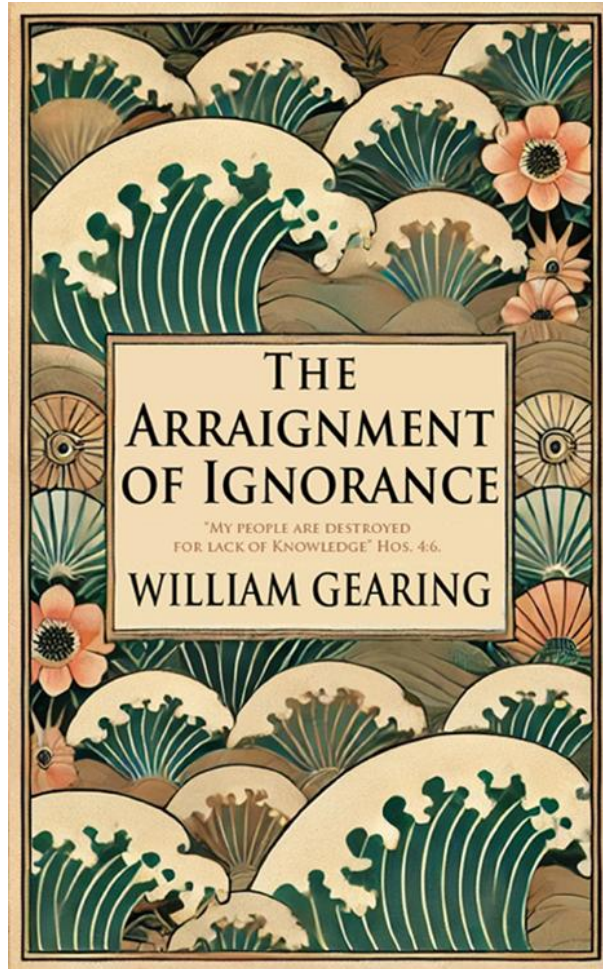


The book cover features a repeating pattern of stylized, overlapping waves in shades of green and cream, interspersed with stylized flowers in orange and brown tones. The central text is enclosed in a rectangular frame.

THE ARRAIGNMENT OF IGNORANCE

"MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED
FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE" HOS. 4:6.

WILLIAM GEARING



The Arraignment of Ignorance

William Gearing

Monergism Books

This text has been initially updated from EEBO-TCP by Project Puritas.

Further revision and editing done by Monergism.

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Published by Monergism Books

P.O. Box 491

West Linn Oregon 97068

www.monergism.com

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PREF. 1. Right Worshipful.

Marcus Antonius de Dominis confessth in that little book, wherein he expressth the reason of his departure from the Church of Rome, That the closing up of the Scriptures from the people, thereby laboring to hold all in ignorance, gave him occasion to suspect their Religion, and to fear his estate, and to think on conversion, freely professing three in these terms, *Scripturae summa apud nos ignoratio*, that there is nothing whereof the Papists are more ignorant, then of the Scriptures. And other Nations heretofore have cast this as a reproach upon the English Nation, That the Nobility and Gentry thereof were ignorant and unlearned; which aspersion hath been well wiped off, since the beginning of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth: but I wish it were not a just reproach, that did yet stick upon the body of our Common people, that they are lamentably ignorant and unlearned in matters of the highest concernment; what gross darkness is yet among us, notwithstanding all the means vouchsafed to us from the Father of lights? And may not the Lord complain of us, as sometimes he did of the people of Israel, they are a Nation void of Counsel, neither is there any

understanding in them? Divers of the Ancients have given us their testimony concerning the great diligence that was used in all sorts of people in their times, in searching the Scriptures, desiring nothing else but to attain to the mind of him that wrote them, and so to the will of God contained in them. And what was more common to the Fathers, then to exhort the people to get them Bibles, to read them, and to examine what they heard by them? And how sharply did they reprove the negligence of those that did it not? Theodoret, writing of his times, saith, You shall everywhere see those points of our faith to be known and understood, not only by such as are Teachers in the Church, but even of all kind of Artificers, and not men only, but women also, not they only which are book-learned, but they also that get their living with their needle; yea maid-servants, and waiting-women, and not Citizens only, but Husband-men of the Country are very skillful in these things: yea, you may hear among us, Ditchers, and Neatheardes, and Wood-setters, discoursing of the Trinity, and the Creation, &c. Origen from his childhood learnt the Scriptures, and gat them without book, and propounded many questions to his Father Leonides a godly Martyr, (who rejoiced much in it) about the difficult senses thereof. So Macrina, Basil's Nurse, taught him the Scriptures of a child, and Jerome writeth of the Lady Paula, that she could say the Scriptures by heart, and that she set many of her maids to learn them, and many of his writings are directed to women, commending their industry in searching the Scriptures, and exciting them thereunto, as to Paula before mentioned, *Eustochium*, *Salvina*, *Celantia*, &c. The diligence of those times may justly reprove the great negligence of these times: we have had the light of the Gospel clearly shining among us these hundred years, we have had many excellent Teachers to unfold the mind of God out of his word to us, and yet very few there be that are anointed with eye salve,

to see that which is called the secret of the Gospel, and to understand that great mystery of godliness, which God hath revealed in his word: we have had the way of God (like Apollos) expounded to us more perfectly then our forefathers; and yet the Lord may say to us, as sometime Christ to his Disciples; Are ye yet without understanding? Perceive ye not yet? Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, &c. Joh. 14:9.

There be certain impediments of knowledge, Some natural, as infancy, incapacity, unlearnedness, the one of these is not suddenly, the other not easily cured: Some are sinful, as Pride, Ignorance, and Averseness, for which cause the Lord hath not only given us the Scriptures, but also the Ministry of his Pastors, and other means to remove these impediments: let an ignorant man be locked up with a Bible, he will return forth as ignorant as he went in: though the word of God be not obscure in itself, yet to an ignorant man, that which is plain, and that which is obscure is all one: but let the Book be opened, the Text read and expounded, and then by the blessing of God upon it, as Chrysostom speaks, the most unlearned man that is, shall understand. And were there a constant preaching Ministry settled (as much as is possible) in every place and corner of the land, and not only public preaching, but also frequent catechizing in public congregations, and private families enjoined, and effectually maintained against the manifold discouragements of this Iron Age, the darkness of ignorance might soon vanish, and be expelled out of our coasts. Now the consideration of the gross ignorance of most people and congregations in this clear Sun-shine of the Gospel, was not the least motive inducing me to the study and publication of these Sermons, being also importuned by divers godly Ministers, and other Christian friends, to bring them into the public view. My desire herein is to further the simplest of my Country-men

in the knowledge of God, hoping they will not slight my poor endeavors, for whose sake they were primarily undertaken; and those are all ignorant persons, that have lived under the Gospel so long, that for their time they might have been teachers, but by reason of their gross and dull ears, are but babes in understanding, and have need to be taught the first principles of the Oracles of God.

And now (much honored Sirs) your good understanding in the mystery of Christ, your unfeigned love to learning and true Religion, your great respects shown to all God's faithful Ministers, which have the happiness (as myself have had) to be acquainted with you, have emboldened me to present this Treatise to you, upon whom God hath stamped his own image in an eminent manner, (as it were upon his own Gold) more than upon many others of your rank. You deserve (I confess) a greater testimony of my respects unto you, then this cluster or two of my slender vintage; which I here offer to you, not so much to feed your appetite, as to quicken it; but where power is wanting, I humbly in treat, that a sincere affection may make the supply; and if by this tender of mine, you may receive any little benefit, I shall crave this recompense of you, That you would be earnest with God in my behalf, to make me faithful and profitable in my function, to the end of my days. The value of Paper-presents is but small, and the less to be esteemed of; by how much this Age of ours hath made the number of Books to be the purgation of distempered brains; I beg this favor of you, To have this little piece of coin laid up in your closets, as an acknowledgement of a greater obligation: and if after your many weighty and public affairs, you shall sometimes look into this book, I hope you may meet with some passages therein, that may yield you some content, and further your growth in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And leaving this

Manual with you as a testimony of that respect, which your Worships many ways challenge from me, I remain,

Your Worships in all respective Services to be commanded, W. G.

PREF. II. To the Reader.

These are days that abound in the means of saving knowledge, but few partake of it: the most, like brutes, do altogether neglect it: others seek after it, but not as for Gold; and many there be that prefer childish toys, and trifling knowledge, before that wisdom that is from above. A natural man is apt to affect things more or less according to the sense and understanding that he hath of them; now a natural man cannot understand the things of the spirit, therefore he cannot truly affect them: the excellent knowledge of Christ, the glorious privileges of the Gospel, are things transcending all created understanding; the love of Christ is a love that passeth knowledge, saith the Apostle; the Peace of God, a peace that passeth all understanding; communion with God in the Spirit, and joy in the Holy Ghost, these are things that even the understanding of a spiritual man cannot reach unto: but a natural man is in darkness, and altogether blind towards them: Faith is the evidence of things not seen, it discovereth to a believing soul, things invisible. A carnal man wanteth faith, therefore when the glorious excellencies of the Gospel are presented before him, he

wanteth an evidence to discover these things unto him: visible things being presented, are to be seen with bodily eyes, but spiritual and invisible things cannot be seen by those that want the eye of Faith. For judgment, I am come into the world, saith our Savior, that they which see not may see, and they that see, may be made blind. As to the humble soul; he sets up a light within, enabling it with Moses, to see him that is invisible; but on the contrary, he leaves them in their natural blindness, who are wise in their own conceits. It is the complaint of Solomon, Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom: seeing he hath no heart to it? There is a rich price in hand, much means of knowledge, by Preaching, Expounding, Writing, Catechizing, the things of God excellently and clearly set out to us; but all this while, this price is in the hand of a fool, one who (though worldly wise) yet wanteth the light of the Spirit to direct him to true happiness, and to show him the worth of Heavenly things, and thereupon it followeth, that he hath no heart to it. A similitude taken from a Man that is going to a Town or City, where there is some great Mart or Faire, with money in his hand to buy Commodities; but for want of judgment he passeth by the most advantageous Commodities, being ignorant of the goodness and profitableness of them, and throws away his money upon toys and trifles, that are of no advantage to him:

So there is a price put into the hands of the sons of men, to get Heavenly Wisdom, but the carnal worldling remains a stark fool, he cannot see into the excellency of Heavenly things, and thereupon hath no heart to them but passeth by them, and embraceth a thing of naught instead of them. God is to be sought above all, and may be found of all that will seek after him, and take any pains to know him: but the greatest part of the World have not a mind to know him, and therefore do not follow on to know him.

When man will not use those helps that God hath left him to search after the saving knowledge of God; God justly suffereth him to fall into divers opinions, and gross conceits, which shut him up in the bottom of a stinking Dungeon, where he findeth nothing but ignorance, error, and irksome uncertainties, as filthy vermin, creeping round about him; where the darkness of ignorance fills the mind, the Prince of darkness fills the heart. The Sepia or Cuttle-fish, saith Tertullian, when he is in danger to be taken, casteth about him a black inky matter, wherewith he darkeneth the water, that the Fishermen cannot see him: So many people do seek to compass themselves with the dark clouds of ignorance, to hide themselves and their wicked practices, which would appear to be very odious, should they come to be viewed, and surveyed by the light of the Word. And for many others, that are a little enlightened, they profess wisdom, but they practice folly, and so their knowledge is no better than ignorance.

But he that hath had experience of the freeness of God's grace, and the riches of his mercy, that hath felt the lively workings of the Spirit of God upon his heart, that man hath an experimental knowledge of God; and this is, after a sort, to eat of the Tree of Life: the more acquaintance he hath with God, the more he desireth, and beggeth acquaintance with him: though every hour he give him a fresh taste of his goodness; yet he ever findeth a new and most pleasant sweetness in it: the more knowledge a man hath of God, the more he knoweth his own duty towards him, and he that savingly knoweth God, dareth not either neglect his duty, or do it deceitfully: he that hath made proof of God's goodness, dareth not make trial of evil, he knoweth, if he should, he should do it to his cost.

What man can reckon himself a Christian, that is ignorant of God? Without the knowledge of God, all that we do is but in a customary or

uncertain way: hereby we know whom we serve, and the great advantages we shall reap by his Service, and are sensible of our estate in Grace, measuring God's gracious presence with us, or his absence and withdrawals from us, and our own strength, and weakness; it is the earnest of our Heavenly Inheritance, the first fruits of the Beatific Vision, our acquaintance with his face in this Life, and our Heaven upon Earth:

And now (Reader) if thou art in an ignorant estate, and one who art willing to be brought to the sense of thy ignorance and blindness, and so to come to him who is the Light of the World; Then say I to thee, as Jehu to Jonadab. Give me thy hand, and thou and I shall quickly accord, and thou shalt be a fit, and welcome Reader, to this poor Treatise; and I hope I have written that which shall be both for thy satisfaction and comfort.

I have here labored for such plainness, as might best inform thy judgment, and affect thy heart; purposely avoiding that unnecessary artificialness, which might make it like those Spiders webs (to which one once compared Logic) which are said to be much in workmanship, but in profit nothing.

My hearty desire is, (if the will of the Lord be so) to do a double good, with these my poor labors, and therefore to write the same things which at first I Preached to my own Congregation, it is not grievous.

I have here (for the Common good) changed my tongue, into a pen, though a dead letter be of less effectual persuasion, than a lively voice: The scope of this Treatise is, to bring-men out of darkness, into the true light, and to show them how to walk in the direction of that light.

That is the best knowledge which is of God, the chiefest good, a knowledge that suffereth least alteration in the hour of death, but only admitteth of a gradual change, advancing to perfection; All other knowledge, then, will vanish away: this is the knowledge according to

godliness, whereunto I labor in this small Treatise to stir thee up; that knowing God in a saving way, thou mayest live in him, and walk in communion with him.

The knowledge of God in Christ is the pith and marrow of Christian Religion and Profession; which whosoever wanteth, he is but the shadow of a Christian, though he abound with all other knowledge.

If this that I have now done, shall be acceptable to the Church and People of God, and be anything (though but Goats hair towards the Lord's Sanctuary) I shall rejoice, and give God the glory, and the Reader may expect a Treatise from me on another Subject, in some short time, the Lord assisting me.

In the meantime, if thou reap any benefit to thy soul, by these my Labors; let God have all the glory, and me a share in thy prayers.

I shall conclude with that of Austin, who having in his Books of Christian Doctrine propounded the Rule of Christian Faith, yet notwithstanding thus concludeth: To such as understand not what I write, I answer, they must not blame me, if they conceive not these things, as if I shown them with my finger; the Moon, or a Star which they would see, being not very clear; and if they have not eyes to see my finger (much less a Star) they must not be offended at me, if they see it not: So they who reading these things, cannot yet see the things which in the Scripture are dark and obscure; let them cease to blame me, and rather pray to the Lord to give them eye-sight; for I may point with my finger, but cannot give them eyes to see the things that I point to.

Now that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being opened, that you may know what is the

hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints, I shall not cease to pray, and rest,

Thine in the Lord. W. G.

The Arraignment of Ignorance.

My people are destroyed for lack of Knowledge , Hos. 4:6.

In the three foregoing Chapters were typical Prophecies; in this fourth, and in the following Chapters are plain Oracles and predictions, not covered with Types. This Chapter is a sharp Sermon to the ten Tribes, the beginning whereof consisteth:

1. In a citation of them to God's tribunal: Hear ye the Word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the Land, ver. 1, as if he should say, Seeing ye set at naught, and lightly esteem all the admonitions of the Prophets, I cite you by God's appointment to his tribunal, to hear the controversy which he hath with you, and most of the inhabitants of the land.

2. In an accusation of them for their sins, he accuseth them for their sins against their Neighbor, and against God.

1. He chargeth them with their sins against their Neighbor, which he sets down in two things; want of Truth, want of Mercy, There is no truth nor mercy in the land, ver. 1. Righteousness is there understood for truth by a

Synecdoche, There is no truth, (that is, there is no righteousness and justice) in the land: and by mercy is understood bountifulness and liberality to those that are in misery; this also was not to be found in the land, though there were many objects of mercy, yet there were none that would put on bowels of mercy.

2. He chargeth them with their sins against God, and the first and leading sin, is, their Ignorance of God, there is no knowledge of God in the Land: in this sixth verse, the Prophet aggravateth this sin of theirs, showing that ignorance is the cause of their destruction, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;

In the words there are three things to be observed.

1. The persons of whom the Lord speaks, his own people, not strangers, but his people, that were in covenant with him, not of his elect people neither, but of those that were his people in outward profession.

My people] whether it be referred to God or to the Prophet, some make a question; but whether that affix [*meus*] be referred to God or to the Prophet, an opposition is here and elsewhere made to other people that were not God's people, and had not the Prophets for their Monitors. This word (*my*) signifies propriety, they are called God's people.

1. Because God had called them to be his peculiar people from all people of the earth, and the Lord had entered into covenant with them, to become their God, &c.

2. They had the Word and Sacraments, and sacrifices among them, and to them were committed the Oracles of God; they (and they only) had the knowledge of the true God among them.

3. Of them came many holy Prophets and Patriarchs that were men in great favor with the Lord.

4. The Lord wrought many signs, wonders, and miracles among them.
5. They had many visions, prophecies, dreams, and revelations from God.
6. The Messiah was promised to descend of that Nation, and in particular of the Tribe of Judah. These were the privileges of the people of God, which the Gentiles were destitute of, or else he saith, [*My people*] to put them in mind, what they had been, or should be.

2. Here is the judgment or punishment threatened unto them, which is destruction; they are destroyed. Vatablus renders it, My people shall be destroyed. Rivet. thus, My people are cut off. Some read it thus, My people are brought to silence. And Zanchi saith, that *Verbum pereundi, tàm ad spiritualem, quàm ad carnalem, & politicam mortem refertur, Zanch. in loc.* This word [*destroyed*] hath as well relation to their spiritual, as to their carnal and politick death.

And it is said here, they are destroyed or cut off, to denote the certainty of the judgment, they shall as surely be destroyed, as if they were already cut off and rooted out.

3. Here is expressed the cause of their destruction, and that is ignorance, for want of the knowledge of God. This people were not destitute of knowledge, as the Gentiles, who had not the Law of God: but therefore were they without knowledge, because when they had the Law, they neglected the use of it, and when they were admonished by the Prophets, they contemned their admonitions, and therefore perished, because they would be destroyed. *Mibeli hadaat, fignifies, absque scientia illa*, without that knowledge. Vatablus referreth that knowledge to the knowledge of God, which the Land is said to be destitute of, ver. 1.

This speech of the Prophet, in the name of the Lord, is an astonishing speech, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: as if he should say,

it were no wonder if other people should want the knowledge of God, and so be destroyed, but that my people should be destroyed for lack of knowledge, this is matter of astonishment: the Lord had shown his word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his judgments unto Israel, he had not dealt so with any Nation, nor had they the knowledge of his judgments: This people were esteemed in the sight of the Nations to be a wise and an understanding people, therefore Israel, God's people could have no plea for their ignorance, having the Law of God, which the Gentiles had not: they were destitute of knowledge, because they willfully shut their eyes against the light that shined upon them, therefore their punishment was most just, in that they were cut off, that they should not be further accounted for the people of God. I proceed to the point of Instruction.

That ignorance is the main and principal cause of a people's destruction: I do not say, it is the only cause, but it is a principal cause of a people's ruin: the Apostle Paul saith, that destruction and misery are in the ways of wicked men, and then addeth this as the reason thereof, and the way of peace they have not known; the Lord accounts them poor and foolish that know not the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God; and the mouth of the foolish is near to destruction, Prov. 10:14.

1. It brings many outward calamities upon a people: My people are gone into captivity for lack of knowledge, saith the Lord, a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding, saith the wise man, the whip of God's wrath is their due, the rod and not reason must prevail with them, they must be instructed *ῥόχῳ, non λόγῳ*.

2 It brings everlasting ruin upon a people that live and die in it, God will pour out his wrath upon them that know him not, and Christ shall be revealed in flaming fire against them that know not God, &c. 2 Thess.

1:7,8,9, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

In the handling of this Doctrine, let us inquire,

What is Ignorance?

Ignorance is a great blot upon man's nature or a want of that clear and perfect light that was in man at his first creation, being made after the image of God, which principally consisted in knowledge: this light being much darkened, God's image in man is much defaced: God, at the first, gave man perfect knowledge of all things, so far forth as he was capable of (for no infinite thing can be fully comprehended of a finite, saith the Philosopher) his knowledge was very great in natural and super-natural things: Adam was both a perfect Philosopher and a perfect Divine. Consider him first as a Philosopher, he knew himself, he knew his own condition, he knew what manner of person he was made, he understood how he ought to walk, what to have done, what to have avoided; he had a singular knowledge of the nature of all creatures, giving them names suitable to their very natures. Adam could not choose but know himself, when as he knew the nature of stones and plants, and beasts, and all other creatures, but now the eye of man's understanding being obscured by sin, we see natural things no better than the man in the Gospel that was blind, who had but a little glimmering of light, that could not discern between men and trees. Scholars in their studies are like Sailers in a troublesome Sea, that sail along where they cannot see their way: Socrates that was judged wisest by Apollo, said, he knew this one thing, viz. that he knew nothing. And Aristotle that knew as much of natural things, as man could know by the height of reason, saith of all things, *Videntur esse*, they only seem to be: and the Platonists do hold

this Paradox, That nothing can be known as it is; so that all man's natural knowledge now is but as a spiders web.

Having considered man as a Philosopher, let us see what a Divine he is. In the state of innocence man knew God, so far forth as a terrestrial creature could know his Creator, he perfectly knew so much of the will and mind of God, as it concerned him to know, and was necessary for him; he had an inbred knowledge of God; but now if our eyes be so blind in natural things, what are they in super-natural? The understanding of man is darkened through ignorance and blindness of the heart, saith the Apostle; natural men are said to be darkness, and to sit in darkness, not as if the natural faculty of light or seeing were quite extinct by the fall of Adam: no, there is some inward light still in the understanding of natural men; therefore when the Scripture taxeth all people for being a gross and dull people, it is not for that they are altogether void of understanding, for they are wise to do evil, saith the Prophet Jeremy, and our Savior saith, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light, they are eagle-eyed in the things of the world, and in sinful matters still, but to do good they have no knowledge. Man hath by a natural light, still the knowledge of God; so the Gentiles by the book of the creatures knew God: and they had a moral knowledge of God, having some moral principles within, engraven upon their hearts, by which they understand both good and evil: but they are deprived of an higher light, a spiritual knowledge, a divine light, *lumen fidei*, the light of faith, a supernatural light, this is called the true light by the Apostle: so that natural or moral light, is but a false, or dim light, in comparison of that which directeth a man the way to true happiness, and this true light is called in Scripture, the light of Christ. Eph. 5:14, and the light of life. Joh. 8:12.

What are the causes of ignorance?

The first cause is the corruption of man's nature, the understanding of man is corrupted, and turned away from this light, unto blindness, darkness, error, ignorance, unbelief, and misbelief; the understanding of man is darkened, being estranged from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness or hardness of his heart: corruption and pravity hath blinded the eyes of his understanding, so that he cannot (by reason thereof) savingly see the things of God, the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit, nor can he know them, because that corruption on the faculty, hath blinded the eye of his understanding, turning it away from the chiefest good; man doth now but grope and feel after God, man is so stupefied, that though he hear never so often, yet understandeth not in a saving way, like the people that live near the river Nile, that are made deaf by the fall of the waters of that river, for *videndo non vident*; (in seeing, men do not see,) and *intelligendo non intelligent*, in understanding, they do not understand; as evil stomachs turn good nourishment into bad humors, so evil men turn the truth of God into a lie.

The corruption of our natures hath deprived us of all those principles of saving truth, that should be in the understanding. The Lord looked down from heaven, so see whether there were any that did understand and seek God, saith David. There is no principle of light in a natural man, that gives him a supernatural knowledge of God. God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, &c. So that till the glorious Son of righteousness shine into our hearts, the heart hath not one principle of heavenly light there, and is no better than a lump of darkness. The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God, it is as it were at deadly feud with the wisdom of the Spirit, for

it will yield to, or grant no more, then it can see ground for in natural reason, therefore must needs be stark blind in matters of faith: An instance of this, we have in Nicodemus a Ruler of the Jews, and (no doubt) a great Rabbi, and well skilled in all human learning, yet cannot he understand the doctrine of regeneration, and though our Savior had told him of the necessity of it, and illustrated it by an excellent similitude of the wind blowing where it listeth, and yet saith he, how can these things be? The reason was, because he looked upon it, through the thick spectacles of reason, and wanted the pure and clear eye of faith. Christ spake spiritually, and he understood him carnally. Another instance you have in the learned Athenians, who in Paul's time were as great Scholars, as any in the world, yet when he preacheth to them the resurrection from the dead (a doctrine crossing the principles of natural Philosophy, which maintaineth for an Axiom and Maxim, that *à privatione ad habitum nullus est regressus*, a natural body resolved into its first elements and matter whereof it was made, cannot possibly resume the same, and live again after death) they therefore mock at him, thinking him to teach impossibilities, and to set abroad some strange Paradox. Now as it was with Nicodemus and the Athenians in these two points; so it is with all natural men (be they never so learned) in the mysteries of Religion, that are above the reach of carnal reason the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. Joh. 1:5.

A second cause of ignorance is the Devil, helping forward the corruption of man, plunging him every day further and further into sin, and casting thick fogs and mists before his eyes. If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the

image of God, should shine unto them. Two ways is the corporal sight offended, either by injection of exterior dust into it, or by interior humors, stopping the optic nerves within: So Satan either blindeth the eyes of natural men with the dust of worldly things, which he casteth into them, or by their own gross and carnal affections; he stoppeth the Conduits of their sight, that they shall not have any true knowledge of God: likewise Satan bestirreth himself, and spareth no pains to blind the eyes of men, by endeavoring to keep them from the means of knowledge, or to increase in them the darkness of ignorance; and from thence he laboreth to lead them to the darkness of sin, from one sin and error to another, as from one dungeon to another, till at last he bring them into his own den, the dungeon of utter darkness.

The third cause is God himself: and that in divers respects.

1. When denieth men the means of knowledge, as,

1. The Word and outward Ministry: thus they are said to sit in darkness, that are without the word, and the means of knowledge: the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the word is a lamp or candle to my feet, and a light to my paths, saith David: and the Ministers of the word are called the light of the world: therefore where God denieth a people these outward lights the means of knowledge, that people must needs fit in the dark dungeon of ignorance.

