine, study, consider or muse in mind or heart. Psal. 1.2. In his Law doth he meditate day and night; & 77.6. I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search. Isa. 33.18. Thine heart shall meditate terror; & 59.13. conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

And secondarily, [unspec 2] To pray or express that with the mouth, which the heart mindeth; either

1 Articulately, Gen. 24.63. Isaac went out to meditate in the field, i. e. to meditate his evening prayers, and pray over his meditations. Psal. 55.17. Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray ; & 105.2. Talk ye of all his wondrous works. Or,

2 Inarticulately, Isa. 8.19. And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto Wizards, that peep, and that mutter : should not a people seek unto their God? & 38.14. I did mourn as a Dove; & 31.4. Like as the Lion, and the young Lion roaring on his prey. The former of these two significations being the Principal.

Quest. How is Meditation to be defined, as it is taken in the former sense?

Answ. Meditation is a serious, earnest and purposed musing upon some point of Christian instruction, tending to lead us forward toward the Kingdom of Heaven, and serving for our daily strengthening against the flesh, the world, and the Devil.

Or it is a steadfast and earnest bending of the mind upon some spiritual and heavenly matter, discoursing thereof with ourselves, till we bring the same to some profitable issue, both for the settling of our judgments, and bettering of our hearts and lives.

Quest. How do Prayer and Meditation differ?

Answ. They are often confounded in name, but inseparably linked in nature, going hand in hand together; and can no more be severed, than two Twins, who live and die together; only in Prayer we confer and commune more directly with God by Petition and Thanksgiving; in Meditation we talk and confer more directly and properly with ourselves, and with our own souls.

Quest. What reasons may show the necessity of this duty?

Answ. [unspec 1] First, It is commanded by God, who hath supreme Authority to command what he pleaseth; is infinite in Wisdom, to judge what is most profitable for us, and most acceptable to himself; is of great Power to punish our contempt, and abundant in Goodness to reward our obedience. It is his good pleasure that we should purposely separate ourselves from other matters, to think seriously upon some good and holy observation, that our understandings might be bettered, and our affections stirred to hate evil, and love good.

Secondly, [unspec 2] How necessary this heavenly exercise is, may easily be conceived, for that the hearts even of good Christians are too much pestered with unsavory thoughts, desires and delights of folly, vanity, and much other naughtiness, that they think it utterly impossible to bring them to any better point; and no wonder if they neglect this duty of Meditation, the understanding of the best settled Christian is dim, his memory feeble, his affections so overlaid with sin, that without much striving he cannot mount aloft, nor run swiftly in the way of God's Commandments. So ponderous is the flesh that presseth down, that unless we labor the thing with our hearts, the word will not stick fast, nor work kindly, nor our affections rise to any good purposes: would we thrive in grace, and raise our desires and delight in heavenly things? we must breathe ourselves well in Meditation.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] Would you have examples for the warrant of this necessary practice? Naturally we desire not to go alone nor travel in a way which none hath trodden before us; we may truly affirm, all godly men have meditated, and the most holy have most abounded in Meditation: This the Holy Ghost reporteth of Isaac the Patriarch, That he went out into the field towards the evening to meditate, which had not been so commendable, if he had not used so to do (being such holy duties should be often used) herein following his Father Abraham, who was the friend of God, and very familiar with him. Enoch in his whole life walked with God, and had much talk and communion with him. David promised to meditate on the statutes of the Lord. And what he vowed, that he did perform, Mine eyes prevent the morning watch, to meditate on thy word. His life was a life of sorrow; before he came to the Kingdom, Saul hunted him like a Partridge; after he was encumbered with wars abroad, and the disobedience and rebellion of his sons at home, what time could he take to commune with God? how could he quiet his heart, or bring it into order? when others slept, his eyes were waking, and his heart was musing upon God, his word and works; his reins did teach him in the night season. What point of divinity can be learned without Meditation? not one; for, as none can say that it is his own work, which his own hands hath not made: So, none can count any point of divinity his own, which he hath not wrought by the Meditation of his own heart.

Amongst Christians, who have excelled? such as have been most frequent and earnest in this exercise of holy Soliloquies, pressing their hearts to the love of God, and solacing themselves in the remembrance of his love: Even as much odds as is betwixt a young scholar that can only say his part, and patter over his rules by rote, and a learned School-master that by long practice and experience hath the use thereof; or as there is between a cunning Artificer that can make his own work, and an ignorant Shopkeeper that only sells the same; such or more is the difference between the Christian that meditates, and him that meditateth not; David attained to more wisdom, than the Antient, his teachers, his enemies, it was by meditation of the Law of God.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] The Lord by his Prophet complaineth of the neglect of this duty, None saith what have I done?

Fifthly, [unspec 5] Meditation putteth life and strength into all other duties, and parts of God's worship. When Nehemiah heard of the affliction of his brethren, and the ruin of Jerusalem, he entered into a deep and earnest consideration of God's judgments, and of the causes thereof, which were the sins of the people; that thereby he might be the more fit to humble himself by prayer and fasting before the Lord . When Peter came to himself, and knew where he was, and from what he was delivered, and by whom; then he began with all thankfulness, to muse on the great danger he had escaped, and of the author and instrument of his deliverance . Paul beholding the superstition of the Athenians, and finding an Altar which was dedicated to the unknown God, began to pity the blindness and ignorance of the people, and to meditate how he might take occasion from the inscription to win them to God .

Quest. Who are bound to use this exercise?

Answ. This exercise doth appertain to all persons, professing Christianity ; and howsoever all men have not equal education, learning, strength of memory, stayedness of mind, sharpness of wit, and invention, variety of reading, opportunity of time and place, &c. yet is no man to be freed from it.

There is none so simple, or busy, of so high place, or base condition, of so short memory, or quick capacity, such a babe in Christ, or so strong a Christian, that can exempt himself from this duty, unless he purpose to live unprofitably to others, uncomfortably in himself, and disobedient against God.

Joshua was a valiant Captain, a mighty Governor, one always busied in the wars of God, yet must he meditate in the Law . Who shall pluck out his neck, when such a man must bear the yoke? what must an holy man, a King, a Warrior, notwithstanding his holiness, dignity, troubles, have the word of God to dwell in him, and be his Counselor? what shift canst thou find to excuse thyself in the neglect of it, when neither worldly honor, nor weight of business, nor strength of body, nor courage of mind, nor variety of incumbrances, nor multitude of distractions, shall be held as plea sufficient? art thou a Father of many children, and so pleadest the great charge that lieth upon thy hand? hear what the Lord saith, Deut. 6.6. & 11.18. And these words which I command thee, shall be in thy heart; The more thou hast to care for, the more need hast thou to acquaint thyself with the Law of God, that thou mayest teach and pray for them that depend upon thee.

Thou art Young, and lusty, it is good for thee to be wise aforehand, and to remember the Lord, for thou must give account how thou hast spent thy days, thou must answer for the sins of youth . Call to mind what counsel a good Father gives to his Son, a Father that advised in love, a godly Father, (who by experience knew that his admonition was wholesome, a Father moved by divine inspiration in that which he spake:) My Son, forget not thy Fathers instructions: Bind them continually upon thine heart . What better treasure canst thou lay up in thy breast? what safer direction canst thou follow? The word of life is a precious and sweet liquor, fit to season the green vessel, a sure guide to lead us in the darkness of this world.

Wilt thou pretend poverty to excuse omission of this duty? Oh fool and blind; dost thou not consider, and if thou be oppressed with want, thou hast the more need to strive for grace, peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost? Thou hast nothing in this world, provide spiritual treasure, and learn what legacies the Lord hath bequeathed unto thee in his holy word.

We need not urge reasons to persuade old men, who have accustomed themselves to the practice of godliness, and by long custom have made that easy to them, which to another seems difficult (if not impossible) to continue the use of this exercise: for by experience they know the singular benefit and comfort of it; They have tasted many times how sweet a thing it is to commune with the Lord, how profitable to incite, and call upon their souls: and though the natural stomach be decayed, the spiritual appetite still increaseth in them . There is none so employed, or tied by any service or duty to man, but he may find some time, either by day or night, to call upon God, to confer and talk with God, and with his own soul in the presence of God, especially upon the Sabbath day, wherein the poorest Artificer, and most painful Plough-man, Prisoner, and Gallislave, must put apart some time, if not to hear and pray publicly (from which he is restrained) yet to behold, muse and meditate with himself, both of the word, and works of God. Canst thou find time to eat, drink, sleep ? redeem some portion of time from worldly business to refresh thyself with sweet Meditation. Is it not better to want thy full sleep, than to deprive thy soul of communion with God? It were a busy day when thou wouldest not a little attend to salute a kind friend, who is come a far journey to visit thee in love: Let no day pass without some conference with God and thine own heart.

Many hear the Word of God, praise the Preacher, wonder at the doctrine delivered, are affected with joy or sorrow; but the godly man treasureth up the Word in his heart, not as a Talent in a Napkin, but as provision in a storehouse, which he bringeth forth in due season. Mary kept all those sayings, and pondered them in her heart, when as others heard them as well as she. Jacob observed Joseph 's dream, the brethren heard it, but the Father kept it in mind.

Quest. What ought to be the matter or subject of our Meditation?

Answ. Some good or profitable observation gathered out of the Word, or raised from the Works of God, as the Titles and Properties of God, by which he showeth what he is to his Church and People; his Power, Wisdom, Justice and Mercy; also the works of the Most High, as his Decree, Creation, Providence, the fall of man, our Redemption by Christ, Vocation,

Justification, Sanctification and Glorification; likewise our own vileness and sinfulness, both in general and particular, also our manifold wants, and infirmities; our mortality, and daily dangers, with the mutability of all things in the world; the great and sundry privileges which we enjoy daily through the inestimable kindness of God in Christ Jesus; the sundry afflictions and troubles of this life; and how we may best bear them, and go thorough with them, to the glory of God, and our own spiritual good.

It is good to observe further, and think upon the vanity of all earthly things, the vain confidence of worldly men, the destruction of the wicked, the assaults that are made against the Church, and how the Lord doth still protect her with his right hand.

In brief, the Word of God is a rich storehouse of good matter; and the world a stage furnished with great variety; every day bringeth forth manifold occasions of Meditation, and a godly mind may make good use of every Word or Work of God, of everything it seeth or heareth (whether it be good or evil.)

Quest. What be the fruits, effects, and benefits of Meditation?

Answ. They are manifold; for it calls our minds out of the world to mourning, or mirth; to complaint, prayer, rejoicing, and thanksgiving in the presence of God. It drieth fleshly and bad humors of worldliness, and earthly-mindedness; it quickens and awakens the dull and drowsy heart, that is ready to be sleeping in sin; there is no private help so available, to gave, and sift, weed and purge, and (as it were) to hunt and ferrit out of our hearts, swarms of wicked and unsavory thoughts and lusts, which otherwise will not only lodge and dwell, but rule and reign in them, and to entertain and hold fast heavenly thoughts, which otherwise will run out of our riven heads, as liquor out of a rotten vessel. It is an ointment to soften our hard hearts, and to sweeten the bitterness of our lives in all inward and outward troubles: It is a sovereign preservative against the sugered baits of worldly pleasures and commodities that they become not poison unto us. Meditation is the searcher of the heart, the manure of the soul, the fosterer of zeal, the key of paradise, the ladder of Heaven, the remedy of security, the pastime of Saints, the improvement of Christianity. It enters us into the first degrees of heavenly joys, exalteth our minds and thoughts above the highest pitch of worldly things, and imparteth unto us some first beginnings of the vision of God; it is as watering to plants, as blowing to fire, as oil to aking joints, as Physic to the sick; It urgeth to repentance, it quickeneth to prayer, confirmeth faith, kindleth love, digesteth the word, encourageth in well doing, and refresheth with heavenly consolations.

More Particularly.

First, [unspec 1] Meditation discovers corruption, and acquaints us with the rebellion of our hearts and lives, with our blindness, security, earthly-mindedness, and infinite other loathsome filthiness, which neither we ourselves would take knowledge of, while we carry ourselves in many things as good Christians amongst men; neither any other would ever think that so much poison could be enclosed in so narrow a room, as within the compass of one silly man or woman; The vanity of mind, & frowardness of will, will show themselves sooner in this duty, than in any other. By the hearing of the Law comes the knowledge of sin, but never so clear and distinct, as when we constantly set ourselves to walk with God; Let us observe what unfaithfulness, injustice, worldliness, impatience, breaketh forth in our

callings; what weariness, coldness, deadness, distrust possesseth the heart in prayer; how full of wanderings, forgetful, irreverent, how soon tired we be in hearing the Word, how senseless, froward, and hardhearted under the Rod, and we shall be forced to acknowledge that we are very stubborn, and rebellious, prone to evil, and averse to that which is good.

But set thyself to think upon some instruction that hath been taught, or thou hast observed, do it seriously, conscionably, religiously, constantly, as one who desireth to spend all time well, and then corruption of nature will show itself; Thou shalt soon perceive that thou art vain, ignorant, impotent, proud, worldly, self-conceited, fickle, envious, impatient, unprofitable, an harbourer of filthy lusts, a stiff opposer of sound holiness, passionate, unsound, and what not? Begin to meditate when opportunity is offered, thou art barren, and canst find nothing fit to be matter of musing, canst make use of nothing which thou hast heard or seen; hast thou found matter? thou art dull, and senseless, not able to fasten one thought upon it, as is mere, so hard-hearted, that nothing can pierce or enter; Thou settest forward, but art quickly turned out of the way, that thou mayest well wonder to see how far thou art strayed before that thou couldest discern that thou hast stepped aside; some idle toy, earthly business, vain pleasure, needless fear, delightful remembrance of sin hath drawn thy thoughts another way. Do not these things display the poison of our evil and corrupt nature?

Moreover, by Meditation we look into every dark, filthy corner of our naughty hearts, and rake into that stinking channel, which is seldom stirred: So that when we set about it, we shall be compelled to say, I heard of corruption by the hearing of the ear, but now I see it with mine eye; I feel it to the great disturbance of my soul. And thus we are drawn to deny ourselves, humble our souls, and seek to Christ for succor and relief.

Secondly, [unspec 2] It is a spiritual means to purge out sin, and to cleanse the ground of our heart from those noisome, and hurtful weeds that grow in them. No means more available to rince and purify them, to break the bed of sins, and hunt away the litter of profane lusts, none comparable to this. For though by the Word we know them, by conference we revive the remembrance of them, and by reading we do both, yet all these run out of our riven heads, and abide meanly with us to suppress our corruption, and to tame our hearts, until we bring ourselves to often and much musing, and debating of the good things, which we hear and read, that so we may digest them; and of the evils, which by occasion we fall into, that we abandon them: Even as worldly men ponder deeply their affairs, which are weighty. Meditation makes known the hainousnefs of sin, inflames the heart with love of holiness, cherisheth the graces of God's Spirit (which are as fire to consume the dross of sin) and rouseth to earnestness in prayer, to be set at liberty from that cruel bondage.

Moreover, the conscionable performance of this duty of Application of the Word, with Examination, and Prayer, which is done by Meditation, is, through the blessing of God very effectual, to kill, and crucify the lusts of the flesh: The special sins prevented by this exercise. Are,

1. Idle roavings, unprofitable wanderings, unsavory thoughts, wishes and desires of heart; who groans not under this burden? who is not much hindered by them? They distract in

prayer, reading, hearing, and cool our zeal, dead our hearts, waste much precious time, steal away comfort, defile the soul, and bring forth much dangerous fruit.

The special medicine to cure this malady is Meditation, it either keeps, or thrusts out frivolous, and idle thoughts and motions, either it prevents them, or keeps them under. The Word hid in the heart preserves from sinning. When the door is open, and the house empty, it is an easy matter for the thief to enter; but if the heart be occupied in goodness, evil cannot find room, and harbor; The foul spirit being cast out of a man, seeketh to return with seven spirits worse than himself, but is not able to re-gain possession, till he find the house empty, swept, and garnished: when we do nothing, and withal labor to get no good matter into our minds, we are sure to be pestered with evil cogitations, arising from natural corruption, or cast in by Satan; but if the heart be employed continually in that which is profitable, holy, and excellent, corruption shall not have that strength to molest, nor stir, nor Satan that opportunity to suggest. Hath vanity taken root? To remove it, no means more profitable than oft and deep consideration of the swarms of evil cogitations that arise in the mind, to bring them into vile account, to be weary and ashamed of them, and to endeavor to entertain and harbor better motions and desires in their room. What Christian can endure to have his heart taken up as a lodge, or sty, for froth, filth; vanity, idleness, or folly, that seeth the loathsomeness of it, and knows how, and where to furnish himself with heavenly and comfortable matter? He will judge himself, watch, and make earnest requests, never ceasing till the number of idle imaginations be abated.

2. Earthly-mindedness, and the inordinate love of things temporal, are bad weeds that cover much ground, bitter roots that stick fast in our nature, sins that set open the heart for Satan to take possession, and dwell therein, that make the Word unprofitable, because it cannot have right and sound plantation, that are attended with multitude of other sins, and never go alone.

The only means to dig them out of the heart, is Meditation: Look into the vanity, deceitfulness, uncertainty, vexation that outward things bring with them, and thou wilt never set thy heart upon them. Why do many men lay up for themselves treasure on Earth? They know not the glory and dignity of God's Saints; they conceive not the necessity and excellency of saving Grace; they never tasted the comforts of a godly life; see not the Crown and joy that is prepared in Heaven for them that love and fear the Lord. It may be they know there is a life to come, an Heaven, an Hell, but their knowledge is dim, uncertain, confused, idle; earnestly, often, advisedly, deeply, they consider not of it: It is impossible that he should covet great things in this world, or highly prize what is base, and transitory, that hath an eye to the recompense of reward. What we are in Meditation, may easily be guessed by our affection to the things that are perishing: He that admireth the fading bravery of what is under his feet, hath taken but sleight view of heavenly glory.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] By nature we are very sluggish, like unto the Ox that will not draw, unless he be driven, or pricked with a goad.

Meditation is a spur to quicken us. The words of the wise are as goads, if the Word read or preached be of great force, it must needs work effectually, if we join Meditation. Upon the first hearing, the practice of good works may seem difficult, and unpleasant; our slothful

nature will object many things against it; A Lion is in the way; a Lion is in the street; it is hard to be tied so narrowly, dangerous to follow such courses: But if we consider the matter more attentively, we shall see great cause, good encouragement to set upon that work with diligence, joy, and cheerfulness; as the mercies of God, the love of Christ, the comforts of grace, the bond of Creation, preservation, redemption, the promise of divine assistance, and gracious acceptance, the peace of conscience, and lively hope of an Inheritance in the highest Heavens. When these and such like considerations are duly weighed, we shall find many, and more effectual provocations to incite to holiness, than possiblely can be to incite unto sin, or to dishearten in any good enterprize.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] In company we are apt to forget ourselves, and take offensive liberty; to be idle, loose, vain in speeches, pettish in behavior.

The reason is, because we are not stored with good matter, we have not seen into the manifold imperfections of our hearts, nor tried in secret how we can master and overcome corruptions. Whereby the necessity of Meditation is manifest, that gaging the heart thoroughly, and fighting against sin at home, we might be more watchful in company, lest we should be overtaken, and better enabled to resist; for as he who goeth to war, is first trained, and made fit to use his weapon at home, and the scholar trieth masteries privately, before he come forth to dispute openly; so must a good Christian try what he can do against his affections, & lusts, alone by himself, in his solitary Meditation, and resolve against them (accordingly as he seeth the difficulty to require) before he can in his common dealings with all sorts and companies, be strengthened against temptations, and falls, and free from offense-giving in his words and deeds.

5 Unbelief, and hardness of heart, are evils no less dangerous than common, to the godly that feel them, to the ungodly that are insensible, a curse, a judgment, that cannot sufficiently be lamented.

The special remedy is earnest communication with ourselves, and with the Lord in secret. How doth the heart relent when we set ourselves in the presence of God, to record our disobedience with shame, and sorrow; and when we call to remembrance our mortality, the day of death, the coming of Christ to judgment, the favors of God, the love of Christ, his most bitter death and passion? Hardness of heart cometh from want of due consideration. Tenderness follows Meditation, as contraries are cured by their contraries. To chide the heart for sin, and force it by strong reasons pressed again and again upon the conscience, is effectual to break and rent it, as hard strokes with beetle and wedges are to cleave the knotty Oak. They that look up to Christ, will mourn over him. To stock up infidelity, and to plant the word of promise, what means to Meditation? when we consider the power, goodness, unchangeableness of the Lord, his free grace, rich mercy, and constant truth, how he dealt with his servants in former times, and hath holpen us in the day of our calamity, doth not the heart rise in indignation against distrust? To check and reprove dejectedness of spirit, and to stir up ourselves to wait and trust in the Lord, is a ready way to get freedom from distracting thoughts that overwhelm and oppress the soul?

