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Title	A little handful of cordial comforts, scattered thorowout several answers, to sixteen questions and objections ... / by Richard Standfast ...
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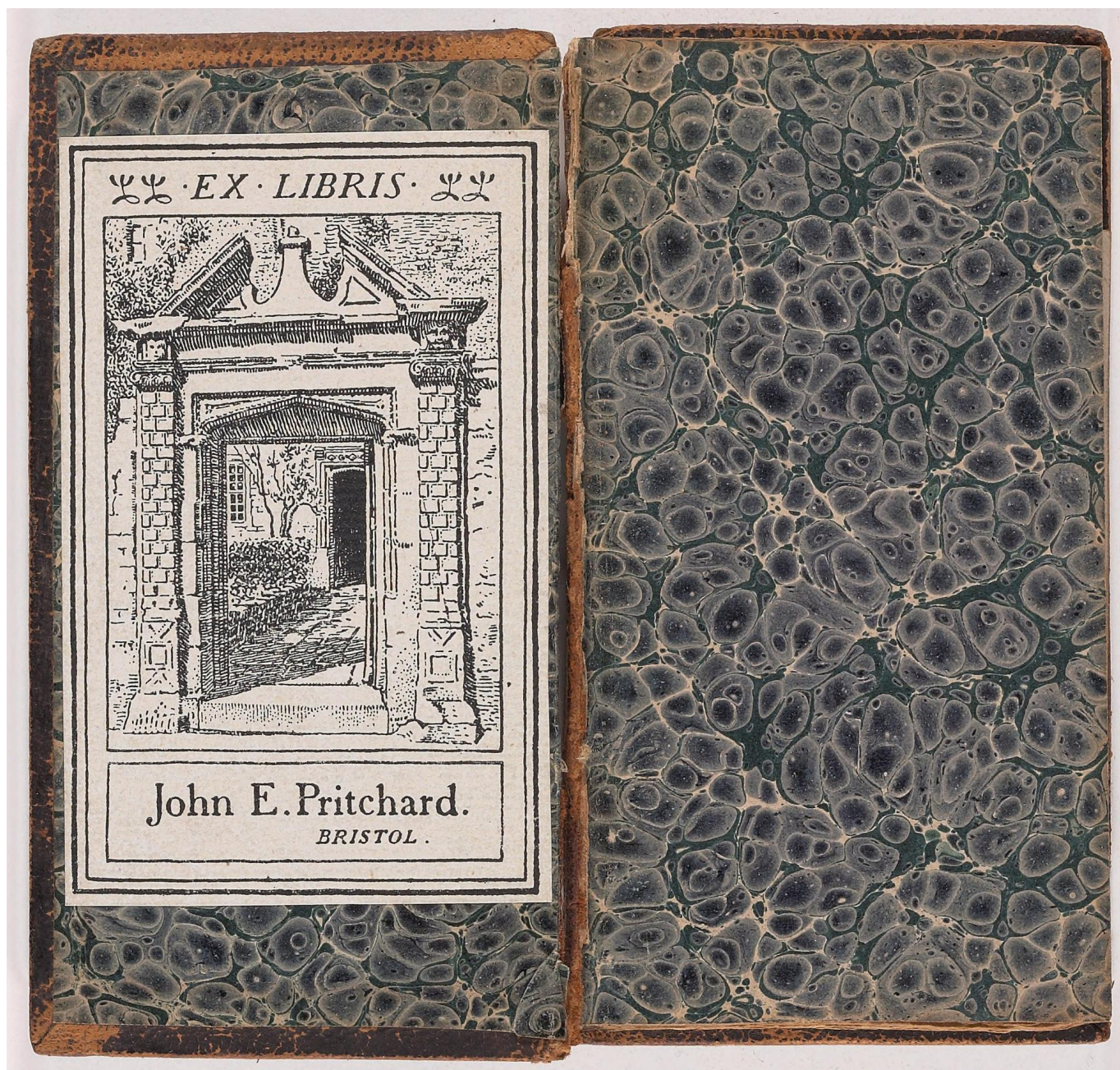
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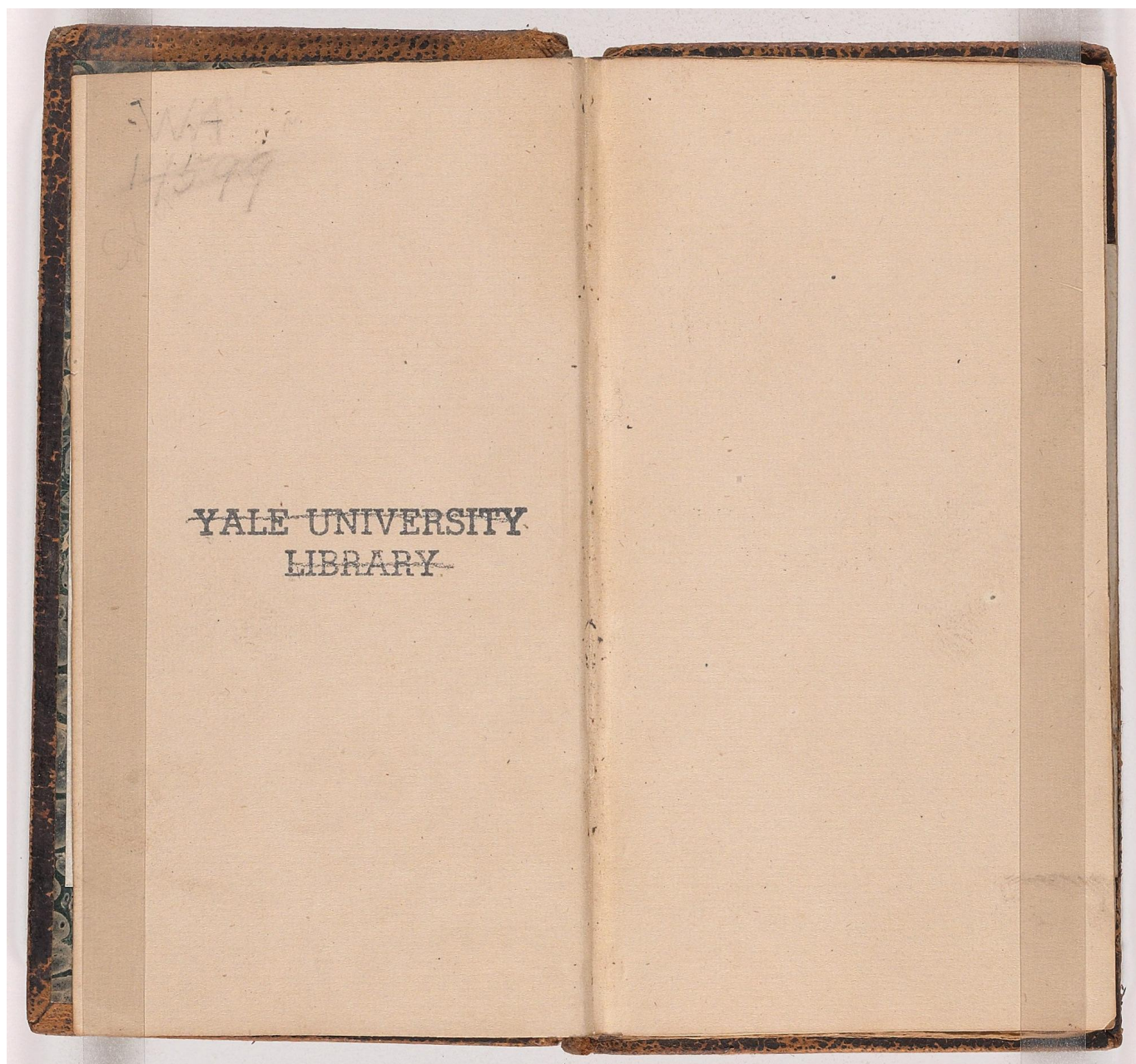
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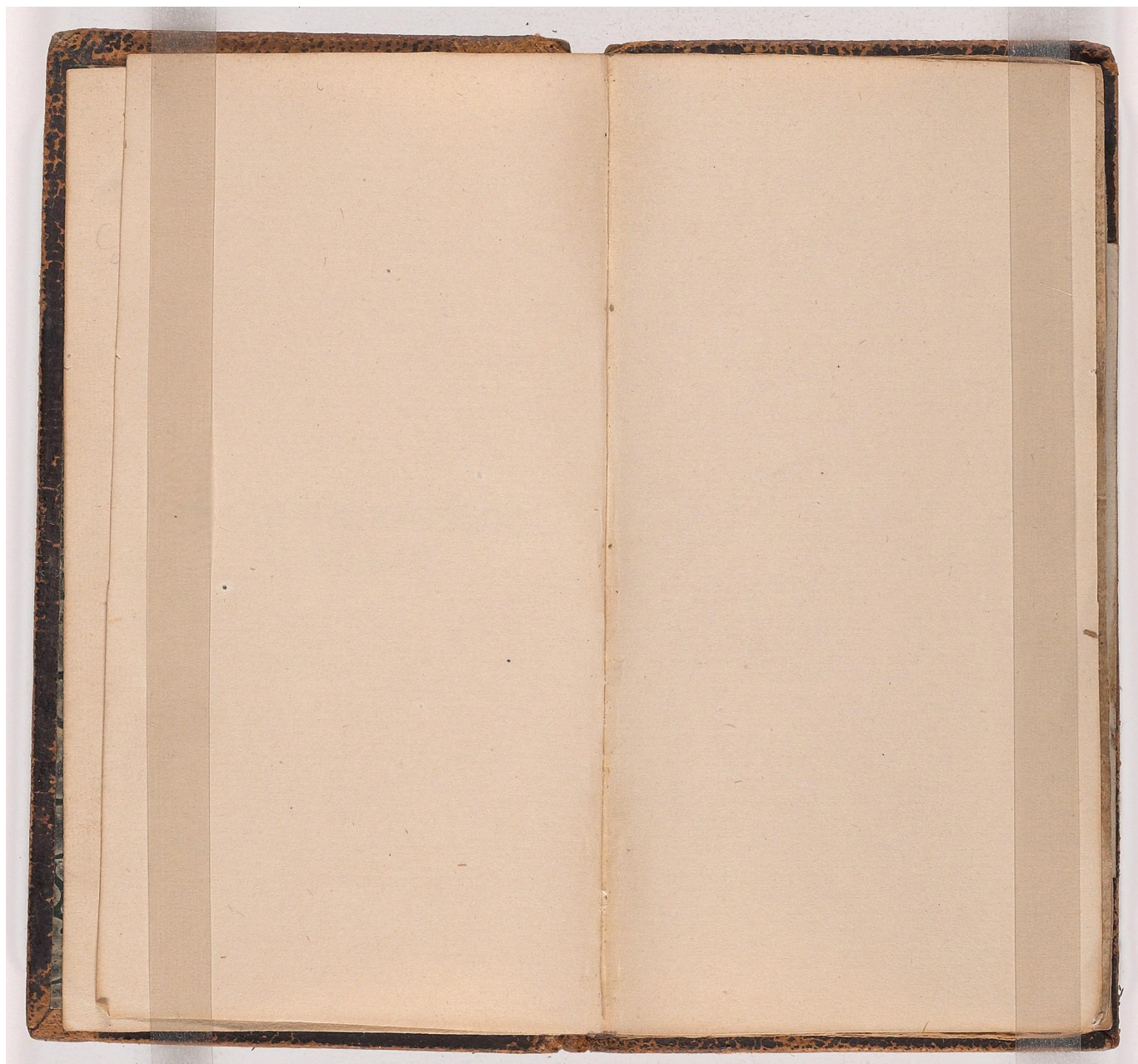
