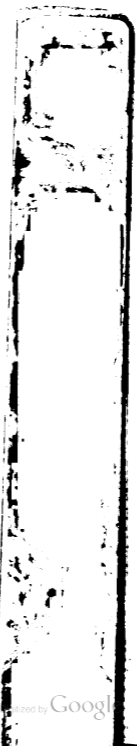

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IX. Eng. 127

THE
CHRISTIAN'S
PATTERN:
OR, A
TREATISE
OF THE
Imitation of CHRIST.

Translated from the LATIN of
THOMAS à KEMPIS.

Compared with the ORIGINAL, and Corrected
throughout, by

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Late Fellow of *Lincoln College, Oxon.*

And afterwards revised by an eminent Divine of
the Church of ENGLAND.


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THE
P R E F A C E.

I.  *S it is impossible for any one to know the Usefulness of this Treatise, till he has read it in such a manner as it deserves; instead of heaping up Commendations of it, which those who have so read it do not want, and those who have not will not believe; I have transcribed a few plain Directions, How to read this (or indeed any other Religious Book) with Improvement.*

II. *Assign some stated Time every Day for this pious Employment. If any indispensable Business unexpectedly robs you of your Hour and Retirement, take the next Hour for it. When such large Portions of each Day are so willingly bestowed on bodily Refreshments, can you scruple al-*

P R E F A C E.

lotting some little Time daily for the Improvement of your Immortal Soul?

III. *Prepare yourself for reading by Purity of Intention, whereby you singly aim at your Soul's Benefit; and then in a short Ejaculation beg GOD's Grace to enlighten your Understanding, and dispose your Heart for receiving what you read; that you may both know what He requires of you, and seriously resolve to execute his Will when known.*

IV. *Be sure to read not cursorily and hastily; but leisurely, seriously, and with great Attention; with proper Intervals and Pauses, that you may allow Time for the Enlightenings of Divine Grace. Stop every now and then to recollect what you have read, and consider how to reduce it to Practice. Farther, let your Reading be continued and regular, not rambling and desultory. It shews a vitiated Palate, to taste of many Dishes, without fixing upon, or being satisfied with any: Not but that it will be of great Service to read over and over those Passages, which more nearly concern yourself, and more closely affect*

P R E F A C E.

affect your own Practice or Inclinations; especially if you add a particular Examination upon each.

V. Labour to work yourself up into a Temper correspondent to what you read; otherwise it will prove empty and unprofitable, while it only enlightens your Understanding, without influencing your Will or inflaming your Affections. Therefore intersperse here and there pious Asperations to GOD, and Petitions for his Grace. Select also any remarkable Sayings, or Advices, treasuring them up in your Memory to ruminare and consider on: Which you may either in Time of Need draw forth, as Arrows from a Quiver against Temptation, against this or that Vice which you are more particularly addicted to; or make use of as Incitements to Humility, Patience, the Love of GOD, or any other Virtue.

VI. Conclude all with a short Ejaculation to GOD; that he would preserve and prosper this good Seed sown in your Heart, that it may bring forth its Fruit in due Season. And think not this will take up too much of your Time, for you can never bestow it to so good Advantage.

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T H B

CHRISTIAN'S
PATTERN,



B O O K I.



C H A P. I.

*Of the Imitation of CHRIST, and contempt
of all the vanities of the world.*



H E that followeth me, walketh not
in darkness, saith the LORD.
These are the words of CHRIST,
by which we are admonished,
that we ought to imitate his
life and manners, if we would be truly en-
lightened, and delivered from all blindness of
heart.

Let therefore our chief endeavour be, to
meditate upon the life of JESUS CHRIST.

2. The doctrine of CHRIST exceedeth all the doctrines of holy men; and he that hath the Spirit, will find hidden manna therein.

But it falleth out, that many, who often hear the gospel of CHRIST, are yet but little affected, because they have not the Spirit of CHRIST.

But he that would fully and feelingly understand the words of CHRIST, must endeavour to conform his whole life to *the life of CHRIST*.

3. What will it avail thee to dispute sublimely of the TRINITY, if thou be void of humility, and art thereby displeasing to the TRINITY?

Truly, sublime words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God.

I had rather feel compunction, than know the definition thereof.

If thou didst know the whole Bible, and the sayings of all the philosophers by heart, what would all that profit thee without the love of God, and without grace?

Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but to love God, and to serve him only.

This is the highest wisdom, by contempt of the world to tend towards the kingdom of heaven.

4. It is therefore vanity to seek after perishing riches, and to trust in them.

It is also vanity to seek honours, and raise ourselves to a high station.

It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh, and to labour for that, for which thou must afterwards suffer grievous punishment.

It is vanity to wish to live long, and to be careless to live well.

It is vanity to mind only this present life, and not to foresee those things which are to come.

It is vanity to set thy love on that which speedily passeth away, and not to hasten thither, where everlasting joy remains.

5. Call to mind often that proverb, *That the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.*

Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and to turn thyself to the invisible.

For they that follow their sensuality, stain their conscience, and lose the favour of God.

C H A P. II.

Of thinking humbly of ourselves.

ALL men naturally desire to know; but what availeth knowledge, without the fear of God.

Surely, an humble husbandman that serveth God, is better than a proud philosopher that, neglecting himself, studies the course of the heavens.

He that knoweth himself well, is vile in his own eyes, and is not pleased with the praises of men.

If I understood all things in the world, and had not charity; what would that help me in the sight of GOD, who will judge me according to my deeds?

2. Cease from an inordinate desire of knowing, for therein is much distraction and deceit.

Learned men are desirous to produce themselves, and to be called Wise.

There are many things, to know which doth little or nothing profit the soul:

And he is very unwise, that minds any other things than those that tend to the welfare of his soul.

Many words do not satisfy the soul; but a good life comforteth the mind, and a pure conscience giveth great confidence towards GOD.

3. The more thou knowest, and the better thou understandest: the more grievously shalt thou be judged, unless thy life be the more holy.

Be not therefore lifted up for any art or science; but rather let the knowledge given thee, make thee afraid.

If thou thinkest that thou understandest and knowest much; yet know that there are many more things which thou knowest not.

Be not over-wise, but rather acknowledge thine own ignorance. Why wilt thou prefer thyself before others, since there are many more learned and skilful in the scripture than thou?

If thou wilt know or learn any thing profitably, desire to be unknown, and of no account.

4. The highest and most profitable lesson is, the true knowledge and contempt of ourselves.

It is great wisdom and perfection to esteem ourselves nothing, and to think always well and highly of others.

If thou shouldest see another openly sin, or commit some heinous offence, yet oughtest thou not to esteem thyself better than him: for thou art not sure of thy own perseverance.

We are all frail, but thou oughtest to esteem none more frail than thyself.

C H A P. III.

Of the doctrine of truth.

HAPPY is he, whom *Truth* itself teacheth, not by *figures* and words that pass away; but by an immediate communication of itself.

Our own opinion and our own sense often deceive us, and discern little.

What availeth it to cavil and dispute about dark and hidden things; for being ignorant of which we shall not be reprov'd at the day of judgment.

It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable and necessary, and to chuse to think of curious and hurtful things. We have eyes, and see not.

2. And what have we to do with dry notions?

He, to whom the Eternal WORD speaketh, is delivered from a world of vain notions.

From the One WORD are all things, and all speak that One: and this is He, who also speaketh unto us.

No man understandeth or judgeth rightly without Him.

He, to whom all things are One, who reduceth all things to One, and seeth all things in One, may be stable in heart, and remain peaceable in GOD.

O GOD, the truth, make me One with thee in everlasting love!

I am weary of often reading and hearing many things; in thee is All that I desire.

Let all doctors hold their peace; let all creatures be silent in thy sight; speak thou alone unto me.

3. The more united any one is in himself, and inwardly simple, the more and higher things doth he understand without labour; because he receiveth the light of knowledge from above.

A pure, simple, and stable spirit is not diffipated, tho' it be employed in many works: because it does all to the glory of GOD, and seeks not itself in any thing it doth.

Who hinders and troubles thee more than the unmortified affection of thine own heart?

A good and devout man first disposeth within himself those things which he is outwardly to act:

Neither do they draw him to inordinate desires, but he bends them to the prescript of right reason.

Who hath a sharper combat, than he that laboureth to overcome himself?

This ought to be our business, to conquer ourselves, and daily to grow stronger, and to advance in holiness.

4. All perfection in this life hath some imperfection mixed with it: and no knowledge of ours is without some darkness.

An humble knowledge of thyself is a surer way to GOD, than a deep search after science.

Yet knowledge is not to be blamed, it being good in itself, and ordained by GOD; but a good conscience and a virtuous life is always to be preferred before it.

But because many endeavour rather to get knowledge, than to live well; therefore they are often deceived, and bear either none, or very little fruit.

5. O, If men bestowed as much labour in the rooting out of vices, and planting of virtues, as they do in moving of questions; there would not so great crimes and wickedness, nor so much hurt be done in the world.

Surely at the day of judgment we shall not be examined what we have read, but what we have done: not how well we have spoken, but how religiously we have lived.

Tell me, where are now all those doctors and masters, with whom thou wast well acquainted whilst they lived and flourished in learning?

Now others possess their preferments, and perhaps do scarce ever think of them. In their life-time they seemed something, but now they are not spoken of.

6. O, how quickly doth the glory of the world pass away! O, that their life had been answerable to their learning! then had their study and reading been to good purpose.

How many perish in this world by reason of vain learning, who take little care of the serving of GOD?

And because they rather chuse to be great than humble, therefore they become vain in their imaginations.

He is truly great, that is great in love.

He is truly great, that is little in his own eyes, and that maketh no account of any height of honour.

He is truly wise, that accounteth all earthly things as dung, that he may gain CHRIST.

And he is truly learned, that doth the will of GOD, and forsaketh his own will.

CHAP. IV.

Of prudence in our actions.

WE must not give ear to every saying or suggestion, but wearily and leisurely ponder things according to the will of GOD.

But alas, such is our weakness, that we often more easily believe, and speak, evil of others than good.

Good men do not easily give credit to every thing one tells them; because they know human frailty prone to evil, and very subject to fail in words.

2. It is great wisdom not to be rash in thy proceedings, nor to stand stiffly in thine own opinion.

It is wisdom likewise not to believe every thing which thou hearest, nor presently to relate again to others what thou hast heard; or dost believe.

Consult with a wise and conscientious man, and seek to be instructed by a better than thyself, rather than to follow thine own inventions.

A good life maketh a man wise according to GOD, and giveth him experience in many things.

The humbler one is in himself, and more resigned unto GOD; the more prudent and contented shall he be in all things.

C H A P. V.

Of reading the holy scriptures.

TRUTH, not eloquence, is to be sought for in holy scripture.

All scripture is to be read with the same spirit wherewith it was written.

We should rather search after spiritual profit in the scriptures, than subtilty of speech:

We ought to read plain and devout books as willingly as high and profound ones.

Let not the authority of the writer, whether he be of great or small learning, but the love of pure truth, draw thee to read.

Search not who spake this, but mark what is spoken.

2. Men pass away; but the truth of the LORD remaineth for ever.

GOD speaks unto us sundry ways, without respect of persons.

Our own curiosity often hindereth us in reading of the scriptures, when we will examine and discuss that which we should rather pass over without more ado.

If thou desire to profit, read humbly, simply, and faithfully: nor ever desire the estimation of learning.

Enquire willingly, and hear with silence the words of holy men; dislike not the parables of the elders, for they are not spoken without cause.

C H A P. VI.

Of inordinate affections.

WHENSOEVER a man desireth any thing inordinately, he is presently disquieted in himself.

The proud and covetous never rest. The poor and humble in spirit live in the multitude of peace.

The man that is not yet perfectly dead to himself, is quickly tempted and overcome in small and trifling things.

He that is weak in spirit, and still in some measure carnal and prone to sensible things, can hardly withdraw himself altogether from earthly desires.

And therefore he is often afflicted, while he is withdrawing himself from them: and easily falleth into anger, if any one opposes him.

2. Yet if he hath followed his appetite, he is presently disquieted with remorse of conscience; because he yielded to his passion which profiteth him nothing to the obtaining of the peace he sought for.

True quietness of heart therefore is gotten by resisting our passions, not by obeying them.

There is no peace in the heart of a carnal man, nor of him that is addicted to outward things, but in the spiritual and fervent man.

C H A P. VII.

Of avoiding vain hope and pride.

HE is vain that putteth his trust in man or creatures.

Be not ashamed to serve others for the love of **JESUS CHRIST**; nor to be esteemed poor in this world.

Presume not upon thyself, but place thy hope in **GOD**.

Do what lieth in thy power, and **GOD** will assist thy good will.

Trust not in thine own knowledge, nor in the subtilty of any living creature: but rather in the grace of **GOD**; who helpeth the humble, and humbleth the proud.

2. Glory not in wealth if thou have it, nor in friends because potent; but in **GOD**, who giveth all things, and desireth to give thee himself above all.

Value not thyself for the strength or beauty of thy body, which is spoiled and disfigured with a little sickness.

Pride not thyself in thy natural gifts or wit, lest thereby thou displease **GOD**, to whom appertaineth all the good thou hast by nature.

3. Esteem not thyself better than others, lest perhaps in the sight of **GOD**, who knoweth what is in man, thou be accounted worse than they.

Be not proud of thy good works: for the judgment of GOD is far different from the judgment of men, and that often offendeth him which pleaseth them.

If there be any good in thee, believe that there is much more in others, that so thou mayest preserve humility.

It hurts thee not, if thou thinkest thyself worse than all men: but it hurts thee much to prefer thyself before any one man.

The humble enjoy continual peace: but in the heart of the proud is envy and frequent indignation.

C H A P. VIII.

That too much familiarity is to be shunned.

LA Y not thy heart open to every one; but treat of thy affairs with the wise and such as fear GOD.

Converse not much with young people and strangers.

Flatter not the rich; neither do thou appear willingly before great personages.

Keep company with the humble and simple, with the devout and virtuous; and confer with them of those things that may edify.

Be not familiar with any women; but in general commend all good women to GOD.

Desire to be familiar with GOD alone and his angels, and fly the knowledge of men.

2. We must have charity towards all; but familiarity with all is not expedient.

Sometimes it falleth out, that a Person unknown to us, is much esteemed from report; yet upon a nearer acquaintance becomes disagreeable.

We think sometimes to please others by our company, and we rather distaste them with those bad qualities which they discover in us.

C H A P. IX.

Of obedience and subjection.

IT is a very great advantage to live in obedience, to be under a superior, and not to be at our own disposal.

It is much safer to obey, than to govern.

Many live under obedience, rather for necessity than for charity; such are discontented, and do easily repine and murmur.

Neither can they attain to freedom of mind, unless they obey with their whole heart for the love of God.

Go whither thou wilt, thou shalt find no rest, but in humble subjection under the government of a superior. Many have deceived themselves by imagining, that the change of places would make them happy.

2. True it is, that every one willingly doth that which agreeth with his own sense and liking; and affects those most that are of his own mind:

But if God be amongst us, we must sometimes, for peace-sake, cease to adhere to our own opinion.

Who is so wise, that he can fully know all things?

Trust not therefore to thine own opinion: but be willing to hear the judgment of others.

If thy opinion be right, and yet thou recedest from it for GOD'S sake, and compliest with others, thou shalt thereby make great proficiency.

3. I have often heard, that it is safer to hear and take counsel, than to give it.

It may also fall out, that each one's opinion may be good: but to refuse to yield to others when reason or cause requireth it, is a sign of pride and obstinacy.

C H A P. X.

Of avoiding superfluity of words.

FLY the tumult of the world as much as thou canst: for the treating of worldly affairs is prejudicial, altho' it be done with sincere intention.

For we are quickly defiled, and enthralled with vanity.

I could wish that I had oftentimes held my peace, and that I had not been in company.

Why are we so fond of conversation, when notwithstanding we seldom return to silence without hurt of conscience?

The reason is, because we thereby seek mutual consolation, and desire to ease our mind wearied with sundry thoughts;

And we very willingly talk and think of those things which we most love or desire, or of those
 which

which we feel most contrary and troublesome unto us.

But alas, oftentimes in vain, and to no end : for this outward comfort doth not a little obstruct the inward and divine consolation.

Therefore we must watch and pray, lest our time pass away idly.

2. If it be lawful and expedient for thee to speak, speak those things that may edify.

An evil habit, and the neglect of our proficiency in virtue, contribute much to the ill government of our tongues.

However, devout conversation upon spiritual subjects doth greatly further our spiritual growth, especially where persons of one mind and spirit are associated in God.

C H A P. XI.

Of the obtaining of peace, and zeal for improvement.

WE might enjoy much peace if we would not busy ourselves with the words and deeds of others, in which we have no concern.

How can he live long in peace, that meddles with the cares of others, that seeks occasions abroad, that little or seldom recollecteth himself within his own breast?

Blessed are the single-hearted, for they shall enjoy much peace.

2. Why were some of the saints so perfect, and attained to such high degrees of contemplation? Because they laboured to mortify themselves wholly to all earthly desires; and there-

fore they could with their whole heart cleave to God, and keep their mind free and vacant,

We are too much taken up with our own passions, and too solicitous for transitory things.

We also seldom overcome any one vice perfectly, and are not inflamed with a fervent desire to grow better every day: and therefore we remain cold and indifferent.

3. If we were perfectly dead unto ourselves, and disengaged from all low affections: then should we be able to relish divine things, and experience something of heavenly contemplation.

The greatest and indeed the whole impediment is, that we are not disentangled from our passions and desires, neither do we endeavour to enter into that path of perfection, wherein the saints have walked before us,

And when any small adversity befalleth us, we are too quickly dejected, and turn ourselves to human comforts.

4. If we would endeavour, like men of courage, to stand in the battle; we should surely feel the assistance of GOD from heaven.

For he, who furnisheth us with occasions of striving, that we may conquer, is ready to succour those that strive, and trust in his grace.

If we place our progress in religion only in exterior observances, our devotion will quickly be at an end.

But let us lay the axe to the root, that being freed from passions, we may find rest to our souls.

5. If every year we would root out one vice, we should soon become perfect men.

But

But now oftentimes we perceive, on the contrary, that we were better and purer at the beginning of our conversion, than after many years.

Our fervour and proficiency ought to increase daily; but now it is accounted a great matter, if one can retain but some part of his first zeal.

If we would do ourselves some little violence at the beginning, then should we be able to perform all things afterwards with ease and delight.

6. It is hard to leave that to which we are accustomed, but harder to go against our own wills.

But if thou dost not overcome little and easy things, when wilt thou overcome harder things?

Resist thy inclination in the very beginning, and unlearn evil customs, lest perhaps by little and little they draw thee to greater difficulty.

O, if thou didst but consider how much inward peace unto thyself, and joy unto others thou shouldest procure by demeaning thyself well, I suppose thou wouldest be more careful of thy spiritual advancement.

C H A P. XII.

Of the usefulness of adversity.

IT is good that we have sometimes some troubles and crosses: for they often make a man enter into himself, and consider that he is here in banishment, and ought not to place his trust in any worldly thing.

It is good that we be sometimes contradicted; and that men think ill of us: and this, altho' we do, and intend well. These things help

often to the attaining of humility, and defend us from vain-glory:

For then we more diligently see GOD for our inward witness, when outwardly we are contemned and disregarded by men.

2. Therefore a man should settle himself so fully in GOD; that he need not seek comforts of men.

When a good man is afflicted, tempted, or troubled with evil thoughts; then he understandeth better the great need he hath of GOD, without whom he perceiveth he can do nothing good.

Then also he sorroweth, groaneth, and prayeth by reason of the miseries he suffereth.

Then he desireth not to live any longer, but rather to die, to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST.

Then also he well perceiveth, that perfect security and full peace cannot be had in this world.

C H A P. XIII.

Of resisting temptation.

So long as we live in this world, we cannot be without tribulation and temptation.

Hence it is written in *Job*, the life of man is a warfare upon earth.

Every one therefore ought to take care as to his own temptations, and to watch in prayer, lest he be deceived by the devil; who never sleepeth, but goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

No man is so perfect and holy, but hath sometimes temptations: and we cannot be altogether without them.

2. Temptations are often very profitable to men, tho' they be troublesome and grievous: for in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed.

All the saints have passed through, and profited by, many tribulations and temptations.

And they that could not bear temptations, became reprobates and fell away.

There is no order so holy, nor place so secret, where there are not temptations or adversities.

3. There is no man that is altogether secure from temptations whilst he liveth: for the root of temptation is in ourselves, being born with inclinations to evil.

When one temptation or tribulation goeth away, another cometh, and we shall ever have something to suffer, because we are fallen from the state of our felicity.

Many seek to fly temptations, and fall more grievously into them.

By flight alone we cannot overcome, but by patience and true humility we conquer all our enemies.

4. He that only avoideth them outwardly, and doth not pluck them up by the roots, shall profit little; yea, temptations will sooner return unto him, and he shall feel them worse than before.

By little and little, and by patience and longanimity, (through God's help) thou shalt
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more easily overcome, than by harsh, and disquieting efforts in thy own strength.

Often take counsel in temptations: and deal not roughly with him that is tempted, but give him comfort as thou wouldst wish to be done to thyself.

5. The beginning of all temptations to evil, is inconstancy of mind, and little confidence in God.

For as a ship without a rudder is tossed to and fro with the waves; so the man that is negligent, and breaketh his resolutions, is many ways tempted.

Fire trieth iron, and temptation a just man.

We know not often what we are able to do, but temptations shew us what we are.

We must be watchful, especially in the beginning of the temptation; for the enemy is then more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the door of our hearts, but be resisted without the gate at his first knock.

Wherefore one said, Withstand the beginnings. For an after-remedy comes too late.

First there occurreth to the mind a simple evil thought; then a strong imagination; then afterwards delight, and evil motion; and lastly consent.

And so by little and little our malicious enemy getteth entrance, whilst he is not resisted in the beginning.

And the longer one is slack in resisting, the weaker he becomes daily, and the enemy stronger against him.

6. Some suffer the greatest temptations in the beginning of their conversion; others in the latter end.

Others again are much troubled almost throughout their life.

Some are but slightly tempted according to the wisdom and equity of the divine appointment, which weigheth the states and deserts of men, and ordaineth all things for the good of his elect.

7. We ought not therefore to despair when we are tempted, but so much the more fervently to pray unto God, that he will vouchsafe to help us in all tribulations; who surely, according to the words of *St. Paul*, will give with the temptation such a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.

Let us therefore humble ourselves under the hand of God in all temptations and tribulations, for he will save and exalt the humble in spirit.

8. In temptations and afflictions, man is proved how much he hath profited; and his reward is hereby the greater, and his virtues do more eminently shine.

Neither is it any such great thing if a man be devout and fervent, when he seeleth no affliction; but if, in time of adversity, he bear himself patiently, there is hope then of great proficiency.

Some are kept from great temptations, and are often overcome in small ones, which daily occur; that being humbled, they may never con-

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confide in themselves in great matters, who are
baffled in so small things:

C H A P. XIV.

Of avoiding rash judgment.

TURN thine eyes unto thyself, and beware
thou judge not the deeds of other men.

In judging of others a man laboureth in vain,
often erreth, and easily sinneth: but in judg-
ing and examining himself, he always labour-
eth fruitfully.

We often judge of things according as we
fancy them; for private affection bereaves us
easily of a right judgment.

If **GOD** were always the pure intention of
our desire, we should not be so much troubled,
when our inclination is opposed.

2. But oftentimes something lurks within,
or else occurreth from without, which draw-
eth us after it.

Many secretly seek themselves in their acti-
ons, and know it not.

They seem also to live in peace of mind,
when things are done according to their will
and opinion; but if things succeed otherwise
than they desire, they are straightways troubled
and afflicted.

Diversity of inclinations and opinions, often
causes dissensions between religious and devout
persons, between friends and countrymen.

3. An old custom is hardly broken, and no
man is willing to be led further than himself
can see.

If thou dost more rely upon thine own reason or industry, than upon the virtue which was in JESUS CHRIST, and to which thou oughtest to subject thyself; late, if ever, shalt thou become illuminated: for GOD will have us perfectly subject unto him, and that, being enflamed with his love, we transcend the narrow limits of human reason.

C H A P. XV.

Of works done out of charity.

FOR NO worldly thing, nor for the love of any man, is any evil to be done: but yet for the profit of one that standeth in need, a good work is sometimes to be intermitted without scruple, or changed for a better.

For, by thy doing this, a good work is not lost, but changed into a better.

The outward work without charity profiteth nothing; but whatsoever is done out of charity, be it never so little and contemptible in the sight of the world, is become wholly fruitful.

For GOD weigheth more with how much love one worketh, than how much he doeth.

He doeth much, that loveth much.

2. He doeth much, that doeth a thing well.

He doeth well, that serveth his neighbour, and not his own will.

Often it seemeth to be charity, and it is rather carnality; because natural inclination, self-will, hope of reward, and desire of our own interest, are motives that men are rarely free from.

3. He that hath true and perfect charity, seeketh himself in nothing; but only desireth in all things that the glory of GOD should be exalted.

He also envieth none, because he seeketh not his own satisfaction: neither will he rejoice in himself; but chuses GOD only for his portion and beatitude.

He attributeth nothing that is good to any man, but wholly referreth it unto GOD, from whom, as from the fountain, all things proceed; in whom finally all the saints do rest with perpetual fruition.

O, he that had but one spark of true charity, would certainly discern that all earthly things are full of vanity.

C H A P. XVI.

Of bearing with the defects of others.

THOSE things, that a man cannot amend in himself, or in others, he ought to suffer patiently, until GOD order things otherwise.

Think that perhaps it is better so for thy trial and patience, without which all our deeds are not much to be esteemed.

Thou oughtest to pray, when thou hast such impediments, that GOD would vouchsafe to help thee, and that thou mayest bear them patiently.

2. If one that is once or twice warned will not give over, contend not with him: but commit all to GOD, that his will may be done, and his name honoured in all his servants, who well knoweth how to turn evil into good.

Study to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, of what sort soever they be ; for that thou thyself also hast many, which must be suffered by others.

If thou canst not make thyself such a one as thou wouldest, how canst thou expect to have another in all things to thy liking ?

We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our own faults.

3. We would have others exactly corrected, and will not be corrected ourselves.

The large liberty of others displeaseth us, and yet we will not have our desires denied us.

We will have others kept under by strict laws, but in no sort will ourselves be restrained.

Thus it appears, how seldom we weigh our neighbour in the same balance with ourselves.

4. If all men were perfect, what should we have to suffer of our neighbour for GOD ?

But now GOD hath thus ordered it, that we may learn to bear one another's burthens : for no man is without fault, no man but hath his burthen, no man is self-sufficient, no man has wisdom enough for himself ; but we ought to bear with one another, comfort, help, instruct, and admonish one another.

Occasions of adversity best discover how great virtue each one hath ;

For occasions make not a man frail, but sheweth what he is.

C H A P. XVII.

Of living in a religious community.

THOU must learn to break thy own will in many things, if thou wilt have peace and concord with others.

It is no small matter to dwell in a religious community and to converse therein without complaint, and to preserve therein faithfully until death.

Blessed is he that hath there lived well, and ended happily.

If thou wilt persevere and profit as thou oughtest, esteem thyself as a banished man, and a stranger upon earth. Thou must be contented for CHRIST'S sake to be esteemed a fool, if thou desire to lead a holy life.

2. The wearing of a religious habit, little profits; but change of manners, and perfect mortification of passions, make a true religious man.

He that seeketh any thing else, but GOD, and the salvation of his soul, shall find nothing but tribulation and sorrow.

Neither can he remain long in peace, that laboureth not to be the least, and subject to all.

3. Thou camest to serve, not to rule. Know that thou wast called to suffer and to labour, and not to be idle, or pass your time in unprofitable conversations.

Here therefore men are proved as gold in the furnace.

Here no man can stand, unless he humble

himself with his whole heart for the love of
GOD.

C H A P. XVIII.

Of the examples of the holy fathers.

CONSIDER the lively examples of the holy fathers, in whom true perfection and religion shined; and thou shalt see how little it is, and almost nothing which we do now.

Alas! what is our life, if it be compared to them!

These saints and friends of CHRIST served the LORD in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in labour and weariness, in watchings and fastings, in prayer and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproaches.

2. O, how many and grievous tribulations suffered the apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the rest that would follow the steps of CHRIST!

They hated their lives in this world, that they might possess their souls in everlasting life!

O how strict and self-renouncing a life, led those holy fathers in the wilderness! How long and grievous temptations suffered they! How often were they assaulted by the enemy! What frequent and fervent prayers offered they to GOD! How rigorous an abstinence did they daily use! How great zeal and care had they of their spiritual proficiency! How strong a combat had they for the overcoming of their lusts! How pure and upright an intention did they persevere unto GOD!

All the day they laboured, and spent part of the night in prayer; altho', even while they laboured, they had not ceased from mental prayer.

3. They spent all their time usefully: all their hours of devotion seemed short: and, by reason of the great sweetness they felt in contemplation, they forgot the necessity of corporal refreshments.

They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends, and kinsfolks; they desired to have nothing of the world, they took no more of any thing than was necessary for the sustenance of life.

They were poor in earthly things, but rich in grace and virtues.

Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly were refreshed with grace and divine consolation.

4. They were strangers to the world, but near and familiar friends to GOD.

They seemed to themselves as nothing, and were despised by the world: but they were precious and beloved in the eyes of GOD.

They were grounded in true humility, lived in simple obedience, walked in love and patience, and therefore they profited daily in spirit, and obtained great favour of GOD.

They were given for an example to all religious men; and they should more provoke us to profit daily, than the number of the lukewarm to make us remiss.

5. O, how great was the fervour of all religious persons in the beginning of their holy institution!

How devout was their prayer! What zeal to excel in virtue! How exact discipline then flourished! How great reverence and obedience, under the rule of their superiors, observed they in all things!

Their footsteps yet remaining, testify that they were indeed holy and perfect men; who fighting so valiantly, trod the world under their feet.

Now he is thought extraordinary, that offendeth not, and that can with patience endure that which is laid upon him.

6. O, the lukewarmness and negligence of our times; that we so soon decline from the former fervour, insomuch that our life grows burthensome through sloth and listlessness.

Would to GOD the desire to profit did not sleep in thee, who hast often seen the many examples of devout persons.

C H A P. XIX.

Of the exercises of a religious person.

THE life of a religious person ought to be adorned with all virtues: that he may inwardly be such as outwardly he seems to men.

And with reason ought he to be much more virtuous within, than is perceived without: for GOD beholdeth us, whom we ought most highly to reverence wheresoever we are, and walk in purity like angels in his sight.

Daily should we renew our purposes, and stir up ourselves to fervour, as tho' this were the first day of our conversion; and say,

Help me, O LORD GOD, in this my good purpose, and in thy holy service; and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly: for that which I have done hitherto is nothing.

2. According to our purpose shall be our spiritual profiting; and much diligence is necessary to him that will profit much.

If he that firmly purposeth often faileth, what shall he do, that seldom, or feebly, purposeth any thing?

It may fall out sundry ways that we break our resolution, and a little omission of *spiritual* exercises seldom passeth without some loss.

The purpose of just men depends not so much upon their own wisdom, as upon the grace of GOD, on whom they always rely, whatsoever they take in hand.

For man doth purpose, but GOD doth dispose; neither is the way of man in himself.

3. If an accustomed exercise be sometimes omitted, either for some act of piety, or profit to thy brother, it may easily afterwards be recovered again.

But to omit it out of sloth, or carelessness, is very blameable, and will be found pernicious.

Let us do the best we can, we shall fail in many things;

Yet must we always purpose some certain course, and especially against those things, which most hinder us.

We must diligently search into, and regulate both the outward and inward man, because both contribute to our advancement.

4. If thou canst not continually recollect thyself; yet do it sometimes, at the least once a day, to wit, at morning, or at night.

In the morning fix what to do, at night examine thyself what thou hast done, how thou hast behaved thyself in thought, word, and deed; for in these perhaps thou hast often offended both God and thy neighbour.

Gird thy loins like a man against the assaults of the devil; bridle thy appetite, and thou shalt the more easily bridle all the motions of the flesh.

Be thou at no time idle altogether, but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or endeavouring something for the publick good.

Yet bodily exercises must be used with discretion, neither are they to be practised of all men alike.

5. Some religious exercises, which are not common, are better practised in privacy.

Nevertheless beware thou neglect not the duties incumbent on thee, for those of thy own choice. But, having fully and faithfully accomplished the former, if thou hast any spare time, thou mayest follow thy pious inclinations.

All cannot use one kind of exercise, but one is more convenient for this person, another for that:

According to the seasonableness of times also, divers exercises are fitting. Some suit better with us on working-days, others on holy-days.

Some we have need of in the time of temptation, and of others in time of peace and quietness.

Some, when we are dejected; and others, when we rejoice in the LORD.

6. When chief festivals draw near, good exercises are to be renewed, and the prayers of holy men more frequently to be implored.

From feast to feast we should make our good purposes, as tho' we were then to depart out of this world, and to come to the everlasting feast.

Therefore ought we carefully to prepare ourselves at holy times, and to live more devoutly, and exactly, as tho' we were shortly at GOD'S hands to receive the reward of our labours.

But if it be deferred, let us think with ourselves that we are not sufficiently prepared, and unworthy yet of so great glory, which shall be revealed in us in due time; and let us endeavour to prepare ourselves better for our departure.

Blessed is that servant (saith St. Luke the Evangelist) whom when his Lord cometh he shall find watching; verily I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

C H A P. XX.

Of the love of solitude and silence.

SE EK a convenient time to retire into thyself, and meditate often upon GOD'S benefits.

Meddle not with curiosities.

Read such things as may rather yield compunction of heart, than-busy thy head.

If thou wilt withdraw thyself from superfluous talk and useless visits, as also from hearkening after news and rumours; thou shalt find sufficient and convenient leisure to meditate on good things.

The greatest saints avoided the society of men when they could conveniently, and rather chose to serve GOD in secret.

2. One said, As often as I have been among men, I returned less a man; and this we often find true, when we have been long in company.

It is easier not to speak at all, than not to speak more than we should.

It is easier to keep at home, than to be sufficiently upon our guard when we are abroad.

He therefore, that intends to attain to inward and spiritual things, must with JESUS retire from the multitude.

No man safely goes abroad, but he who is willing to stay at home:

No man can speak safely, but he who is willing to hold his peace.

No man ruleth safely, but he that is willing to be ruled.

No man safely commands, but he that hath learned readily to obey.

3. No man safely rejoiceth, unless he hath within him the testimony of a good conscience;

And yet the security of the saints was always full of the fear of GOD.

Neither were they less careful and humble in themselves, because they shined outwardly with grace and great virtues.

But the security of the wicked riseth out of pride and presumption, and in the end makes them deceive their own souls.

Altho' thou art in a convent or a desert, yet promise not thyself security in this life.

4. Those have often through confidence in themselves fallen into the greatest dangers, who have been in the greatest esteem among men.