2. By denying or not giving in the inward light of the Spirit: it is the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding, not only the opening of the Scriptures, but also the opening of the heart, and of the understanding is the work of the Spirit; till there be an inward operation of the Spirit, the outward means is ineffectual. It is true; the word of God is like a light, and like a candle, as was said before, but what benefit reap blind men thereby?

And such are all men till God be pleased to open their eyes by the key of the spirit, and anoint them with eye-salve, Rev. 3:18.

2. By holding in the eyes of men's understandings: as it is said of those disciples to whom Christ appeared after his resurrection, their eyes were holden that they should not know him. Luk. 24:26, and afterwards it is said, their eyes were opened, and they knew him: thus when God holds the eyes of men's understanding, they cannot discern the mind of God, but remain ignorant of his will and counsel, and so he hides understanding from men: so Moses saith of the Israelites, the Lord hath not given them eyes to see: they had sensitive eyes to see, and rational eyes to understand, but they wanted spiritual eyes to apprehend and improve what they saw: it is God that giveth ability to each part and member, power and faculty of the soul and body, to execute and exercise their several actions and operations, which if he withdraw, the Organs be no more than dead instruments, for we can no more see nor understand savingly of ourselves, then an instrument lying upon a table, or hanging by the wall, can sound till it be blown and plaid upon

But it may be said that ignorance is a sin, how then can God blind men's eyes, or be a cause of ignorance, and not be the author of sin?

The first and nearest cause is man's corruption; the instigator unto spiritual blindness is the devil; and God as a just judge blindeth men's eyes, Isa. 6:10, and hardeneth men's hearts, Exod. 9:12. God blindeth the eyes of many men judicially, that shut their eyes willfully against the light they have received: wicked men are said to rebel against the light; of these things they are willingly ignorant. 2 Pet. 4:3, when men have the means of knowledge and will not know; God saith in judgment they shall not know. Wicked men are blind and brutish, this blindness is from God as a Judge:

blindness and ignorance is in wicked men a sin, but so is it not from God, but from the devil and their own naughtiness, yet is it the punishment of former sins by which they have brought and increased this blindness upon themselves: for they were secure despisers of God and his word; therefore God most justly punisheth sin with sin, giving them up to a Spirit of slumber, to a mind void of judgment, that perceiveth, and understandeth not the things of God. Musculus saith: It was a just judgment on the Scribes and Pharisees, because they would not understand when Christ spake clearly, therefore to their punishment he speaketh in Parables, speaketh obscurely: when did the Jews bewray greater blindness, then in the times of the Prophets, of Christ, and his Apostles: the evil disposition of wicked men is never more clearly discerned, then where the light of the truth begins to shine.

When Jesus Christ that great light came into the world, when he professed himself the Messias, and would have instructed them in the highest mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, then doth their rage and malice the more break out against him, the more light they had, the more their blindness doth appear. It is a great judgment, when men have eyes and cannot see with them: the wicked Jews had eyes to see, *Corticom legis*, the bark and outside of the Law, *sed non penetrabant oculi eorum ad medullam*, but their eyes pierced not to the marrow thereof: when God gives men eyes to see, and they abuse their light, God in judgment blindeth their eyes, or casteth such a mist upon their understandings, that now they cannot see though they would, their eyes are so distempered, that the sight they have (like the sight of a pur-blind man) not only faileth them, but deceiveth them, making them think they see rightly what they see not; their eyes being thus darkened, they cannot understand with their hearts. The Gospel

is the best means to bring us to the true knowledge of God, but if Gospel-light be abused, God then saith to his Ministers, Go, make the hearts of this people fat, shut their eyes that they may not see.

I come now to confirm the point by reasons.

Ignorance is a destroying sin, and the chief cause of ruin to a people, because it is a mother-sin, and the root of many other sins, ignorance is a leading sin: there is no knowledge of God in the land, saith our Prophet, in the first verse of this Chapter, and see what a troop of sins do follow this blind leader, ver. 2, swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery, and blood toucheth blood: therefore he that sins through ignorance, sins most perniciously. Under the Law the sacrifices offered for the ignorance's of the people, shown it to be a great sin: the Author to the Hebrews putteth it for all manner of sins whatsoever; for having spoken of the ordinary services and sacrifices performed by the ordinary Priests in the first Tabernacle, Heb. 9:6, he tells us, ver. 7, that into the second Tabernacle went only the High-priest once every year, and that not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the ignorance's of the people; where by the consent of Expositors, ignorance is put for all sorts of sin, and Beza saith, that *Shegioth* which is equivalent with *αγνοηματα*, signifies as much coming of *Shaga*, which signifies to sin through ignorance, as the Learned note.

I will instance in some particular sins, and thereby you will see ignorance to be a mother-sin.

1. It is the root of pride, Ignorance of God, and of a man's self puffeth up the heart with pride; he that is wise in conceit, is a fool in proof, the more we know God, the more humble shall we be in his presence, and the more we know ourselves, the more vile shall we be in our own eyes; when men

are proud, it is either because they know nothing of God at all, or know nothing of him in a saving way, not knowing him as they ought to know: the more ignorant a man is of God, the more doth pride prevail upon him; now Ignorance being the root of pride, it must be the chief cause of destruction to a people, for pride goes before destruction, saith the wise man, Prov. 16:18.

2. Ignorance is the cause of Rebellion against God, to this purpose the Lord complains of his people, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me, and the reason of their rebellion against God, is their ignorance of him, the Ox, saith he, knoweth his owner, and the asse his Masters crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Thus when Moses cometh with a message from God to Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me. Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? &c. I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go: Ignorance is the root of disobedience: this sin was that which brought swift destruction upon Pharaoh and his people, when Peter would have men like obedient children, he bids them not fashion themselves according to the former lusts of their Ignorance.

3. Ignorance is the root of persecution:

1. It makes men persecute Christ himself, when Christ called to Saul from heaven, as he was persecuting, and making havoc of the Church, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Like one wholly ignorant of Christ, he said, Who art thou, Lord? The Lord answered, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is said by the Apostles, that none of the Princes of this world knew Christ, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.

But it may be said from Matth. 21:38, that they did know who Christ was, when they saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come

let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance, and they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him: in this place it is evident, that they did know him, and in the other place, that they did not know him; for they would not have crucified him, if they had known him: how shall these places be reconciled?

They did know him, in regard of the reality of the thing, but they had not an effectual knowledge able to change their minds and affections, that were set to crucify the Lord of Glory: thus people that have the means of knowledge may be said to be ignorant.

First, In regard they may have a general knowledge, and yet be ignorant in the particular application of what they know.

Secondly, in regard they may have a particular knowledge, and yet be ignorant in regard of an effectual knowledge, and this kind of ignorance is a destroying sin, a man may know what is to be done, and in particular, that such a thing is to be done, and yet this knowledge is ineffectual, if it change not the will and affections to yield obedience, and so it is no better than ignorance; He that saith, he knoweth God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar; the sons of Eli were sons of Belial, and it is said of them, They knew not the Lord, though they were the Priests of the Lord, whose lips should preserve knowledge, Mal. 2:7.

And as ignorance makes men persecute Christ himself; so it makes them persecutors of the faithful messengers and members of Christ. Ignorant men love not their teachers, that be eyes to guide them, seers to go before, though they stand in danger of their own lives to save theirs; and if the seers were once out of the way, into what error would not the blind multitude suddenly fall? Were there no faithful Ministers to lead them, or speak to the people from God, they could not choose but fall to every sin against God:

our Savior tells his Disciples a little before his departure out of this world: If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you, but all these things they will do unto you for my names sake, the reason followeth, because they know not him that sent me: and he tells them further, that they should put them out of the Synagogues, yea the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service: and gives the reason of it: These things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me. Joh. 16:2,3. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as bread; the Prophet Hosea showeth, where there is no knowledge of God in the land, there is no truth nor mercy in the land: the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty; that is, of cruel men; men that have no true knowledge of God among them, are ready to act any manner of cruelty against the people of God.

4. Ignorance is the cause of Idolatry, the Prophet Isaiah showing the dotage of idolaters, he sets it down thus; he falleth down to his graven image, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith; deliver me, for thou art my God: then he showeth the root of it to be their blockish ignorance, they have not known nor understood; Ignorance of the true God, makes men adore any fantastical deity. Ignorant men (like brute beasts) are ready to run into any sin and danger.

Because ignorance is the breach of God's Commandments, and especially the first Commandment, he that is ignorant of God, is so far from worshipping God as he ought to be worshipped, that he is an enemy to God; an ignorant man walks in darkness, and he that goes in the dark is apt to stumble at every stone, and fall into every ditch, he that knows not the way to life, must needs walk in the way that goes down to the chambers of death; he that is ignorant of him who is the Way, will soon wander in a

wilderness where there is no way, where there is no plain and beaten path; an ignorant man runs out of God's way, viz. the way of his Commandment, and walks in his own ways, and runs into extreme danger every moments; an ignorant man is blind, he knoweth not what he doth; his way is darkness, he knoweth not at what he stumbleth, and having often stumbled, at last he falleth into the pit of destruction, from whence he shall never see his way out; if a man be ignorant, he knoweth not where he goes, and he that walks in darkness, knoweth not whither he goes, as our Savior saith.

Ignorance doth stupefy and harden men's hearts, they are in a miserable and damnable condition, and are not sensible that they are so, they see not their misery, therefore seek they not out for a remedy. The Church of Laodicea was in a blind and wretched estate, but being ignorant, she knew not that she was wretched and miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The five foolish Virgins in the Parable slumbered and slept as well as the wise, that is, (as I conceive) they thought their condition as good as that of the wise: none are so confident as those that are most ignorant; and this confidence of theirs undoeth them: ignorance of God, makes a man an opposer of the word, which is the means of knowledge, and who so despiseth the word shall be destroyed.

But it may be said, that our Savior Christ praying for the Jews that persecuted him unto death, putteth an ignoramus in the plea to make it more plausible: for thus it runneth. Father forgive them, for they know not what they do: and Paul making confession of his mis-demeanors, saith, that he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; but saith he, I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly; &c. and under the Law, we read, that if ought were committed by ignorance, without the knowledge of the congregation, &c. that the Priest should make an atonement for all the

congregation of the children of Israel, and it should be forgiven them, for it is ignorance, &c. and the Priest was to make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinned by ignorance before the Lord to make an atonement for him, and it should be forgiven him.

That ignorance here in these alleged places, cannot be said to be medium *impetrationis misericordiae*, the means or cause of obtaining mercy and forgiveness, but only showeth the extent of mercy: so we find that sin is said to be forgiven upon our confession of sin; not that repentance or confession are apt or innate in themselves to procure pardoning mercy, but only that the Lord hath been pleased to prescribe this as a way how to dispense his mercy to us; so when it is said that Paul, and the Israelites obtained mercy, because they sinned through ignorance, it setteth out but only the order, and not the cause of mercy.

2. That simple ignorance of the mind of God doth excuse *à tanto*, though not *à toto*; for our Savior saith, that he that knew not his Masters will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, should be beaten, though with fewer stripes, then he that knew the will of his Lord, and did it not: and in this respect the Heathen are said to have known God, and so were inexcusable, because they were bound to have known more of him; God having at first imprinted the knowledge of himself upon man's nature: and man having lost it through his own default.

The School-men make three sorts of ignorant men, either such as know not their Lord's will, because they will not know it, their ignorance is *ignorantia affectata*, an affected ignorance; when men are willfully ignorant, willfully refusing to know such things as might hinder them from sin, or further them in godliness; this is *ignorantia voluntaria*, men being willingly ignorant, that they may walk the more freely after their own lasts,

and our Savior tells us it is the nature of wicked men to love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, and to hate the light, and not to come to the light, lest their evil deeds should be reprov'd, i.e. manifested thereby to their consciences, as the thief and the adulterer love the twilight, and the darkest night, because it hideth their wickedness's; So profane sinners, and close hypocrites do not desire the knowledge of God's ways, and would willingly be ignorant of their duty towards God, because the dark dungeon of ignorance hideth many a beloved lust from them, which they are not willing to forsake, and could not so quietly commit, were it clearly made known unto them; such men as these do bring swift destruction upon themselves.

2. There is a second sort which know not their Lord's will, because they care not to know it, their ignorance, is a gross, idle, and negligent ignorance: it is not imputed to negligence, if a man know not those things which he cannot know, but that is negligence, when a man careth not to know that which he might know, and ought to know, nor useth any care to know those things which appertain to salvation, and such an ignorance is a great sin. Thence one of the Ancients saith; Although it be a more grievous thing to sin knowingly, then to sin ignorantly, yet must we not therefore fly to the darkness of ignorance, as therein to seek after an excuse, for it is one thing not to know, another thing to neglect the means of knowledge: for a man not to know those things which exceed the strength of his understanding, having a desire to know, this ignorance hath some excuse, but when men neglect to know things knowable, which are necessary to Salvation. This proceedeth from pride, which is the chieftest and first bond of the devil, with which a wicked man is bound, who not only desireth not to know, but also contemneth the knowing of those things that are requisite

to salvation, and this is an unnatural kind of malice, seeing every man naturally desireth knowledge, and such naughtiness doth make a man indispose himself to know, and to give himself to vain pleasures, and carnal delights, which do indispose him for the knowledge of those things which he might know. A wicked mind hateth knowledge, and feareth to understand his duty, lest conscience compel him to do what he understandeth: of such a one David speaks. He hath left off to be wise, or to understand and do good. Psal. 36:3. Such men as these shall be beaten with many stripes.

3. There are such as know not their Lord's will because they cannot know it, and this ignorance the School-men call an invincible ignorance, not because it is simply so, but because it remaineth after a man hath taken much pains, used much means, and done all that he can to remove it. The School-men say (most of them) that this ignorance doth simply excuse a man from sin, *non solum in tante, sed in toto*: but this is their error: and standeth convicted by that speech of Christ already produced, the servant that doth not his Masters will, by reason he knoweth it not, shall be beaten with stripes, though fewer; now this ignorance shall not wholly excuse a man, because every man is bound to know God by a positive command, and whether we know God's laws, or know them not, they still bind us, as Master Perkins doth observe. Adam had the perfect knowledge of God, and lost the same for himself and his posterity: no man therefore for this is to complain against the justice of God, since that our first sin hath merited a greater punishment; I say then that this sin may excuse for the degree and measure of the sin, but not from the sin itself.

I come now to make use and application of the doctrine.

Is Ignorance the principal cause of a people's destruction?

The first use shall be for lamentation: what cause have we exceedingly to lament the great ignorance that is among us, though God hath delivered us from that blindness and darkness, with which our forefathers were overwhelmed: Time was, men were wholly ignorant of the true God, and of his worship, even in this our land; where in divers places thereof were Temples and Altars, erected to heathenish Idols. viz. In Bath the Temple of Apollo, in Leicester the Temple of Janus, in York where Peter's now is, the Temple of Bellona, and in London the chief and head City of our Land, where Paul's is now, the Temple of Diana: and if there were such gross idolatry in these principal places, what hope can there be of better things in country villages? All our Priests were Painims, our Religion was superstition, our worship idolatry; our God's were dumb Idols, or *Dii stercorarii*, dung-hill deities; we were all as Paul saith to the Ephesians, sometime darkness; the night of that heathenish ignorance is past, and the clouds of that error scattered by the Sun-beams of the Gospel preached among us: and therefore it is much more sad and lamentable, now to see men blind and ignorant under the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ: what swarms of ignorant people are there everywhere? Ignorant congregations, ignorant families, ignorant parents, ignorant children, ignorant Masters, ignorant servants, there is no faithful Minister that laboreth to know the state of his flock, but may sadly witness with me the truth of this thing, how few of our people and Congregations, if you come to them, that can render a sound reason of the hope that is in them: Beloved, let me tell you, that this is a woeful sin in this clear light of the Gospel, and it is one of the sins for which God hath a controversy with the land this day: and it is a sin so much the more dangerous, and the more to be lamented by all that fear the Lord, because it is scarcely apprehended to be a sin: for a

man to be a swearer, a liar, a drunkard, a whoremonger, an oppressor; these sins partly by the light of nature, and partly by reason of the odiousness of them are granted by the most, to be sins, but ignorance of God and of his word, and of those points, which are as it were the very life and marrow of Religion, this is hardly taken to be a sin: no man thinks himself the less wicked, because he is ignorant: this I say is the more dangerous, because it passeth away unregarded and unobserved by us: yet this is the fin that is the principal cause of a people's destruction, a sin against which the Lord will proceed, when he cometh to judgment; the people that do not understand shall fall: This was Jerusalem's sin, which drew tears out of the eyes of our blessed Savior, when he drew near, he beheld the City; and wept over it, saying; if thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, &c. where you have

1. Our Savior Christ's lamentation for this sinful City, before he goes into it. Luk. 19:41,

2. A prediction and prophesy of her destruction for her sins, and principally for her contempt of him and his Gospel, ver. 43.

3. The ground of this their hardness of heart is their ignorance of Jesus Christ, if thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day: there can be no greater grief to true faithful and painful Pastors, then to bestow pains to no purpose, lose their labors, and not profit their people; how doth he bewail their ignorance of himself: if thou hadst known [*thou*] who art the City of God, the seat of the great King, the joy of the whole earth: [*yea thou*] whose gates the Lord hath loved, and concerning whom most glorious things have been spoken, [*thou*] whom God hath chosen for his habitation and his rest; [*thou*] who hast often heard these things out of the Prophets, and therefore

thy ignorance is gross and palpable, not to be excused or extenuated, not being simple, but affected, and therefore thy sin and misery is the greater.

If thou hadst known the things that belong to thy peace] i.e. if thou hadst known, and wouldest acknowledge me, my benefits and blessings, that I now offer unto thee, and would bestow upon thee; for by peace here, after the manner of the Hebrews, we must understand *affluentiam omnium bonorum*, abundance of all good things; it is like enough that this unhappy city, and her inhabitants knew, and were cunning in many quirks of the law, but they were not well catechized in this one needful and necessary point of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ was their peace, as S. Paul told the Ephesians: nor that there was Salvation to be had or hoped for by no other means; & *hinc illae lachrimae*, this was their sin, and this occasioned his sorrow, which he expresseth most lively, emphatically, and pathetically; by this Aposiopesis, this abrupt speech, and imperfect sentence, if thou hadst known in this thy day: for as joy doth *dilatare cor*, enlarge the heart, and make men eloquent and fluent in speech: so, on the contrary, sorrow and grief binds up the heart, so that sorrowful persons cannot speak out the things which they do conceive; and both the tongue of a sad person, and of an angry person, doth often cleave to their jaws; for anger, see an example of the young man in the Comedy; see how abruptly he speaks. *Egone illam? Quae illum? Quae non?* And for grief; I have read of an old man that grievously lamenting the untimely death of his hopeful son, and being demanded the cause of his mourning, was not able to express himself, but so well as he could utter his mind, he thus by an abrupt and imperfect speech unfolded it: *Filius, unicus, habilis adolescens, ingenio pollens*, &c. leaving out the verb which should have made all known: and this is usual, as the Philosopher long since hath observed.

Light cares do speak, but great ones do stupefy and astonish. So here, when our Savior saith, if thou, even thou hadst known, &c. somewhat must be supplied. O daughter, Zion, and Jerusalem, if thou knewest as well as I do, what a woeful case thou standest in, thou wouldest weep as well as I, or if thou knewest who I were, and what I offer thee, thou wouldest willingly receive me, and not willfully and obstinately reject me; yea, thou wouldest obey my doctrine, and so prevent thine own destruction.

And have not we as much cause to lament the great ignorance that is among our people at this day, notwithstanding all the plentiful means that God hath vouchsafed unto us; how many of our people are in the dark dungeon of ignorance, and yet perceive it not. True it is! There is much weakness of understanding, and dullness of apprehension in the best, but multitudes of our people have not a mind to know the Lord, as it is. 1 Joh. 5:20, they do not follow on to know the Lord, many know not the grounds of Religion, and are ignorant of the doctrine of the beginning of Christ: many of people mind nothing, but the honors, riches, and pleasures of the world, and these they follow after with all their might, but they have no saving knowledge of God, and living and dying without understanding, become like the brute beasts that perish. —And further, many there are, that do profess they know God, when in their works they do deny him, this is a practical ignorance; of such Jude speaks; in what they know naturally: as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves: their knowledge seemeth to be according to a natural light, therefore they are said to know naturally, but they act more like brute beasts, then like rational men, and so in their actions do cross their knowledge. Though man hath more sublime rules of instruction, then the light of nature to walk by, and in this regard attaineth to higher, and more transcendent knowledge, then brute beasts do,

that are led by a natural instinct; yet he may be said to know even as a beast, or to have but a bestial kind of knowledge; as the Prophet speaks of such in his days, man is brutish in his knowledge: when a man's knowledge ariseth *ex principiis scientificis*, from certain principles, and his actions are according to ignorance, this is to be brutish in knowledge: I shall conclude this use with the words of the Apostle to the Corinthians, awake to righteousness and sin not, or awake righteously, as the Greek hath it; with all your might labor after righteousness, 1 Cor. 15:34, for some have not the knowledge of God, I speak this to your shame: and may not this be spoken to the shame of most people and congregations, that after such clear revelation of the mind of God in Scripture, and such plentiful preaching of the word among them, yet men should be so grossly ignorant of God and his truth; many that for time and means they have had, might have been teachers of others, and yet themselves have need to be taught the first rudiments of Religion.

The second use is a use of confutation:

1. It serves to confute and reprove the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome, bearing the poor people in hand, that ignorance is the mother of devotion, and therefore persuade them that it is enough to have *fidem implicitam*, an implicit faith, and to believe as the Church believeth; therefore they bar them from the use of the Scriptures, either not suffering them to read them at all, or at least with the Popes spectacles, so that they may find nothing there, but what he will have there, in which dealing they tread up and down the steps of Herod, who being an Idumean by birth, yet having usurped upon the Kingdom of Jury, and intruded himself into that place, by colloquing with Augustus the Roman Emperor; scraped together all the Genealogies of the Jews from Abraham, and burnt them, lest

anything might there be found, that might convince him of strange blood, and so in time prejudice himself or his posterity, in the succession of that Crown and Kingdom; so the Papists, wheresoever their furies have prevailed, have either burnt the holy Bibles in whole, or mangled them in part, putting in, and putting out at their pleasures, as hath best fitted their purposes, not suffering the people to have them in their Mother-tongue, lest by them, as by a candle, they might discover their bad dealings, whereby they betray their cause, and bewray the badness thereof to the world, because they will not abide the light, and suffer the Scriptures to decide their doubts contrary to the practice of the ancient Fathers in the Primitive Church. Augustine being to dispute with Petilian the Donatist, saith thus; let there not be heard among us these words, I say this, or thou sayest this, but thus saith the Lord in the Scriptures. Much stir do the Papists make, to prove the people ought not to have the Scriptures in a known tongue, and so not knowledge. When we object to them that command of our Savior, Search the Scriptures, and justly complain of their spirit contrary to Christ's; Dureus denies this to be spoken to all Christians, for, saith he, How should the ignorant and unlearned search them? We answer, if Christ only had then spoken to the learned, his exception had been just, but Christ then preached to the whole people of the Jews, and if to all the- Jews, then the same exhortation doth concern all Christians; and both Jews and Gentiles by the Scriptures must have the knowledge of Christ, and of Eternal life; therefore all must search the Scriptures. When we urge that the Bereans searched the Scriptures, whether those things were so. Bellarmine answereth, that was because they doubted whether he was an Apostle, or no. But I answer, the matter is not why they searched the Scriptures, but that they did search them, and are commended for it by the Holy Ghost, that

they compared his doctrine with the doctrine of the Prophets. Then ought all Christians thus to do, to try the spirits; for now more doubt may be made, then at that time, and no search can be but by the Scriptures, and the knowledge of them: thus do the Papists keep the people from the knowledge of God, and so bring the curse of God upon them: this people who know not the law are accursed: therefore they must partake in the woe denounced by Christ against the Lawyers; Woe be to you Lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in, you hindered. Matthew saith, You shut the gates of heaven to those that were entering in.

It may be said, that as Christ is the door, Joh. 10, so he only hath the key of David. Rev. 3:7, he hath the key of knowledge.

Christ indeed hath it originally, and by his own power, and authority, and he is said to open the Scriptures, and to open the understandings of the disciples; and his Ministers have the key of knowledge by deputation, as a Noble-man commended his treasury to his Steward: 1 Cor. 4:1, now this key they hid away.

1. Privatively, by hiding their talent in a napkin, and not opening and expounding the Scriptures, and teaching men the way of salvation, as their duty was; The Priests lips should keep knowledge, and the people should seek the Law of God at his mouth: but

2. Which was worse; they hindered others from entering, as Joh. 9:22, they agreed, that if any man did confess Christ, he should be put out of the Synagogue: and thus do the Papists, their true successors, who regard more their earthly preferments, then look after an inheritance in heaven, and they keep out those that would enter in, by vexing all those that will not with themselves receive the mark of the beast upon them. The Lord complaineth

that the leaders of his people do cause them to err, and they that are led of them, are destroyed. i.e. they are led into error and vanity, and destroyed for lack of knowledge.

This may serve to reprove all such as are ignorant, and care not for true knowledge, such as hate the light, and love darkness, it is the property of fools to hate knowledge, and love simplicity.

But who are they that do thus despise and reject knowledge?

In general: all they that do despise God's Ordinances, do despise knowledge: but more particularly.

1. All those that reject the word of knowledge, they that reject the reading and searching of the Scriptures, do reject knowledge, or if they read them sometime, will not meditate upon them, that will not let the word of God dwell in their hearts richly, and in all wisdom: as Owls and Bats fly not in the day time, but come abroad only in the night, because all the Birds of the air will come about them, and chatter at them, by reason of their deformed shape, so because wicked men know, that if they should frequently look into the glass of the word, they should see the ugly deformity of their own shapes, and be brought to abhor themselves as the most stupendous monsters in the world; therefore it is, that they keep themselves in the dark dungeon of ignorance, and hate the light: but this their way is their folly; they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them? Saith the Prophet Jeremy.