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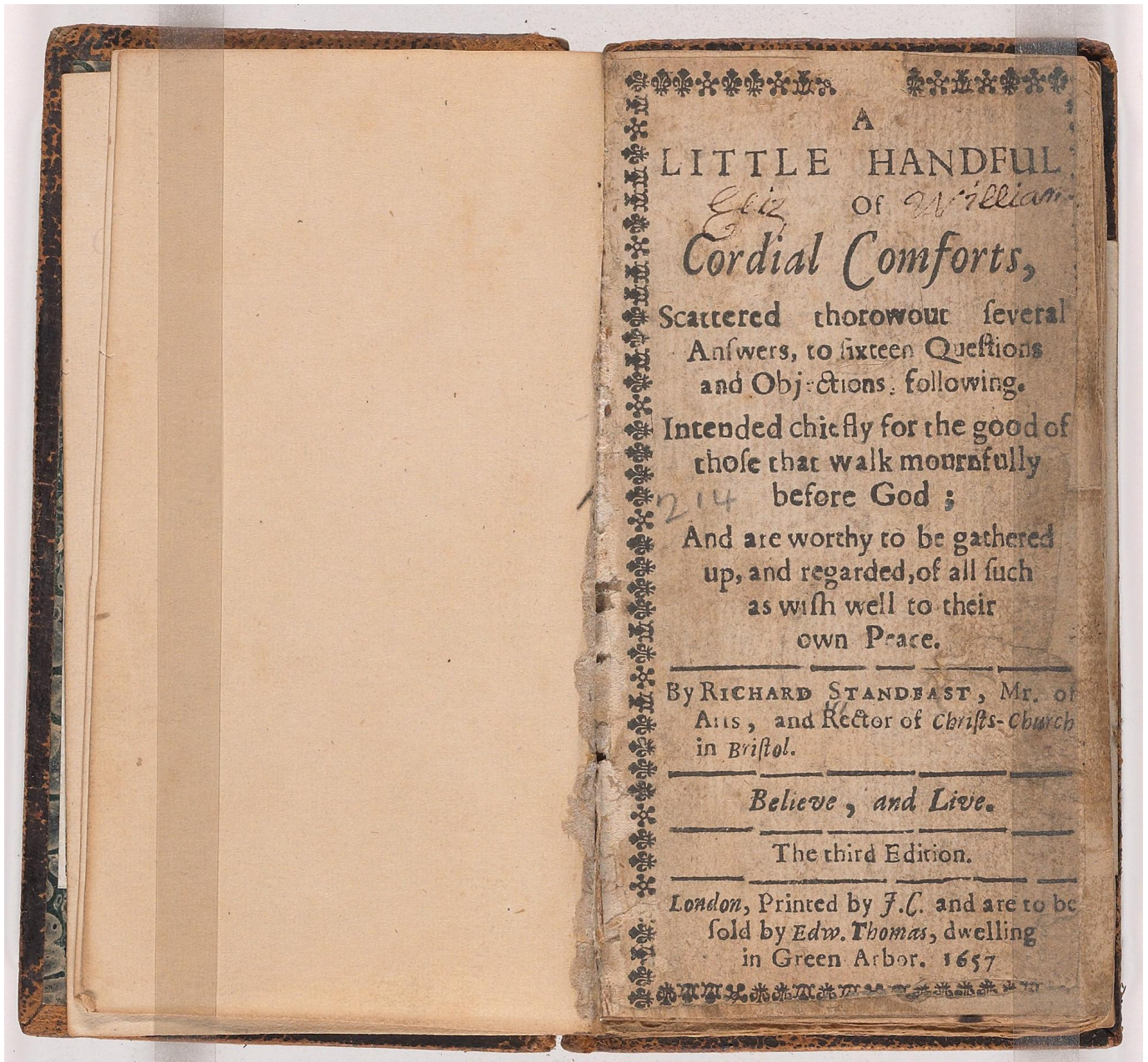
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A
LITTLE HANDFUL
Eleg of *William*
Cordial Comforts,