Thirdly, [unspec 3] Meditation may be called the beginning of all sound Reformation; when will men turn from their sins with an holy resolution to cleave unto the Lord in all things?

Never till they come to their right mind, and bethink themselves. They may promise fair in sickness, conceive some purposes of amendment upon the sight or hearing of judgment denounced against their bosom sin; but all this abides meanly with them to break the heart, or change it from those sinful delights wherewith it was bewitched. They must remember, and weigh what they have done, before they can rise out of the miry-puddle into which they are fallen .

Fourthly, [unspec 4] Hereby wellgrounded and working knowledge is attained, increased; without understanding we cannot begin this exercise, but wisdom is begotten and confirmed by it. They that hear often, read much; but live not in the exercise of Meditation, and digest not what is brought to their minds by outward means, they continue still in darkness, or hang upon the credit of their teachers; at the best, their knowledge is less profitable to themselves and others, as that which swimeth in the brain, but is not kindly rooted in the heart. In earthly occasions, wherein we are sharper sighted than in spiritual, we conceive not a matter at the first hearing; the more we think upon it, the better we come to know it. In spiritual things often reviewing the same thing is most requisite. It is Meditation that settleth the truth in the judgment, assureth it to the conscience, and firmly groundeth it in the heart, that it becometh a behooveful word, ready in the time of need, and ruling over the whole man, with an universal, mild, and gentle sovereignty. It may be added, that if we meditate of what we hear, we shall see more into the truth, use, and benefit of what is taught, than he that preacheth. Surely there is no doctrine so plain, or work so small, but great good might be gathered, much learned out of it, by study and diligence.

Fifthly, [unspec 5] What an help this is to strengthen memory, all men know by continual practice. Doth not the light of reason teach us, to call that oft to mind which we would not have to overslip us. I will meditate on thy statutes, and will not forget thy Word. The Saints of God know it is needful to grow in wisdom, and to retain what they have learned: but look how necessary it is to be filled with wisdom, and to hold fast what we have received; so needful it is to repeat again and again, and to bethink ourselves of what hath been commanded and committed to our custody: Defect of memory is best supplied by Meditation.

Sixthly, [unspec 6] Meditation enlargeth delight in goodness: much blowing will make the fire to burn under green wood. Our nature desires liberty, and goodness is burdensome to the flesh, but if we accustom ourselves to mind, and muse, and think upon the word, until it be made our own, it will be pleasant to our taste, sweeter than honey, or the honey comb. Familiarity is the best Nurse of Friendship, better than good turns: Even as looking breedeth loving: so when by the thought of mind we look upon good matters, there is a love of them bred in us; for affections kindle on a thought, as tinder doth when a spark lighteth on it. The most vehement love doth wax cold for want of communication; and the coldest affections are inflamed by conversings, and intercourse of speech.

Seventhly, [unspec 7] Meditation is a gracious means to ease and refresh the mind (wearied in worldly businesses.) It seasoneth our meat, sleep, labors. Oh how sweet and pleasant a thing it is to come into the presence of God, to record his mercies, to solace our souls in the remembrance of his love! This is the place of rest after a toilsome journey; the

cool shade to the weary laborer; the waterbrooks to the panting Hart: No mirth, no melody is to be matched to it: The joy and comfort of the Spouse in the presence of Christ is a matter incredible to the carnal heart, who never tasted of the refined Wines, and fat things in the house of God.

Eighthly, [unspec 8] Take away Meditation, and the duties of Religion lose their life and vigor; Prayer is cold, reading unprofitable; Think daily with thyself what great honor it is to be the Son of God, what unspeakable joy to possess assurance that our sins are pardoned, how invaluable a prerogative to lay open thy cares into the bosom of the Lord; persuade thyself of his readiness to hear, mercies to forgive, and compassions to relieve them that ask in his Sons name. These things will stir up intention and fervency in prayer; with what sighs and groans will he confess and bewail his iniquity, who with a single eye doth behold the filthiness of sin, and look into his own estate? But lay aside Meditation, and all is turned into form, comes to be of little use; For the appetite will decay, if it be not sharpened, desire will cool if it be not quickened. Meat received into the mouth, and spit forth again presently, nourisheth not; Seed must be covered, as well as cast into the ground. Reading benefits little without Meditation (which is to the Word what chewing and digestion is to meat that should feed the body.)

Ninthly, [unspec 9] Frequent and daily repetition, and regard of heavenly things, brings us to better and more inward acquaintance with God, most comfortable fellowship and communion with him. The more we speak and converse with a man, the better we know him, the further we see into his worth, faithfulness, and excellency. So doth communing with God lead us to the sound and comfortable knowledge of his Majesty. This is the fruit of holy musing, than which, what can give more joy and comfort? what knowledge so delightful to the mind, as the knowledge of God in the face of Christ, in whom the Father hath revealed the treasures of his wisdom, the riches of his grace, longsuffering, and mercy? Nothing can revive the soul so much as the feeling of his love, and the assurance of his fatherly care over us. Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, & we shall be safe.

Tenthly, [unspec 10] To call to remembrance the Lord's mercies of old, and his free promises that never fail, is a singular ease and refreshing in the time of temptation; when Satan doth sift and winnow us with temptations, and terrors within, and troubles without. I remembered thy judgments, O Lord, and was comforted: I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me.

Eleventhly, As the mind is, [unspec 11] such is the life; for that is the fountain of actions (whether good or evil) if the mind be pure, the life is holy, if the mind be defiled, the actions cannot be upright; Wouldest thou live a Christian life, and enjoy those great liberties which God affords to his children in this life? then thou must scatter the bed of disordered cogitations, and nourish godly desires, and motions in their room; meditating on the Law of God, doth bring on the doing of it, even as evil thoughts do bring on evil actions; for the thought is as the seed, and conception of all our actions: Now look as after conception there is a travel to bring forth, and a birth in due season: so when the soul by thought hath conceived, presently the affections are tickled, and excited, the will inclined, and stirred, which commandeth the inferior powers to execute what the thought suggested.

Twelfthly, [unspec 12] Meditation fitteth for conference; he that hath digested good matter by serious cogitation, study, and care, is able to bring it forth, and utter it (as occasion requireth) As they that have treasured up much gold and silver, can easily lay it out, when it may be to their advantage; whereas others that after long study can speak excellently, being put to it upon the sudden, can say little for lack of Meditation; herein like unto them, that having laid up nothing in store, are compelled to borrow of the Usurers, before they can make their purchase.

Thirteenthly and lastly; The Word of God appears excellent, his works great, his favor unspeakable, when we ponder them in our hearts. By it in our solitariness we enjoy God, and ourselves, and by conversing with him we are fitted for, and made more profitable in all good company.

Quest. What use is to be made of this point?

Answ. If formerly thou hast been a stranger to this exercise, now learn it, begin to practice it, entertain not conceits, as though it were needless, unprofitable, impossible, burdensome; for a Christian life cannot stand without it; Thou shalt find it exceeding beneficial, delightsome, easy, when thou art entered into it; it is tedious only to corruption, to the heart renewed, it is most sweet and comfortable: The neglect of this duty is the very cause why many Christians enjoy not the tenth part of those privileges that God hath provided for them in this their pilgrimage: why they are kept under their strong corruptions, and break forth offensively in their dealings in the world: Moreover, how should a man be assured of God's love, if knowing this to be a duty required, he never address himself unto it in good earnest. It is not sufficient to praise that which is good, speak well of the children of God, keep ourselves pure from the gross stains of the time, but we must hate iniquity, and love righteousness, which they do not, who harbor such thoughts as are displeasing to his Majesty: How can a purified mind take pleasure in those filthy waters that flow from the stinking puddle of original corruption? It is for swine to wallow in the mire, and corrupt fountains to send forth muddy streams. If the treasure be in Heaven, the heart must be there; If the soul be of an heavenly disposition, nothing is more delightful than to walk, and commune with God. By thy thoughts thou mayest know thyself; as evil thoughts will argue an evil heart, so good thoughts will argue a good heart: for these cannot be subject to hypocrisy, as words, and deeds are, which sometimes come more from respect of the creature, than of the Creator. It is the will of God that we should not only seek the Kingdom of Heaven, but, mind it, set our thoughts upon it, and turn the bent of our desires wholly that way. The Lord hath given to us the great things of his Law, caused the Scriptures to be written for our learning, and sent his Prophets to declare unto us his mind, and pleasure; Christ Jesus (the great D^{r}. of the Church) hath revealed the glory of God, as it were in open face, and fully, and clearly made known the last will of his heavenly Father touching man's salvation, than which, nothing can be more wonderful, excellent, delightful, comfortable: Now for us to pass by these things as strange, and now and then only to cast an eye towards them, is it not an offense intolerable? How should the heart be framed after the image of God, but by a serious Meditation of heavenly things, whereby their likeness is stamped upon the soul; as by Application, the seal leaves the impression upon the wax? We are strangers in this world, who have no abiding City on earth, nor may place our hearts, delights, and felicity here, but Heaven is our home, and our chiefest comfort must be to have

daily communion with God, and to have our conversation in Heaven with him, which cannot be enjoyed ordinarily without Meditation. If it be tedious at first, use will make it easy, and the sweetness which at length we shall taste in contemplation, will make it delightful.

Quest. What say you of superficial, and careless thinking upon some points of Doctrine by fits, seldom in a good mood?

Answ. The chief praise of this duty, is, that we be much in its use, from time to time, through the whole course of our life, and every day thereof, that by recording holy and divine things, especially those which tend to soundness in the matter of salvation a little time more or less (as opportunity is offered, and occasions will permit) may be bestowed of us, to dry up fleshly, and bad humors of earthly-mindedness, and worldliness, &c. and to quicken our dull hearts, lest after sleep in sin, the Devil draw us to deep forgetfulness and security. Neither can anything if it be weighed, be less tolerable in the sight of God Almighty, than whereas he hath given us his Scriptures, which tell us his mind, and teach us how we may commune with his Majesty, and for our behoof hath given us an earnest charge to ponder them in our heart, to have them in our mind, to make them the matter of our cogitation, talk, delight, and practice; yet that Christians should not be better acquainted with this heavenly course, nor be occupied thus, unless it be seldom (as it were) upon high days, and that very coldly: as if God had been earnest with us about a trifle, or as if he had offered us great injury to move us thereunto.

Nor is this work slightly to be gone about, we must set our hearts to the cogitation of heavenly things, thoroughly debating, and reasoning them with ourselves, so far as we are able, that we might be enabled to order our lives, as well in one state, as another, and strengthened against the assaults of Satan, and allurements of this present evil world: Meditation is a weighty matter, and great pity that works of greatest importance should find the most sleight regard. It is the work of the Lord, wherein remiss dealing is condemned as injurious to God, hurtful to ourselves. The fruit of Meditation stands in fervency; he that is not serious shall reap no profit: How should the Word sink into our stony hearts, if it be not minded? how should mercy, or judgment affect, if we dwell not upon the thought of them? The heart must be pressed, before it will relent, and fixed upon things above, before it will rejoice in them. Meditation is one part of a Christian man's treasure, that is ever in his hand, can never be taken from him: Many duties must wait their seasons, but all estates, conditions, companies, actions, minister occasion of Meditation: nor can this liberty be taken from us by the rage of Satan, or cruelty of persecuting Tyrants; for so long as we be with ourselves, we may commune with ourselves, and with the Lord. Now, the more excellent our treasure is, the more careful must we be to preserve and employ it.

Quest. Seeing this duty is so necessary, profitable, divine, and comfortable, what doth keep so many from the practice of it?

Answ. The main impediment and hindrance of this (as of all other duties) is the nourishing of someone sin, or more, unrepented of, which dimmeth the eye of the mind, that it cannot behold spiritual things anymore than the Owl can behold the light, and cloyeth the appetite that it cannot relish heavenly dainties, anymore than a full stomach doth hunger after sweet

meats: As a black cloth can take no other die; so an impenitent heart is uncapable of Divine Meditation.

Quest. How is this impediment to be removed?

Answ. This bar can never be removed, till our hearts be purged, by humble, and unfeigned repentance, hearty sorrow, free confession, and well advised purpose of reformation. Wherefore as they that intend to keep any precious liquor, will see that their vessels be clean: So they that will entertain holy thoughts and desires, must give all diligence to keep their hearts pure, and undefiled.

Quest. What are the special lets that hinder the performance of this duty?

Answ. They be diverse; whereof some do keep men that they do not use this exercise at all; others drive them to use it without any fruit, or sound profit, performing it slightly, and negligently, making it an idle Ceremony, or a matter of course or custom.

Quest. What be these lets?

Answ. One is a deadly custom of ranging after fond, and deceiveable thoughts, delights, and dreams of things either impertinent, or unprofitable, and oftentimes impossible, being such as never were, nor are, nor ever shall be: or else flatly wicked, hurtful, and pernicious. For the heart of man is exceeding deceitful, slippery, fickle, wandering, and wicked, infinite ways: Besides that, the subtle and malicious fowler, even Satan that old Serpent, doth set his snares so thick in our ways, that it is very hard for us to pass thorough them without being entangled. To this head may be referred worldly cares and pleasures, which clog the soul that it cannot mount aloft. For as a bird (whose wings are limed) is not able to take her flight on high: So the man, whose mind is entangled with worldly cares, and earthly delights, is not able by holy Meditation to soar aloft up to Heaven: When the mind is carried after other desires, it is unfit for heavenly Meditation, slow, and unwilling to be occupied in cogitation, and consideration of any holy matters; he that knows it should be performed, is sometimes grieved for the omitting of it, but if the mind be impotent, as having lost her former strength, and constancy in good things, for the time it is constrained to omit and let pass the same.

Quest. How is this to be remedied?

Answ. The remedy to such a one (as through an unsettled heart, cannot meditate of any parts of Christianity, and godliness, having otherwise knowledge) is to meditate of his present unfitness, looseness of heart, and earthly-mindedness, to account it as an heavy burden; to accuse his heart; and to bring it to kindly relenting, by considering how far it is off presently from that mildness, humbleness, and heavenliness, and readiness unto duty, which ought to be in him continually, and hath been in him at some other time: Let him bring his mind to these considerations, and say with himself; I have received a mind to please God, to be teachable, and ready to any duty; I have opposed myself against mine own will, and the Devils secret, and malicious counsel (though sweet to the flesh) I am not a debtor unto it, how can I then yield to the untowardness of my heart, and to sin against my God I have tasted the fatness and marrow in the house of God, and shall I return to feed

upon the husks of the world? where are the manifold and comfortable privileges which he hath given me, that I might be faithful unto him? Am I weary of my own peace, and do I haste after my own sorrow? what pleasure can I find in vanity and vexation? what taste in the white of an egg? Lord bring back this ranging heart of mine from the deceitful dreams and fears that it hath been snared in, and restore it to the liberty that it was wont to enjoy, that is, to solace itself in thy favor and communion with thee. And this gift being decayed, through my own fault, and Satan's cruelty and subtlety forgive my cold and weak love of thee, who have provoked thy Majesty (if thou wouldest be provoked) to frown, and look amiably on me no more: Thou Lord chargest me thus to seek thy face, and sweet presence, which I have gone from, and for a time been blinded, as having no ability to muse of any good thing, and have not seen that I was seduced, till I perceived that I had lost this sweet liborty. Now therefore, O Lord, show thy loving kindness in my distress and weakness, and restore to me this liberty of my heart, which many of thy children do find and enjoy. Thus fall into consideration with thyself, and be not discouraged when thou seest thy infirmities, who hast learned to use all thy wants to humble thee, and to bring thee nearer to God, rather than to go further from him: but let no man give any liberty in any sort to his evil heart (when it is turned away from cheerfulness and willingness in any part of God's service) to go forward therein, for that were to bring himself into utter bondage.

Quest. What is a second Impediment or Let?

Answ. Inconstancy; when we begin to set upon this duty, but are drawn aside by the love of vanity, or discouraged by the difficulty of the exercise, and so give over, and never set about it in good earnest.

Quest. What is the Remedy of this Impediment?

Answ. Labor to be constant, and if it be possible, let no day pass without some line of Meditation, though many blocks be cast into the way. Impediments will multiply, as we give way unto them; indisposition and unfitness get strength through omission, and delay; but constancy and courage (our breaking thorough all opposition) with careful watchfulness to tie up our thoughts, will make this exercise in time, not only possible, but easy, and pleasant. It is grievous for children at the first to go to school, but after they have tasted the sweetness of study, and tried the fruit, they are contented to leave country and kindred for love of learning: So the entrance into this exercise is hard and tedious, but the progress full of heavenly delight and contentation; nay, it is grievous to be pestered with vain, wicked, idle thoughts, whereby communion and fellowship with Christ is interrupted. In the world it is accounted a hard thing to be bound with cords and chains of Iron, to be vexed with Tyranny an insupportable burden, what is it then to be bound with chains of our corruption, to live under the power of lust, to be tossed to and fro with the temptations of Satan? let us therefore set apart the fittest time for this exercise, especially on the Sabbath (when spiritual idleness is as bad, or worse than bodily labor) and to keep it constantly, not giving over (when we have once begun) till we find that it hath done our hearts some good: For what will it avail us to knock at the door of our hearts, if we depart before we have an answer?

Quest. May not a man spend too much time in private Meditation?

Answ. Yes, no doubt, and many do, who are so addicted to their own private devotions, that they neglect other duties of Christianity, and of their particular callings, the neglect of which, besides that it is a separating of those things which God hath joined together, doth not enlighten and quicken the mind, but rather (by the just judgment of God) blind and dull it. Hence it proceeded, that the ancient Monks mingling bodily labor with Meditation, proved excellent, whereas the Popish Monks, mured up in their Cloisters, and exempted from bodily labor, proved the most noisome Caterpillars in the world. Wherefore we must so choose our times for the performance of this exercise, that God be not dishonored, nor our brethren wronged, by the neglect of others. The object of this exercise being spiritual, is far too excellent for the weak sight of man to be gazing on continually.

Quest. What is the third Impediment?

Answ. Many are hindered and kept back from this duty, for want of matter. Notwithstanding the great variety of matter, which the word, and works of God, and the due consideration of their own estate might minister unto them, yet their hearts are so barren, and their heads so empty, that they are utterly to seek about what to bestow their time, and their cogitations.

Quest. What is the Remedy against this Let?

Answ. The help is to bewail and lament the barrenness of their hearts, and to enforce themselves to read, and hear the Word, and to mark, and observe the works of God with greater care, conscience, diligence, and attention, than they have done in former times. How a Christian is to furnish himself with good matter, we shall show hereafter more fully. But for the present, every man that is desirous to set upon this exercise, may propound these things to be thought upon.

First, [unspec 1] His vileness, unworthiness, and other his several corruptions and sins.

Secondly, [unspec 2] The sufferings of Christ, and the wrath of God due unto us for sin.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] The love of God in giving Christ to die for us, and the greatness of his bounty, and riches of his grace, and constancy of his love, in forgiving so many transgressions, and subduing daily more and more the dominion of sin and Satan.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] He is to think how he may be guided, thorough that present day, after the rules of his daily direction, especially those that seem hardest to be followed, both the well-ordering of his heart, and framing of his life so far as stands with God's Word.

Fifthly, [unspec 5] Let him meditate on the several parts of the Christian Armor, and how God hath appointed to strengthen him thereby for his better going forward in a godly life.

Lastly, [unspec 6] Let him consider of the outward blessings that God vouchsafeth unto him, his constant care, and fatherly protection over him, in his going out, and coming in, providing him meat, drink, and apparel, and other necessaries.

Quest. What is the fourth Let?

Answ. Want of leisure and opportunity, by reason of necessary business taking up the time.

Quest. How is this to be remedied?