Wherefore it is more profitable to many not to be altogether free from temptations, but to be often assaulted, lest they should be too secure, lest they should be puffed up with pride, or too too freely decline to worldly comforts.

O how good a conscience would he keep, that would never seek after transitory joy, nor entangle himself with the things of this world!

O how great peace and quietness would he possess, that would cut off all vain solicitude, and think only upon divine things, and such as are profitable for his soul, and would place all his confidence in GOD!

5. No man is worthy of heavenly comforts, unless he diligently exercises himself in holy compunction.

If thou desirest compunction of heart, enter into thy closet, and shut out the tumults of the world, according to the advice of the Psalmist (iv. 4.) *Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.*

In thy closet thou shalt find what abroad thou often losest.

The more thou frequentest thy closet, the more thou wilt like it ; the less thou comest thereunto, the more thou wilt loath it.

If in the beginning of thy conversion thou passest much time in it, it will afterwards be to thee a dear friend, and pleasant comfort.

6. In silence and in stillness a religious soul profiteth, and learneth the hidden truths of holy scripture.

There she findeth rivers of tears, wherein she may every night wash and cleanse herself, that she may be so much the more familiar with her CREATOR, by much the further off she liveth from all worldly tumult.

Whoso therefore withdraweth himself from his acquaintance and friends, GOD, with his holy angels, will draw near unto him.

It is better for a man to live privately and to have regard to himself, than to neglect his soul, and work miracles.

It is commendable in a religious person seldom to go abroad, and to avoid seeing or being seen.

7. Why art thou desirous to see that which is unlawful for thee to enjoy ? For the world passeth away, and the desire thereof.

Our sensual desires draw us to rove abroad ; but when the time is passed, what carriest thou home with thee, but a burthened conscience and dissipated heart ?

A merry going out often bringeth a mournful return, and a joyful evening a sad morning.

So all carnal joys enter pleasantly, but in the end it bites and stings to death.

What canst thou see elsewhere, which thou canst not see here: behold the heaven and the earth and all the elements; for of these are all things created.

8. *What canst thou see any where, that can long continue under the sun?*

Thou thinkest perchance to satisfy thyself, but thou canst never attain it.

Shouldst thou see all the things of this world, what were it but a vain fight?

Lift up thine eyes to GOD in the highest, and pray to him to pardon all thy sins and negligences.

Leave vain things to the vain, but be thou intent upon those things which GOD commandeth thee.

Shut thy door upon thee, and call unto thee JESUS thy beloved.

Stay with him in thy closet; for thou shalt not find so great peace anywhere else.

Hadst thou not gone abroad and hearkened to idle rumours, thou mightest the better have remained in peace. But so long as thou delightest to hear novelties, thou must endure trouble of heart.

C H A P. XXI.

Of compunction of heart.

IF thou wilt make any progress, keep thyself in the fear of GOD, and use not too much liberty.

Keep all thy senses under discipline, and give not thyself over to trifling mirth.

Give thyself to compunction of heart, and thou shalt find devotion.

Compunction bringeth much good, which dissoluteness is wont quickly to destroy.

It is a wonder that any man can ever perfectly rejoice in this life, if he duly consider his banishment, and thoroughly weigh the many perils wherewith his soul is invironed.

2. The levity of our minds and want of concern for our faults, maketh us lose the sense of our inward state, and often laugh when we have just cause to weep.

There is no true liberty nor right gladness, but in the fear of God and a good conscience.

Happy is he, that can avoid all distracting impediments, and recollect himself to the union of holy compunction.

Happy is he, that can abandon all that may defile or burthen his conscience.

Resist manfully: one custom overcometh another.

If thou canst let others alone, they likewise will let thee do as thou pleasest.

3. Busy not thyself in matters which appertain to others; neither trouble thyself with the affairs of thy betters.

Still have an eye to thyself first, and be sure to admonish thyself before all thy friends.

If thou hast not the favour of men, be not grieved at it; but grieve that thou dost not carry thyself so warily and circumspectly as it becometh the servant of God.

It is often better and safer that a man hath not many consolations in this life, especially worldly ones. But that we have not at all or seldom divine consolations, is our own fault, because we seek not compunction of heart, nor do altogether forsake vain and outward comforts.

4. Know that thou art unworthy of divine consolation, and that thou hast rather deserved much tribulation.

When a man hath perfect contrition, then is the whole world grievous and bitter unto him.

A good man findeth sufficient cause of mourning and weeping;

For whether he considers his own or his neighbour's estate, he knoweth that none liveth here without tribulation.

And the more narrowly he looks into himself, the more he sorroweth.

Our sins and wickednesses, wherein we are so enwrapt, that we can seldom apply ourselves to heavenly contemplations, do minister unto us matter of most just sorrow and inward compunction.

5. Didst thou oftener think of thy death, than of thy living long, there is no question but thou wouldest be more zealous to amend.

I believethou wouldest willingly undergo any labour, or sorrow, or austerity, if thou didst consider within thyself the pains of a future state.

But because these things enter not into the heart, and we still love the things of the world, therefore we remain cold and slothful.

6. It is a want of the Spirit which maketh our miserable body so easily complain.

Pray therefore unto the LORD with all humility, that he will vouchsafe to give thee the spirit of compunction. And say with the prophet, *Pfal. lxxx: Feed me, O LORD, with the bread of tears, and give me plenteousness of tears to drink.*

C H A P. XXII.

Of the consideration of human misery.

MISERABLE thou art wheresoever thou be, or whithersoever thou turnest, unless thou turn thyself to God.

Why art thou troubled, when things succeed not as thou wouldest, or desirest? Who is he that hath all things according to his mind? Neither I, nor thou, nor any man upon earth.

There is none in this world, be he king or lord, without some tribulation.

Who is in the best case? Hé who can suffer something for God.

2. Many weak ones say, behold what an happy life hath such a one, how wealthy, how great is he, in how great power and dignity!

But lift up thine eyes to the riches of heaven, and thou shalt see that all these goods are nothing. They are very uncertain, yea burthen-some, because they are never possessed without carefulness and fear.

Man's happiness consisteth not in having abundance of wealth, but a mean estate is sufficient for him.

The life of man upon earth is full of misery : and the more he desires to become spiritual, the more burthensome it proves, because he feels more sensibly the mischievous effects of human corruption.

Woe be to them that know not their own misery ; and a greater woe to them that love this wretched and corrupt life.

Yet some so much dote upon it, that altho' with great labour and pains they can scarce get mere necessaries ; yet, could they live here always, they would not care for the kingdom of heaven.

3. O foolish and faithless of heart, who are so deeply sunk in the earth, that they can relish nothing but carnal things !

But, miserable wretches as they are, they shall in the end sadly feel how vile and how nothing that was which they loved :

The saints of GOD, and all the devout friends of CHRIST regarded not those things which pleased the flesh, or which were in repute in this life, but their whole hope and aim panted after eternal goods.

Their whole desire was carried upward to things durable and invisible, that the desire of things visible might not draw them to things below.

O brother, quit not thy hope of profiting in spiritual things : there is yet time, the hour is not yet past.

4. Why wilt thou defer thy good purpose ?

Arise, begin this instant, and say, Now is the time to be doing, now is the time to be striving, now is the time to amend.

When thou art uneasy and troubled, then is the time of deserving best ;

Thou must pass through fire and water before thou comest to the place of refreshing.

Unless thou doest violence to thyself, thou shalt never get the victory over sin.

So long as we carry about us this frail body, we cannot be without sin, or live without trouble.

We would gladly be freed from all misery ; but, seeing by sin we have lost our innocency, we have lost also true felicity.

Therefore we must have patience, and wait for the mercy of GOD, till this our iniquity pass away, and mortality be swallowed up of life.

5. O how great is human frailty, which is always prone to evil !

To-day thou confessest thy sins, and to-morrow committest the very same thou hast confessed.

Now thou resolvest to look well unto thy ways, and in an hour behavest thyself, as tho' thou hadst not resolved at all.

Good cause have we therefore to humble ourselves, and never to have any great conceit of ourselves ; because we are so frail and so inconstant.

That may quickly be lost by our own negligence, which, by the grace of GOD and our own great pains, we have scarce at length obtained.

7. What will become of us in the end, who grow cold so soon!

Woe unto us, if we go to repose ourselves, as if all were peace and safety, when as yet there appeareth no sign of true holiness in our conversation!

We have need, like young beginners, to be newly instructed again to good life, if haply there may be any hope of our being some time the better, and making greater progress in spiritual things.

C H A P. XXIII.

Of the meditation of death.

THIS life will soon be at an end: consider therefore how thy affairs stand in relation to the next.

Man is to-day; to-morrow he is gone.

When he is out of sight, he is soon forgot.

O, the stupidity and hardness of man's heart, who thinketh only upon the present, and hath no care of what is to come!

Thou shouldest so order thyself in all thy thoughts and all thy actions, as if thou wert to die to-day.

Hadst thou a clear conscience, thou wouldest not much fear death.

It were better to avoid sin, than to fly death.

If thou art not prepared to-day, how wilt thou be to-morrow?

To-morrow is uncertain, and how knowest thou that thou shalt live till to-morrow?

2. What availeth it to live long, when we are so little the better ?

Alas ! long life doth not always mend us : but often increaseth guilt.

O that we had spent but one day well in this world !

Many there are, who reckon years since their conversion, and yet there is often little fruit of amendment in them.

If to die be dreadful, to live longer may perhaps prove more dangerous.

Happy is he, that always hath the hour of death before his eyes, and daily prepareth himself to die.

If at any time thou hast seen another die, think thou must also pass the same way.

3. When it is morning, think thou mayest die before night.

When evening comes, dare not to promise thyself the next morning.

Be therefore always in readiness, and so live, that death may never take thee unprepared.

Many die suddenly, and when they look not for it ; for *in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh.* Matt. xxiv. 44.

When that last hour shall come, thou wilt have a far different opinion of thy whole life that is past, and be exceeding sorry thou hast been so careless and remiss.

4. How wise and happy is he, that labour-eth to be such in his life, as he will wish to be found at the hour of his death !

A perfect contempt of the world, a fervent desire to go forward in virtue; the love of discipline, a painful repentance, a ready obedience, the renouncing ourselves, and the bearing any affliction for the love of CHRIST, will give us great confidence we shall die happily.

Whilst thou art in health, thou mayest do much good; but when thou art sick, I know not what thou wilt be able to do.

Few by sickness grow better; and they who travel much are seldom sanctified.

5. Trust not in friends and kindred, neither put off the care of thy soul till hereafter; for men will sooner forget thee, than thou art aware of.

If thou beest not careful for thyself now, who will be careful for thee hereafter?

The time present is very precious, now are the days of salvation, now is the acceptable time.

But alas! that thou shouldest spend thy time no better here, where thou mightest purchase life eternal. The time will come when thou shalt desire one day or hour to amend in, and I cannot say that it will be granted thee.

6. O my friend, from how great danger mayest thou deliver thyself! from how great fear, if thou wilt be always mindful of death!

Labour now to live so, that at the hour of death thou mayest rather rejoice than fear:

Learn now to die to the world, that thou mayest then begin to live with CHRIST.

Learn now to contemn all earthly things, that thou mayest then freely go to CHRIST.

Chastise

Chastise thy body now by repentance, that thou mayest then have assured confidence.

7. Ah fool, why dost thou think to live long, when thou canst not promise to thyself one day?

How many have been deceived and suddenly snatched away?

How often dost thou hear, Such a man is slain, another is drowned, a third has broke his neck with a fall; this man died eating, and that man playing;

One perished by fire, another by the sword, another of the plague, another was slain by thieves? Thus death is the end of all, and man's life suddenly passeth away like a shadow.

8. Who shall remember thee when thou art dead! Do, do now, my beloved, whatsoever thou art able to do: for thou knowest not when thou shalt die nor yet what shall befall thee after thy death.

Now, whilst thou hast time, lay up for thyself everlasting riches.

Think on nothing but the salvation of thy soul, care for nothing but the things of God.

Make now friends to thyself, by honouring the saints of God, and imitating their actions, that when thou failest in this life, they may receive thee into everlasting habitations.

9. Keep thyself as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, who hath nothing to do with the affairs of this world.

Keep thy heart free, and lifted up to God, because thou hast here no abiding city.

Send thither thy daily prayers, and sighs, and tears, that after death thy spirit may happily pass to the LORD. *Amen.*

C H A P. XXIV.

Of judgment, and the punishment of sins.

IN all things remember the end, and how thou wilt be able to stand before that severe JUDGE, from whom nothing is hid, who is not pacified with gifts, nor admitteth any excuses, but will judge according to right.

O wretched and foolish sinner, who sometimes fearest the countenance of an angry man, what answer wilt thou make to GOD, who knowest all thy wickedness?

Why dost thou not provide for thyself against that great day of judgment, when no man can excuse or answer for another, but every one shall have enough to answer for himself?

Now are thy pains profitable, thy tears acceptable, thy groans heard, thy grief pacifieth GOD, and purifieth thy soul.

2. The patient man hath a great and wholesome purification, who, tho' he receive injuries, yet grieveth more for the malice of another, than for his own wrong; who gladly prayeth for his adversaries, and from his heart forgiveth their offences; who delayeth not to ask forgiveness of whomsoever he hath offended; who is sooner moved to compassion than to anger; who often doth violence to himself, and laboureth to bring the body wholly into subjection to the spirit.

It is better to purify our sins, and root out our vices here, than to keep them to be punished hereafter.

Verily we do but deceive ourselves through an inordinate love of the flesh.

3. *What is it that that infernal fire feeds upon, but thy sins?*

The more thou sparest thyself now, and followest the flesh; so much the more hereafter shall be thy punishment, and thou storest up greater fuel for the flame.

In what thing a man hath sinned, in the same shall he be the more grievously punished.

There shall the slothful be drove with burning goads, and the gluttons be tormented with great hunger and thirst.

There shall the luxurious and lovers of pleasure be bathed in burning pitch and stinking brimstone, and the envious shall howl for pain.

4. There is no sin but shall have its proper torment.

There the proud shall be filled with all shame, the covetous shall be pinched with miserable penury.

One hour of pain there, shall be more bitter than a thousand years of the sharpest penance here.

There is no quiet, no comfort for the damned there: here we have some intermission of our labours, and enjoy the comfort of our friends.

Be now solicitous and sorrowful because of thy sins, that at the day of judgment thou mayest be secure with the blessed.

For then shall the righteous stand with great boldness before such as have vexed and oppressed them.

Then shall He stand to judge, who doth now humbly submit himself to the judgment of others.

Then shall the poor and humble have great confidence, but the proud man shall be compassed with fear on every side.

5. Then will it appear, that he was wise in this world, who had learned to be a fool and despised for CHRIST'S sake.

Then shall every affliction patiently undergone delight us, and the mouth of iniquity shall be stopped.

Then shall the devout rejoice, and the profane mourn.

Then shall he more rejoice that hath mortified his flesh, than he that hath abounded in all pleasure.

Then shall the poor attire shine gloriously, and the precious robes appear vile.

Then shall be more commended the poor cottage, than the gilded palace.

Then will constant patience more avail us, than all earthly power.

Then simple obedience shall be preferred before all worldly wisdom.

6. Then shall a good and clear conscience more rejoice a man, than deep philosophy.

Then shall the contempt of riches weigh more, than all the worldling's treasure.

Then wilt thou be more comforted, that thou hast prayed devoutly, than that thou hast sared daintily.

Then wilt thou be more glad thou hast kept silence, than that thou hast said much.

Then will good works avail more, than many fine words.

Then a strict life and a severe repentance will be more pleasing, than all earthly delights.

Accustom thyself now to suffer a little, that thou mayest then be delivered from more grievous pains.

Prove first here, what thou canst endure hereafter.

If now thou canst endure so little, *how wilt thou be able to endure perpetual torments?*

If now a little suffering make thee so impatient, what will hell-fire do hereafter?

Assure thyself, thou canst not have two paradises; thou canst not indulge thyself here, and after reign with CHRIST.

7. Suppose thou hadst hitherto lived always in honours and delights; what would all this avail thee, if thou wert to die this instant?

All therefore is vanity, but to love GOD and serve him only.

For he that loveth GOD with all his heart, is neither afraid of death, nor judgment, nor hell: for perfect love gives secure access to GOD.

But he that still takes delight in sin, what marvel is it, if he be afraid both of death and judgment?

Yet it is good, altho' love be not yet of force to withhold thee from sin, that at least the fear of hell should restrain thee.

But he that layeth aside the fear of God, can never continue long in good estate, but falleth quickly into the snares of the devil.

C H A P. XXV.

Of the zealous amendment of our whole life.

BE watchful and diligent in the service of God, and often bethink thyself wherefore thou hast renounced the world. Was it not, that thou mightest live to God, and become a spiritual man?

Be fervent then to improve; for shortly thou shalt receive the reward of thy labours; nor shall there be any more fear of grief in thy coasts.

Labour but a little now, and thou shalt find great rest, yea perpetual joy.

If thou continuest faithful and fervent in doing good, no doubt God will be faithful and liberal in rewarding thee.

Thou oughtest to have a good hope of getting the victory; but thou must not be secure, lest thou wax either negligent or proud.

2. When one, that was in great anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once, being oppressed with grief, humbly prostrate himself in a church in prayer, and said within himself, *O, if I knew that I should persevere!* he presently heard within him an answer from God, which said, *If thou didst know it, what wouldest thou do? Do now what thou wouldest do then, and thou shalt be safe.*

And being herewith comforted and strengthened, he committed himself wholly to the will of GOD, and his anxiety ceased :

Neither had he any mind to search curiously further what should befall him ; but rather laboured to understand what was the perfect and acceptable will of GOD, for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work.

3. Hope in the LORD, and do good, saith the prophet, and inhabit the land, and thou shalt be fed.

One thing there is that draweth many back from spiritual progress and diligent amendment, the horror of the difficulty, or the labour of the combat.

But they improve most in virtue, that endeavour most to overcome those things which are grievous and contrary to them.

For there a man improveth more and obtaineth greater *grace*, where he more overcometh himself and mortifieth himself in *spirit*.

4. But all men have not alike to overcome and mortify :

Yet he that is zealous and diligent, tho' he have more passions, shall profit more than another that is of a more temperate disposition, if he be less fervent in the pursuit of virtue.

Two things especially further our amendment, to wit, to withdraw ourselves violently from that to which nature is most viciously inclined, and to labour earnestly for that virtue which we most want.

Be careful also to avoid and conquer those things in thyself, which commonly displease thee in others.

5. Gather some profit to thy *soul* whereforever thou be; so as if thou seest or hearest of any good examples, stir up thyself to the imitation thereof.

But if thou seest any thing worthy of reproof, beware thou do not the same. And, if at any time thou hast done it, labour quickly to amend it.

As thine eye observeth others, so art thou also noted again by others.

O how sweet and pleasant a thing it is, to see the servants of CHRIST fervent, devout and virtuous!

And on the contrary, how grievous a thing it is, to see them that live dissolutely, not applying themselves to that for which they are called?

O how hurtful a thing it is, to neglect the good purposes of their vocation, and to busy themselves in that which is not committed to their care!

6. Be mindful of the profession thou hast made, and have always before thy eyes the remembrance of thy *Saviour crucified*.

Thou hast good cause to be ashamed looking upon the life of JESUS CHRIST, seeing thou hast as yet no more endeavoured to conform thyself unto him, tho' thou hast walked a long time in the way of GOD.

A religious person that exerciseth himself seriously and devoutly in the most holy *life and pas-*

passion of our LORD, shall there abundantly find whatsoever is necessary and profitable for him; neither shall he need to seek any better thing out of JESUS.

O, if JESUS *crucified* would come into our hearts, how quickly and fully should we be instructed in *all truth*!

7. A fervent religious person taketh and beareth all well that is commanded him.

But he that is negligent and cold, hath *tribulation upon tribulation*, and on all sides is afflicted; for he is void of *inward consolation*, and is forbidden to seek *external comforts*.

A religious person that liveth not according to discipline, lies open to great mischief.

He that seeketh the loosest and slackest rules, shall ever live in disquiet; for one thing or other will displease him.

8. When a man cometh to that estate, that he seeketh not his comfort from any creature; then doth he begin perfectly to relish GOD. Then will he be pleased with whatsoever doth befall him.

Then he will neither rejoice in having much, nor grieve for having but little; but entirely and confidently commit himself to GOD, who is all in all to him; to whom nothing perishes or dies always, but all things live to him, and instantly obey his command.

9. Remember the end, and that time lost never returns. Without care and diligence thou wilt never get virtue.

If thou beginnest to be lukewarm, thou wilt soon begin to be in an ill state.

But if thou give thyself up to fervour, thou shalt find much peace, and feel less labour, through the assistance of GOD'S *grace*, and love of *virtue*.

The fervent and diligent man is prepared for all things.

It is harder labour to resist *vices* and *passions*, than to toil in bodily labours.

He that avoideth not small faults, by little and little falleth into greater.

Thou wilt always rejoice in the evening, if thou spend the day profitably.

Be watchful over thyself, stir up thyself, warn thyself, and, whatsoever becomes of others, neglect not thyself.

So much shalt thou profit, as thou usest violence towards thyself.





B O O K II.

C H A P. I.

Of the inward life.



THE kingdom of GOD is within you, saith the LORD. Turn thee with thy whole heart unto the LORD, and forsake this wretched world, and thy *soul* shall find rest.

Learn to despise exterior things, and to give thyself to the interior, and thou shalt perceive the kingdom of GOD to come into *thee*.

For the kingdom of GOD is peace and joy in the HOLY GHOST, which is not given to the wicked.

CHRIST will come into thee, and shew thee his *consolations*, if thou prepare for him a worthy *mansion* within thee.

All his *glory* and *beauty* is within, and there he pleaseth himself.

He often visits an interior Christian, and hath with him sweet *discourses*, pleasant *consolation*, much *peace*, amazing *familiarity*.

2. *O faithful soul, make ready thy heart for this bridegroom, that he may vouchsafe to come unto thee, and dwell within thee.*

For he saith, *If any love me, he will keep my words, and we will come unto him, and will make our abode with him.*

Give therefore admittance unto CHRIST, and deny entrance to all others.

When thou hast CHRIST, thou art rich, and he will suffice thee. He will be thy faithful and provident helper in all things, so as thou shalt not need to trust in men.

For men are soon changed, and quickly fail, but CHRIST remaineth for ever, and is with us even unto the end.

3. We ought not to put much trust in man, frail and mortal as he is, tho' he be friendly and serviceable: nor should we be much grieved, altho' he sometimes cross and oppose us.

They, that to-day take thy part, to-morrow may be against thee, and so on the contrary; they often turn like the wind.

Put thy whole trust in GOD, let him be thy fear, and thy love: he will answer for thee, and do in all things what is best.

Thou hast not here an abiding city; and wheresoever thou be, thou art a stranger and pilgrim: neither shalt thou ever have rest, unless thou be intimately united unto CHRIST.

4. Why dost thou here gaze about, since this is not the place of thy rest? In heaven ought to be thy dwelling, and all earthly things are to be looked upon as they forward thy journey thither.

All things pass away, and thou together with them.

Beware thou cleave not unto them, lest thou be entangled, and perish.

Let thy thoughts be on the Highest, and thy prayer directed unto CHRIST without ceasing.

If thou canst not contemplate high and heavenly things, rest thyself in the passion of CHRIST, and dwell willingly in his holy wounds.

For if thou fly devoutly unto the wounds and precious marks of the LORD JESUS, thou shalt feel great comfort in *tribulation*: neither wilt thou regard being despised of men, and wilt easily bear words of detraction.

5. CHRIST was also despised of men, and in his greatest necessity forsaken by his acquaintance and friends in the midst of reproaches.

CHRIST chose to suffer and be despised; and darest thou complain of any thing?

CHRIST had adversaries and slanderers; and wilt thou have all men thy *friends and benefactors*?

How shall thy patience be crowned, if no adversity happen unto thee?

If thou wilt suffer nothing, how wilt thou be the friend of CHRIST?

Suffer with CHRIST, and for CHRIST, if thou desirest to reign with CHRIST.

6. If thou hadst but once perfectly entered into the interior of Jesus, and tasted a little of his ardent affection: then wouldest thou not be careful about thine own advantage or disadvantage, but would rather rejoice at slanders cast

cast upon thee; for the love of JESUS maketh a man despise himself.

A lover of JESUS and of truth, and a true inward *Christian*, free from inordinate *affections*, can freely turn himself unto GOD, and lift himself above himself in spirit, and rest with fruition.

7. He that relishes all things as they are, and not as they are said or esteemed to be, is truly wise, and taught rather by GOD than men.

He that can live inwardly and make small reckoning of outward things, neither requireth places, nor attendeth times, for the exercise of his devotion.

An interior *man* soon recollecteth himself, because he is never wholly intent upon outward things.

He is not hindered by outward labour or business: but as things fall out, so he suiteth himself unto them.

He that hath well ordered and disposed all things within, careth not for the strange and perverse carriages of men.

So much is a man hindered and distracted, by how much he cleaveth to outward things.

8. If all went well with thee, and if thou wert well purified, all things would tend to thy good and advantage.

But therefore many things displease and often trouble thee, because thou art not yet perfectly dead unto thyself, nor separated from all earthly things.

Nothing so defileth and entangleth the heart of man, as the impure love of creatures.

If thou refuse outward comfort, thou wilt be able to contemplate the *things of heaven*, and often receive *eternal joy*.

C H A P. II.

Of humble submission.

MIND not much who is with thee, or who is against thee: but endeavour and take care that **GOD** may be with thee in every *thing* thou doest.

Keep a *good conscience*, and **GOD** will defend thee.

For whom **GOD** will help, no malice of man can hurt.

If thou canst hold thy peace and suffer, without doubt thou shalt see the salvation of the **LORD**.

He knoweth the time and manner how to deliver thee, and therefore thou oughtest to resign thyself unto him.

It belongs to **GOD** to help, and deliver from all shame.

It is often very profitable for the keeping us more humble, that others know and reprehend our faults.

2. When a man humbleth himself for his faults, then he easily pacifieth others, and quickly satisfieth those that are offended with him.

GOD protecteth and delivereth the humble: unto the humble man he inclineth himself; unto the humble he giveth great *grace*; and after his *humiliation* he raiseth him unto *glory*.

Unto the humble he revealeth his secrets, and sweetly draweth and inviteth him unto himself.

The humble person, tho' he suffer shame, is yet in peace : for that he resteth in GOD, and not in the world.

Do not think that thou hast profited any thing, unless thou esteem thyself inferior to all.

C H A P. III.

Of a good and peaceable man.

FIRST keep thyself in *peace*, and then mayest thou pacify others.

A peaceable man doth more good than a learned one.

A passionate man turneth even *good* into *evil*, and easily believeth the worst.

A good, peaceable man turneth all things into good.

He that is in peace, is not suspicious of any.

But he that is discontented and troubled, is agitated with divers suspicions ; he is neither quiet himself, nor suffereth others to be quiet.

He often speaketh that which he ought not to speak ; and omiteth that which he ought to do.

He considereth what others are bound to do, and neglects that which he is bound to do himself.

First therefore have a careful zeal over thyself, and then thou mayest justly shew thyself zealous also for thy neighbour's good.

2. Thou knowest well how to excuse and colour thine own deeds, and thou wilt not receive the excuses of others.

It were more just to accuse thyself, and excuse thy brother.

If thou wilt be borne with, bear also with another.

Behold, how far thou art yet from true charity and humility, which knoweth not how to be angry with any, but one's self. It is no great matter to live peaceably with the good and gentle; for that is naturally pleasing to all, and every one willingly enjoyeth peace, and loveth those best that are of his own mind.

But to be able to live peaceably with unquiet and perverse men, or with the disorderly, or such as cross us, is a great grace, and a very commendable and manly deed.

3. Some there are that keep themselves in peace, and are in peace also with others.

And there are some, that neither are in peace themselves, nor suffer others to be in peace: who are troublesome to others, but always more troublesome to themselves.

And others there are, that keep themselves in peace, and labour to bring others unto peace.

Our whole peace in this life consisteth rather in humble *suffering*, than in not feeling *adversities*.

He that knows best how to suffer, will best keep himself in peace. *He is a conqueror of himself, a lord of the world, a friend of CHRIST, and an heir of heaven.*

C H A P. IV.

Of a pure mind, and simple intention.

SIMPLICITY and *purity* are the two wings, by which a man is lifted up above all earthly things.

Simplicity must be in the intention; *purity* in the affection: *simplicity* tends to GOD; *purity* apprehends and tastes him.

No good action will hinder thee, if thou be inwardly free from all inordinate affection.

If thou intend and seek nothing but the will of GOD and the good of thy neighbour, thou shalt enjoy internal liberty.

If thy heart were right, then every creature would be a looking-glass of life, and a book of holy doctrine.

There is no creature so little and abject, that representeth not the goodness of GOD.

2. If thou wert inwardly good and pure, thou wouldest see and understand all things without any impediment.

A pure heart penetrateth *heaven and hell*.

Such as every one is inwardly, so he judgeth outwardly.

If there be joy in the world, surely a man of a pure heart possesseth it.

And if there be any *where tribulation and affliction*, an *evil conscience* feels it.

As iron put into the fire loseth its rust, and becometh all bright like fire; so he, that wholly turneth himself unto GOD, is purified from all *slothfulness*, and is changed into the likeness of GOD.

3. When

3. When a man beginneth to grow lukewarm, then he is afraid of a little labour, and willingly receiveth external comfort.

But when he once beginneth to overcome himself perfectly, and to walk manfully in the way of GOD: then he esteemeth those things light, which before seemed grievous unto him.

C H A P. V.

Of the consideration of one's self.

WE cannot trust much to ourselves, because we have often neither grace nor understanding.

There is but little light in us, and that we quickly lose by negligence.

Often we do not perceive our inward blindness.

We often do evil, and excuse it worse.

We are sometimes moved with passion, and we think it zeal.

We reprehend small things in others, and pass over greater in ourselves.

We quickly feel and weigh what we suffer from others; but we mind not what others suffer from us.

He that doth well, and rightly considers his own works, will find little cause to judge hardly of another.

2. The inward *Christian* preferreth the care of himself before all other cares.

He that diligently attendeth unto himself, easily holds his peace concerning others.

Thou wilt never be inwardly religious, unless thou pass over other men's matters, and look especially to thyself.

If thou attend wholly unto GOD and thyself, thou wilt be little moved with whatsoever thou seest abroad.

Where art thou, when thou art not with thyself? And when thou hast run over all, what hast thou profited, if thou hast neglected thyself?

If thou desirest peace of mind and true recollection, thou must reject all other cares, and look only to thyself.

3. Thou shalt profit much, if thou keep thyself free from all temporal cares.

Thou shalt greatly fail, if thou esteem any thing of this world.

Let nothing be great, nothing high, nothing pleasing to thee, but only GOD himself, or that which is of GOD.

Esteem all comfort vain, which proceedeth from any creature.

A soul that loveth GOD, despiseth all things but GOD.

GOD alone, who is everlasting, immense, filling all things, is the comfort of the soul, and the true joy of the *heart*.

CHAP. VI.

Of the joy of a good conscience.

THE glory of a good man, is the testimony of a good conscience.

Have a good conscience, and thou shalt ever have joy.

A good *conscience* is able to bear very much, and is very chearful in *adversities*.

An evil *conscience* is always fearful and unquiet.

Thou shalt rest sweetly, if thy heart condemn thee not.

Never rejoyce, but when thou hast done well.

Sinners have never true joy, nor feel inward peace; because *there is no peace to the wicked*, saith the LORD.

And if they should say, we are in *peace*, no evil shall fall upon us, and who shall dare to hurt us? Believe them not, for on a sudden will arise the wrath of GOD, and their deeds shall be brought to nought, and their thoughts shall perish.

2. To glory in *tribulation* is no hard thing for him that loveth; for to glory so, is to glory in the *Cross of our LORD*.

That glory is short, which is given and received from men.

Sorrow always accompanieth the glory of the world.

The glory of the good is in their *consciences*, and not in the tongues of men. The gladness of the *just* is of GOD, and in GOD; and their joy is of the *truth*.

He that desireth *true and everlasting glory*, regardeth not that which passeth away.

And he that seeketh temporal glory, or contemneth it not from his heart, sheweth that he little regarded the *glory of heaven*.

He enjoyeth great peace of mind, that careth neither for the praise, nor dispraise of men.

3. He will easily be content and quiet, whose *conscience* is pure.

Thou art not the more holy, tho' thou art praised; nor the more abject, tho' thou art dispraised.

What thou art, thou art; neither canst thou be said to be greater, than thou art in the sight of GOD.

If thou consider what thou art within, thou wilt not care what men say of thee.

Man seeth in the *face*, but GOD looketh into the *heart*.

Man considereth the *deeds*, but GOD weigheth the *intention*.

To do always well and to disesteem himself, is a sign of an humble *soul*.

To disdain comfort from any creature, is a sign of great purity and inward confidence.

4. He that seeketh no witness for himself from without, doth shew that he hath wholly committed himself unto GOD.

For not he that commendeth himself is approved, saith St. Paul; but whom GOD commendeth.

To walk inwardly with GOD, and not to love any thing without, is a state of a spiritual man.

C H A P. VII.

Of the love of JESUS.

BLESSED is he that understandeth what it is to love JESUS, and to despise himself for JESUS.

Thou oughtest to leave what thou hast loved hitherto for the sake of JESUS; for he will be loved alone above all things.

The love of things created is deceitful and unconstant: the love of JESUS is faithful and constant.

He that cleaveth unto a creature, shall fall when it falls: he that embraceth JESUS shall stand firmly for ever.

Love Him, and keep Him for thy friend, who when all go away, will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end.

Thou must one day be left of all, whether thou wilt or no.

2. Keep close to JESUS both in life and death, and commit thyself unto his faithfulness, who, when all fail, can alone help thee.

Thy beloved is of that nature, that He will not admit of a rival; but will have thy *heart* alone, and sit like a king in his own throne.

If thou couldest empty thyself perfectly of all creatures, JESUS would willingly dwell with thee.

Whatsoever affection thou reposest in men out of JESUS, is all no better than lost.

Trust not, nor lean upon a broken reed; for all flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof shall wither away as the flower of the field.

3. Thou shalt quickly be deceived, if thou regardest only the outward appearance of men.

If in them thou seekest comfort and profit, thou shalt often feel loss.

If thou seekest JESUS in all things, thou shalt surely find JESUS.

If thou seekest thyself, thou shalt also find thyself, but to thy own destruction.

For if a man do not seek JESUS, he doth more hurt to himself than the world and all his adversaries could do.

C H A P. VIII.

Of familiar friendship with JESUS.

WHEN JESUS is present, all is well, and nothing seemeth difficult: but when JESUS is absent, every thing is hard.

When JESUS speaketh not inwardly, we have no true comfort: but if JESUS speak but one word, we feel much consolation.