Scattered thorowout several
Answers, to sixteen Questions
and Obj:ctions. following.

Intended chiefly for the good of
those that walk mournfully
214 before God ;

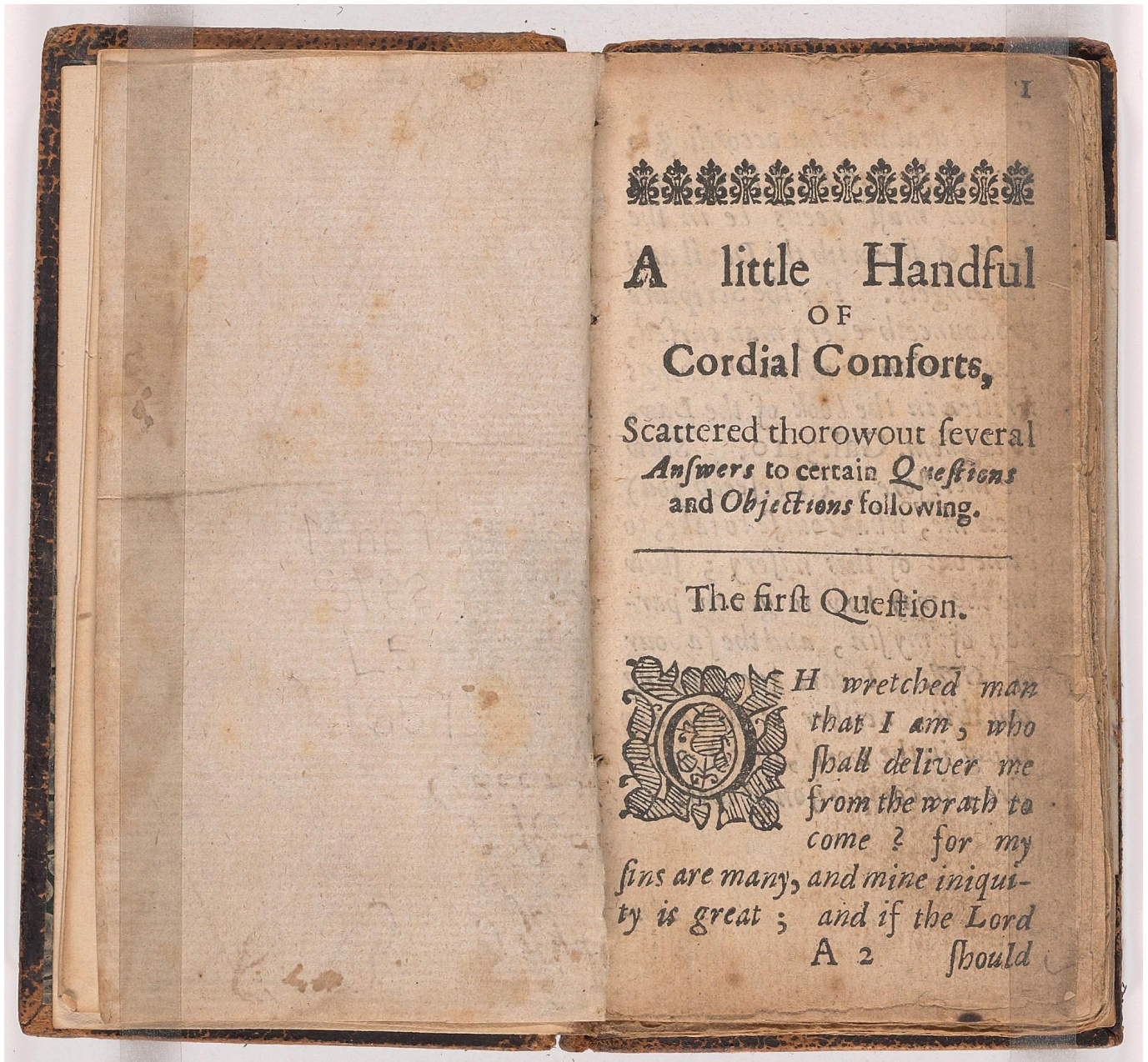
And are worthy to be gathered
up, and regarded, of all such
as wish well to their
own Peace.

By RICHARD STANDEAST, Mr. of
Arts, and Rector of Christs-Church
in Bristol.

Believe, and Live.

The third Edition.

London, Printed by J.C. and are to be
sold by Edw. Thomas, dwelling
in Green Arbor. 1657



A little bandful
 should deal with me according to
 his justice and my deserts, my
 portion must needs be in the
 Lake of fire with the Devil and
 his Angels. For the Scripture
 pronounceth every man cursed,
 that continueth not in all things
 written in the book of the Law,
 to do them. Gal. 3. 10. Shew
 me therefore, (I beseech you)
 shew me, what course to take, to
 come out of this misery; shew
 me the way how to get the par-
 don of my sin, and the favour
 of God. I care for nothing
 but this, neither is there any
 thing in the world, that I do de-
 sire, in comparison of this.

of cordial Comforts.

Answer.

This is that (indeed) which
 of all other things doth most
 concern us. For upon the
 pardon of our sins, & peace
 with God, depends all so-
 lid comfort while we are
 here, and the eternal salva-
 tion of our most precious
 souls hereafter. And there-
 fore for our better both dire-
 ction and consolation in this
 behalf, let us take notice of
 this that follows.