Answ. Men must know, that the ordinary works of their calling, are not to put this duty out of place, for if they do, it is by the unskillfulness, or untowardness of them, who commit this fault; but the one of them is appointed of God to go with the other, and both of them to stand together to the upholding of one another. If any through necessary occasion and hindrances, shall be constrained to let pass this duty of Meditation, when otherwise he would have set upon it, hereby let it appear to have been necessarily passed by, and without his fault: if he supply the want of this duty after his necessary labor ended, and take heed that in no wise it be omitted altogether, unless he can be assured with peace, that God in the omitting of it hath been remembered answerably some other way.

Quest. What should move us to be careful to take time for this duty?

Answ. Because we are earnestly exhorted by the Apostle to redeem the time, that is, to take the opportunity, and lay hold on all occasions whereby we may glorify God, or do good to others, and to our own souls. And the special spur to provoke us to make choice of, and constantly to keep some time to the performance of this duty, and to break thorough the manifold lets and impediments, which stand in our way, is the due consideration of the fruits, and effects of this duty carefully performed, which have been mentioned before, and come to be named hereafter.

Quest. What things do hinder the fruitful performance of this duty?

Answ. Two principally, which may be called abuses of Meditation.

First, [unspec 1] Sleightness; when we make a ceremony of it, not so much looking how our hearts are affected in and by it, as that we may not justly be charged for omitting it.

Secondly, [unspec 2] Trifling fantasies, and worldly cares, which fill the head, that we cannot mind heavenly things; hence followeth weariness of it, and an hastening to more liberty, that our hearts may range where they list.

Quest. How are these abuses to be remedied?

A. First, We must remember, [unspec 1] that it is a duty of great weight, earnestly called for at our hands, of singular fruit, and comfort, worthy to be delighted in, and exercised with greatest diligence. The men of the world are exact in trifles, is it not a shame to the children of God, if they be sleighty in matters of so great importance? Labor spent in the duties of Religion is lost, and the fruit perisheth, if we strive not to perform them with life and power.

Secondly, To obtain, [unspec 2] that we may be fit to perform this duty, and not to be carried at that time after wandering, we must tie up our loose hearts throughout the day from the deadly custom of ranging after vain, fond, and deceiveable thoughts, dreams, and delights; we must weigh how little worth this is to suffer our cogitations to be fastened on things transitory with delight, much less about those that are filthy, and evil, but rather bring them to be taken up in those which are heavenly: This we are called unto, and until we learn, how weighty soever our dealings be, to count this the chiefest, to keep peace with

God, and ever fear to offend him, it will be an hard matter to bring ourselves to meditate with cheerfulness, and fruit.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] When thou settest upon this duty, take heed of self-confidence, lest thou provoke God to give thee up to be buffeted of Satan, to teach thee humility, and lowliness. How should we hope to prosper in any good work, so long as we trust in our own strength? Success joined with self-presumption, is perilous; for it tendeth to spiritual fullness, and surfeiting, two main and great diseases of the soul.

Quest. What be the sorts and kinds of Divine Meditation?

Answ. It is fitly divided into two sorts.

First, Extemporary, [unspec 1] occasional, or sudden, which may be done at all times, and in all employments.

Secondly, Set, deliberate, [unspec 2] or solemn: both these have their use, and in both these, seriousness is required.

Quest. What is occasional Meditation?

Answ. It is a serious bending of the mind, to think upon some good and profitable subject, being occasioned thereunto by such things as (by the providence of God) do offer themselves to our senses, eyes, and ears, as we go about the duties of our calling, or be exercised in some honest, and lawful Recreation, for the continuance of our health, and comfort of our life.

Quest. What Rules are to be noted touching this extemporary Meditation?

Answ. [unspec 1] First, Extemporary Meditation, as Ejaculatory Prayers, have no ornament but fervency, no motive but love, no other eloquence but affection, and their clauses, no contexture but necessity.

Secondly, [unspec 2] No employment can hinder us from this duty, they rather minister occasion thereof unto us: The cold of Winter, the heat of Summer, the sweetness of the Spring, the fruitfulness of the Harvest, do praise the Lord, that is, do minister plentiful occasion to us to praise God: No month in the year, nor week in the month, nor day in the week, nor hour in the day, which doth not afford us some profitable matter to meditate upon.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] The fittest day in the week, is the Lord's day, which we are to consecrate wholly to him: but as no person is exempted from this duty, so no time but may fitly serve for the performance thereof.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] As we must not lightly let slip such matters of good use, as will be often offered unto us, and defraud ourselves, and others of the benefit thereof; so we must not fix our minds too earnestly upon them, lest we offend others, and neglect some necessary duty of our own.

Fifthly, [unspec 5] The more natural and lively the occasion of external Meditation is, the better it doth affect at the first salutation, as soon as we take a taste of it, which must be regarded and labored after, because the business of this life will not suffer us largely to discourse upon them.

Sixthly, [unspec 6] Variety of matter is very profitable, for often iteration of the same thing, breeds heartlessness. It is with Meditation, as with medicines, which with over ordinary use lose their sovereignty, and kill instead of purging.

Quest. What are the benefits of Extemporary Meditation?

Answ. 1 It fits for settled Meditation, as it furnisheth with matter, and prepareth the heart to commune with God: as oft salutations makes way to familiar conference. He that observeth the Lord in all his dealings, and makes spiritual use of earthly things, shall with more ease find and fasten his heart upon some good matter, and have it at command, to attend upon the Lord in most serious Communication.

Secondly, [unspec 2] It kindles the graces of the Spirit, which might otherwise be damped with the foggy mists of earthly cares, and vain delights. As the fire gathers that which causeth it to burn faster: so the Spirit raiseth holy thoughts upon outward occasions, which do revive the grace we have received.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] Since the greatest part of our life is spent in worldly affairs, unless we lift up our hearts to God upon occasions offered in our callings, journeys, and such like, we shall deprive our souls for the most part of sweet fellowship, and communion, and company with the Lord.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] If God walk along with us in the labors of our callings, is it not an offense in us to take no notice, or observation of his presence?

Fifthly, [unspec 5] Occasional Meditation is a sharp spur, and strong provocation, to prayer and praise: He cannot want matter of thanksgiving or supplication, that conscionably observeth and considereth the goodness of the Lord towards him in the things of this life, and infirmities of the creature, and his own inability of himself to effect, or bring anything to pass.

Sixthly, [unspec 6] It furthers much to bring us to the knowledge of ourselves, and to increase humility: self-ignorance is a disease most dangerous, the daughter of corruption, infidelity, forgetfulness, pride, presumption, earthly-mindedness, flattery, bad company, ill examples, and custom in sin. One special Remedy of this over-spreading malady is oft and diligent Meditation of the things that shall happen, fall out, or be presented to us in our daily vocations.

Seventhly, [unspec 7] The thoughts of this nature are not only lawful, but so behooveful, that we cannot omit them without neglect of God, his creatures, ourselves; the creatures are half lost, if we only employ them, not learn something of them, God is wronged, if his creatures be unregarded; ourselves most of all, if we read this great volume of the creatures, and take out no lesson for our instruction.

Quest. How should a man fit himself for extemporary Meditation?

Answ. [unspec 1] First, He must get an heart desirous to reap profit by everything that doth befall him. Love of wealth draws the covetous to study how he might turn all things to his advantage, and love of grace will produce the same effects in her kind.

Secondly, [unspec 2] He must learn to read the power, goodness, bounty, and wisdom of the Lord written in fair characters in the large volume of the creatures, and in every leaf, and line thereof. The fire, hail, snow, rain, dew, frost, yea, herbs, plants, fish, and fowl, praise the Lord, that is, give occasion to man to magnify the name of God, who is great and excellent.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] Let him make spiritual use of earthly things, and mark how the one is resembled and shadowed forth in the other: And to this end it is good to observe the parables, and similitudes, and borrowed phrases in Scripture, whereby a Christian may soon furnish himself in this point.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] It must be remembered, that in everything the wise, just, powerful, and good providence of God doth over-rule: this persuasion rooted in the heart, draws a man to acknowledge the hand of God in whatsoever happeneth, great or small.

Quest. What is solemn, or settled Meditation?

Answ. It is a purposed and advised bending of the mind, to consider, and muse on some good and wholesome matter, with resolution to work the heart into an holy temper, to which end we separate ourselves from all companies and occasions that might distract us.

Quest. What Motives should persuade Christians to set upon this duty?

Answ. Besides the benefits before mentioned, which principally belong to solemn Meditation, these considerations may be of force to quicken us.

First, [unspec 1] We must exercise ourselves in the Word of God with care, and diligence, that it may sink into us, abide with us, quicken, and conform, and strengthen us. We are commanded to treasure up, and feed upon the Word of Life; Bind up the Testimony, seal up the Law, among my Disciples. Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it. Blessed are they who read, and they who hear the words of this Prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein. Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is so called, because it should abide in our hearts like a Siens in a stock, and never be removed, but there grow and fructify unto eternal life. But the Word cannot take root, be remembered, digested, we cannot feed upon it without Meditation: Let him that readeth, consider and understand.

Secondly, [unspec 2] The Scriptures were written to bring us to happiness, to fellowship, and communion with God, to everlasting life. They set forth the way to blessedness, and direct how we may be partakers of glory. And if we be not careless of the salvation of our souls, we must search into this Mine as well by Meditation, as reading, or hearing.

Quest. What things must be looked unto, that this exercise might be taken in hand with good success?

Answ. Choice of good matter, fit place, due time, holy entrance, orderly proceeding, and seasonable, meet conclusion.

Quest. What rules are to be observed touching the choice of matter?

Answ. The matter of Meditation must be some good and profitable thing: as God himself, his attributes, titles, properties, works of mercy, and judgment, creation and providence, his Word, Threatenings, Promises, Commandments; our own unworthiness, mortality, the afflictions and manifold changes of this life, and how we may go thorough them with comfort.

But out of this variety, make choice of someone to be the subject of thy discourse, for he that is everywhere, is nowhere: Nothing is more hurtful to the body, than many medicines. The sore, to which sundry kinds of plasters are applied, is hardly brought to a scar. Think upon one thing until thy affections be wrought upon. Nothing is so profitable, that it can benefit much in passing by; he that comes by the fire may feel a glimpse of heat, he only is warmed that tarrieth at it: It is the property of a weak stomach to taste many things, to hold and digest nothing. Many matters thrust upon us at once, weaken and distract the powers of the soul. To scatter the thoughts upon many things, is to attend nothing as it ought: when the mind is distracted betwixt divers things, the one is a hindrance to the other, and we receive benefit by neither, nor bring our thoughts to any good issue.

Secondly, [unspec 2] Out of this variety of matter, seeing thou must take but someone, play the part of a wise man, and choose that whereof thou hast special need: As salves are not for every sore, nor all meats agreeable to every constitution; every part of the Word is holy, pure, and good; but times, occasions, conditions of men make a difference: There is a time to mourn, and a time to be merry; to put on sackcloth, and to sing for joy; and there is matter to be found in Scripture which doth suit with each disposition, and will serve to stir up either affection. The occasions, diseases, comforts of Christians are not the same, nor alike at all times: out of the treasury of the Word we may gather instructions which will fit every occasion, season, and estate: Fitness of matter is required, as in speaking, so in musing. Art thou afflicted in conscience for sin? speak with thy heart of the promises of pardon and forgiveness, that are freely made in Jesus Christ: inquire diligently into God's mercies of old, commune with thyself what former experiences of love and favor thou hast felt; call to remembrance how tenderly the Lord hath dealt with others upon their humble submission. If thou wouldest stir up thy heart to love or reverence the Lord, think of his majesty, power, goodness, free grace, and undeserved mercy.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] It is neither unlawful nor unmeet to meditate on our sins past, that we might be humbled; & frailties present, that we might prevent them: but a discreet course must be held that we defile not ourselves with delightful remembrance of sin; nor by thoughts stir up the corruption which we desire to subdue, nor cast ourselves into despair and horror for what hath been done amiss, nor give place to doubting of perseverance in respect of the time to come, for humiliation must be joined with confidence in God, and watchfulness that we fall not into sin again.

Quest. What if the heart be so barren, that we cannot call to mind anything that hath been taught, nor remember any mercy we have received?

Answ. These may be observed as matters meet to have good room in our thoughts, our own vileness, unworthiness, emptiness of grace, the goodness of God in sparing our lives, bestowing outward blessings, forgiving multitude of sins, and subduing them more and more; the sufferings of Christ in the Garden, and upon the Cross; the Christian armor that must be put on, and kept about us; how we might carry ourselves uprightly in all estates, and affairs, that our hearts be not disordered, nor our lives blemished. It is not amiss to propound to ourselves the mercies of the day, our special wants of grace, and the chastisements that are laid upon us as matters to be mused on: that we might be quickened to prayer and thanksgiving.

First, [unspec 1] More particularly, He that desireth to have help by Meditation, must weigh how slippery, bad, fickle, and wandering his heart is, infinite ways to his exceeding hurt, and that he must of necessity appoint some set time to check, reclaim, and wean it from the same.

Secondly, [unspec 2] He must watch over his heart (having been so often deceived by it) throughout his whole life, and have it in suspicion, that so it may be more fit to be drawn to such heavenly exercise, and be stayed therein, and attend upon the same.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] This being observed, let him draw matter of Meditation and Prayer from his own wants, and infirmities, from God's benefits, from the change and mortality of this life. Also it is good to meditate on the Glory of God's Kingdom, the sweet comfort of a peaceable conscience; love of humility, meekness, but specially that which for the present shall be most suitable to his state.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] If he cannot thus do, let him read some portion of the holy Scripture, some part of the Psalms, some of the Epistles of the Apostles, Christ's Sermons, or some good book fit to furnish him with good matter, and season, and affect his mind, that so he may learn how to perform this duty, and quicken up himself to it oft, and from time to time, when he once knoweth how. If he cannot read, he must desire more help of others, and for want of help, he must needs look to go the more slowly, forward, either in the right and kind use of Meditation, or in any part of sound godliness, and Christianity, seeing we cannot be ignorant of this, that the old subtle fowler sets his snares, and nets, so thick in our way, that we have no shift but to fall into them, and light upon them, except with the wings of Meditation and Prayer, we mount up on high above them, and fly over them, which to them that cannot read will for the most part be found more hard and difficult.

Quest. What particular Meditations concerning duties to be performed or practiced, may we find commended unto us in the writings of godly men?

Answ. They are many, and most excellent, amongst the rest, such as these.

First, [unspec 1] No man shall be fit to govern himself aright before men, if he do not usually acquaint himself with, and frame himself after that Christian course first which he should have before God. Yet no man must rest in private exercises of Religion, without a well-ordered life before men.

Secondly, [unspec 2] Every part of our calling must be so carried on, as we may have peace thereby: and it behooveth us to be best armed, and most circumspect, where we are weakest.

If a man be fallen, he must not lie still, but return unto the Lord with speed, though with much difficulty: for sluggishness and deadness will follow, if the breach be not made up in our consciences, but if we seek to God unfeignedly, he is not far off.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] If we rejoice only in prosperity, it is a sign that God's benefits, not his favor makes us merry.

It is a good thing to rejoice in the Sabbaths, and in the communion of Saints, yet we may not rest there, but in this, that God is our portion always.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] In crosses we must use great sobriety, otherwise we shall be unsettled by them, especially if they be many and great, to this end we must prepare for trouble before it come, and in it we must meditate on the best privilege that God hath given unto us, laboring that our graces and strength increase, as our afflictions do increase: For affliction is doubled, if the inward infirmity of the mind be not diminished. Although for want of proof we count all afflictions hard, yet when we have experience of the fruit and benefit that comes by them, confidence in God will make them easy, if our cause be good: We shall never want somewhat to exercise us, sin, or trouble, we shall have; neither is it unprofitable for us, to the end we may be ever in the combat, for our life is a warfare.

Fifthly, [unspec 5] We seldom keep unlawful commodities, or rejoice too much in lawful; but the Lord doth cross us in them. The things of this world are too sweet and pleasant to our corrupt taste, but the Lord doth season them with bitterness; vain liberties breed much sorrow, and unchearfulness.

Sixthly, [unspec 6] The most vexations in our life become annoyances unto us through our own fault, in that we either prevent them not when we may, or bear them not as we ought, or make not use of them as we might do.

Seventhly, [unspec 7] When matters of more importance than our salvation come into place, let us be occupied with more fervency in them, than in that, but not before. The practice of godliness is a rich and gainful trade, but if it be not well followed, it will bring no great profit.

Eighthly, [unspec 8] To have a willing mind to be well occupied, and matter about which we may, and time to bestow therein, and freedom from lets therefrom, is an estate to be much made of, and yet for the most part, they which have most outward encouragements, cannot tell what to do with them.

Ninthly, [unspec 9] Whatsoever measure of graces we have gotten, yet it is certain, that God hath much more than we can think of, if those be the matters which we have in greatest price: but being set light by, and the means neglected (which preserve them) they die. That is a good state when we have not only joy in heavenly things at the first hearing of them, but increasing in joy as our knowledge and experience increaseth: and when we are not only delighted in the present duties of God's service, but also as joyful to think of them that are

to come; accounting that the more they be, the better they are. The flesh is apt to take the smallest occasions that may be, to favor itself, but our study must be to increase in goodness, and to delight more in walking with God in a Christian course.

Tenthly, [unspec 10] Love of the world makes death terrible, and surfeiting in pleasure lulleth us asleep. Seeing it pleaseth the Lord to let us know that we have this precious liberty all the day long to be with him, to enjoy his presence by Faith, and solace ourselves in bold affiance in him, and that for all good things, and to be free from the fear, terror, and anguish, which haunteth the ungodly. It were pity we should for some deceivable folly deprive ourselves of such happiness and peace, as he alloweth us even here to be partakers of.

Eleventhly, [unspec 11] The more sure thou art of God's favor by Faith, the more humble thou art also: One special point of profiting, is to know our own vileness and misery better daily, that so we may come to know the inestimable bounty of God the better, and what we are beholding to him for, as receiving increase from him, multiplied pardons of sin, and daily increase of grace.

Twelfthly, [unspec 12] They are worthy of great punishment, who set light by the plenty of grace, the crumms whereof God's hungry servants do set great store by. Look what care, conscience, zeal, love, and reverent estimation of good things thou hadst when first thou embracedst the Gospel, the same at least retain, and be sure thou keepest still afterwards. The more knowledge that thou hast, take heed thou beest not more secure: for thus it is with many at this day, who therefore do smart for it: we shall not enjoy the grace we had at first, except we be as careful now to keep it, as we were then to come by it.

Thirteenthly, [unspec 13] When we are afflicted, and the wicked spared, our estate seems to them most vile, when we are both in prosperity, they seem more happy: when they and we be both afflicted, then they account our estate happier than their own, but especially when they be afflicted, and we spared: We may not assign the Lord in what place and state, in what condition and company we should live, but as strangers wait on him, even as the handmaid on her Mistress, for whatsoever he will allow us: we are ready most commonly to be called away by death, before we have learned how to live.

Fourteenthly, [unspec 14] Keep down carnal liberty, and the spiritual liberty shall be great, rest on God, and it shall make thee overcome the hardest things. If thou wilt find Christ sweet, thou must ever find sin bitter. Fear ever to offend God, and thou needest not to fear any other peril. No good thing abideth long with us in its strength, and beauty, without new quickening: When we feel any weariness in a godly course, by what occasions, or weighty dealings soever it be, the Devil hath met with us; therefore we must speedily take shame and sorrow, and turn unto the Lord.

Fifteenthly, [unspec 15] We must remember to serve and walk with God, by days, not by weeks, and months only. A great difference there is betwixt the observing and viewing of our life from day today, and the doing of it by fits now and then; in the one we are safe, cheerful, and fruitful, in the other rash, offensive, and often unquiet for it, walking in fear, and with little comfort.

Sixteenthly, [unspec 16] As husbandmen wait for their fruit, so should we for that which we pray, and hope for; and that would make us joyful when we obtain it. If a man can rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, then is he the friend of Christ.

Seventeenthly, It is a folly, [unspec 17] yea, a madness to be heavy to the death for any earthly thing, when yet a man desireth nothing more than life. They who can neglect, and set meanly by a little vain glory, and credit with men, may gain, and enjoy much peace with God. All our life ought to be a providing for a good end, and a keeping away of woe, which cometh by sin, fear not the pain of death, for God can make it easy, or tolerable.

Eighteenthly, [unspec 18] The flesh would fain please itself in some unlawful liberty, when we have pleased God in some duties: but a wise man will keep him well while he is well.