2. All those that do reject and despise the faithful Ministry of the word, these do reject knowledge, when men like the deaf adder stop their ears against the voice of the charmer, for fear lest they should be charmed by the power of that voice, out of their works of darkness: the Priests lips should keep knowledge, and they (i.e. the people) should seek the law at his mouth,

for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts: he must so keep knowledge, as like the wise and faithful Steward in the Gospel, he may give to his fellow servants, everyone their portion in due season. Now the people are bound to seek the law at his mouth: In the name of the Law, saith one of the Ancients is contained the knowledge of all things necessary to well living: the reason followeth, because he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. Therefore all those that live under a powerful ministry, and resort not to the public congregations, or judge it unnecessary to frequent those places, where the word is to be had from the mouths of God's faithful Ministers; they are despisers of knowledge, because they despise the messengers of the Lord of Hosts, whose lips must preserve knowledge, and our Savior saith, he that heareth you (speaking to those whom he sent out to preach the Gospel) heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: therefore Christ denounced a woe against Chorazin and Bethsaida, ver. 13. They were Cities near the lake of Genesareth, or Tiberias, where Christ had preached many Sermons, done many miracles, whence he had chosen certain of his Apostles, saying, if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had long ago repented, &c. and that it should be more toller able for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, then for them; he denounceth a woe likewise against Capernaum, and thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell, and then he addeth, he that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: whereby it seemeth that those places were notorious for despising Christ and his messengers sent unto them. Capernaum was a City of Galilee, lying at the mouth of Jordan, a commodious Haven, and Harbor of ships, a place where our Savior had often preached, by reason of the great concourse of People that resorted thither, yea its thought that he dwelt

there, and so one of the Ancients saith, that he graced Bethlehem by his birth, Nazareth by his education, and Capernaum by his habitation: and so it is called his own City. Matth. 9:1. By the phrase of lifting up to heaven, he meaneth, that it was much in request in the eyes of the world, not only by reason of her great wealth and riches, but also because she had the means of knowledge, and of salvation, having Christ daily conversing with them, and preaching to them: and by her casting down to hell, he meaneth, that she should be abased, and have her pride plucked down in regard of her temporal estate: which came to pass not long after, when it was ruined by the Romans, and all such her inhabitants, as did reject the preaching of Christ, and his messengers sent unto them, were condemned, and went to Hell eternally. Many there are that dream of Anabaptistical revelations, and I know not what kind of strange and immediate inspiring's, despising the public teaching and ministry of man: I know God can teach otherwise, but I have no ground to think that he will: he that desireth to lodge among the wise, let him prepare his care to hearken to the instruction of life, saith Solomon: thou mayest never expect a blessing from him, who is a teacher of the heart; if thou despisest him whom God hath appointed to be a teacher of the Eare: as the holy Scripture is the book of wisdom, out of which God giveth subtlety to the simple, so teaching by his Ministers, is the Pipe by which this heavenly wisdom is conveyed to us from the Fountain; and no man is assured by the word of God to attain this knowledge, but by this course.

3. All those that reject prayer, which is a seeking of God for a blessing upon the means, whereby knowledge might be acquired. The Psalmist saith, that the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God; If thou criest after

knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, &c. there are many that pray not for knowledge, nor for a blessing on the means of knowledge, and those are such as despise knowledge. Paul speaks of such as despise the Word, the Ministry, Prayer; and the means of knowledge, as if their case were desperate, and saith, if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant, as if he should say, if any man will despise the means of knowledge, and choose to be still ignorant, let him be ignorant, to his own peril be it; he will run through inner darkness, to utter darkness. I fear brethren, that the commonness of the word, and of preaching, hath bred the contempt thereof: I read, that when Elephants were first brought into Asia, and two of them brought and presented to King Antiochus, he made great account of them, and held them in high esteem, calling the one Ajax, and the other Achilles, but in process of time growing common in the country, by reason of their traffic into those places, whence they came; notwithstanding, they were of no less use then they were before; Nay, in all likelihood of more, because they were better acquainted with the use of them, and knew better how to manage them, yet because they were common, they contemned them, and called them Lucanian oxen: So doubtless the word of God in the days of our forefathers in this nation, when the light of God's truth first brake out of that gross darkness of Popery: it was highly esteemed, and the godly Ministry and Preachers of the word were valued as precious jewels, but now it is just an hundred years, that we have had the Gospel among us, this very year, 1658, therefore it is as odious and loathsome, as it is common, but did men know the worth of it, they would not despise the means of knowledge.

This may reprove such as go about to hinder and discourage others from getting knowledge, such as will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer others: how many sottish and wicked Parents will

discourage their children from reading the Scriptures, and frequenting Sermons, they will not get knowledge themselves, nor suffer their children? How many Masters will not allow their servants one hour in a week to hear a Lecture, but cry to them as Pharaoh to the Israelites, when they spake of going out to serve the Lord; ye are idle, ye are idle, and so increase their tasks: many ignorant Masters are well contented with ignorant servants, with an ignorant family like themselves: wicked wretches that are wholly led by the Prince of darkness, do labor to hinder others from attaining the light of saving knowledge: Thus when Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, called for Paul and Barnabas, desiring to be instructed by them in the knowledge of Christ; Elymas the sorcerer withstood them, seeking to turn away the Deputy from the faith: Acts 13:8, and for this, the hand of God was upon him: the Lord smote him with corporal, who labored to keep others in spiritual blindness, ver. 11, and after the stubborn Jews had rejected the word, the Apostles turn from them to the Gentiles; yet then the Jews stirred up devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the City, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. Ver. 50, and for this very cause the Apostle saith, they filled up their sins, and the wrath of God comes upon them to the uttermost.

If ignorance be the chief cause of a people's destruction, then suffer the word of exhortation, Let us all labor after knowledge, that we may be men of knowledge: wise men will lay up knowledge saith Solomon, or store it up, as the covetous man lays, or storeth up his bags of silver and gold. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding: many men spend so much of their time about getting of the world, that they can find little or no time to get wisdom and knowledge; they see the want of riches, as they think, but they see not the

want of spiritual knowledge. Diogenes had a pretty answer to some that asked him, why Philosophers rather followed rich men, then rich men Philosophers, why! That is no marvel at all said he, for Philosophers know that they want rich men's wealth, but rich men will not acknowledge that they want Philosophers wisdom. Most men hate the imputation of ignorance, vain man would be wise; so pleasing a thing is knowledge to reasonable creatures, not too much degenerated; and though men run a course tending to ignorance and error, yet they hate the imputation of ignorance, as a thing very reproachful: and yet some such monsters there are, that care not to acquire anymore knowledge, then is necessary to the keeping up of a poor sottish and half-brutish kind of life: and for God they know him not, nor do they care to know him, and if you speak of God to them, they presently cry out, like Pharaoh, who is the Lord?

Let therefore both ministers and people labor to be filled with knowledge.

1. But especially the Ministers of the Gospel should be knowing men. A Minister must not be like young Samuel, who knew not the voice of the Lord from Eli's, when the Lord called him, nor like Ahimaaz, that would needs run to carry the King news from the Camp, but when he came, knew nothing: every Scribe that is instructed unto the Kingdom of God, is like an householder, that bringeth forth of his treasury things both new and old. Ministers must be knowing men.

2. Because they are to be lights to others, therefore are they called the light of the world they are to give the knowledge of salvation to God's people, as Zacharias prophesied of John the Baptist: by giving of knowledge is not meant infusing of knowledge, for this is proper to God alone, but to give notice, or make to understand; so they are said to give knowledge, *instrumentaliter & organice*, as they are said to give faith, 1

Cor. 1:5, and to confirm men in the faith. Acts 14:22, he that will draw disciples to Christ, and prepare their hearts for him, he must be acquainted with the Scriptures, and able out of them to instruct his people in the knowledge of salvation: Ministers are God's Ambassadors, and therefore must be able to treat of the affairs of the holy state; they must be able to publish the secrets of the Gospel. Eph. 6:19, they must have the tongue of the learned, to know how to minister a word in season to a wearied soul: his lips must preserve, or be a storehouse of knowledge; and Elihu saith, such a messenger or interpreter, is but one of a thousand; and Paul saith, *quis ad haec idoneus*? Who is sufficient for these things? Not *quisquis*, but *quis*.

Therefore the Holy Ghost at the Feast of Pentecost, fell upon the Apostles in fiery cloven tongues, to furnish them with zeal and knowledge, to instruct all Nations in tongues, that they might be eloquent in all manner of tongues; and in fiery tongues, that they might be inflamed with zeal: if Christ had only given his Apostles cloven tongues, and not fiery tongues also, then should they have been full of knowledge, but void of zeal; if fiery tongues only, and not cloven, they should have abounded with zeal, but not according to knowledge: but Christ who knew what was best in every respect, sent down the spirit both in fiery and cloven tongues, that they might have the tongue of the learned, and show themselves men of God perfectly instructed to every good work, that their zeal might raise their discretion, and discretion govern their zeal. One saith, that Luther's zeal and courage, with Melanchthon's discretion, joined with Calvin's eloquence, would make an excellent preacher; Every Minister must be willing and able to teach, for the ignorance of the flock is the reproach of the Pastor, if it be his fault especially.

A Minister is to teach like a man of knowledge, his mouth must speak of wisdom, he must warn and teach in all wisdom. Col. 1:28, knowledge, and much wisdom is requisite to a Minister.

1. In the choice of a fit matter, a Minister must teach, *non inepta & futilia*, not with philosophical speculations, lying legends, and friary fables; for what is Chaff to the wheat saith the Lord? His doctrine must be like fire, full of light, to dispel the darkness of ignorance, by enlightening the minds of his hearers with the saving knowledge of God's truth, and full of heat to enflame their affections with the zeal of God's glory: the word of God must only be taught by him, *nec aliud, nec aliter*: he must teach no other doctrine. If we were to deal with the Heathen, we might use human testimony to convince them, as Paul doth. Acts 17:28; Tit. 1:12, but yet sparingly.

The main scope of the ministry is to preach sound doctrine, and for this, much knowledge is requisite, for the right opening of the Scriptures, that they may not mingle gold and dross, wheat, and chaff, together; of which dealing an Ancient saith of heretics, the harder they sucked, and drew the breasts of the Scriptures, the more they drunk down blood instead of milk.

2. In respect of the manner of his preaching, knowledge is a requisite, for,
1. A Minister is not rashly to run upon the handling of holy things without deliberation, and due premeditation, and preparation; his heart must be first inditing of a good matter, before his tongue can be the Pen of a ready writer; whether in Sermons, disputations, or the like. A grave Divine said, it were better men had neither tongues in their heads, nor parts in their bodies, then so boldly and busily, many times to employ them in rash reasoning, about Election, Predestination, and the sin against the Holy Ghost, without serious consideration, and mature deliberation: and the second part of Arch-

Bishop Cranmer's Preface before the Church-Bible, is for the most part spent in reproving such persons: so also the 37th injunction appointed to be publicly read, in Queen Elizabeth's time: for want of this wisdom and discretion, men many times wrangle about what they understand not, like two men meeting together, the one would be of Doctor Martins, and the other of Doctor Luther's opinion, who were both one and the same.

2. As the scope of the ministry is to preach the word purely, so to apply it powerfully to the consciences of men, therefore he must not be like Pope Boniface's Priests, no Clerks, nor, as our Savior speaks of some, that are blind leaders of the blind: a Minister must sometimes be a Boanerges, a son of thunder, in denouncing the dreadful threatening's of the law against obstinate sinners, and sometimes a Barnabas, a son of consolation, in pronouncing the sweet and comfortable promises of the Gospel, to the broken hearted penitent; he must be able likewise by sound doctrine both to exhort, and convince gainsayers: he must be able to resolve doubts, and to answer questions, therefore our Savior commended the Scribe for answering wisely or discreetly: he must likewise deliver the word with authority and gravity: now to all these purposes, wisdom and much knowledge is requisite in a Minister of the word.

3. Ministers are to teach manifestly, and evidently: God gave Pastors and Teachers to the edifying of the Church, and to further it in the knowledge of God: now how shall the hearer get knowledge, when the Preacher teacheth obscurely? He that prophesieth, speaketh unto men: 1 Cor. 14, the main work of the Teacher must be the profit of the hearer. I will give you Pastors after my own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding: what knowledge can a people reap, if they are taught obscurely; we read, that when the Levites read in the book of the Law, they

caused the people to understand the Law, and the people stood in their place, so they read in the book of the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading: but what understanding can the hearer have, if the Minister teach obscurely? Let them call this learned obscurity that will: I take it rather to be unlearned obscurity; for let learning appear, when it should appear. Let any man show that either the Greek or Roman Orators, have been commended for dealing obscurely; therefore let Ministers deal *aperte & perspicue*, in their Sermons, that the hearers may be made to understand what they teach them. Solomon speaks thus of himself, the more wise the Preacher was, he still taught the people knowledge, yea he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many Proverbs: now to preach so, as to make the people to understand what they hear, much wisdom and knowledge is requisite. And here let me show, that human learning rightly used, is very useful and necessary to a Minister of the Gospel.

1. It is very useful and necessary to the understanding, and expounding of diverse places of Scripture; where mention is made of the motions, influences, and operations of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, being celestial, and heavenly bodies, which places are dark and difficult, and cannot be understood without the help of natural Philosophy and Astronomy.

Also where there are allusions to, and similitudes, and comparisons from, Birds, Beasts, Fishes, Serpents, &c. natural Philosophy is also needful.

Item, in the description of Countries, and regions, with their several Climates and Temperatures, and the natures and inclinations of their inhabitants, there is use of Cosmography, Geography, Topography, and natural Philosophy too.

2. For Logic, it can by no means be lacking in a Minister, for without it we cannot in many things discern the truth, nor discover falsehood; both which, both Pastor and people must endeavor to do, Eph. 4:14; Eph. 5:17, that we may be wise, clearly to understand what the will of the Lord is, and not be like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness of those that lie in wait to deceive.

3. Learning is necessary to confute and confound pagans, that are not acquainted with the Scriptures; therefore Paul made use of this kind of learning at Athens, out of their own Poets, to confute them.

If one that had been born, bred, and brought up a long time under the earth, should upon the sudden be brought into the clear light of the Sun, it would so dazzle his eyes, as it would almost make him stark blind; so if one that hath been nuzzled up all his time in ignorance, should at first be brought to the bright shining light of the Gospel, it would so amaze him, as he would not know, what to make of it: such therefore must be set in the Moon-shine or star-light of nature, before they be brought to the clear Sunshine of the Scriptures, that so being overcome by common principles, whereto both sides agree, and give consent, they may be forced to yield, being foiled at their own weapons, as Goliath was slain with his own sword.

4. History and other things moving delight, may be moderately borrowed from human Authors, and inserted into Sermons, and mixed with, and mingled among Theological discourses, as sauce, not so much for necessity, as for delight. The Scriptures only be *instar panis*, like bread, as needful and necessary food to suffice and satisfy nature, and kill hunger: and Philosophy and other human learning, that may serve for sauce, both to procure appetite, and help digestion. But here let me add this caution: Let us

beware, that there be not more sauce then meat, more humanity then divinity: As Grynaeus reporteth of a certain Monk of Heidelberg, who when Melanchthon was a young man, lived in that University, and used to read and expound to the people in their Mother tongue, a piece of Aristotle's Ethics, instead of a Sermon; this was indeed to put Hagar in Sarah's place; and therefore by no means to be endured.

2. Let people also look to it, that they be men of knowledge: Every one of you profess yourselves to be God's servants, and the Lord to be your Master; now it behooves every servant to know his Master's will: Every servant of God must labor to know his will revealed in his word. A loving and dutiful wife that should have a letter sent to her from her husband out of a far Country, would not throw it into a hole, and there let it lie and rot, but have it in her bosom, near her heart and hand, that she may often peruse it, and inform herself by it; how she may the better order her business, according to her husband's directions contained therein; O do not rest yourselves in an ignorant condition, nor content yourselves with any natural wisdom and understanding, such as was in the old Philosophers, who had not the knowledge of God in Christ, but only a confused, a general knowledge, which could not lead them to happiness. Nor must you rest content that you have worldly wit and wisdom, to get and gather together things for this life, of which Christ speaks, Matth. 16:26. Labor not for that wisdom that is from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish, such was the wisdom of Pharaoh, plotting to oppress the Israelites, Come on, saith he, let us deal wisely with them, but labor for that wisdom that is from above, which as it cometh from heaven, so it carrieth the soul that hath it to heaven again, setting the heart and affections on things that are above, and

let me tell you further, that it is not enough for you to have other graces, but you must also have spiritual knowledge and understanding.

And here I shall lay down and propound two great motives to labor after saving knowledge.

1. Consider the great danger and mischief of ignorance.

2. The great benefit and excellency of knowledge.

1. For the danger and mischief of ignorance, I shall discover it in many particulars.

1. Without knowledge a man cannot be good: An ignorant man cannot be a good man; an ignorant man is apt to say, I have a good heart, and my heart is as good as the best: thou art deceived, if thou art ignorant, thou canst not be good, I do not mean of natural goodness one towards another, but of being good towards God. The Soul without knowledge is not good; saith Solomon, it hath not a dram of goodness in it, i. e. of true goodness; and if a man's soul be not good, his heart is naught; an ignorant man is a wicked man, and the heart of the wicked is little worth, saith the wise man; many ignorant people are ready to say, what though we be ignorant, yet we mean well, our heart is as good as the best, and we hope that God will accept of our good meanings and intentions: But how can men mean well, when they know not how to do well? Then is the heart good, when a man can say as David, Lord, thou hast taught, or made me to know wisdom in the hidden part, or in the secret of my heart: when this wisdom entereth into thy heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, as Solomon speaketh, when thy heart is taught of God, then it is good. A man may have a good nature, a good disposition, good natural wisdom and knowledge, but this is hateful to God, if spiritual knowledge be wanting; the wisdom of the flesh is enmity to

God; and it is that which keeps a man off from yielding subjection to the Law of God.

A man cannot be good in any relation without knowledge: A man cannot be a good husband without knowledge.

Peter exhorts husbands to dwell with their wives, according to knowledge.

Knowledge is required of all husbands, and of all men before they be husbands, because as soon as they have wives, they are charged to show their knowledge. Husbands must set up the worship of God, and the exercises of piety in their dwellings, by instructing their wives and children in the things of God, and by talking and discoursing of God's Word upon all occasions, as also by praying together, that so they may keep off the curse of God from them, which shall fall upon them that know him not, and the families that call not upon his Name. A man cannot be a good Parent without knowledge. Parents are required to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: how canst thou instruct thy children, while thou thyself art ignorant of God and his word? A man cannot be a good Master, nor a good Christian without knowledge; God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, &c. saith the Apostle: the first thing that God created in the world was light, and the first thing he creates in the soul of the new creature is spiritual light and knowledge; so then unless we have the light of heavenly knowledge in our hearts, we cannot be good.

2. Without knowledge we cannot do good. David makes it an indelible Character of a wicked man, to refuse knowledge; he hath left off to understand, and to do good. Geneva, he ceaseth to use his understanding to do well. Junius, he would not understand, that he might do well, saith

Jerome, upon Psal. 36:3, under the. Law God rejected the blind sacrifices, showing how he contemneth blindness and ignorance in all those that will serve him, Mal. 1:8. A good intention cannot make a good action; if knowledge be wanting, it is but a blind offering, though done in obedience to God's command. As it is will-worship, when things are done, which are not commanded, and men think by them to do God good service, so likewise when men do God's commands for sinister respects, not knowing the force and ground of the command.

1. Without knowledge a man cannot repent, how can a man turn from sin, unless he know the nature and danger of sin, how can he turn to the Lord, unless he know him: When Israel turneth to the Lord, he shall cry to the Lord, My God we know thee, saith the Prophet Hosea. If you urge an ignorant man to turn from his sin, and turn to the Lord, he will answer as Pharaoh, Who is the Lord, I know not the Lord, neither will I let my beloved lusts go: how can a man repent, till his conscience be touched, and how can conscience accuse him without knowledge? Knowledge is the effect of a good conscience, and a good conscience (like a haughty spirit) scorneth to lie in the hovel of ignorance.

2. A man cannot pray to the Lord without knowledge: there is none that understandeth, that seeketh after God, saith the Apostle. If thou knewest, saith Christ, to the woman of Samaria, thou wouldst have asked, &c. A man may say a prayer, or read a prayer, without true knowledge, and the Lord regard them not; but he cannot pray with the heart, nor pray spiritually without true knowledge; that prayer is right which is done in the spirit, and with understanding. *Scienter or at, qui novit quem orat, quid, & pro quo.*

3. Without knowledge a man cannot praise God for any mercy; Sing ye praises with understanding, saith the Psalmist, therefore the Saints do honor

God most with their praises and confessions, because they know more of God and his goodness then others, and can report higher things of him. Wicked and ignorant men speak of God only by hearsay, but they that know him, by intimate acquaintance and experience, as the Queen of Sheba knew more of Solomon's wisdom by his mouth, then by his fame; he that hath the most inward communion with God, is able to render the more abundant praises to him.

4. Without knowledge, a man cannot be zealous for God and his glory; there is a blind zeal like that of Popish votaries, there may be a zeal of God, where there is no knowledge of God, as the Apostle Paul speaks of himself, before his conversion, that he persecuted the Church out of zeal; the like he speaks of his Country-men the Jews that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. It is good, saith the Apostle, always to be zealously affected in a good matter, Gal. 4:18. Now wisdom and knowledge are good guides to zeal, to keep it within compass, that it run not out into fury, in all pious actions let zeal be your spur, but let knowledge and wisdom be your guide.

5. A man cannot truly worship God without knowledge, we must know him before we can worship him: how can we reverence him whom we do not know; we know what we worship, saith our Savior; but as for all ignorant persons (like the Samaritans) they worship they know not what and if they do him any outward service, they ignorantly worship the true God, like the Athenians that set up an Altar to the unknown God; this makes many persons to come into God's presence, and carry themselves so irreverently as they do, because they do not know him: Such as our knowledge is, such is our worship of God.

3. Without knowledge a man cannot receive good.

1. Without knowledge a man cannot receive Jesus Christ, God first shineth into the heart with the light of knowledge, before Jesus Christ can be received by the hand of faith: though Jesus Christ when he was upon earth spake as never man spake, his preaching being with power and authority, and not like that of the Scribes, yet multitudes of his hearers could not receive him, till the eyes of their understanding were opened.

2. Without knowledge a man cannot receive the Spirit of God: our Savior saith, That the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: many men make a mock and scorn of the Spirit of God, because they do not know him; the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

A natural man may hear of spiritual things, but cannot be in a capacity of receiving them, till he come to understand and to know them. They are riddles to a natural man, as the Apostle saith, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him; he speaks there of the things of the Gospel: but, saith he, God hath revealed them to us by his spirit, and we have the mind of Christ, ver. ult. A natural and ignorant man is like a corrupt stomach, where no meat will digest or nourish, it doth him no good, it turneth to no good nutriment; so it is with an ignorant soul, the spiritual things of God do him no good, they digest not in his soul, they nourish him not, because he is full of darkness, corruption, and ignorance.

4. Without the knowledge of God, we can have no communion and fellowship with him.

God is light, and the ignorant man is darkness, and what communion hath light with darkness? God is light, and in him there is no darkness, and while

thou art in the dark dungeon of ignorance, thou canst not converse with the Father of Lights. A natural man is a blind man, he cannot see nor discern spiritual things: God takes no delight in such blind fools. If you delight yourselves in ignorance, and are unwilling to be taught, as many children and servants are, how can you have any communion with God that know him not? It is true, as a judicious Divine observeth, there are many that desire knowledge, and cannot attain it, and of such, saith he, God will either accept their desires, or give them knowledge, but such as please themselves with their ignorance, they have no communion with God, but are sealed up unto damnation. If a man walketh in darkness, and saith he hath fellowship with God, he is a liar. A man can have no communion with God in the spirit, nor in his ordinances, nor in anything as his, without the knowledge of God; for while he liveth in the darkness of ignorance, he is without God in the world.

5. Without the knowledge of God men are still under the power of Satan, the Prince of darkness.

They are said to be under the power of darkness, i.e. of ignorance, and they that are under the power of darkness, are under the power of this Black Prince: the Devil himself is bound in everlasting chains under darkness, and he bindeth sinners with the chains of darkness, the darkness of ignorance, and holds them under his power: therefore when a sinner is converted unto God, he is delivered from the power of Satan, being turned from darkness to light, and being made a meet partaker of the inheritance of the Saints in light, he is delivered from the power of darkness. Most men, while they are under Satan's power, they are held with this chain: where ever an ignorant man goes, he goes like a fettered prisoner with his Keeper at his back: let him go to the Congregation to hear the word, there Satan either stops his

ears, or blinds his eyes, or else chokes and steals away the good seed of the word out of his heart. Those that are without the acknowledgment of the truth, they are taken captive, or taken alive by him in his snare, and wicked spirits are said to be the Rulers of the darkness of this world: Oh tremble then, thou ignorant wretch, to think to whom thou art in bondage.

6. While thou art ignorant, wanting the knowledge of God, thou art in subjection to every base lust.

Paul speaking of the unregenerate State, describeth it thus: At that time we were foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures: Fashion not yourselves, saith Peter, according to the former lusts in your ignorance. An ignorant man knoweth not what is good, and what is evil, and often putteth good for evil, and evil for good, putteth darkness for light, and light for darkness; now the will and affections do for the most part follow the understanding in things that are good, I say for the most part, because the will and affections are sometimes more depraved then the understanding: and in evil things, the will and affections do altogether follow the understanding; now the understanding being darkened, and putting evil for good, and good for evil, how can it be, but a cause of divers lusts, making the soul to serve divers lusts and pleasures? Ambition, Pride, Passion, Drunkenness, Revenge. Every sin and lust will command them, so long as they are without the true knowledge of God: this is a miserable slavery, to be led by their lusts, if they had eyes to see it; one lust hurries them one way, and another hurries them another way; where there is the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue, such have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust: there is no escaping the pollutions and defilements of sin and lust, but by the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

7. Ignorance makes a man like a beast; A man without knowledge is like Nebuchadnezzar, who had the heart of a beast in the shape of a man: an ignorant man hath the head and heart of a beast, an ignorant man is a very beast. For what difference between a man and a beast? A beast hath eyes, ears, legs, as well as a man; seeth, heareth, goeth, smelleth, tasteth, as well as a man can do: nay, many beasts can do these things better than a man can do: a man then differeth only from a beast in understanding and discourse. Therefore saith God to his people, Be not as the horse or mule, that hath no understanding; as the Poet calleth an ignorant man, a sottish man, yea, a sottish mule. Ask an ignorant man what God is, what Jesus Christ is, what his natures, what his offices are? Ask him what the Spirit of God is, what God requireth at his hands, how he should serve him? Ask him how he will get faith? Examine him about the doctrines of Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, what evidences he can show for everlasting life and salvation, what marks of Christianity he can show, what tokens of sound conversion and sincerity in himself, what strange answers shall you receive from an ignorant man? So that the bleating of a sheep, the neighing of a horse, or the lowing of an Ox, is as much to the purpose, as his answers are. Is he rich? He is a rich beast; as Diogenes Cynicus called a rich man that was unlearned, a sheep with a golden fleece. Is he honorable? He is an honorable beast, if ignorant; as one said of an ignorant and unlearned King, that he was but a crowned Ass. Fortune makes a man rich, said an Heathen, but it is wisdom makes a man; and let me add, it is the knowledge of God, that makes a man indeed, that makes a true Christian: Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish: saith the Psalmist; when man was in his highest honor, he did affect to become like God in knowledge, and therefore God made him like a beast that understandeth

not; God made him like the beast: and a godly Divine of ours well observeth; it is better to be a beast, then to be like a beast: for a beast in his own condition followeth the instinct of nature, but to be like a beast, is for a man to unman himself, to degenerate to a baser condition, then that wherein he was created: therefore be not in that sottish estate, as to be like the horse or mule that hath no understanding.