There is a way for men
 to come out of the misery of
 sin, and to obtain and enjoy
 the mercy and favour of Al-
 mighty God, and that is

A 3 *faith*

4 *A little handful*
faith in Christ: this is the way, and there is none but this; neither is there any thing in the world, that can help us to the pardon of our sins, to the love of God, and to the salvation of our souls, but onely *faith in the Lord Jesus*.

That this is the way, is apparent enough by the answer which was given by *Paul and Silas, Act. 16. 31.* for when the keeper of the Prison cryed out with trembling, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* they made him this answer, *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.* There is in *Christ* sufficiency enough, for the ob-

of cordial Comforts. 5

obtaining of our pardon, and the procuring of our peace; and there is in *faith* ability enough to make us partakers of *Christ's* sufficiency. *Christ* is the onely way whereby we come unto eternal life, and *faith* is the only way whereby we come to be partakers of *Christ*; by *faith* we come unto *Him*, and through *Him* unto God.

And that we may the better know, that there is in *Christ* sufficiency enough for the pardon of our sins, and the salvation of our souls, let us consider a little both who *Christ* is, and also what he hath done for the working out of our deliverance,

A 4 and

6. *A little handfull*

and the procuring of our peace.

The Lord *Jesus Christ* is the eternal Son of *God*, who pitying that sinful and miserable condition, whereinto we were all brought by the disobedience of our first Parent, undertook to mediate the matter betwixt God and us, and to reconcile us again unto God. For the better effecting of which great work, He came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin *Mary*, and was made man, yea in all things like unto other men, save onely in sin, that so he might the better make us free from all sin.

of cordial Comforts. 7

sin. Being found thus in fashion as a man, he set himself in our stead, and for us men, and our salvation, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And by his *obedience* and *death* He hath perfectly alone by himself accomplished *whatever* was requisite for our salvation.

The wretchedness of our condition is briefly this. We all like Sheep have gone astray, neither have we only *omitted* those duties, which the Law requires, but we have also *committed* those evils, which the Law forbids; & as the *want of righteousness* doth exclude us from

A 5. the

the favour of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven: so the *guiltiness of sin* doth expose us to the wrath of God, and the damnation of Hell. But the Lord *Jesus Christ* hath fulfilled all *righteousness*. For in his life he performed as much *obedience*, as the Law in rigour could exact; and by suffering death upon the Cross, he under-went as much *punishment*, as could be required of sinners, in the severity of justice: and so by his *death* and *obedience* hath he provided against our double misery. For by his *sufferings* upon the Cross the justice of God is satisfied, and his wrath ap-

appeased; and by his *obedience* the Law is fulfilled, and we are accepted. And as by his *death* comes the pardon of sin, and deliverance from wrath: so by his *obedience* comes the imputation of righteousness, and life everlasting. All which as they were done in our nature, so they were done for us, and in our behalf, he stood in the place of sinners, that we might be numbered among the righteous; he took our sins upon him, that he might put his obedience upon us; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that with his stripes we may be healed; he was made a curse.

10 *A little bandful*

curse for us, that he might redeem us from it; he was made sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him: 2 Cor. 5. 22.

And the better to assure us that by his death upon the Cross, there was paid a price sufficient enough for the procuring of our pardon, he arose again from the dead; which he could not have done, if the justice of God had not been satisfied to the very full in every particular. For as sin is the sting of death, and the only thing that makes death terrible: so it is the strength of death, and it is that onely
that

of cordial Comforts. 11

that doth give death dominion over us: sin is the lock, and bar and bolt, that makes fast the gates of death; and as the door cannot be opened to let out a prisoner, till the bar be removed: so there is no escaping from death, until sin be taken out of the way. *Christ* therefore by rising from the dead hath mightily declared unto us, that he hath paid the utmost Farthing of our debts, and that by his death he hath fully satisfied the justice of God. So that now, by virtue of his sufferings, the *greatest* sins are made pardonable, and there is a way set open for the *worst* sinners,
both

both to grace and glory. *I* say, even for the *worst* sinners. There is *no man* now that can deny himself to be *capable* of grace; there are too many, who from the greatness of Gods mercy, do without any cause presume to sin: but there is no man, who from the heinousness of his sins hath any just cause to despair of mercy: for though our sins be many, yet the mercies of God are more; though they be great, yet his mercies are above them; he is rich in mercy, yea, his mercy is infinite, so that though he have spent much mercy already upon our fore-fathers, yet he hath
mercy

mercy enough in store for us also; with him there is plenty of forgiveness, and his mercy endureth for ever: and the merits of *Christ* are of the same nature, for he is *mighty* to save, and he is the *same* for ever, and through the riches of these merits of *Christ*, there is a way set open, even for the *worst sinners*, to become partakers of the riches of the mercies of God. Now if *any man* sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ* the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, &c. *1 John 2. 1, 2.* And though the time of his abode upon earth in the dayes of his flesh were
but

14 *A little handful*

but short, though his sufferings were but for a season; yet such was, and is the dignity of his person, (being the eternal Son of God) that his *sufferings and obedience* are *infinitely meritorious*, and his blood is able to cleanse us from *all* unrighteousness: so that we may well say with the Apostle, *who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that dyed, or rather who is risen again, and now maketh intercession for us*, Rom. 8. 33, 34. But let no man turn this doctrine of comfort to a liberty of sinning: against the *greatest sins* there is hope in *Christ* for *penitent believers*. But because there is mercy with

of cordial Comforts. 15

with God, shall we therefore go on in sin? God forbid: there is mercy with him, and therefore he must be feared. But if any man shall presume to sin, because there is mercy with God, through *Jesus Christ*; in stead of mercy, that man is like to meet with nothing but justice: for as merciful as God is, and as all-sufficient as the death of *Christ* is, there is no mercy for such as go on still in their wickedness.