Nineteenthly, [unspec 19] Where there is willfulness in sinning, there is great difficulty in relenting, and also no power, nor boldness in believing; many beginning well in godliness, have fainted and quailed or been justly reproached before their end, that others may the more fear their own weakness: where new knowledge is not sought, there is the less savor in the old, and when men make not good use of the old, the seeking of the new is but an enquiring after novelties.

Twentiethly, [unspec 20] Men having experience of Satan's malice, and continual dogging of them to do evil, it should move them to truss on their armor, to trust better in the Lord, and less to themselves. Corruption grows when it is not suspected, and where it is suspected to grow, if we go not about to pull it out, and pluck it up, it will be too deeply fastened in a short time. The like may be said of conceitedness, though a man pray, and meditate, and keep a better course in his life than some do, yet if he do it but slightly, that the flesh prevaileth much in hindering the well performing of it, all will soon come to naught: It may be perceived in the sway it beareth in other parts of the life, and then let it be speedily amended.

Oneantwentiethly, [unspec 21] It is good so to task ourselves with duties, one or other, at all times, and in all places, that we may cut off occasions of much sin. Men have never so much wealth, but more is ever welcome. Why should we not do the like in spiritual things? even whosoever hath most and greatest part therein: when we be come to the highest degree of seeking God with much travail, yet we abide hardly, and a short time therein, at least much unprofitableness and barrenness will meet with us again afterwards, by means of our corrupt hearts, which being so, we need not think that we be too forward, when we be at the best.

Twoantwentiethly, [unspec 22] Let no sin be slightly passed over, or boldly committed, for when it cometh to remembrance in trouble, it will be an heavy burden, and pinch us to the very heart.

Quest. What other Observations fit to be meditated upon, shall we find in the writings of godly men?

Answ. These and such like.

First, [unspec 1] That we keep a narrow watch over our hearts, words, and deeds continually.

Secondly, [unspec 2] That with all care the time be redeemed, which hath been carelessly, and idly, and unprofitably spent.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] That once in the day private prayer at the least, and meditation (if it may) be used.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] That care be had to do, and receive good in company.

Fifthly, [unspec 5] That our family be with diligence and regard instructed, watched over, and governed.

Sixthly, [unspec 6] That no more time or care be bestowed in matters of the world, than must needs.

Seventhly, [unspec 7] That we stir up ourselves to liberality to God's Saints.

Eighthly, [unspec 8] That we give not the least liberty to wandering lusts and affections.

Ninthly, [unspec 9] That we prepare ourselves to bear the cross, by what means soever it shall please God to exercise us.

Tenthly, [unspec 10] That we bestow some time, not only in mourning for our own sins, but also for the sins of others, of the time and age wherein we live.

Eleventhly, [unspec 11] That we look daily for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, for our full deliverance out of this life.

Twelfthly, [unspec 12] That we use (as we shall have opportunity, at least as we shall have necessity) to acquaint ourselves with some godly, and faithful persons, with whom we may confer of our Christian estate, and open our doubts, to the quickening up of God's Graces in us.

Thirteenthly, [unspec 13] That we observe the departure of men out of this life, their mortality, the vanity and alteration of things below, the more to contemn the world, and to continue our longing after the life to come: And that we meditate, and muse often on our own death, and going out of this life, how we must lie in the grave, which will serve to beat down the pride of life in us.

Fourteenthly, [unspec 14] That we read somewhat daily of the holy Scriptures for the further increase of our knowledge, and understanding, if it may be.

Fifteenthly, [unspec 15] That we enter into Covenant with God, that we will strive against all sin, especially against the special sins and corruptions of our hearts, and lives, wherein we have most dishonored the Lord, and raised up most guiltiness to our own consciences; that we carefully see our Covenant with God kept and continued.

Sixteenthly, [unspec 16] That we mark how sin dieth, and is weakened in us, and that we turn not to our old sins again, but wisely avoid all occasions of sin.

Seventeenthly, [unspec 17] That we fall not from our first love, but continue still our affections to the liking of God's Word, and all the holy exercises of Religion, diligently hearing it, and faithfully practicing it in our lives and conversations; that we prepare ourselves before we come, meditate and confer of that we hear, either by ourselves, or with others, and so mark our daily profiting in Religion.

Eighteenthly, [unspec 18] That we be often occupied in meditating on God's Works, and benefits, and sound forth his praises for the same.

Nineteenthly, [unspec 19] That we exercise our faith by taking great comfort and delight in the great benefit of our Redemption by Christ, and the fruition of God's presence in his glorious and blessed Kingdom.

Lastly, [unspec 20] That we make not these holy Meditations, and such like practices of repentance, common or customary in time, neither use them for course.

Quest. What place is fit for Meditation?

Answ. It is indifferent whether it be in the house, or in the field, at home, or abroad, walking, sitting, or lying; but a solitary place is fittest for this exercise: (as our Savior hath taught us, When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and pray privately) that being alone, not distracted with noise, or company, we might with more freedom, and quietness, talk with God. We cannot be too wary in avoiding all occasions of disturbance, because every small thing will soon break us off in this service. But some men can be more solitary at the Market-cross, or in the midst of a throng, than some others in their closets (when they be furthest removed from company.)

Moreover, it is not amiss to use one place often, for we find fewest Impediments there where we are most accustomed to meet the Lord; then we can best recollect our thoughts, and being gathered, keep them together without distraction.

Quest. What say you of them that have no room to be alone?

Answ. First, [unspec 1] They must be diligent to redeem the time, and watch all opportunities, not making their wants a cloak for their negligence.

Secondly, [unspec 2] Though all men cannot be fitted, as they desire, for secrecy, and solitariness to withdraw themselves from company, and noise, yet there is no man that hath an unfeigned desire to perform this duty, but he may find some place to do it in, either in the field with Isaac, or in the house with Daniel, or at least (if they be hindered all the day long) in his bed with David.

Quest. What time must be set apart for the performance of this duty?

Answ. [unspec 1] First, The Lord's day is the fittest time in the week for the performance of this exercise: but though it must not be omitted on that day, yet it must not be put off till that day.

Secondly, [unspec 2] Some time convenient must be set apart for this duty every day, and that must be observed constantly, as much as we can, for by that means we shall be better enabled to finish this work with better success.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] No part, nor hour of the day is absolutely necessary to be kept, neither is a man so strictly bound to observe the time which he hath chosen, as fit and seasonable that he should charge himself in conscience to be guilty of sin, if upon occasion he change it unto some other. Order in all good duties is a cause of constancy, and constant order is a notable means of continuance.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] As for the fittest hour in the day, a man's own experience must instruct him, and his occasions direct him, whether to take the golden hours of the morning, when being awakened, and refreshed by sweet sleep and quiet rest, he shall find himself free, and fit to meditate upon some heavenly matter, as Jacob did; or the evening, when he hath ended his labors, which was the time that Isaac took; or the midst of the day, which was Peters time; or any other part, and hour of the day: David and Daniel used three times a day to pray, and meditate.

Fifthly, The most quiet, [unspec 5] and free times (if strength and wakefulness will give leave) are the morning, evening, and night season: which were the times approved among the Heathen, who for the better imprinting of anything in memory, give this counsel (which common experience doth confirm) to think seriously upon it in the evening before they sleep, and to call it again to mind in the morning when they awake: Oh how sweet it is to awake with God in the morning, and to salute him with our first thoughts! How safe and profitable to prevent unsavory thoughts, and wicked projects, by lodging up in our soul some holy matter worthy our chief employment; and to prepare the heart to walk with God before we enter into the world! He that makes himself well ready every morning, shall pass the rest of the day with much ease, and great comfort. It is much with what liquor the heart is first seasoned; if it be well prepared with some heavenly Meditation before the cares of this life take up the room; it will be kept in better order, in all businesses, occasions, accidents whatsoever. How fit is it when we have tasted of the blessings of the day, that we should render unto God the fruit, not of the lips, but of the heart, and come into his presence from whom we have received so many favors? What more expedient, than that we should commend ourselves into the hands of God with confidence, and make our accounts even, being to lie down in his fear? What more excellent recreation after tedious labor, than to recount the mercies of the Lord, his fatherly protection, the dangers we escaped, what service we owe to God for all the tokens of his love, and what cause we have to be humbled for all our sins. Of the night David saith, My reins shall teach me in the night season. God used to speak to his servants in the night by dreams and visions. When we are freed from cares and incumberances, compassed about with darkness, that outward objects apprehended by the eye, cannot draw the mind away; when all things are quiet, and still, then what greater solace, or sweet refreshing can be found, than to lift up the heart to Heaven? But these times may be commended as fit, not urged as absolutely necessary.

Sixthly, [unspec 6] Every man must set apart some time for this duty, but they the most, that have most leisure, and opportunity: Meditation is an affirmative duty, which must be

taken in hand when the Lord calleth thereunto, and putteth it upon us by affording us means, and season.

Quest. What say you to them that pretend multitude of worldly business to excuse the omission, and neglect of this exercise?

Answ. It is their sin, that they will thus set God against himself, as though he should command them to do that which hindereth them from another duty commanded: God hath appointed unto us our several standings in our general, and personal callings, they are both of him, and the duties belonging to them both will excellently stand together, if the Commandments of God be not contrary. Nay rather, we should think that following of the world to be too much, which is not ordered and moderated by due consideration, how far, and in what manner we should deal in the world, so as not to be hindered from holiness by it, but even to practice holiness in our earthly affairs. If we be rich, we have the less cause to be holden from Meditation by worldly cares. If poor, we have the more need of this duty to moderate our care, that it exceed not, nor carry us to unbelief; What example soever we have of the contrary in the multitude of worldlings among whom we live, yet we must know, though others will not, that we are not set here in our places to do as loose, and wretched servants, who when they go to Market, neglect their Masters business, and mis-spend their time.

Quest. What course must be holden to redeem time out of the world for Meditation?

Answ. First, Walk so on earth, [unspec 1] as that thy chief delight be in Heaven still: use this world as a Pilgrim doth his cloak. Love will find somewhat to do, they that delight in the world, will make business in the world, as children invent matter of play: But if Christ be our beloved, and our treasure in Heaven, nothing can hold our hearts from him.

Secondly, [unspec 2] Order the affairs of this life wisely, that everything may have its fit time and season: we have sufficient allowance for the dispatch of all our labors, if we take the opportunity, and manage both work, and means with discretion. If thy heart be upright, fear not, God will teach thee how to walk. To the man that is good in his sight, God giveth wisdom, knowledge, and joy.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] Spend not much time either in consulting privately with thyself, or by talking, in company with others, about that whereof there is no use, or which may be done and ended in a little space.

Thoughts of the world do tickle us, and that may be determined in a few sentences, and in a part of an hour, which may (if we take not heed) hold us work the most part of a day. Worldly speech doth so relish to our pallats, that if we enter upon it, we cannot tell when to make an end. These two great devourers of time must narrowly be watched against, for if we waste time needlessly about the things of this life, we must needs fall short in better matters.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] Gird up thy loins with strength, and what thou dost, do it with all thy might; thy calling requires labor, trifling will not serve the turn.

Quest. How must we make entrance into this exercise?

Answ. After we have selected something wherein we have some knowledge, or understanding, we must make entrance unto it, by some short, yet earnest, and pithy prayer unto God, to guide, and direct us therein by the gracious assistance of his holy Spirit, without which we shall beat our brains to no purpose. The Heathen began their business with invocation. Of ourselves we are not able to think one good thought, and if in presumption of our wit, invention, memory, learning, or anything beside, we set upon this work, the success is like to be answerable to the beginning: without the help of God we can do nothing that is good. The matter or form of our prayer must be this, or such like: Oh Lord, since it hath pleased thee to give me a mind ready, and desirous to perform this holy duty (for which I humbly thank thy heavenly Majesty) I beseech thee by thy holy Spirit to assist me therein, that I may bring the same to a profitable and comfortable issue. Thou hast charged me, Oh Lord, to seek thy face, that is, thy blessed and holy presence; Let my soul answer, and say with thy faithful servant, Lord, I will seek thy face; Oh cause the light of thy face to shine upon me, enlighten my understanding, strengthen my memory, and sanctify my will and affections; with-hold my ranging and truant-like heart, from all trifling fantasies, deceitful dreams, vain hopes, carnal fears, and worldly cares, wherewith it is naturally and customarily entangled, keep it unto thyself, and unto thy laws, that it may wholly delight and solace itself in thee, and grant that this point that I now go about to think upon, may be so settled in my memory, and rooted in my heart, that I may reap the fruit thereof all my life long, to thy glory, and my own comfort, and salvation, through Jesus Christ.

Quest. In what order must we proceed after the entrance?

Answ. [unspec 1] First, We must first travel with our judgment to inform it, and then make application, that it may work upon the heart: Knowledge without affection is dead and fruitless, Affection without understanding is blind and inordinate: All good motions arise from sound judgment, and must be ruled by it, else they will be as a ship without a Governor, that is in danger to run upon the sands, or to split against the rocks.

Secondly, [unspec 2] For the helping of our judgment, understanding, invention, and memory, it is good for to call to mind (so far as we can) what the Holy Ghost saith in the Scriptures of that thing which we meditate upon, referring the particular passages to the several heads, or places of reason. This is a great help to lead us along in our discourse with more ease and facility, and to furnish us more readily with profitable matter, touching the point we meditate upon; as the marks set up in the high-way, direct a traveler in his intended journey; yet we must not be curious, nor scrupulous herein, for that would distract the mind, and draw us too much from the right end of this holy exercise, which is not to practice Logic, but to exercise Religion, and to kindle piety, and devotion. And therefore it shall be our wisdom to take such places or heads only, as are most pregnant, and ready at hand, and do more easily offer themselves to our mind. But this order cannot be prescribed as necessary, but as profitable only. In this we must labor with diligence, and sincerity, that the understanding, or memory, may be bettered, or confirmed, but the method is left free, as each man shall find it most convenient.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] Our proceeding to inform the mind cannot be after one manner in all things. We must observe one thing in our Meditation of God, another of his Works; one of

good Duties, another of our Sins: one thing when we meditate on simple theams, another when we consider of an entire sentence. This shall be in a good measure made clear by examples hereafter following.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] Application is the life of Meditation; for the increase of knowledge, and strenthening of memory, is vain and to little purpose, unless the affection be reformed and kindled. It is not the knowledge of good and evil, but the hearty, and unfeigned affecting of the one, with a zealous detestation of the other, that makes us holy, and happy. We must therefore endeavor to have a sensible taste, lively touch, and feeling of that whereof we have discoursed with ourselves, according to the former direction, that we may be affected either with godly joy, or godly sorrow, godly hope, or godly reverence, &c.

Fifthly, [unspec 5] The affections to be quickened, are divers, according to the nature of the thing meditated upon. As for example, if we meditate on God, or any of his mercies, or benefits, we must labor with our hearts and affections to feel how sweet the Lord is; that as doting Lovers do inwardly conceive a carnal delight in thinking and speaking of them whom they so love, and of the letters, and tokens they have received from them: So we may conceive a spiritual joy and contentment by thinking and speaking of the Lord, and of his mercies towards us.

Again, if we meditate on sin according to the former example, we must labor to feel the plague in our own hearts, and to know, that it is an evil thing, and bitter, to forsake the Lord our God, and not to have his fear in us.

Sixthly, The chief things to be observed for the quickening and affecting of the heart, are these.

1 Trial, examination and communing with ourselves, wherein we have offended, or come short of our duty.

2 Taking shame to ourselves for our transgressions, joined with lamentable, and doleful complaining, and bewailing of our own estate, either in respect of the sin that aboundeth, or the grace that is wanting.

3 A most passionate, vehement, earnest, and hearty longing after the removal of this sin, and punishment, which we hate, and obtaining the good things which we love.

4 Religious quickening and calling upon our souls, by many strong and forcible reasons, to hate evil, and follow that which is good.

The fifth is an humble, and unfeigned acknowledgement, and confession of our own weakness and inability, either to remove the evil, or obtain the good, proceeding from a broken and contrite heart.

The sixth is fervent Petition, earnestly craving, and begging this at the hands of God, who is only able to effect it.

The last is cheerful confidence, raising and rousing up our souls, after such doleful complaining, hearty wishing, humble confessing, unfeigned acknowledging, and serious stirring up ourselves, and earnest craving of what we want, grounded upon the most sweet,

and sure Promises of God, made to them that call upon him in Faith, and upon the experience which the Saints of God in all ages have had of the success of their suits, who were never sent empty away, but either obtained that thing which they begged, or that which was much better for them; but these things are specially observed in Meditation upon some grace, or sin, as will be made more evident, and plain, by examples, and are not ever necessary, that they should be particularly observed.

Quest. What is to be observed for conclusion of this exercise?

A. First, [unspec 1] We must begin when the heart is fitly disposed, or at least labor to bring it into order, before we set upon this duty, and break off before the spirits be dulled, and tired, otherwise we shall lose the comfort and sweetness of it.

Secondly, [unspec 2] It is not good suddenly, or abruptly, to break off, except some unavoidable necessity of company or business do urge us thereunto.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] The conclusion of this exercise consists principally in these things.

1 Hearty thanksgiving to God, that hath vouchsafed in such gracious measure to assist us in the performing of this duty.

2 Recommending ourselves, and our ways to him, that our life, and carriage, and all our thoughts, and actions afterwards, may be answerable to those heavenly thoughts and desires which we have had, and express in the performing of this duty.

3 Renewing our covenant to live by Faith, and to walk with God in all holy conversation.

Quest. Declare this by some example, and first, how should we meditate on God his infinite excellency?

Answ. Entrance may be made thus into it. Oh Lord, my heart desires to commune with thee, that I might come into better acquaintance with thy Majesty; but of myself I have no ability to conceive what is right, or to think a good thought concerning thy highness: Teach me therefore, Oh gracious God, if not to comprehend thine excellency, for that is impossible, yet so to confer with thee, that I may apprehend in some measure how thou hast revealed thyself, and what thou wilt be unto me: that knowing thee in thy power, goodness, truth, sovereignty, and grace, I may unfeignedly cleave unto thee all the days of my life.

Quest. How must we proceed in this Meditation?

Answ. We must consider of his titles, properties, and works, observing how infinitely he exceedeth what excellency soever is in any, or all the creatures in the world. Oh Lord, thou dwellest in the light unapproachable, whom man never saw, neither can see and live; thou art incomprehensible by reason, and unnameable by words, thy name is wonderful, and thy nature secret, I cannot comprehend what thou art, I will labor to know what thou hast revealed; I am not able to behold thy face, let me see thy back-parts, for this is my life, and joy of heart to know thee the only true God, which springeth, and increaseth daily as I come to the fuller knowledge of thee: and shall be infinite, because thou art infinite.

I believe as thou hast taught me (according to my manner, and measure) that thou art a Spirit, without beginning, without cause, the first and absolute being, living in and of thyself; giving being and life to all creatures; infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, without composition, one in essence, and three in persons; most perfect, a mere act, blessed, and glorious: all sufficient in thyself, for us a great reward, void of all possibility to be what thou art not; great in power, infinite in wisdom, abundant in goodness, everlasting in compassion, rich in mercy, faithful, sincere, constant in thy promises, unchangeable in thy love, gentle, easy to be entreated, just and righteous in all thy Commandments, and Proceedings: the most absolute, universal sovereignty of all things both in Heaven and Earth: Thy name is wonderful in all the world, for thou hast created all things, and by thy appointment they continue unto this day. Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and it abideth, thou hast stretched forth the heavens, as a curtain, and in them or dained a Tabernacle for the Sun. Thou stillest the raging of the Sea, and the proud waves are quelled by thy command: the day is thine, the night also is thine, the Moon and Stars are the work of thine hands: Thou thunderest from Heaven by thy voice, and bringest the winds out of their treasure; thou breakest up the deep, and causest the springs to ascend in the valleys. Thou causest the grass to grow upon the mountains, and satisfiest with thy goodness every living thing. The earth, Oh Lord, is full of thy goodness, but thy glory shines most bright in the assembly of thy Saints. Oh what wisdom, power, grace, mercy, love, longsuffering hast thou manifested in Jesus Christ, the brightness of thy glory, the image of the invisible God? what great admirable things hast thou done for thy people? thou hast reconciled them being enemies, redeemed them being bond-slaves, justified them being sinners, of vassals of Satan thou hast adopted them to be thy sons, of unclean and polluted, thou hast washed, and made them clean: Thou guardest them with thy Angels, protectest them against dangers, feedest them with fatness, and marrow, and hast reserved for them the Kingdom of Heaven. All thy Works praise thee, Oh Lord, and thy Saints bless thee.