Did not *Mary* presently rise from the place where she wept, when *Martha* said unto her, *The master is come, and calleth for thee?*

Happy the hour when JESUS calleth from tears to *spiritual joy*.

How dry and cold art thou without JESUS! how foolish and vain, if thou desire any thing out of JESUS.

Is not this a greater loss, than if thou shouldst lose the whole world?

2. What can the world profit thee without JESUS?

To be without JESUS is a *grievous hell*; and to be with JESUS a *sweet paradise*.

If JESUS be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee.

He that findeth JESUS, findeth a good treasure, yea, a good above all goods.

And he that loseth JESUS, loseth too much, and more than the whole world.

He is most poor, that liveth without JESUS, and he is most rich, that is well with JESUS.

3. It is a great skill to know to converse with JESUS, and great wisdom to know to keep JESUS.

Be humble and peaceable, and JESUS will be with thee.

Be devout and quiet, and JESUS will stay with thee.

Thou mayest soon drive away JESUS and lose his grace, if thou turn aside to outward things.

And if thou shouldest drive him away, and lose him; unto whom wilt thou fly, and what friend wilt thou seek?

Without a friend thou canst not live well: and if JESUS be not above all friends unto thee, thou shalt be very sorrowful and desolate.

Thou dost therefore foolishly, if thou dost trust or rejoice in any other.

It is better for thee to have all the world against thee, than JESUS offended with thee.

Of all things that are dear to thee therefore, let JESUS alone be peculiarly thy beloved.

4. Love all for JESUS, but JESUS for himself.

JESUS CHRIST alone is singularly to be beloved; who alone is good and faithful above all friends.

For him, and in him, let as well friends as foes be dear unto thee, and thou art to pray to him for all these, that all may know and love him.

Never desire to be singularly commended or beloved, for that appertaineth only unto GOD, who hath none like unto himself.

Neither

Neither do thou desire that the heart of any should be set on thee, nor do thou set thy heart on any : but let JESUS be in thee, and in every good man.

5. Be pure and free within, and entangle not thy heart with any creature.

Thou must be naked, and carry a pure heart to GOD, if thou wouldest be at liberty to see how sweet the LORD is.

And truly, unless thou be prevented and drawn by his grace, thou shalt never attain to this, to forsake and cast off all, that thou alone mayest be united to him alone.

For when the grace of GOD cometh unto a man ; then he has power to do all things. And when that retires, he is poor and weak, and as it were left only to affliction.

In this thou oughtest not to be dejected, nor despair ; but to resign thyself with all indifferency unto the will of GOD, and to bear all things that befall thee for the *glory of CHRIST* : for after winter followeth summer, after night cometh day, and after a storm a great calm.

C H A P. IX.

Of the want of all comfort.

IT is not hard to despise *human comfort*, when we have *divine*.

It is much and very much, to be able to want both *human* and *divine comfort* ; and, for the glory of GOD, to be willing to endure desolation of heart ; and to seek himself in nothing, nor to regard his own merit.

What great matter is it, if thou be chearful and devout at the coming of *grace*? This hour is wished for of all men.

He rideth easily enough, whom the *grace of GOD* carrieth.

And what marvel, if he feel no burthen, who is borne up by the *Almighty*, and led by the sovereign guide.

2. We are always willing to have something for our *comfort*: and a man doth hardly put off himself.

The *holy martyr St. Lawrence* overcame the world, because he despised whatsoever was delightful in it; and for the love of *CHRIST*, patiently suffered *Sixtus* to be taken from him, whom he most dearly loved.

He overcame therefore the love of man by the love of the *Creator*; and he rather chose the *divine good pleasure*, than *human comfort*.

See thou also learn to forsake thy intimate and beloved friend, for the love of *GOD*.

Be not grieved when thou art forsaken by a friend, knowing that we all at length must be separated one from another.

3. A man must fight long and mightily with himself, before he get the full victory over himself, and draw his whole heart unto *GOD*.

When a man trusteth in himself, he easily slideth unto *human comforts*.

But a true lover of *CHRIST*, and a diligent follower of virtue, betakes not himself to *human comforts*, nor seeketh sensible sweetneses, but rather to sustain hard exercises, and great labour for *CHRIST*.

4. When

4. When therefore *spiritual comfort* is given thee from GOD, receive it thankfully: but know, that it is the gift of GOD, not thy desert.

Be not puffed up, joy not too much, neither do thou presume vainly: but be rather the more humble for that gift, and more wary and careful in all thine actions: for that hour will pass away, and temptation will succeed.

When consolation is taken away, despair not presently, but with humility and patience wait for the heavenly visitation: for GOD is able again to give thee greater *consolation*.

This is not new nor strange unto them that have experience in the way of GOD: for the great *saints* and antient *prophets* had oftentimes experience of such vicissitudes.

5. Hence *David*, in the presence of the *divine grace*, said, *I said in my prosperity, I shall never be removed.*

But in the absence of it, having experienced what he was in himself, he adds, *Thou didst turn thy face from me, and I was troubled.*

Yet doth he not despair, but more earnestly prayeth unto the LORD, and saith, *Then cried I unto thee, O LORD, and gat me to my LORD right humbly.*

Lastly, he receiveth the fruit of his prayer, and witnesseth that he was heard, saying, *The LORD hath heard me, and taken pity on me; the LORD is become my helper.*

But wherein? *Thou hast turned, saith he, my heaviness into joy, thou hast compassed me about with gladness.*

If great *saints* have been so dealt with, we that are weak and poor ought not to despair, if we be sometimes fervent, and sometimes cold; for the spirit cometh and goeth, according to the good pleasure of his will. For which cause blessed *Job* saith, *Thou visitest him early in the morning, and provest him every moment.*

6. Whereupon therefore can I hope, or where; in ought I to trust, but in the great mercy of GOD alone, and in the only hope of *heavenly grace*?

For whether I enjoy the presence of good men, or religious brethren, or faithful friends, or holy books, or excellent treatises, or sweet songs and hymns; all these help little, and have little relish, when grace forsaketh me, and I am left in my own *poverty*.

At such a time there is no better remedy than patience, and the renouncing my own, according to the will of GOD.

7. I never found any so religious and devout, that hath not had sometimes a withdrawing of *grace*, or felt not some decrease of *fervour*.

There was never *saint* so highly rapt and illuminated, who at first or last was not tempted.

For he is not worthy of the high *contemplation* of GOD, who hath not been exercised with some *tribulation* for GOD's sake.

For temptation going before, is wont to be a sign of ensuing *comfort*.

And to those that are proved by *temptations*, *heavenly comfort* is promised. *He that shall overcome*, saith he, *I will give him to eat of the tree of life.*

8. *Divine comfort* is given, that a man may be stronger to bear *adversities*.

There followeth *temptation*, lest he should grow proud thereof.

The devil sleepeth not, neither is the flesh as yet dead; therefore cease not to prepare thyself to the battle: for on thy right hand and on thy left are enemies that never rest.

CHAPTER X.

Of thankfulness for the grace of GOD.

WHY seekest thou rest, since thou art born to labour?

Dispose thyself to patience, rather than to comfort; and to the bearing of the *cross*, rather than to joy.

What worldly man would not willingly receive *spiritual joy and comfort*, if he could always have it?

For *spiritual comforts* exceed all the delights of the world and pleasures of the flesh.

All worldly delights are either vain or unclean, but *spiritual delights* are only pleasant and pure, sprung from *virtue*, and infused by GOD into pure minds.

But no man can always enjoy these *divine comforts* according to his desire; for the time of *temptation* is not long away.

2. False freedom of mind, and great trust in ourselves, are very contrary to heavenly visitations.

GOD doth well in giving the *grace of consolation*; but man doth evil in not returning all again unto GOD with *thanksgiving*. And

And therefore the *gifts of grace* cannot flow in us, because we are not thankful to the *Giver*, and return them not wholly to the *Fountain*.

For *grace* ever attendeth him that is thankful; and from the proud shall be taken that which is given to the humble.

3. I desire not that *consolation* that taketh from me compunction; nor would I have that contemplation which leadeth to haughtiness.

For all that is high, is not holy; nor all that is sweet, good; nor every desire, pure; nor every thing that is dear unto us, grateful to GOD.

I willingly accept that *grace*, whereby I may ever become more humble and careful, and more ready to renounce myself.

He that is taught by the gift of *grace*, and instructed by the withdrawing thereof, will not dare to attribute any good to himself, but will acknowledge himself poor and naked.

Give unto GOD that which is GOD's, and ascribe unto thyself that which is thine own; that is, give thanks unto GOD for his *grace*, and acknowledge that nothing is thine, but only *sin* and the *punishment* due thereto.

4. Set thyself always in the lowest place, and the highest shall be given thee; for thou canst not be in the highest, till thou hast been in the lowest.

The chief *saints* before GOD, are the least in their own eyes: and how much the more glorious, so much the more humble.

Those that are full of *truth* and *heavenly glory*, are not desirous of *vain-glory*.

Those that are firmly settled and grounded in GOD, can no way be proud.

And they that ascribe all unto GOD, what good soever they have received, seek not *glory* one of another; but would have that *glory* which is from GOD alone; and desire that GOD should be praised above all in themselves and in all his *saints*, and always aim at this very thing.

5. Be therefore thankful for the least gift, so shalt thou be meet to receive greater.

Let the least appear unto thee very great, and the most contemned as an especial gift.

If thou consider the worth of the *Giver*, no gift will seem little or of too mean esteem. For that is not little which is given by the *most high GOD*.

Yea, if he should give *punishment* and *stripes*, it ought to be grateful; for he doth it always for our welfare, whatsoever he permiteth to befall us.

He that desireth to keep the *grace* of GOD, let him be thankful for the *grace* given, and patient for the taking away thereof. Let him pray that it may return. Let him be wary and humble, lest he lose it.

C H A P. XI.

That there are few who love the Cross of CHRIST.

JESUS hath many lovers of his *heavenly kingdom*, but few *bearers* of his *Cross*.

He hath many desirous of *comfort*, but few of *tribulation*,

He findeth many *companions* of his *table*, but few of his *abstinence*.

All desire to rejoice with him, few will suffer any thing for him.

Many follow J E S U S unto the breaking of *bread*, but few to the drinking of the *cup of his passion*.

Many reverence his *miracles*, few follow the ignominy of his *Cross*.

Many love J E S U S, as long as adversities happen not.

Many *praise* and *bles*s him, as long as they receive any *comforts* from him.

But if J E S U S hide himself, and leave them but a while; they fall either into complaint, or into dejection.

2. But they that love J E S U S for J E S U S, and not for some *comfort* of their own, bles him in all *tribulation* and *anguish of heart*, as well as in the greatest *comfort*.

And altho' he should never give them *comfort*, they yet would ever praise him, and always give him *thanks*.

3. O how powerful is the pure love of J E S U S, which is mixed with no self-love, or self-interest! Are not all those to be called hirelings, that always seek *comfort*?

Do they not shew themselves to be rather lovers of themselves than of C H R I S T, that always think of their own pleasure and gain?

Where may one be found that is willing to serve G O D *gratis*?

4. It is hard to find any one so spiritual, that is stript of *the love of all earthly things*.

For where is any one to be found, that is indeed poor in spirit, and free from all *affection to creatures*?

He is a jewel scarce to be met with in these parts.

If a man should give all his substance, yet it is as nothing.

And if he should do great penances, yet are they but little.

And if he should attain to all knowledge, he is yet far off.

And if he should be of great virtue, and very fervent devotion, yet there is much wanting; to wit, one thing, which is most necessary for him.

What is that? That having left all, he leave himself, and go wholly out of himself, and retain nothing of self-love.

And that when he hath done all which he knew ought to be done, he knows, that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not think that a great thing, which others may think so: but according to truth let him affirm himself to be an unprofitable servant, as our SAVIOUR hath said, *When you have done all things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants.*

Then may he be truly poor and naked in spirit, and say with the prophet, I am helpless and poor.

Yet no man richer, no man more powerful, no man more free, than he that can leave him-

self

self and all things, and set himself in the lowest place.

C H A P. XII.

Of the royal way of the Holy Cross.

THIS speech seemeth hard to many, *Renounce thyself, take up thy Cross, and follow JESUS.*

But it will be much harder to hear that last word, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire.*

They that now willingly follow the doctrine of the *Cross*, shall not then fear to hear the sentence of *everlasting damnation*.

This sign of the *Cross* shall be in *heaven*, when our **LORD** shall come to *judgment*.

Then all the servants of the *Cross*, who in their life-time conformed themselves unto **CHRIST** crucified, shall draw near unto **CHRIST** the Judge with great confidence.

2. Why therefore fearest thou to take up the *Cross*, which leadeth to a *kingdom*?

In the *Cross* is *salvation*, in the *Cross* is *life*, in the *Cross* is *protection* against our *enemies*, in the *Cross* is *heavenly sweetness*, in the *Cross* is *strength of mind*, in the *Cross* is *joy of spirit*, in the *Cross* is the *height of virtue*, in the *Cross* is the *perfection of holiness*.

There is no *salvation of the soul*, nor hope of *everlasting life*, but in the *Cross*.

Take up therefore thy Cross, and follow JESUS, and thou shalt go into life everlasting.

He is gone before bearing the *Cross*, and is dead for thee on the *Cross*; that thou mayest

also bear thy *Cross*, and desire to die on the *Cross* with him.

For, if thou diest with him, thou shalt also live him. And if thou be his companion in *pain*, thou shalt be partaker with him in *glory*.

3. Behold in the *Cross* all doth consist, and all lieth in our dying *upon it*: for there is no other way to life, and to true inward peace, but the way of the *holy Cross*, and of daily *mortification*.

Go where thou wilt, seek whatsoever thou wilt; thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the *holy Cross*.

Dispose and order all things according to thy will and judgment; yet thou shalt ever find, that of necessity thou must suffer somewhat either willingly or against thy will, and so thou shalt ever find the *Cross*.

For either thou shalt feel pain in thy *body*, or in thy *soul tribulation of spirit*.

4. Sometimes thou shalt be forsaken of GOD, sometimes thou shalt be exercised by thy neighbour; and which is more, often thou shalt be irksome to thyself;

Neither canst thou be delivered or eased by any remedy or comfort; but so long as it pleaseth GOD thou must bear it.

For GOD will have thee learn to suffer *tribulation* without *comfort*; and that thou subject thyself wholly to him, and become more humble by *tribulation*.

No man hath so cordial a feeling of the *passion of CHRIST*, as he who hath suffered the like himself.

The *Cross* therefore is always ready, and every where waits for thee.

Thou canst not escape it whithersoever thou runnest; for wheresoever thou goest, thou carriest thyself with thee, and shalt ever find thyself.

Both above and below, without and within, which way soever thou dost turn thee, every where thou shalt find the *Cross*; and every where of necessity thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward *peace*, and enjoy an everlasting *crown*.

5. If thou bear the *Cross* willingly, it will bear thee, and bring thee to thy desired end, to wit, where there shall be an end of suffering, tho' here there shall not.

If thou bear it unwillingly, thou increasest thy load, and yet thou must bear it.

If thou cast away one *Cross*, without doubt thou shalt find another, and that perhaps a more heavy one.

6. Thinkest thou to escape that which no man could ever avoid? Which of the *saints* in the world was without *crosses* and *tribulation*?

Verily, *JESUS CHRIST* our *LORD* was never one hour without suffering, so long as he lived. *CHRIST* (saith he) *ought to suffer, and rise again from the dead, and so enter into his glory.*

And dost thou seek any other way than this royal way, which is the way of the *Holy Cross*?

7. The

7. The whole life of CHRIST was a *Cross* and a *martyrdom*; and dost thou seek rest and joy?

Thou art deceived, if thou seekest any other thing than to suffer *tribulations*; for this whole mortal life is invironed on every side with *crosses*.

And the more one hath profited in spirit, so much the heavier *crosses* he often findeth, because love maketh him more sensible of the misery of his banishment.

8. But yet this man, tho' so many ways afflicted, is not without some refreshing comfort; for he perceiveth much benefit to accrue unto him by the bearing of his *Cross*.

For whilst he willingly submits to it, all the burthen of *tribulation* is turned into the confidence of *divine comfort*.

And the more the flesh is wasted by *affliction*, the more is the spirit strengthened by inward *grace*.

And sometimes he is so strengthened with the love of suffering, for the sake of conformity to the *Cross* of CHRIST, that he would not wish to be without *sorrow* and *tribulation*; because he believeth that he is the more acceptable unto GOD, the more grievous things he can suffer for him.

This is not the power of man, but the *grace* of CHRIST, which can, and doth so much in frail flesh, that what naturally it always abhorreth and flieth, that by fervour of spirit it encounters and loves.

9. It is not of man to bear and love the *Cross*, to chastise and keep the body under, to fly honours,

nours, to suffer reproaches gladly, to despise himself, and to rejoice in being despised, and to bear all adversities and losses, and to desire no prosperity in this world.

If thou considerest thyself, thou art able to perform nothing of this sort thyself.

But if thou trustest in the LORD, strength shall be given thee from *heaven*, and the world and flesh shall be made subject to thy command,

Neither shalt thou fear thy enemy the *devil*, if thou beest armed with faith, and bearest the *Cross of CHRIST*,

10. Set therefore thyself, like a good and faithful servant of CHRIST, to bear manfully the *Cross of thy LORD*, who was crucified for thee out of love.

Prepare thyself to bear many adversities and various troubles: for so it will be with thee, wheresoever thou be; and so surely thou wilt find it, wheresoever thou hide thyself.

So it must be, and there is no remedy or means to avoid *tribulation* and *sorrow*, but to bear them,

Drink of the *Cup of the LORD* gladly, if thou wilt be his friend, and desirest to have part with him.

As for comforts, leave them to GOD; let him do therein as shall best please him.

Set thou thyself to suffer tribulations, and account them the greatest comforts; for the sufferings of this life are not worthy of the glory which is to come, altho' thou alone couldst suffer them all.

11. When thou shalt come to this, that tribulation shall be sweet unto thee for CHRIST; then think it well with thee, for thou hast found a paradise upon earth.

As long as it is grievous to thee to suffer, and thou desirest to fly it; so long shalt thou be ill at ease; and the tribulation thou fleest will follow thee every where.

12. If thou dost set thyself to be what thou oughtest, to wit, to suffer, and to die to thyself, it will quickly be better with thee, and thou shalt find peace.

Altho' thou hadst been rapt unto the third heaven with *Paul*, thou wouldest not for this be secure from suffering adversity. *I*, saith JESUS, *will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name.*

It remaineth therefore, that thou suffer, if thou wilt love JESUS, and perpetually serve him.

13. O that thou wert worthy to suffer something for the name of JESUS! how great glory would it be unto thee! what joy to all the *saints of God*! how great edification also to thy neighbour!

For all commend patience, tho' few are willing to suffer.

With great reason thou oughtest to be willing to suffer a little for CHRIST; since many suffer far greater things for the world.

14. Know for certain that thou art to lead a dying life. And the more every one dieth to himself, the more he liveth to God.

No man is fit to attain unto heavenly things, unless he submit to suffer for CHRIST.

Nothing is more grateful unto GOD, nothing more wholesome to thee in this world, than to suffer willingly for CHRIST.

And if it were in thy choice; thou shouldest rather wish to suffer *adversities* for CHRIST, than to enjoy many comforts; because hereby thou shouldest be more like CHRIST, and more conformable to all the *saints*.

For our worthiness and proficiency consist not in many *sweetnesses* and *comforts*, but rather in suffering great *afflictions* and *tribulations*.

15. If any thing had been better and more profitable to the salvation of man than suffering, CHRIST surely would have shewed it by word and example.

But he plainly exhorteth all that follow him, to the bearing of the *Cross*, and saith, *If any will come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.*

So that when we have read and searched all, let this be the last conclusion, *That by many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of GOD.*



* B O O K III.



C H A P. I.

Of the inward speech of CHRIST unto a faithful soul.

Christian.



Will hear what the LORD GOD will speak in me.

Blessed is the soul that heareth the LORD speaking in her, and receiveth from his mouth the word of comfort.

Blessed are those ears that receive the whispers of the *divine voice*, and listen not to the whisperings of the world.

Blessed indeed are those ears that hearken not to the *voice* which soundeth *outwardly*, but unto the *Truth* which teacheth *inwardly*.

Blessed are the eyes which are shut to *outward things*, but open to those that are *internal*.

Blessed are they that penetrate *inward things*, and endeavour to prepare themselves more and more by daily exercise to the attaining of *heavenly secrets*.

Blessed

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• This and the following book are by way of dialogue.

Blessed are they that delight to be at leisure for GOD, and rid themselves of all worldly impediments.

2. Consider these things, my *soul*, and shut up the door of thy sensual desires, that thou mayest hear what thy LORD GOD *speaketh in thee*.

Christ. I am thy *peace*, thy *life*, and thy *salvation*.

Keep thyself with me, and thou shalt find *peace*.

Leave all *transitory*, and seek things *everlasting*.

What are all *temporal things*, but *snare*? and what do all creatures avail thee, if thou be forsaken by thy CREATOR?

Forsake therefore all earthly *things*, and labour to please thy CREATOR, and be faithful unto him, that thou mayest attain *true happiness*.

C H A P. II.

That truth speaketh inwardly without noise of words.

Christian. **S**peak, LORD, for thy servant beareth. I am thy servant, grant me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.

Incline my heart to the words of thy mouth.

Let thy speech distil as the dew.

The children of *Israel* said unto *Moses*, Speak thou unto us, and we will hear thee: Let not the LORD speak unto us, lest we die.

Not so, LORD, not so, I beseech thee: but rather with the prophet *Samuel*, I humbly and earnestly intreat, Speak, LORD, for thy servant beareth.

Let not *Moses* speak unto me, nor any of the

prophets: but do thou rather speak, O LORD GOD, the inspirer and enlightener of all the *prophets*: for thou alone without them canst perfectly instruct me, but they without thee can profit nothing.

2. They indeed may sound forth words, but they cannot give *spirit*.

They speak well, but if thou be silent, they inflame not the *heart*.

They teach the *letter*, but thou openest the *sense*.

They bring forth *mysteries*, but thou unlockest the meaning of them.

They declare thy *commandments*, but thou helpest to fulfil them.

They shew the *way*, but thou givest strength to walk in it.

They work only *outwardly*, but thou instructest and enlightenest the *heart*.

They water, but thou givest the increase.

They make a noise with *words*, but thou givest to understand them.

3. Let not therefore *Moses* speak unto me, but thou, my LORD GOD, the *everlasting Truth*, lest I die, and prove unfruitful, if I be warned outwardly only, and not inflamed within.

Let not the word heard and not fulfilled, known and not loved, believed and not observed; turn to my *condemnation*.

Speak therefore, LORD, for thy servant *heareth*, for thou hast the words of eternal life.

Speak unto me to the comfort of my *soul*, and to the amendment of my whole life, and

to thy praise and glory, and everlasting honour.

C H A P. III.

That the words of GOD are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

Christ. SON, hear my words, words of greatest sweetness, excelling all the knowledge of the philosophers, and wise men of this world.

My words are spirit and life, not to be weighed by the understanding of man.

They are to be heard with silence, and to be received with all humility and great affection.

Christian. Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O LORD, and shall teach thy law, that thou mayest give him rest from the evil days, and that he be not destroyed upon earth.

2. *Christ.* I have taught the prophets from the beginning, and cease not in these days to speak to every one: but many are hardened and deaf to my speech.

Most men more willingly listen to the world, than to GOD: and follow sooner the desires of their flesh, than the will of GOD.

The world promiseth temporal and small things, and is served with great eagerness: I promise high and eternal things, and the hearts of men are unmoved.

Who is he, that serveth and obeyeth me, with such care as the world and the lords thereof are served with?

Blush, O Sidon, saith the sea, and if thou ask the cause, hear it.

For a little money a long journey is undertaken:

taken : for *everlasting life* many will scarce once lift a foot from the ground.

A thing of small value is sought after greedily : for the slight hope of a trifle men cease not to toil day and night.

3. But *alas!* for an unchangeable *good*, for an inestimable *reward*, for the highest *honour* and *everlasting glory*, they are loth to take the least pains.

Blush therefore, slothful and complaining *servant*, that they are more eager for *destruction*, than thou for *life*.

They rejoice more in *vanity*, than thou in the *truth*.

And yet they are often frustrated of their hope : but my promise deceiveth none, nor sendeth him away empty that trusteth in me.

What I have promised, I will give ; I will fulfil what I have said to him that remains faithful in my love to the end.

I am the Rewarder of all that are good, and do try my devout servants with strong trials.

4. Write my words in thy heart, and think diligently of them ; for they will be very necessary in the time of *temptation*.

What thou understandest not when thou readest, thou shalt know in the day of *visitation*,

I am wont to visit my elect two ways, with *temptation* and with *comfort*.

And I daily read two lessons unto them, one reprehending their *vices*, another exhorting them to the increase of *virtues*.

He that hath my words and despiseth them, hath

bath him that shall judge him at the last day.

5. *Christian.* O LORD my GOD, thou art to me whatsoever is good. Who am I, that I dare speak unto thee? I am thy poorest servant and a most vile worm, much more poor and contemptible than I can or dare express.

Yet remember, O LORD, that I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing.

Thou alone art good, just, and holy: thou canst do all things, thou fillest all things, only the sinner thou sendest empty away.

Remember thy mercies, and fill my heart with thy grace, thou who willest not that thy works be empty.

6. How can I bear myself, unless thou strengthen me with thy mercy and grace?

Turn not thy face from me: delay not thy visitation; take not away thy comfort, lest my soul become as the thirsty land.

LORD, teach me to fulfil thy will, teach me to live worthily and humbly in thy sight; for thou art my wisdom, thou dost truly know me, and didst know me before the world was made, and before I was born in the world.

C H A P. IV.

*That we ought to live in truth and humility before
G O D.*

Christ. SON, walk before me in *truth*, and ever seek me in simplicity of *heart*.

He that walketh before me in *truth*, shall be defended from evil accidents; and the *truth* shall deliver him from *seducers*, and from the detrac-tions of the wicked.

If the *truth* shall have made thee free, thou shalt be freed indeed, and shalt not care for the vain speeches of men.

Christian. LORD, it is true. According as thou saidst, so I beseech thee let it be with me; let thy *Truth* teach me, and keep me, and bring me safe to an happy end.

Let it deliver me from all evil affection and inordinate love; and I shall walk with thee in great freedom of heart.

2. *Christ.* I will teach thee those things that are right and pleasing in thy sight.

Think of thy sins with great displeasure and grief, and never esteem thyself any thing for thy *good works*:

Thou art in very deed a *sinner*, thou art subject to, and incumbered with many *passions*.

Of thyself thou always tendest to nothing; thou art quickly cast down, quickly overcome, quickly troubled, quickly dissolved.

Thou hast nothing wherein thou canst glory, but many things for which thou oughtest to despise thyself; for thou art much weaker than thou art able to comprehend.

3. Make no account therefore of any thing that thou doest.

Let nothing seem great, nothing precious and wonderful; let nothing seem worthy of estimation, nothing high, nothing truly praiseworthy and desirable, but that which is everlasting.

Let the eternal truth above all things please thee. Let thy own great *unworthiness* always *displease thee*.

Fear nothing, blame and fly nothing so much as thy *vices* and *sins*; which ought to displease more than the loss of any thing whatsoever.

Some walk not sincerely in my sight; but, out of curiosity and pride, will know my secrets, and understand the high things of GOD, neglecting themselves and their own *salvation*.

These often, because I resist them, fall into great *temptations* and *sins*, for their pride and curiosity.

4. Fear the *judgments* of GOD, dread the *wrath* of the Almighty. But discuss not the works of the Highest. Search thine own iniquities, how much thou hast offended, and how much good thou hast neglected.

Some place their *religion* only in *books*, some in *images*, some in outward *forms* and *ceremonies*.

Some have me in their *mouths*, but little in their *hearts*.

There are others, that being illuminated in their *understandings*, and purged in their *affection*, continually pant after things *eternal*; hear of earthly things with reluctance, and unwillingly serve the necessities of nature: these perceive what the Spirit of *Truth* speaketh in them.

Because it teacheth them to despise *earthly*, and love *heavenly things*; to neglect the world, and all the day and night to desire *heaven*.

C H A P. V.

Of the wonderful effects of divine love.

Christian. **I** Praise thee, O heavenly Father, Father of my Lord JESUS CHRIST, for that thou hast vouchsafed to remember me a poor creature. O

O Father of mercies, and GOD of all comfort, thanks be unto thee, who sometimes with thy comfort refreshest me unworthy of all comfort.

I ever bless and glorify thee with the only begotten SON, and the HOLY GHOST, for ever and ever.

O LORD GOD, the holy lover of my soul, when thou shalt come into my heart, all that is within me will rejoice.

Thou art my glory and the joy of my heart. Thou art my hope and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. But because I am still weak in love, and imperfect in virtue, I have need therefore to be strengthened and comforted by thee.

Visit me therefore often, and instruct me with thy holy discipline.

Deliver me from evil passions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections; that being healed within and well purged, I may be made fit to love, strong to suffer, and constant to persevere.

3. *Christ.* Love is a great thing, a very great good, which alone maketh every burthen light, and beareth with equanimity all the vicissitudes of life.

For it carrieth a burthen without a burthen, and maketh every thing that is bitter, sweet and savoury.

The noble love of JESUS impelleth to do great things, and stirreth up continually to desire greater perfection.

Love will be aloft, and not kept down with any earthly thing.

Love will be free and loose from all worldly affection, lest its inward sight be hindered, lest it be entangled by any temporal *prosperity*, or subdued by *adversity*.

Nothing is sweeter than *love*, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more large; nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in *heaven* or in *earth*.

Because *love* is born of GOD, and cannot rest but in GOD, above all creatures.

4. He that loveth; flieth, runneth, and rejoiceth: he is free, and not bound.

He giveth all for all, and hath all in all; for he resteth in the supreme One, from whom all good floweth and proceedeth.

He respecteth not the gifts, but turneth himself above all goods unto the Giver.

Love often knoweth no measure, but is inflamed above all measure.

Love feeleth no burthen, weigheth no pains, desireth above its strength; complaineth not of impossibility, for it thinketh all things possible.

It is able therefore to undertake all things, and performeth and bringeth many things to pass, whereas he, that doth not *love*, fainteth, and sinketh under them.

5. Love watcheth, and sleeping sleepeth not. Being tired, is not weary; straitened, is not pressed; frightened, is not disturbed? but, like a lively flame and burning torch, it bursteth out aloft, and securely passeth thro' all.

If any one loveth, he knoweth what this meaneth.

The ardent affection of the soul crieth aloud in the ears of GOD, when it saith, *My God, my love, thou art wholly mine, and I wholly thine.*

6. *Christian.* Enlarge me in love, that with the inward mouth of my heart I may taste how sweet it is to love, and to be melted and swim in thy love.

Let me be possessed by love, mounting above myself with excessive fervour and admiration.

Let me sing the song of love, let me follow thee on high my beloved; let my soul die away in thy praise, rejoicing thro' love.

Let me love thee more than myself, and not myself, but for thee, and all in thee that truly love thee as the law of love commandeth, which shineth out from thee.

7. *Christ.* Love is swift, sincere, pious, pleasant and delightful, strong, patient, faithful, prudent, long-suffering, manly, and never seeking itself.

For where one seeketh himself, there he falleth from love.

Love is circumspect, humble, and upright; not soft, nor light, nor attending unto vain things; sober, chaste, constant, quiet, and guarded in all the senses.

Love is subject and obedient to superiors, vile and despicable to itself, devout and thankful unto GOD, trusting and hoping always in him, even when GOD imparteth no sweetness unto it, for without sorrow none liveth in love.

8. He that is not ready to suffer all things, and to stand to the will of his beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover. A

A *lover* ought to embrace willingly all that is hard and distasteful for his beloved; and not to turn away from him for any contrary accidents.

C H A P. VI.

Of the proof of a lover.

Christ. SON, thou art not yet a valiant and prudent lover.

Christian. *Wherefore, Lord?*

Christ. Because thou givest over thy undertakings for a small *difficulty*, and too greedily seekest after *comfort*.

A valiant *lover* standeth firmly in *temptations*, and giveth not credit to the crafty persuasions of the *enemy*.

As I please him in *prosperity*, so I am not unpleasant to him in *adversity*.

2. A prudent *lover* considereth not so much the gift of his *lover*, as the *love* of the giver.

He regardeth the *love* more than the value, and valueth his beloved above all his gifts.

A generous *lover* resteth not in the gift, but in me above every gift.

All therefore is not lost, if sometimes thou hast less taste of me than thou wouldest.

That good and sweet affection, which thou sometimes feelest, is the effect of present *grace*, and a foretaste of the *heavenly country*; whereon thou mayest not rely too much, for it goeth and cometh.

But to fight against evil thoughts, and to despise the suggestions of the devil, is a notable sign of virtue, and shall have a great reward.

3. Be not therefore troubled at any fancies suggested to thee.

Retain a strong purpose and an upright intention to God.

Neither is it an illusion, that sometimes thou art suddenly rapt on high, and presently returnest again unto the accustomed *vanities* of thy *heart*.

For thou dost rather unwillingly suffer them, than commit them.

And, as long as they displease thee, and thou strivest against them, is matter of reward, and no loss.

4. Know that thy ancient *enemy* doth ever strive to hinder thy desire to good, and to divert thee from all religious exercises; to wit, from devout memory of my *passion*, from the profitable remembrance of thy *sins*, from the guard of thine own *heart*, and from the firm purpose of profiting in *virtue*.

He injecteth many evil thoughts, that he may cause a wearisomness and horror in thee, to draw thee from *prayer and holy reading*.

Humble confession is displeasing unto him; and if he could, he would cause thee to cease from receiving the *sacrament*.

Trust him not, nor care for him, altho' he should often set snares for thee.

Charge him with it when he suggesteth evil and unclean thoughts unto thee; say unto him,

Away *unclean spirit*, blush *miserable wretch*; thou art very unclean that bringeth such things to mine ears.

Away from me *wicked deceiver*, thou shalt have

have no part in me ; but JESUS shall be with me as a strong Warrior, and thou shalt stand confounded.

I had rather die, and undergo any torment, than to consent unto thee.

Hold thy peace and be silent ; I will hear thee no more, tho' thou shouldest work me many troubles.

The LORD is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear ?

Tho' hosts of men rose up against me, yet should not my heart be afraid.

The LORD is my Helper and my Redeemer.

5. Fight like a good soldier : and, if thou sometimes fall thro' frailty, take greater strength than before, trusting in more abundant grace.

And take great heed of vanity and pride.

This brings many into *error*, and makes them sometimes fall into almost *incurable blindness*.

Let this fall of the *proud*, foolishly presuming of themselves, serve thee for a warning, and keep thee perpetually *humble*.

C H A P. VII.

That grace is to be guarded by humility.

Christ. SON, it is more profitable and safe for thee to hide the *grace of devotion* ; not to extol thyself, nor to speak much of it, nor to think much thereof ; but rather to despise thyself, and fear it, as given to one unworthy thereof.