And thus you see that *Christ* is mighty enough to save us from all our sins, and to reconcile us unto *God*: now that we may have benefit by this sufficiency of *Christ*,

16 *A little handful*

Christ, we must lay hold upon it by a lively faith. This is that which unites us unto *Christ*, and makes us one with him; this is that which gives us interest in him, and makes us partakers of his merits; this makes the death and obedience of *Christ* as verily our own, and as effectual for the pardon of our sins, and the salvation of our souls, as if they had been performed by our very selves. So that if we do truly *believe in the Lord Jesus*, then is *God* well pleased with us for his sake; and by virtue of his merits being made ours by faith, our sins are all pardoned, and our souls

of cordial Comforts. 17

souls and bodies shall be eternally saved. And so much the Scripture doth plainly testifie in several places. As *John* 3.16. *God* so loved the world, that he gave his onely begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in him*, should not perish, but have life everlasting. And again, *Act*. 10. 43. Through his name *whosoever believeth in him*, shall receive remission of sins, (be they never so many, never so hainous.) And again, *Act*. 13. 38, 39. Be it known unto you, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all those

those things, from which they could not be justified by the law of *Moses*. By the law of *Moses* we could never have been acquitted either from the guiltiness of *sin*, or from the wrath of *God*: but we are delivered from both, by faith in *Christ*; for by it we obtain the forgiveness of our sins, and the salvation of our souls.

And thus it is manifest, that *Christ* is the way, by which we are to obtain the pardon of *sin*, and peace with *God*; and that faith is the way whereby we are made partakers of the merits of *Christ* for our justification and salvation. Proceed we now in a word,
to

to shew that *nothing but Christ* can reconcile us unto *God*, and that *nothing but faith* can make us partakers of *Christ* for our reconciliation.

There is no way whereby to come unto *God*, but *onely Christ*: it is *onely in Christ* that *God* is well pleased; neither is there salvation in any other. For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. *Act. 4.12.* Neither is there any other means on our part, whereby to receive *Christ*, but *onely faith*; and yet unless we do receive him, we get no benefit by him; and therefore unless we do believe in him.

20 *A little handfull*

we shall perish in our sins. And to this purpose speaks our Saviour, *Joh. 3. 36.* He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him. See the sum of all this, in that place of *S. John, 1 Epist. 5. Chap. 11. 12* & *13 verses*: God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life. These things have I written to you, that believe in the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe
in

of cordial Comforts. 21

in the name of the Son of God. By which place it is plain, that there is a way to life; that *Christ* is the way to it; that life is so in him, that it is in no other but him; that it is so in him, that by believing in him we obtain life; and that it is so in him, that without believing in him, we get no benefit at all by him. And thus you have the truth of the former answer enlarged and confirmed, according to it's several branches; by which it is manifest, that faith in the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and nothing else but onely faith in him, can help us to the pardon of sin, the love of God, and the salvation of our souls. Here-

22 *A little handful*

Hereupon it may be thus
replied.

The second Question.

IF I cannot obtain the pardon
of my sins, and the favour
of God, without faith in Christ,
I doubt my condition is woful,
and that I am yet in my sins,
and liable unto wrath. For I
fear that I have not this faith
in Christ, and that I do not as
yet believe in him. Shew me
therefore (I pray you) how I
may be comforted against this
fear, and how I may know whe-
ther I do believe in Christ,
yea, or no.

An-

of cordial Comforts. 23

Answer.

Doubtless if we do not
believe in Christ, our condi-
tion is woful: for there is
no salvation in any other; and
without faith in him, we get
no benefit by him, but we
are in our sins, and the ob-
ligation unto wrath is in full
power and force against us.
For though the ransome,
which Christ paid by his
death upon the Cross, be a
ransome abundantly suffici-
ent for the sins of the whole
world; yet the benefit of that
death of his is bestow'd on
none, but upon such condi-
tions as God himself pleaseth:

B which

24 *A little handful*

which conditions, for such as be of years, are *faith* and *repentance*; which if we want, we shall be sure to perish in our sins, not out of any defect in *Christ*, but only because we want those conditions, whereby we come to have interest in him, and to be partakers of his merits. Now that we may the better know whether we have this faith in us yea, or no, (and so neither be deceiv'd with vain hopes, nor yet discomforted with false fears,) consider this which follows, and see what answer you can make to these several demands.