Great is the power, wisdom, holiness, and glory of the heavenly Angels, but they are finite, created, dependent; great, immortal, glorious by participation only, not able to behold the glory of God; great is the renown, dignity, dominion of earthly Monarchs, but their persons are mortal, their glory fading, their Dominion temporary, their power limited, what they are, they have by deputation, during pleasure: As for our God, he is an infinite, eternal, absolute, independent sovereign: His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and his Dominion endureth throughout all ages, Before the foundations of the earth were laid, and ere the mountains were formed, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. But Lord thine excellency far exceedeth all that I can conceive; for what can a finite understanding comprehend of an infinite being? I know very little of thy ways, much less of thy nature; yea what thou hast revealed of thyself in thy Word, doth rather make known what thou wilt be to thy people, than what thou art in thyself. As the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are thy ways higher than our ways, and thy thoughts than our thoughts.

Quest. How are these things to be laid to heart, and pressed upon the soul?

Answ. We must stir up ourselves to desire full knowledge of God, and free communion with him, to trust, love, reverence, glory in his name, and to walk before him in all humility of mind. Blessed is the man that knoweth the Lord, and cleaveth unto him in love, fear, and affiance: yea happy is the man whose God is the Lord. Look unto God, Oh my soul, observe

his ways, seek his face, and labor after more entire fellowship and familiarity with him. The knowledge of God is excellent, easy, comfortable, it perfecteth the understanding, seasoneth the will, changeth the affections, rejoiceth the heart. The worth, and excellency, the profit, and delight that knowledge bringeth, is answerable to the object which is apprehended, in which the knowledge of God hath infinitely the preeminence. Nothing can rejoice the heart, in which the goodness of God is not felt, nor his power, wisdom and mercy seen: Oh how sweet and delightsome is it to behold the face of God as it shineth in Jesus Christ, to contemplate the happy Reconciliation of justice and mercy, by his unsearchable wisdom, to think upon his longsuffering, tender love, and never-fading compassion! Love the Lord, Oh my soul, and trust in his mercy, serve him with fear, and rejoice in his holy name, for he is thy strength, thy rock, thy portion, thy salvation. His favor is better than life; in his presence is fullness of joy; he is goodness itself, the highness of all good things that can be desired. The pleasures of the world are vain; earthly gain breeds great vexations, worldly honors vanish and come to nothing; but God is our pleasure, glory, gain, everlasting, immeasurable; But woe is me, my sight is dim, my judgment vain, my heart carnal, my affections disordered, my thoughts loose, I know little of God, I have been very negligent to seek acquaintance with him. These vain things below, the gifts of God's bounty have stolen away my heart, from the giver of every good and perfect gift; If men speak, I tremble, if they smile, I rejoice, in their presence I am reverent, if superiors; cheerful if friends; if absent, I long for their company; if present, I desire to give them content; if in distress, I mourn; if in prosperity, I rejoice; when separated from them in body, I am with them in spirit: If I be ignorant of the things of this life, I inquire after them; if I have sustained loss, I fall out with myself for it, am pinched at the heart, learn wisdom, against another time, and labor by double diligence to redeem it again: But I have greatly neglected the knowledge of God, when he threateneth, I am senseless; in his presence, I am irreverent, dead-hearted when I appear before him; lumpish in Prayer, loose in Meditation (scarce lifting up a thought to Heaven) soon tired in the Meditation of heavenly things, never well till my thoughts be set at liberty, to range up and down, not moved to hear thy name dishonored, little affected with grief when I have offended. I am ashamed and confounded in myself to hear, and see the wisdom of worldly men in the affairs of this life, when I am so rude, and ignorant in the things that concern my eternal happiness. The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his Masters crib; but I am not acquainted with the Lord my life, my light, my portion, from whom I have received what I am, in whom I look to be eternally blessed: Ah wretched man that I am. I look for reverence from mine inferiors, for love from them of whom I have deserved little, to whom I can show small kindness. If men give not credit to my Word, I take it grievously, but in these things I have offered wrong to the Lord of life, who is glorious in Majesty, dreadful in power, plenteous in goodness, most constant in his promises. Oh that mine eyes were open to behold the glory of God, and my heart inclined to love him unfeignedly, entirely, above all things; Oh that my soul were close united to his fear, that I could solace myself in his favor, and stand in awe of his displeasure, that I might not sin against him: Awake, Oh my soul, rouse up thyself to seek the knowledge of God in Christ, whom to see is eternal happiness: What contentment canst thou take in anything, if God be not seen in it? If the eye of the body, wherewith we behold this light, be annoyed or dimmed, we will seek far and wide for help, and shall we not labor to have the eye of our spirits cleared, wherewith we see the Lord, the Son of Righteousness, the light, and joy of every Christian? Raise up thyself to love, reverence, and trust in the Lord; Thou canst not

comprehend his goodness, which is immeasurable, his power, which is unsearchable, his truth, which is firm, and immovable; as his infiniteness passeth thy conceit, covet the more inseparably to cleave unto him: Couldest thou comprehend his nature, he should not be all-sufficient in himself, nor able to satisfy thy desire: But as God is infinite, and never to be comprehended essentially; so is our joy in him bottomless, our help from him most certain, and our love to him should be above measure, our confidence in him without wavering. Oh my God, I do confess before thee, that I am miserably stained with ignorance, unbelief, irreverence, I am full of carnal wisdom, harlotry love, vain fear, fleshly confidence, corrupt joy; But grievously wanting in true knowledge, sound faith, sincere love, and holy reverence of thy holy Majesty. Nor is my want greater than my inability to help myself: the dead cannot restore himself to life, nor the blind to sight, supernatural graces must come from above; Therefore unto thee, O Lord, do I direct my supplication, give me grace to know thee as my chief happiness, to love thee as the perfect good; unite my heart unto thee in Faith and Reverence, that nothing may draw me aside from thy testimonies. It is thy promise to write thy Law in my heart, and to put thy fear in the inner man; Oh Lord, thou art able to do what thou wilt, and thou wilt accomplish what thou hast spoken; unto thee I commend my soul, and upon thee I will rely as long as I live.

Quest. Let the holy Angels be a second instance; how are we to proceed in the Meditation of that subject?

Answ. We must consider their author, nature, properties, estate, end, and offices.

The Angels are more excellent than man, but inferior to the Almighty, from whom they received their being in time according to his good pleasure, and by whose goodness such as abode in the truth were still preserved in their being, and blessed condition.

The truth hath taught us to define them to be spirits, finite, complete, immortal, made after the Image of God, who through his grace and goodness abode still in the estate of innocence and blessedness; they are created spirits, limited in essence, compounded of subject and accident, act and possibility, immortal by participation, mutable by creation, but established by grace in their first state.

As spirits, they are invisible, immaterial, incorruptible, intelligent; as chief instruments of God's providence, they are furnished with great power, incredible swiftness, singular wisdom, burning zeal, and undoubted faithfulness; as blessed Ministers that ever attend his Throne, they are endued with clear knowledge of God, inestimable love, exceeding joy, and admirable glory.

Their life is spiritual, their state blessed, and permanent, for they stand ever in the presence of God, behold his glory, and rest in him with full delight.

Their End, and office, in respect of God, is to praise his Name, and execute his Commandment; in respect of Christ, to minister, and attend upon him; in regard of men, to rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, to guard and protect the faithful against the dangers of this life, and the assaults of Satan, to curb, bridle, and destroy their enemies, and to gather the elect together at the day of judgment.

Quest. How are these things to be pressed, and urged, and applied unto the heart?

Answ. 1 We must stir up ourselves to admire the power, goodness, and glory of God in himself, his tender care over us, rouse up our souls to the obedience of God's will, and respect of his children, and take courage to rely upon God in the midst of dangers that compass us about; who would not fear thee, O Lord, our God, glorious in Majesty, dreadful in Holiness, wonderful in Power! Thine holy Angels excel in strength, are clothed with glory, that man cannot behold; but all their might and goodness is derived from thee, a drop of thy Ocean, a beam of thy Sun; if the glory of the creature be so great, the glory of the Creator must infinitely surpass all comprehension. Oh how blockish am I, that in the view and contemplation of the work, have not enlarged my heart to laud and magnify the work-man?

Arise my soul, and gird thyself to the cheerful, sincere, faithful obedience to God's Commandment. To do the will of God is Angelical preferment, a divine and heavenly exercise, the greatest freedom and perfection. Make haste, delay not to exercise his good pleasure. Loe the Angels in Heaven are thy samplers, whom thou oughtest to follow. Let not that seem irksome to thee, that is delightsome to them: esteem it not a burden, which is to them an heavenly solace, and refreshing. Ah wretched man! why should I grudge to yield obedience to my heavenly Father, or do his will negligently by the halves, when those Noble spirits, and heavenly soldiers do always stand in readiness, to receive his commands, and execute their commission? Doth the world despise the poor Saints of God for their outward baseness; yet I will honor them as the only excellent, for God is their Father, the Angels their Attendants. We cap, and bow to them that are nobly attended, gorgeously arrayed, honorably served, but herein the Saints excel, if the thing be well considered. They are esteemed the scum of the world, but respected of God in such manner that he hath given his Angels charge over them; the guard that attends upon his Throne is assigned to watch over them. Walk on courageously, O my soul, walk on courageously in the ways of piety. Fear not the assaults of Satan, the fury of any adverse power that shall oppose itself; for more are with thee, than can be against thee. If Satan with his bands endeavor thy destruction, The troops of heavenly Angels do watch for thy defense, yea, the Lord himself is thy keeper, and stands at thy right hand to save thee from all them that rise up against thee. How great is the clemency, and tender care of the Lord over his poor people? what tongue can express, what heart comprehend his infinite goodness? he sends from on high his mighty soldiers to encamp about us, watch over us, preserve, and save us, from them that lie in wait to vex, and annoy. Oh my Father, what can I render unto thee for this thy great kindness, and unspeakable mercy? I have nothing to give but my heart, which here I offer unto thee; and because I am weak, exposed to the temptations of Satan, and allurements of this wicked world, I pray thee give me thy grace, confirm, and strengthen me, that I may imitate those pure spirits every day more and more, that I may praise thy Name, execute thy Commandments, love thy Children, rejoice in the conversion of them that go astray, and fight thy battles against sin and Satan.

Quest. Let man be the third example; how must we proceed to meditate on that Subject?

Answ. For the better information of our judgment, we must consider these particulars; the Author, the Matter, Form, End Properties, and Effects, what are like, and what opposite. Man is inferior to the Angels, but of earthly creatures most excellent.

The Author of this principal work is God himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that in special manner; for other creatures were made by a simple command; man not without a divine consultation; others at once; man he did first form, then inspire: others in several shapes like to none other but themselves; man after his own Image: others with qualities fit for service; man for Dominion: He was made the last of the creatures, and brought as the Lord's Vicegerent into this world, as into a parlor ready trimmed and prepared, for so worthy a guest.

Man consisteth of two parts, Matter, and Form; Heaven and Earth, a human body, and divine soul; and well may be called a little abridgement, map, or table of the whole world. In his soul is the nature of Angels, though not so active and extensive. In his body are the Elements, Meteors, Minerals, as may appear both by vapors, fumes and spirits: He lives the life of plants, he hath the senses of beasts, and above all, the addition of reason. His body was framed of the dust of the ground, in more exquisite manner than any other, furnished with most excellent instruments, absolutely composed, both for beauty, and duty, in all the works of holiness, and righteousness: For variety of parts, sweetly knit together, and orderly disposed, it was wonderful; for temperature, exact; for form, erect and straight. In the whole, beautiful, glorious, strong, subject to no annoyance, most artificially fashioned, that it might be the neat, stately Palace of a Divine, Noble, reasonable soul. In every part beauty, strength, convenience meet together. The distinct consideration of every member with its temper, proportion, placing, figure, and use might well astonish: The soul of man was immediately created of nothing, and being endued with most excellent faculties and gifts natural and supernatural, was infused into the body, and inseparably knit (had not sin made an unnatural divorce) to give life, motion, and sense unto it: Thus man was made the wonder of the world, the principallest of living creatures, endued with a reasonable soul, most divinely qualified, and strictly united to that earthly mass to quicken and enliven it.

The end why man was made in respect of God, was the glory of his power, goodness and wisdom, appearing in the work itself; of his justice in rewarding man if obedient, and in punishing man if disobedient; of his grace and mercy redeeming him fallen into the gulf of misery, and that man should praise and magnify his glorious name. In respect of man, that he should live blessedly forever if he did obey: man by creation was immortal, for death is an enemy, no consequent of nature, but a companion of sin; man dieth not because his body was framed of the dust, but because he is infected with sin: Subjection to mortality, and all miseries accompanying it, is a fruit of disobedience.

He is reasonable and intelligent, able to think, invent, judge, devise, compose, discourse, remember, choose, refuse, suspend, and affect. These powers being essential to man's nature do still remain, but very weak, and corrupt since the fall. Also to man is given power to eat, drink, sleep, weep, laugh, and speak, whereby he may communicate to others whatsoever he conceiveth: he was perfectly conformable to the will of God, made after the Image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness: But the Image of God is defaced with sin, there remaining only some relics in us, as the ruins of a magnificent and stately palace, that served to show what once we had. Moreover in the state of innocence, man was honored with great Royalties and Prerogatives, for he had liberty to eat of every tree in the Garden, except the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and was made ruler over

all earthly creatures, that he might freely use them to the glory of God, his own necessity, and lawful pleasure: But these privileges he hath forfeited by rebellion against his Creator.

The effects of man are suitable to the faculties, and gifts he hath received, as to know God, call upon his name, worship him sincerely, preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, govern, give counsel, contemplate the works of God, read, write, confer, and dispute, exercise the works of virtue, and honesty, govern the affections, reverence superiors, live peaceably, and such like. But in all these things we have much dis-enabled ourselves by willful disobedience.

Would you see the prime dignity of man by comparison? In soul he is like the Angels, invisible, immaterial, immortal, beautified with understanding, will and power, enriched with admirable, divine gifts, whereby he resembleth God, or carrieth his Image. In body he is the perfection of all earthly things whom they are to serve. In both he is the Epitome of all created excellency in Heaven and Earth.

Quest. How must these things be applied unto the heart for the quickening of affection?

Answ. We must stir up ourselves to magnify the goodness of the Lord towards man-kind, to shame ourselves in conscience of our sins and misery: raise up the heart to the contempt of earthly things, and love of obedience, and seek unto God to have his Image repaired in us again, through Jesus Christ. Lord, what is man that thou visitest him, the son of man that thou so regardest him. Thou hast made him little inferior to the Angels, adorned him with grace, stamped upon him thy Image, invested him with dignity, and crowned him with glory and honor. Thou hast given him Dominion over the work of thy hands, and put all things in subjection under his feet: Thou hast made him for thy service, his soul to be thy habitation, his body to be the Temple of thy spirit, and all other things to be serviceable unto him, the world, and all that is therein for his use. All things are prepared for him; all things are subject to him, he ruleth over all living creatures, they labor for him, obey his command. Lord thou art the glory of man, man the receptacle of thy works, thy wisdom, and power: But as mine excellency by creation exceeds, so doth my shame and misery by sin and disobedience: The higher mine advancement, the lower my fall. This was my chief honor and title, that I was the Image of God; This is my disgrace and ignominy that I bear the Image of the Devil: This is my comfort, that God did love, delight, and desire to dwell in me, it is my misery that I am cast out of thy favor, and lie under wrath: Ah what grief is this to think, how my condition is altered, through my foolishness? once immortal, now mortal; once pure, now impure and polluted; once rich in wisdom, and grace, now blind, and naked; once the Image and free servant of God, now the vassal of Satan; once at peace with God, my conscience, all creatures, now at war with his Majesty, myself, all the world: Once a free man to walk at liberty, now a bondslave that can do nothing but sin; once the Ruler of all creatures, now of all creatures the basest (Satan excepted) once subject to no annoyance, now secure from nothing that might offend. If a Noble man fall from height of honor, to great contempt and bitter extremities, he is much afflicted: much greater cause have I to bemoan my folly, who have cast myself headlong from Heaven unto Earth, even to the gulf of misery and confusion. Oh my soul, why dost thou forget thyself, so much as to affect the base things of this life? It is a shame for him that was to subdue all things, to suffer himself to be subdued by men, and to become a Lacquey to his vile affections, doing honor to the

three great Idols of the world, profit, pleasure, and preferment. The world is too vile for thy delight, thou art created for more divine service, the Lord himself covets thy love.

The glory of the world is put under thy feet, as things to be trodden upon, that which thou shouldest affect is far above, heavenly and glorious. If the fashion of the body should be so changed, that the face and eyes bowed to the earth continually, should never be able to look up, it would be grievous: But if the soul which should be lifted up to God, do creep upon earth, be glued to worldly, vain delights, the alteration is more uncomfortable and monstrous. He that subdueth the world, doth yield himself to the service of God, which is perfect liberty; But when we become slaves to the world, we labor to make God servant to our lusts, which is most abominable, and accursed. The glutton makes God his caterer, his belly his God, and himself the guest; The covetous worldling would have God his Broker, and himself the Usurer; The angry sinner would have God his executioner, and himself the Judge; The ambitious inquisitor can sometimes make God and Religion his style, but honor shall be his God, and lust reign. The Lord himself is abased in our esteem. Love the Lord, Oh my soul, and give thyself to the obedience of his Commandments, thou art the perfection and end of all creatures, the Lord thy life, perfection, comfort: what thou art, is of him, that thou shalt be happy, is of his goodness; thou owest him thyself, thou wast created for his glory; defile not his Image, pollute not his workmanship, be not unthankful for what thou hast received, forget not thy own estate. O heavenly Father, I heartily desire to follow thee whithersoever thou shalt lead me, to do what thou shalt command, and to cleave unto thee as long as I live: But I find the flesh rebellious, soliciting daily, yea, and violently haling to those things that are evil: Ah miserable wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Thou, Thou Lord only art able, and willing to vouchsafe help, and succor: To thee therefore do I fly, I pray thee have mercy upon me in Jesus Christ, and repair the lost image of thyself. Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me, give me understanding, and I shall live; thou createdst me pure, thou canst restore me, though corrupt. Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me: Breathe into me the Spirit of Life, and establish me in the way of thy Precepts; Heal my soul, for I am defiled, and cause me to grow up unto the perfect stature of a spiritual man. I have wounded my soul, but cannot cure it, defaced thy Image, but cannot fashion it anew: Look upon my misery, dear Father, forgive my sin, and make me a new creature for thy infinite mercy, begin in me this good work, and perfect it to thy praise; in thee do I trust, to thee I seek for grace, for in thee the fatherless find mercy.

Quest. I would know in the fourth place, how we might proceed to meditate on God's infinite greatness?

Answ. God is infinitely good, without quality, infinitely great, without quantity, his excellency is incomprehensible, and surpasseth what we can speak or think. But for our proceeding in this Meditation according to our capacity, we may consider, what it is, what be the parts of it, and how incomparably it exceedeth whatsoever might be likened unto it. Great is the Lord, and worthy to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. Our God is the God of God's, and Lord of Lord's, a great God, mighty, and terrible, who being both the original and end of all things, cannot rightly be said to be anything; for he must needs be above all, and better than all. Such is his greatness, that he is that one, infinite, and eternal

being. See how that I, even I (saith the Lord) am he, and there is no God with me: I lift up my hand, and say, I live forever.