This *affection* is not to be cleaved unto, which may be quickly changed unto the contrary.

Think, when thou art in *grace*, how miserable and needy thou art wont to be without *grace*.

Neither doth the proficiency of a *spiritual life* consist wholly in the *grace* of *comfort*; but rather in humbly, self-denyingly and patiently suffering the withdrawing thereof, so that thou be not then less diligent in *prayer*, nor remit the rest of thy accustomed *duties*.

But willingly perform what lieth in thee according to the best of thy power and understanding: not neglecting thyself wholly for the dryness and trouble of *mind* which thou feelest.

2. There are many, who, when it succeedeth not well with them, presently become impatient or slothful.

The way of man is not always in his power, but it belongeth to GOD to give and to comfort when he will, and how much he will, and whom he will; as it shall please him, and no more.

Some unadvised persons have overthrow themselves for *the greedy desire which they had of the grace* of devotion; attempting more than they were able to perform, not weighing their *weakness*, but following rather the desire of their *heart*, than the judgment of *reason*.

And because they presumed on greater matters than was pleasing to GOD, they quickly lost his *grace*.

They became needy and left destitute, who had built themselves nests in *heaven*: that being humbled and impoverished, they might learn

not to fly with their own wings, but to trust under my wings.

They, that are yet but novices and unacquainted in the way of the LORD, unless they govern themselves by the counsel of discrete persons, may easily be deceived and overthrown.

3. And if they will rather follow their own judgment, than give credit to others that are experienced, the event will be dangerous, if they will not be drawn from their own conceit.

Seldom those that are self-wise suffer themselves humbly to be governed by others.

A little *knowledge with humility*, and a slender *understanding*, is better than great measures of learning with self-conceit.

It is better for thee to have little, than much, whereof thou mayest be *proud*.

He doeth not discretely, that wholly giveth himself to *mirth*, forgetting his former *poverty*, and the chaste fear of GOD, which feareth to lose the *grace* he hath obtained.

Neither is he virtuously *wise*, that in time of *adversity* or any *tribulation*, yieldeth to despair, and trusteth in me less confidently than he ought.

4. He that will be over-secure in time of *peace*, shall be often found in time of *war* dejected and fearful.

If thou couldest always continue humble and lowly within thyself, and order and govern thy *spirit* well, thou shouldest not so soon fall into danger and offence.

It is good counsel, that when fervour of spirit is kindled within thee, thou shouldest think

what will become of thee, when that light shall leave thee.

And when that doth happen, remember the light may return again, which for thy *instruction* and my *glory* I have withdrawn for a time.

5. Such a trial is often more profitable, than if thou shouldest always enjoy *prosperity* according to thy desire.

For a man's worthiness is not to be judged by the number of *visions* and *comforts* which he hath, neither by his knowledge in *scripture*, or by his being placed in a high degree ;

But by his being grounded in true *humility*, and filled with *divine love* ; by his always purely and entirely seeking the honour of GOD, by his esteeming himself nothing, and despising himself, and rejoicing more to be despised and humbled by others, than to be honoured.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the contempt of ourselves in the sight of GOD.

Christian. SHALL I speak unto my LORD, who am *dust* and *ashes* ?

If I esteem better of myself, behold thou standest against me, and my *iniquities* bear true witness *against me* : neither can I contradict it.

But if I abase and know myself to be nothing ; if I renounce all self-esteem, and (as I am) account myself to be but dust, thy *grace* will be favourable unto me, and thy light will be near unto my *heart*.

And all self-esteem, how little soever, shall

be swallowed up in the deep valley of my nothingness, and perish everlastingly.

There thou shewest myself unto me what I am, what I have been, and whither I am come; for I am nothing, and I knew it not.

And if I be left to myself, behold I become nothing and all weakness.

But if thou suddenly look upon me, I am made strong and filled with new joy.

And it is a great marvel, that I am so suddenly lifted up, and so graciously embraced by thee, who by mine own weight always sink downward.

2. Thy *love* is the cause thereof, freely preventing me, and relieving me in so many necessities, preserving me also from *grievous dangers*, and delivering me (as I may truly say) from *innumerable evils*.

For, by inordinate loving myself, I lost myself; and by seeking thee alone, and purely loving thee, I have found both myself and thee, and by that *love* have more deeply brought myself to nothing.

For thou, O most sweet LORD, dealest with me above all desert, above all that I dare hope or ask.

3. *Blessed be thou, my GOD: for altho' I be unworthy of any benefits; yet the nobleness of thy bounty and thy infinite goodness, never ceaseth to do good unto the ungrateful, and them that are far from thee.*

Turn us unto thee, O LORD, that we may be thankful, humble and holy; for thou art our power, and our strength, and our salvation.

C H A P. IX.

*That all things are to be referred unto GOD,
as unto their last end.*

Christ. SON, I ought to be thy *chief* and *last*
end, if thou desire to be truly *blessed*.

By this intention thy *affection* shall be *purified*, which is often inordinately bent down to itself and unto *creatures*.

For if in any thing thou seekest thyself, thou soon fallest into a languor and spiritual driness.

Refer therefore all things' unto me, for I am *He* that have given all.

Consider every thing as flowing from the highest *Good*; and therefore all things are to be reduced unto me as unto their original.

2. Out of me, as out of a living *fountain*, the *little* and the *great*, the *poor* and the *rich*, draw the *water of life*: and they that willingly and freely serve me, shall receive *grace* for *grace*.

But he that will glory out of me, or be delighted in any *good* that tends not to me, shall not be grounded in true *joy*, nor enlarged in his *heart*, but shall be many ways *incumbered* and *straitened*.

Thou oughtest therefore to ascribe nothing of *good* unto thyself, nor attribute *goodness* unto any man: but give all unto *GOD*, without whom man hath nothing.

I have bestowed all, and will that all be returned unto me again: and with great strictness I require thanks.

3. This is the *truth* that putteth to flight *vain*
glory.

And if *heavenly grace* and *true love* enter in, there shall be no envy nor straitness of heart, neither shall there be any place for self-love.

For *divine love* overcometh all, and enlargeth all the powers of the *soul*.

If thou beest *truly wise*, in me alone thou wilt rejoice, in me alone thou wilt hope: for none is good, but GOD *alone*, who is to be praised above all things, and to be blessed in all.

C H A P. X.

That it is a sweet thing to despise the world, and serve GOD.

Christian. NOW I will speak again, O LORD, and will not be silent; I will say in the ears of my GOD, my LORD, and my KING that is on high,

O how great is the abundance of thy goodness, O LORD, which thou hast laid up for those that fear thee!

But what art thou to them that love thee? What to them that serve thee with their whole heart?

Truly unspeakable is the sweetness of contemplating thee, which thou bestowest on them that love thee.

In this chiefly thou hast shewed me the sweetness of thy *love*: in that when I was not, thou *madest me*; and when I went astray afar off from thee, thou broughtest me back again, that I might serve thee, and hast commanded me to love thee.

2. *O Fountain of everlasting love, what shall I say of thee?* How

How can I forget thee, that hast vouchsafed to remember me, even after I had pined away, and perished?

Thou hast shewed *mercy* to thy *servant* beyond all my expectation.

Thou hast exhibited thy *favour* and *friendship* beyond all my desert. What shall I return to thee for this favour?

Is it much that I should serve thee, whom all creatures are bound to serve?

It ought not to seem much unto me to serve thee: but this rather seemeth much and marvelous unto me, that thou vouchsafest to receive into thy service one so *poor* and *unworthy*, and to join him with thy *beloved servants*.

3. Behold, all is thine which I have, and whereby I serve thee.

And yet, contrariwise, thou rather servest me than I thee.

Behold, *heaven* and *earth*, which thou hast created for the *service* of man, are ready at hand, and do daily perform whatsoever thou dost command;

And this is little: thou hast also appointed the *angels* to the *service* of man.

But that which *excelleth* all this, is, that thou thyself hast vouchsafed to *serve* man, and hast promised to give *thyself* unto him.

4. What shall I give thee for all these thousands of *benefits*?

Would I could serve thee all the days of my *life*.

Would I were able at least for one day, to do thee *worthy service*.

Verily, thou art *worthy* of all *service*, of all *honour*, and everlasting *praise*.

Verily, thou art my LORD, and I thy *poor servant*, that am bound to serve thee with all my *might*, neither ought I ever to be weary of *praising thee*.

This I wish to do, this I desire; and whatsoever is wanting unto me, *vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to supply*.

5. It is a great *honour*, a great *glory* to serve thee, and despise all *things* for thee.

For great *grace* shall be given unto them that shall willingly subject themselves to thy most *holy service*.

They shall receive the most *sweet comfort* of the HOLY GHOST, that for thy love renounce all *carnal delights*.

They shall attain great freedom of *mind*, that for thy Name's sake enter into the narrow way and throw off all worldly care.

6. O sweet and delightful service of GOD, by which man is truly made free and holy!

O sacred state of religious service, which maketh man equal to *angels*, pleasing to GOD, terrible to *devils*, grateful to all the *faithful*!

O service to be embraced and always wished for, by which we obtain the greatest good, and acquire that joy which never shall have an end!

C H A P. XI.

That the desires of our heart are to be examined and moderated.

Christ. SON, thou must still learn many things, which thou hast not yet well learned.

Christian. What are those, LORD?

Christ. That thou frame thy *desires* wholly according to my pleasure; and be not a lover of thyself, but a zealous follower of my will.

Thy *desires* often inflame thee, and that vehemently. But consider, whether thou art moved rather for my *honour*, or for thy own *profit*.

If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content, howsoever I shall ordain:

But if there lurk in thee any self-seeking, behold this is it that hindereth thee and weigheth thee down.

2. Beware therefore thou lean not too much upon any *desire* conceived without asking my *counsel*, lest perhaps afterwards it *repent thee*, and thou dislike what before *pleased thee*, and which thou zealously *desiredst* as the best.

For every *affection* that seemeth good, is not presently to be followed: nor every *affection* that at first seemeth evil, to be avoided.

It is expedient sometimes to use a restraint even in good *desires* and *endeavours*, lest by opportunity of *desire* thou incur distraction of mind, and by the want of self-government be a scandal to others; or being gainsaid by others thou be suddenly troubled and fall.

3. But thou oughtest sometimes to use *violence*, and resist manfully thy sensual *appetites*, and respect not what the *flesh* would or would not; but rather to labour, than even perforce it be subject to the *spirit*.

And, it is to be *chastised* so long, and to be forced under servitude, until it readily obey in all things, and learn to be content with a little, and to be pleased with plain things, and not to murmur at any *inconvenience*.

C H A P. XII.

Of patience, and of striving against concupiscence.

Christian. O LORD GOD, I perceive *patience* is very necessary unto me, for many *adversities* happen in this *life*.

For howsoever I aim at *peace*, my life cannot be without *war* and *affliction*.

Christ. So it is, son. And my *will* is, that thou seek not such a *peace*, as is void of *temptations*, or as feeleth no contrariety:

But then think that thou hast found *peace*, when thou art exercised with sundry *tribulations*, and tried in many *adversities*.

2. If thou say, that thou art not able to suffer much, how then wilt thou endure the *fire* hereafter?

Of *two evils*, the less is always to be chosen. That thou mayest therefore avoid *everlasting punishment*, endeavour to suffer patiently for GOD the present evils.

Dost thou think that the men of this world suffer little or nothing? Look into the *life* of them

them that are most at ease, and thou wilt find it otherwise.

But thou wilt say, they have many *delights*, and follow their own *wills*, and therefore make small account of their *tribulation*.

Be it so, that they have whatsoever they will: but how long dost thou think it will last?

3. Behold, the *rich* of this world vanish away like smoke, and there shall be no memory of their past *pleasures*.

Yea, even while they live, they rest not in them without *bitterness*, *irksomeness*, and *fear*.

For the self-same thing, in which they take their *delight*, is often to them the cause of sorrow.

And it is but just that they, who inordinately seek such *pleasures*, should not enjoy them without *bitterness* and *confusion*.

4. O how short and false, how inordinate and base are all those *pleasures*!

Yet so *blind* and *intoxicated* are men, that they understand it not: but, like *dumb beasts*, for a little *pleasure* of a *corruptible life*, they incur the *death* of their *soul*.

Thou therefore, my son, go not after thy *lusts*, but forsake thine own will.

Delight thou in the LORD, and he will give thee thy heart's desire.

5. For if thou desire true *delight*, and to be more plentifully comforted by me, behold, in the contempt of all *worldly things*, and in the cutting off all *base delights*, shall be thy *blessing*, and abundant *comforts* shall be given thee.

And the more thou withdrawest thyself from

all comfort of *creatures*, the sweeter and more powerful *consolations* shalt thou find in me.

But thou canst not attain unto them without some sorrow at first, nor a without a laborious *conflict*.

Thy inveterate habits will resist for a time, but they will be overcome by better habits.

Thy *flesh* will murmur; but thou shalt bridle it by the fervour of thy *spirit*.

The old *serpent* will tempt and provoke thee, but by *prayer* he shall be put to flight: moreover useful labour will much contribute to prevent his having access to thee.

C H A P. XIII.

Of the obedience of an humble inferior, according to the example of CHRIST.

Christ. SON, he that endeavoureth to withdraw himself from *obedience*, withdraweth himself from *grace*.

And he that seeketh his own pleasures, loseth my blessings.

He that doth not willingly and freely submit himself to his *superior*, it is a sign that his *flesh* is not as yet perfectly obedient unto him, but oftentimes kicketh and murmureth against him.

Learn therefore readily to submit thyself to thy superior, if thou desirest to subdue thy *flesh*.

For the outward enemy is sooner overcome, if the inward man be not in disorder.

There is no worse, nor more troublesome enemy of the *soul*, than thou art unto thyself, when disobedient to the *spirit*.

Thou must of necessity have a true contempt of thyself, if thou wilt prevail against *flesh and blood*.

2. Because thou still lovest thyself inordinately, therefore thou art afraid to resign thyself wholly to the will of others.

But what greater matter is it, if thou that art *dust and nothing*, submit thyself to a man for GOD, when I the *Almighty*, the most High, who created all things of nothing, humbly submitted myself unto man for thee?

I became the lowest and most object of all, that thou mightest overcome thy *pride*; with my *humility*.

Thou *dust*, learn to obey.

Thou *earth and clay*, learn to humble thyself, to bow down beneath the feet of all men.

Learn to break thine own will, and to yield thyself to all *subjection*.

3. Be zealous against thyself: and suffer not *pride* to live in thee.

Shew thyself so lowly, such a little child, that every one may go over thee, and tread thee as dirt of the streets under their feet.

Vain man, what hast thou to complain of?

Vile sinner, what canst thou answer to them who reproach thee, who hast so often offended GOD, and so many times *deserved hell*?

But mine eye hath spared thee, because thy *soul* was precious in my sight;

That thou mightest know my *love*, and always remain thankful for my benefits;

And that thou mightest continually study

true

true *subjection and humility*, and patiently endure, to be despised.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the considering the secret judgments of GOD, lest we be exalted on account of our good deeds.

Christian. **T**HOU thunderest forth thy judgments over me, O LORD; thou shakest all my bones with fear and trembling, and my soul is sore afraid.

I stand astonished, when I consider that the heavens are not pure in thy sight.

If thou hast found wickedness in angels, and hast not pardoned them, what shall become of me?

Stars fell from heaven, and am I, who am dust, proud?

They, whose works seemed commendable, have fallen greatly: and I have seen them that did eat the bread of angels, delighted with the husks of swine.

2. There is therefore no sanctity, if thou, O LORD, withdrawest thy hand.

No wisdom availeth, if thou cease to govern.

No strength helpeth, if thou leave to defend.

No chastity is secure, if thou dost not protect it.

No vigilance profits, if thy sacred watchfulness be not present.

For if we be left, we sink and perish: but if thou visit us, we are raised up and live.

We are incóntant, but by thee we are established: we grow cold, but by thee we are inflamed.

3. O how meanly and humbly ought I to think of myself! how nothing ought I to esteem it, if I seem to have any good!

O LORD, with what profound *humility* ought I to submit myself to thy *inscrutable judgments*; where I find myself to be a *Nothing*, a very *Nothing*.

O unmeasurable weight! O unpassable *sea*, where I find myself to be nothing, how altogether nothing! Where then is the hiding place of *glory*? Where is the *confidence* I once conceived of my own *virtue*?

All vain-glorying is swallowed up in the depth of thy judgments over me.

4. What is all flesh in thy sight?

Shall the clay *glory* against him that frameth it?

How can he be lifted up with vain words, whose heart is truly subject to GOD?

All the world cannot lift him up, whom the *truth* hath subjected unto itself? Neither shall he be moved with the *tongues* of all his *praisers*, that hath settled his whole *hope* upon GOD.

For as for them that speak, behold, they are all nothing, they shall pass away, as doth the sound of their *words*: but the *truth* of the LORD remaineth for ever.

C H A P. XV.

How we are to be affected, and what we are to say, in every thing which we desire.

Christ. SON, say thus in every thing: LORD, if it be pleasing unto thee, let this be thus.

LORD, if it be to thy honour, let this be done in thy name. LORD,

LORD, if thou seeft it expedient for me, and knoweft it to be profitable, then grant me to ufe this unto thy *honour*;

But if thou knoweft it will be hurtful unto me, and not profitable to the health of my *soul*, take away this defire from me.

For every defire proceedeth not from the **HOLY GHOST**, tho' it feem unto man right and good.

It is hard to judge rightly, whether a *good spirit* or the contrary incline thee to defire this or that; or whether thou be not moved by thine own *spirit*.

Many are deceived in the end, who at the firft feemed to be led by a *good spirit*.

2. Always therefore, whatfoever feemeth defirable to thee, let it be defired and prayed for in the fear of **GOD**, and with *humility of heart*.

And above all thou oughteft to resign thyself, and to commit the whole unto me, and fay:

LORD, thou knoweft what is beft, let this or that be done as thou pleafeft.

Give what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt.

Deal with me as thou thinkeft good, and as beft pleafeth thee, and is moft for thy *honour*.

Set me where thou wilt, and deal with me in all things according to thy will.

I am in thy hand; turn me, and turn me again, which way foever thou pleafeft.

Behold, I am thy *servant*, prepared for all things: for I defire not to live unto myself, but

unto thee: and O that I could do it *worthily* and *perfectly*.

3. Grant me thy grace, O *most gracious* Jesus, that it may be with me, and labour with me, and continue with me until the end.

Grant me always to desire and will that which is most acceptable unto thee, and best pleases thee.

Let thy *will* be mine, and let my *will* ever follow thine, and agree perfectly with it.

Let my *will* and *nill* be all one with thine, and let me not be able to *will* or *nill* any thing else, but what thou *willest* or *nillest*.

4. Grant that I may die to all things that are in the world, and for thy sake to love to be contemned, and not to be known in this world.

Grant that above all things that can be desired, I may rest in thee, and may quiet my *heart* in thee.

Thou art the true *peace* of the *heart*, thou art the only rest; out of thee all things are troublesome and unquiet.

In this very *peace*, that is, in thee, the one chief eternal Good, may I sleep and rest. Amen.

C H A P. XVI.

That true comfort is to be sought in GOD alone.

WHATSOEVER I can desire or imagine for my *comfort*, I look not for it here, but hereafter.

For if I should alone have all the *comforts* of the world, and enjoy all the *delights* thereof, it is certain, that they could not long endure.

Where-

Wherefore, my *soul*, thou canst not be fully comforted, nor have perfect delight, but in **GOD**, the *comforter* of the *poor*, and the *helper* of the *humble*.

Wait a while, O my *soul*, wait the *divine promise*, and thou shalt have abundance of all good things in *heaven*.

If thou desire inordinately the things that are present, thou shalt lose the *celestial* and *eternal*.

Use *temporal things*, desire *eternal*.

Thou canst not be satisfied with any *temporal good*, because thou art not created to enjoy them.

2. Altho' thou hadst all created *good*, yet wouldest thou not be happy, or blessed; but in **GOD**, that hath created all things, thy whole *beatitude* and *happiness* consisteth.

Not such happiness as is seen and commended by the foolish lovers of the world; but such as the good and *faithful servants* of **CHRIST** expect, and the *spiritual* and *pure* in heart, whose conversation is in *heaven*, sometimes have a *foretaste* of.

Vain and short is all *human comfort*.

Blessed and real is that *comfort*, which is received inwardly from the *truth*.

A devout man every where carrieth with him **JESUS** his comforter, and saith unto him: Be present with me, **LORD JESUS**, in every place and time.

Let this be my *comfort*, to be willing to want all *human comfort*.

And if thy *comfort* be wanting, let thy will and just proving of me be unto me as the greatest *comfort*:
For

For thou wilt not be angry always, neither wilt thou threaten for ever.

C H A P. XVII.

That all our care is to be cast on G O D.

Christ. SON, suffer me to do with thee what I please. I know what is expedient for thee.

Thou thinkest like a man; thou judgest in many things, as human affection persuadeth thee.

Christian. LORD, what thou sayest is true. Thy care for me is greater than all the care that I can take for myself.

For he standeth very totteringly, that casteth not his whole care upon thee.

LORD, so that my will may remain right and firm towards thee, do with me whatsoever shall please thee.

For it cannot be but good whatsoever thou doest with me.

2. If it be thy will I should be in darkness, be thou blessed: and if it be thy will I should be in light, be thou again blessed.

If thou vouchsafest to *comfort* me, be thou blessed: and if thou wilt *afflict* me, be thou equally blessed.

Christ. Son, such must be thy disposition, if thou wilt walk with me.

Thou must be as ready to *suffer* as to *rejoice*. Thou oughtest to be as willing to be poor and needy, as full and rich.

3. *Christian.* LORD, I willingly suffer for thee, whatsoever thy pleasure is shall befall me.

I will receive indifferently from thy hand good and evil, sweet and bitter, delightful and sorrowful, and give thee thanks for all that befall me.

Keep me from all sin, and I will neither fear death nor hell.

So thou dost not for ever cast me from thee, nor blot me out of the *book of life*, what tribulation soever befall me, shall not hurt me.

C H A P. XVIII.

That temporal miseries, after the example of CHRIST, must be borne patiently.

Christ. SON, I descended from heaven for thy salvation: I took upon me thy miseries, my own love, and not any necessity, drawing me thereunto; that thou mightest learn patience, and bear temporal miseries without repining.

For, from the hour of my birth, until my death on the cross, I was not without suffering.

I suffered great want of temporal things; I often heard many complaints against me: I bore patiently shame and reviling: for benefits I received ingratitude; for miracles, blasphemies; for heavenly doctrine, reproaches.

2. *Christian.* LORD, since thou wert patient in thy life-time, herein chiefly fulfilling the commandment of thy Father, it is reason, that I, a miserable sinner, should shew myself patient according to thy will, and for my soul's

welfare bear the burthen of this corruptible life as long as thou wilt.

For altho' this present life be burthensome ; yet notwithstanding it is now, by thy *grace*, made very gainful ; and by the example and the footsteps of thy *saints*, more plain and tolerable to the weak : yea, much more comfortable also than it was in times past, in the old law, when the gate of *heaven* remained shut, and the way also to *heaven* seemed darker, when so few took care to seek after thy *kingdom*.

3. O how many and great thanks am I bound to render unto thee, that thou hast vouchsafed to shew unto me and to all the *faithful*, a direct and sure way to thy *everlasting kingdom* !

For thy life is our way, and by holy patience we go unto thee that art our crown.

If thou hadst not gone before us and taught us, who would have gone the way which thou hast traced out ?

Alas ! how many would stay behind and remain far off, if they beheld not thy glorious example !

Behold, we are still cold, altho' we have heard of so many of thy wonders, and thy *heavenly* doctrines. What would become of us, if we had not so great a light given us to follow thee ?

C H A P. XIX.

Of suffering of injuries : and who is proved to be truly patient.

Christ. **W**HAT is it thou sayest, son ? Cease to complain, considering my *passion*, and that of my other *saints*. Thou

Thou hast not yet resisted unto blood.

It is but little thou sufferest, in comparison of them that have suffered so much, were so strongly tempted, so grievously afflicted, so many ways tried and exercised.

Thou oughtest therefore to call to mind the more heavy sufferings of others, that thou mayest the easier bear thy little adversities.

And if they seem not little unto thee, beware lest thy impatience be the cause thereof.

Yet, whether they be little or great, endeavour to bear all patiently.

2. How much the better thou disposest thyself to suffering; so much the more wisely thou doest, and so much the greater reward shalt thou receive:

Thou shalt more easily also endure it, if both in mind, and by exercise, thou art well prepared thereunto.

Do not say, I cannot suffer these things at the hands of such a person, nor ought I to suffer such things; for he hath done me great wrong and upbraided me with those things which I never thought of; but of another I will willingly suffer, as proper occasions of suffering shall offer.

Such a thought is foolish; it considereth not the virtue of *patience*, nor by whom it shall be crowned; but rather weigheth the persons, and the injuries offered.

3. He is not truly patient, that will not suffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whom he listeth.

But the true patient man mindeth not by whom he is exercised, whether by his superior, or some of his equals, or by his inferior; whether by a good and holy man, or by a perverse and unworthy person.

But indifferently from all creatures, how much soever, or how often soever, any adversity befalleth him, he taketh all thankfully from the hands of GOD, and esteemeth it a great gain.

Seeing nothing, how little soever, so it be suffered for GOD, shall pass without its reward from GOD.

4. Be thou therefore prepared for the fight, if thou wilt have the victory.

Without a combat thou canst not attain unto the *crown of patience*.

If thou wilt not suffer, thou refusest to be crowned:

But if thou desirest to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently.

Without labour there is no coming to rest, nor without fighting can victory be obtained.

5. *Christian*. LORD, let that be made possible to me by thy *grace*, which seemeth impossible to me by nature.

Thou knowest that I can suffer but little, and that I am quickly dismayed when a small adversity ariseth.

Let every exercise of *tribulation* be made amiable unto me, and be welcome for thy name; for to suffer and to be troubled for thy sake, is very profitable for my *soul*.

C H A P. XX.

Of the acknowledging of our own infirmities, and of the miseries of life.

Christian. I WILL confess against me my unrighteousness; I will confess unto thee, O LORD, my infirmities.

It is often a small matter that dejecteth and grieveth me.

I purpose to act with courage; but when a small temptation cometh, it brings me into great straits.

It is sometimes a very trifle, from whence great temptations proceed.

And whilst I think myself somewhat safe, when I least expect it, I find myself sometimes overcome with a small blast.

2. Behold therefore, LORD, my low estate, and my frailty every way known unto thee.

Have mercy on me, and deliver me out of the mire, that I stick not fast therein, and that I may not be cast down altogether.

This is that which often strikes me, and confounds me in thy sight; for that I am so subject to fall, and weak in resisting of my passions.

And tho' I do not altogether consent; yet their continual assaults are grievous unto me; and it is a very irksome thing to live thus daily in conflict. Hereby my infirmity is made known unto me, that wicked thoughts always much more easily invade, than forsake me.

3. O mighty GOD of Israel, the zealous lover of faithful souls, let it please thee to con-

sider the *labour* and *sorrow* of thy *servant*, and assist him in all whatsoever he undertaketh.

Strengthen me with heavenly strength, lest the old man, the miserable *flesh*, not yet fully subject to the *spirit*, prevail and get the upper hand; against which I ought to fight as long as I breathe in this miserable *life*.

Alas, what a wretched kind of life is this, where all is full of *snarcs* and *enemies*!

For when one *temptation* goeth away, another cometh; yea, and during the first conflict also, many others come unlooked for, one after another.

4. And how can a *life* be loved, that hath so many *embitterments*, and is subject to so many *calamities* and *miseries*? How is it called a *life*, that begetteth so many *deaths* and *plagues*? And yet is loved, and many seek to delight themselves therein. The world is oftentimes blamed that it is deceitful and vain; and yet it is not easily forsaken, because the desires of the *flesh* bear so great a sway.

Some things draw us to love it, others to contemn it. To the *love* of the world, the *lust* of the *flesh*, the *lust* of the *eyes*, and the *pride* of *life* do draw us: but the pains and miseries, that do justly follow them, cause a hatred and loathsomeness thereof.

5. But alas! vile *pleasure* overcometh the *mind* which is addicted to the world: and she esteemeth it a delight to be even under thorns, because she hath neither seen nor tasted the sweetness of God, and the inward pleasantness of virtue.

But

But they that perfectly contemn the world, and endeavour to live to GOD under *holy discipline*, these are not ignorant of the *divine sweetness* promised to the true forsakers of the world, but clearly see how grievously the world erreth, and how many ways it is deceived.

C H A P. XXI.

That we are to rest in GOD above all his gifts and benefits.

Christian. **A**BOVE all things, and in all things, O my soul, thou shalt ever rest in the LORD; for he is the everlasting rest of the *saints*.

Grant me, O most sweet and loving JESUS, to rest in thee above all creatures.

Above all *health* and *beauty*, above all *glory* and *honour*, above all *power* and *dignity*, above all *knowledge* and *subtilty*, above all *riches* and *arts*, above all *joy* and *gladness*, above all *fame* and *praise*, above all *sweetness* and *comfort*, above all *hope* and *promise*, above all *desert* and *desire*.

Above all *gifts* and *presents* that thou canst give and impart unto us,

Above all *joy* and *triumph*, that the mind of man can receive and feel:

Lastly, above *angels* and *archangels*, and above all the *host* of *heaven*, above all *visible* and *invisible things*, and above all that thou art not, O my GOD.

2. For thou, my LORD GOD, art best

above all, thou alone art most *high*, thou alone most *powerful*, thou alone most *full* and *sufficient*, thou alone most *sweet* and overflowing with *comfort*, thou alone most *lovely* and *loving*, thou alone most *noble* and *glorious* above all things, in whom all good things are together and most perfectly, and ever have been and shall be.

And therefore it is too little and not sufficient, whatsoever thou bestowest on me besides thyself, or revealest unto me of thyself, or promistest whilst thou art not seen, and not fully obtained.

For surely my *heart* cannot truly rest nor be fully contented, unless it rest in thee, and surmount all *gifts* and *creatures* whatsoever.

3. O my most beloved *Bridegroom*, JESUS CHRIST, the most pure *lover*, the governor of all *creatures*! O that I had the wings of true *liberty*, that I might fly away and rest in thee.

O when shall it be fully granted me to consider in quietness of mind, and see how sweet thou art, my LORD GOD!

When shall I fully gather up myself into thee, that by reason of my love to thee I may not feel myself, but thee alone, above all sense and measure, in a manner not known unto every one?

But now I oftentimes sigh, and bear my infelicity with grief, for that many *evils* occur in this vale of *miseries*, which often trouble, grieve, and overcloud me; often hinder and distract me, allure and entangle me; so that I can have no free access unto thee, nor enjoy thy
sweet

sweet embracings wherewith thou ever favourest the *blessed spirits*.

O let my sighs and manifold *desolations* on earth affect thee.

4. O JESUS, the brightness of *eternal glory*, the *comfort* of the *banished soul*, with thee is my tongue without voice, and my very silence speaketh unto thee.

How long doth my LORD delay to come?

Let him come unto me his poor *servant*; and make me glad.

Let him put forth his hand, and deliver me from all trouble.

Come, O come; for without thee I shall have no joyful hour: for thou art my joy, and without thee my table is empty.

A wretched *creature* I am, and in a manner imprisoned and loaded with irons, until thou comfortest me with the light of thy presence and settest me at liberty, and shewest a friendly countenance unto me.

5. Let others seek what they please instead of thee: but for me, nothing else doth, or shall delight me, but thou only, *my GOD*, *my hope*, *my everlasting salvation*.

I will not hold my *peace*, nor cease to *pray*, until thy *grace* return again, and thou speak inwardly unto me.

Christ. Behold I am here: behold I come unto thee, because thou hast called upon me.

Thy tears and the desire of thy *soul*, thy *humiliation* and the *contrition* of thy *heart*, have inclined and brought me unto thee.

Christian. LORD, I have called thee, and have desired to enjoy thee, being ready to cast away all things for thee.

For thou first hast stirred me up that I might seek thee.

Blessed be thou therefore, O LORD, that hast shewed thy goodness to thy servant according to the multitude of thy *mercies*.

6. What hath thy servant more to say before thee, but greatly to humble himself in thy sight, and always mindful of his own *iniquity* and *vileness*!

For there is none like unto thee in all that are wonderful in *heaven* and *earth*.

Thy *works* are very good, thy *judgments* true, and by thy providence all things are governed.

Praise therefore, and *glory* be unto thee, O wisdom of the *Father*: let my *mouth*, my *soul*, and all *creatures* together *praise* and *bless* thee.

C H A P. XXII.

*Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of
G O D.*

Christian. OPEN, O LORD, my *heart*, in thy *law*, and teach me to walk in thy *commandments*.

Grant me to understand thy *will* and remember thy *benefits*, as well in general as in particular, with great reverence and diligent consideration; that henceforward I may be able worthily to give thee thanks.

But I know, and confess, that I am not able to give thee due thanks for the least of thy *favours*.

I am less than the least of all thy *benefits*: and when I consider thy noble *bounty*, the greatness thereof maketh my *spirit* to faint.

2. All that we have in our *souls* and *bodies*, and whatsoever we possess outwardly or inwardly, naturally or supernaturally, are thy *benefits*, and do speak thee *bountiful*, *merciful*, and *good*, from whom we have received all *good things*.

Altho' one have received more, another less; all notwithstanding are thine, and without thee even the least cannot be had.

He that hath received greater cannot *glory* in his own desert, nor extol himself above others, nor insult over the less: for he is greater and better that ascribeth least unto himself, and is more humble and devout in rendering thanks.

And he that esteemeth himself vilest of all men, and judgeth himself most unworthy, is fittest to receive greater blessings.

3. And he that hath received fewer, ought not to be sorry nor to repine, nor envy them that have greater store; but attend rather unto thee, and highly praise thy goodness, who bestowest thy gifts so bountifully, so freely, and so willingly, without respect of persons.

All things proceed from thee, and therefore in all things thou art to be praised.

Thou knowest what is fit to be given to every man, and why one hath less and another more.

It is not ours, but thine to judge, who dost exactly know what is meet for every one.

4. Where-

4. Wherefore, my LORD GOD, I esteem it a great *mercy*, not to have much of that which outwardly, and in the opinion of men, might seem worthy of *glory* and *applause*.

He who considereth the poverty and unworthiness of his person, ought not therefore to grieve or be dejected, but rather to take great *comfort*, and to be glad:

For thou, O GOD, hast chosen the *poor* and *humble*, and the despised of this world for thyself, to be thy friends and servants.

Witness thy *apostles* themselves, whom thou hast made *princes* over all the *earth*.

And yet they lived without complaint in the world, so humble and simple, without all malice and deceit, that they even rejoiced to suffer reproach for thy name; and they ardently loved what the world abhorreth.