8. An ignorant state, is an estate hardly to be cured.

That is the reason why there are so many old men that are sottish and ignorant, men that have lived sixty, seventy, or eighty years, and yet are but children in understanding: therefore the Holy Ghost calleth an ignorant people, sottish children: so the Lord complaineth, my people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, they have no understanding. If a man be ignorant, the elder he is, the more sottish and ignorant he grows. Ignorance in youth is sottishness in old age; therefore people commonly call an old ignorant man an old fool, and the Apostle Peter calleth such ignorance, the ignorance of foolish men.

1. An old man thinks it a great disgrace and disparagement for him to be taught, or to learn: what saith he, have I lived to this age, and must I now be catechized?

2. Ignorant old men are very unteachable: if a fool be brayed in a mortar, yet his folly will not depart from him, saith Solomon: and if any man speak in the ears of a fool, he will despise the wisdom of his words. Words and persuasions are but spent in vain upon an old sottish man, who is wiser in his own conceit, then seven men that can render a reason. A reproof will enter more into a wise man, then an hundred stripes into a fool: it is natural for old ignorant persons to frame many excuses; they are ready to say, they know enough, and as much as anybody can tell them, and they need know

no more, and they think themselves well where they are; they are in love with darkness, and hate the light, and therefore like the blind Pharisees, they despise the counsel of God against themselves.

3. Old men do usually hang upon some old custom or tradition of their forefathers, and from that they will not be beaten, though they can give no reason for it.

4. The older they grow, the weaker are their brains, and so the more unapt to learn *senex bis puer*, an old man is twice a child. Covetousness for the most part so possesseth old men, and this sin never waxing old, but growing green in withered and decrepit old men, their hearts being so set upon the things of the world, that they have neither heart, nor will to get knowledge.

6. Being old, and now ready to drop into the grave, they have but a little time to be instructed, and so at length as they lived all their days without knowledge, so they die without wisdom, as Eliphaz speaketh, Job 4:21.

You see then that an ignorant estate is very dangerous, because hard to be cured. Better is poverty with wisdom, then folly with riches and honor. Better is a poor and wise child, then a foolish King, who will no more be admonished; let me close up this with that of the Apostle. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men; or as the Greek hath it, in understanding be ye of a ripe (or perfect) age.

9. Ignorance makes a man to slight and despise all God's works.

David meditating on the works of God, cries out: O Lord how great are thy works! And thy thoughts are very deep: but then he addeth: A brutish man knoweth not: neither doth a fool understand this. Psal. 92:5,6, who so is wise, will observe these things. Psal. 107:43. As Pearls cast before dogs or swine, so are the works of God among ignorant persons: swine, or dogs,

will trample precious pearls under their feet in the dirt, but skillful Lapidaries will use them carefully, and set them in gold, and rich attire. So ignorant people that know not the works of God, and consider not the operation of his hands, will condemn and despise, or at least neglect the excellent documents, and fruitful instructions of God's glory therein exhibited, whereby the Name of God is much profaned. A man that knows and considereth the works of God, useth them aright, and glorifieth God in them. The Dung-hill-Cock as the Fable moralizeth, doth more esteem of a barley corn, then of a precious pearl, knowing the profit of the one, and not the rich value of the other. So blind and ignorant people, do lightly esteem of God's glorious and wonderful works, preferring the dirty commodities of this dung-hill world, before the footsteps of God's Majesty imprinted in his works, thereby exceedingly dishonoring the Lord himself.

And let me add hereunto, that ignorance makes a man lightly to esteem of God himself, and of his word. An ignorant man is ready to pass by a King without any reverence done unto him, and the Country Peasant (we know) doth trample many a wholesome herb under his feet, (which the skillful Apothecary doth gather up, and make good account of) because he is ignorant of the virtues, and medicinal uses thereof, which the Apothecary knoweth: knowledge is a necessary precedent to a reverent and high estimation of God and his word, for to know the excellency of anything, is a good preparative to a due esteem thereof.

10. Ignorance is an inlet into all errors.

It is a fruitful mother of error: An ignorant man is apt to be carried away, κενοῖς λόγοις with vain and empty words. The Papists who would persuade the people they may be ignorant, and a little or no knowledge is required of them; give great occasion to us to suspect, as if they meant to make a prey

of them, by seducing them with gross errors: for then saith Chrysostom, thieves go to stealing, when they have first put out the candle, and in dark shops, men use to utter their base and refuse wares. It was ignorance of the doctrine of regeneration, and of the Scriptures, that made Nicodemus conceive that carnally, that our Savior spake spiritually. It was ignorance of the Scriptures that made the Sadducees make a mock and scoff at the resurrection, and afterwards to propound their question about a woman that had many Husbands, Whose wife she should be in the resurrection? Matth. 22:23, our Savior tells them that ignorance was the cause of this their error, ye err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. Ver. 29. An ignorant man is a prey for every impostor and deceiver, as Sampson was for the Philistines, when his eyes were out. If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch together: It is a people, saith God, that do err in their hearts, and the reason is given, they have not known my ways: An ignorant man is the very map of change, and like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, being not well grounded; an ignorant man like a child is apt to be taken with every new fangle, soon growing weary of everything. The most learned are subject to error; for at the best, they know but in part, and do frequently err, because not wholly sanctified: knowledge then is most necessary, that we may be able to try doctrines that are brought to us, and to discern the spirits, whether they be of God or no: the rich man is wise in his own conceit: but the poor that hath understanding can try him, saith Solomon.

Lastly. An ignorant man is every moment liable to God's wrath and vengeance. They have not known my ways saith the Lord, therefore I swear in my wrath; that they should not enter into my rest. Psal. 95, ult. Pour out thy wrath upon the Heathen, that have not known thee, &c. saith the

Prophet Jeremy: the like hath David. Psal. 79:6. Put all those together, and you may clearly see the danger of the sin of ignorance, that we may be stirred up to labor after the true knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. The case of ignorant men then is much to be pitied and lamented; for if their case be to be lamented, who through corporal blindness run into innumerable mischiefs, and at last fall into a deep gulf without hope of recovery; much more are they to be pitied, who through spiritual blindness plunge themselves into far greater evils for the present, and at last fall into the pit of everlasting destruction, without recovery. Do you not pity blind men, when you see them go out of the way, or stumble at every block, or fall into every pit or ditch, or be misled by every false guide, or exposed to the injury of every vile and malicious person: how much more then should we sadly lament the case of those who are ignorant, lying under the punishment of spiritual blindness, which is greater than bodily blindness, beyond all comparison, and much more desperate.

2. The second thing by way of motive to this duty of getting knowledge, is the great worth, benefit, and excellency of knowledge: Get wisdom, saith Solomon; for wisdom is the principal thing: we read of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. And here consider

1. Knowledge is the principal thing wherein the image of God consisteth: the new man is said to be renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him; it is not our substance, that is God's image, but true knowledge; knowledge makes a man like unto God: this the Devil knew well enough, when he tempted our first Parents, to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, telling them, that God knew, that in the day they eat thereof, their eyes should be opened, and they should be as God's, knowing good and evil: Ignorance makes a man like the brute beasts that

perish, but knowledge is the renewing of the image of God upon the soul. Pythagoras engraved in a stone with his own hand these words, setting it before his Academy: He that knoweth not in his measure what he ought to know, *scil.* in divine things, is but a beast among men; he that knoweth what is simply needful, and no more, is a man among men, but he that knoweth according to the helps vouchsafed him of God, what may well be known; and so far as to direct himself and others aright in the way to true happiness, is a God among men: Thus the Lord tells Moses, he should be to his brother Aaron instead of God.

2. Knowledge is a most enriching thing; we read of the riches of the full assurance of understanding, and of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; this makes a man rich to God: there is one that is *dives sibi*, rich, to himself; there is another that is *dives Deo*, rich unto God: he that hath only outward treasures, is rich to himself, but he that hath the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, is rich in God. God never chargeth us to be rich in worldly things, but to be rich in knowledge, to be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: where this treasure is wanting, the soul is beggarly and bankrupt, base in God's sight, as he saith of the Church of Laodicea. Thou sayest, thou art rich, and increased with goods, and hast need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: A blind and ignorant soul, is a poor, miserable, and beggarly soul. When thou buyest a Farm, thou buyest a good one, saith a Father, when thou marriest a wife, thou chooseth a good one; when thou desirest children, thou desirest good ones; and when thou hast all these riches, thou art but poor, *inter tot dona*, amongst so many gifts; and, *malus inter tot bona*, evil among so many good things; if thou wantest the riches of true knowledge: men may welter upon their Gold like

Heliogabalus, as Lampridius, and Herodian report of him, and yet for spiritual knowledge, have hearts like stones, and heads like beetles, and be beggars in the midst of their abundance, destitute of all heavenly riches, of riches towards God. The merchandise of wisdom is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof then fine Gold: Merchants that trade for silver and gold, bring in much profit, but the merchandise of wisdom is better, and more profitable: My fruit is better than Gold, yea then much fine gold; saith wisdom: It brings in peace of conscience, it filleth the heart with unspeakable joy, it comforts the soul in the greatest distress; this is the fruit that groweth upon the tree of Knowledge.

3. It far transcendeth all other kind of knowledge, other knowledge compared with this knowledge, is but, as the Apostle saith, Science falsely so called; what will it avail a man with the Grammarian to be able to speak and write purely, and use elegant phrases in his words, if he want the knowledge of God to direct him to live purely and holily; for want whereof, he committeth many solecisms and absurdities in his works and actions? What comfort can it afford a man to have been a fine Rhetorician, and eloquent Orator, and having used many pleasing words to men, if in the meantime, he want a light within him, to show him how to do those things that are pleasing to God? What will it help the Musician to have had a tunable tongue with an untunable heart? What will it posit the Logician, to be able to dispute subtly, if he be graveled, and set Non-plus in the Devils sophistry? What will it help the Lawyer, to be able to prescribe to others the rules of equity, and himself to live in the practice of all iniquity? What good will it do to the Geometrician to know the measure and compass of the whole earth, and not to know and consider that himself must shortly return to the earth? What will it advantage the Astronomer to have his eyes lifted

up to heaven, if he be ignorant of the God of heaven, and his heart be groveling upon the earth? What will it help the Arithmetician, to be cunning and skillful in numeration, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and all the several branches of that Science; if in the meantime he forget Moses numeration, and never pray unto God to teach him to number his days, and to apply his heart unto wisdom; or Zacchaeus division in restoring what he had ill gotten to the right owners, and disposing of what he had to spare, of what he had well gotten, to the poor and needy members of Christ? What is a man profited with the Physician, to know the state and constitution of other men's bodies, and yet be ignorant how it fares with, and what shall become of, his own poor soul! In a word, if we were so well read in histories, and had such firm and sure memories, as that we could discourse of the affairs of all foreign and far Countries; as Turkey, Persia, the East and West Indies, &c. and in the meantime be strangers at home, not knowing how things go in that Microcosm, or little world of ourselves, it would but little profit us? What if we could describe as in a Map or Table, the wars of the Trojans, Grecians, Romans, Turks, and Persians, and in the meantime be ignorant, that we have a politick, powerful, mighty, and malicious Adversary, to encounter with ourselves, as Peter tells us. 1 Pet. 5:8, yea, that he useth treachery and treason against us, being in league with our own flesh, which he stirreth up to rebel against the good motions of the spirit, and make us yield ourselves to be his Slaves and Vassals? Beloved, all these knowledges in their kind, are good and commendable; and good ornaments to those that have attained them, and may be means to fit, and furnish men to be more serviceable to Church and common-wealth, but they must all be subordinate, and stoop to this most excellent knowledge, the knowledge of God in Christ. Compare this excellent knowledge, with other

knowledges contained in the writings of Philosophers, and other human authors, and you will find it so far to excel and exceed them all, as heaven doth the earth: and you will find it so far to excel and exceed them all, as heaven doth the earth: for their discourses and disputations be but like spiders webs, many times so subtle, as we scarce conceive the reason of them; yet withal so light, as they yield no comfort or content, when we do conceive it; and as Austin saith, their arguments are glassy, which shine with subtlety, and are broken with vanity: They discourse of knowledge, and dispute thereof, and yet still remain blind and ignorant as Bats, or Beetles, in respect of the main and chief knowledge, the knowledge of God and Christ? Paul determined to know nothing else save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. These men discourse and dispute of happiness, and yet remain themselves most miserable, being so far from enjoying it, as few or none of them ever truly knew what it was, they talk of the truth, but many of them are liars, they talk of virtue, and yet remain most vicious: briefly, we may say of all their speculations, and curious Arts and Sciences, without the saving knowledge of God in Christ, (which none of them ever attained unto by the Moon-light of nature) that it was but *docta quaedam ignorantia*, a kind of learned ignorance, or ignorant kind of knowledge, as Austin calleth it, at least nothing worth in comparison of this heavenly knowledge; for, as Bernard hath noted, that is the best knowledge, not only which makes men more learned, but better and more holy. All riches in comparison of this, is but dross and rubbish, all wisdom (in comparison of this) is but foolishness.

4. Knowledge is the Mother-grace.

1. It is the Mother of faith; If a man know God, he will believe and trust in him: They that know thy name will trust in thee, we have known and

believed, saith the Apostle. 1 John 4:16. Bellarmine saith, that Faith ariseth from ignorance rather than from knowledge, because, saith he, Faith is the evidence of things not seen: but I say, we first know a thing, before we can believe; now whereas the Apostle, Heb. 11:1, saith, Faith is the evidence of things not seen, you are to understand that the Apostle doth not there define faith, but only describe it by one of the effects of it, because it makes things clear and evident which it never saw: as by faith we do believe the creation of the world, though we never saw it: sight and knowledge is no hindrance of, but a help to, faith; as Stephens faith was not any whit lessened, but rather helped by his sight of Christ, sitting at the right hand of God.

2. Knowledge is the root of love: he that loveth not, knoweth not God, saith the Apostle; he that knoweth God most, loveth him best, therefore many men do not love him, because they do not know him; there be two feet on which we must walk to heaven, saith one, if ever we mean to come there, viz. Faith and Love; he that wants faith, is lame on the right foot, and he that wanteth love, is lame on the left foot, and both these follow after knowledge. A man that knoweth God in Covenant, and as an all-sufficient God, cannot choose but love him: till a man knoweth Christ in the fullness of his perfections as Mediator, he cannot truly love him. For as men naturally love the children of their own body, so men are apt to dote upon the brats of their own brain, and to be in love with their own imaginations, till they come to know the Lord: naturally man hath an operating fancy to set up somewhat in his understanding, and in his heart, above and besides God, till he comes to a distinct knowledge of God in Christ. It is true! It is not knowledge that makes a man a good man, but love and sanctified affections; for though I speak with the tongues of men and Angels, and though I have the gift of Prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all

knowledge, &c. and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, and all this profiteth me nothing; the devil and wicked spirits know much, and yet have no love to God: yet there can be no love to God, where the knowledge of God is not.

3. Knowledge is the root of obedience: as soon as Abraham knew the Lord, he obeyed the voice of the Lord, when God called him to get out of his country, from his kindred, and from his Fathers house: the foolish and disobedient are put together by the Apostle; disobedience springs from folly, as obedience springeth from wisdom; what is the reason? The natural man scorneth at the things of the spirit, and they are foolishness to him; it is because he cannot perceive the excellency of them. Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding. After true knowledge, followeth obedience of the heart and life: the end of learning. The Commandment of God is obedience, for if the end of all practical knowledge be obedience, then much more the end of the commands of God: The knowledge of Christ is the only means to suppress sin and vice.

5. Knowledge is the only way to true happiness: it is the will of God that all men should be saved, saith the Apostle, but how, may some say? He addeth in the next words, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth: and it is not only the way to true happiness, but it is true happiness inchoate; this is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ, saith our Savior. Moses first prays to God, Lord tell me thy name; he beggeth acquaintance with God, and then saith he afterwards; Lord show me thy glory, they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, saith Daniel: there are no ignorant fools in Emmanuels land. Glorified creatures are said to be full of eyes within, seeing eternal

happiness consisteth in vision, they must be full of heavenly light and knowledge: Now we know but in part, but then shall we know as we are known. 1 Cor. 13:12.

6. Knowledge is very useful and necessary to the soul.

1. To direct and guide a man: as God hath put the Sun and Moon in the Firmament to rule the day and the night, so he hath put knowledge into the soul, to guide and govern men in their practices, and to dictate to them what is to be done, what is to be avoided. A man without knowledge, is like a blind man wanting a guide to direct him, if the understanding be clear and good, the man is safe, but if the understanding be darkened, then he falls into the pits of sin and error; The light of the body is the eye, saith our Savior, if therefore thine eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness: The meaning is, that as the eye is the light and guide of the body, so is the understanding the guide of the soul: and as the body followeth the fortune of the eye, if the eye be single, (that is, clear and good) the whole body is full of light, and every member will be able to do its proper work, as if it had an eye in it: but if the eye be evil or blinded, then the whole body is full of darkness, that is, every member mistaketh in its operations; as the eye in the body guideth the feet how to walk, and the hand how to work, and every member how to do his part and duty, and the whole body to decline and avoid danger: so rectified reason, and a single eye will guide our wills and affections, teaching them what to choose, and what to refuse; and if the judgment be cleared from corrupt principles, then the whole soul will be full of light, and the whole life of man will be good: for as where the eye is clear, and quick-sighted, the body is well guided, so where the understanding, and reason, and judgment is rightly informed, there the soul

is well ordered, otherwise there is nothing but disorder and confusion. True knowledge will direct thy choice to forsake the bad, and follow the good; to leave earthly things, and cleave to heavenly; Wisdom is Profitable to direct, saith Solomon; even as light directeth him in his way: the knowledge of God in a saving way, will make thee not to place happiness in pleasing thy humor with the ancient Philosophers, but it will make thee content with Paul, to give over all to gain Christ; true knowledge guideth the tongue, understanding is a well-spring of life to him that hath it: the heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips; that is, as if he had said, whereas a fools heart is upon the tip of his tongue, to vent and utter whatever he knoweth at all adventures, a wise man's tongue is ordered and guided by his heart, to keep and observe a decorum both in speech and silence: And concerning actions, Solomon bringeth in wisdom, speaking thus in her own person, saying; My fruit is better than Gold, yea then fine Gold, and my revenue then choice Silver; and then addeth a reason saying: I lead in the way of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment. Now on the other side, if thine eye be evil, thy whole body is full of darkness; as a man that hath an ill sight, a pearl in his eye, or is pur-blind, is oftentimes, nay evermore deceived in his choice, and misseth his mark: So he that hath his understanding darkened and dazzled, wanteth a right judgment to guide him in the worship and service of God: the corruption of his own heart and proud flesh, the sleights and suggestions of Satan, and the evil examples of others with whom he liveth, being (as Gregory Nazianzen saith) interposed between the eye of his mind, and the light of the Gospel; as a thick cloud, or the shadow of the body of the earth, between our eyes and the light of the Sun. Now where this evil eye is, there is nothing but darkness, and the fruits of it, amazedness, horror, and confusion: where

understanding is wanting, the whole life must be nothing but disorder: knowledge in the soul, is as a King in his Realm, the head to the body, the eye in the head, a Pilot in a ship; yea in a word, as the Sun to the world: now what truer mirror of misery, then a Realm without a King or Governor, or whose King is a child, not so much in years as in discretion, as Rehoboam was? And what can that body do that hath an head blind without eyes, or that is still distempered, fit for nothing but sleep? What can be expected to become of a ship, whose Pilot and guide is still stark drunk, neither knowing nor caring how to guide her at Sea, nor bring her to shore? And what greater darkness is there in the greater world, then when the Sun (the eye thereof) hath run his race, and is gone to rest, until his rising again? As great disorder, discomfort and confusion is there in a man without knowledge, and spiritual understanding; nay far greater, unless Jesus Christ, the Son of Righteousness, arise in it, and shine upon it, by the beams of his grace and favor.

2. Knowledge is useful to strengthen a man, a knowing man is a strong man; a fool is a weak man: wisdom strengtheneth the wise, more than ten mighty men that are in the City, saith Solomon: it will more support and strengthen a man, then many great friends in Court or City, it will strengthen a man in great straits; Friends may fail a man, and oftentimes do fail him: but true wisdom doth not fail a man in the greatest straits, it leadeth a man through the greatest difficulties, and supports him under them: to this purpose the Apostle prayeth, that the Colossians might be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and increase in the knowledge of God, that they might be strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering, with joyfulness.

Wisdom strengthens us rightly to use our spiritual armor, both defensive, and offensive, as it is best for us, and appointed to us.

When a great King besieged a little City, and built great bulwarks against it, there was found in it, a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the City: then said I, wisdom is better than strength: Eccl. 9:14,15,16, and ver. 18, he addeth, Wisdom is better than weapons of war: the Devil is like this great King, that cometh against, and besiegeth the little City of the soul, buildeth great bulwarks against it; but a poor Christian by wisdom delivereth his soul: a man that knoweth his own weakness, and wants, that knoweth the necessity of grace, that knoweth Jesus Christ to be the Fountain of wisdom and strength, he goeth out of himself to Jesus Christ, making use of the virtue of his death and resurrection, to overcome all temptations unto sin.

3. Knowledge doth exceedingly encourage a man, and hearten him against all discouragements: when a man knoweth God, knoweth his service, and knoweth what God requireth at his hands, this doth exceedingly encourage a man upon the performance of his duty. Paul saith, I am not ashamed of my sufferings for the preaching of the Gospel; and giveth this reason; for I know whom I have believed, and he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. When a man knoweth the will of God, and walketh according to the light he hath received, when a man knoweth the promises, and his own interest in them, this doth mightily encourage a man under sufferings; when once we have gotten understanding of Christ and the Promises, and Privileges by him, the heart is full of courage; he knoweth then, let God cast him into what state or condition he will, that it shall go well with him; this will make a man courageous in death itself: What though I die? Yet saith he with Job, I know that my Redeemer liveth,

and in that he liveth, he liveth for my good: he is my life, who is the life; My life is bound up in him, who is the Fountain of Life, and because he liveth, I shall live also.

4. Knowledge is sweet, and comfortable: light is sweet, and it is a comfortable thing for a man with his eyes to behold the light of the Sun: So when an ignorant soul is enlightened with the true knowledge of God and his ways; this is very comfortable: What a comfort is it to come out of the dark dungeon of ignorance, into God's marvelous light? The light of knowledge raiseth a drooping spirit; Ignorance of God, and of his Word: ignorance of ourselves also, is the cause of much trouble of spirit, when we are ignorant of our own estate, and of our grounds of comfort; It is the great design of the Devil, to blind our eyes in soul troubles, that we may not see the Well of Comfort, that runneth by us; as poor Hagar, that was ready to perish for thirst, had not eyes to see the Fountain by her: Now true knowledge leads the soul to the Promises, to the waters of Comfort, to the breasts of Consolation, where he may suck and be abundantly satisfied: Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart; when gross darkness covereth other people, light is risen to their souls: The light of the righteous rejoiceth, when the lamp of the wicked is put out. The knowledge of God in a saving way, bringeth three grounds of comfort to the soul that hath it.

1. It comforteth the soul to consider, how many Wise and Learned men, are blinded by the god of this World, that, God hath hid Heavenly Mysteries from the wise and prudent of the World, and hath revealed them to poor babes: and to such a poor ignorant creature as he was.

2. It comforteth it to consider, what darkness it hath sometime lived in, and that now the Lord hath called it out of darkness, into his marvelous

light. Oh! Saith such a soul, God hath done as great a work upon my heart, as he did when he commanded light to shine out of darkness, in the beginning of the World: my heart was like the earth at that time, when there was nothing but *Tohu*, and *Bohu*, upon it, and darkness was upon the face of the Deep, and then did the Lord make light of it: It is with God's people before he openeth their eyes, as it was with Abraham; the Lord sent on him a most fearful darkness, even then, when he was ready to communicate a most comfortable light unto him. The Lord struck Paul with blindness, even then, when he came to open his eyes.

3. This further comforteth such a soul, in that God shining into it hath given it the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in Jesus Christ; glorious things are now revealed to the soul, the soul seeth that now, which it never saw before, and they clearly see, that which others cannot know, nor discern: It is light in Goshen, where the Israelites are, when there is no light in Egypt: men in the same City, in the same Congregation, in the same Seat, in the same Family, sit in darkness, and cannot see; when others in the same places, do clearly behold the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ. Now if this light of the godly be so glorious and comfortable in this World, what shall it be in the World to come? When God and the Lamb shall be their immediate light? Here God enlightens us by candle-light, but there the glorious Sun of Righteousness himself, will be our everlasting light: here our light may be darkened and eclipsed, but there shall be an eternal light without all darkness, there shall be no night there.

5. Knowledge is useful to resolve all doubts, and difficulties, which arise in our souls; this makes a man of a full and firm resolution; a man is happy when he can say, This I know to be the mind of God, and in this will I live and die; this is the truth of God, and from this I will not be moved.