Thou Lord art so great, that thou art most perfectly one in essence, one in number: The Lord he is God, and there is none besides him. As thou art one in essence, so art thou one in thy purpose, determination, promise: For how shouldest thou that art one in number and essence, be otherwise than thyself? All things do turn upon this point, and hasten to this center: if it were not unity, multiplicity would destroy it. Thou Lord art infinite, without all limits of essence, without matter, or form, efficient, or end; thou art without all dimensions of length, breadth, or thickness; thou art without all limits of place, and yet fillest all places in Heaven or Earth; Thou art wholly without, and within all, and every place; nowhere excluded, and nowhere included, and that without all localmotion, or mutation of place. Thou art higher than the Heavens, deeper than Hell, longer than the Earth, broader than the Sea. Simply and purely everywhere by essence, and presence. A God at hand, and a God a far off. Thou movest or changest all things, without either motion, or change in thyself; thou art in every place present, in every place entire, within all things, and contained in nothing; without all things, and sustained by nothing; but containest, sustainest, and maintainest all things. Thou art unspeakably present in every place by essence, power, wisdom and providence, but thy glory is specially manifested to the Angels, and Saints in Heaven; thy grace, power, and mercy, to the Saints on earth, whom thou dost favor, with whom thou dwellest, for whose deliverance thou wilt arise, and have mercy, into whose hearts thou wilt shine comfort. Thou art eternal, before and after all beings, without all limits of time, past, present, and to come; Thou art at all times, but without respect of time, an everlasting, and immortal God, before, and after all times, and in all times forever and ever. Thou art the King of ages, the maker of times, the Inhabitour of eternity. Before the mountains were made, and ere ever thou hadst formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God: Everlasting in thyself, in love, in the fruits of thy favor, towards thy people, which thou hast chosen, in wrath and indignation against the obstinate, and disobedient. O God thou art great, and we know thee not, neither can the number of thy years be searched out; All powers on earth come short to be shadows of thy greatness; The Nations are as a drop of a bucket, less than nothing, and vanity before thee.

Quest. How must we apply these things to the heart?

Answ. We must stir up ourselves to magnify the Lord, love, fear, reverence, and trust in him forever. Great is the Lord, and worthy to be praised: for he sitteth upon the circuit of the earth, and stretcheth out the Heavens like a curtain: He bringeth the Princes of the earth to nothing, and lifteth up the meek to honor: Great is our Lord, and of great power, his understanding is infinite. The men of this world labor to set forth the state, and magnificence of earthly Monarchs, the largeness of their dominions, greatness of their power, continuance of their house. Oh my soul, why art thou so silent, awake, and sing aloud of the praises of God, whose greatness is infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, thou canst not by searching find him out: but remember to magnify his work, which men behold. Every man may see it. Man may behold it afar off; Love the Lord, Oh my soul, and stick fast unto him as thy life and treasure. He is that infinite, unbounded, eternal goodness, passing all human both search, and sight, that filleth and includeth all things. Alas, how do we affect a thousand things that cannot be effected, or if obtained, do vanish, or cloy, and can no more

satisfy desire, than salt water quencheth thirst? Oh that true love, like a strong stream, which the further it is from this head of eternity, would run into it with greater violence. In God's love there is no mixture of sorrow; no want of delight, fullness of pleasure, all manner of contentment. Alas! alas that ever so many cold winds of temptation should blow betwixt God and our hearts, to make our affections cooler unto him. What dull metal is this we are made of? we have the fountain of felicity and eternity, and yet complain of want and weariness. Do we freeze in the fire, and starve at a feast? Have we God to enjoy, and yet pine, and hang down the head? Let me have my God, and let me never want him, so shall my joys be lasting, pure, incomprehensible: for possessing him that is the pure, eternal, and an all-sufficient good, how should I not find fullness of joy, and contentment in him? Oh my soul, fear the Lord, and stand in awe of his Majesty, for he is a great God, and terrible, a King above all God's. At his presence the earth trembleth, the mountains quake, and the foundations of the world are shaken: The Angels cannot behold his glory, the Sun and Moon are not clean in his sight. Fear the Lord, and depart from iniquity; harbor no wicked plot in thy breast, contrive not evil in thy thoughts: for thou hast to deal with a God that is light of hearing, who dwelleth in thy heart, and knoweth thy Imaginations long before: And what needs any other evidence when the Judge is witness? His eyes are as flaming fire, his feet are as burning brass, he will tread down the wicked in his wrath, and vex them that hate him. Serve the Lord with fear, and commit thyself to him in well doing. Trust in the Lord at all times, and stay upon his mercy. He is the everlasting Rock, constant in promises, ever present for our aid, unchangeable in love and favor. No place can hinder God from doing us good; distance, or difficulty may be impediments to all the creatures to stay their help, but God at a blush fills all places, to comfort, or confound (as it pleaseth him.) He that is freed from dimensions, may pierce, and penetrate, enter and pass whither he pleaseth, without probability, or possibility of resistance. He hath created the world, and yet is not weary, his provision is no whit abated, his power nothing diminished: Let him carry us which way he will, make the passages never so troublesome and perilous, yet the same hand that makes them hard, will make them sure; and if we be faithful to him, will master all the difficulties for us. Let him cast us into such great miseries of long continuance, that he seem to forsake us, as if he would not return to our help, yet we know that he is everlasting, the Holy One of Israel, who cannot leave them forever that rely upon him. O God, as I have trusted thee with the beginning, so will I trust thee with the finishing of my glory: And though never so many or main hindrances of my salvation offer themselves, and after all hopes threaten to defeat me, yet faithful art thou who hast promised, who wilt also do it.

Quest. I would now hear how we must proceed to meditate on the Love of God?

Answ. We must consider of the efficient cause, subject, end, objects, effects, properties, and kinds of this Love; what is like, what opposite unto it.

The Love of God signifieth either that love whereby God loveth us, or that affection whereby we being united unto God, do rest in him with pleasure and delight: Of this Theological virtue first, in order, not the first, in fruit, and continuance, the greatest, the end of the Commandment, the bond of perfection, the fulfilling of the Law, I purpose to meditate by the grace of God. This Love is a grace supernatural, and is neither in us by nature, nor can be acquired by our endeavor. Yea, the measure of love is not defined according to the

endeavor of the received, but the pleasure and will of the Spirit measuring and pouring it into everyone.

The author, or principal cause of Divine Love, is God himself, by his blessed Spirit renewing, and regenerating our hearts to the love of his Majesty. Love is the fruit of the Spirit . He that loveth is born of God. Love is of God, and God is love: He loveth us in his well-beloved, and is the ever-springing fountain of all love in us. The Spirit openeth our eyes to see and behold the incomprehensible goodness of God, without which there is no love: For of a thing unknown there is no desire. The same Spirit infuseth the grace of love, whereby we are enabled to love God, and quickened unto it; whereas of ourselves we are destitute of all power and ability to every spiritual duty. And the Spirit sheddeth abroad the love of God in our hearts, whereby they are warmed to love God again: The means which the Spirit useth for this purpose, is the Word of Grace revealing the incomparable love of God in Jesus Christ towards us most miserable wretches.

The less principal cause of love is man renewed by the Spirit. Man regenerate doth love the Lord, not of himself, but by the grace of God: The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. Faith well rooted, will animate, quicken, and move love. Faith and Love are both graces supernatural, infused at once in the same instant of time; but in order of working, Faith hath the precedency, and kindleth Love.

From this it followeth, that the subject of Love is a renewed heart, enlightened with the true saving knowledge of God, purified by Faith, and seasoned by Grace. For Love is a spiritual affection in the reasonable part, presupposing knowledge, and affiance, whereby the soul goeth forth to embrace the good it apprehendeth.

The end of Love is the possession of God as the chief good. Love (as we see) makes man and woman one, and so it doth couple us to God. It is a weight whereby the heart is inclined toward God, and wholly carried unto him.

The object of Charity, is God in Christ; God is to be loved, not only as he is good, merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and bountiful; and as he doth love, and daily lade us with his blessings: But also as he is wise, just, and powerful, even as he doth chastise and visit us with severe corrections: For as the true love of children towards their Parents doth effect this, that they love their Parents, and persuade themselves that they be beloved of them, though they be reprehended, crossed, corrected, and cannot obtain what they will; so true Love doth look to God when he sendeth persecution, war, sickness, or any other calamity. God is to be loved in Christ, in whom he is well pleased, greatly delighted in us: If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed. Christ hath redeemed us unto God, and reconciled us being enemies. He is ordained of God to be our Lord and King, advanced at the right hand of his Father, to give salvation unto Israel. Love is a supernatural gift or Grace, whereby we cleave to God in Christ, and desire to possess him with joy, and comfort.

The acts, or effects of Love, presupposed, or comprehended under it, are these.

First, [unspec 1] To acknowledge God to be the chief good, and with most earnest desire to be carried towards him, that we might be united to him.

Secondly, [unspec 2] To rest, delight, and rejoice in him, and to desire nothing above him, nothing against him, nothing equal unto him.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] To seek the advancement of his glory, and to think, will, speak, or do, what is acceptable in his sight, whether we have to deal immediately with his Majesty, or others pertaining to him: He that loves God, will love what the Lord loveth, and hate what he hateth, do what he commandeth, and forgo whatsoever is forbidden; Whose keepeth the Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] To neglect no occasions which are or may be offered for the exercise of piety: Love is diligent, and laborious.

Fifthly, [unspec 5] To love them that fear God, for his sake, and to draw as many as possibly they can, to the knowledge, and obedience of the truth: If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

The Properties of Love are,

First, [unspec 1] It cannot be lost; the act of Love may be intermitted, but the grace cannot be lost; for the gifts of God are without repentance; the life of grace is everlasting.

Secondly, [unspec 2] It is imperfect in this life, and ever wanting somewhat that may be added to it; for as long as we live here, it is far short in degree to that the Law requireth.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] It is sincere and entire for nature, though for degree defective. True love is not maimed in parts, though it be not come to full growth.

Fourthly, [unspec 4] It increaseth by degrees in this life, and shall be perfected in Heaven: When Faith shall cease, then Love shall come to full strength, and glory. Not that the Saints can love God in measure answerable to his goodness, and excellency: for a finite virtue cannot infinitely love the infinite God, the infinite Beloved; but their love shall be preserved so far as a creature is capable.

Fifthly, [unspec 5] It is most pure and comfortable, free from all mixture of sorrow and vexation: Men, though never so loving, are compassed with infirmities, subject to passions, and many things may befall them; they may do somewhat that is to us occasion of grief, and pain: but in the Lord, each Christian heart shall ever find matter of solace and refreshing, never of vexation, and discomfort, if the fault be not in himself. Oh the excellency of Love, what is it but the gate of Heaven, the beginning of everlasting happiness, not the least portion of that glorious inheritance which we shall then fully possess, when love is grown to perfect ripeness!

The degrees and kinds of love are diverse. We love God for good things received, or benefits past; we love him also for the good we expect, that is eternal happiness, with the comforts of this life; and we love him for himself, and for his own glory. God is to be loved for himself, and not for another end, form, or efficient; for he is the last end of all things, his essence is perfect goodness, his goodness is from himself, and not from an external efficient: but nothing hinders why God should not be loved for his blessings received, or hoped for.

Each grace of the Spirit is for original divine, in nature excellent, for use necessary, bending towards Heaven: but if comparison be made, love must have the preeminence for use and continuance. The dignity and sweetness of love will appear by the baseness of what is opposite: That is best whose contrary is the worst: Now what is more abominable, hateful, pernicious, so full of vexation, and horror, as the love of sin, love of the world, and hatred of God? As continual fear, unquietness, discontent, doth accompany these with eternal confusion in the latter end: So unspeakable joy, peace, contentment, security do wait upon it; and the end shall be everlasting glory, and full fruition of God, in Heaven.

Quest. How must these things be applied to the heart?

Answ. We must stir up our hearts, to the hearty, entire love of God, by examination, taking shame to ourselves for our manifold slips, and great slackness, complaining of our great bondage, and inability to raise up our souls, hearts, wishing and longing to be fired with the love of God, calling upon ourselves to be more hot, and fervent, and seeking unto the Lord, by earnest, and hearty prayer.

Love the Lord, Oh my soul, and all that is within thee, love him with all thy strength, and let his glory be dear unto thee, for he is the object of love, gracious, merciful, longsuffering, abundant in goodness, and truth: he is thy Father, thy God, thy Husband, thou art bound unto him by covenant; his love to thee is free, and of mere grace; thy love to him is debt, many ways due from thee, deserved by him: He loves thee for thy profit, thou art to love him for thy own good, for in his love stands thy perfection: He is the chief good, absolute, all-sufficient, the rest, and stay of the mind, beyond which it can desire nothing, in whom it finds incredible joy, and comfort, and shall possess everlasting consolation, when it is immediately united to him by vision, and love. The former blessings thou hast received, the future good things thou dost expect, and look for, do challenge this duty at thy hand. Publicans and sinners love those that love them, and for kindness return affection: God hath loved thee first, loved thee when thou wast not, when thou wast miserable: He hath laden thee with his benefits, given thee more than thou wouldest desire, and prevented thee with favors which thou never didst ask; he made thee of nothing, he is thy preserver, redeemer, Savior, who hath delivered thee from death, and hell, and vouchsafeth unto thee, life and mercy; his blessings upon thee are innumerable, pass all thought and reckoning. What canst thou render less than hearty affection for these inestimable favors? Oh my soul, thou canst not love thyself truly, if thou love not him above all things, for thou art coupled to him by love, in whose presence is fullness of joy, without whom to be, is to be most miserable. Thou canst not but desire happiness, but happy thou canst not be without love. But ah wretch that I am, I find mine affection is weak toward God, strong to vanity. Those we love, do we not love to be present with them? If they be absent, do we not think long till they return again? Are we not grieved to hear them wronged by word or deed, whom we esteem dearly of? are we not desirous to give them content? doth it not cut us if we do them any harm? Are we not with them in thought, though absent in body? glad of a letter that comes from them? is not the messenger welcome that can bring us tidings of their welfare? But I find little joy in coming publicly or privately into God's house, or presence. I think little of him, and that but overly, I speak little to him, and that not without weariness and distraction. Nay, I am like those children, who can play abroad all the day long, and never care to look unto their Parents: When did my heart long to return home, and to be with Christ? Though

God through sundry troubles do even smoke me out of this world, yet I will not come away in mine affection. When I see God's name blasphemed, and all wickedness committed, do mine eyes gush out with tears? or do not I offend daily, and pass it over, taking too light penance of myself? It is irksome to me to do his will; I do not long for his presence, nor bewail his absence; I do not study to please him in all things, nor can I rejoice in the prosperity of his Saints: when I my self am in misery and distress, I cannot prize his favor, am not cheered with his promises, do not delight in his statutes above all things: His Word is his Letter sent unto me, but I am not glad and diligent with care and conscience to read it; vanity hath stolen away my heart, and the transitory bewitching pleasures of the world (which cannot profit) have taken up my thoughts. This hath been mine impudent behavior against thee my God, which I cannot with any words of indignation sufficiently discover.

If a woman should be dead in the nest, when her husband were before her, but should be affectionate to every stranger; if she should not care how long she were absent from him, but think herself best while they were asunder; if she cared little how her loving husband were offended, casting that at her heels, which he takes to heart, were not this shameless behavior in her? And shall I not be ashamed to show no more love to thee, to whom my soul is married in Christ? Oh my soul! what canst thou find in the world, why thou dost affect it? it hath bred much vexation and sorrow, thou hast been crossed and molested with it, the more thou lovest it, the greater trouble & discontentment thou findest therein, and wilt thou still take pleasure in thy pain? what canst thou not find in God, and that above all thought and conceit, why thou shouldest entirely cleave unto him? what occasion couldest thou find at any time to draw thy affection from him? wilt thou leave the fatness, and marrow that is in the house of God, to feed upon the refuse, and scraps that this world affords? Ah wretch that I am! who shall deliver me from this bondage of sin? I am full of uncharitable and false love. I can love myself, I have affection enough to the things of this world, to the gifts of God, and those the meanest, more than to the giver; as harlots to rings, gold, bracelets, more than to the sender. But I have not power to raise my soul to the love of God in Christ, here my affections lie dead, and will not mount aloft. Oh that the love of God did possess my reins in such sort, that in thought I might be still with him, rejoice in his presence, and walk before him in dutiful obedience! Oh that my heart did burn with love that is strong as death, hot as coals of Juniper, that hath a vehement flame that no waters can quench, no floods can drown, no allurements can draw aside. Why art thou so dead, Oh my soul? why dost thou not lift up thyself to the love of God? whom hast thou in Heaven but him? and who in earth is to be desired in comparison of him? for whom dost thou reserve thy prime affection? for the world, sin, vanity? Oh adulteress, knowest thou not that the amity of the world is enmity with God? thou hast gone astray, and deeply defiled thyself with the love of sin, return now unto the Lord, and embrace him with most entire and dear affection: what thou hast bestowed upon the world, pleasure, lusts, carnal delights, to thy great discomfort, now set it wholly upon things above, that it may find rest and comfort. Oh Lord, I beseech thee, who art only able to purge my heart of all filthy, profane love, and to fill it with the pure love of thy holy Majesty, this is thy promise, I will circumcise your hearts, and make you love me with all your hearts; therefore I am bold to make this prayer, and will confidently wait upon thee for this mercy.

Quest. How should a man proceed to meditate on the Fall of our first Parents?

Answ. He must consider the subject, causes, and end of that act, aimed at, but not obtained; the degrees, properties, and effects of it.

By the Fall of our first Parents, we understand the first sin of Adam, and Eve, whereby they transgressed the Commandment of God, in eating the forbidden fruit: this is fitly so called, because, as an heavy body falling upon some hard and sharp rock is greatly bruised, and hurt: so man, after he had received so many, and great gifts from God, sinning wickedly against his express charge and commandment, did grievously wound himself.

The subject of this transgression was our first Parents Adam, and Eve, made after the Image of God, perfect in stature of body, and strength of mind, enriched with excellent prerogatives of liberty and dominion, planted in a garden of delights, that they might dress it, and keep it, favored of God, and admitted into near fellowship with him.

The principal outward cause of man's disobedience, was Satan, the Prince of darkness, that old murderer, who being fallen from God, and shut up under condemnation, did with incredible fury, and malice, seek the dishonor of God, and the destruction of mankind: This envious one spying his opportunity, set upon the woman, as the fitter to be made his prey, when she was alone; and by his subtlety beguiled her; The Serpent, the most subtle of beasts which the Lord had made, was the instrument that he used to seduce the woman; and the woman herself being first in the transgression, was made the willing instrument of her husbands destruction. The quality of the fruit as it was good for meat, and pleasant to the eye, was by accident a cause that moved them to eat, which yet they might, and ought to have forborne, having liberty to eat of all the trees in the garden besides, and being strictly charged upon pain of death not to taste of it. The just, and good Law of God was a blameless occasion of man's sin, as it did forbid an act in itself indifferent, that it could not be done without sin. The Law and Sin, as well as the Law and Obedience, work together, though in a distinct manner: for of Obedience the Law is a principal cause, but of sin an accidental, as working besides his own scope, and main drift, which is to savor nothing but life, and also as a contrary to sin. The Lord in his wise providence did work in the fall of man, as the Law by accident was occasion of it, but he is not the author of his sin, he did not constrain him to offend, not withhold from him any grace, that by Covenant, or otherwise he was bound to give him.

The principal inward cause of this transgression, was the will of man, freely turning from the Commandment of God, which he might and ought to have obeyed, but would not; and willingly hearkening to the suggestion of Satan, which he should have resisted, but did not. The sin of man was the eating of the forbidden fruit, not absolutely considered in itself, but in respect of the Commandment and charge whereby God had severely forbidden the tasting of the fruit of that tree, and had threatened punishment to them that should transgress.

In evil actions no end can properly be assigned, for the end is of a good thing, and to be desired. But Satan in that temptation aimed at the dishonor of God, and the damnation of Man. Man being deceived by the old Serpent, proposed this end to himself, but obtained it not; that he might satisfy his superior affection to the Image of God, and his inferior to the fruit of the tree. The Lord, who bringeth light out of darkness, out of his infinite wisdom did

order this evil to the setting forth of his mercy, and justice, and the utter confusion of Satan, contrary to his purpose, and intendment.

In this their disobedience we may observe these degrees: The impression of the suggestion; obscuration of their thoughts concerning the excellency of God; forgetfulness of what was done before, and what God commanded; doubting of the truth of God; tickling of ambition, whereby the woman affected great power, dignity; credit to the flatteries, and allurements of Satan, and familiarity with him, and inclination of will to the forbidden fruit.

First, [unspec 1] This was the first sin committed by man, in itself most heinous: the fountain of all other evils, both of sin and punishment. Many things do show the greatness of this sin.

1 It was the transgression of that precept which God had given for the trial of man's obedience, and so was an absolute denial of subjection, and renouncing of obedience: As the performance of it had been an open profession of submission and due obedience. It was not a breach of some particular Commandment, but an universal denial of all the branches of obedience.

2 It was intolerable, that man being enriched with so many graces, privileges, and blessings, should presently forget God, being so much indebted, and bound unto him in love for his inestimable favors.