5. Nothing therefore ought so to rejoice him that loveth thee and acknowledgeth thy *benefits*, as thy will in him, and the good pleasure of thy *eternal appointment*.

With this he ought to be so contented and comforted, that he would be willing to be the *least*, as another the *greatest*.

He is as peaceable and contented in the *last* as in the *first* place.

He is as willing to be *despised* and *contemned*, and to be of no *esteem* or *account*, as to be preferred in *honour* before all others, and to be *greater* in the world.

For thy *will* and the *love* of thy *glory* ought to be preferred above all things.

And to comfort him more, and please him better than all the *benefits* which either he hath received, or may receive.

C H A P. XXIII.

Of four things that bring much peace.

Christ. SON, now I will teach thee the way of peace and true *liberty*.

Christian. DO, LORD, as thou sayest, for I shall be very glad to hear it.

Christ. Endeavour, my son, to do rather the *will* of another than thy own.

Ever chuse rather to have less than more.

Always seek the *lowest place*, and to be beneath every one.

Continually wish and pray, that the will of GOD may be wholly fulfilled in thee.

Behold, such a man entereth into the *bounds of peace and quietness*.

2. *Christian.* LORD, this thy short *speech* containeth much perfection.

It is little in words, but full in sense, and abundant in fruit.

For if I could faithfully keep it, then should I not so easily be troubled.

For as often as I feel myself *unquiet and afflicted*, I find that I have strayed from this *doctrine*.

But thou who canst do all things, and ever lovest the profiting of my soul, increase in me thy *grace*, that I may fulfil thy *words*, and work out my own *salvation*.

3. My LORD GOD, be not far from me; my

my GOD, consider and help me: for sundry thoughts have risen up against me, and great fears afflicting my soul.

How shall I pass through them without hurt?
How shall I utterly break them?

Christ. I will go before thee, and will humble the great ones of the earth. I will open the doors of the prison, and reveal unto thee hidden secrets.

Christian. Do, LORD, as thou sayest, and let all evil thoughts fly before thy face.

This is my hope, my only comfort, to fly unto thee in every tribulation, to trust in thee, to call upon thee from my heart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

5. Enlighten me, O good JESUS, with a clear-shining inward light, and drive away all darkness from the habitation of my heart.

Repress my many wandering thoughts, and drive away those temptations which violently assault me.

Fight strongly for me, and vanquish these evil beasts, these enticing lusts, that so peace may be obtained by thy power, and abundance of thy praise found in the holy court of a pure conscience.

Command the winds and the tempest: say unto the sea, be still, and to the north-wind, blow not; and there shall be a great calm.

5. Send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may shine upon the earth; for I am as the earth without form, and void, until thou enlighten me.

Pour out thy *grace* from above, let thy *heavenly dew* distil upon my *heart*.

Supply streams of *devotion*, to water the face of the *earth*, that it may bring forth good and excellent fruit.

Lift up my *mind* which is pressed down by the weight of *sins*. Draw up my whole *desire* to *heavenly things*; that having tasted the sweetness of supernal *happiness*, it may be irksome to me even to think of *earthly vanities*.

6. Snatch me, and deliver me from all the unlasting *comfort* of *creatures*; for no created thing can fully *comfort* and *quiet* my *desire*.

Join me unto thee with an inseparable band of *love*; for thou alone dost satisfy him that loveth thee, and without thee all things are *frivolous*.

C H A P. XXIV.

Of avoiding curious enquiry into the life of others.

Christ. SON, be not curious, trouble not thyself with idle *cares*.

What is this or that to thee? Follow thou me.

For what is it to thee, whether that man be such or no; whether this man do, or speak this or that?

Thou shalt not need to answer for others, but shalt give account of thyself. Why therefore dost thou trouble thyself?

Behold I know every one, and see all things that are under the sun, and understand how it is with every one; what he thinks, what he desires, and at what his intention aims.

All things therefore are to be committed unto me; but do thou keep thyself in *peace*, and let him that acts, act as he will.

Whatsoever he shall have done, or said, shall fall upon himself, for he cannot deceive me.

2. Be not careful for the shadow of a great name, or for the friendship of many: nor for the affection of particular men:

For these things distract and greatly darken the heart.

I would willingly utter my words, and reveal my secrets unto thee, if thou didst diligently observe my coming, and open the door of thy heart unto me.

Be careful and watch in prayer, and humble thyself in all things.

C H A P. XXV.

Wherein firm peace of heart and true profiting consisteth.

Christ. SON, I have said, *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*

All desire *peace*, but all care not for those things that appertain unto true *peace*.

My *peace* is with the humble and meek of heart. Thy *peace* doth consist in much *patience*.

If thou wilt hear me and follow my voice, thou mayest enjoy much *peace*.

Christian. What then shall I do, LORD?

Christ. In every thing attend unto thyself what thou doest, and what thou sayest: and

direct thy whole intention unto this, that thou mayest please me alone, and desire or seek nothing besides me.

Of the sayings and doings of others judge not rashly, neither do thou entangle thyself with things not committed unto thee: and doing thus, thou shalt be little or seldom troubled.

But never to feel any trouble at all, nor to suffer any grief of heart, or pain of body, is not the state of this life, but of everlasting rest.

Think not therefore, that thou hadst found true peace, if thou feelest no sorrow; nor that then all is well, if thou have no adversary; nor that all is perfect, if all things be done according to thy desire.

Neither do thou then esteem highly of thyself, or account thyself to be specially beloved, if thou be in great devotion and sweetness: for by these things a true lover of virtue is not known, neither doth the profiting and perfection of a man consist in these things.

3. *Christian.* Wherein then, LORD?

Christ. In offering thyself with thy whole heart unto the will of God, not seeking thine own, neither in great nor little, neither in time nor in eternity.

So that thou keepest one and the same even countenance with thanksgiving, both in prosperity and in adversity, weighing all in an equal balance.

If thou be of such courage and so patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawn from thee, thou preparest thy heart to suffer

greater things; and dost not justify thyself, as tho' thou oughtest not to suffer these and so great *afflictions*, but justifiest me in whatsoever I appoint, and praisest my *holy name*: then thou walkest in the true and right way of *peace*; and thou shalt have undoubted hope to see my face again with *joy*.

And if thou attain to the full contempt of thyself, then shalt thou enjoy as great abundance of peace, as this thy state of sojourning is capable of.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the excellent liberty which humble prayer sooner gaineth than reading.

Christian. LORD, it is the work of a perfect man, never to slack his mind from the attentive thought of *heavenly things*, and as it were to pass without care amongst many cares; not like a dull sluggard; but by the privilege of a free mind, adhering to no creature with *inordinate affection*.

2. I beseech thee, my most gracious God, preserve me from the cares of this *life*, lest I be too much entangled thereby: and from the many *necessities* of the *body*, lest I should be caught by *pleasure*: and from whatsoever is an obstacle to the *soul*, lest, broken with *troubles*, I should be overthrown.

I say not from those things, that worldly *vainity* so greatly desireth; but from those *miseries*, that, as *punishments* and as the common curse of *mortality*, do weigh down and hinder the

soul

Soul of thy servant, that it cannot enter into freedom of *spirit*, as oſtep as it would.

3. O my G O D, who art ineffable ſweetneſs, embitter unto me all carnal *comf*ort, which draws me away from the love of *eternal things* to itſelf by the hope of preſent delight.

Let me not be overcome, O LORD, let me not be overcome by *fleſh* and *blood*. Let not the *world* and the ſhort *glory* thereof deceive me. Let not the *devil* and his ſubtilty ſupplant me.

Give me ſtrength to reſiſt, patience to ſuffer, and conſtancy to perfevere.

Give me, inſtead of all the *comf*orts of the world, the moſt ſweet *unction* of thy *Spirit*, and in lieu of carnal love pour into my ſoul the love of thy name.

4. Behold, meat, drink, clothes, and other *neceſſaries* for the maintenance of the body, are burthenſome to a fervent *ſpirit*.

Grant me to uſe ſuch *reſreſhments* moderately, and not to be entangled with an over-great deſire of them.

It is not lawful to caſt them all away, for nature is to be ſuſtained : but to deſire ſuperfluities, and thoſe things that are moſt pleaſing, thy holy law forbiddeth : for otherwiſe the *fleſh* would rebel againſt the *ſpirit*.

Herein I beſeech thee, let thy hand govern me, and teach me, that I may fall into no extreme:

C H A P. XXVII.

That self-love must hindereth our attainment of the supreme Good.

Christ. SON, thou oughtest to give all for all, and to retain nothing of thyself.

Know, that the *love* of thyself doth hurt thee more than any thing in the *world*.

According to the *love* and *affection* thou bearest them, every thing cleaves unto thee more or less.

If thy *love* be pure, simple, and well ordered, thou shalt not be in bondage to any thing.

Covet not that which thou mayest not have. Be not willing to have that which may hinder thee and deprive thee of *inward liberty*.

It is strange, that thou committest not thyself wholly unto me, from the bottom of thy heart, with all things that thou canst desire or have.

2. Why dost thou consume thyself with vain *grief*? Why art thou tired with *needless cares*?

Stand to my will, and thou shalt suffer no detriment.

If thou seekest this or that, and wouldest be here or there, to enjoy thy own *will* and *pleasure*; thou shalt never be at quiet, nor free from care:

For in every thing somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will cross thee.

3. It availeth thee therefore, not to attain and multiply outward things, but to despise them, and utterly root them out from thy *heart*.

And this thou must not understand only of revenues and wealth, but of seeking *honour* also, and desiring of *praise*, all which pass away with this *world*.

Place availeth little, if the *spirit* of fervour be wanting; neither will that *peace*, which is sought abroad, long continue, if the state of thy *heart* be destitute of a true *foundation*:

That is; unless thou stand stedfast in me, thou mayest change, but not better thyself.

For when occasion of change happens and is embraced, thou shalt find not only those things which thou soughtest to fly, but a great deal more.

4. *Christian*. Strengthen me, O God, by the grace of thy Holy Spirit.

Give me to be strengthened in my inward man, and to empty my heart of all unprofitable care and anguish:

Not to be drawn away with the *undry* desires of any thing, either mean or precious; but to look upon all things as passing away, and myself as passing away together with them.

For nothing is permanent under the sun, where all things are vanity and vexation of spirit. O how wise is he that so considereth them!

5. Grant me, LORD, heavenly wisdom, that I may learn above all things to seek and find thee, above all things to relish thee, and to love thee.

And to think of all other things as they are according to the disposal of thy wisdom.

Grant me prudently to avoid him that flatters me, and to suffer patiently him that contradicts me.

For it is a great part of wisdom not to be moved with every blast of words; nor to give ear to an ill-flattering *Syren*; for so we shall go on securely in the way which we have begun.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Against the tongues of slanderers.

Christ. SON, grieve not, if some think evil of thee, and speak that which thou wouldest not willingly hear.

Thou oughtest to judge worse of thyself, and to think no man weaker than thyself.

If thou dost walk *spiritually*, thou wilt not regard flying words.

It is no small wisdom to keep silence in an evil time, and inwardly to run to me, and not to be troubled with the judgment of men.

2. Let not thy *peace* depend on the tongues of men: for whether they interpret well or evil, thou art not therefore another man.

Where is true *peace*, and true *glory*? Is it not in me?

And he that desireth not to please men, nor feareth to displease them, shall enjoy much *peace*.

From inordinate *love* and vain *fear* ariseth all *disquietness* of heart and *distractiion* of mind.

C H A P. XXIX.

How we ought to call upon GOD, and bless him in tribulation.

Christian. BLESSED, O LORD, be thy name for ever; who art pleased that this *temptation* and *tribulation* should come upon me.

I cannot fly it; but must needs fly to thee, that thou mayest help me, and turn it to my *good*.

LORD, I am now afflicted, and it is not well with me. I am much troubled with this present suffering.

And now, dear Father, what shall I say? I am in a strait, save me from this hour.

Yet therefore came I unto this hour, that thou mayest be glorified, when I shall have been brought very low, and then delivered by thee.

Let it please thee, LORD, to deliver me: for poor *wretch* that I am, what can I do, and whither shall I go without thee?

Grant me patience, LORD, even this time also.

Help me, my GOD, and then I will not fear, how grievously soever I be afflicted.

2. And now in these my *troubles* what shall I say? LORD, thy will be done; I have deserved to be afflicted and grieved.

Surely I ought to bear it: and O that I could bear it with *patience*, until the *tempest* be passed over, and it become *calm*.

But thy *omnipotent hand* is able to take even this *temptation* from me, and to assuage the violence thereof, that I utterly sink not under it, as often heretofore thou hast done unto me, O my GOD, my merciful GOD.

And how much the more hard it is to me, so much the more easy is this *change to the right hand of the most High*.

C H A P. XXX.

Of craving the divine aid, and confidence of recovering grace.

Christ. SON, I am the LORD that give strength in the day of *tribulation*.

Come unto me when it is not well with thee,

This is that which most of all hindereth *heavenly consolation*, that thou art slow in turning thyself unto *prayer*.

For before thou dost earnestly pray unto me, thou seekest in the mean while many *comforts*; and triest to refresh thyself with outward things.

And hence it comes to pass that all doth little profit thee, until thou consider that I am he that delivers those that trust in me; that out of me there is neither powerful *help*, nor profitable *counsel*, nor lasting *remedy*.

But now having recovered breath after the tempest, gather strength again in the light of my mercies, for I am at hand to repair all, not only entirely, but also abundantly and in a very plentiful measure.

2. Is there any thing hard to me? Or am I like unto him that promiseth and performeth not?

Where

Where is thy *faith*? Be firm and constant.

Take courage and be patient; *comfort* will come to thee in due time.

Wait, wait for me, I will come and heal thee.

It is a *temptation* that vexeth thee, and a vain fear affrighteth thee.

What else doth the care of future contingencies bring thee, but sorrow upon sorrow?

Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

It is a vain and unprofitable thing to be grieved, or to rejoice, for future things that perhaps will never come to pass.

3. But it is incident to man, to be deluded with such imaginations: and a sign of a weak mind to be so easily drawn away by the suggestion of the *enemy*.

For he careth not, so he delude and deceive thee, whether it be by *truth* or *falsehood*: whether he overthrow thee with the *love* of present, or the *fear* of future things.

Let not therefore thy *heart* be troubled, neither let it fear.

Believe in me, and put thy trust in my *mercy*.

When thou thinkest thyself furthest off from me, oftentimes I am nearest unto thee.

When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then often is the greatest opportunity of improvement.

All is not lost, when something falleth out contrary.

Thou must not judge according to that which thou seekest for the present: nor so take,

or give thyself over to any *grief*, from whence-soever it cometh, as tho' all hope of delivery were quite gone.

4. Think not thyself wholly left, altho' for a time I have sent thee some *tribulation*, or withdrawn thy desired *comfort*: for this is the way to the *kingdom of heaven*.

And without doubt it is more expedient for thee and the rest of my *servants*, that ye be exercised with *adversities*, than that ye should have all things according to your *desires*.

I know the secret thoughts of thy *heart*, and that it is very expedient for thy salvation, that thou be left sometimes without taste of *spiritual sweetness*, lest perhaps thou shouldest be puffed up with thy prosperous estate, and shouldest please thyself in that which thou art not.

That which I have given, I can take away; and restore it again when I please.

5. When I give it, it is mine; when I withdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine; for mine is every *good* and every perfect *gift*.

If I send thee *affliction*, or any *cross* whatsoever, repine not, nor let thy *heart* fail thee: I can quickly succour thee and turn all thy *beaviness* into *joy*.

Nevertheless I am *righteous*, and greatly to be *praised* when I deal thus with thee.

6. If thou be wise, and considerest this rightly, thou wilt never mourn so dejectedly for any adversity but rather rejoice and give thanks.

Yea, account this thy only *joy*, that afflicting thee with *sorrows*, I do not spare thee.

As my father hath loved me, I also love you, said I unto my beloved disciples; whom I sent not to temporal joys, but to great conflicts: not to honours, but to contempts: not to idleness, but to labours: not to rest, but to bring forth much fruit with patience.

My son, remember these words.

C H A P. XXXI.

Of the contempt of all creatures, in order to find the CREATOR.

Christian. **L**ORD, I stand in need of yet greater grace, if I am to attain to that state wherein no man nor any creature may be a hindrance unto me.

For as long as any thing detains me, I cannot freely take my flight unto thee.

He desired to fly freely, that said, *Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?*

What is more quiet than a single eye? And what more free, than he that desireth nothing upon earth?

Man ought therefore to pass over all creatures, and perfectly to renounce himself, and to go out of himself, and to see that thou the Creator of all things hast nothing amongst creatures like unto thee.

And unless a man be free from *the affection of all creatures*, he cannot freely attend unto *divine things*.

For this cause there are so few contemplative men, because few can wholly withdraw themselves from things created and perishing.

2. To do this, there is need of much *grace*, which may raise up the *soul*, and lift it above itself.

And unless a man be raised up in *spirit*, and freed from all *creatures*, and wholly united unto GOD: whatsoever he knoweth and whatsoever he hath, is of little account.

A long while shall he be little and lie groveling below, that esteemeth any thing great, but the one only infinite and eternal GOOD.

For whatsoever is not GOD, is nothing; and ought to be accounted as nothing.

There is great difference between the wisdom of an illuminated and devout man, and the knowledge of a learned and studious scholar.

For that learning which floweth from above from the divine influence, is far more excellent than that which is painfully gotten by the wit of man.

3. There are many that desire *contemplation*, but they endeavour not to practise those things that are required thereunto.

The great hindrance is this, that we rest in signs and sensible things, and take little care about perfect mortification.

I know not what it is, nor by what *spirit* we are led, nor what we pretend, we that would be called spiritual, that we take so much pains and so great care for transitory and vile things, and seldom think of our own inward concernments with the full recollection of our minds.

4. Alas, presently after a slight recollection,

we break out again, and weigh not our works with diligent examination.

We mind not where our affections lie; nor bewail the impurity that is in all our actions.

For all flesh had corrupted his way, and therefore did that general flood ensue.

Since then our inward affection is much corrupted, it must needs be that our actions proceeding thence be corrupted, as a sign of the want of inward vigour.

From a pure heart proceedeth the fruit of a good life.

5. We ask how much one hath done; but on how good a principle he acts, is not so diligently considered.

We enquire, whether he be valiant, rich, beautiful, ingenious, a good writer, a good singer, or a good labourer: but how poor he is in *spirit*, how *patient* and *meeke*, how *devout* and *spiritual*, is seldom spoken of.

Nature respecteth the outward things of a man: *Grace* turneth itself to the inward.

That is often deceived: this hath her trust in *God*, to the end she be not deceived.

C H A P. XXXII.

Of self-renunciation, and forsaking all inordinate desire:

Christ. **S**ON, thou canst not possess perfect liberty, unless thou wholly renounce thyself.

All who are lovers of themselves are fettered and *in bondage*, full of desires, curious, wan-

derers, seeking self-indulgence and not the things of JESUS CHRIST; but often devising and framing that which shall not stand.

For all that is not of GOD shall perish.

Keep this short and perfect saying, *Forfake all, and thou shalt find all. Leave desire, and thou shalt find rest.*

Consider this well: and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt understand all things.

2. *Christian.* LORD, that is not one day's work, nor children's sport: yea, in this short word is contained all perfection.

Christ. Son, thou must not go back, nor straitways be dejected when thou hearest of the way of the perfect; but rather be stirred up to higher things, and at least desire and sigh after them.

I would it were thou wert come to this, that thou wert no longer a lover of thyself, but didst stand merely at my beck, and at his, whom I have appointed a Father over thee.

Then thou wouldest exceedingly please me, and all thy life would pass away in joy and peace.

Thou hast yet many things to forsake, which unless thou wholly resign up unto me, thou shalt not attain unto that which thou desirest.

I counsel thee to buy of the gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest become rich: that is heavenly wisdom which treadeth under foot all earthly things.

Cast away earthly wisdom, and all study to please others or thyself.

3. I said, that thou art to prefer mean things before

before precious things, and such as were with men of great esteem.

For the true heavenly wisdom seemeth mean and of small account, and is almost forgotten by men;

It thinketh not highly of itself, nor seeketh to be magnified upon earth.

Many praise it with their mouths, but in their life they are far from it;

Yet it is the precious *pearl* which is hidden from many.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Of inconstancy of heart, and of directing our intention unto G O D.

Christ. SON, trust not to thy present *affection*, for it will quickly be changed into another.

As long as thou livest thou art subject to mutability, even against thy will:

So that now thou art chearful, now sad; now quiet, now troubled; now devout, now undevout; now zealous, now slothful; now grave, now light.

But he that is wise and well instructed in *spirit*, standeth fast above these changes, not heeding what he feels in himself, or which way the wind of instability bloweth; but that the whole intention of his *mind* may tend to the right and desired end.

For thus he may continue one, and the self-same, and unshaken in the midst of so many various events, directing continually the single eye of his intention unto me.

2. And the purer the eye of the intention is; the more steddily doth he pass through various storms.

But in many things the eye of a pure intention waxeth dim, for it quickly looketh upon any delightful object that occurs.

And it is rare to find *one* that is wholly free from all blemish of self-seeking.

So the *Jews* of old came to *Bethany* to *Martha* and *Mary*, not for *JESUS* alone, but to see *Lazarus* also.

The eye of our intention therefore is to be purged, that it may be single and right, directed unto me beyond the manifold earthly objects that come between.

C H A P. XXXIV.

That God is sweet above all things, and in all things, to him that loveth.

Christian. *MY GOD, and my all!* What would I have more, and what greater happiness can I desire?

O sweet and pleasing word! but to him that loveth the word, not the world, nor those things that are in the world.

My GOD, and my all! Enough is said to him that understandeth; and to him that loveth, it is pleasant to repeat it often.

For when thou art present, all things please; but when thou art absent, all things disgust.

Thou givest quiet of *heart*, and much *peace*, and pleasant *joy*.

Thou makest us think well of all things, and
praise

praise thee in all things : neither can any thing please long without thee :

But that any thing may be pleasant and grateful, thy *grace* must be present, and it must be seasoned with the sweetness of thy *wisdom*.

2. What is not tasteful unto him, who tasteth thee ?

And him, who delighteth not in thee, what can delight ?

But the *wise* of this *world*; and they that relish the things of the *flesh*, come short of thy *wisdom* : for in the *world* is much *vanity*, and in the *flesh* is *death*.

But they that follow thee by the contempt of worldly things, and mortification of the flesh, are proved to be truly wise ; for they change from *vanity* to *truth*, from the *flesh* to the *spirit*.

These relish GOD ; and what *good* soever is found in *creatures*, they wholly refer unto the praise of their *Maker*.

Notwithstanding great, yea very great, is the difference between the *Creator*, and of the *creature* ; of *eternity*, and of *time* ; of light *uncreated*, and of light *enlightened*.

3. O thou everlasting *Light*, surpassing all created *lights*, dart the beams of thy brightness from above, piercing the most inward parts of my *heart*.

Purify, rejoice, enlighten, and enliven my *spirit*, with all the powers thereof, that I may cleave unto thee with abundance of *joy* and *triumph*.

O when will that blessed and desired hour
come

come, when I shall be filled with thy presence, and thou be unto me all in all!

As long as this is not granted me, I shall not have full joy,

Alas! the old man yet liveth in me, he is not wholly crucified, he is not perfectly dead.

He doth yet lust strongly against the *spirit*, he stirreth up inward wars, and suffereth not the kingdom of my *soul* to be in peace.

4. But thou, that rulest the *raging* of the sea, and stillest the *waves* thereof when they arise, arise and help me.

Scatter the people that delight in *war*, destroy them in thy *might*.

Display thy greatness, and let thy right-hand be glorified, for there is no other *hope* nor *refuge* for me, but in thee, my LORD GOD.

C H A P. XXXV.

That there is no security from temptation in this life.

Christ. SON, there is no security in this life: as long as thou livest, thou shalt always have need of *spiritual armour*.

Thou livest among *enemies*, and art assaulted on the right-hand and on the left.

If therefore thou defendest not thyself on every side with the shield of *patience*, thou canst not be long unwounded.

Moreover, if thou fix not thy *heart* on me with a sincere will to suffer all things for me, thou canst not bear the heat of this *battle*, nor obtain the crown of the blessed.

Thou ought therefore manfully to go thro' all, and to use a strong hand against whatsoever withstandeth thee.

For to him that overcometh is *Manna* given; but for the negligent there remains much misery.

2. If thou seekest rest in this *world*, how wilt thou then attain to *everlasting rest*?

Prepare not thyself for much *ease*, but much *patience*.

Seek true *peace*, not in *earth*, but in *heaven*; not in *men*, nor in any other *creature*, but in *GOD alone*.

Thou oughtest for the *love* of *GOD* willingly to undergo all things, even labours, griefs, temptations, vexations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, injuries, detractions, reproaches, humblings, shame, corrections, and contempts.

These help to *virtue*: these try a young soldier of *Christ*: these make the *heavenly crown*.

I will give an everlasting reward for a *short labour*, and infinite glory for *transitory shame*.

3. Thinkest thou that thou shalt always have *spiritual consolation* at will!

My *saints* had not so, but they had many *afflictions*, and sundry *temptations*, and great *desolations*.

But they bare all patiently, and trusted in *GOD*, not in themselves, knowing that the *sufferings* of this time are not worthy of the *glory* that shall be revealed.

Wilt thou have that *strait way*, which many after many *tears* and great *labours* have hardly obtained!

Wait upon the LORD, do manfully, be of good courage, do not despair, do not fly, but with constancy expose both *body* and *soul* for the glory of GOD.

I will reward thee most plentifully, and I will be with thee in all thy *tribulation*.

C H A P. XXXVI.

Against the vain judgments of men.

Christ. SON, cast thy heart firmly upon GOD, and fear not the judgment of men, when thy *conscience* giveth testimony of thy *piety* and *innocency*.

It is a good and happy thing so to suffer: neither will it be burthenfome to an humble heart, nor to him that trusteth in GOD, not in himself.

The most part of men are given to talk much, and therefore little heed is to be given to them.

Neither is it possible to satisfy all.

Altho' *Paul* endeavoured to please all in the LORD, and made himself all things unto all; yet with him it was a very small thing that he should be judged of man's judgment.

2. He did for the *edification* and *salvation* of others, as much as he could, and lay in him; yet could he not hinder but that he was sometimes judged and despised by others.

Therefore he committed all to GOD, who knew all, and defended himself with *patience* and *humility* against them that spoke perverse things, and such as thought *vanity* and *lies*, and said what they listed:

Yet sometimes he answered, lest the weak should be offended by his silence.

3. Who art thou that fearest a mortal man? To-day he is, and to-morrow he is not seen.

Fear GOD, and thou shalt not fear the terrors of men.

What harm can the words or injuries of any do thee? He rather hurteth himself than thee; neither can he avoid the judgment of GOD, whosoever he be.

Have thou GOD before thine eye, and contend not with complaining words.

And if for the present thou seem to be worsted, and to suffer shame without desert; do not therefore repine, neither do thou lessen thy crown by thy impatience.

But rather lift up thine eyes to me in heaven, who am able to deliver thee from all shame and wrong, and to render to every one according to his works.

C H A P. XXXVII.

Of a pure and entire resignation of ourselves, for the obtaining freedom of heart.

Christ. SON, forsake thyself and thou shalt find me.

Stand without chusing any thing, and without seeking to have any thing as thy own, and thou shalt ever be a gainer.

For greater *grace* shall be given thee, as soon as ever thou hast perfectly resigned thyself, without resuming thy claim.

Christian. LORD, how often shall I resign myself? And wherein shall I forsake myself?

Christ. Always, and every hour, as well in little things as in great, I except nothing, but require that thou be *naked* and *void* of all things.

Otherwise how canst thou be mine, and I thine, unless both within and without thou be free from all self-will?

And the sooner thou dost this, the better it will be with thee; and the more fully and sincerely thou dost it, the more shalt thou please me, and the more shalt thou gain.

2. Some resign themselves, but with some exception; for they put not their whole trust in God, and therefore they study how to provide for themselves.

Some also at first offer all, but afterwards being assaulted with *temptation*, return again to that which they had left, and therefore they go not forward in *virtue*.

These shall not attain to the true liberty of the *purity of heart*, nor to the favour of my sweetest familiarity, unless they first make an entire resignation and a daily oblation of themselves unto me. For without this there neither is nor can be the fruitive union with me.

3. I have often said unto thee, and now again I say the same: forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy much inward *peace*.

Give all for all; seek nothing, require back nothing, abide purely and with a firm confidence in me, and thou shalt enjoy me;

Thou

Thou shalt be free in heart, and darkness shall not have any power over thee.

Let this be thy whole endeavour, let this be thy prayer, let this be thy desire: that being stript of all selfishness, thou mayest follow naked the naked JESUS, and dying to thyself, mayest live eternally to me.

Then shall all vain imaginations, even perturbations, and superfluous cares fly away :

Then shall immoderate fear leave thee, and inordinate love shall die.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

Of the good government of ourselves in outward things, and of recourse to GOD in danger.

Christ. SON, thou oughtest with all diligence to endeavour, that, in every place and action or external business, thou be inwardly free and master of thyself, and that all things be under thee, and not thou under them;

That thou mayest be lord of thy actions, not a servant or a hireling, but rather a freeman and a true *Hebrew*, enjoying the lot and liberty of the sons of GOD,

Who stand above the things that are present, and view the things which are eternal ;

Who look on transitory things with the left eye, and with the right behold the things of heaven.

Whom temporal things cannot draw to cleave unto them, but they rather draw temporal things to serve them, in such a way, as they are ordained by GOD, and appointed by

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the Creator of all, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2. If thou remain stedfast in all events, and dost not weigh by the outward appearance, nor with a carnal eye, the things which thou seest and hearest; but presently in every affair dost enter with *Moses* into the *tabernacle* to ask counsel of the LORD, thou shalt sometimes hear the *divine oracle*, and return instructed concerning many things both present and to come.

For *Moses* had always recourse to the *tabernacle* for the deciding of *doubts* and *controversies*, and fled to the help of *prayer*, for a defence against the iniquity and dangers of men.

So oughtest thou to fly to the closet of thy heart, earnestly craving the *divine favour*.

For the *scripture* testifieth, that therefore were *Joshua* and the children of *Israel* deceived by the *Gibeonites*, because they asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD, but giving too lightly credit to their fair words, were deluded with their counterfeit *piety*.

C H A P. XXXIX.

That a man be not over-earnest in his affairs.

Christ. SON, always commit thy cause to me, I will dispose well of it in due time.

Wait for my ordering of it, and thou shalt find it will be for thy good.

Christian. LORD, I most willingly commit all unto thee, for my care can avail little.

O that I cleaved not too much to future events, but offered myself with all readiness of mind to thy good pleasure!

2. *Christ.*

2. *Christ*. Son, a man often earnestly labours for what he desireth; and when he hath gotten it, he beginneth to be of another mind.

For men's *affections* do not long continue fixed on one thing, but do pass from one to another.

It is therefore no small thing for a man to forsake himself even in the smallest things.

3. The true profiting of a man consisteth in the denying of himself: and he that is thus denied, liveth in great freedom and security.

But the *old enemy*, who always sets himself against all that are good, ceaseth at no time from tempting, but day and night layeth grievous snares, if haply he may cast the unwary into them.

Therefore *watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*

C H A P. XL.

That man hath no good of himself, nor any thing whereof he can glory,

Christian. LORD, What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

What hath man deserved, that thou shouldst give him thy grace?

LORD, what cause have I to complain, if thou forsake me? Or if thou doest not that which I desire, what can I justly say against it?

Surely, this I may truly think and say, LORD, I am nothing, I can do nothing, I have nothing that is good of myself; but in all

things I am defective, and do ever tend to nothing:

And unless thou help and inwardly instruct me, I become altogether cold and dissipated.

2. But thou, O LORD, art always the same, and endurest for ever; always *good, just, and holy*, doing all things well, justly, and holily, and disposing all things with wisdom:

But I, that am more ready to go backward than forward, do not ever continue in one estate, for seven times are passed over me;

Yet it is soon better with me, when it so pleaseth thee, and when thou vouchsafest to stretch forth thy helping hand.

For thou alone canst help me without the aid of man, and so strengthen me, that my *countenance* shall be no more changed, but my *heart* shall be turned to thee alone, and there shall rest.

3. Wherefore if I could once perfectly forsake all *human comfort*, either for the attaining of *devotion*, or for my own *necessity*, which enforceth me to seek after thee (for none else can comfort me)

Then might I well hope in thy *grace*, and rejoice for the gift of new *consolation*.

4. Thanks be unto thee, from whence all proceedeth, as often as it goeth well with me.

But I am mere *vanity* and nothing in thy sight, an inconstant and weak man.

Whereof then can I *glory*? Or for what do I desire to be esteemed?

For nothing? But this is most vain.

Truly

Truly vain-glory is an evil *plague*, and a very great *vanity*; because it draweth man from true *glory*, and robbeth him of *heavenly grace*.

For whilst a man is pleased with himself, he displeaseth thee; whilst he gapeth after the praise of men, he is deprived of true *virtues*.

5. But the true *glory* and holy rejoicing is for a man to *glory* in thee, and not in himself.

To rejoice in thy name, and not in his own virtue; nor to delight in any *creature*, but for thee.

Praised be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy *work*, not mine.

Let thy *holy name* be blessed, but to me let no part of men's praises be given.

Thou art my *glory*, thou art the joy of my *heart*.
In thee will I glory and rejoice all the day; but as for myself I will not *glory*, but in my *infirmities*.

6. Let the *Jews* seek honour one of another, I will desire this, which is from GOD only.

For all *human glory*, all *temporal honour*, all *worldly highness*, compared to thy *eternal glory*, is *vanity* and *folly*.

O my *truth*, my *mercy*, my GOD, most blessed TRINITY, to thee alone be *praise*, *honour*, *power*, and *glory* for evermore.

C H A P. XLI.

Of the contempt of all temporal honour.

Christ. SON, trouble not thyself, if thou seeſt others honoured and advanced, and thyself contemned and debased.

Lift up thy *heart* unto me in *heaven*, and the contempt of men on *earth* will not grieve thee.

Christian: LORD, we are blind, and quickly seduced by *vanity*.

If I look well into myself, I cannot say that any *creature* hath done me wrong, and therefore I cannot complain justly of thee.

2. But because I have often and grievously sinned against thee, all *creatures* might justly take *arms* against me:

Therefore shame and contempt is due unto me; but unto thee, *praise, honour, and glory*.

And unless I bring myself to be entirely willing to be despised and forsaken of all *creatures*, and to be esteemed nothing at all: I cannot obtain inward *peace* and *strength*, nor be spiritually enlightened, nor fully united unto thee.

C H A P. XLII.

That our peace is not to be placed in men.

Christ. SON, if thou placest thy *peace* in any one, because he thinketh like thee and liveth with thee, thou shalt be unstable and entangled.

But if thou have recourse unto the ever-living and eternal *Truth*, a friend going from thee or dying shall not grieve thee.