Ignorance is the mother of two filthy daughters; the first daughter of Ignorance is called dubiety, or doubtfulness, which is a continual wavering in opinion; a knowing man hath a fixed spirit, and settled judgment, but an ignorant man is a doubleminded man, though he be never so resolute and willful in his opinions. The other daughter of Ignorance is falsity, or error, which settleth a man upon an unsound basis: he that is void of reason, will not be convinced by truth or reason: when there were divers opinions in the World concerning Christ, who he should be, some said he was John the Baptist, some Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets; this variety of opinions sprang from ignorance: Some said he was Elias, *propter zelum & amorem veritatis*, for his zeal and love of the truth; for as Elias could not endure to have God's worship mingled with idolatry; no more could Christ, as appears Joh. 2, by his punishing and casting out of those that bought and sold in the Temple: others said, he was Jeremias, *propter patientiam in adversis*, being like a lamb before the shearer, not opening his mouth, however he was abused: and others said, he was John the Baptist, for his boldness in reproofing sin, and this opinion for the most part went current; and the reason why it was more favored and followed than the rest, Divines observe to be, because a great man was Author of it; as you may see Matth. 14:2, for when Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, he said unto his servant, this is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him: and then no matter, whether it be true or false, if Herod be the Author of it; for if Abimelech cut boughs from trees, to set the Tower in Shechem on fire, all the people will do so by his example. Here you may see the dangerousness of ignorance, causing such various and erroneous opinions concerning Christ; their ignorance of Christ, made way to the entertainment of the Pythagorean

opinion of the transmigration of souls into other men's bodies, which occasioned all these errors; so grossly ignorant were even the better sort of people in Christ's time, in a main fundamental point of Religion, as viz. Whether he were the Messiah or no: Now on the other side, knowledge resolves all doubts: though others doubted who Christ was, yet Peter freely and clearly confesseth him, he doth not stay till a Council might be called, and the question determined among the Jews; but knowing who Christ was, like the fore-man of a Jury, he brings in the verdict of himself and his followers, saying, (as Matthew tells us) to our Savior, Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God. A man that hath clear eyes in his head, can discern the light if it be shown him, but blindness makes a man incapable of seeing light offered to him: knowledge resolves a man, and settlenth his judgment; without knowledge a man cannot in divers cases, discern truth from error: as in the body of man, eyes are given to distinguish of colors, ears to distinguish of sounds, palates to distinguish of tastes; so is knowledge very useful to distinguish of Doctrines, that are tendered to us; that with David, we may choose the way of truth, and avoid the rocks of error; growing in the knowledge of Christ, preserves a man from being carried away with the error of the wicked.

6. Knowledge is useful to adorn the soul: knowledge is the soul's greatest ornament: wisdom (especially heavenly wisdom) makes a man's face to shine, saith the Wise man: it putteth such a luster upon a man, as outshineth all the Diadems of the greatest Princes of the World: It is an ornament of grace to the head, and chains about the neck. Persons of Renown for wisdom, were wont to wear chains of Gold about their necks, in token of honor done to them for their wisdom; for that cause Pharaoh put a Golden chain about the neck of Joseph; and the like did King Belshazzar unto

Daniel, who was so Renowned for his wisdom, that in those days, none were esteemed wiser than he: therefore the Lord upbraideth the Prince of Tyrus, that was puffed up with the conceit of wisdom; Behold thou art wiser than Daniel; that is, thou thinkest thyself wiser than Daniel, there is no secret they can hide from thee. How amiable was Solomon for his wisdom, when the Queen of Sheba came from a far Country to hear it? And when she had seen it, said, Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom: now those that are filled with heavenly wisdom and knowledge, they wear more beautiful and glorious ornaments, than all the golden Chains in the World, As a clear, quick, and piercing eye, is a great beauty and ornament of the face of man, so a clear apprehension, a sharp inspection and a sound judgment in the things of God, is the highest and most becoming ornament of a Christian soul.

7. Knowledge fits a man for high and eminent Employments; the best and wisest men are to be chosen to the highest places: thus upon the Tree that Nebuchadnezzar saw, the birds are upon the boughs, the beasts below at the root; that is, in a kingdom and common-wealth, men of worth and wisdom are to be placed above in Authority to bear Rule, and others of meaner reach, are to hold meaner places, and to be ruled and kept in obedience and subjection: for Solomon tells us where and when it is otherwise, there is a great confusion, Prov. 26:8. As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that gives honor to a fool: the ordinary Translation is, As he that putteth a stone, or ae precious stone, in a heap of stones, so is he that giveth glory to a fool. The vulgar Latin is, *Sicut qui mittit lapidem in Acervum Mercurii, ita qui tribuit honorem insipienti*, As he that putteth a stone to an heap of Mercury, &c. Lyra expounds it two ways, and the first methinks very much

strained, telling us that it's a metaphor taken from such as cast accounts, whereof Mercury was the God among the superstitious Gentiles: now as in casting of accompts, wherein they anciently used little stones, the same stone sometimes lay for a penny, and sometime for many pounds, and yet the value was the same, his place being altered: So many times a fool by favor, and friendship is exalted, and advanced to high place, much beyond his desert: Another exposition he gives us, saying, that as he that putteth a stone to an heap of mercury, that is, to build him a Temple, and so set up idolatry; so is he that conferreth honor upon a fool. He confesseth also that the words in the Original tongue, may have another sense thus, *ut qui mittit lapidem in palmam fundae*, as he that putteth a stone into the hand of a sling, so is he that gives honor to a fool. And so reads Junius and Tremellius; *ut qui applicat lapidem Balistae, ita qui praebeet stolido honorem*: and the Hebrew word *Margemah*, coming of *Ragam*, *lapidare*, or *lapidibus obruere*, to strike or kill with stones, as Pagnine tells us, will bear both, and signifieth either an heap of stones, or a sling to hurl stones with; and taking the words in the last sense: Solomon's meaning may be this; As he that putteth a stone in a sling, and hurleth it, forceth it upward violently, which would and should of itself go downward naturally, so he that advanceth a fool to honor, committeth a solecism in nature, setting him above in authority to rule others, whose proper place is to be beneath in subjection to be ruled of others. Knowing and understanding men are fittest for places of rule and government, therefore Pharaoh advanced Joseph to high honor, For as much, saith he, as there is none so discreet and wise as thou art, thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word, shall all my people be ruled. Gen. 41:39,40.

And now before I give directions to get knowledge, I must remove diverse objections thrown in my way (or rather in their own way) by ignorant wretches: for many sottish people are apt to frame many objections against their getting of knowledge.

Obj. 1. Many poor souls are apt to object and say, I am simple and ignorant, and am not book-learned, I cannot read, and I am blockish, dull of apprehension, and the like; how then can I understand the knowledge of the Lord, or the mind of God revealed in his Word?

Resp. It is a very bad thing not to be book-learned, as you say, &c. but there are three things in answer to this objection of ignorant men, that say they cannot understand.

1. Poor souls! They say they cannot get this knowledge, but the reason is, because they will not: now that they will not get holy knowledge is evident: although they cannot learn the knowledge of God, they can learn other things that are evil and vain fast enough: My people is foolish, they have not known me, saith the Lord: they are sottish children, they have no understanding: what altogether void of understanding? No; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge: now this proceedeth from the evil frame and corruption of their hearts, the wisdom of the flesh assisteth them in doing the works of the flesh, and in counter-working the working of the Spirit; and our Savior saith, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light: they are not absolutely more wise and sagacious than the children of light in every respect, but wiser in their kind of wisdom; and in some respect; wiser for the world, and for worldly advantages: they can order all their outward affairs with much discretion; they have strange inventions to hook in a good bargain; they observe the fittest times of taking in, and putting off

commodities to the most advantage, they are given to oppression, engrossing's, fraud, and cozenage, and yet so cunning they are, that they keep themselves out of the reach of the Law. Now if men would employ their wisdom and diligence, in getting spiritual knowledge, as they lay out about the world, they might not only be wise for the world, but wise to salvation also.

2. What thought you are simple and unlearned yet God calleth upon such to turn unto him: Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, &c. saying, How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof behold I will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you: wisdom calleth upon simple ones to leave their simplicity, with great affection he seemeth to bewail men's simplicity, and kindly invites them to repentance: you have continued too long in your folly and simplicity, it is high time now to think of returning to the ways of wisdom; it is a great weakness for a man to be simple, but to be in love with simplicity is egregious madness; it is the worst of evils to be in love with folly: hearken therefore to wisdoms call, give ear to his reproof, and turn in to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is this wisdom here meant, and he hath promised to pour his spirit upon you, and to make known his words unto you, and then you shall be filled with all true wisdom, and spiritual understanding; here then is God's promise to the simple and unlearned: mark what David saith, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the Lord not only gives wisdom, but subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge, and discretion; young men, of all other, are most rash and heady, and very unteachable, yet the Lord gives subtlety to the simple, and to the young man knowledge and discretion. It was written over

Pythagoras School-door, ἀγεωμέτρητος μέδεις εἰσίτω. Let no man ignorant of Geometry enter: but the Lord calleth upon ignorant persons, upon babes and little children to come to his School, and be instructed in the doctrine of the beginning of Christ: the simplest that cometh to the School of Christ, learneth wisdom at his very first entrance there: the entrance of thy words saith David, giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple.

3. Consider, that many simple ones have attained to a great measure of knowledge; who more simple then babes and little children, yet to such John writeth, I write unto you babes, because you have known the Father. It did not a little move our Savior, when they forbad little children to be brought unto him: and when the chief Priests and Scribes took it ill, that the children cried out after Christ, Hosannah, thou Son of David: he told them it was written, Out of the mouths of babes and suckling's, hast thou perfected praise: though young Samuel knew not God, when he first called him, yet from that time forwards he knew him: Josiah began to seek after the God of his Father, when he was but young: and Paul commendeth Timothy, that from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation: It is the good will and pleasure of our heavenly Father to hide heavenly mysteries, from worldly wise men, and those that are wise in their own eyes, and to reveal them unto babes: and many that have been but children in understanding, when they have applied their hearts to wisdom, and inclined their ears, their thoughts, their desires, their affections to wisdom, they have attained to a great measure of heavenly knowledge: when a Philosopher subtly disputed against Christ in a great Council; a plain simple man (to look to) stands up and makes confession of his Faith: We believe that Jesus Christ was incarnate, &c. O Philosopher saith he, believest thou this? The Philosopher was presently stricken with

astonishment, and said; I could answer the Philosophers with reason, but this man speaks so powerfully, that I am not able to resist what he saith; as it is said of the Libertines that disputed with Stephen, they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he speak. So even babes and simple ones shall rise up in judgment against many men at the last day (when they shall appear before the tribunal of Christ) even against those that despised instruction, and hated knowledge, and set at naught holy counsels, when as poor simple and ignorant men have attained to abundance of knowledge: therefore let not your simplicity keep you off from seeking after knowledge: the Lord now calleth loud in your ears, O ye simple ones: understand O ye brutish among the people, and ye fools, when will ye be wise? Wisdom cries, O ye simple ones understand wisdom, and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart, receive my Instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice Gold, for wisdom is better than rubies, and all desirable things are not to be compared to it.

Obj. Some will be ready further to object, and say, We have lived many years, some 30, some 40, some 50, some 60 years without preaching, and without the means of knowledge, and we find we are well enough, and that there is no such great danger in ignorance, as you would bear us in hand, and we hope we shall do well enough, for time to come, without troubling ourselves to get knowledge.

Resp. Dost thou think that because thou hast as yet found no trouble in an ignorant and sinful way for many years past, that thou shalt therefore never meet with any trouble at the last, alas! Thou art much mistaken: read one place of Scripture, and think seriously of it, and the Lord set it home on thy heart, and then come and tell me what thou thinkest of such flattering, and vain delusions of thy poor soul. It shall come to pass that that man, when he

heareth the words of this curse, that he blesseth himself in his heart, saying I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven, Deut. 29:19,20,21, and the Lord shall separate him unto evil, out of all the Tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the Covenant, that are written in this book of the Law. Let ignorant and profane wretches tremble at this Scripture, who have lived in ignorance and profaneness for many years, and let them take heed of blessing themselves in ways of sin and ignorance, for the Lord will make his anger and his jealousy to smoke against such persons at last: Dost thou think thou shalt do well enough in the end; thou art mistaken, while thou art ignorant of God and his ways, thou art a wicked wretch: and God hath commanded his Prophets to denounce a woe against thee; Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him; then it followeth, woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

2. Hast thou been without the means of grace for 30 or 40 years past, and lived in ignorance so long, and wilt thou refuse the means of grace now it is offered thee in thy age? Thy sin will be double, and thy condemnation will be the greater; If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin, saith our Savior; if thou hadst always been without the means of knowledge, thou mightest have pleaded; Lord had I known thy will, I would have done it: but now Christ by his messengers hath spoken to thee, and yet thou art ignorant, and profane, thou hast no excuse for thy sin: it is the saddening of many a Ministers heart, to see the blockish ignorance that is among their people, and that few or none

will come to them to be instructed; what thronging is there to the chambers of Lawyers for their advice and counsel touching men's outward estates; what running after great men to get offices and places of preferment? What posting to Physicians for advice, if the body be sick, and a little out of frame? If an indulgent Father have his only son lie very sick by him, how earnest is he in enquiring of the physician, what he thinks will become of his poor child, and whether there be any hopes of his recovery? But the precious soul that is more worth than the whole world (as our Savior intimateth to us) this is neglected, and never looked after: when shall you see a man or woman come to a Minister and say, O Sir, what shall I do to be saved? I am a poor ignorant creature, I pray teach me good judgment and knowledge, and cause me to understand the fear of the Lord, show unto me the way of salvation: but (with grief I speak it) we may sit till we freeze before people will come to us on such an errand: Most people will never send to a Minister, till the Physician leaves them, and death stands ready to take them, and then a Minister is called to come to them to speak some words of comfort to their languishing souls: and what hard censures are past upon a Minister: if he will not pronounce them then to be meet partakers of inheritance among the Saints in light, who have walked in darkness all their life: we dare not speak peace to those to whom God speaks nothing but wrath and indignation, lest we bring that curse upon us: in Deut. 27:18. Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of his way: what a terrible curse would light upon us, if we should now seal you up for God's Kingdom, when you know not one step of the way that leadeth thither; let me tell you if you die without knowledge, you die in your sins, and as death takes thee, so shall judgment find thee: and then they that said unto the Almighty in their life, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy

ways, they, I say, shall hear God saying to them at their death, depart from me, I know ye not, ye workers of iniquity; or I never knew you to this day: you that have hated the light of knowledge, and the light of grace, shall be forever without the light of life. We read in the Gospel of one that went not into the Vineyard till the 11th hour of the day, but did he refuse to go into the Vineyard when he was called? Surely no: do you think it had been a tolerable excuse for him to have answered Christ, when he was called, It is now too late, I am an old man, at the last part of my life: the better part of my life is spent and gone, I can do thee but little service now, and have but a little time to get the saving knowledge of thy will; I will therefore shift as well as I can for that little time that remaineth, as I have done to this day; therefore trouble me not now: you see he maketh no such excuse, but as soon as ever he is called upon to know and turn to the Lord, he goes into the Vineyard: And now if God open thine eyes in thine old age, thou wilt bitterly lament, that thou wast no sooner acquainted with God and his ways, as Austin did, who meditating on the knowledge of God, brake forth into such words as these: Alas O Lord that I knew thee no sooner, I have begun very late to love thee, a beauty very ancient, a beauty very new: Too late have I begun; thou wast within, and I sought for thee without, and have cast myself with such violence upon these created beauties, without knowledge of my Creator, to defile thyself daily more and more.

3. Dost not thou think thy condition to be dangerous, because thou art not sensible of thy danger? Persons oftentimes in the greatest danger, are least sensible of their danger, as men that are sick of a frenzy, will sometimes laugh and sing, and those that are stung with an asp, they lie laughing, the poison being of that nature, as it killeth them without putting them to any present pain; these men are insensible of the dangerous estate they are in,

and their friends knowing in what condition they are, do weep to see them laugh: so it fareth with them that are sick of the frenzy of sin and ignorance, and poisoned with the venom of the old Serpent, they are many times at the brink of the pit of destruction, they are at hell-mouth, and do drop into hell itself before they fear any danger, and like the Syrian soldiers that were smitten with blindness, in the midst of Samaria, before they knew where they were: he that should by night travel over a narrow bridge, under which were a deep river, or go upon the edge of a very steep hill, from which if he should have fallen, he must needs be drowned in the one, and break his neck from the other; he goes on without fear, but let him be brought back in the morning, and shown what danger he escaped, and it will make him even to tremble to think of the greatness thereof, and then he will stand (like a man amazed) and wonder he should escape so imminent a danger: so all the while thou walkest in darkness, thou knowest not where thou goest, nor whither thou art going. An ignorant sinner is every moment ready to drop into the infernal pit, and when he is near to destruction, yet (like the Benjamite's) he knoweth not that evil is near him: But if ever the Lord open his eyes by the light of his word and spirit, then he will stand amazed and wonder at the goodness of God towards him, he will then tremble to think of the danger he hath escaped: therefore the Apostle calleth the light of grace marvelous light; because when God brings a man out of the dungeon of darkness into the true light, everything is then to the poor soul very marvelous, and full of admiration.

4, thou sayest thou art not sensible of any danger in an ignorant estate; no marvel! For thou art dead: and dead men are senseless men, the dead know nothing. Paul tells us, that those that have their understanding, darkened, are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them; there

is no life in the soul without knowledge; spiritual knowledge is as it were, the seed of true life in the soul, and it maintaineth the life thereof; and as the body is dead without the soul, so the soul is dead without saving knowledge: therefore being spiritually dead, thou must needs be insensible of thy danger; and so thou thinkest thou art in a good estate: but hear, O thou dead and sottish soul, what the Lord saith unto thee this day, out of his word; Awake thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light: he doth not say, Christ shall give thee life; but Christ shall give thee light; i.e. the light of knowledge, if thou wilt awake from thy pleasing sleep and slumber. Let me beseech you then, if you love your souls, labor to know God betimes, even in your youth: that is a commendable youth, that is old in grace, and savoreth of the wisdom of the Ancient of days; happy is he whom God's effectual grace saluteth at his Cradle, whose spirit is God's candle to discern youthful lusts and vanities, so as to avoid them. If we know God when we are young, we shall not be strangers to him when we are old: see thou that thy lamp be ready whensoever the Bridegroom passeth by thee; make not that the task of thy Age, which should be the practice of thy whole life: you know by experience, that a ship, the longer it leaks, the harder it is to be emptied; an house, the longer it goes to decay, the worse it is to repair; a nail, the further it is driven in, the harder it is to draw out again: and can we persuade ourselves, that the trembling joints, the dazzled eyes, the fainting heart, and failing legs, of a decrepit and indisciplinable old age, is able to repair the many ruins which so many years ignorance have brought upon us? Are there not twelve hours in the day, saith our Savior? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth, the light of this World: but if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. It is no

wisdom to defer to get the knowledge of God, till old age cometh, which usually brings with it a bedroll of follies to repent of: no wisdom to post off this knowledge to the last hour: the Lord of the Vineyard is not always in the Market to set thee a work, saith Austin; and no marvel, saith another Father, if that man at the last gasp forget himself, who in all his life neglected to remember God.

Others are ready further to object, We have neither time nor leisure to get knowledge: one saith I am in great trading, and have a great many servants, and much business in my hands to look after. And another faith, I have a great charge of children at home to look to, and provide for, and I cannot go abroad, nor spare any time to get knowledge, I live altogether by my labor, I can spare no time for such occasions.

It is not multiplicity of business, nor weightiness of affairs, that can excuse any man's ignorance; and therefore, those that are in the highest places, and have the management of the greatest affairs, are charged to know the Lord, and to study his Word. Who hath greater affairs than a King? Yet even Kings are commanded to know the Lord: thus David chargeth Solomon his son, now entering upon the Regal Dignity; And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: Kings and great Personages, are to take care of Religion, and God's Service, which they cannot do, without the knowledge of the Lord: therefore God charged Moses, that the King that should rule his people after him, should take a copy of his Law, and write it in a Book, and keep it by him, and read therein, all the days of his life, that he might learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all the words of that Law, and his Statutes to do them: So God commandeth Joshua, the Captain and General of the Armies of Israel: The Book of the Law shall not depart

out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. And according to the direction of God to Moses, Samuel, upon the election of Saul their first King, having declared to the people the manner of the Kingdom, wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord, where no doubt the King might repair to it, or have a copy taken out of it, for his private instruction. Herein doubtless, Jehoiada the Priest, instructed King Jehoshaphat: this Book surely had been neglected by the space of 57 years, viz. the time of Manasseh and Amnon, the Father and Grandfather of King Josiah; for in his time we read that Helkias the High Priest told Saphan the Scribe, That he had found the Book of the Law, which he took and read, first by himself, and afterwards before the King, whose heart melted at the hearing of it, because his Predecessors had neglected the Law, and not hearkened to the words of that Book to do it. Thus you see it is not weighty affairs that must hinder men from the knowledge of the Lord. Therefore Christ upbraids Nicodemus for his ignorance; Art thou a Master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Ignorance of God, and of the things of God, in them that are Rulers, is a very great sin: those that rule over others, are to defend the true Religion, and the truths of Christ, and those that are professors thereof; now this they be not able to do, unless they have knowledge to discern between truth and falsehood. Now, as weighty affairs, so neither must multiplicity of business, hinder us from attending on the means of knowledge: to this purpose our Savior gives Martha a check, that she was cumbered with too much worldly business, Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful, Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. In which speech of his, he

doth not simply condemn Martha, for giving him entertainment, and a friendly welcome (for hospitality is a commendable quality, as appeareth in Abraham, Gen. 18, and Lot, Gen. 19, and the Widow of Sarepta, 1 King. 17, and the Shunamite, 2 King. 4) but only lets us see, that he had rather be entertained into our hearts, than our houses; *Et attente audiri, potiùs quam laute tractari*: He had rather have his Doctrine hearkened to diligently, than his person feasted daintily: and therefore he tells Martha, one thing is necessary, viz. to hearken to his word, whereby she might be made wise to salvation; there is a time of getting knowledge, as well as a time of getting riches; wherefore else do we hear the word? But that we may learn to know what to do, and to do what we know; now as Martha and Mary be Sisters, so they must not jostle, but help one another, saith Macarius; Seek first the Kingdom of heaven, and labor after that knowledge that leads to true happiness, let everything have its right place. Government and ordering household-affairs, I condemn not, and making provision for temporal things; but everything must be moderated, and reduced to the right order.

2. Thou complainest thou wantest time to get knowledge: is not this a vain plea in many men? They can find time enough to be Idle, time enough to go to the Alehouse, and be drunk, time enough to keep vain and wicked company, and to break the Sabbath, time enough to hunt after sensual pleasures, and vain recreations, and when carnal and profane persons meet together, how much time will they spend in idle, vain, frothy, and rotten Communication, and yet can find no time for, but think it a disgrace, to talk and confer of, the word of God? The Lord commands us to keep his words in our hearts, to teach them diligently to our children, to talk of them in our houses, when we sit down, when we walk by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise up.

What! Have we time enough to eat and drink, and to rise up to play, and follow our sports and recreations? Have we time enough to provide for our bodies and for our families? Have we time enough to pamper our flesh, and indulge our lusts? And cannot we spare a little time to get saving knowledge for the good of our immortal souls? Do you not know that Christ hath said, if you first seek the Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, and take care for the good of your souls, that God will take care for all other things for you, which you stand in need of; your heavenly Father knoweth that you need these things; and he hath promised if you seek God's Kingdom first, these things shall be added to you.

Others are ready to object and say, you tell us of getting knowledge, we have had a poor and mean education, and been but little instructed in the way to get knowledge, and we find it a very hard and difficult thing; for we read, he that will get knowledge, must seek for it as silver, and dig for it, as for hidden treasure: he must take abundance of pains to obtain it.

Men do frame more difficulties to themselves about the attaining of knowledge then they have cause: men might as easily learn the plain principles of Religion, as they might learn to play at Cards and Chess, if they were as willing to learn the one, as they are to learn the other: but the plain truth is; as Peter speaks, of these things men are willingly ignorant, they are slothful and sluggish, and not willing to take any pains to get the knowledge of God: the sluggard cries out, there is a Lyon in the way, I shall be slain in the streets, and therefore he will take no pains to get knowledge: mark what the wise man saith, Knowledge is easy to him that understandeth, Prov: 14:6, or to him that hath a mind to know the Lord; it is very easy, the yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden is light: So that it is a groundless fear in many men to think, that the knowledge of God, and of

the mysteries of salvation, is a thing so difficult to attain: let me tell you, that you must take some pains to get knowledge, but if you be willing to put your hands and hearts to the work, it will the more easy, if you watch daily at wisdoms gates, and wait at the posts of her doors, then shall you find it more easy to you, then you can imagine; what shall men spend much time and pains to get gold and silver out of the earth, shall covetous wretches toil and moil to get a little worldly riches, and shall we not take a little pains to get that which is better than all riches, for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof then fine gold. Prov. 3:14, the sweet pleasure and inestimable profit that you will reap by it, will far exceed all your pains and labor: let me add by way of encouragement to you to take some pains to get knowledge, that if the salvation of your souls be necessary, then the knowledge of God is necessary, without which you cannot be saved. If therefore a man will take heed to what he reads and hears; Incline his heart unto wisdom and understanding, and hide the knowledge of God in his heart, and ponder upon what he readeth and heareth, that were the way to get knowledge. It is incredible to those that never made trial, to what abundance of spiritual knowledge, a poor plain man, a common and ordinary person may attain unto, and what understanding he shall have in the mystery of Christ; if he be diligent in the use of the means to acquire heavenly knowledge.

But ignorant persons are apt further to object and say, What needs all this running after Sermons, and reading and studying of the Scriptures, if we can but say our Belief, and the Lord's Prayer, and the ten Commandments; we know as much as we need to know, and as much as all the preachers of the world can tell us, and we know, and are told, that if we can but love God

with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves, it is enough; and this we are instructed in, and what need we to know anymore:

If a man should speak of any Art or Science in the world, and should discourse of the great skill, and long experience, that is requisite to make a man a proficient in this or that Science, and another man that standeth by should say, tush, it is nothing but to go and do such a thing: would not such a person be an object of derision to those that should hear him? For it is not unknown, though this or that be the sum of every Art and Trade, yet in every Science there are some particular mysteries, which are not so quickly learnt, and put in practice, which a man must understand before he can be an ingenious Artist; if he have not skill in such a mystery, his labor will be without success, as his undertaking was rash and inconsiderate: so in the business of Religion, we must be acquainted with the mysteries of godliness; there are *profunda Dei, & Spiritus*, the deep things of God and of the Spirit, and though to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, be the sum of the moral precepts, yet it is necessary, that we have a more particular knowledge then the knowledge of these generals, that we know the particular branches of the mystery of godliness, without which we shall neither love God with all the heart, nor our neighbor as we ought: if thou wilt learn a trade, thou must first understand the rules and principles of it, and every particular branch belonging to every mystery, so if thou wilt have any understanding in the mystery of Christ, thou must be acquainted with the rules and grounds of spiritual understanding, so thou shalt neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ.