Are you sensible of the misery

of cordial Comforts. 25

misery wherein you are by reason of your sins? and do you find that you need a Saviour? do you know who is the Saviour of the world? do you know in some good measure who *Christ* is, and what he hath done for us, & what are the benefits that are to be had by him? do you know what a necessity there is of having of him, and what a misery it is to be without him, and what we must do, if we would have any benefit by him? and do you verily *believe* that *Christ Jesus*, and none but he, is the Saviour of the world, & that he hath both done & suffered, as the Scriptures testifie

26

A little bandful

of him? do you verily believe that there is no way to Heaven but Christ, that there is no way to get Christ but Faith, and that there is no part to be had in him, but by renouncing all other Lords, and all other Saviours, and by adhering *wholly* unto him for all our consolation and salvation? and do you now *desire from the heart* to be made partaker of Christ, and do you *sincerely endeavour* to accept of him, and to embrace him? and can you be content for his sake to forsake all things, and to undergo any misery, rather than to part with him? Can you be content to take him (as we say

of cordial Comforts. 27

say) *for better for worse*, and not onely for your *Jesus*, to save you from your sins, but also for your *Lord*, to command and dispose of you at his pleasure? and is it your care to know his will? and is it your endeavour to yeeld him an *universal obedience*? and is it your *practise* in obedience unto him, to exercise your self to keep a conscience void of offence both toward *God*, and toward men, and constantly and conscientiously to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live godly, and righteously, and soberly in this present world? do you thus accept of Christ, and *submit* unto him?

B 3

28 *A little handful*

him? nay, is it your hearty desire and unfained endeavour so to do? then you may be sure that you have some degrees of true faith in *Jesus Christ*, and therefore that *Christ* is yours, that *God* is yours, that all is yours. For this is such a qualification as hath the promise, both of the life that now is, and also of that, that is to come.

By these questions we may examine our condition. For after this manner is faith wrought in us; such are the preparatives, such is the nature, and such are the effects of a true faith, as are implied in these questions; so that if we can in some good measure

of cordial Comforts. 29

sure make understanding and affectionate answers to them all; then we may be sure that we have a true faith in *Christ*: but if either we know him not, or desire not to accept of him, or care not to obey him, we have then cause to think that we do not believe in him; and if we think otherwise, we do but deceive our own souls.

Now if upon examination had, we find that we want faith, we must be diligent in using the means whereby to get it, which is by reading and hearing of the word of *God*, and conferring about it. For faith commeth by hearing, and hearing by the

B 4

word.

30 *A little handful*
word. If we find that we
have this faith, we must be
careful to keep it, and to in-
crease it, by the word, by the
Sacraments, and by prayer.

The third Question.

UPON this that hath been
spoken, another question
may be raised to this purpose. I
do in some measure know who
Christ is, and I do believe that
he is a Saviour all-sufficient,
and that there is no other way to
salvation, but him, and that
whosoever believeth in him shal
not perish: and I my self would
fain believe in him. But how
may I know that I have right to
believe in him, and that the in-

vi-

of cordial Comforts. 31
vitations to faith do concern
me? how may I know whether I
should be welcome, or not, if I
should be so bold as to come unto
him?

Answer.

For our encouragement
herein, and that we may
come the more boldly unto
the throne of grace, we must
know, that Christ is a com-
mon Saviour, he is the Savi-
our of the World; and in re-
gard of the all-sufficiency of
his merits, there is not one of
those, whose nature he took,
unto whom his merits are
not communicable; neither
is there any one, who in that

B 5

re-

32 *A little handfull*

respect may not truly be said to be savable. *The promise is made to you, and to your children, and to all that be afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, Act. 2. 39.* Now if you desire to know, whether you be one of those, whom he doth call to believe in him, consider then whether or no, you be sensible of your misery, and burdened with your sins; whether your desire be to be eased of your sins, and to be partaker of Christ, and of those benefits and comforts that be in him. For if we be thus qualified, we may be confident that we are of the number of those, whom he doth

of cordial Comforts. 33

doth seriously invite to come unto him, and to depend upon him. And hereof you have a witness in your self, and Gods own hand to shew for it, to your greater comfort. For these are his own words: *Come unto me all ye that labour and be heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Mat. 11. 28.* and again, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, Joh. 7. 37.* unto such *thirsty souls* was Christ sent, he came to speak peace to such as are *weary*, and *broken hearted*, and to set at liberty such as are *bruised*. So that if we, finding what a misery it is to be in sin, and to want a Saviour, have there-

34 *A little handfull*

thereupon an earnest desire to be delivered from this misery, we may be as sure, that he calls upon us to come unto him, as if our very names were specified in these invitations: being thus qualified, we may come boldly, and upon our coming shall be sure to find rest; but without this badge we have no warrant at all to expect a welcome. *They that do thus hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled; but they that be rich in their own conceits, and are not sensible of any wants, these he sends empty away.*

The

of cordial Comforts. 35

The fourth Question.

But if I finde that I want this sorrow, what course should I take, to bring my heart to be humbled for my sins?

Answer.

To this end let a man examine himself by the Law of God. For by the Law is the knowledge of sin. And let him duly think upon that fearful curse of God, whereunto every the least sin doth make us liable. Let him diligently consider, how uglye and lothsome sin doth make us in the sight of God, and what

what a fearful thing it is to be deprived of the love of God and the joyes of Heaven, and what a misery it is to be exposed to the wrath of God, and the torments of Hell. Let him seriously ponder what a misery it is to lose the soul. Let him thoroughly weigh the nature of eternity, and the strictness of that account that is to come; and the severity of that sentence, which in that last and dreadful day shall be pronounced upon all impenitent sinners, when they shall be adjudged to that everlasting fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels. All these are of sin-

gular use to wound our souls, and to affect our hearts with sorrow for our sins. It is the Law that makes way for the Gospel: for thus *John* the Baptist by denouncing the judgments of God upon wicked courses, prepared the way for our blessed Saviour. But especially let him consider how great things God hath done for him. For as there is no greater obligation to obedience, then the loving kindness of the Lord: so there is nothing that doth more aggravate our sins, & so consequently our misery; and therefore nothing that can tend more to the breaking of the heart, then the consideration