The love of thy friend ought to be grounded in me; and for me is he to be beloved, whosoever he be whom thou thinkest well of, and is very dear unto thee in this life.

No friendship can avail, or continue with-

out me; neither is that *love* true and pure, which is not knit by me.

Thou oughtest to be so dead to such affections towards men, that (as far as appertaineth unto thee) thou shouldest wish to be without all friendship purely human.

Man approacheth the nearer unto God, the further off he departeth from all earthly *comfort*;

So much the higher also he ascendeth unto God, by how much the lower he descendeth into himself, and how much the meaner he is in his own sight.

2. But he, that attributeth any good unto himself, hindereth God's *grace* from coming into him.

For the *grace* of the HOLY GHOST ever seeketh an humble heart.

If thou couldest perfectly annihilate thyself, and empty thyself of all created *love*; then should I flow into thee with great abundance of *grace*.

When thou castest thine eyes on *creatures*, the sight of thy *Creator* is taken from thee.

Learn to overcome thyself in all things, for the *love* of thy *Creator*; and then thou shalt be able to attain to *divine knowledge*.

How little soever the thing be, if it be loved and regarded inordinately; it defileth the *soul* and hindereth the enjoyment of the supreme Good.

C H A P. XLIII.

Against vain and secular knowledge.

Christ. SON, let not the fair speeches and subtle sayings of men move thee: *For the kingdom of GOD consisteth not in word, but in power.*

Observe well my words; for they inflame hearts and enlighten minds, they cause compunction and bring sundry comforts.

Do thou never read any thing, that thou mayest appear more learned and wise.

Labour to mortify thy sins; for that will profit thee more than the knowledge of many difficult questions.

2. When thou hast read and knowest many things, thou must ever return to one principle.

I am he that teacheth man knowledge, and giveth unto babes a more clear understanding, than can be taught by man.

He, to whom I speak, shall quickly be wise, and he shall profit much in the *spirit*.

Wo be to them that enquire many curious things of men, and little mind the way how to serve me.

The time will come, when the Master of masters shall appear, CHRIST the Lord of angels, to hear the lessons of all, that is, to examine the consciences of every one.

And then he will search *Jerusalem* with a candle, and the hidden things of darkness shall be laid open; and the arguings of men's tongues shall be silent.

3. I am He, that in an instant raiseth up the humble mind to understand more of the *e-zernal truth*, than can be gotten by ten years study in the schools.

I teach without the noise of words, without the confusion of opinions, without the desire of honour, without bandying of arguments.

I am He, that teacheth to despise earthly things, to disdain things present, to seek the everlasting, to relish things eternal, to fly *honours*, to suffer *injuries*, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing out of me, and above all things ardently to love me.

4. For a certain person, by loving me entirely, learned *divine things*, and spake that which was wonderful: he profited more by forsaking all things, than by studyng subtilties.

To some I speak common things, to others uncommon; to some I appear sweetly by signs and figures, but to some I reveal mysteries with much light.

The voice of books is indeed one, but it teacheth not all men alike.

For I am within, the *Teacher of truth*, the *Searcher of the heart*, the *Discerner of the thoughts*, the *Promoter of good actions*, distributing to every one as I judge meet.

C H A P. XLIV.

Of not concerning ourselves with outward things.

Christ. SON, in many things thou must be ignorant, and esteem thyself as dead upon earth, and as one to whom the whole world is crucified. Thou

Thou must also pass by many things with a deaf ear, and rather think of that which appertaineth to thy *peace*.

It is better to turn thine eyes from what thou dislikest, and to leave unto every one his own opinion, than to strive with contentious words.

If all stand well betwixt thee and **GOD**, and thou hast his judgment in thy mind, thou shalt the more easily bear to be overcome.

2. *Christian*. O **LORD**, to what a pass are we come! Behold we bewail a temporal loss, for a little gain we toil and run; and the damage of our *soul* is forgotten, and hardly at length called to mind.

That which little or nothing profiteth, is minded; and that which is necessary in the highest degree, is slightly passed over;

Because the whole man doth slide down into external things; and unless he speedily repent, lieth willingly immersed in them.

C H A P. XLV.

That credit is not to be given to all men: and that we easily offend in words.

Christian. **H**ELP me, O **LORD**, in my *tribulation*, for vain is the help of man.

How often have I found want of *fidelity* where I have thought it sure?

And how often have I found it where I least expected it?

It is vain therefore to trust in men; but the *salvation* of the just, O **LORD**, is in thee.

Blessed be thou, my **LORD GOD**, in all things that befall us.

We are weak and inconstant, quickly deceived, and soon changed.

2. Who is he, that can in all things so wisely and circumspectly keep himself, that he never falls into any deceit or perplexity!

But he that trusteth in thee, O LORD, and seeketh thee with a single heart, doth not so easily fall.

And if he fall into any *tribulation*, however entangled he is, he shall quickly be either delivered or comforted by thee.

For thou wilt not finally forsake him that trusteth in thee.

A friend is rare to be found, that continueth faithful in all his friend's distresses;

But thou, O LORD, thou alone art most faithful at all times, and there is none like unto thee.

3. O how wise was that holy *soul* that said, my mind is firmly settled and grounded in CHRIST.

If it were so with me, then would not the fear of man so easily trouble me, nor the darts of words move me.

Who can foresee all things? Who is able to beware before-hand of future evils?

If things foreseen often hurt us, how can things unlooked for chuse but wound us grievously?

But why did I not provide better for myself, miserable *wretch*? Why also have I so easily given credit to others?

We are men, nothing but frail men, altho' by many we are reputed and called *angels*.

To whom shall I give credit, LORD? To whom but to thee? Thou art the *Truth*, that neither dost deceive, nor can be deceived.

On the contrary, every man is a liar, weak, unconstant, and subject to fall, especially in words.

And therefore we must not easily give credit to that, which in outward shew seemeth right,

4. How wisely hast thou warned us to beware of men! that a man's foes are they of his own household, and that we are not to believe, if one should say, *Lo here*, or *Lo there*.

I have learned it to my cost; and O that I might thereby increase my care, and not my folly!

Be wary, saith one, be wary, keep to thyself what I tell thee: and whilst I hold my *peace*, and think it is secret, he cannot keep that secret, which he desired should be secret, but presently betrayeth me and himself, and goeth his way.

From such tales, and such indiscrete persons protect me, O LORD, that I fall not into their hands, nor ever commit such things.

Give me to observe *truth* and *constancy* in my words, and remove far from me a deceitful tongue.

What I am not willing to suffer, I ought by no means to do.

5. O how good is it and tending to *peace*, to be silent of others! not to believe promiscuously all that is said, nor easily to report what we have heard.

To lay one's self open to few; always to seek after thee who art the beholder of the *heart*.

Not to be carried about with every wind of words, but to desire that all things, both within and without, be accomplished according to thy will.

How safe is it for the keeping of *heavenly grace*, to avoid the sight of men, and not to seek those things that cause admiration abroad, but to follow that with all diligence, which bringeth amendment of *life* and zeal.

6. To how many hath *virtue* known and imprudently commended, been *hurtful*?

How *profitable* hath *grace* been, kept with *silence* in this *mortal life*, which is nothing but a *temptation* and a *warfare*?

C H A P. XLVI.

Of putting our trust in GOD, when we are evil spoken of.

Christ. SON, stand firm, and put thy trust in me.

For what are words but words? They fly through the air, but hurt not a stone.

If thou be guilty, see that thou be willing to amend thyself: if thou be innocent, resolve to suffer this willingly for the sake of *GOD*.

It is but a small matter to suffer sometimes a few words, if thou hast not yet the courage to endure hard stripes.

And why do so small matters go to thy *heart*, but because thou art yet carnal, and regardest men more than thou oughtest.

Because thou art afraid to be despised, therefore thou wilt not be reprov'd for thy faults, but seekest the shades of excuses.

2. But look better into thyself, and thou shalt see that the world is yet alive in thee, and a vain desire to please men.

For when thou shunnest to be humbled and reprov'd for thy faults, it is evident that thou art neither truly humble, nor truly dead to the world, nor the world crucified to thee.

But give diligent ear to my words, and thou shalt little regard ten thousand words spoken by men.

Behold, if all should be spoken against thee that could be most maliciously invented, what would it hurt thee, if thou suffer'dst it to pass, and madest no more reckoning of it than of a mote?

Could all those words pluck as much as one hair from thy head?

3. But he that hath no *heart* in him, nor hath GOD before his eyes, is easily moved with a word of dispraise:

He that trusteth in me, and will not confide in his own judgment, shall be free from the fear of man.

For I am the *Judge*, and the Discerner of all secrets: I know how the matter pass'd. I know him that offereth the injury, and him that suffereth it.

From me hath this proceeded: this hath happened by my permission, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed;

I shall judge the *guilty*, and the *innocent*, but by a secret judgment I would before-hand try them both.

4. The *testimony* of men often deceiveth: but my *judgment* is true, it shall stand and not be overthrown.

It is commonly hidden, and not known in every thing, but to few: notwithstanding it never erreth, neither can it err, altho' to the eyes of the foolish it seems not right.

Men ought therefore to have recourse to me in every judgment, and not to cleave to their own opinions.

For the just man will not be troubled, whatsoever befalleth him from God.

And if any thing be wrongfully said against him, he will not much care;

Neither will he rejoice much, if by others he be with reason excused.

For he considereth, that I am he that searcheth the *heart* and *reigns*, and do judge not according to human appearance.

For that is often found culpable in my sight, that in the judgment of men is thought commendable.

5. Christian. O LORD GOD, the just Judge, strong, and patient, thou who knowest the frailty and wickedness of man, be thou my strength, and my whole trust, for my own conscience sufficeth me not.

Thou knowest that which I know not, and therefore in every reproof, I ought to have humbled myself, and to have borne meekly.

Vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me as often as I have failed herein, and give me grace to bear it better hereafter.

For thy abundant mercy is more available to me for the obtaining of pardon, than my fancied justice for my defence, since I cannot see to the bottom of conscience:

Altho' I know nothing by myself, yet I cannot hereby justify myself: for without thy mercy no man living shall be justified in thy sight.

C H A P. XLVII.

That all grievous things are to be endured for life everlasting.

Christ. **S**ON, be not dismayed with the labours which thou hast undertaken for me, neither be thou wholly discomfited for the tribulations, which befall thee:

But let my promise strengthen and comfort thee in all events.

I am able to reward thee infinitely and above all measure.

Thou shalt not long toil here, nor always be pressed with griefs.

Wait a while and thou shalt see a speedy end of all evils.

There will come an hour, when all labour and trouble shall cease.

Little and short is all that which passeth away with time.

2. Apply thyself to the business in hand; labour faithfully in my vineyard, and I will be thy reward.

Write, read, say the service of the church, live in silence and in penitence, pray, suffer crosses manfully : *life everlasting* is worthy of all these, yea and greater combats.

Peace shall come in the day which is known unto the LORD, and it shall neither be day nor night, such as now is, but everlasting light, infinite brightness, stedfast peace, and secure rest.

Then thou shalt not say, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Nor cry, *Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!*

For *death* shall be destroyed, and *salvation* shall appear which never shall have end: there shall be no anxiety; but blessed joy, sweet and lovely company.

3. O, if thou hadst seen the everlasting crowns of the *saints* in *heaven*, and with how great *glory* they now rejoice, who in times past were contemptible to this world, and esteemed unworthy of *life* itself, verily thou wouldest presently humble thyself even unto the *earth*; and wouldest rather seek to be under the feet of all, than to have command so much as over one:

Neither wouldest thou desire the pleasures of this life, but rather rejoice to suffer affliction for GOD, and esteem it thy greatest gain to be reputed nothing amongst men.

4. O, if thou hadst a relish of these things, and didst suffer them to sink into the bottom of thy *heart*, how wouldest thou dare so much as once to complain?

Are not all *labours* to be endured for *everlasting life*?

It is no small matter to lose or to gain the kingdom of *heaven*.

Lift up thy face therefore unto *heaven*: behold I and all my *saints* with me, who in this world had great *conflicts*, do now rejoice, now are comforted, now are secure, now are at rest, and shall remain with me everlastingly in the *kingdom* of my *Father*.

C H A P. XLVIII.

Of eternity, and shortness of this life.

Christian. O Most blessed mansion of the *heavenly city*! O most clear day of *eternity*, which *night* obscureth not, but the highest *truth* ever enlighteneth!

A day of continual *joy*, of perpetual *quietness*, and never changing into a contrary state!

O that that day would once appear, and all these temporal things were at an end!

To the *saints* it shineth with everlasting *brightness*; but to those that are *pilgrims* upon earth, it appeareth only afar off, and through a glass.

2. The *citizens of heaven* know how joyful that day is; but the banished children of *Eve* bewail the bitterness and tediousness of this.

The days of this life are short and evil, full of sorrow and difficulties; where man is defiled with many *sins*, perplexed with many *passions*, oppressed with many *fears*, filled with many *cares*, distracted with many *curiosities*, entangled with many *vanities*, compassed about with many *errors*, worn away with many *labours*, grieved with *temptations*, unnerved with *pleasures*, tormented with *want*,

3. O, when shall these *evils* be at an end!
 When shall I be delivered from the miserable
 bondage of *sin*!

When shall I think, O LORD, of thee alone!
 When shall I fully rejoice in thee!

When shall I enjoy true liberty without any
 impediment, without any heaviness of mind or
 body!

When shall I have solid *peace*, secure and un-
 disturbed *peace*, *peace* within and without, *peace*
 every way assured!

O good JESUS, when shall I stand to behold
 thee! When shall I contemplate the *glory* of
 thy *kingdom*! When wilt thou be unto me all
 in all!

O when shall I be with thee in thy *kingdom*,
 which thou hast prepared for thy beloved from
 all *eternity*!

I am left a poor and banished man in the
 land of mine enemies, where there are daily
 wars and great calamities,

4. Comfort my banishment, assuage my sor-
 row; for my whole desire sigheth after thee.

For all is burthensome to me whatsoever
 this world offereth for my *comfort*.

I long to enjoy thee most inwardly, but I
 cannot attain unto it.

My desire is, that I may be wholly given up
 to *heavenly things*, but *temporal things* and un-
 mortified passions weigh me down.

My *mind* would be above all things, but my
flesh enforces me to be subject against my will.

Thus unhappy man that I am, I fight against
 myself,

myself, and am become grievous to myself, whilst my *spirit* seeketh to be above, and my *flesh* to be below.

5. O what do I inwardly suffer, when in my *mind*, I consider *heavenly things*, and presently in my *prayers* a multitude of carnal imaginations present themselves before me!

My GOD, be not far from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy servant.

Cast forth thy lightening, and disperse them: shoot out thine arrows, and consume all the imaginations of the *enemy*.

Gather in, call home my senses unto thee, make me forget all the things of this world.

Grant me to cast away speedily the imaginations of wickedness.

Succour me, O thou the everlasting *Truth*, that no vanity may move me.

Come heavenly Sweetness, and let all impurity fly from before thee.

Pardon me also, and mercifully forgive me as often as I think upon any thing besides thee in *prayer*.

I truly confess, that I am wont to be subject to many distractions.

For oftentimes I am not there, where I stand or sit, but I am rather there, whither my thoughts do carry me.

Where my thought is, there am I: there is oftentimes my thought, where my *affection* is.

That quickly offereth it: If unto me, which nature or custom hath made pleasing.

6. And for this cause, thou that art *Truth* itself

self haſt plainly ſaid, *Where thy treaſure is, there thy heart is alſo.*

If I love *heaven*, I willingly think of *heavenly things*.

If I love the *world*, I rejoice at the *felicity* of the *world*, and grieve for the *adverſity* thereof.

If I love the *fleſh*, I ſhall fancy often thoſe *things* that are pleaſing to the *fleſh*.

If I love the *Spirit*, I delight to think of *ſpiritual things*.

For whatſoever I love, thereof do I willingly ſpeak, and hear, and carry home with me the *representations* thereof.

But bleſſed is that man, that for thee, O LORD, diſmiſſeth all *creatures*, that violently reſiſteth nature, and through fervour of *ſpirit*, crucifieth the luſts of the *fleſh*: that ſo with a ſerene *conſcience* he may offer pure *prayer* unto thee, and be meet to be admitted into the *angelical choirs*, all earthly things both outwardly and inwardly being excluded.

C H A P. XLIX.

Of the deſire of everlaſting life, and how great rewards are promiſed to thoſe that fight valiantly.

Chriſt. SON, when thou perceiveſt the deſire of everlaſting bliſs to be given thee from above, and deſireſt to depart out of the *tabernacle* of this *body*, that thou mayeſt behold my brightneſs without ſhadow of turning; open thy *heart* wide; and receive this holy *inſpiration* with thy whole deſire,

Give moſt ardent thanks to the heavenly
Good-

Goodness, that dealeth with thee so favourably visiteth thee mercifully, stirreth thee up fervently, sustaineth thee powerfully, lest thro' thy own weight thou fall down to the things of the earth.

Neither dost thou obtain this by thine own thought or endeavour, but by the mere condescension of *heavenly grace* and *divine fervour*.

To the end that thou mayest make a further progress in *holiness* and *humility*, and prepare thyself for future *battles*.

And that thou mayest study to cleave unto me with the whole *affection* of thy *heart*, and serve me with a fervent desire.

2. Son, the *fire* burneth many times, but the *flame* ascendeth not up without *smoak*;

So likewise the *desires* of some men burn towards *heavenly things*, and yet they are not free from *temptation* of carnal *affection*:

And therefore they do not act altogether purely for the *honour* of God, in what they so earnestly request of him.

Such is also oftentimes the desire, which thou hast pretended to be so serious..

For that is not pure and perfect, which is tinged with self-love.

3. Ask not that which is delightful and profitable to thee, but that which is acceptable to me, and for my *honour*:

For if thou judgest aright, thou oughtest to prefer and follow my *appointment*, rather than thine own *desire*, or any desired thing.

I know thy *desire*, and have heard thy frequent *groans*.

Thou

Thou wouldest now enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD: the everlasting *habitation*, and thy heavenly *country*, replenished with all joy, now delights thee.

But that hour is not yet come: as yet there is another time, to wit, a time of war, a time of labour and trial.

Thou desirest to be filled with the supreme Good, but thou canst not attain it for the present.

I am that supreme Good; patiently wait for me, until the kingdom of GOD come.

4. Thou art yet to be tried upon earth, and to be exercised in many things.

Comfort shall be sometimes given thee, but the abundant fulness thereof shall not be granted.

Take courage therefore, and be valiant, as well in doing as in suffering things contrary to nature.

Thou must put on the new man, and be changed into another man.

Thou must often do that which thou wouldest not, and leave undone that thou wouldest do.

That which is pleasing to others, shall go well forward: that which thou wishest, shall not speed.

That which others say, shall be heard: what thou sayest, shall be nothing regarded.

Others shall ask and shall receive: thou shalt ask and not obtain.

5. Others shall be great in the praise of men, but of thee there shall be no speech.

To others this or that shall be committed; but thou shalt be accounted fit for nothing.

At this nature will sometimes be troubled, and it is much if thou bearest it with silence.

In these and many such like, a faithful servant of the LORD is wont to be tried, how he can deny himself and break his will in all things.

There is scarce any thing, wherein thou hast such need to die to thyself, as in seeing and suffering those things that are contrary to thy will;

Especially when that is commanded, which seems unto thee inconvenient or less profitable.

And because being placed under *authority*, thou darest not resist the *higher power*; therefore it seemeth hard to thee to walk at the beck of another, and wholly to give up thine own *opinion*.

6. But consider, son, the fruit of these labours, the end near at hand, and the exceeding great reward: and thou shalt be so far from sustaining them grievously, that thou wilt feel great *comfort* in thy *patience*.

For in regard of that little of thy will, which now thou willingly forsakest, thou shalt always have thy will in *heaven*.

There thou shalt find all that thou wilt or canst desire:

There thou shalt enjoy all good, without fear of losing it:

There shall thy will be ever one with me; it shall not covet any outward or private thing.

There no one shall withstand thee, no man complain of thee, no man hinder thee, nothing shall cross thee;

But all things desired shall be there together
present,

present, and refresh thy whole *affection*, and fill it up to the brim.

There will I give thee *glory* for the reproach which here thou sufferedst; the garment of praise for heaviness; for the lowest place a kingly throne for ever.

There shall the fruit of obedience appear, the labour of *repentance* rejoice, and humble *subjection* shall be gloriously crowned.

7. Now therefore be humbly obedient unto all; and regard not who said or commanded this;

But take great heed, that whether the *superior*, *inferior*, or thine *equal*, require any thing of thee, or do insinuate their desire, thou take it all in good part, and endeavour to fulfil it with a sincere will.

Let one seek this, another that; let him *glory* in this, the other in that, and be praised a thousand thousand times; but do thou neither rejoice in this, nor in that, but in the contempt of thyself, and in my good *pleasure* and *honour* alone.

This art thou to wish, that whether it be by thy *life*, or by thy *death*, GOD may be always glorified in thee.

C H A P. L.

How a person in a state of desertion ought to give up himself into the hands of GOD.

Christian. LORD GOD, Holy Father, be thou blessed both now and for evermore; because as thou wilt, so is it done, and what thou doest is good.

Let thy *servant* rejoice in thee, not in himself nor in any thing else; for thou alone art the true *gladness*, thou art my *hope* and *crown*, thou art my *joy* and my *honour*, O LORD.

What hath thy servant, but what he hath received from thee, even without any merit of his?

Thine is all that thou hast given, and whatsoever thou hast made.

I am poor, and in labour from my *youth*: and sometimes my *soul* is sorrowful even unto tears; sometimes also it is troubled in itself by reason of the evils which hang over mine head.

2. I long after the joy of *peace*, I earnestly crave the *peace* of thy children that are fed by thee in the light of thy *comfort*.

If thou give *peace*, if thou pour in my *heart* holy joy; the *soul* of thy servant shall be full of *gladness*, and shall become devout in thy *praise*.

But if thou withdraw thyself (as many times thou doest) he will not be able to run the ways of thy *commandments*, but rather he will bow his knees, and smite his *breast*, for it is not with him as it was heretofore, when thy candle shined upon his head, and he was protected under the shadow of thy *wings*, from the temptations which violently assaulted him.

3. O righteous Father, and ever to be praised, the hour is come that thy *servant* is to be tried!

Behold, dear Father, meet it is that in this hour thy servant suffer something for thy sake.

O Father, evermore to be honoured, the hour

hour is come, which from all *eternity* thou didst foreknow should come; that for a short time thy *servant* should outwardly be oppressed, but inwardly live for ever with thee.

That he should be a little despised, humbled, and made abject in the sight of men, and worn down with *passions* and *heaviness*; that he may rise again with the morning of the new light, and be glorified in *heaven*.

Holy Father, thou hast so appointed it and wilt have it so: and this is fulfilled which thyself hast commanded.

4. It is a favour to thy friend that he may suffer, and be afflicted in the *world* for the love of thee, how often soever, and by whomsoever thou permittest it to fall upon him.

Nothing cometh to pass on *earth* without thy *counsel*, without thy *providence*, or without a cause.

It is good for me, LORD, that thou hast afflicted me, that I may learn thy *righteous judgments*, and cast away all *baughtiness of heart*, and *presumption*.

It is profitable to me, that shame hath covered my *face*, that I may the rather seek to thee for *comfort* than to men.

I have learned also hereby to dread thy *unsearchable judgments*, who afflicteth the *just* with the *wicked*, but not without *equity* and *justice*.

5. I give thee thanks, for that thou hast not spared my sins, but hast worn me away with bitter stripes, inflicting *sorrows*, and sending *griefs* within and without.

There is none under *heaven* that can *comfort* me, but thou my LORD GOD, the *heavenly Physician of souls*, that strikest and healest, bringest down to hell and bringest back again.

Let thy *correction* be upon me, and let thy *rod* instruct me.

6. Behold, dear Father, I am in thy hands, I bow myself under the *rod* of thy correction :

Strike my back and my neck, that my *perverse*ness may be conformed to thy will.

Make me an holy and humble disciple of thine (as thou art wont well to do) that I may be ready at every beck of thy pleasure.

I commend myself and all that is mine unto thee to be corrected.

It is better to be corrected here, than hereafter.

Thou knowest all and every thing, and there is nothing in the *conscience* of man hidden from thee.

Before things are done, thou knowest that they will come to pass, and hast no need that any should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things which are done on *earth*.

Thou knowest what is expedient for my profiting, and how fit *tribulation* is to scour off the rust of my *sins*.

Do with me according to thy desired good *pleasure*, and disdain me not for my *sinful life*, better and more clearly known to none than to thee alone.

7. Grant me, O LORD, to know that which ought to be known, to love that which ought to be loved.

To praise that which pleaseth thee most, to esteem that which is precious unto thee, to despise that which is contemptible in thy sight.

Suffer me not to judge according to the sight of the outward *eyes*, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the *ears* of ignorant men;

But to discern *visible* and *spiritual* things with a true judgment, and, above all things, ever to search after thy good will and pleasure.

8. The minds of men are often deceived in their judging; the lovers of the world are also deceived in loving only visible things.

What is man the better for being esteemed great by man?

The deceitful in exalting the deceitful, the vain man in extolling the vain, the blind in commending the blind, the weak in magnifying the weak, deceiveth him, and doth in truth the more shame him, while he praises him.

For how much every one is in thy sight; so much he is, and no more.

C H A P. LI.

That a man ought to employ himself in works of humility, when strength is wanting for higher employments.

Christ. SON, thou art not able always to continue in the more fervent desire of *virtue*, nor to persist in the higher pitch of *contemplation*:

But thou must sometimes of necessity, by reason of original corruption, descend to inferior things,

things, and bear the burden of this *corruptible life*, though against thy will.

As long as thou carriest a mortal *body*, thou shalt feel trouble and heaviness of *heart*.

Thou must therefore in the *flesh* often bewail the burden of the *flesh*: because thou canst not always continue in *spiritual exercises* and *divine contemplation*.

2. It is then expedient for thee to fly to humble and exterior works, and to refresh thyself with good *actions*;

To expect with a firm confidence my coming and *heavenly visitation*.

To bear patiently thy *banishment* and the dryness of thy *mind*, till I visit thee again, and deliver thee from all anxieties.

For I will make thee forget thy former *pains*, and enjoy inward *quietness*:

I will lay open before thee pleasant *fields* of *holy scriptures*, that with an enlarged *heart* thou mayest begin to run the way of my *commandments*.

And thou shalt say, *That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us.*

C H A P. LII.

That a man ought to esteem himself not worthy of comfort, but rather to deserve stripes.

Christian. **L**ORD, I am not worthy of thy *comfort*, nor of any *spiritual visitation*:

And therefore thou dealest justly with me, when thou leavest me poor and desolate.

For though I could shed a sea of tears, yet I were not worthy of thy comfort.

For (alas) I deserve nothing but to be scourged and punished, in that I have grievously offended thee, and have sinned greatly in many things.

All things therefore duly considered, I am not worthy even of the least comfort.

But thou, O gracious and merciful God, who wilt not that thy works should perish, to shew the riches of thy goodness upon the vessels of mercy, even beyond his desert, vouchsafest to comfort thy servant above the manner of men.

For thy comforts are not like the words of men.

2. What have I done, O LORD, that thou shouldest bestow any heavenly comforts upon me?

I remember not that I have done any good, but have been always prone to sin, and slow to amendment.

This is true, that I cannot deny it: if I should say otherwise, thou wouldest stand against me, and there would be none to defend me.

What have I deserved for my sins, but hell and everlasting fire!

I confess in very truth, that I am worthy of all scorn and contempt, and it is not fit that I should be numbered amongst thy servants.

And although I be unwilling to hear this, yet notwithstanding, for the truth's sake, I will lay open my sins against myself, that so I may the sooner obtain mercy at thy hand.

3. What shall I say guilty as I am, and full of all confusion?

I have nothing to say but this: I have *sinned*, LORD, I have *sinned*; have mercy on me, pardon me;

Suffer me a little, that I may vent my *grief*, before I go into the land of *darkness*, a land covered with the shadow of *death*:

What dost thou so much require of a guilty and miserable *sinner*, as that he be contrite, and humble himself for his offences?

Of true *contrition* and *humbling* of the *heart*, ariseth *hope* of *forgiveness*; the *troubled conscience* is reconciled to GOD; the favour of GOD, which was lost, is recovered; man is preserved from the *wrath* to come, and GOD and the *penitent soul* meet together with an *holy kiss*.

4. Humble *contrition* for *sins* is an acceptable *sacrifice* unto thee, O LORD, favouring much sweeter in thy presence, than the perfume of *frankincense*.

This is also the pleasant ointment, which thou wouldst be poured upon thy *sacred feet*:

For thou never despisest a *contrite* and *humbléd heart*.

There is the place of refuge, from the angry face of the *enemy*;

There is amended and washed away, whatsoever *defilement* was contracted and polluted elsewhere.

C H A P, LIII.

That the grace of GOD doth not join itself with those that relish earthly things.

Christ. SON, my grace is precious, it suffereth not itself to be mangled with *external things* nor *earthly comforts*.

Thou oughtest therefore to cast away all hindrances of *grace*, if thou desire to receive the infusion thereof.

Choose a secret place to thyself; love to live alone with thyself; desire the conversation of none;

But rather pour out devout *prayers* unto GOD, that thou mayest keep thy *mind* in compunction, and thy *conscience* pure.

Esteem the whole *world* as nothing: prefer attendance upon GOD, before all outward things.

For thou canst not attend upon me, and be delighted also in transitory *things*.

Thou oughtest to sequester thyself from thy *acquaintance* and *friends*, and to keep thy *mind* void of all *temporal comfort*.

* So the blessed apostle *Peter* beseecheth, that the *faithful* of CHRIST should keep themselves as *strangers* and *pilgrims* in this *world*.

2. O how great a confidence shall he have at the *hour of death*, whom no *affection* to any earthly thing detaineth in the *world*!

But the sickly mind is not yet capable of a *heart*, so dead to all things, neither doth the carnal man understand the liberty of him who is *spiritual*.

Notwithstanding, if he will be truly *spiritual*, he must renounce as well those which are strangers, as those which are near unto him; and beware of no man more than of himself.

If thou perfectly overcome thyself, thou shalt with more ease subdue the rest.

It is a perfect victory to triumph over ourselves.

For he that keepeth himself subject in such sort, that his sensuality is subdued to *reason*, and *reason* in all things obedient to me; he is truly a *conqueror* of himself, and lord of the *world*.

3. If thou desire to mount unto this height, thou must set out courageously, and lay the axe to the root;

That thou mayest pluck up and destroy that hidden inordinate inclination to thyself, and unto all private and earthly good.

On this sin (that a man inordinately loveth himself) almost all dependeth, whatsoever is thoroughly to be overcome; which evil being once overcome and subdued, there will presently ensue great *peace* and *tranquillity*.

But because few endeavour perfectly to die unto themselves, and altogether to go out of themselves, therefore they remain entangled in themselves, and cannot be lifted up in *spirit* above themselves.

But he that desireth to walk freely with me, it is necessary that he mortify all his evil and inordinate *affections*, and that he should not earnestly adhere unto any *creature* by *self-love*.

C H A P. LIV.

Of the different motions of Nature and Grace.

Christ. SON, mark diligently the motions of *Nature* and *Grace*; for they move in a very contrary and subtil manner, and can hardly be discerned but by him that is spiritually and inwardly enlightened.

All men indeed desire that which is good, and pretend some *good* in their *words* and *deeds*, and therefore, under the shew of *good*, many are deceived.

Nature is crafty, and seduceth, entangleth and deceiveth many, and always proposeth herself for her end;

But *Grace* walketh in simplicity, and avoideth all appearance of evil, useth no deceit, and doth all things purely for GOD's sake, in whom also she finally resteth.

2. *Nature* will not willingly die, nor be kept down, nor be overcome, nor be subject to any, nor be subdued:

But *Grace* studieth *self-mortification*, resisteth *sensuality*, seeketh to be subject, is willing to be kept under, and will not use her own liberty;

She loveth to be kept under *discipline*, and desireth not to rule any, but always to live and remain wholly subject to GOD, and for GOD's ready humbly to obey all men.

Nature striveth for her own advantage, and considereth what profit she may reap by another.

But *Grace* considereth not what is profitable and

and advantageous unto herself, but rather what is profitable to many.

Nature willingly receiveth *honour* and *respect*;

But *Grace* willingly attributeth all *honour* and *glory* unto *GOD*.

3. *Nature* feareth *shame* and *contempt* ;

But *Grace* rejoiceth to suffer reproach for the name of *JESUS*.

Nature loveth ease and bodily rest ;

But *Grace* cannot be idle, but willingly embraceth labour.

Nature seeketh to have those things that are curious and beautiful, abhorreth that which is mean and coarse ;

But *Grace* delighteth in plain and humble things, despiseth not rough things, nor refuseth to wear that which is old and mean.

Nature respecteth temporal things, rejoiceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for loss, is moved with every little injurious word ;

But *Grace* thinketh on that which is everlasting, and cleaveth not to temporal things ; she is not troubled at losses, nor disquieted with hard words ; because she hath placed her *treasure* and *joy* in *heaven*, where nothing perisheth.

4. *Nature* is covetous, and doth more willingly receive than give, she loveth her own things ;

But *Grace* is bountiful and liberal to all, shunneth private interest, is content with a little, thinketh that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Nature inclines to the creatures, to her own flesh, to vanities, and wanderings ;

But *Grace* draweth unto GOD and unto goodness, renounceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth the desires of the flesh, restraineth wandering abroad, blusheth to be seen in publick.

Nature is willing to have some outward comfort, wherein she may be sensibly delighted ;

But *Grace* seeketh comfort in GOD alone, and delighteth above all visible things in the highest good.

5. *Nature* worketh all for her own gain and profit, she can do nothing *gratis*, but for benefits she hopeth to obtain either that which is equal or better, either praise or favour, and coveteth to have her works and gifts much esteemed.

But *Grace* seeketh no temporal thing, nor requireth any other reward than GOD alone ; nor desireth more of temporal necessities, than what may serve her for the obtaining of things *eternal*.

6. *Nature* rejoiceth to have many *friends* and *kinsfolks*, glorieth of noble *place* and *birth* ; is obsequious to the *powerful*, fawneth upon the *rich*, applaudeth those that are like herself.

But *Grace* loveth even her *enemies*, and is not puffed up with multitudes of *friends* ; nor esteemeth *place* or *birth*, but where it is joined with greater *virtue*.

She rather favoureth the *poor* than the *rich* ; hath more tenderness for the *innocent* than the *powerful* ; rejoiceth in the true, not in the deceitful ;

Always exhorteth good men to labour for more excellent gifts, and by goodness to resemble the SON of GOD.

Nature quickly complaineth of want and trouble: *Grace* with constancy endureth need.