Some are ready further to object, that God is not easily known, the Scripture tells us, that no man hath seen God at any time, and no man hath

seen him, nor can see him; and God is often said in Scripture to hide his face, how then can he be known by such poor creatures as we are?

We cannot know God's Essence here, in respect of the manner of his being, thus no man hath seen him at any time, or can see him; for when Moses desired God to show him the fullness of his glorious Majesty, God tells him, the granting his request, would be very hurtful to him, for (saith he) there shall no man see me and live: the weakness of man's frail nature, cannot bear the infinite glory of the divine presence, but is swallowed up with the transcendent luster of the heavenly Majesty: even as we see the sight of the eye to be dazzled with the brightness of the Sun shining in his strength: or a Crystal glass, to be broken in pieces with the strong operation of the fire; but yet there is much of God that may be seen and known, as the Lord tells Moses. Exod. 33:22. I will put thee, saith he, in the cleft of a rock, and I will cover thee with my hand when I pass by: after, I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back-parts, but my face shall not be seen: where God speaks to us of himself, as of a man having face and back, showing us hereby, that it is impossible for any man in this mortality to know the nature and being of the most high. We know God here but in part, like the sight of a man *in transitu*, as he passeth along by us, whose face we discern not, whose back-parts only we do behold: the more exact knowledge of him is reserved for that time, when being changed into his likeness, we shall see him as he is, even face to face: but yet much of God may be seen and known in this life, which he calleth his back parts, his wisdom, goodness, mercy, grace, his longsuffering, his faithfulness and truth, his slowness to anger, being provoked daily by the sins of men, his readiness to pardon iniquity, transgression and sin: these back-parts of Jehovah are clearly revealed in the word, And when God is said in Scripture

to hide his face from his people, it is not that we should not see him, but that we should the more earnestly seek after him: the Lord is willing to be known unto any, that have a mind to know him: God takes no delight in hiding himself from us, but is willing to open and manifest himself to us; God stands not upon State, as some great Princes do, that seldom show themselves, but think their presence and converse lesseneth their respect: the more we know man; the more we shall understand his errors and imperfections, as well as his excellencies; but the more we know God, the more we shall admire him: none admire him so much as the holy Angels that see most of him, that always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven: therefore the Lord hides not himself, as though he were unwilling to be known, but he desireth to be known by us, he bids us seek his face; therefore if we do not know the Lord, the cause is not in God, but in ourselves, that we are not willing to know him, nor desirous of his acquaintance.

Ignorant persons are ready further to object and say, What though we be ignorant? Yet God is a merciful God, and his mercy is over all his works, and therefore we hope to find mercy from God: notwithstanding, he that made us, will surely save us.

Let such poor souls see what the Prophet Isaiah saith to them, It is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will show them no favor: if thou art ignorant under the means of knowledge; thou art willfully ignorant, therefore he that made thee, will not save thee, &c. God will not be merciful to men because they are ignorant, what then will he do to them? You may read it at large. Prov. 1. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would none of my counsel, they despised all my

reproof, therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

But they are ready farther to say, Christ died, and we hope to have some benefit by the death of Jesus Christ, for he came into the world to save sinners.

I answer, No. You are like to have no benefit by his death, if you abide in ignorance; this is the condemnation, That light came into the world, and men love darkness rather than light: men that are in love with darkness and ignorance shall be condemned.

If you shall yet say further, that the Apostle saith, that God would have all men to be saved, 1 Tim. 2:4, then take in the next word following, And come to the knowledge of the truth; so that all those that will not come to the knowledge of the truth; there is no hope of their salvation: I may say, that God wills not their salvation, that never come to the knowledge of the truth. But yet they hope Christ will not condemn them for their ignorance; To that purpose consider what the Apostle saith, 2 Thess. 1:7,8. That the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God; let every man then take heed of this fin of ignorance, for it is a most dangerous sin.

Many there are that if you tell them of the danger of ignorance will be ready to object and say, yet further, What became of all our forefathers? They lived and died in ignorance, and yet we hope they are saved, and it were a great breach of charity; yea, great inhumanity, for us to think the contrary.

We are not to trouble our heads, What became of our forefathers, but we are to look what God now requires at our hand; let us leave them to the Lord to whom they stand or fall, and let us (to whom God hath vouchsafed

greater light, and more means of knowledge) look to it that we walk as children of the light: Cyprian speaks well to this purpose, If my Predecessors (saith he) either by ignorance, or by simplicity, have not kept and holden that which our Lord hath taught them by his example and authority, the mercy of the Lord might pardon them, but (saith he) we cannot hope for the like, having better means of instruction then they had.

And a learned Divine of ours hath well observed a vast difference, between their estate and thine, between thine ignorance, and theirs: they had but a small enjoyment of the light of God's word, hid from them under two bushels, under the bushel of a Tyrannous Popish Clergy, that if any man should be able to understand the books he should not have them, and under the bushel of an unknown tongue, that if anyone should chance to get the books he might not understand them: whereas to thee, the light is holden forth, it is set on a table, and on a candlestick, the books are open, the language is plain, easy and familiar, they had eyes but saw not, because the light was kept from them; and the land was dark, about them, as the darkness of Egypt: but thou livest as in a Goshen, where the light incompasseth thee in on all sides, where there are burning and shining lights in every corner of the Land; therefore thy blindness is greater, and more inexcusable; for who so blind, as he that will not see? They wanted the light, thou shunnest the light: they lived in darkness, thou delighest in darkness: their ignorance was simple, thine is willful and affected; therefore though the times of their ignorance God winked at, yet thou hast no ground to presume that God will wink at thee, who rejectest the counsel of God against thine own soul: thus he: Many things, saith Austin, were tolerable amongst them, which now are not; because, saith he, many things are tolerated in the darkness, and dawning, which are not in the day when the

Sun is up: The time of this ignorance God winked at; but now God calls upon every man, everywhere, to repent.

You will say then, What shall we do to get knowledge?

If you would attain to the true knowledge of God, labor to discover and find out your ignorance, and be sensible of it: when a man is sick, the Physician laboreth first to find out, and to discover the Disease, before he can give any directions for the cure thereof: So in this spiritual Disease, you must first discover and find out your ignorance. The state of one spiritually blind, is much worse than of one naturally blind; for he that is bodily blind, will commonly be led by somebody, his servant, wife, dog, &c. but the spiritually blind, is commonly misled by the world, the flesh, and the devil.

1. The bodily blind will have a seeing guide, but the spiritually blind followeth his own lusts, which be blind guides, like Ahab's false Prophets, and Rehoboam's young Counselors, and so both fall into the ditch, and danger, as Math. 15:14.

2. The bodily blind, will acknowledge his want of sight, and desire to supply it by some other sense, as Isaac did; but the spiritually blind, will not be persuaded, but that they see purely and perfectly. Thus the Pharisees, when Christ told them, that for judgment he was come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see, might be made blind; they said unto him, What, are we blind also? So Christ tells Laodicea, That she was blind, but yet she know not, that she was so.

3. The bodily blind account it a great happiness to see, but the spiritually blind despise the Seers. Have we not great reason than to labor to be sensible of this our spiritual blindness? Many men, saith an Heathen, might have attained to much wisdom, had they not thought themselves to have had wisdom enough already: As those men will never come to the Physician to

be healed, of any malady, which think not themselves to be sick; so there are no people more unapt to be taught, and to be enlightened by God unto salvation, than those which think they understand, and know as much as any can teach them, and that they see of themselves, when they are altogether ignorant, and overwhelmed in darkness. The first Lesson a good Christian, that would attain heavenly wisdom, should learn, is, To deny his own wisdom: If any man will be wise, saith the Apostle, let him become a fool, that he may be wise; a man must become a fool, in respect of his own wisdom, and become a fool for Christ's sake; and the more of the true wisdom a man hath, the more he is sensible of his ignorance: thus Agur cries out; Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man, I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy; or know the knowledge of the holy: according to the Hebrew: have you any spark of this knowledge in you? Have mean thoughts thereof. The first step to folly, is for a man to believe himself to be wise: the second step is to profess himself to be so, saith a Wise man: If thou wert truly wise, thou wouldest not think or say so of thyself. Agur was a man full of heavenly wisdom, and yet he saith, Surely I am more brutish than any man, &c. It were very well, if there were as many knowing men in the World, as there are professors of wisdom and knowledge; the wiser any man is, the more he understandeth his want of true wisdom and knowledge; he doth not boast of it, but more and more breaths after it; if thou wilt be wise, do not think thyself to be so.

Oh! But I am accounted and esteemed by others to be a wise and knowing man.

It is not thy tongue, nor the voices of others that have made thee wise; but the thing itself: do not rest upon the vulgar opinion concerning thyself: the

common people do use to account wise men to be mad men, and mad men to be wise, taking false things for true, and true for false; there is nothing more remote from virtue, and from the truth many times, than the opinion of the vulgar; people are very apt to rely upon other men's opinions concerning themselves. Wilt thou know whether thou art wise? Turn thine eyes backward, remember how often thou hast gone astray, how often thy feet have stumbled; *quot dolenda, quot pudenda, quot paenitenda commiseris*, how many things thou hast committed that are to be lamented, that thou art to be ashamed of, that thou hast cause to repent of; and then call thyself a wise man, if thou darest.

But I have gotten much knowledge, and am able to discourse knowingly and wisely, and therefore I know that I am wise.

It is one thing to speak wisely, it is another thing to live wisely; It is one thing to be accounted, another thing to be a truly wise man. The Romans do pronounce Lolius and Cato for wise men, and Grecia when it flourished, is said to have had seven wise men; now these men did not assume this title to themselves; but possessed it, being given to them by the erring people; and there was but one Epicurus that was wise in his own judgment, and he was the veriest fool of all: and those wise men before mentioned, notwithstanding all their wisdom, were ignorant of God; for so saith the Apostle, the world by wisdom knew not God.

Labor to find out the cause of thy ignorance: It is not enough to find out a Disease, but also to find out the cause thereof is most requisite: examine thyself how thou camest to be thus spiritually blind: the blind man in the Gospel could tell that he was borne blind; This I know, saith he, that once I was blind; inquire then (being once sensible of thy blindness) why thou dost continue in thy blindness? Surely the main cause is, because thou hast not

all this while gone to the Physician for eye-salve, to cure thy blindness, Jesus Christ is the great Physician of Souls, and he would have cured thy blindness, if thou wouldest have gone unto him.

Go to Jesus Christ, and beg of him this eye salve; beg of him that he will anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. Physicians say this eye-salve is an ointment to purge away all filth and fluxes, and ophthalmias out of the eyes, that they may clearly see; pray to him to make the scales of ignorance fall from thine eyes: buy of him this eye-salve, as he adviseth Laodicea; by buying, we can understand nothing but begging; for what price can we pay to procure this rich purchase? Seeing therefore we are in ourselves, either stone-blind, the light of grace being quite extinguished, or at the least blear-eyed, the light of nature being eclipsed and obscured, so that we cannot know the things that behoove us, and belong to our peace: Have we not then great reason to sue to Jesus Christ the Heavenly Chirurgeon, for the true eye-salve, viz. the enlightening of his Spirit? And therefore it is called an Unction from the Holy One, whereby we know all things. If your eyes are anointed with this eye-salve, your knowledge will be more clear than other men's, you will see most clearly into Divine Mysteries, like a man that seeth at noon-day: your knowledge of God likewise will be more sure, and more experimental; you will see the creatures emptiness, Christ's fullness, sins misery, and graces excellency; you will know how Christ was formed in you, and how you have conceived him in your heart, you will know the powerful and influential workings of the Spirit upon your souls. You will then have such a distinct knowledge of God's Promises, as to be able with comfort to apply them to your own so Is; The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding: then shall the eyes of the blind see out of darkness, Isa. 29:18. The blind world walks in the dark

shadow of death, and is not acquainted with this Heavenly light. Pray to the Lord with David, Lord open mine eyes, that I may see the wonderous things out of thy Law: pray (as Paul doth for the Colossians) that your knowledge may abound in all wisdom: pray to God likewise, to open the Scriptures to you, as well as your understandings; for the Gospel is a Mystery which hath been hid from Ages and Generations, but is now made manifest to his Saints, saith the Apostle: It is *sacrum secretum*, as Lyra, a holy secret; or *sublime arcanum*, as Calvin, Rom. 16:25; Eph. 1:9; Eph. 3:9; Col. 2:2,3; 1 Tim. 3:16.

1. In which places it is said sometime to be hidden in God; because it was kept close in his secret purpose and eternal counsel.

2. Sometimes hidden in Christ, because he was the Store-house in which was laid up, all the Treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all those Treasures that concerned our eternal happiness and salvation, Col. 2:3, as also, because he was the meritorious cause of it.

3. Sometimes hidden in the Word, because that is the Fountain wherein it is contained, whence the knowledge thereof is derived and conveyed to us.

4. Hidden from the Gentiles, for the space of many hundreds of years, and before their illumination, by the light of the Gospel, and all the while they served dumb Idols, and had not the glorious Sun of Righteousness shining to them.

5. Hidden from the Jews themselves comparatively, and respectively, because it was revealed to them, but under shadows, types, and figures, darkly, and dimly: the Promises and Prophecies were not so easy to be understood, as now they be. Pray then to the Lord to open your understandings, that hath the key of David, that in some measure you may be able to comprehend Divine Mysteries, that they may not be as a sealed

book unto you, Isa. 29:9,10,11. Pray further with David, Teach me O Lord thy way, and I will walk in thy truth. As God hath set a course to the Heavens with all their Hosts, the Sun, Moon, and all the Stars, and as he hath set the Sea his bounds, which he must not pass, without his permission, yea special injunction; So he hath not left man at liberty to do what he listeth, but hath appointed him a way to walk in, instructing him in the knowledge of himself: this appeareth, in that presently after he had made our first Parents, Adam and Eve, he gave them divers directions, how to order and carry themselves.

1. By sanctifying a Sabbath, and resting from their labors the seventh day, as God did from his, Gen. 2:2,3.

2. By dressing and keeping the Garden, Gen. 2:15.

3. By abstaining from, and not meddling with, the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Gen. 2:17. Then after their Fall, and expulsion out of Paradise, he taught them how to worship him, and serve him; which instructions (doubtless) he imparted to his posterity: else what can we imagine should move his sons Cain and Abel, to offer sacrifice: and afterwards he instructed Noah, before the coming of the Flood, to prepare an Ark wherein to preserve himself and Family, with a certain number of all kind of creatures, whereby the species and kinds might be preserved, and the world renewed, Gen. 6:14, *ad finem*. Then after the Flood, he instructeth them, what they should eat, and from what they should abstain, Gen. 9:3,4, Afterwards he instructeth Abraham, and gives him as it were an Epitome or abridgement of his whole worship and service, saying, I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be perfect, Gen. 17:1. Again, in the same Chapter, he gives him particular instructions concerning Circumcision, and in divers other places about other matters: and thus in a continued Series, Rank, and

Succession, he hath from time to time, taught his people; first by Moses, and afterwards by his other Prophets, as he tells us, Hos. 8:12. So Mic. 6:8. He hath shown thee O man what is good, and what the Lord doth require of thee, &c. Now, if any one shall demand, where this duty is shown, he may find it, Deut. 10:12,13. You see then that from the beginning, man hath not been left to himself, but been instructed by God in the way, wherein he should go.

Be conversant in the Scriptures, which are the rules of knowledge; he that will be a Physician must learn the precepts that teach Physic, he that will be a Musician must learn the rules of Music; the Orator must learn the rules of Rhetoric, the Plough-man the rules of husbandry, and so every man the rules of his profession, or else he shall never be a proficient in his Art or Science, nor be accounted a Crafts-man, that is ignorant of the principles of his Craft; even so no man can attain to the practice of those duties that belong to a Christian, that is ignorant of the rules of the Word: he that is ignorant of the Scriptures, is ignorant of Christ, saith Jerome: It is a most happy ignorance (saith Hilary) which rather deserves reward then pardon, when a man trusteth to the Scriptures in that he cannot comprehend: therefore let me exhort you to study to read the Scriptures, they are able to make you wise unto salvation. 2 Tim. 3:15, read them frequently: it is recorded of Alphonso King of Spain, that he read over the Bible, with Lyra's gloss and notes upon it fourteen times, notwithstanding his other employments; and of Anthony an Egyptian Monk, of whom Augustine in his first book *de doctrina Christianâ*, saith, that though he had no learning, yet by often hearing the Scriptures read, and meditating upon what he heard, he learned much of them without book, and attained a competent measure of understanding and knowledge: Chrysostom thus exhorts the

people of Antioch, Get ye Bibles, the Physic of your souls, read them often, for there you may find a salve for every sore, a medicine for every spiritual malady: here is the bread of life that must feed our hungry souls; here is the light that must direct and guide us in the way to heaven, as Bishop Cranmer in his Preface before the Bible. The Book of God is the treasure of knowledge, as Jerome speaks: *Convivium sapientiae*, a banquet of wisdom, so many books, so many messes: the Scriptures are (saith Doctor Sutton) like to Tagus in Lusitania, or Ganges in India, which the Scripture calleth Pishon, whose very sand and gravel is gold; but when an ignorant man seeks Christ in them, he falls into many Labyrinths (like the Jews) and loseth himself: when he should feast at this table, his meat becomes his poison, the savor of it killeth him, because it is the savor of death to him, when he seeks for gold, he is blind-folded, and falls into a pit, for the veil is over his face. 2 Cor. 3:5, that which should be his Pilot, is like an ignis fatuus, to seduce and mislead him; most men desire to be conversant in those Authors, that treat of good arguments, for the ripening of their knowledge, and therefore many are delighted in history, which doubtless is a very commendable study; and the more commendable, if men propound to themselves, the Acts of these famous and honorable personages, of whom they read not only to be admired, but also to be imitated, and followed, as occasion shall be offered: Some men are so given to the search of antiquity, and finding out of nice quirks, and quaint distinctions, as they will take infinite toil, to read Manuscripts, and rude dunstieal Writers, whereby they have lost even the habit of writing, and speaking handsomely themselves: others again, are so delighted and carried away, with a delicate smooth phrase, and fluent style, as they will vouchsafe even to read most obscene Authors, for their matter good for nothing, but for the dung-hill; to learn a

good phrase, and composition of speech. Now if you desire both excellent matter, and eloquent words, then read the Scriptures diligently, and when you have so done, tell me what learning there lacketh? To begin with that which everyone makes most reckoning and account of, and (how deservedly I will not dispute) I mean the Law; if ever thou meanest to be a good Lawyer, have recourse to the Law of God, the ground of all human Laws; and observe what Laws were moral, and perpetual, binding all people at all places at all times? What ceremonial, concerning the Jews till the coming of Christ, and what judicial, free either to be observed or let alone, according to the discretion of every Law-giver, and the state of his Country, whereto he gives or makes Laws; in the knowledge of all these, the 5 Books of Moses will furnish thee; Secondly, if thou art not of such an aspiring spirit, but canst as well be contented to wear a rug gown, as a velvet Jacket; and dost esteem more thy mind than thy body, and therefore thou hast set up thy rest to be a Philosopher, then do but say, what part thou art addicted to, and there it's ready for thee: if moral Philosophy, read the book of the Proverbs: if natural Philosophy, read the book of Ecclesiastes, and some Chapters of Job: if the Metaphysics, read the book of the Canticles, or if thou wilt be an Antiquary, there thou mayest find, what was done, as soon as anything was done: the age of the world, the time of the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the time of the Israelites going down to Egypt, and coming up again, their being carried into Babylon; the time of their abode there, and coming back again, or if you desire to see the Acts of good and bad Kings; the diversity of God's dealing with them, the books of the Kings and Chronicles, will give you full satisfaction: in a word, if you will make but the Law of God contained in the Scriptures, the Looking-glass of your lives, you should be thoroughly furnished, both how to speak, and how to

live: therefore for the obtaining of all kind of most excellent knowledge; it is most necessary to read the holy Scriptures: this made David wiser than his Teachers, wiser then the Ancients (old men are presumed to be the wisest) and wiser than his enemies.

Oh but some will object and say, the Scriptures wherein is contained the knowledge of God and Christ, are in many places very difficult, and hard to be understood; Which men that are unlearned, and unstable, are apt to wrest to their own destruction. We are ignorant, and cannot understand them.

Let no man object his simplicity, as if that thereby he were incapable of knowing the Mysteries of God's Kingdom, our Savior tells us, that he hideth these things from the subtle, and openeth them to the simple.

2. Let not the seeming difficulty of the Scriptures keep thee from reading and studying them; you have heard, it gives wisdom to the simple; and David tells us further, the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes, he doth not say it blindeth them that read it, and could see before, it enlighteneth them that were blind before: Some say, of the Beryl, a certain precious stone, that it hath an especial virtue to preserve the eyesight; whether this be so, or no, I know not: but this I am sure, that the word of God is both a light to our eyes and to our feet; yea, though we fit in darkness, and in in the shadow of death, yet it will give us both spiritual light, and life, guiding our feet into the way of peace. Gregory tells us, that the Scriptures are in some places so deep, that an Elephant may swim, and in other places so shallow, as a Lamb may wade: and Austin tells us, in some places it is plain and easy, that the simple might love it, and in others hard and obscure, lest the subtle might loath it; some places are hard and difficult to exercise the learned, and others are easy to allure the unlearned to the study of them: and Basil saith, that those things which in some

places; are obscurely and doubtfully delivered, are in other places plainly and perspicuously explained.

All things needful and necessary to be known to salvation, are so revealed, as they may be understood in the Scriptures, or if there be any hardness, it is either in the hearts of the readers, or hearers, rather than either in the words or matter of Scripture. And Chrysostom tells us, that it's very probable, that therefore the Scriptures were penned, by Publicans, Fisher-men, Tent-makers, Shepherds, and Neatherds, to the end that Artificers, Householders, Plough-men, Widows, Boys and Girls, and unlearned women might read, and understand them.

3. It is a duty commanded by God, that thou shouldest study the Scriptures, and be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; as it is vanity to inquire into what God hath not revealed, so it is great unthankfulness, tot to study the Scriptures, which were written for our learning, as Paul saith.

Obj. But our adversaries, and the enemies of Scripture will tell us, that Heretics abuse the Scripture.

Resp. If any do abuse the Scriptures, the fault is in themselves, not in the Scripture, there is nothing but wholesome food, unless thou (spider-like) by ill apprehension, or mis-application turn it into poison, and what if heretics do abuse the Scriptures; must Christians therefore be afraid to meddle with them? Because wine and strong drink are abused by some, must they therefore be used by none? Because the Sun sometime hurteth sore eyes, shall none have liberty to look upon it?

Be diligent in hearing the word preached, wait at wisdoms gates: by hearing the word preached, we are prepared for the knowledge of God: Incline your ears to hear, and your hearts to understand; be swift to hear, as

James speaks, it is the property of a wise man to hear; a wise man will hear; and increase learning: the Queen of Sheba came a great way to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and yet many now a days will not go from their houses to hear the wisdom of a wiser then Solomon. What shall we say to such as think themselves wise enough already, they know as much as their Minister can teach them? Solomon saith, there is more hope of a fool, of a simple fool, then of such proud fools: let them not be offended, to be so styled, for God's Dictionary affords them no better titles; there is a great necessity of hearing the word preached, we must first hear, before we come to see: As we have heard, so we have seen, saith the Prophet, We lost much of our knowledge, by not hearkening to the Lord, and we must recover it again by obedient hearing of it: by hearing, we learn how to help our eyesight, that the eye being made clear, it may see the Lord, whom it cannot see so long as it is troubled. Gregory Nyssen hath this observation, saying, that Moses of set purpose caused the Hebrews to wear Ear-rings, giving them thereby to understand, that their beauty and grace was in an obedient ear.

If thou wouldest attain to the knowledge of God, take heed of vain curiosity in searching after the knowledge of those things that are too high, and too wonderful for thee, in earthly kingdoms, there he, *mysteria regis*, which it is better many times to be ignorant of, then to know, as he knew well, that being come to the Court of a great King, being asked by the King wat he should do for him, told him that his desire was to know none of his secrets: indeed there are some, *mysteria Dei*, that are, *inscrutabilia*, as Job 11:7,8,9. Canst thou by searching find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the

Sea: there be many things in the nature of God, as we cannot find out, as also concerning the subsistence of three Persons in one entire Essence, of which Justin Martyr saith, he would believe it was so, because the Scripture taught and told him so; but how it should be so, he could neither himself find, nor would he have others too curiously to search: but though there be some *mysteria regis*, that cannot clearly be known, yet there are *mysteria regni*, and these are necessary to be known: To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, saith Christ to his Disciples: things revealed are for us, and for our children. It pleaseth God out of his goodness to propound many things touching the knowledge of himself to be believed, and not questioned, which notwithstanding might naturally be known.

Why are those things that cannot be searched out by reason, propounded to be believed by faith.

Because man is ordained to higher matters, than he can naturally know, and no man will desire or study for what he knows not; therefore it is necessary that we believe, what we cannot naturally know of God. Spiritual and eternal things do *intellectum nostrum excedere*; to these we are ordained, therefore we must believe them: and it helpeth to the true knowledge of God; for we never know God truly, till we know him to surpass whatsoever we can know or think of him.

2. Because otherwise, every man would teach and maintain what seemed true to himself. This confuteth the error of Simonides, who said, that it did *decere hominem humana tantum, & mortalem mortalia sapere*. Now the truth of faith and reason are not contrary one to another.

1. The verity of Christian Faith, exceedeth that of human reason, but it is not contrary to it, saith Aquinas, the reason is, because nothing is contrary

to truth, but falsehood; therefore whatsoever things are known true naturally, they cannot be contrary to Divine truth.

2. The same teacher will not teach contrary Doctrine, especially such a teacher as God is: but God taught those things that are naturally known; therefore they are not contrary to those things that are known by a supernatural revelation, and received by Faith.