3 Amongst so many trees in the Garden, it was easy for man to forbear the pursuit of one; and being made after the Image of God, he might have resisted the temptation of Satan: Wherefore to suffer himself to be drawn away in that manner was an heinous offense.

4 This sin was committed in Paradise, where the tree of life stood in their sight, and God had manifested himself unto them familiarly. In respect of God, the Law, the Offender; this sin was hateful, and notorious.

Secondly, [unspec 2] This sin was not the proper sin of our first Parents, but the common sin of all their posterity, who were in their loins when they did offend, and afterwards by natural propagation descended from them: for they did represent all mankind, which was propagated from them as the root.

Thirdly, [unspec 3] The effects of this sin stayed not in the first authors of it, but spread, and stretched themselves over all mankind: For if they whose Parents are infected with any disease, their children do possess it by inheritance; how is it possible that our first Parents, being deprived of the Image of God, we their posterity should spring of them perfect, and without maim? For the beginnings of all things are all that in power which doth spring from those beginnings, for the virtue that is in the beginnings, is communicated to the things which receive beginning from them: Like egg, like bird; what is in the root will be in the branches, and the vice or fault that is in the beginning, is common to the thing begun. The punishment of this sin doth degenerate into sin, As the want of holiness, and proneness to evil, is not only a judgment inflicted for sin, but it is sin, and the cause of sin; One sin begets another, and the second is an effect of the former, both properly, and accidentally.

The effects of this first sin are bitterness itself, to wit, in respect of mankind in general, wrath, blame, guilt, deprivation of God's Image corruption of nature, spiritual bondage, subjection to death temporal, and eternal. God is offended in that his Commandment is despised to the derogation of his sovereignty; sin is vile, and naught, deserving blame; man is guilty, and tied to punishment, whence issueth griping of conscience, fear of the angry Judge, and dread of punishment. The loss of original Justice followed the act of sin, in whose room succeeded corruption of the whole man, in every power, and faculty. Thus the liberty of man was turned into miserable servitude, and he became bondslave to sin-revenging justice, as his principal Lord; to the Devil, and his Angels, and to the power of his accusing and condemning conscience, as the Lord's Ministers. Moreover, the natural man hath no spiritual liberty, to do anything spiritually good, as he did before sin entered, but is led as a slave, by lusts, by passions, by objects, which please him: So that he is in a brutish bondage. And death entered into the world by sin, and is gone over all men, for as much as all men have sinned.

In respect of Adam, and Eve, the effects are common to both, or particular to either.

1 The common are sense of nakedness, shame, fear of the angry Judge, slight, and desire to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord, ejection out of Paradise into the cursed Earth, and stopping the way that they might not enter to eat of the tree of life.

2 The particular effects in respect of Adam, are, that the Earth is accursed to bring forth briars, and thorns; that he should till the ground in labor, and eat his bread in the sweat of his brows, till he return unto the dust.

The woman was sentenced to conceive and bring forth in sorrow, and to be in painful subjection to her husband.

Satan intended the dishonor of God, and destruction of mankind by that temptation: but it turned to his confusion, and overthrow. The seed of the woman hath bruised the Serpents head; his power is crushed, and his devices frustrated.

Nor did the instrument of the Devil escape unpunished: the Serpent is accursed above all the beasts of the earth, most wretched, and ashamed to appear abroad; he is adjudged to creep upon his belly with pain, to eat the dust for meat; a grievous diet. And the Lord hath put enmity betwixt him, and the woman.

All sin, especially profanation, and contempt of the Sacrament, is like to this of our first Parents in some sort, but this was the first sin, the fountain of all sin, the sin of man and his posterity: for Adam received, and lost integrity both for himself and us.

Quest. How are these things to be applied unto the heart?

Answ. We must work our heart to humiliation, stir up ourselves earnestly to seek help and deliverance, and acknowledge the justice of God in correcting, and his incomprehensible mercy, in vouchsafing means of recovery unto man. How is man fallen from his first dignity and good estate? he was created holy, and happy, furnished with grace, and set in place of high renown. Thou Lord didst crown him with glory and honor, and gavest him a patent for his posterity, that they should live in blessedness before thee. But woe is me! what

alteration do I find? Man hath sinned, and God is displeased. Man that was the beauty of the world, the beloved of God, is now the map of misery, the object of divine revenging justice: His mind is besotted, his conscience unquiet, his will and affection poisoned with sin, fear, dread, horror, and trembling possesseth his reins; his body is naked, deformed, subject to annoyance of heat, cold, distemper many ways. The Free-man of God, the Lord of the creatures, is brought into most miserable, and sore bondage unto Satan, sin, his own conscience; who can comprehend the miseries of this life, whereunto he lies open? No words can describe the spiritual plagues that are seized upon the soul already, nor the dreadful torments that are prepared for him in hell for evermore. Oh my soul, enter into thyself, consider, and bewail thy natural estate: thou art exposed to suffer a thousand evils, to wearisome vanity in everything, yea through fear of death, the upshot of evils, thou art in bondage all thy days, while in that state thou abidest. Pharaoh did never put Israel to such hard service, as the Devil putteth thee to while thou art under his power. Thou art sick, filthy, naked, crooked, fallen from the love of God, more odious in his eyes than the stink, or filthy savor of a dead corps in the nostrils of man, exposed to the torments of Hell, shut up under the curse of the Law, abidest under wrath. How do men of the world take on, when they have lost a great friend, upon whom all their hopes depended, when they be cast from the top of honor, into the gulf of misery, poverty, and disgrace? weep, oh my soul, and pour out tears in secret, for thou hast lost thy glory, art spoiled of thy ornaments, and hast provoked the Lord to anger by thy inventions. The brute beasts take it as a grievous thing to be ensnared, and taken, and wilt thou laugh in the midst of bondage, and count it liberty to be a slave of Satan? Death is terrible, and wilt not thou fear Hell, which followeth after it, as a desert of thy transgression? Ah miserable man, and the more miserable, that thou art senseless of thy misery; yet now that I know my disease, I will seek for remedy. The sick person will take bitter pills to recover health, the bondman desires liberty, the captive freedom, the condemned a pardon: My present case is very wretched, and in no case to be rested in. Nature teacheth all creatures to shroud themselves from dangers, or being in distress to seek help without delay, much more am I to be moved with mine estate, who am subject to eternal death, which hath already seized upon me in a spiritual death of soul, and mortality, or dying state of the body; we will meet a disease betime, laboring to rid ourselves of it; if anything threaten our name and estate, we will endeavor quickly to free the one, and the other: But whither shall I fly for succor? where shall I find the Physician that is able to cure, and redeem me from the tyranny of Satan? Set me free from the fear of Hell? I am even at my wits end, not knowing which way to turn. Oh Lord, I am utterly destitute of all means to help myself, it is not in my power to satisfy thy justice, overcome death, or deliver my soul out of the hands of the Devil: I cannot think a good thought; I know not, nor of myself can know the way of Life, or means of my recovery. Blessed God, as of thine infinite mercy thou hast ordained, so I pray thee reveal unto me the way how I may escape eternal death deserved by my sin, and be made partaker of everlasting happiness, through thy special grace. Righteous art thou oh Lord, and just are thy judgments, I know that in very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me, and that I have deserved much more than ever I felt from thee; Thou mightest have cast me forever out of thy presence, and given me my portion with the Devil, and his Angels: But loe thou dost correct me in measure for my good, to purge me from sin, and bring me unto repentance, that I might be saved. Oh my God, I will magnify thy name, for thou hast redeemed my soul from death, my darling from the power of the dogs. This mercy was not showed to the Angels, Creatures more excellent

than man. Should one redeem us from the state of villanage, or ransom us from the Gallows, we would think we could not be thankful enough; But Lord thou hast redeemed me from revenging Justice, from the power of the Devil, holding me under the curse, from the power of conscience justly condemning me, from the power of sin commanding as King: How great is thy mercy towards me! I am not able to comprehend it. As my sin and misery hath abounded, thy mercy hath abounded much more.

Quest. Let us now hear what order is to be observed in Meditation of sin?

Answ. We must call to mind, and discourse with ourselves of the causes, ends, properties, and effects, and kinds of sin: what is contrary unto it, what like, and what unlike.

O my soul, what is sin wherewith thou art beset and stained, yea miserably besotted, since the fall of Adam? what is it but the privation of God's Image, and corruption of the soul, an aberration from the rule of perfection, an evil disposition of the subject, turning aside from the path of life, and swerving from the mark and end that all should aim at?

God is the fountain of all good things, the giver of every good and perfect gift; but sin was not created by him, can receive no approbation from him. God cannot possibly sin; for he may work besides his rule who may sin: But God's Rule is his most just and wise will, which he cannot but work after, no more than he can deny his own nature. God cannot be the author of sin in and with his creature, as he is of every good word, and work; for that which the creature doth, God being the author and principal worker of it, he must inform the manner of it by his Commandment, and work it in him by his Spirit: But it is impossible for the creature to sin, in working after that which is commanded him of God; God cannot so far will sin, as to approve it for good in itself; it hath no proportion to his nature. It is such a thing as he cannot be author of in the creature, nor yet the creature work while it keepeth communion with him, wherefore God cannot allow it as good in itself. The Lord persuadeth to obedience, threateneth the sinner, commandeth the practice of holiness, punisheth the disobedient. He is just and holy in himself, in all his ways, and cannot be tainted with the least spot or blemish: Thou oh God temptest no man, as thou canst not be tempted of evil; and if it be not of God, it cannot be good; for he is the absolute original goodness, from whom cometh every good by participation.

The cause of sin is some voluntary agent, that worketh besides Rule, and comes short in goodness required: Sin itself is an aberration, the subordinate and deficient cause of sin, is Satan, or man himself revolted from God; Satan soliciteth, the flesh enticeth, the will consenteth, and so sin is finished: The Devil was made an Angel of light, but he abode not in the truth, and being fallen from Heaven, ceaseth not to draw others into the same perdition. God made man righteous, but he found out many inventions; this is the cause, but what is the end of sin?

Of evil there is no end, for that is never good; No gain to be gotten by that which is naught and vile; the poisoned stalk can bear no wholesome fruit. Satan in tempting aimeth at man's perdition; Man in sinning intendeth the satisfaction of his lusts; The Lord doth by his providence order it to the glory of his name; but of sin properly there is no end to the sinner: God takes occasion by sin to give the promise of the Mediator. He can use sin for a punishment, for the exercising of his children: No speech from Shimei, but sinful, reviling

speech was David's exercise; but yet the goodness that cometh by sin is not of, nor through it by nature, but from the infinite wisdom of God, who knoweth how to work good out of evil.

Let us somewhat inquire into the properties of this poison: every sin is mortal in its own nature, it deserveth and bringeth death endless, and easeless, of soul and body; for it is a turning aside from God, who is the life of the soul; it is a breach of his Law, an offense against his infinite Majesty. If a man sin against the Majesty of an earthly Prince, he is punished with temporary death, or perpetual imprisonment, if he could be supposed to live always he should lie in forever: How much more deservedly am I subject to eternal death, who have sinned against an eternal God? Every sin in its own nature is accompanied with final impenitency: He that sinneth once, can never cease to sin by any natural power; sin is a running leprosy, that cannot be stayed; the soul that is once distempered, must go amiss for ever: (if it be not rectified by supernatural power.) It is of grace that sin is pardoned, it is of supernatural power that any soul is set free from the power and tyranny of it. For being once enthralled by voluntary submission, we cannot after draw back and work deliverance. Sin is of a soiling nature, and defileth all it toucheth; Every good work and holy ordinance. To the unclean all things are unclean. The Word, Prayer, Sacraments, Alms, everything is polluted by that touch. Corrupt qualities are more apt to hurt, than sound to heal; one rotten sheep may infect the whole flock, but cannot be cured by them. One filthy ragg stained with the plague may infect a whole pack; but the clean garment cannot purify it. If a common garment touch holy flesh, the garment is not sanctified, but the flesh polluted. The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. Sin mixed with God's ordinances, is like poison mingled with wholesome meat, that corrupteth it for our use and nourishment.

Mark and consider well the effects of sin, O my soul! the waters of this fountain are bitter, the fruits of this tree unsavory. They that sow iniquity, shall reap vanity; and they that follow vanity, forsake mercy. Affliction pursueth sinners, and shall overtake them to their cost: without question the wages of sin is death. Look as it is with men, if they turn themselves from this aspectable light, they are forthwith environed with darkness: So man turning away by his sin from God the Father of lights, from whence every good gift cometh, he cannot but be forthwith in outward and inward darkness. By reason of sin the soul is dead in ignorance, and lust: So that they have in them a seed apt to bring forth every sin: Our bodies have mortality as a worm corrupting them, our conditions are exposed to a thousand vanities, and wearisome courses, and these are the beginnings of evil. Despair, darkness, fear, horror, and shame are the companions of sin; disgrace, sickness, poverty, loss of goods, the best fruit it beareth. Hast thou lost any blessing? sin hath robbed thee of it; dost thou want any good thing? sin keepeth thee from it; art thou annoyed with evil? thy perdition is of thyself; sin sets man at odds with God, the Law, his own conscience, all creatures, and with himself. Oh what a drudge is man made to his lusts by sin! what confusion, vexation, bitterness, doth lodge in the heart continually! Look into the world, and see what desolations it hath made. How are the mighty slain, and glorious Kingdoms laid on heaps? Is not sin the cause of all disorders, wars, confusions, bloodsheds, famines, and pestilences that ever were in the world? The sorrows of this life are many and grievous, but nothing comparable to spiritual and eternal miseries that sin bringeth with it. Oh that thou didst behold how miserably the soul is mangled, defaced, wounded, imprisoned by it; the

light of nature, terror of conscience, power of grace is not able to set forth or comprehend the desert and fruit of sin; for the full wrath of God which shall be executed upon the ungodly, exceedeth all that can be imagined. If the wicked prosper for a time, sin turneth their blessings into curses: The Table, and by proportion, the wealth, strength, and honor of the wicked are dangerous snares wherein they are caught to be destroyed. It is misery to sail to Hell with the pleasantest wind; and to live in fat pastures to be fed unto eternal slaughter.

This cursed sin is a monster of many heads, a serpent with many stings, the kinds cannot easily be reckoned, the number passeth all count. It is original that is born and bred with us, or actual that is brought forth by us: That is the filthy corrupt fountain, this the filthy stinking puddle water that runneth from it; that the cursed root, this the bud, and blossom of that venomous tree.

Again, there are sins of defects, omission, and commission; for sometimes the soul worketh for matter that which is required, but in other manner than God hath prescribed; Sometimes it doth suspect, and ceaseth to move after the good commanded, and sometimes it doth move itself to something which is forbidden, which is the greatest, and highest kind of evil. For as in a wife, not to love her husband is a great lewdness, but not only to neglect his love, but to turn to the embracement of strangers is much more heinous: So for the soul not to cleave to God in doing righteousness is sinful, but to leave him, and turn to love and like any kind of unrighteousness, this is most sinful.

Moreover, it is either inward, lurking and boiling in the heart, by evil thoughts, motions, desires, wishes, consent; or want, and slackness to think, devise, remember, and effect what is praise-worthy; or outward, breaking forth in life and conversation, both in word, and actions.

Sometimes it liveth in us, but lieth dead, and stirreth not with violence; and sometimes it rageth boisterously, and carrieth us headlong to that which is forbidden.

Sometimes it rusheth immediately and directly against God, and sometimes it reacheth more properly to the hurt of our neighbor. Oh my soul, look into thyself, and thou shalt find the branches of this venomous tree to exceed in number: Thou hast sinned against God, thy neighbor, and thyself; thou hast sinned of ignorance, infirmity, negligence; and presumption; Thou hast been led away with the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and pride of life: Sin ever moveth, oftentimes stirreth violently, and overruleth many times to the committing of what is evil, and hindrance of what is good. Thou hast offended in that which is evil in itself, and thou hast come short in that which is good and honest, not doing it at all, or failing in the manner, measure, and circumstances: Who can tell how often he offendeth? The number of my sins cannot be reckoned, nor the filthiness discovered.

Piety is amiable, lovely, honorable, sin loathsome and abominable. The fear of the Lord makes the face to shine; but impiety and sin dis-figure the face and Image of God in him. The man that feareth the Lord shall be praised; but a vile, naughty person, is had in contempt of God, and good men, how great soever he be in this world: The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor. Grace exalteth the poor; sin debaseth the mighty. Godliness makes a man as like to God, as a creature can be like to the Creator, but sin

transformeth us into the likeness of the Devil. No man is honorable, but the virtuous, none base, but the sinner.

Sin is opposite to God in a sort, not by an inward positive repugnance, or contrariety to his nature, such as is twixt fire and water; but in respect of outward disagreement, such as may be in a creature from the Creator: Even as the good created, though it hath not an inward agreement with, and resemblance to the Creator, such as is betwixt nourishment, and the thing nourished, for then should the divine nature inwardly in itself be better for it, and necessarily will it; yet hath it an outward agreement and resemblance. So is it most true of sin, that it hath no inward disagreement to the Divine Nature, for then it should be the worse for the being of it, and so should necessarily nill it; but outward only.

The venom and filthiness of sin is set forth by sundry comparisons in the holy Scriptures: Sinners are compared to Doggs, Swine, Vipers, Asps, Bears, Tigers; Sin is known by the name of Rebellion, Disobedience, Filthiness, Adultery, Playing the Harlot. It is likened to menstruous clouts, & filthy rags, that are cast aside upon the dunghill, and detested of all that pass by. It is a spiritual nakedness, a spiritual leprosy, a spiritual crookedness, a spiritual drunkenness. It biteth as a Serpent, and stingeth as a Cockatrice; creepeth as a gangrene, or deadly canker, that eateth to the heart, and cannot be cured. It is honey in the mouth, but gravel in the bowels, sweet in the beginning, but death in the latter end. Oh my soul, if thou peruse the holy Scriptures, thou shalt find no book, no leaf, no chapter, nor scarce any verse wherein there is not some precept, promise, prohibition, threatening, or example, which serveth to show the amiableness of virtue, and ugliness of vice, and with what care, zeal, watchfulness, the one is to be embraced, and the other to be shunned.

Quest. How are these things to be pressed upon the heart?