7. *Nature* referreth all things to herself, striveth and contendeth for herself;

But *Grace* reduceth all to GOD, from whence originally they proceed; she ascribeth no good to herself, neither doth she arrogantly presume; she contendeth not, nor preferreth her *opinion* before others, but in every apprehension and opinion submitteth herself unto the eternal *wisdom*, and to the *divine judgment*.

Nature coveteth to know *secrets*, and to hear *news*; she will appear abroad, and make proof of many things by her own senses; she desireth to be known, and to do those things, for which she may be praised and admired:

But *Grace* careth not for hearing *news*, or curious *matters*; since all this springeth from the old corruption of man, seeing here is nothing new and durable upon earth.

She teacheth therefore to restrain their senses, to avoid vanity and ostentation, humbly to hide those things that are worthy of *praise* and *admiration*; and of every thing and every knowledge to seek profitable fruit, and the *praise* and *honour* of GOD;

She will not have herself nor hers publicly praised, but desireth that GOD should be blessed in his *gifts*; who of mere love bestoweth all things.

8. This *Grace* is supernatural *light*, and a special gift of *God*, and the proper mark of the elect, and pledge of *everlasting salvation*; which raiseth up a man from earthly things to love the things of *heaven*, and of a carnal maketh a spiritual man.

The more therefore *Nature* is depressed and subdued, the greater *Grace* is infused, and the inward man daily by new *visitations* more reformed according to the image of *God*.

C H A P. LV.

Of the corruption of nature, and efficacy of divine grace.

Christian. O LORD my *God*, who hast created me after thy *image* and *likeness*; grant me this *grace* which thou hast shewed to be so great and so necessary to *salvation*, that I may overcome my wicked nature, which draweth me to *sin* and to *perdition*.

For I feel in my *flesh* the law of *sin* contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the obeying of sensuality in many things; neither can I resist the passions thereof, unless thy most holy *grace*, fervently infused into my heart, do assist me.

2. Thy *grace*, O LORD, and great *grace* is needful, that nature may be overcome, which is ever prone to evil from her youth.

For by *Adam* the first man nature being fallen, and corrupted by *sin*, the penalty of this stain hath descended upon all mankind, in such sort, that nature itself, which by thee was cre-

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ated good and upright, is now used to signify the sin and the infirmity of corrupted nature; because for the motion thereof left unto itself draweth to evil and to inferior things.

For the little power which remains, is like a spark lying hidden in *ashes*.

This is natural *reason* itself; encompassed about with great darkness, yet still retaining power to discern *good* and *evil*, and the difference between true and false; although it be unable to fulfil every thing it approveth, and enjoyeth not now the full light of *truth*, nor the soundness of her *affections*.

3. Hence it is, my GOD, that after the inward man I delight in thy law, knowing thy *commandments* to be *good*, *just*, and *holy*, reprov- ing also all *evil* and *sin*, teaching that it is to be avoided.

But with the *flesh* I serve the law of *sin*, whilst I rather obey sensuality than reason. Hence it is, that to will to do good is present with me, but how to perform it I find not.

For this cause I often purpose many good things; but, because I want *grace* to help my weakness, upon a light resistance I go back and faint.

Hence it is, that I know the way of *perfection*, and see clearly enough what I ought to do;

But, pressed down with the weight of my corruption, I rise not unto what is more perfect.

4. O LORD, how exceeding needful is thy *grace* for me to begin any good work, to go forward, and to accomplish it?

For without it I can do nothing, but in thee I can do all things, when thy *grace* doth strengthen me.

O heavenly *grace* indeed, without which our most worthy actions are nothing, and no gifts of nature are to be esteemed!

Arts, riches, beauty or strength, wit or eloquence, are of no value with thee, O LORD, without thy *grace*.

For gifts of nature are common to good and bad; but the peculiar gift of the elect is *grace* or *charity*, and they that bear this mark, are esteemed worthy of *everlasting life*.

Such is the excellence of *grace*, that neither the gift of *prophecy*, nor the working of *miracles*, nor any speculation (how high soever) is of any esteem without it.

Neither *faith*, nor *hope*, nor other *virtues* are acceptable unto thee without *love* and *grace*.

5. O most blessed *grace*, that makest the poor in *spirit* rich in *virtues*, and makest the rich in many blessings to be humble in heart;

Come, come down unto me, replenish me early with thy *comfort*, lest my *soul* should faint for weariness and driness of mind.

I beseech thee, O LORD, that I may find *grace* in thy sight; for thy *grace* is sufficient for me, though other things that nature desireth be wanting.

If I be tempted and vexed with many *tribulations*, I will not fear any evils whilst thy *grace* with me:

That is my strength, that giveth advice and help;

That is stronger than all *enemies*, and wiser than all the *wise*.

6. Thy *grace* is the mistress of *truth*, the teacher of *discipline*, the light of the *heart*, the solace in *affliction*, the driver away of *sorrow*, the expeller of *fear*, the nurse of *devotion*, the mother of *tears*.

What am I without it, but a withered piece of wood, and an unprofitable stock, only meet to be cast away?

Let thy *grace* therefore, O LORD, always prevent me and follow me, and make me ever diligent in good *works*, through JESUS CHRIST thy SON. *Amen*.

C H A P. LVI.

*That we ought to deny ourselves, and imitate
CHRIST by the Cross.*

Christ. SON, behold how much thou goest out of thyself, so much mayest thou enter into me.

As to desire nothing without, maketh inward *peace*; so the forsaking of ourselves inwardly, joineth unto GOD.

I will have thee learn the perfect renouncing of thyself and acquiescence in my will, without contradiction or complaint.

Follow me, I am the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life*.

Without the *way* there is no going aright, without the *truth* there is no *knowledge*, without *life* there is no *living*.

I am the *Way*, which thou oughtest to follow;

low; the *Truth*, which thou oughtest to trust; the *Life*, which thou oughtest to hope.

I am the *Way* inviolable, the *Truth* infallible, the *Life* which cannot end.

I am the most strait *Way*, the supreme *Truth*, the true *Life*, yea the blessed *Life*, the uncreated *Life*.

If thou remain in my *way*, thou shalt know the *truth*, and the *truth* shall make thee free, and thou shalt lay hold on *everlasting life*.

2. If thou wilt enter into *life*, keep the *commandments*.

If thou wilt know the *truth*, believe me.

If thou wilt be my *disciple*, renounce thyself.

If thou wilt possess a blessed life, despise this present *life*.

If thou wilt be exalted in *heaven*, humble thyself upon *earth*.

If thou wilt reign with me, bear the *Cross* with me.

For only the servants of the *Cross* find the way of *bliss* and *true light*.

3. *Christian*. LORD JESUS, forasmuch as thy life was poor and contemptible unto the *world*, grant me *grace* to imitate thee in suffering worldly contempt.

For the *servant* is not greater than his *Lord*, nor the *disciple* above his *Master*.

Let thy *servant* be exercised in thy *life*, for therein my *salvation* and true *holiness* consist:

Whatsoever I read or hear besides it, doth not refresh or delight me fully.

4. *Christ.* Son, now that thou knowest and hast read these things, happy shalt thou be, if thou do them:

He that hath my *commandments* and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ;

And I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him, and make him fit with me in the kingdom of my Father.

Christian. LORD JESUS, as thou hast said and promised, so let it come to pass, and grant that I may not wholly *undervalue* this favour.

I have received this *Cross*, I have received it from thy hand ; I will bear it, and bear it till *death*, as thou hast laid it upon me.

Truly the *life* of a *Christian* is the *Cross*, but yet it is a guide to *paradise*.

I have begun, I may not go back, neither is it fit to leave that which I have undertaken.

5. Let us then take courage, my brethren, and go forwards together, JESUS will be with us.

For JESUS's sake we have undertaken this *Cross*, for JESUS's sake let us persevere in the *Cross*.

He will be our helper, who is our guide and fore-runner.

Behold, our king goeth before us, who also will fight for us.

Let us follow him manfully, let none be dismayed, but be we ready to die valiantly in the battle, and let us not blemish our *glory* by flying from the *Cross*.

C H A P. LVII.

That a man be not too much dejected, when he feeleth some defects.

Christ. SON, *patience and humility in adversity are more pleasing to me, than much comfort and devotion in prosperity.*

Why art thou grieved for every little trifle spoken and done against thee?

Altho' it had been much more, thou oughtest not to have been moved.

But now, let it pass; it is not the first that hath happened, nor is it any new thing, neither shall it be the last, if thou live long.

Thou art valiant enough, as long as no *adversity* happeneth.

Thou canst give good counsel also, and canst strengthen others with thy words; but when any *tribulation* suddenly comes to thy door, thou art destitute of counsel and strength.

See therefore thy great frailty, which thou often hast experienced upon slight occasions.

It is notwithstanding intended for thy good, when these and such like things befall thee.

2. Put it out of thy *heart* the best thou canst, and if it touch thee, let it not deject thee nor trouble thee long:

Bear it at least patiently, if thou canst not joyfully.

Altho' thou be unwilling to bear it, and conceivest indignation thereat: yet restrain thyself, and suffer no inordinate word to pass out of thy mouth, whereby the little ones may be offended.

The

The storm which now is raised shall quickly be appeased, and thy grief sweetened by the return of *grace*.

I yet live, saith the LORD, ready to help thee, and to give thee greater *comfort* than before, if thou puttest thy trust in me and callest devoutly upon me.

3. Be more patient, and prepare thyself to greater suffering.

All is not lost, if thou feel thyself often afflicted or grievously tempted.

Thou art a man, and not GOD: thou art *flesh*, not an *angel*.

How shouldest thou continue ever in the same state of *virtue*, when an *angel* in *heaven* hath fallen, and the first man in *paradise*?

I am He, who will strengthen with health them that mourn, and raise up unto *divine glory* those that know their own infirmity.

4. *Christian*. LORD, blessed be thy word, more sweet unto my mouth than the honey and the honey-comb.

What should I do in so great *tribulations* and straits, unless thou didst *comfort* me with thy holy words?

What matter is it, how much, and what I suffer, so I may at length attain to the port of *salvation*?

Grant me a good end, grant me a happy passage out of this world.

Be mindful of me, O my GOD, and direct me in the right way to thy kingdom. *Amen*.

C H A P. LVIII.

Of searching into high matters, and into the secret judgments of GOD.

Christ. SON, beware thou dispute not of high matters, nor of the secret judgments of GOD.

Why this man is left, and that man taken into so great favour; why also this man is so much afflicted, and that man so greatly advanced.

These things are beyond the reach of man, neither can any reason or disputation search out the judgment of GOD.

When the *enemy* therefore suggesteth these things unto thee, or some curious people enquire of thee, answer that of the prophet; *Thou art just, O LORD, and thy judgments are right.*

And again, *The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*

My judgments are to be feared, not to be discussed; for they are such as cannot be comprehended by the understanding of man.

2. Neither enquire, or dispute of the merits of saints, which of them is holier than the other, and which is greater in the kingdom of heaven.

These things often breed strife and unprofitable contentions, they *nourish* also *pride* and *vain-glory*, from whence spring *envy* and *dissensions*, whilst one will proudly prefer this, and the other, another.

To desire to know and search out such things is to no purpose; nor would it please the *saints*; for

for I am not the God of *dissension*, but of *peace* : which *peace* consisteth in true *humility*, not in *self-exaltation*.

3. Some are carried with zeal of *affection*, to love these or those most ; but this *love* is rather *human* than *divine*.

I am He, who made all the *saints* ; I gave them *grace* : I will give thee *glory*.

I know what every one hath deserved ; I have prevented them with the blessing of my goodness.

I foreknew my *beloved* before the beginning of the *world* ; I chose them out of the *world*, they chose me not first.

I called them by *grace*, I drew them by *mercy*, I led them through sundry *temptations*.

I poured into them *glorious comforts*, I gave them *perseverance*, I will crown their *patience*.

4. I know both the first and the last : I embrace all with inestimable *love*.

I am to be praised in all my *saints* : I am to be blessed above all things, and to be honoured in every one, whom I have thus gloriously exalted and predestinated without any precedent merits of their own.

He therefore that contemneth one of the least of my *saints*, honoureth not the greatest ; for that I made both the less and the greater.

And he that dispraiseth any of the *saints*, dispraiseth also me.

They are all one through the bond of *love*, they think the same, they will the same, and they all love one another.

5. But yet (which is much more high) they love me more than themselves.

For being ravished above themselves and self-love, they are wholly carried out to love me, in whom also they fruitively rest.

Nothing can turn them back, nothing can press them down; for being full of eternal truth, they burn with the fire of unquenchable love.

Let therefore carnal and natural men, who can effect no other but their own private joys, forbear to dispute of the state of *saints*. They add and take away according to their own fancies, not as it pleaseth the eternal Truth.

6. Many are ignorant, but especially those that being little enlightened, seldom love any with a perfect spiritual love.

They are as yet much drawn by natural affection and human friendship to this man or to that; and according to the experience they have of earthly affections, they frame an imagination of heavenly things.

But there is an incomparable distance between the things which the imperfect imagine, and those which the illuminated see by revelation from above.

7. Beware therefore, my son, that thou treat not curiously of these things which exceed thy knowledge;

But rather diligently endeavour, that thou mayest have the meanest place in the kingdom of heaven.

And if any one did know which of the *saints*, exceeds others in sanctity, or were greater in

the kingdom of *heaven*; what would this knowledge avail him, unless he thereby humbled himself in my sight, and praised my name the more?

He pleaseth GOD much better, that thinketh of the greatness of his sins, and the smallness of his virtues, and how far off he is from the perfection of the *saints*; than he that disputeth of their greatness or littleness.

8. They are perfectly contented, if men could content themselves, and refrain from these vain discourses.

They glory not of their own merits, for they ascribe no good unto themselves, but attribute all to me, who of my infinite love have given them all things.

They are filled with so great love of the *Divinity*, and with such an overflowing joy, that there is no glory nor happiness, that is or can be wanting unto them.

All the *saints*, the higher they are in glory, the more humble they are in themselves, and the nearer and dearer unto me:

And therefore it is written, that they cast their *crowns* before GOD, and fell down upon their faces before the *Lamb*, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever.

9. Many enquire who is greatest in the kingdom of GOD, that know not whether they shall be numbered among the least there.

It is a great thing to be even the least in heaven, where all are great: for that all there shall be called, and shall be the sons of GOD.

When the *disciples* asked, who should be greatest in the kingdom of *heaven*, they received this answer; unless you be converted, and become as *little children*, you shall not enter into the kingdom of *heaven*.

Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this *little child*, the same is greatest in the kingdom of *heaven*.

10. Wo be unto them that disdain to humble themselves with *little children*; for the low gate of the kingdom of *heaven* will not give them entrance.

And wo be to the *rich*, that have their *comforts* here; for whilst the *poor* enter into the kingdom of **GOD**, they shall stand lamenting without.

Rejoice ye humble, and ye *poor* be glad, for yours is the kingdom of **GOD**, if you walk according to the *truth*.

C H A P. LIX.

That all our hope and trust is to be fixed in GOD alone.

Christian. **L**ORD, what is my trust in this life? Or what is my greatest *comfort* of all things under *heaven*?

Is it not thou, my **LORD GOD**, whose *mercies* are without number?

Where hath it been well with me without thee? Or when could it be ill with me, when thou wert present?

I had rather be poor for thee, than *rich* without thee.

I rather choose to be a *pilgrim* on earth with thee, than to possess *heaven* without thee.

Where thou art, there is *heaven*: and there is *death* and *hell* where thou art not.

Thou art my desire; and therefore I cannot but sigh, and cry, and pray unto thee.

For I have none fully to trust in, none that can seasonably help me in my *necessities*, but thee alone, my GOD.

Thou art my *hope*, thou art my *trust*, thou art my *comforter*, and most faithful unto me in all things.

2. All men seek their own; thou only seekest my *salvation* and *profit*, and turnest all things to my *good*.

Although thou exposest me to divers *temptations* and *adversities*, yet thou orderest all this to my advantage, who art wont to try thy beloved a thousand ways.

In which trial thou oughtest no less to be loved and praised, than if thou didst fill me with *heavenly comforts*.

3. In thee therefore, O LORD GOD, I put my whole *hope* and *refuge*:

On thee I rest in all *tribulation* and *anguish*; For I find all to be weak and unconstant, whatsoever I behold out of thee.

For neither can many *friends* avail, nor strong *helpers* aid, nor wise *counsellors* give any profitable answer, nor the books of the *learned* comfort, nor any *wealth* deliver, nor any *secret* or *pleasant place* defend; if thou thyself dost not assist, help, strengthen, comfort, instruct, and keep us.

4. For

4. For all things, that seem to make for *peace* and *felicity*, without thee are nothing, and do bring indeed no felicity at all.

Thou therefore art the end of all that is good, the height of *life*, the depth of *wisdom*:

And the strongest *comfort* of thy *servants* is to trust in thee above all things.

To thee therefore do I lift up mine eyes; in thee, O my GOD, the Father of *mercies*, I put my *trust*.

Bless and sanctify my soul with thy heavenly blessing, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the seat of thy *eternal glory*.

And that nothing may be found in the temple of thy *glory*, that may offend the *eyes* of thy *Majesty*.

According to the greatness of thy *goodness*, and the multitude of thy *mercies* look upon me, and hear the *prayer* of thy *poor servant*, who is far exiled from thee in the *land* of the shadow of death.

Protect and keep the *soul* of thy *servant*, amidst so many dangers of this *corruptible life*, and by thy *grace* accompanying me, direct it by the way of *peace* to the country of *everlasting light*. Amen.



B O O K IV.

An EXHORTATION unto the Holy COMMUNION.

The voice of CHRIST.

COME unto me, all ye that travel
and are heavy laden, and I will re-
fresh you.

The bread which I will give, is
my flesh for the life of the world.

Take, eat, This is my body that is given for
you : do this in remembrance of Me.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,
dwelleth in Me, and I in him.

The words which I speak unto you are spirit and
life.

C H A P. I.

*With how great reverence CHRIST ought to
be received.*

The voice of the disciple.

THESSE are thy words, O CHRIST, the ever-
lasting Truth, though not spoken all at
one time, nor written in one place.

Because therefore they are thine and true,
they are all thankfully and faithfully to be re-
ceived by me.

They are thine, and thou hast spoken them, and they are mine also, because thou hast spoken them for my *salvation*.

I willingly receive them from thy mouth, that they may be the deeper imprinted in my *heart*.

These so gracious *words*, so full of *sweetness* and *love*, encourage me; but mine own *offences* terrify me, and my impure *conscience* driveth me back from receiving so great *mysteries*.

The *sweetness* of thy *words* encourages me, but the multitude of my *sins* oppresses me.

2. Thou commandest me to come confidently unto thee, if I will have part with thee; to receive the *food* of *immortality*, if I desire to obtain *everlasting life* and *glory*.

Come, sayest thou, unto me, all ye that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

O sweet and friendly *word* in the ear of *sinners*, that thou, my LORD GOD, shouldest invite the *poor* and *needy* to the *participation* of thy most *holy body*?

But who am I, LORD, that I should presume to approach unto thee?

Behold the *heaven* of *heavens* cannot contain thee, and thou sayest, *Come ye all unto me*.

3. What meaneth this so gracious *condescension*, this so friendly *invitation*?

How shall I dare to come, that I know no good in myself, whereupon I may presume?

How shall I bring thee into my *house*, that have so often offended thy most gracious *countenance*.

The *angels* and *archangels* revere thee, the *saints* and just men fear thee, and thou sayest, *Come ye all unto me.*

Unless thou, O LORD, didst say it, who would believe it to be true?

And unless thou didst command it, who would dare to come unto thee?

Behold *Noah* a just man laboured a hundred years in the making of the *ark*, that he might be saved with a few; and how can I in one hour prepare myself to receive with reverence the *Maker* of the world?

4. *Moses*, thy great *servant*, and thy special *friend*, made an *ark* of incorruptible wood, which also he covered with most *pure gold*, to put the *tables of the law* therein; and I a *corruptible creature*, how shall I dare so lightly to receive the *Maker of the law*, and the *Giver of life*.

Solomon, the wisest of the kings of *Israel*, bestowed seven years in building a *magnificent temple* to the *praise* of thy name.

He celebrated the *feast* of the *dedication* thereof eight days together: he offered a thousand *peace-offerings*, and he solemnly set the *ark* in the place prepared for it, with the sound of *trumpets*, and *joy*.

And I the most miserable and poorest of men, how shall I bring thee into my *house*, that can scarce spend one half hour devoutly? Yea, would I could once spend near half an hour in a due manner!

5. O my GOD, how much did they do out of an endeavour to please thee!

And alas, how little is that which I do !
How little time do I spend to prepare myself to receive !

I am seldom wholly recollected, very seldom free from all distraction ;

And yet surely no unbecoming thought ought to appear in the *presence* of the *Deity*, nor any *creature* find any place in me, for I am not to harbour an *angel*, but the Lord of *angels*.

6. And yet there is great difference between the *ark* of the *covenant* with its *relics*, and thy most pure *body* with its unspeakable *virtues* : between those legal *sacrifices*, *figures* of future things, and the true *sacrifice* of thy *body*, the completion of all ancient *sacrifices*.

Why therefore am I not more inflamed at thy venerable *presence* ?

Wherefore do I not prepare myself with greater care to receive thy *holy things* ; when those holy ancient *patriarchs*, and *prophets*, yea, *kings* also and *princes*, with the whole people, shewed such affectionateness of *devotion* to thy *service* ?

7. The most devout king *David* danced before the *ark* of *God* with all his *might*, calling to mind the *benefits* bestowed in times past upon his *forefathers*.

He made *instruments* of sundry kinds, he composed *psalms*, and appointed them to be sung with *joy* :

He also often *sung* himself to the *harp*, being inspired with the *grace* of the *HOLY GHOST*.

He taught the people of *Israel* to praise *God* with

with their whole *heart*, and with joint *voices* every day to *bles*s and *praise* him.

If so great *devotion* was then shewn, and there was such celebrating of the *divine praise* before the *ark* of the *testament*; what *reverence* and *devotion* is now to be performed by me, and all *Christian* people, at the *sacrament*, in receiving the *most precious body and blood* of *CHRIST*?

8. O *GOD*, the *invisible* *Creator* of the *world*; how wonderfully dost thou deal with us!

How sweetly and graciously dost thou dispose of all things with thine *elect*, to whom thou offerest thyself to be received in the *sacrament*!

This exceedeth all understanding! This strongly draweth the hearts of the devout, and inflameth their *affections*.

For thy true faithful *servants* that dispose their whole *life* to amendment, by this most precious *sacrament*, gain much of the *grace* of *devotion*, and love of *holiness*.

9. O the admirable and hidden *grace* of this *sacrament*, which only the faithful ones of *CHRIST* know: but the unbelieving, and such as are *slaves* unto *sin*, cannot experience!

In this *sacrament* spiritual *grace* is given, and strength which was lost is restored in the *soul*, and the beauty disfigured by *sin* returneth again.

This *grace* is sometimes so great, that out of the fulness of *devotion* here given, not only the *mind*, but the weak *body* also, feeleth great increase of strength.

10. Our coldness and negligence is much to be bewailed and pitied, that we are not drawn

drawn with greater *affection* to receive CHRIST, in whom all the *hope* and *merit* of those that are to be *saved* consists.

For he is our *sanctification*, and *redemption*: He is the *comfort* of us *travellers*, and the everlasting fruition of *saints*.

It is much therefore to be lamented, that so many so little consider this salutary mystery, which rejoiceth *heaven*, and preserveth the whole *world*.

O the blindness and hardness of man's *heart*, that doth not more deeply weigh so unspeakable a *gift*; but rather cometh, by the daily use thereof, to regard it little or nothing!

12. If this most *holy sacrament* were celebrated in one place only, and consecrated by one only *priest* in the *world*; with how great desire would men be affected to that place, and to such a *priest*, that they might enjoy these *divine mysteries*?

But now there are many *priests*, and CHRIST is offered in many places; that so the *grace* and *love* of GOD to man may appear greater, the more this sacred communion is spread through the *world*.

Thanks be unto thee, gracious JESUS, the everlasting *Shepherd*, that hast vouchsafed to refresh us *poor exiles* with thy precious *body* and *blood*, and to invite us to the receiving of these *mysteries* with the *words* of thy own mouth, saying, *Come unto me, all ye that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*

C H A P. II.

That the great goodness and love of GOD is exhibited to man in this sacrament.

The voice of the disciple.

IN confidence of thy *goodness* and great *mercy*, I come, O LORD, a sick man unto my SAVIOUR, *hungry* and *thirsty* to the *Fountain of life*, *needy* to the *King of heaven*, a *servant* unto my *Lord*, a *creature* to my *Creator*; disconsolate to thee, my merciful *Comforter*.

But whence is this to me, that thou vouchsafest to come unto me? Who am I, that thou shouldest give thyself unto me?

How dare a *sinner* appear before thee? And how is it that thou dost vouchsafe to come unto a *sinner*?

Thou knowest thy *servant*, and seest that he hath no good thing in him, for which thou shouldest bestow this favour upon him.

I confess therefore my unworthiness; I acknowledge thy *goodness*; I praise thy *mercy*, and give thee thanks for this thy transcendent *love*.

For thou dost this for thine own *sake*, not for any *merits* of mine; that thy *goodness* may be better known unto me, thy *love* more abundantly shewed, and thy gracious condescension the more eminently displayed.

Since therefore it is thy *pleasure*, and thou hast commanded that it should be so, this thy *favour* is also pleasing to me, and may my sins be no hinderance.

2. O most sweet and benign JESUS, how great

great *reverence* and *thanks*, together with perpetual *praise*, is due unto thee for the receiving of thy *sacred body*, whose preciousness no man is able to express!

But what shall I think of at his *communion*; now that I am to approach unto my LORD, whom I am not able duly to honour, and yet I desire to receive him with *devotion*?

What can I think better, and more profitable, than to humble myself wholly before thee, and to exalt thine infinite *goodness* over me?

I *praise* thee, my GOD, and will exalt thee for ever: I despise and submit myself unto thee, in a deep sense of my own *unworthiness*.

3. Behold thou art the *Holy of Holies*, and I the vilest of *sinners*.

Behold thou inclinest unto me, who am not worthy so much as to look up unto thee!

Behold thou comest unto me, it is thy will to be with me, thou invitest me to thy banquet.

Thou wilt give me the *food of heaven*, and *bread of angels* to eat, which is no other indeed than thyself, the living *Bread*, that descended from *heaven*, and giveth *life* unto the *world*.

4. Behold from whence doth this *love* proceed! what a gracious condescension appeareth herein! How great *thanks* and *praises* are due unto thee for these *benefits*!

O how good and profitable was thy *counsel*, when thou ordainedst it! How sweet and pleasant the *banquet* when thou gavest thyself to be our *food*.

How wonderful is thy operation, O LORD,
 U how

how mighty is thy *power*, how unspeakable is thy *truth*!

For thou hast said the word, and all things were made; and this was done which thou commandedst.

5. A thing of great admiration, that thou, my LORD GOD, true GOD and man, shouldst be exhibited unto us by the *elements* of *bread* and *wine*.

Thou, who art the LORD of all things, and standest in need of none, hast pleased to dwell in us by means of this thy *sacrament*.

Preserve my *heart* and *body* undefiled, that with a chearful and pure *conscience* I may often celebrate thy *mysteries*, and receive them to my everlasting *health*: which thou hast ordained and instituted for thy *honour* and for a perpetual *memorial*.

6. Rejoice, O my *soul*, and give thanks unto GOD for so excellent a *gift*, so singular a *comfort* left unto me in this vale of *tears*.

For as often as thou celebratest this *mystery*, and receivest the *body* of CHRIST; so often dost thou renew the work of thy *redemption*, and art made partaker of all the *merits* of CHRIST:

For the love of CHRIST is never diminished, and the greatness of his propitiation is never exhausted:

Therefore thou oughtest always to prepare thyself hereunto by a fresh renewing of thy *mind*, and to weigh with attentive consideration this great *mystery* of thy *salvation*.

So great, new, and joyful it ought to seem
unto

unto thee, when thou comest to these *holy mysteries*; as if the same day CHRIST, first descending into the womb of the *Virgin*, was become man; or, hanging on the *Cross*, did suffer and die for the *salvation of mankind*.

C H A P. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

The voice of the disciple.

BEHOLD, O LORD, I come unto thee, that I may be comforted by thy *gift*, and delighted in thy holy *banquet*, which thou, O GOD, hast prepared in thy goodness for the *poor*.

Behold in thee is all I can or ought to desire: Thou art my *salvation*, and my *redemption*, my *hope* and my *strength*, my *honour* and my *glory*.

Make joyful therefore this day the *soul* of thy *servant*, for I have lifted it up unto thee, O LORD JESUS.

I desire to receive thee now with *devotion* and *reverence*. I long to bring thee into my *house*, that with *Zaccheus* I may be blessed by thee, and numbered amongst the children of *Abraham*.

My *soul* thirsteth to receive thy *body* and *blood*, my *heart* desireth to be united with thee.

2. Give me thyself; and it sufficeth: for, besides thee, no *comfort* is available.

I cannot be without thee, nor live without thy *visitation*:

And therefore I must often come unto thee, and receive thee for the welfare of my *soul*; lest

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haply I faint in the way, if I be deprived of
thy heavenly food.

For so, most merciful JESUS, thou once didst
say, preaching to the people, and curing sun-
dry diseases, *I will not send them home fasting, lest
they faint in the way.*

Deal thou therefore in like manner now with
me, who hast vouchsafed to leave thyself in
the *sacrament* for the comfort of the *faithful*.

For thou art the sweet refection of the *soul*;
and he that eateth thee worthily, shall be par-
taker and heir of everlasting *glory*.

It is necessary for me, that so often fall and
sin, and so quickly grow lukewarm and faint,
that by frequent *prayer* and *confession*, and re-
ceiving of thy *holy body*, I renew, cleanse, and
in flame myself; lest perhaps by long abstin-
ing, I should fall from my holy purpose.

3. For the imaginations of man are prone
unto evil from his youth;

And unless some divine remedy help him, he
quickly slideth into sin.

This *holy communion* therefore draweth back
from *evil*, and strengtheneth in *good*.

For if I be now so often slack and cold, when
I communicate, or celebrate; what would be-
come of me if I received not this remedy, and
sought not after so great an help?

This is one chief *comfort* of a faithful *soul*,
while, distant from thee, she sojourns in this
mortal body, that she may often be mindful of
her GOD, and receive her *beloved* with a devout
mind.

4. O the wonderful condescension of thy mercy towards us, that thou, O LORD GOD, the Creator and Giver of life to all spirits, dost vouchsafe to come unto a poor soul, and with thy whole Deity to replenish her hunger!

O happy mind and blessed soul, that receives thee, her LORD GOD, with devout affection, and in receiving of thee is filled with spiritual joy.

O how great a LORD doth she entertain! How beloved a guest doth she harbour! How pleasant a companion doth she receive! How faithful a friend doth she take in! How lovely and glorious a spouse doth she embrace!

She embraceth him, who is to be loved above all that is beloved, and above all things that may be desired.

Let heaven and earth and all the hosts of them be silent in thy presence: for what praise and beauty soever they have, it is received from thy bounty, and shall not equal the beauty of thy name, of whose wisdom there is no number.

C H A P. IV.

That many gifts are bestowed upon them that communicate devoutly.

The voice of the disciple.

MY LORD GOD, prevent thy servant with the blessings of thy sweetness, that I may approach worthily and devoutly to thy glorious sacrament:

Stir up my heart unto thee, and deliver me from a heavy numbness of mind.

Visit me with thy salvation, that I may taste

in *spirit* thy sweetness, which plentifully lieth hid in this *sacrament*, as in a *fountain*.

Enlighten also my eyes to behold so great a *mystery*, and strengthen me to believe it with *steddy faith*.

For it is thy *work*, and not man's *power*, thy sacred institution, not man's *invention*.

For no man is of himself able to comprehend and understand these things, which surpass the understanding even of angels.

What therefore shall I, unworthy *sinner*, *dust* and *ashes*, be able to comprehend of so high and sacred a *mystery*!

2. O LORD, in the simplicity of my *heart*, with a good and firm *faith*, and at thy *commandment*, I come unto thee with *hope* and *reverence*, and do truly believe that thou art present in this *sacrament*.

Thy will is, that I receive thee, and that by love I unite myself unto thee.

Wherefore I implore thy *mercy*, and crave thy special *grace*, that I may wholly melt and overflow with love unto thee; and hereafter *not* seek any *comfort* out of thee.

For this most high and worthy *sacrament*, is the health of the *soul* and *body*, the remedy of all spiritual weakness; hereby my *vices* are cured, my *passions* bridled, *temptations* overcome or weakened, greater *grace* is infused, *virtue* begun increased, *faith* confirmed, *hope* strengthened, and *love* inflamed and enlarged.

3. For thou hast bestowed, and still often dost bestow many *benefits* in this *sacrament* upon thy

thy beloved ones that communicate devoutly,
O my God, the Protector of my *soul*, the Re-
pairer of human frailty, and the Giver of all
inward *comfort*.

Thou impartest unto them much *comfort* a-
gainst sundry *tribulations*;

Thou liftest them up from the depth of their
own *dejectedness*, to hope in thy protection;

Thou dost inwardly refresh and enlighten
them with new *grace*; so that they, who, be-
fore *communicating*, felt themselves heavy and
unaffected, afterwards being refreshed with hea-
venly *meat* and *drink*, find in themselves a great
change to the better.

And in such a way of dispensation thou deal-
est with thy *elect*, that they may truly acknow-
ledge and patiently prove, how great their own
infirmity is, and what *goodness* and *grace* they
receive from thee.

For they of themselves are cold, dull, and
undeavour; but by thee they are made fervent,
cheerful, and full of *devotion*.

For who is there, that approaching humbly
unto the *fountain* of sweetness, doth not carry
away from thence at least some little sweetness?

Or who standing by a great fire, receiveth
not some small heat thereby?

Thou art a *Fountain* always full and over-
flowing, a *Fire* ever burning and never decaying.

4. Wherefore, if I cannot draw out of the
full *fountain* itself, nor drink my fill; I will
notwithstanding set my lips to the mouth of
this *heavenly conduit*, that I may draw from
thence

thence at least some small drop to refresh my thirst; and not be wholly dried up.

And though I be not altogether heavenly, nor so inflamed as the *cherubims* and *seraphims*; notwithstanding I will endeavour after *devotion*, and prepare my heart to obtain some small spark of *divine fire*, by humble receiving of this enlivening *sacrament*.

And whatsoever is wanting in me, O merciful JESUS, most holy SAVIOUR, do thou bountifully and graciously supply, who hast vouchsafed to call all unto thee, *Come unto me, all ye that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*

5. I indeed labour in the sweat of my *brows*, I am vexed with *grief of heart*, I am burthened with *sins*, I am troubled with *temptations*, I am entangled and oppressed with many evil *passions*, and there is none to help me, none to deliver and save me, but thou, O LORD, my SAVIOUR, to whom I commit myself, and all that is mine, that thou mayest keep me and bring me to *life everlasting*.