3. God would not be the Author of contrary knowledges, and these would hinder the one the other, whereas they do not hinder, but help rather: therefore the knowledge or verity of faith, cannot be contrary to the verity of reason: Indeed many mysteries of faith do exceed reason, but are not contrary to it; and therefore whatsoever is brought out of natural reason, against the documents of faith, it cannot be of the nature of infallible demonstrations, but mere cavils and sophistications. *Duplex est veritas divinorum*, There is a double verity of things divine, the one our reason may reach, the other it cannot, that it may reach is probable, the other demonstrative; the one we must prove by the other: *Sicuti minus nota per notiora*, As things less known, by things more known: by the books of holy Scriptures, by the books of old Philosophers, and by miracles; The first book considereth God simply in himself; the second the creatures, as they proceed from him; the third, as they are again referred to him.

Be not then too curious in searching after hidden secrets concerning God: Curiosity (saith a learned man) makes more offenders in prison, then learned in Schools, and ever the desire to know what God would have hidden, is paid with ignorance of one's self: The Statue of Curiosity is on a moving Globe; what more inconstant? It is full of wings, what lighter? Its sprinkled all over with eyes, what more watchful? Its filled with ears, what more industrious in the discovery of things? It hath a mouth perpetually

open, for it is no sooner filled by the ears, but emptied by the mouth: its lodging is at the sign of the Vacuum, for what is more vain? Its attire is spiders webs, what more frivolous? Its table and viands is smoke, what more slender and hungry? Her officers are many liars and impostors, for such people are its favorites: before it a certain itch of knowledge goes, for it is the ordinary messenger thereof; at her right hand stands opinion, for it is it that deceives her; at the left tattle, 'tis that which instructeth her; after her followeth disturbance of spirit, ignorance, and misery, for it is his inheritance in the end: Thus he. I shall conclude this with that of Augustine; Faithful ignorance, saith he, is better than rash knowledge.

Art thou ignorant? Do not conceal thy ignorance, but discover it. A man that is ignorant, and yet thinks he hath no need of the counsel of others, is no better than a beast among men: If thou readest the Scriptures, and canst not understand without an interpreter, go to Ministers, or experienced Christians, to any that are learned in God's Word, to know the meaning of it, as men do to Lawyers in difficult Law-cases to be resolved by them: God gives more knowledge to some than to others, that they might as Conduit pipes, pour out to others. It was the practice of the Disciples in many things wherein they were ignorant, to come to Christ, and desire to be instructed by him: as Math. 13:36, they say unto him, Declare to us the Parable of the tares: and Mar. 9:11. Why say the Scribes, that Elias must first come? So likewise Nicodemus saith, How can these things be? Joh. 3:9. So the Eunuch to Philip, Of whom speaks the Prophet this, of himself, or of another? Act. 8:34. When you read and hear the word, and study and meditate upon it, and yet remain ignorant in many points, have recourse then to your Minister, and God's Messenger, whose mouth the Prophet tells you, must preserve knowledge; you must seek the Law at his mouth. This

Austin tells us, was one cause, why some things in the Scriptures were so hard; that we may rather show diligence of enquiring, than rashness of affirming. Pythagoras saith, that those were the best of his Scholars, and the greatest Proficients in knowledge, that were the most inquisitive, and asked the most questions. Yet such is the sottishness of many people, that they will remain grossly ignorant in many things, rather than they will ask questions to betray their ignorance. Sick persons are not ashamed to tell the Physician what their Disease is; neither is it good to hide ignorance, but to bring it forth that it may be healed, saith Heraclitus: when John the Baptist's disciples were infected with envy, and repined at Christ, that he should out-strip and excel their Master with the people, as is evident by the complaint they make, Joh. 3:26, where they come unto him, saying, Rabbi, or Master, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, and baptizedst, behold now he baptizeth more than thou, and all men come unto him: Hereby the holy Baptist perceiving them to be infected with ignorance and infidelity, he sends them to school to Christ, to correct their ignorance, that they might hear the words of his wisdom; to correct their incredulity, they might see his Works of wonder: therefore two of his disciples are sent to Christ with this question: Art thou he that should come, or shall we wait for another? Some think that John the Baptist moveth this doubt on the behalf of himself; but this could not be: for first, John the Baptist could not be so incredulous, but believe what was testified by God the Father from Heaven at his Baptism: This is my well-beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. Yea he testified of him before he baptized him, and had born this testimony, That he was not worthy to carry his shoes after him. and again; Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. Now John the Baptist could not doubt of Christ, and give such large testimony of

him; nor was John inconstant and unsettled, like a reed shaken with the wind, as our Savior testifieth of him. Thus Elisha knew, and was assured, that his Master Elias was taken up into Heaven, and yet for the satisfaction of the children of the Prophets in that point, he is at last contented, that they shall send fifty men to seek him by the space of three days in the mountains: So John the Baptist, knowing his disciples to be too much infected with the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees, by reason of their too much familiarity and correspondency that they had one with the other; he sendeth them therefore to Christ, to be better instructed, and that they might be satisfied, both concerning his person, that he was true man, their eyes telling them, that he had the dimensions and natural properties of a true human body; and true God too, working such wonders as could not be done, without the finger of God; and also for his office, that he was a most absolute Physician, both of body and soul, yea the very Messiah and Savior of the World. Thus the Publicans, the Soldiers, and the People, come to John the Baptist, and say to him, Master what shall we do? Being ignorant they come with a desire to learn of him; and here they ask a profitable question: they ask not what God did before he made the World? What Pharaohs Daughter, or the Queen of Sheba's names were? Whether Solomon was saved or not? Whether Jonas were ever at Nineveh before he went thither to preach? Whether ever the Virgin Mary had any more children than Christ? But they go plainly to the point, to inquire about a matter needful for them to know: What shall we do to avoid the wrath, and enjoy the favor of God?

Thus you see it is our duty, not to conceal, but to discover our ignorance: To this purpose, one of the Ancients hath a good saying; Albeit it becometh old men rather to be teachers than learners, yet it is more comely for them

to learn, than to be ignorant. If a Minister be well seen in Physic, or in the Law, his house shall be frequented and made *oraculum civitatis*; but for Divinity, few will trouble him: which showeth, that men have more care of their bodies and goods, than of their souls. Let me entreat you to frequent much the company of those that are godly-wise, such as have the true knowledge of God and Christ in them; he that walketh with wise men, shall be wise, saith Solomon, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. The Queen of Sheba pronounced Solomon's servants happy, which continually stood before him to hear his wisdom: though wisdom be condemned by the foolish world for madness, yet wisdom is justified, or commended of her children. Associate thyself with the godly-wise, and thou also shalt become more wise.

If thou hast any small measure of knowledge, be thankful for that little: I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel, saith David; if thou hast received any glimpse of the saving knowledge of God in Christ, then bless the Lord who hath given thee counsel, and made thee to understand aright: he that is thankful for a little, shall have more. It is just with God to suffer their understandings to be darkened, who are not thankful for the light. It is charged upon the Heathens, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: Unthankfulness for light received, makes way for darkness, blindness, and ignorance.

Labor to be humble and poor in spirit, he hath promised to teach the humble, with the lowly there is wisdom, God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble; he fills the hungry with good things: Pride keeps a man far from God, and makes him unfit to come near him, that which brings a man near is humility, without humility it may be said to us, as

Didimus said to proud Alexander, that we want vessels to receive God's gifts and graces: for as full vessels will hold no more liquor, so a soul stuffed with pride, and vain glory, cannot receive in, nor hold God's gifts and graces: the proud shut their windows, and will not receive in the light of saving knowledge: God is not so prodigal of his grace, as to cast it in upon those that are not willing to entertain it; heavenly mysteries are hid from the prudent, but revealed unto babes. This is a wonder of humility, (saith Augustine) that pride tends downward, humility upwards: the more true knowledge a man hath, the more he is sensible of his want of knowledge; and that which he hath, is nothing to what he wants:

Quest. Now peradventure some may step in and ask me, what shall we do with our knowledge, having attained to a competent measure thereof?

Resp. I shall show you what is to be done with it.

As you know what to do, so now you must do what you know: put in practice what you know. In Paradise there was a Tree of Life, as well as a Tree of Knowledge; and as one saith well; One apple of the Tree of Life, is worth twenty of the Tree of Knowledge. We read in Scripture that there is a form of Knowledge, as well a form of godliness: A form of knowledge is nothing else but an Idea of truth floating in the brain, that hath no influence on the heart or life; like a Winters Sun which shines, but warms not: knowledge is as the eyes to direct us, practice as the hands and feet to perform that direction; knowledge alone is as the eyes without feet and hands: and practice without a solid knowledge, is as strong legs and nimble hands in a blind man: light and life are best together; if naked knowledge be sufficient, then the Devil is a most perfect creature, who hath one name from the greatness of his knowledge: all men in the world do come short of him in the knowledge of good and evil, he knoweth good, but not to love

and seek it; he knoweth evil; but not to hate and flee from it; his actions and affections are set close unto his knowledge, (as Devils are called understanding spirits, so also they are styled spiritual wickedness) his serpentine subtlety hath purchased him the name of an intelligent spirit, but his wickedness, calls him Satan, an enemy to God. It is said of the Cherubim's, that there were hands under their wings. The word Cherubin signifies light, intimating, where there is the light of knowledge; there should be hands to put that light into practice. The Egyptians in their Hieroglyphics painted a tongue, and a hand under it, to show that knowledge and speech is good, when that which is known and spoken, is put in practice. If you know these things (says our Savior) happy are you if you do them, It is nothing for one to have the Trumpet at his lips, (as Gideon's soldiers) who hath not the Torch in his hand, saith a Father; the voice of Athanasius was a thunder-clap, and his life a lightning flash, saith he; because words never thunder well, if examples enlighten not. True wisdom is a prudence of works, not of words, saith Cyprian. He that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin. It is a great sin not to know what thou doest, a greater not to do what thou knowest, saith Ambrose, for as one saith at the last day, we shall not be demanded; *Quid legimus sed quid egimus, nec modo quid diximus, sed quomodo viximus*; what we have read, but what we have done; nor so much what we have spoken, as how we have lived. Bernard. Knowledge and practice must go together; for else, as the saying is true amongst the Philosophers, that power is to none effect which is never produced into act. So it is as true in Divinity, that it is a vain and idle intention, that is never put in execution. The end of knowing God's will, is to do it. There is say the Philosophers, contemplative and practical knowledge, contemplative or speculative is that

which teacheth a man to understand things in their own nature, and only to contemplate, whose end is bare knowledge; and this is sufficient in Metaphysics, Physicks, and Mathematics: Practical or active knowledge, is that which not only teacheth a man to know, but to do the things which he knows: the end of this knowledge is action, and this is required in Disciplines, Ethics, Economics, Politicks, and Religion consisteth not in a bare naked profession, but in action and practice; all the bells of Aaron's garments ring out a loud peal of practice, and it is the common tenant of all the Fathers, that Religion consisteth not so much in the fine fair leaves of knowledge, profession, and good words; as in the sound and savory fruits of practice and good works. Yea, even some of the Heathen have taught this truth: for Aristotle affirmeth that felicity or happiness consisteth not in the Theory or Knowledge, but in the practice of virtue: a man that hath knowledge without practice, is like a man that carrieth a Lanthorn behind him, to give light to others, but breaks his own shins, or like Noahs Carpenters, that made an Ark to save others, but were drowned themselves. Lyra observeth, that as that Physic is vain that doth not purge the bad humors, and procure the health of the body, so that knowledge is no better that makes no amendment upon the soul. Aristotle in his Ethics saith, that such as content themselves with the naked knowledge of moral virtue, and go no farther, caring not to practice it, are not unlike to such, as consult with, and ask the advice of Physicians concerning their bodily diseases, but care not for having them administer or apply anything to them to cure or recover them; and therefore no marvel though the one retain unsound, unhealthy bodies, notwithstanding they know their diseases; and the other have the corruptions and maladies of their minds and souls remaining, though they have been discovered to them: to put in practice what we know

of Christ, is one great evidence of our love to him. He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, saith our Savior; upon which words one of the Ancients hath this meditation, he that hath them in his memory, and keepeth them in his life, which hath them in his speeches, and keepeth them in his manners, which hath them by hearing, which keepeth by doing them; how justly then are they here to be censured, that think Religion to be nothing else but matter of speculation and discourse, and that there is little else required of a Christian then an ear and a tongue? Of such Parisiensis complained in his time, when he said that many men were *Solis auribus Christiani*; let me tell you, as we must have ears to hear, heads to understand, hearts to believe, and tongues to confess, so we must have hands to practice, else we shall but deceive the world with a vain show of profession, and deceive ourselves without hope of salvation; it is not the knowers and the hearers of the Law, but the doers of the Law shall be justified; It is not everyone that says to Christ, Lord, Lord, and so scrape acquaintance with him that shall enter into heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, saith our Savior, &c. And if to know and do the will of God, be the way to true happiness, this then confutes the dreams and conceits of the ancient Philosophers, being much troubled about this matter, scarce two sects concurring in opinion; it also sets down a speedy course, and short cut to find out what we all seek, though in a different and diverse sort: and of most men Seneca saith truly, that it fareth with men in this pursuit, as it doth with men going to Physic, who oftentimes seek, and pay dear for that which doth them but little good; whereas it is at home growing in their gardens, that would cure them, if they knew but the virtue of it, and how to apply it: so (saith he) many men weary themselves in seeking felicity without themselves, whereas that that

must lead them to happiness, is within themselves; so I say true happiness consisteth not in any outward thing, but in the knowledge and practice of God's will, upon which consideration Augustine hath this meditation, The Kingdom of heaven (saith he) is set to sale, stand thou not upon the price of it, it is worth much more than thou shalt pay for it, give but thyself for it, and thou shalt have it. — But thou wilt say, thou art not good enough for it; and being evil, it will not receive thee: he tells thee further how to help that, by giving thyself to it, thou shalt become both better to thyself, and fitter for it: if thou demand farther how thou shalt give thyself to it; I answer, by putting thyself to School to Jesus Christ, and learning, and taking forth this one Lesson of knowledge, and doing the will of God.

But it may be objected, that our Savior Christ making none capable of blessedness, but such as know and do the will of God revealed, seems to speak of a matter only in imagination, and such a thing as indeed never was, nor ever shall be, for we cannot attain perfect knowledge, much less perform perfect obedience in this life, for the Apostle Paul saith, Here we know but in part, and our Savior himself saith to his disciples, say ye when you have done all these things which are commanded you, We are unprofitable servants.

God that made us knows whereof we are made, and therefore requires of us no more then he will enable us to perform in this frail condition; Aquinas saith truly, God's precepts are imperfectly fulfilled in this life, perfectly only in heaven; and of this imperfect obedience, God in mercy accepteth, dealing with his children, as Augustus Caesar was wont to do with his young soldiers, commending their service not only when they performed what they should, but also when they endeavored what they could: so Bernard tells us, God reputes that for being done, which man truly willed to

do, but was not able to perform: and now under the Gospel, God measureth men's actions, not by the thing done, but by the mind of the doer; yea, the Lord is so well pleased with our willingness of doing his will upon the knowledge of it revealed unto us, that it pleaseth him sometimes to accept and account that as done, which indeed never was done: as appeareth, Heb. 11:17, where it is said, that Abraham offered up Isaac, whereas the plain Text, Gen. 22:12, assureth us that he offered him not: *obtulit voluntate non re*. Gorran. *obtulit* i.e. *offerre voluit*; He offered him, that is, he was willing to have offered him; *nisi divinitus impeditus & prohibitus esset*; unless he had been hindered and forbidden by God: and therefore the Lord accounted it as done, and the Spirit of God guiding the hand of the Apostle, in writing this Epistle, bids him set it down as done; and where there is but a little done with a willing mind, he accepteth according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not; therefore the poor Widow that cast in but two mites into the Treasury, is said by our Savior to cast in more than the Rich men that cast in their gifts out of their abundance: they cast in out of their great plenty, and she out of her penury had cast in all the living that she had: this little of hers, is not Arithmetically, but Geometrically more, not simply in respect of the gift, but comparatively in regard of the mind of the giver, and the acceptance of the receiver, who measureth the mind, not the matter, the quality of the giver, not the quantity of the gift; the Rich men peradventure, out of their ambition, as well as from their abundance, gave much; but she out of her penury for mere devotion and pity, consecrated her little All to the service of him from whom she acknowledged herself to have received all that she had and for whose sake, she shown herself willing to part with all again, doing it from her affection, and not from affectation; The affection many times imposeth the name on the work: An example in

this kind, we have in Zacharias and Elizabeth, the Parents of John the Baptist, of whom it is said, they were both just before God, and walked in all the commandments of God without reproof: not but that God could have reproved them in the rigor of his justice; but because they endeavored to walk in all the Commandments of God blameless, the Lord would not, to show the riches of his mercy, and to encourage others to follow their example: they walked in them all, they desired no exemption from any, or toleration and dispensation for the breach of any; but so far forth as God enabled them, they endeavored to keep them all blameless, or without reproof. And to this purpose, Augustine saith, that *peccatores conversi non sunt amplius peccatores*: not that they have not sin remaining in them; for so the best shall have so long as they are in this world, but because, sin reigneth not in them, it shall not be imputed to them. Thus the Scripture testifieth of Noah, that he was a man perfect in his generation; and of Nathanael, that he was a true Israelite in whom was found no guile. Thus you see that it is not enough, that we know what we ought to do, but also that we do what we know. You know the doom that is passed on that Steward, or Servant that knew his Masters will, and did it not, he should be beaten with many stripes.

Having attained Heavenly knowledge, see thou lose it not: it is a precious Jewel, and ought carefully to be kept, and not to be lost: Keep sound wisdom and discretion, is the advice of the Wise man; the loss of heavenly knowledge is the greatest loss, because thereby you lose all those excellent things, which the knowledge of God procureth for you. Men that have great parts and much knowledge, and afterwards lose it, may be compared unto those, that are witty to get money, and spend it as fast as they get it, being at the years end, not a penny the better for all they have gotten: knowledge

cannot be gotten without much pains; and therefore let it not be easily lost, it will be your shame to lose that carelessly, the obtainment whereof, hath cost you dear; as men that have their eye-sight are very careful to preserve it, so we ought as carefully to preserve knowledge, which is the eye of the soul. The eye of the body is very tender, therefore God hath guarded it with lids, which close and open most speedily at the pleasure of a man. So it is with the eye of the mind, and therefore we should much esteem the good that may preserve it, and carefully shun the evil that may hurt it. You that are Parents will often call upon your children to be good husbands, and keep together, and not to waste and squander away what you have given them, or shall leave them; and you that are Christians should often call upon your souls, to keep good judgment and knowledge, and not to lose it; And let me tell thee, if thou keepest sound wisdom and discretion, it will also keep and preserve thee from many corporal dangers, and spiritual falls.

Art thou a man of knowledge? See what good thou hast gotten by thy knowledge: art thou wise? Thou must be wise for thyself, whatever thou knowest, thou must labor to know it for thy good, as Eliphaz speaks, Job 5, ult. A wise man will labor to know the goodness of everything: The eye of the body can see anything but itself; but it is the glory of heavenly knowledge (which is the eye and beauty of the soul) that it sees itself by an admirable reflection upon itself: Thus thou shouldest be often thinking with thyself, God hath opened the eyes of my understanding, he hath shined into my heart, giving me the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ; he hath given me a more piercing head, a more sublime speculation, a deeper insight and penetration into divine Mysteries, than to many others: Oh! What am I the better for it? Do I find my heart more lifted upwards, my affections more raised from the earth, and set on heavenly

things? It is a spice of Atheism, to look at anything as good in its own nature, and not to extract some good out of it, and get some good by it. How few men do worship God as they know him? They can say that God is good, and yet never love nor seek him; that he is just and powerful, yet fear not to offend him; that he is wise, yet submit they not to his wisdom; that he is omniscient, and yet they breed, and feed wicked thoughts in their hearts: they believe there is an hell for sin and sinners, and yet go on in the way of sin: and that there is laid up a Crown of glory in Heaven for well-doing, and yet they follow the multitude to do evil: such knowledge as this, is no better than Atheism, and Infidelity. That is the best knowledge that reduceth all duties, promises, and threatening's, to our persons, joying affection to light, and moving the heart according to things known, and out of all, draweth actions that serve to express that knowledge, doing all as in the presence of the glorious Sun of Righteousness: where this care is, sin findeth a bridle, and grace a spur. They who walk in this light, enjoy the unspeakable fruits thereof, whilst others are as void of them, as they are strangers to the light itself.

Labor to grow in knowledge, according to the advice of the Apostle, 2 Pet. 3:18, do not show yourselves children, by thinking you know enough already; for he that thinks he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know: Brethren, be not children in understanding, but in understanding be men, 1 Cor. 14:20, the Apostle commendeth the Corinthians for abounding in knowledge; and gives thanks for the Colossians upon the like account. Solon was wont to say, I grow old, always learning many things. It is written of David Chytreus a German Divine, when he was even upon the point of death, that he raised up himself upon his pillow, as well as he was able, to hear the discourses of his godly

friends that sat by him, and said, that he should die the more comfortably, if he might die learning something. There is none so cunning in Christ's School, but may learn more: even David a prime Scholar, and of the highest form, desireth to be further informed, Lord teach me thy ways, Psal. 86:11.

And so Solomon his son, though he were the wisest King amongst men, and the wisest man amongst Kings, yet he prayeth to God for a wise and an understanding heart, that he might discern between good and bad. David was no Novice in Christ's School, or mean Proficient in the study or practice of Piety, he was surely a man of much knowledge, and had many excellent natural parts, which doubtless he augmented by art being added unto them, and improved both by many years study and industry; nay (which was more) he was doubtless, endowed with a great measure of grace from above; for he confesseth and thankfully acknowledgeth that he had more understanding than his teachers, and out-stripped all the Ancients, Psal. 119:99,100, yet even he, thus excellently qualified by nature and art, yea even as it were perfected by grace, still prayeth for direction and instruction in the ways of God, Psal. 119:27,33-36,64,66,73. That we can attain to no perfection of knowledge here in this life, many places might easily be produced plainly to prove it to us: 1 Cor. 13:9. We know in part, and prophesy in part, and vers. 12. Now we see through a glass darkly, as old men see through spectacles: and Bernard saith, that here we see *per angusta foramina*, through narrow auger-holes, & *non per aperta ostia*, and not through opened doors. Peter tells us plainly, that his beloved brother Paul, had written to the Jews, according to the wisdom given unto him: Let us get as much knowledge as we can, we may say as Job doth, Lo these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him, and the thunder of his power, who can understand? Job 26:14. Therefore labor to be filled with

the knowledge of God: It is said of our Savior Christ, that he was filled with wisdom, Luk. 2:40, and the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was with him: as he grew in age; so he increased in understanding, and the other gifts of the mind. If any shall say he was wisdom itself, Joh. 1:14, and Col. 3, and how then could he be said to increase in wisdom and knowledge?

I answer, There was in him, a double wisdom: vid. his uncreated wisdom, quatenus deus, as God, and his infused wisdom, quatenus homo, as man: Now to the first there could be no addition, or augmentation, he being even perfect wisdom itself: but in regard of the second, he increased, in *sapientiâ*, & *naturali*, & *acquisitâ*, in natural and acquired wisdom: in natural wisdom, the organs of his body growing apt to exercise it, and express it, and in acquired wisdom, getting daily by observation, more experience of things, and it is most certain, as man he was in his infancy ignorant as other children are, and grew in knowledge, in the same manner they do, though in an extraordinary measure; the more therefore you increase in knowledge, the more you are like to Christ, the storehouse of wisdom and knowledge. It was prophesied by Daniel concerning the latter days, that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

See that you communicate your knowledge unto others:

The ends of men that desire knowledge, and use means to obtain it are diverse, saith one. Some desire knowledge only, that they may know, which is curiosity, some desire knowledge, that that they may be known, which is pride and vanity: Some only to make an advantage of their knowledge, which is covetousness: Some again to edify themselves, and to communicate their knowledge, and to do good to others, and this is true wisdom. - Bernard.