Answ. We must work the heart to humiliation for sin; stir up ourselves earnestly to seek pardon, and labor for grace to have sin in detestation for the time to come. Is it even so, Oh my soul, is sin so loathsome and abominable, odious to God, contrary to godliness, pernicious to thy state, life and spiritual welfare, more infectious than the plague, more stinking than any carrion, the rottenness and corruption of the soul condemned and cried down in every book, in every leaf, and almost in every verse of the holy Bible? Woe therefore, and alas to me that have so long lain under this burden and bondage, and that even many times willingly and wittingly. When I look into myself, I can see nothing but a mass of corruption pressing me down. Mine understanding covered with ignorance, vanity, and folly; I know nothing as I ought to know; such deadness possesseth my heart, that I cannot look up: my soul is a very den, and cage of unclean motions, worldly desires, corrupt projects, vain boastings, idle rovings; but marvelous barren, untoward, toward that which is good: Infidelity, distrust, pride, self-confidence, blockishness, unthankfulness, envy, malice, discontent, covetousness, do lodge with me continually. I was born in sin, and it hath grown up with me from my youth; so that it is become exceeding strong, an old stinking, deep festered sore, that can hardly be cured. My sins are multiplied exceedingly, increase daily, in number they pass the sands by the Sea, and are become a burden too heavy for me to bear. When I remember these things, I wonder at myself that I should be thus senseless in the midst of all misery. Were I descended of one that had been executed for treason, and so were pointed at as a traitorous brood without inheritance in earth; Had I but with my

nature, the stone, or leprosy, or falling-sickness from my Parents, I should bewail mine unhappy nativity: But my condition is much more wretched; for descending from the loins of Adam by natural propagation, with my nature I received the poison of sin, which hath corrupted every power of soul, and like a running leprosy, staineth all it toucheth: I am unclean by birth, and whatsoever I touch, it is unclean. Were I with Job from top to toe covered with biles, it would grieve me, but my whole spirit is fraught with corruption, more filthy than that which breaketh forth at the eye, car, &c. I am ashamed of corporal nakedness, deeply affected with lameness, or deformity; if overtaken with any loathsome disease, I grow weary of the world, and wish to be separated from the society of men: But the nakedness, deformity, corruption of soul and life is more shameful, and loathsome, filthy, and abominable. Deep is the stain that sin hath made, and great is the danger that I am in by reason of my transgressions. If I had offended the Law, and stood as guilty to be censured before the Tribunal of an earthly Judge, with loss of liberty, limbs, or life, I should bewail my estate, and condemn my folly; but I have broken the Law of God, and stand guilty before him, not of temporal, but eternal death, which the Law hath pronounced, and I may expect every moment to be executed upon me: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes: Oh that mine eyes were a river of tears, and mine head a fountain of water, that day and night I could bewail the misery into which I am plunged by reason of my sin! But woe is me, what shall I do? whither shall I fly for succor? I am bound with the cords of sin, who shall unloose them? I am guilty before the Throne of Justice, who shall acquit me? I am defiled, who shall make me clean? Humble thyself, oh my soul, and fly unto the Throne of grace, for with God there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption; against him thou hast sinned, and with him there is forgiveness; acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou mayest be received unto mercy; judge thyself, that thou mayest not be judged. How well is he that sleepeth with his quietus est in his bosom? In this regard God's children have followed God more for this, than for deliverance from evils that have been upon them: Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Oh happy man, who is stirred up to fly the wrath to come. Thou art in danger to be cast into the prison of Hell for thy debts, thy sins; which make thee debtor of punishment to God's justice. Humble thyself, compound with thy creditor before his heavy arrest be served upon thee. Shouldest thou have to deal with many men, thou mightest have a cold suit, but seek mercy of God, none that cometh to him doth he cast forth. And now my soul be warned for the time to come, to take heed of sin, turn from it with hatred and detestation, be purged from it (as a thing filthy and abominable) It is the most deadly poison, a fretting leprosy, a corruption, in comparison of all others, most detestable. We would not suffer spots on our face, nor lint or other soil upon our clothes; surely we cannot make clean anything, but thou mayest thence take the rise of this thought, how careful should I be to cleanse my heart? we would not have any natural infirmities, which are unseemly or filthy, as wry mouths, foul breeches, lameness, or halting in our gate, &c. But a tongue speaking perverse things, rotten speeches, crooked walking from God's Law, and the direction thereof, are far more uncomely than the other. If we go by a foul stinking place, we stop our noses, and haste away; if an ugly shape present itself, we shut our eyes, and endure not the view of it: Thus shouldest thou, Oh my soul, with indignation turn from all filthy and abominable vices. It is enough and too much that thou hast dishonored God in time past, and gone a whoring after strange lovers, return now unto the Lord, and keep thyself chaste unto him forever. To see a child war with his loving Parents, or a wife contend with her kind husband, is a detestable sight, for any

subject to rebel against his Prince, is wretched lewdness, but for one to rebel against such a Prince, which out of his bounty hath most highly advanced him, and done him favors from day today, this is most loathsome disloyalty. Thus it is with sin, which offendeth a most kind and merciful Father, who hath redeemed us from death, and daily ladeth us with his blessings: Oh that I could once find out power and ability to weed out corruption, and to pluck it up even by the root; Oh that I were able to destroy the root and bud, and branch of this cursed tree, that it might never spring, or bear fruit anymore: But alas, I sensibly perceive that there is in me no strength, no more than there is in a sick man to recover himself, or rather in a man stark dead to restore himself to life: If I purpose to amend this or that which I find to be amiss, I fail presently, and come short of the accomplishment of my desire: Oh who is it then that is able to deliver me from the body of this death? surely none but the Lord who hath made and fashioned me, to whom it belongs to kill, and quicken, heal and wound; to thee therefore oh Lord do I make my moan, to thee I render my humble petition, and pour out my soul which hath sinned against thee: Oh Lord, I beseech thee for thy infinite mercy in Jesus Christ, to take pity upon me, and to heal my soul which hath sinned against thee; Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; Convert me oh Lord, and I shall be converted, set me at liberty, and I shall run the race of thy Commandments. Open unto me the fountain of grace for the washing away of my sin and uncleanness. It is thy property to have mercy, it is thy free covenant to write thy Law upon my heart. Thou hast promised to pour rivers of waters upon the dry and thirsty ground. Thou invitest the barren soul to come unto thee for ease and rest, O Lord have mercy upon me, for in thee do I trust, thou art the well-spring of grace and mercy, the fountain of life, the author and preserver of grace, unto thee do I commend my soul, and upon thy merciful promise I will wait as long as I live.

Quest. Let the work of Redemption be the eighth Instance, how are we to proceed in Meditation on that work?

Answ. In this work we must consider the Author, Subject, Object, Causes, Ends, Parts and Properties, what is like, and what unlike.

To redeem is to deliver from bondage and misery, freely, or upon exchange; and to free from captivity by strong hand, or ransom; which two latter have place in the Redemption of man, in divers respects.

The Author of this great, admirable, and extraordinary work of Grace, is Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who in time became man, and was made under the Law, that he might redeem us that were under the Law: For this he is called our Savior, and Redeemer, or Redemption of his people, who doth deliver them from the hand of all their enemies, that they might serve the Lord without fear. Those that God did raise up to redeem his people, as Moses, the Judges, yea those that redeemed as kinsmen this or that, were shadows of this our great Redeemer, who was in time to be revealed. Christ hath satisfied revenging-justice, overcome Satan, killed sin, and purchased deliverance for his people that are given unto him of his Father, and such as believe in him are partakers of this Redemption in truth in this life, perfectly in the life to come: For from what time we are engrafted into Jesus Christ, by a sovereign, well-rooted, and allseasoning Faith, we are freed from being under the Law, and revenging-justice of God. The strong man is cast forth from what time Christ the

stronger is entered. The conscience is made a sweet companion and comforter, rather than a rigorous keeper. Where the King hath released a Prisoner, the Jailor can have no further power over him, for he is but to keep him during the Kings pleasure.

Again, By grace God doth set our wills at liberty, so that sin cannot reign in us as heretofore; yea the world is crucified to us, and we unto the world: For as when health cometh, a man beginneth to walk abroad, and do such things as he could not stir to do while his sickness did keep him under: so it is here.

Finally we are so freed, that we can suffer nothing which our wills have cause to be unwilling with, all things being such as shall work together for our good.

Behold the rich grace, admirable love, and tender mercy of the Lord towards man in himself most miserable, rebellious, and worthy to be cast off forever. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. Oh Lord, as our sin and misery abounded, thy mercy hath superabounded. In mercy thou didst provide a means for man's deliverance, that justice being satisfied, grace might be glorious in his salvation: Oh God, when thou hadst determined that justice should take her revenge, if by breach of covenant she be wronged, thine infinite wisdom found out a way to satisfy wronged justice; when all mankind lay under the sentence of condemnation, altogether unable to help themselves, thine unspeakable mercy did show herself for our deliverance; when man had nothing to pay for his Ransom, nor any strength to rescue himself from the hands of justice, or the curse of the Law, of thine endless love thou didst give Christ to be our Savior, and by way of ransom to redeem us: Oh my soul, thou art redeemed not with silver or gold, but with the blood of Christ, a lamb undefiled. This was it which in the blood of all the sacrifices was prefigured: The death of Christ is it by means whereof God's Grace doth set thee free, and that in most just manner. It doth pacify justice her displeasure against sin: For God (that is) God as his Revenging Justice is gone forth, is said to smell a savor of rest in the death of Christ, and by Christ's being put under the Law, or curse of God's revenging made manifest in the Law, we are said to be redeemed from the Law or curse, as by an all-sufficient Ransom accepted of Justice. This death doth feee us from the Devil, for Satan's power over us was by reason of sin, and the punishment due to it from the Justice of God. By death he destroyed him that had the power of executing death. The price of our Ransom was paid to divine Justice; and it being paid and accepted, Satan was cast down by strong hand. This death hath obtained the Spirit to be given thee, which doth free thee from the captivity of lusts, and enable thee to find liberty in actions of godliness. Through this death thou hast deliverance from all evils; So that all tears in God's Time shall be wiped from thine eyes, and in the mean while all thy sufferings are so changed, that they are not effects of God's Revenging Justice to destroy, but such things in which God doth offer himself as a Father, intending to make thee partake further by means of them in the quiet fruit of Righteousness. And now my soul, why hath the Lord done this for thee? that the Glory of his Grace might be magnified in thy salvation, and thou mightest serve him all the days of thy life. As for the parts of Redemption, it is purchased or possessed, and this begun or consummated in respect of guilt and punishment, or power and tyranny of sin. Rome was not built in a day. Great things are not begun and finished all at once. Redemption takes not its full effect in this life, but it is so begun, that it shall certainly be accomplished in due time.

The Properties of this deliverance will set forth the excellencies of it in some sort. It is true and real, as far excelling that Redemption of Israel out of the Land of Egypt, as the substance doth the shadow, the soul doth the body, and Christ did Moses. It is spiritual, from Sin, Satan, and the curse of the Law. The bondage of soul to the wrath of God, tyranny of Satan, and slavery of sin is most lamentable and grievous; and the more fearful the captivity, the more comfortable the deliverance.

Nor is this mercy vouchsafed to a few that live in some corner of the world, in some special age, or time, which much lessen the value of it; but it is universal, extended to all ages, to all sorts of men, high and low, rich and poor. Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and which is the upshot of all, this Redemption is eternal. He that is ransomed out of the power of a bodily enemy, may be taken captive the second time; but he that is set free by Jesus Christ, cannot be captivated by Satan. It was a singular favor that God raised up Savior's to deliver them out of the hands of their oppressors: It is a much greater mercy that God hath given us Christ to set us free from spiritual thralldom; for that Redemption was typical, this real; that temporal of the body, this spiritual of the soul, and conscience: That from the cruelty of man, this from the tyranny of Satan; that thralldom would have ended with life, this bondage would ever have increased daily: After that deliverance they might and did return to bondage, But in this Redemption, he that is once freed, abideth a freeman for evermore; Those Savior's were mere men, but Christ our Redeemer is God and Man; They delivered their people by force of arms, but Christ by his death first paid the price of our Redemption, and then God by his great power rescued us from the hands of the Devil: They brought their Redeemed into an earthly Canaan, but Christ our Redeemer hath prepared for us an heavenly Inheritance. They saved them that were oppressed, and evil-entreated against their wills; but Christ set us free, who had voluntarily sold ourselves into the state of slavery.

Quest. How are these things to be applied unto the heart?

Answ. Upon consideration of these things, we must stir up ourselves to seek the knowledge of Christ Jesus; fly unto him with sound affiance, rejoice in God, and sing praises to his name: Oh my soul, is deliverance from spiritual thralldom to be found in Jesus Christ, then inquire after him, and seek to know him with gladness. The Name Jesus is sweet, honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, a Jubile in the heart. What a servant were he that knew not his Masters Name? is not he unworthy the benefit of Redemption, that will not vouchsafe to inquire who hath paid his Ransom? Oh my soul, fly unto Christ in whom thou shalt find deliverance from all spiritual thralldom. God hath made Christ an Adam, Head, Root, Store-house, in whom are treasured all those good things, which from him are communicated unto us: We love to thrust amongst them with whom we may find benefit, and profit; Seek this above all, that thou mayest be by Faith in Christ. Should Bankrupts hear of any that should answer their creditors for them, they would quickly resort to him: how much more shouldest thou resort to this Mediator, and Surety, who will answer the debt of those that come unto him by Faith? seek to be engrafted into him, strive by Faith to grow up in him: for the more nearly we are united with anything, the more we partake of the virtue, and operation of it. Those that are nearest the fire, partake in the heat of it more than those that are further removed. Thou seest men seek to be made one person in law, to be most nearly joined to such as may bring them in wealth: Oh my soul, why dost thou not

seek more earnestly by a spiritual marriage to become one with him in whom is every good blessing: Behold he sueth unto thee, not that he might be enriched by thee, for thou hast nothing to give, he stands in need of nothing, but that he might answer thy debt, set thee at liberty, adorn thee with grace, and endow thee with eternal life. O my soul, what great cause hast thou to love the Lord, and rejoice in his mercy! God hath given his Son to die for us, before we asked it: Christ hath (when we could not through our gracelesness once ask him) fulfilled all Righteousness, and discharged us from the danger of sin. We take it as love in men, if spoken to, they will do small matters for us; He that will bear a blow for us in our behalf, be bound for us in great sums of money, specially he that will lie by it for our good: But how much more art thou to acknowledge this grace of Christ, who hath been thy Surety, paid for thy deliverance, not silver or gold, but his precious blood? The insensible creatures are called upon to rejoice for the Redemption of God's people; when they were redeemed from Babel, the joy did put them into an extrasie, they knew not whether they were asleep or awake: But this spiritual Redemption doth as far out-strip that temporal freedom, as Heaven is above the Earth, or hell worse than the house of bondage. Sing unto the Lord, oh my soul, make a joyful noise unto the God of thy salvation. What cause hast thou to praise him, who hath visited and redeemed thee with such a Redemption? Thou mayest remember the day when thou wast in thralldom to the burning wrath of God, and stoodest under the condemnation of the Law, when it was death to be held to the duties of godliness, in which is the exercise of true freedom; and sin did hold thee so fast, that though thou sawest the mischief of it, and proposedst sometimes a new course, yet thou couldest not return to it as before, when this lust and that passion did tyrannize over thee, and fears of conscience, and death did hold thee in thralldom: But now the Lord hath looked upon thee in mercy, his wrath is appeased, the Law is answered, Satan is cast down, and thou art received into special favor to walk with him. Oh Lord, I am ashamed that I should be so senseless at the remembrance of this unspeakable love, so forgetful of this undeserved kindness; move the scales from mine eyes, I pray thee, and take the veil from my heart, which will not let me rejoice in so excellent mercy.

Quest. Show how we must proceed in Meditation on the Resurrection of Christ?

Ans. We must consider the Subject, Antecedents, Causes, End, Time, Place, and things that happened with it, the effects, properties, and consequents, what is like, and what unlike.

My soul desires to think upon the Resurrection of Christ, in which I may behold the reconciled face of God. Dear Father, direct my mind, rightly to conceive of this high mystery, to the glory of thy Name, and the comfort of my soul: To rise from the sleep of sin, is to leave or desist from evil. He that is fallen prostrate, ariseth when he gathers up himself. He that layeth himself down to rest, ariseth when he is raised from sleep. He that is dead ariseth when the soul is knit to the body: The Resurrection of Christ is the first degree of his exaltation, wherein the soul being united again to his body, he was raised up to spiritual and immortal life. It is a motion partly natural, partly supernatural; Natural in respect of the subject, bound, and means. For Christ rose so out of the grave, that he is said to be there no more, and he rose by means proper to a natural body, that being removed which might seem to hinder. Nor was this Resurrection in a moment but in certain succession of time, which is required to every natural motion. Nevertheless this motion is supernatural, in respect of the cause, efficient, and the end: The Divine Nature of Christ could not suffer, nor

die, nor rise again; but he was raised to life in respect of that nature that died for our sins, or in respect of the body, which for a time was separated from the soul, and laid in the grave. This was prefigured by types, foretold by the Prophets of the Old Testament, and most clearly spoken to his Disciples by our Savior himself, signifying unto them that the Son of Man must suffer at Jerusalem, and be buried, and the third day rise again.

The principal cause of the Resurrection, was the Divine Nature, most strictly united with the Humanity: In Scripture this work is ascribed to the Father, who is said to raise his Son; and to the Son, who by his Divine power, or as the Apostle speaketh, by the eternal Spirit raised up himself. I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it: Of his infinite love towards his Elect, he laid down his life, and of the same love and affection toward them, he rose again, which is more evidently seen in this, that he did vouchsafe to call them brethren; with which sweet name, full of love he had not before saluted any man. As he suffered the most grievous torment for the salvation of the Elect his chosen people, so for the glorification of his Spouse, that is, the Church, he rose again that he might enrich and beautify her with spoils, taken from the enemy.

The Causes lead us to consider of the End, why Christ rose again, for every proper efficient, intendeth an end which is ever good, and that most excellent as the worker is of greatest wisdom and excellency: Now therefore, since Christ rose in special love to his peculiar people, it must needs tend to their special exceeding great good: By his Resurrection the glory of Christ which he had with the Father (before the foundation of the world) was manifested, which the world would not acknowledge by his Sermons, nor by miracles confirming his Doctrine. By his Resurrection he obtained those glorious Titles with which the Prophets foretold that the Messias should be adorned: such as be; The Prince of life, the first-fruits of them that sleep, the first-born of every creature, the first-born from the dead, and the first-begotten of the dead; and the Lord of Dead and Living. By his Resurrection he showed himself to be the Conqueror of Death, Sin, and Satan; meritoriously he triumphed over our enemies upon the Cross; actually he began his triumph at the Resurrection. Now when the powers of Hell could no longer hold him under, it is manifest that they are subdued, and conquered. By his Resurrection he declareth that his satisfaction is fully absolute. Had the least penny of our debt remained upon the score not discharged, he could not have loosed the sorrows of Death. Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. By the Resurrection he prepared himself to the glorious function of a Mediator. As he suffered without the gate to pay the price of our Redemption: So did he enter into Heaven to appear before the Father for us. He died once for our sins, and now liveth forever to make intercession for us. By his death he purchased life and salvation for his people, and now sitting in glory at the right hand of the Father, he doth communicate the blessing that he hath procured for them. Christ rose, that we might rise: For he that raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raised up us with Jesus, and set us together with him.

Early in the morning upon the third day after he was buried, our Savior rose out of the Sepulcher in which he was laid, at which time there was a mighty Earthquake, and an Angel descended from Heaven to roll away the stone, at which glorious apparition, the soldiers that kept the Tomb were sore afraid, and became as dead men.

The death of Christ wanted not signs of Majesty, nor his Resurrection tokens of exceeding glory? when the Earth was moved at his presence, and the Angels descended from Heaven to do him service. The effects of this Resurrection are far more glorious than the signs that did accompany it: for unless his Resurrection had followed his cruel death, all his benefits appropriated to us had lain buried together with him. The Resurrection of Christ is a notable confirmation of his Doctrine, the abolition of sin and death, regeneration unto life eternal; and vivification of our bodies are the fruits of it. It was necessary that Christ should rise, in regard of the excellency of his person, for being the proper Son of God, it was impossible he should be held of the sorrows of death; being just and innocent as man, it could not be that he should lie under the power of the grave, and dying to overcome, he could not be vanquished of the enemies. It was also necessary in respect of the Covenant he had made with the Father, the dignity of his high office of eternal Mediation, and that the truth of those things which were foretold concerning the glory of the Messias might be fulfilled: Many admirable things are spoken touching the Messias, and the glory of his Kingdom, who was first to lay down his life, and then to take possession of his Kingdom in glory; where he shall live forever to make intercession for his people, which he could not have done if he had not risen. It cannot be that the Word of God should take none effect, but it was foretold that the Messias should rise again, in which respect his Resurrection was necessary. Christ not as a private person, but as a public person. He died for his Elect, and virtually they rose in him, when he rose from the dead, of whose Resurrection they partake actually, when by lively Faith they are made one with him.

This Resurrection was exceeding glorious, in respect of the power by which it was effected, the life into which he rose, and the things that accompanied, or followed after the Resurrection: For the graves did open, and many bodies of them that slept in the earth, arose. Whereby the grave did witness, that its power was taken away, and clean vanquished.

Jonah 's deliverance out of the Whales belly was wonderful and miraculous; the Lord was gracious in sparing Isaac, and raising him as it were from death, who was a slain Sacrifice in his Fathers account. But these were only types, and shadows of Christ, his Resurrection the life and glory of the other.

The elect and faithful shall rise to glory at the day of judgment, but they shall rise by the power of Christ. Christ arose by his own power: they shall rise as the Members of Christ, but Christ rose as the first-fruits of them that sleep: they shall rise as private persons, but Christ arose as a public: They shall arise from corruption, but Christ his body did not see corruption: They shall rise to immortality and glory for themselves, but Christ rose to glory that he might govern his Church in glory, and bring his Elect unto himself, that where he is, there they might be forever.

Quest. How are these things to be pressed upon the heart?

Answ. We must stir up ourselves to behold and rejoice in the Lord's love towards us; and fly unto Christ by Faith, that we might feel the power of his Resurrection quickening us to newness of life, and comfort ourselves against the fear of death, and rotting in the grave, with an assured hope of Resurrection to immortality, and eternal glory.

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