Receive me to the *honour* and *glory* of thy *name*, who hast prepared thy *body* and *blood* to be my *meat* and *drink*.

Grant, LORD GOD, my SAVIOUR; that by frequenting thy *mysteries*, the fervour of my *devotion* may continually increase.

C H A P. V.

Of the dignity of this sacrament, and of the ministerial function.

The voice of CHRIST.

IF thou hadst the purity of an angel, and the sanctity of St. John Baptist, thou wert not worthy to receive or celebrate this sacrament :

For no man can deserve to consecrate the sacrament of CHRIST, and receive for food the bread of angels,

A great mystery, and great is the dignity of the ministers of GOD, to whom is given that which is not given to the angels.

For priests alone duly ordained in the Church, have power to consecrate the body of CHRIST.

The priest is the minister of GOD, using the sword of GOD, by GOD's commandment and appointment ;

But GOD is there the principal Author, and invisible worker ; to whom is subject all that he pleaseth, and all that he commandeth doth obey.

2. Thou oughtest therefore more to believe GOD Almighty in this most excellent sacrament, than thine own sense, or any visible sign, and therefore thou art to come unto this mystery with fear and reverence.

Consider attentively, whose minister thou art made by the imposition of the hands of the bishop.

Behold thou art made a priest, and consecrated to celebrate : see now that thou faithfully and devoutly offer this sacrifice to GOD

in due time, and behave thyself unrepreevably.

Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but art now bound with a straiter band of *discipline*, and art more highly obliged to excel in *holiness*,

A *minister* ought to be adorned with all *virtues*, and to give an example of good life to others.

His conversation should not be according to the ordinary way of men, but like to the *angels* in *heaven*, or to the *saints* on earth.

3. A *minister* is the *vicegerent* of **CHRIST**, to pray humbly with a prostrate mind unto **GOD** for himself and the whole people;

Neither ought he to cease from *prayer*, till he obtain *grace* and *mercy*.

When a *minister* celebrates, he honoureth **GOD**, rejoiceth the *angels*, edifieth the *Church*, helpeth the members of it, and maketh himself partaker of all good.

C H A P. VI.

An enquiry concerning the exercise before the holy communion.

The voice of the disciple.

WHEN I weigh thy worthiness, O LORD, and my unworthiness, I tremble, and am confounded.

For if I come not unto thee, I fly from life; and if I unworthily intrude myself, I incur thy displeasure.

What therefore shall I do, my **GOD**, my Helper and Counsellor in necessity?

2. Teach me the right way, appoint me some exercise suitable to this *holy communion* :

For it is good for me, to know how I should reverently and religiously prepare my *heart* for thee, for the profitable receiving of thy *sacrament*, or for the celebrating of so great and *divine a sacrifice*.

C H A P. VII.

Of the examining our conscience, and purpose of amendment.

The voice of the beloved.

ABOVE all things, the *minister* of **G O D** ought to come to celebrate, and receive this *sacrament*, with great humility of *heart*, and lowly reverence, with a full *faith*, and a pious intending of the *honour* of **G O D**.

Examine diligently thy *conscience*, and to thy power purge and cleanse it with true *contrition* and humble *confession*; so as there may be nothing burdensome unto thee, or that may breed in thee remorse of *conscience*, and hinder thy free access.

Repent thee of all thy *sins* in general, and in particular bewail and lament thy *daily offences*.

And, if thou hast time, confess unto **G O D**, in the secret of thy *heart* all the miseries of thy *disordered passions*.

2. Lament and grieve, that thou art yet so carnal, so worldly, so unmortified as to thy *passions*, so full of the motions of *concupiscence*.

So unwatchful over thy outward *senses*, so often entangled with many vain *imaginings*;

So vehemently inclined to outward *things*, so negligent of interior;

So prone to laughter and levity, so indisposed to tears and compunction;

So prompt to ease and pleasures of the *flesh*, so dull to necessary rigour and fervency of spirit;

So curious to hear *news*, and see beautiful *things*, so slack to embrace what is low and abject;

So desirous of abundance, so niggardly in giving, so tenacious in keeping;

So inconsiderate in *speech*, so incontinent as to *silence*;

So loose in *manners*, so importune in *action*;

So engaged in *eating*, so deaf to the *word of GOD*;

So hasty to *rest*, so slow to *labour*;

So watchful to *sleep*, so drowsy to *watch* in the service of *GOD*;

So negligent and cold in *prayer*, so undevout in celebrating, so dry in receiving;

So quickly distracted, so seldom wholly recollected;

So suddenly moved to *anger*, so apt to take displeasure against another;

So prone to judge, so severe to reprehend;

So joyful in *prosperity*, so weak in *adversity*;

So often purposing much good, and yet performing little.

3. These and other thy defects being confessed, and bewailed with *sorrow* and a great dislike of thine own *infirmity*, make a firm purpose continually to amend thy *life*, and

to endeavour still after a farther progress in *holiness*.

Then, with full resignation, and with thy whole will, offer up thyself a perpetual sacrifice to the *honour* of my name on the altar of thy *heart*, faithfully committing thy *body* and *soul* unto me ;

That so thou mayest come worthily to celebrate this *eucharistical sacrifice*, and to receive profitably the *sacrament* of my *body*.

4. For a man hath no oblation more worthy, nor greater, for the destroying of *sin*, than to offer up himself unto GOD purely and wholly in the *holy communion*.

And when a man shall have done what lieth in him, and shall be truly *penitent*, whensoever he shall come to me for *pardon* and *grace*, as I live, saith the LORD, who will not the death of a *sinner*, but rather that he be converted and live, I will not remember his *sins* any more, but they shall all be forgiven him.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the oblation of C H R I S T on the Cross, and resignation of ourselves.

The voice of the beloved.

As I willingly offered up myself unto GOD my Father for thy *sins*, my hands being stretched forth on the *Cross*, and my *body* naked, so that nothing remained in me that was not wholly turned into a *sacrifice*; for the appeasing of the *divine Majesty*:

So oughtest thou also to offer up thyself willingly

ingly unto me every day, as a *pure* and *holy* oblation, with all thy *might* and *affections*, in as hearty a manner as thou canst.

What do I require of thee more than that thou entirely resign thyself unto me?

Whatsoever thou givest besides thyself is of no account in my sight; for I seek not thy gifts, but thyself.

2. As it would not suffice thee to have all things besides me; so neither can it please me, whatsoever thou givest, if thou offerest not thyself.

Offer up thyself unto me, and give thyself wholly for GOD, and thy offering shall be accepted.

Behold I offered up myself wholly unto my *Father* for thee, that I might be wholly thine, and thou remain mine.

But, if thou abidest in thyself, and dost not offer thyself up freely unto my will, thy *oblation* is not entire, neither will the union between us be perfect.

Therefore a free offering up of thyself into the hands of GOD ought to go before all thy *actions*, if thou wilt obtain freedom and grace.

For this cause so few become illuminated and inwardly free, because they cannot wholly deny themselves.

My saying is unalterable, *Unless a man forsake all, he cannot be my disciple.*

Therefore, if thou desirest to be my *disciple*, offer up thyself unto me with thy whole *affections*.

C H A P. IX.

That we ought to offer up ourselves, and all that is ours, unto G O D, and to pray for all.

The voice of the disciple.

THINE, O LORD, are all things that are in heaven, and in earth.

I desire to offer up myself unto thee, as a free *oblation*, and to remain always thine.

O LORD, in the simplicity of my *heart* I offer myself unto thee this day, for a *sacrifice* of perpetual *praise*, to be thy *servant* for ever.

Receive me with this holy *oblation* of thy *precious body*; and may this be for my salvation and the salvation of all thy *people*.

2. I offer unto thee, O LORD, all my *sins* and *offences*, which I have committed before thee and thy holy *angels*, from the day wherein I first could *sin*, to this hour, upon thy *merciful altar*.

Consume and burn them all with the *fire* of thy *love*, and wash out all the stains of my *sins*.

O cleanse my *conscience* from all *offences*, and restore to me again thy *grace*, which I lost by *sin*, fully forgiving all my *offences*, and receiving me mercifully to the *kiss* of *peace*.

3. What can I do for my *sins*, but humbly confess and bewail them, and incessantly intreat thy favour?

I beseech thee hear me graciously, when I stand before thee, O my God.

All my *sins* are very displeasing unto me. I will never commit them any more; but I

bewail, and will bewail them as long as I live, and am purposed to repent, and, according to the utmost of my power, to please thee.

Forgive me, O GOD, forgive me my *sins* for thy holy name's sake :

Save my *soul*, which thou hast redeemed with thy most *precious blood*.

Behold, I commit myself to thy *mercy*, I resign myself over into thy *hands*.

Do with me according to thy *goodness*, not according to my *wickedness* and *iniquity*.

4. I offer up also unto thee all whatsoever is good in me, although it be very little imperfect, that thou mayest *amend* and *sanctify* it.

That thou mayest make it grateful and acceptable unto thee, and always perfect it more and more ;

And bring me also, who am a *slothful* and *unprofitable creature*, to a *good* and *blessed* end.

5. I offer up also unto thee all the pious desires of devout persons, the necessities of my *parents*, *friends*, *brethren*, *sisters*, and of all those that are dear unto me, and that have done good either to myself or to others for thy love ;

And that have desired me to *pray* for them and all theirs : that they all may receive the help of thy *grace* and *comfort*, *protection* from *dangers*, *deliverance* from *pain* ; and being freed from all *evils*, may joyfully give worthy thanks unto thee.

6. I offer up also unto thee my *prayers* especially for them who have in any thing *wronged*, or *grieved*, *slandered* me, or have done me any *damage* or *displeasure* ;

And

And for all those also, whom I have at any time troubled, grieved, or scandalized by words, or deeds, wittingly or at unawares; that it may please thee to forgive us all our sins and offences, one against another.

Take, O LORD, from our hearts all jealousy, indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoever may impair charity and lessen brotherly love.

Have mercy, O LORD, have mercy on those that crave thy mercy: give grace unto them that stand in need thereof, and grant that we may be counted worthy to enjoy thy grace, and to attain to life everlasting. Amen.

C H A P. X.

That the holy communion is not lightly to be forborne.

The voice of the beloved.

THOU oughtest often to have recourse to the fountain of grace and of divine mercy, to the fountain of goodness and all purity; that thou mayest be healed of thy sins and passions, and be made more strong and vigilant against all the temptations and deceits of the devil.

The enemy, knowing the great good and advantage of the holy communion, endeavouring by all means and occasions to withdraw and hinder faithful and devout persons from it.

2. Some, when they purpose to fit themselves for the holy communion, suffer worse assaults of the devil.

For that wicked spirit (as it is written in Job) cometh among the sons of God, to trouble

ble them according to his accustomed *malice*, or to make them over-fearful and perplexed, that so he may diminish their *affection*, or by *subtil assaults* take away their *faith*;

If haply they may either altogether forbear the *communion*, or at least come unto it coldly.

But there is no heed to be taken of his *frauds* and *suggestions*, be they never so *filthy* and *bi-deous*; but all is to be turned back upon his own head :

Thou oughtest to contemn and scorn him, a miserable *wretch*, and not to omit the *holy communion* for his *assaults*, and the *troubles* which he raiseth.

3. Often also an excessive care to obtain *devotion*, and anxiety about confessing thy *sins* hindereth thee.

Follow herein the counsel of the *wise*, and put away all doubt and scruple; for it is an hindrance to the *grace* of GOD, and destroyeth *devotion*.

For every small vexation and trouble omit not the *holy communion*;

But the sooner confess thy *sins*, and willingly forgive others their *offences* against thee;

And if thou hast offended any, humbly crave pardon, and GOD will readily forgive thee.

4. What availeth it to delay long the *confession* of thy *sins*, or to defer the *holy communion*?

Purge thyself with speed, spit out the venom presently, make haste to apply this *sovereign remedy*, and thou shalt find it to be better with thee, than if thou hadst deferred it.

If thou omittest it to day for this cause, perhaps to morrow some greater will fall out; and so thou mayest be hindered a long time, and become more unfit.

With all possible speed shake off this *heaviness* and *sloth*, for it will not avail thee to continue long in disquiet, and for daily impediments to withdraw thyself from the *divine mysteries*.

Yea, it is very prejudicial to defer the *communion* long, for this usually causeth a great lukewarmness and numbness.

Alas! some cold and careless *people* willingly defer it, lest they should be engaged to keep a stricter watch over themselves.

5. O how little is their *love*, and how weak is their *devotion*, that so easily postpone the *body communion*!

How happy is he and acceptable to God, who so lives, and keepeth his *conscience* in such purity, that he is ready and desirous to communicate every day, if it might be done.

If one doth sometimes abstain out of *humility*, or by reason of some lawful impediment, he is to be commended for the reverence which therein he sheweth.

But if numbness steal upon him, he must stir up himself, and do what lieth in him, and God will assist his *desire* and good will, which God doth chiefly respect.

6. And when he is unavoidably hindered, he must yet always have a desire, and a pious intention to *communicate*, and so he shall not lose the fruit of the *sacrament*. For every good man

man may every day and hour profitably and without let, receive CHRIST spiritually; and yet on certain days, and at times appointed, he ought to receive *sacramentally*, with an *affectionate reverence*, the *body of his Redeemer*, and rather seek the *honour and glory of God*, than his own *comfort*. For he communicateth *mystically* and is invisibly fed, as often as he devoutly calleth to mind the *mystery of the incarnation*, and the *passion of CHRIST*, and is inflamed with his *love*.

7. He that prepareth not himself, but when a *festival* draweth near, or when custom compelleth him thereunto, shall usually be unprepared for it.

Blessed is he, that offereth himself up as a *sacrifice* to the LORD, as often as he *celebrates* or *communicates*.

Be not too slow nor too hasty in celebrating, but keep the accustomed manner of those with whom thou livest.

Thou oughtest not to be tedious and troublesome to others, but observe the received custom, according to the appointment of thy *superiors*: and rather suit thyself to the profit of others, than to thine own *devotion* or *desire*.

CHAPTER XI.

That the body of CHRIST, and the holy scripture, are most necessary unto a faithful soul.

The voice of the disciple.

O Sweetest LORD JESUS, how great sweetness hath an *holy soul* that feasteth with thee
in

in thy banquet, where there is set no other food to be eaten but thyself, her only beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart!

And verily it would be a sweet thing unto me to pour out tears from the very bottom of my heart in thy presence: and with holy *Magdalene* to wash thy feet with my tears.

But where is this devotion? Where is this so plentiful shedding of holy tears?

Surely in the sight of thee and thy holy angels my whole heart should be inflamed and even weep for joy.

For I enjoy thee in the sacrament truly present, tho' hidden under another representation.

2. For to behold thee even in thine own divine brightness, mine eyes would not be able to endure it!

Neither could the whole world stand in the brightness of the glory of thy Majesty.

I really enjoy and adore him, whom the angels adore in heaven;

But I, as yet, by faith, they by sight, and without a veil.

I ought to be content with the light of true faith, and to walk therein, until the day of everlasting brightness break forth, and the shadows of figures pass away.

But when that which is perfect shall come, the use of sacraments shall cease.

For the blessed in heavenly glory need not any sacramental remedy, but rejoice without end in the presence of God.

Behold.

Beholding his *glory* face to face, and being transformed from *glory* to *glory* in the image of the incomprehensible *Deity*, they taste the Word of GOD made *flesh*, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaineth for ever.

3. Thou art my *witness*, O GOD, that nothing can *comfort* me, no *creature* can give me rest, but thou, my GOD, whom I desire to behold everlastingly.

But this is not possible, whilst I remain in this mortal life.

Therefore I must frame myself to much *patience*, and submit myself to thee in all my *desires*.

For thy *saints* also, O LORD, who now rejoice with thee, whilst they lived, expected in *faith* and great *patience* the coming of thy *glory*. What they believed, I believe; what they hoped for, I also hope for: whither they are come, I trust I shall come by thy *grace*.

In the mean time I will go forward in *faith*, strengthened by their examples:

I have also thy *holy book* for my *comfort* and guide, and, above all these, thy most holy *body* for a remedy and refuge.

4. For I perceive two things to be especially necessary for me in this *life*, without which it would be insupportable.

Whilst I am kept in the *prison* of this *body*, I acknowledge myself to need two things, to wit, *food* and *light*.

Thou hast therefore given unto me, a weak *creature*, thy sacred *body* and *blood* for the nourishment

ishment of my *soul* and *body*; and thou hast set thy word as a *light* unto my *feet* :

Without these two I could not well live.

For the word of GOD is the light of the *soul*, and thy *sacrament* the *bread of life*.

These also may be called the two *tables*, set on the one side and on the other, in the store-house of the *holy Church*.

One is the *holy altar*, having the *holy bread*, that is the precious *body* of CHRIST :

The other is that of the *divine law*, containing *holy doctrine*, teaching the true *faith*, and certainly leading to that within [the veil, where is the *Holy of Holies*.

Thanks be unto thee, O LORD JESUS, the light of *everlasting light*, for the *table* of *holy doctrine*, which thou hast afforded us by thy *servants*, the *prophets* and *apostles* and other *teachers*.

5. Thanks be unto thee, O thou *Creator* and *Redeemer* of man, who, to manifest thy *love* to the whole *world*, hast prepared a great *supper*, wherein thou hast set before us to be eaten (not the typical *lamb*, but) thy most sacred *body* and *blood*.

Rejoicing all the *faithful* with thy *holy banquet*, and replenishing them to the full with thy *cup* of *salvation*, in which are all the delights of *paradise*; and the *holy angels* do feast with us, but yet with a more happy sweetness.

6. O how great and honourable is the office of GOD's *ministers*, to whom it is given with sacred words to consecrate (the *sacrament* of the

the LORD (of glory) with their lips to bless, with their hands to hold, with their mouth to receive; and also to administer it to others!

O how clean ought to be those hands, how pure that mouth, how holy that body, how unspotted that heart, where the Author of purity so often entereth!

Nothing but what is holy, no word but good and profitable, ought to proceed from his mouth, who so often receiveth the sacrament of CHRIST.

7. Simple and chaste ought to be the eyes that use to behold the body of CHRIST;

Pure and lifted up to heaven should be the hands that use to receive the Creator of heaven and earth.

Unto the priests especially it is said in the law, Be ye holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

8. Assist us, Almighty GOD, with thy grace, that we, who have undertaken the office of priesthood, may serve thee worthily and devoutly in all purity and good conscience.

And, if we cannot live in so great innocency as we ought, grant us at least duty to bewail the sins which we have committed; and in the spirit of humility, and with the full purpose of our hearts, to serve thee hereafter more fervently.

C H A P. XII.

That he, who is to communicate, ought to prepare himself with great diligence.

The voice of the beloved.

I AM the lover of purity, and the giver of all holiness.

I seek a pure *heart*, and there is the place of my *rest*.

Make ready and adorn for me the great *chamber*, and I will keep with thee the passover amongst my *disciples*.

If thou wilt have me come unto thee, and remain with thee, purge out the old *leaven*, and make clean the *habitation* of thy *heart* :

Shut out the whole *world*, and all the throng of *sins*: sit like a *sparrow* alone upon the house-top, and think of thy *offences* in the bitterness of thy *soul*.

For every lover prepareth the best and fairest room for his *beloved*: and herein is known the *affection* of him that entertaineth his *beloved*.

2. Know thou notwithstanding, that the merit of no action of thine is able to make this preparation sufficient, although thou shouldest prepare thyself a whole year together, and think of nothing else.

Thou art, of my mere *grace* and *favour*, suffered to come to my *table*.

Like a *beggar* invited to *dinner*, to a rich man, who hath nothing else to return him for his *benefits*, but to humble himself and give him thanks.

Do what lieth in thee, and do it diligently; not for custom, nor for necessity, but with fear and reverence, and *affection*, receive thy beloved LORD GOD, who vouchsafest to come unto thee.

I am He that hath called thee, I have com-
 Y manded

manded it to be done, I will supply what is wanting in thee: come and receive me.

3. When I bestow the *grace of devotion*, give thanks to thy GOD; for it is given thee, not for that thou art worthy, but because I have *mercy* on thee.

If thou had it not, but dost feel thyself dry: continue in *prayer*, sigh and knock, and give not over until thou art meet to receive some crumb or drop of saving *grace*.

Thou hast need of me, not I of thee.

Neither comest thou to sanctify me, but I come to sanctify and improve thee in virtue.

Thou comest that thou mayest be sanctified by me, and united unto me, that thou mayest receive new *grace*, and be inflamed anew to amendment.

Neglect not this *grace*, but prepare thy heart with all diligence, and receive thy beloved into thy *soul*.

But thou oughtest not only to prepare thyself to *devotion* before *communion*, but carefully also to conserve thyself therein, after thou hast received.

Neither is the careful guard of thyself afterwards less required, than devout preparation before.

For a good guard afterwards is the best preparation again for the obtaining of greater *grace*.

A man becometh therefore very indisposed for this, if he presently pour himself out to outward *comfort*.

Beware of much talk, remain in secret, and enjoy thy GOD.

For thou hast him, whom all the *world* cannot take from thee.

I am He, to whom thou oughtest wholly to give thyself, that so thou mayest live hereafter, not in thyself, but in me, without all folicitude.

C H A P. XIII.

That a devout soul ought to desire with her whole heart, to be united unto CHRIST in the sacrament.

The voice of the disciple.

WHO will give me this, O LORD, to find thee alone, and open my whole *heart* unto thee, and enjoy thee as my *soul* desireth?

And that no man may look towards me, nor any *creature* move or regard me, but thou alone mayest speak unto me, and I to thee, as the *beloved* is wont to speak to his *beloved*, and a *friend* to banquet with his *friend*?

This I pray for, this I desire, that I may be wholly united unto thee, and may withdraw my *heart* from all created things.

That I may, by often communicating, learn more and more to relish heavenly and eternal things.

Ah LORD GOD, when shall I be wholly united to thee, and swallowed in thee, and altogether forgetful of myself?

Thou in me, and I in thee, and so grant us both to continue in one.

2. Verily, thou art my *beloved*, the choicest amongst thousands, in whom my *soul* is well pleased to dwell all the days of her *life*.

Verily, thou 'art my *peace-maker*, in whom is great *peace* and true *rest*, without whom is *labour* and *sorrow* and infinite *misery*.

Verily, thou art a **GOD** that hidest thyself, and thy counsel is not with the *wicked*, but thy speech is with the humble and simple of *heart*.

O **LORD**, how sweet is thy *Spirit*, who to shew thy sweetness towards thy *children*, vouchsafest to feed them with the bread which descended from *heaven*, and is full of all sweetness!

Verily, there is no other nation so great, that hath **GOD** so nigh unto them, as thou our **GOD** art present to all thy faithful ones.

Unto whom, for their daily *comfort*, and for the raising up their *hearts* to *heaven*, thou givest thyself to be eaten and enjoyed.

3. For what other nation is there so honoured, as the Christian people?

Or what creature under *heaven* so beloved, as a devout *soul*, to whom **GOD** himself cometh to feed her with his glorious *flesh*?

O unspeakable *grace*! O admirable *condescension*! O infinite *love* singularly bestowed upon man!

But what shall I give unto the **LORD** in return of his *grace*, for so eminent an expression of love?

There is nothing more acceptable that I am able to give, than to give my *heart* wholly to my **GOD**, and to unite it closely unto him.

Then shall my inward parts rejoice, when my *soul* shall be perfectly united to **GOD**:

Then he will say unto me: if thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee. And

And I will answer him: | Vouchsafe, O LORD, to remain with me, and I will gladly be with thee.

This is my whole desire, that my *heart* be united unto thee.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the fervent desire of so devout persons, to receive the body of CHRIST.

The voice of the disciple,

O HOW great is thy goodness, O LORD, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee?

When I remember some devout persons who come unto thy *sacrament*, O LORD, with the greatest devotion and affection, I am confounded, and blush within myself, that I come so heavily and coldly to thy *table*.

That I remain so dry and without hearty affection, that I am not wholly inflamed in thy presence, my GOD, nor so earnestly drawn and affected, as many devout persons have been, who, out of a vehement desire of the *communion*, and a feeling affection of *heart*, could not contain themselves from weeping;

But with desire both of *soul* and *body*, they earnestly longed after thee, O GOD, the living *Fountain*.

Being no-wise able to bear or satisfy their hunger, but by receiving thy *body* with all joy and spiritual greediness.

2. O the most ardent *faith* of those persons! a clear argument of thy sacred *presence*.

For they truly know their LORD, in the breaking of *bread*, whose *heart* burneth so mightily within them, whilst thou, O blessed JESUS, conversest with them.

Such *desire* and *devotion*, so vehement *love* and *servency*, are often far from me.

Be merciful unto me, good JESUS, sweet and gracious LORD, and grant me, thy poor, needy creature, to feel sometimes at least, in this *holy communion*, somewhat of thy tender, cordial affection.

That my *faith* may be more strengthened, my *hope* in thy goodness increased, and that my *love* once perfectly inflamed, after the tasting of heavenly *Manna*, may never decay.

3. Thy *mercy*, O LORD, is able to give me the *grace* I desire, and to visit me most mercifully with the *spirit* of servour when it shall please thee.

For though I burn not with so great desire as those that are so singularly devoted to thee: yet notwithstanding by thy *grace* I desire to have this great inflamed desire;

Praying and craving that I may partake with all such thy fervent *lovers*, and be numbered among them.

C H A P. XV.

That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility and renouncing ourselves.

The voice of the beloved.

THOU oughtest to seek the *grace* of devotion fervently, to ask it earnestly, to expect it patiently and with confidence, to receive it gratefully, to keep it humbly, to work with it di-

ligerly, and to commit the time and manner of this heavenly visitation to GOD, until it shall please him to come unto thee.

Thou oughtest chiefly to humble thyself, when thou feelest inwardly little or no *devotion*; and yet not to be too much dejected, nor to grieve inordinately.

GOD often giveth in a moment, that which he hath a long time denied :

He giveth sometimes in the end that which in the beginning of *prayer* he deferred to grant.

2. If *grace* were always presently given, and ever at hand with a wish, weak man could not well bear it.

Therefore the *grace* of *devotion* is to be expected with *steddy hope* and *humble patience*;

Yet impute it to thyself and thy *sins*, when it is not given thee, or when it is secretly taken away.

It is sometimes a little thing that hindereth and hideth *grace* from us.

If it may be called little, and not rather great, that hindereth so great good.

But if thou remove this, be it great or small, and perfectly overcome it, thou shalt have thy desire.

3. For as soon as ever thou hast delivered thyself to GOD with thy whole heart, and seeketh not this or that, for thine own pleasure or will, but fixest thyself wholly upon him, thou shalt find thyself united and at peace :

For nothing will relish so well, and please thee so much, as what pleases the *divine will*.

Whosoever therefore, with a single heart, listeth up his intention to GOD, and purgeth himself from all inordinate *love* or dislike of any created thing, he shall be fit to receive *grace*, and meet for the gift of *devotion*.

For the LORD bestows his blessings there, where he findeth the vessels empty.

And the more perfectly one forsaketh these low things; and the more he dieth to himself by contempt of himself; the more speedily *grace* shall come, and enter in the more plentifully, and the higher it raiseth the free *heart*.

14. Then shall he see, and be filled, and wonder, and his heart shall be enlarged within him, because the hand of the LORD is with him, and he hath put himself wholly into his hands for ever.

Behold, so shall the man be blessed, that seeketh GOD with his whole *heart*, and busieth not his *soul* in vain.

This man obtaineth a high degree of *divine union*, in receiving the holy *eucharist*.

Because he respecteth not his own *devotion* and *comfort*; but, above all *devotion* and *comfort*, the *honour* and *glory* of GOD.

C H A P. XVI.

That we ought to lay open our necessities to CHRIST, and crave his *grace*.

The voice of the disciple.

O MOST sweet and loving LORD, whom I now desire to receive with all *devotion*, thou knowest my *infirmity*, and the *necessity* which
which

which I endure, with how many *sins* and *evils* I am oppressed, how often I am grieved, tempted, troubled, and defied.

I come unto thee for remedy, I crave of thee *comfort* and *succour*.

I speak to him that knoweth all things, to whom all my inward parts are open, and who alone can perfectly comfort and help me.

Thou knowest what good things I stand most in need of, and how poor I am in virtues.

Behold, I stand before thee poor and naked, calling for *grace*, and craving *mercy*.

Refresh thy hungry beggar, inflame my coldness with the fire of thy *love*: enlighten my blindness with the brightness of thy *presence*.

Turn all earthly things to me into bitterness, all things grievous and cross into *patience*, all created things into *contempt* and *oblivion*.

Lift up my *heart* unto thee in *heaven*, and suffer me not to wander upon *earth*.

Bethou only sweet unto me from henceforth for evermore.

For thou only art my *meat* and my *drink*, my *love* and my *joy*, my *sweetness* and all my *good*.

3. O that with thy *presence* thou wouldest wholly inflame, burn, and transform me into thyself;

That I might be made one *spirit* with thee by the *grace* of inward *union* and by the meltings of ardent *love*!

Suffer me not to go from thee hungry and thirsty; but deal mercifully with me, as thou hast often dealt wonderfully with thy *saints*.

What

What marvel is it, if I should be wholly inflamed by thee, and die to myself.

Since thou art a fire always burning and never decaying, *love* purifying the *heart*, and enlightening the *understanding*.

C H A P. XVII.

*Of fervent love and vehement desire to receive
CHRIST.*

The voice of the disciple.

WITH great *devotion* and ardent *love*, with the *affection* and *fervour* of my whole heart I desire to receive thee, O LORD, as many *saints* and devout *persons* have desired thee, when they received thy *sacrament*, who were most pleasing unto thee in *holiness* of *life*, and most fervent in *devotion*.

O my GOD, my everlasting *love*; my whole *good*, my never-ending *happiness*, I would gladly receive thee with the most vehement desire, and most worthy reverence that any of the *saints* ever had, or could feel.

2. And although I be unworthy to have all those feelings of *devotion*, yet I offer unto thee the whole *affection* of my *heart*, as if I alone had all those highly pleasing inflamed *desires*.

Yea, and whatsoever an holy mind can conceive and desire, all this, with the greatest reverence and most inward affection, I offer and present unto thee.

I desire to reserve nothing to myself, but freely and most willingly to sacrifice myself and all mine unto thee.

My LORD GOD, my *Creator* and my *Redeemer*: I desire to receive thee this day with such *affection, reverence, praise and honour*, with such *gratitude, worthiness and love*, with such *faith, hope and purity*, as thy most *holy mother*, the glorious virgin *Mary* received, and desired thee, when she humbly and devoutly answered the angel, who declared unto her the *mystery of the incarnation*, *Behold the handmaid of the LORD*, let it be done unto me according to thy word.

3. And as thy blessed *fore-runner*, the most excellent among the *saints*, *John Baptist*, leaped for joy, by reason of the *HOLY GHOST*, whilst he was yet shut up in his *mother's womb*;

And afterwards seeing *JESUS* walking amongst men, humbling himself deeply, said with devout affection, *The friend of the Bridegroom that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy for the voice of the Bridegroom*: so I also wish to be inflamed with great and holy *desires*, and to offer myself up to thee with my whole *heart*.

Wherefore I offer also and present unto thee the *joys, fervent affections, extasies*, and *supernal illuminations and heavenly visions* of all devout hearts, with all the *virtues and praises* celebrated by all *creatures in heaven and earth*, for myself, and all such as are commended to me in *prayer*, that by all thou mayest be worthily *praised and glorified for ever*.

4. Receive, my LORD GOD, my *wishes and desires* of giving thee infinite *praise and immense blessing*, which, according to the m

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tude of thy unspeakable greatness, are most justly due unto thee.

These I yield thee, and desire to yield thee every day and moment; I do intreat and invite all heavenly *minds*, and all thy devout *servants*, to give *thanks* and *praises* together with me.

5. Let all *people*, *tribes*, and *tongues* praise thee, and *magnify* thy *holy* and *sweet name*, with the highest joy and most fervent *devotion*;

And let all, that reverently and devoutly celebrate thy most *high sacrament*, and receive it with full *faith*, find *grace* and *mercy* at thy *hands*, and pray humbly for me a sinful *creature*.

And when they shall have obtained their desired *devotion* and joyful *union*, and depart from thy sacred *heavenly table*, well comforted, and marvellously refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poor *soul*.

C H A P. XVIII.

That a man be not a curious enquirer concerning the sacrament, but an humble follower of CHRIST, submitting his sense to faith.

The voice of the beloved.

THOU oughtest to beware of curious and unprofitable searching into this most profound *sacrament*, if thou wilt not be plunged in the depth of doubts.

He that is a searcher into my *Majesty*, shall be oppressed by my *Glory*.

GOD is able to work more than man can understand.

A pious and humble enquiry after truth is tolerable, so it be always ready to be taught, and to endeavour to walk in the sound *doctrine* of the *fatbers*.

2. Blessed is that simplicity, that forsaketh the difficult ways of *controversy*, and goeth on in the plain and sure path of GOD's *commandments*.

Many have lost *devotion*, whilst they would search after high things.

Faith and a good *life* are required at thy hands, not height of *understanding* nor a diving deep into the *mysteries* of GOD.

If thou dost not *understand*, nor *comprehend* those things that are under thee, how shouldst thou comprehend those that are above thee?

Submit thyself to GOD, and let thy sense be subject to *faith*; and the light of knowledge shall be given thee in that degree, as shall be profitable and necessary for thee.

3. Some are grievously tempted about *faith* and the *sacrament*; but this is not to be imputed to them, but to the *enemy*.

Be not thou *anxious*, nor dispute with thy thoughts, neither do thou give answer to the doubts cast in by the *devil*;

But believe the words of GOD, believe his *apostles* and *prophets*, and the wicked *enemy* will fly from thee.

It is often very profitable to the servant of GOD to suffer such things.

For the *devil* tempteth not *unbelievers* *sinners*, whom he already securely possess

but he tempteth and vexeth the faithful and devout many ways.

4. Go forward therefore with a sincere and undoubting *faith*, and come to the *sacrament* with unfeigned reverence.

And whatsoever thou art not able to understand, commit securely to *Almighty God*.

God deceiveth thee not; he is deceived that trusteth too much to himself.

God walketh with the simple, and revealeth himself to the humble.

He giveth understanding to the little ones, openeth perception to pure minds, and hideth grace from the curious and proud.

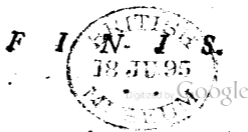
Human reason is weak, and may be deceived; but true *faith* cannot be deceived.

5. All reason and natural search ought to follow *faith*, and not to go before it, nor infringe it.

For *faith* and *love* are here predominant, and work in a hidden manner in this most *holy* and excellent *sacrament*.

God, who is everlasting, immense, and of infinite power, doth great and inscrutable things in *heaven* and in *earth*, and there is no searching out his wonderful *works*.

If the *works* of God were such, as might be easily comprehended by human reason, they could not be called wonderful and unspeakable.



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