No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick; that they which come in, may see the light; the meaning is, whomsoever God hath enlightened with knowledge, he must not make a Monopoly of it, by concealing and keeping it only to himself, but impart it to the use and benefit of others: thus Paul tells us, that the manifestation of the spirit, is given to everyone to profit withal. The Sun and Moon, and Stars, as they are the greatest lights in themselves, so they shine not for themselves, but for the benefit of the whole world; on whom doth not his light arise. Job 25, many men do bear the general knowledge of God locked up in their breasts, as sealed bags of treasures, that be neither told nor opened, of little or no use at all. As a candle is *luminis sui diffusivum & communicativum omnibus in domo*, communicative of its light to all that are in the house; so we ought to communicate our knowledge to all with whom we have to do: some there are whom worldly profits do keep from this duty, these do put this light under a bushel, others are hindered by pleasure and vanity, and these put it under a bed, and both are very dangerous: Take heed of smothering your gifts, and burying your talents with the unprofitable servant. Plato the Philosopher tells us, that no man is born for himself, and surely such as retire themselves to Monkish, Eremitical, and Anchorites lives, altogether regarding only themselves, are reprov'd of the brute creatures, for Beasts, Birds, and Bees, labor not for themselves alone: we find in Scripture, this holy disposition in all true converts, to teach and instruct others in the ways of godliness: when Andrew had found Christ, he was restless till he had called Simon, neither could Philip forbear, till he had brought in Nathanael: when the woman of Samaria was instructed by Christ, she runs into the City, and calleth her neighbors: when Christ had called Matthew, he invited Christ to his house,

and made him a great Feast; and there were (saith the Text) a great company of Publicans and others: it is not to be imagined, that they came into his house without his leave, or that Matthew invited them with any other intent, then that they might get that good by Christ, which his soul had already reaped. Some allegorize hereupon, and say, that it was a great Feast indeed, because the Feast-maker himself was here served in, and labored to bring others unto Christ: now with the very reversion of this Feast, not only the needy on earth, but the very Angels in heaven were made merry. But I dare not strain it thus far with Stella. It was a great Feast saith Calvin, not so much for the multitude of guests, as for the variety of cheer which doubtless he being of ability would provide to manifest his love and duty by way of thankfulness to Christ, that had entertained him into his service; as the manner is of servants inviting their Masters, and to this Feast he inviteth many of his old companions, laboring to draw them also unto Christ. So David first professeth that he will praise the Lord himself saying; I will always give thanks unto the Lord, his praise shall be in my mouth continually, and then presently he addeth, praise ye the Lord with me, let us magnify his name together. So the Spouse in the Canticles, promiseth that if Christ would draw her, she would procure company to go with her. True Christians are not like Rayles; but like Partridges, that fly in companies together. This was prophesied that it should be the disposition of those that should be brought in by the Gospel into the Christian Church; one should provoke and call upon another; come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord: and they that dwell in one City, shall go to another, saying; up, let us go and pray before the Lord of Hosts. These are the rivers of water, that flow out from the belly of a true believer. Come ye: hearken to me, saith David, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul. Therefore let

everyone that hath knowledge, communicate it to others, labor thou according to thy calling, and according to the measure of knowledge which thou hast received, to work upon others by advice, and counsel, by entreaty and persuasion, to bring them to the saving knowledge of God, and his ways. Art thou a Magistrate, thou must labor to reclaim men from the works of darkness. Art thou a Minister, thou must feed the flock, taking the oversight thereof, thou must feed them with the bread of knowledge, and of understanding? Thou must make it thy work to win souls, and to turn the people from the ways of folly and ignorance: Art thou a husband, thou must dwell with thy wife as a man of knowledge? Husbands must instruct their wives with the knowledge of God. Art thou a Master of a family; thou art to instruct thy children and servants at home, and bring them out to wisdoms gates, to God's Ordinances abroad, that so, if it may be, thou mayest bring them to the knowledge of God, that they may be saved. The Apostle exhorts Parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children too much by tyrannizing over them, and immoderately exercising your authority over them; (using all correction and no instruction) being silent in words, yet being more sharp and severe many times then there is just cause, whereby the discipline is spoiled: but bring them up in the instruction and admonition of the Lord: teach them how to carry themselves towards God in the duties of his service, and in civility, and courtesy towards men in the common affairs and dealings of the world, so shall they keep a good conscience before God, and get themselves credit before men. Now as Parents must not use too much severity and austerity, so neither must they use too much lenity, whereupon as many mischiefs, and inconveniences ensue, as upon the former: for as it is said of the Ape, that she having but two young ones, kills one of them with over-much

kindness; so some fond and foolish parents, if they do not kill, yet they spill their children by too much cockering them, whereof we have an example in old Eli towards his sons, and in David, who was to blame too, both towards Adonijah, and Absalom. He that desireth a good crop of corn, must not only sow good seed, but also weed it, and use other good husbandry about it; and he that desireth his son may prove a good man, and a profitable member in the Church and Commonwealth, must procure him a good Tutor, and must himself be continually dropping good and wholesome instructions, and directions upon him; for the soul of a child is, as Aristotle saith, *tanquàm abrasa tabula*, as a smooth table, or like a piece of wax, apt and fit for any impression: Thus have the godly done from time to time; and so it seemeth Adam instructed his sons concerning the worship of God, else what should move them to offer sacrifice. Gen. 4. Thus did Abraham, God himself giving this testimony of him: I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do judgment and justice, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, that which he hath spoken of him: thus also Isaac, Jacob, and the rest of the godly Patriarchs, and we may very well suppose, that they would never have suffered themselves to be circumcised, had they not been formerly instructed in the law of the Lord, and made acquainted, that it was the Lord's will and pleasure: So Joshua, I and my house, saith he, will serve the Lord. Solomon was taught by his Father David. Prov. 4:4, and by his Mother, Prov. 31. Timothies Faith was derived from his Grandmother and Mother; and it is said of him, that from a child he knew the holy Scriptures. Every Master of a Family hath charge over the souls of his children and servants, this God commanded the old Israelites: these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them

diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when then walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up: thus doth King David charge his son Solomon, telling him, that he was going the way of all flesh; take heed to the charge of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways, and keep his Statutes, and Commandments, and Judgments, and Testimonies, pressing him with many words of the same signification, that he might the rather remember the substance of his charge, he addeth a reason, that thou mayest prosper in all thou doest, and in everything whereunto thou turnest thee, and 1 Chron. 28:9. And thou Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy Fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind: in both which places, he first gives him charge of the service of God, before any matter of his Kingdom. Philo the Jew reporteth to the commendation of the Jews, that they were *liberorum cultores & cultrices*, and it is Chrysostom's simile, that as men will patch up their own buildings, and piece up ruinous and rotten houses; so they should be more careful of the Lord's house: and if he punish the neglect of repairing his material Temple, then will he be more offended and displeased for the neglect of his spiritual, as ourselves and our children be. 1 Cor. 6:19.

How justly then are those careless Parents to be reprov'd, who as if their children consisted altogether of body, and had no souls, take care only to scratch and scrape a little goods together for them, but never care for having them taught how to use it: Austin confesseth, that his Father was not much better; for thus he saith of him, that he spared no cost that he might be learned, but he cared not much, though he were lewd and wicked.

But for Monica his mother, in whose heart he saith, the Lord had begun to build his Temple, she ceased not to do her uttermost endeavors every way, that he might be truly religious, and as well God's child by grace, as hers by

nature: And surely where this duty is neglected, children neither know their duty towards God, their Parents, or anybody else: as appeareth in the History of a certain old man of Athens, that came before Solon a Judge at that time, and in that place, where he lived, and complained that his son was undutiful and disobedient, which he knowing to be a foul fault, caused the young fellow to be called in, to see what he could say for himself, and my Author saith, he was not able to deny it; whereupon he decreed, that because he had shown no duty while he lived, therefore he should enjoy nothing by his Father when he died; and so deprived the young man of his inheritance for his disobedience: sentence being past, the young man answered for himself, that howbeit, he could not altogether deny the fact, yet it, was not altogether his fault; but partly his Fathers, because he never afforded him any education, instruction, or good bringing up, whereby he might learn to do his duty, either to him or others; which being likewise affirmed by the Son, and not disproved by the Father, he punished him also, and deprived him of the solemnity of his Funeral.

It is not enough for Parents, to excuse themselves from this work of instructing their children, saying they will do it hereafter; but they must take the soonest time they have opportunity. We know, it is a practice among Husbandmen and Gardeners, to set and sow, both trees, plants, and seeds, in the spring of the year; so we are to sow the seed of the true knowledge of God and of Religion, in children, in the spring of their age. Teach a child in the trade of his way, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Prov. 22:6. That a child is capable of instruction, may appear, in that he is apt to learn rude rhymes, immodest songs, dances, and the like, as children are capable to mock and scoff; as the children that mocked Elisha, so also to cry Hosannah, as those did to Christ, Matth. 21:15, and though children do

not so readily incline to good, as to evil, yet childhood is not so corrupt as a riper age: and for any man to say, it is not good to set an old man's head upon a young pair of shoulders, I say that it is never too soon to learn good things; they that neglect it, when they be young, are uncertain where they shall live to learn being old; therefore it is good to make use of the present time: In the morning sow thy seed. Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, Eccl. 12:1.

1. It will be easy and familiar to them, it is easy for a man to bear the yoke from his youth, for thus by use and custom (which is another nature) grave jugum, will become suave jugum, as our Savior tells us, Math. 11:29. Tender twigs are easily bowed, but old trees, sooner break than bend. The Lord commandeth a Parent, not to withhold correction from his child; for if thou smite him with the rod, he shall not die; Now if they are to be corrected betimes for vices, then also are they capable of instruction, and ought betimes to be instructed. So God requireth, that they should be taught concerning the Passover: It shall come to pass, that when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? That you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And Exod. 13:14. It shall be, when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? That thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand, the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage.

2. All men are to provide for their Families, and he that provideth not for his family, is worse than an Infidel. Now good nurture is as necessary to children, as nourishment; and even as they cannot live without meat, so they cannot do well without the knowledge of God, and his Word, which is *Cibus mentis*, their spiritual food, as Gregory calls it; that Common-wealth

neither, cannot well stand, where the good education of children is neglected,

1. How justly are those Parents to be condemned, that let their children grow old in years, but still be young in knowledge, like Rehoboam, and season them not at first with good things, but cocker them, whereby they have as little comfort of them, as Eli had of his sons, who were sons of Belial, and knew not the Lord, and were destroyed. Negligent Parents only desire to have children, and then no matter whether they be instructed in the knowledge of God or no, and so good or bad, heirs of heaven or hell: whereas they should desire to have a holy seed, to furnish the Earth with Saints, and Heaven with Citizens: careless Parents that only desire to have children, and no more, are like ill husbands, that cast their corn into the ground, and then never care what becomes of it, whether the birds or beasts spoil it: Such Parents have commonly as little comfort of their children being grown up, as they had little care in bringing them up, in the knowledge of the Lord.

2. How are those Parents also to be reprov'd, that are so far from teaching their children good things, as they teach them evil things, either by giving them evil example, or by acting, or talking of what evil they have done with a kind of delight: for of such it is true, as Plutarch saith, They lose their authority of reprov'ing others, whose lives are filthy and vicious.

Clitipho in Terence, scorns his Fathers grave counsel, because he was apt now and then to break out, and discourse of his own knaveries: for youths are apt to think, that such men envy that to them, that age deprives themselves of. Therefore the Romans would not have a Father and his son seen in a Bath together; and Cato sharply censured a Senator for kissing his wife before his daughter, because only it might carry a show of levity;

though no dishonesty, yet, by circumstance, indecency. What then shall we say of such Parents, as teach their Children as soon as they can speak, to swear, and to swagger, to dice, dance, and drink, and think these good qualities, for them to be like their Fathers; surely, without the great mercy of God, they train up their children to the devil; such children will curse their Parents at the last day, and wish that they rather had been the offspring of a Toad, or a Dragon, than the Children of such Parents; then will they cry out for judgment against them.

Let Parents therefore be exhorted to teach their children the principles of Religion, to which no course that I can conceive is more fitting, then catechizing, both by the Minister in the congregation publicly, and themselves privately, that they may be spiritually built in the knowledge of the principles of Religion: having faith the foundation, in the Articles of the Creed; the walls of hope in the Lord's Prayer, and the roof of Charity in the ten Commandments; that which Seneca saith of reading, is true also of hearing: It is better to hear, understand, and learn of one thing, then to hear many things; and of them to understand, and know little or nothing: therefore was the course and custom of catechizing first invented, which hath been an ancient custom in the Church, but little younger then the world, as I have shown before: this was the practice likewise of the Ancient Fathers in the Primitive Church, to compile and compose Catechisms, or Introductions, containing the sum and substance of Christian. Religion. That the Apostles and their associates, did urge those to give some evidence and testimony of their faith, and of their purpose to walk with God in newness life, whom they drew out of Judaism and Gentilism is apparent. John Baptist began, Matth. 3, and the rest followed; And some learned men think that the order of asking questions of the Baptized, dost thou believe? Dost

thou renounce? Is very probable to have been in use in the Apostles time, whereunto that saying of Peter gives a good color; where speaking of Baptism, he mentioneth the Answer of a good conscience, the stipulation of a good conscience, the baptized affirming, that thus and thus he believeth, and thus and thus he engageth. And in the Primitive Church there was a certain form or rank called Catechumen, who were first trained up in the knowledge of the grounds of Faith, before they were baptized (they being converted from Gentilism) the chief of which grounds the Apostle sets down, Heb. 6:1, terming them, the doctrine of Baptisms; because they were the heads, in which they that desired to be numbered among Christians, were instructed before they were baptized. And it is a general opinion, that the Creed was digested into such a form as seemeth to be an answer to a question. The baptized was demanded, what dost thou believe? He answered, I believe in God the Father, &c. And divers Divines of later times have compiled short Catechisms containing the heads of the Christian Faith; that hereby feeding their people at first with milk, they might fit and prepare them for stronger meat, wherein doubtless, they had been well advised, and taken the right course: for to press deep mysteries of Divinity to an ignorant people not well catechized or instructed in grounds and principles of Religion, were but to build a great frame to an heavy burden, upon a weak foundation, which will not bear it — It cannot be denied, but plain and ignorant people, coming to hear a learned and eloquent discourse, may be moved and well affected therewith, but they cannot profit half so well, as if they understood how it were gathered from God's word, or to what point and head of Divinity, or Christian doctrine, it belonged; and might be referred, as Master Perkins proveth in his Epistle, before a little Treatise of his called The six Principles of Christian Religion: and surely

the learning of short Catechisms, and especially the shorter Catechism of the late Assembly of Divines cannot but concern us all, whether we be learned or ignorant, strong or weak Christians, if we be weak and ignorant, we should hereby be taught and instructed, and hence get knowledge, or otherwise, if we have some competent measure of knowledge already, then hereby we may be occasioned to rub up our memories, and call to mind what formerly we have learned, or at leastwise be called upon to practice what we know already. And if any one shall object the hardness of learning good things, let him labor to have the fear of God planted in his heart; The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge: and let not the seeming difficulty of obtaining it, hinder thee from using any good means to get it: It is said of Apelles the painter, that drawing but every day a line, in a short space, he became an exquisite and exact Painter, and surely if we could every day learn but one line, or but some little short Lesson in Divinity, we should in short time perceive ourselves to have made some proficiency. Thus you see that instructions, and good directions, are very necessary for youths, and young men, of whose Age, a witty man in his time said, that it is incredulous, and also unexpert, unable to direct itself, and despising the counsels of others; the truth of which assertion is confirmed sufficiently, by that woeful rent, that happened in Israel; when ten of the twelve Tribes revolted from Rehoboam the Son of Solomon, because he refused the grave, and wise Counsel of the Ancient Nobles, that had attended on his Father, and hearkened to the rash advice of the green-headed youths, brought up with himself, and of his own standing: when young men therefore do *excedere ex Ephebis*, as the Poet speaks, or be *adulti*, as they say at the Universities, they should remember what Plutarch saith in his book *de liberis educandis*, of bringing up of children, that they do not *abjicere*

imperium, sed tantùm mutare imperatorem, i.e. being freed from the *Ferula*, and discharged from subjection to a Tutor, that even they be left to the guidance of their own discretion, whereby they must follow Paul's counsel to his Scholar Timothy, to fly all youthful lusts, and labor (being well instructed in the grounds of true Religion) as they grow in years, to grow in wisdom and knowledge then shall no man have cause to despise their youth, as the same Apostle speaketh. 1 Tim. 4:12. But the wisdom of their young years shall be their Crown and Glory. As Virgil said of Aeneas his Son, *Sequitur Patrem non passibus aequis*, he followeth his Father not with even and equal steps, so it may be said of most of the children of faithful Parents.

Let me press this upon you that are old; to teach the young; do you not read that the Psalmist speaks often, that the praises of the Lord should be declared from generation to generation. Psal. 22:31; Psal. 79:13. And so the very Heathen understood that it was the duty of the old to teach the young.

*Jura senes norint, & quid liceátque nefasque,
Fásque sit inquirant, legemque exanima servant.*

Ovid.

Old men are, or should be very knowing, it belongeth to them to teach, and to youth to learn of them: this is chiefly to be observed among Christians! Hence it appeareth, how grossly old men sin, if they who ought to inform others, do themselves know little or nothing of those things that appertain to everlasting salvation, and if they have neglected the means of knowledge, and in their old age are so rude and ignorant, that they had need to be taught by children the heads of Catechism (which sometime happeneth:) what will they be able to answer to the righteous Judge of all the world, when he shall ask them, how they have done their duty upon the earth.

Let every Christian now be conscientious in this duty, to exhort and instruct one another, to edify one another and provoke to love and to good works, to stir up one another to the ways and work of godliness.

And to move you all hereunto, I desire you to consider.

1. The great benefit that will come to such as truly perform this duty, the Lord hath made a gracious promise to it; if we stand in his counsel, and cause his people to hear his words, i.e. if we faithfully instruct them in the knowledge and fear of the Lord, then we shall turn them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

Happy is that man that can turn a sinner from evil ways, and evil doings, to the ways of godliness.

This is the Reason why the Apostle will not have the believing husband, or wife, to separate one from another, because by dwelling together, they may instruct and do good one to another: for what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

2. If thou canst win but one soul to Christ, thou shalt bring much glory to God. Solomon saith, that in the multitude of people is the Kings honor; So herein is the great King of heaven honored, when many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: he that converteth a sinner, shall save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins. Jam. 5:20.

3. It will bring in great peace and comfort to your own souls: what greater comfort in the world, then to see those that sat in darkness, to have the eyes of their understandings opened? To see those that were dead, translated from death to life; to be new borne, to be converted unto God? Oh what

abundance of comfort will this consideration work upon thy heart. However, let Ministers do their duty, Parents their duty, Husbands their duty, Christians their duty in their respective places, and then let the success be what it will, we shall have comfort therein. Ezek. 2. God commands the Prophet to speak to the people, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear; and thus saith the Prophet Isaiah: though I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for naught, yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work, or my reward with my God; though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. Thanks be to God, saith Paul, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest by us the savor of his knowledge in every place: for we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. Therefore exhort one another daily, while it is called today. Do not think it a duty only belonging to the Minister, to instruct and stir up others in the ways of Religion; it is his duty principally, but it is thy duty also. Do not say with wicked Cain; Am I my brother's Keeper? If thou seest thy neighbor lying in the pit of ignorance, and thou hast that which might help him out, and doest it not, thou art guilty of his perishing, by this our knowledge is nothing else but a fault, saith Salvian. Labor with all thy might to help thy Wife, and Children, Servants, and friends, and neighbors, out of this dark dungeon.

Hath God enlightened you with saving knowledge? See that you walk as children of the light: If a man have never so much knowledge, if he walk not answerable to it, it is but a glow-worm light: if thy head be full of light, and thy works be full of darkness, it is an evidence that the light that is in thee is no better than darkness. The night is far spent, saith the Apostle, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put

on the Armor of light. Pareus by night understandeth our estate of ignorance and blindness, before our effectual calling, and conversion; and by day our estate of illumination and grace, after our conversion: Let us therefore, saith the Apostle, cast off the works of darkness.

Sin may be called works of darkness.

1. Because (for the most part) they proceed from the ignorance of God's will, not revealed to such as are yet unconverted. Thus Paul saith, That the Gentiles walked in the vanities of their mind, having their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them: and did men know the dangers that follow sinners, they would be more wary of their ways; yea doubtless we may say, when we see men run headlong into sin, that either they see not what they do, which is pitiful, or else that they willfully wink and will not see, which is much more perilous.

2. Sins may be called works of darkness, because they be (for the most part) done in the dark, and the doers of them still delight to be in the dark, and are ashamed that their doings should be brought to light: for what Job saith of one sinner, saying, The eye of the Adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me, and disguiseth his face. Our Savior affirmeth to be true of all sin, and every sinner, saying, that everyone that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, least his deeds should be reprov'd: or,

3. Because they are evermore suggested to us, either by Satan himself, the Mint-master of all mischief, the Prince of darkness, or by some of his wicked instruments, that be *Amici Curiae*, Proctors, Factors, and solicitors of that black Prince, in his Court of darkness.

4. Because they carry those that live and die in them, into Hell, the place of utter darkness: Let us then that are enlightened with the true light, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light; that is, have our conversation suitable to our profession. The Gospel is the day, Christ is the light, Faith is the eye which apprehendeth this light; therefore seeing the day is come, and the light shineth, let us walk as in the day, and in the light; the eye of faith, and the foot of obedience (which two concurring, make an holy life) are called armor of light: they be called armor, because thereby we may defend ourselves from the fiery darts of the devil: and they be called armor of light, for three causes.

1. Because they proceed from the Father of lights, Jam. 1:17.

2. Because they make them that wear this armor, shine like lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, Phil. 2:15.

3. Because like true bred Eagles, they abide the light, and need neither care nor fear, who looks upon them; as our Savior telleth us; He that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God: viz. according to his will revealed in his Word.

1. Get in a lightsome principle therefore into your hearts, look that the light that is in you be not darkness; do not act by men's courses, and by precedents from others; but get a principle of light within to guide thee in all thy actions.

2. Let all thy aims also be full of light, labor in all your actions to approve yourselves to God; and above all things aim at his glory. To have low, ignoble and base ends, is not to act as a child of light; but to have high, glorious, and supernatural ends and aims, to confide in his word, to trust in his mercy, to rest upon his grace, to stay upon his power and faithfulness, to adhere to his promises, to sanctify the Lord in your hearts, to glorify his

Name, to praise him for his goodness, to be zealous for his glory, to walk in the light of his countenance, and to have communion with him in all holy ordinances; these are the ends that become the children of light.

3. See that thou walk by a lightsome rule, let the Word of God be your rule, let the Word be a lamp, or candle to your feet, and a light unto your paths; all our deviations and aberrations from the light of this bright-shining candle, are dark steps, or steps into darkness; when men walk by a lightsome rule, their actions are full of light.

Let us then walk decently, as in the day, abhorring all works of darkness: you know discreet men in the night are careless of their attire, not regarding what color, or stuff, or fashion it be, so it keep them warm, because they know that the darkness covereth both it and them; but in the day time, when they mean to go abroad, or admit anybody to see or speak with them, they will be ashamed, unless they be in some good fashion, like men of their place and rank, and therefore will have their apparel beseeeming men of their qualities and conditions. So let knowing Christians walk as becometh Saints, and avoid whatsoever is of evil report: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your heavenly Father, saith our blessed Savior.

Let me add a use of caution:

1. Art thou a man enlightened with the knowledge of God? Take heed how thou sinnest against the light of knowledge which God hath set up in thee to direct thee. Oh the great wickedness that is in men's hearts in these days: the light now shineth more gloriously than it did heretofore, the word is more common, more frequently, and powerfully taught; more and better helps to the attainment of knowledge, than were in former Ages: may not we demand with the Apostle, Have they not heard? Did not Israel know?

Men are not ignorant, or may not be ignorant, what duty they owe to God's Sabbaths, what reverence to his Name, what respect to his word; and yet men profane the Lord's day, despise their teachers, condemn the Word, and sin against clear light, and act as if they were ignorant in the mystery of Christ, and to seek in duties appertaining to God and their neighbor: The sin of such men shall be more heinous, then many others, whom God hath not given to know so much as he hath to them. Make conscience thereof committing sins against conscience, and of thwarting those holy rules which the Spirit of God by the preaching of his Word hath written in thy heart: this makes the ways of God to be evil spoken of, and the seeking after knowledge to be condemned as the cause of all licentiousness, when men bring scandal upon Religion, by walking contrary to what they know,

2. Art thou a knowing man, take heed of being proud of thy knowledge. *Scientia inflat*, Knowledge puffeth up, saith the Apostle: men that know much, are apt to know it too much, and those that excel in knowledge, are apt to swell with pride: the best men are apt to be tainted with this infection; Paul himself was subject to be exalted above measure through the abundance of Revelations: take heed of pride of gifts, learning wit, knowledge; for God hath not given us these things, to the end that we should set them a Sun-shining, or to make sale were of them, but that we may use them to his glory: the finest cloth is soonest stained, and the finest wits are most subject to pride; for as worms sooner engender in tender wood, then in knotty, and as moths breed sooner in fine cloth, than in course flocks, so pride and vain glory do sooner assault a man of excellent parts, and great knowledge: then one of meaner gifts: therefore pride may be said to be endangered of the ashes of all virtues. Ministers, should in a special manner take heed of pride; their calling is high, their gifts are or should be

great, and they are apt to grow proud of them: and the devil hath great reason to bestir himself, to puff them up with their knowledge, for he knoweth;

1. If pride overthrow them, they fall not alone, but like blazing stars, draw tails after them.

2. Because it is a means to engender heresy and schisms, great errors do never spring up without great wits; and many men who seek not truth, but triumph, will rather than not be singular, not be sound. *Omnes doctrinae impietatis de superbiae radice proveniunt.* August. Man is lighter then vanity, and made of the dust, therefore a little wind will blow him high enough, and though a man have never so much cause of abasement, yet knowledge is apt to puff and lift a man up more, then the other will cast him down: A man of great knowledge should not be like the Palm-tree whereof Pliny tells us, that the more weight is laid upon it, the higher it riseth; but like to the Canes that are full of Sugar, the fuller they are, the lower they stoop; much grace and knowledge should not make a man more high, but more humble: yet notwithstanding there is a spiritual glorying in the knowledge of God, that is lawful; a spiritual heart hath a spiritual glorying in the knowledge of the Lord, bred in him by the Spirit of God: of this the Prophet Jeremy speaks, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the strong man glory in his strength, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth, glory in this; that he understandeth and knoweth me that I am the Lord. When a man knoweth the Lord to be his God and portion, and himself to be the Lord's, then may he glory in this excellent knowledge, all other glorying is but vain: Augustine writing upon the fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, tells us that the greatest Emperor in the world is, a very beggar in regard of God; and we know that beggars must be no

braggers, we are but Stewards, and Stewards must not be stately, we must not say of knowledge, and the rest of our talents, as the Atheists of their tongues, Psal. 12:4, that they be our own, and that we will use them, or rather abuse them, as we list, whatever anybody saith to the contrary: this is a false plea, and a flat *Non-sequitur*, for we are but entrusted with them, and must one day be accountable for them: we must not therefore use them at our own pleasure, but according to our Masters appointment.

3. Is thy spirit the candle of the Lord, dost thou know God and his ways? Then take heed of apostasy and backsliding: It is better not to have known the way of righteousness: then after they have known to depart from the holy Commandment given unto them. See that thy goodness be not as a morning cloud, or early dew, that soon passeth away. It is not enough for a soldier to have skill to use his weapons, and to make a fair flourish, and gallant bravado, and then run away; but he must double and treble his activity, till he hath foiled his foe, and possessed himself of the field: It is not enough for a Sailor to be expert in the Art of Navigation, to weigh his Anchors, hoist up his Sails, and go gallantly out, but his skill appears most in coming safe home again. So it is not enough to have some knowledge of Christ, and to come to him. Matth. 4:28. But we must abide in him, and his word must abide in us, then we shall be his disciples indeed: In a word, we must work till night in God's Vineyard, if we will have our penny; for that's not paid in the Morning, but at Even. Matth. 20:8. He that endureth to the end, shall be saved. Matth. 24:13, we must be faithful to the death, if we will have the Crown of life. Rev. 2:10. Some enlightened persons are very forward professors at first, but tire at last like the Asses of Armenia, that go apace in the morning, but grow dull before noon; recoiling like a bad piece,

or deceitful bow, or like the foolish Galatians, beginning in the spirit, and ending in the flesh.

It must not be with knowing Christians in the profession and practice of Religion, as it was wont to be in the Jews banquets, to set forth their best wine first, as our Savior tells us, Joh. 2:10, whosoever are thus, are no better than hypocrites, and their motion forced and violent, for that is still swift at first, and slow at last. A good Christian is best at last, like the Church of Thyatira, to whose commendation our Savior Christ saith, that he knew her works, that they were more at the last then at the first: whosoever is not ever good, and best at last, was never truly good. They that have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the gifts of God's Spirit, if they once fall away, it is impossible, or very difficult, for them to be renewed again by repentance.

FINIS.