38 *A little handful*
 ration of the bounty and
 long suffering of God to
 us-ward. And this plainly
 appears by that course
 which the Prophet *Nathan*,
 at the Lord's appointment
 took with *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12.
 for by setting before his eyes
 Gods many and wonderful
 mercies vouchsafed, and his
 own extreame ingratitude
 and ill requital of so great
 goodness, he was constrain-
 ed to cry out with shame
 and sorrow, *I have sinned a-*
gainst the Lord.

And amongst all the mer-
 cies of God, there is none
 that doth more deserve to
 take up all our thoughts,
 then that departure of
 Christ,

of cordial Comforts. 39

Christ, which he accom-
 plished at *Jerusalem*; nether
 is there any thing that doth
 more tend, either to preserve
 us from sin, or to humble us
 for our failings, then the
 death of our Savior.

For suppose the Lord Je-
 sus should present himself
 unto us, when we are about
 to commit any sin, or after
 we have done it, as he was
 hanging upon the Cross,
 with his sides scourged, his
 face buffeted, his hands and
 feet nailed, his head crown-
 ed with Thorns, his very
 heart pierced, his whole bo-
 dy upon the rack, and trick-
 ling down with drops of
 blood, and speaking unto us
 after

340 *A little handful*

after this or the like manner:
 Behold, if ever sorrows
 were like unto my sor-
 rows; and yet all this was
 but the punishment of thy
 sins. It is thy sins that
 have brought me to all
 these torments; and canst
 thou delight in that which
 was the cause of such mi-
 sery? All this have I done
 for thy good, and is this
 the requital of my love? I
 have born thy sins, that
 thou mightest be eased;
 mine hands were bound,
 that thine might be freed;
 my sides were scourged,
 that thine might be spa-
 red; my cheeks were buf-
 feted, that thine might
 be

of cordial Comforts. 41

be kist: my head was
 crowned with thorns, that
 thine might be crowned
 with glory; and is this
 thy kindness to thy friend,
 thus to return me hatred
 for my good will? hast
 thou not put me to pains
 enough already, but that
 thou must rake in my
 wounds, and make a sport
 of my misery? or if thou
 wilt not pity me, yet pity
 thy self. For can that be
 light to thee, which cost me
 so heavy? or shalt thou es-
 scape the cup, that art a
 sinner, when my beloved
 Father would not spare me
 that was but a surety?

Suppose (I say) that the
 Lord

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A little bandful

Lord *Jesus* should present himself and speak unto us, after this or the like manner, would not such a sight make our bowels to yearn, and such words cut us to the very heart? Doubtless it were enough to make the dryest eyes to wish for tears of blood, and the hardest heart of the most obstinate sinner, to become in the midst of his body like melting wax, thus to hear, and to look upon him whom they have pierced: yea it is impossible for any man to think on this, and to go on in sin, but such as could be content to crucifie again the Lord of glory.

And

of cordial Comforts. 43

And thus you see, what are the chiefeſt helps to humiliation, and by what meanes our hearts may be brought to be deeply affected with sorrow for our sins.

Hereupon a timorous heart will be ready to reply yet further after this manner.

The fifth Question.

B*y this course, and by these and the like meditations, I confesse that I have been brought in some measure to be sorry for my sins, and now I would faine be eased of them; and it is my desire to believe in Christ, but I fear*

44 *A little handful*

fear that as yet I am not enough humbled; I fear I have not so great a measure of sorrow, as may make me capable of this invitation; and my heart is so hardned, that I cannot grieve and mourn for my sins so much as I should, and would do; and therefore I fear, that as yet I have no right to the comforts of the Gospel.

Answer.

True it is, that sorrow for sinne makes ready an heart prepared for the Lord; and as usually in the course of nature, there is no birth without some pain: so in the work of grace, there is no regeneration.

of cordial Comforts. 45

generation, (that of Infants in baptism excepted,) without some sorrow. But as there are degrees of pain in the natural birth: so in the spiritual birth, there are degrees of sorrow. Some women have a quick dispatch, others have a more tedious travel: and so it is in the new birth, all are not pained alike. Some there be that go mourning all the day long, yea day after day, whereas unto others, heaviness indures but as it were for a night, and joy commeth in the morning. Wee must know therefore, and that for our comfort, that it is not the quantity, but the quality of

46 *A little handfull*

of sorrow, that God looks after; neither matters it much, how great our sorrow be, as how true it is.

If a youth, upon due examination had, be found fit for the University, his Tutor never demands how long he hath been at school, how harshly he hath been dealt withall, how often he hath been whipt, before he could come to that perfection; all that he looks after is, whether or no he be fit to be admitted: so it fares with us, the Law is our School-master to bring us unto Christ, and this it doth, partly by discovering unto us our sins, whereby we see that we need

of cordial Comforts. 47

need a Saviour; and partly by threatning of us with the curse, whereby we are made more careful to look out after this Saviour, and more willing to accept of him, and for our own ease to submit unto him, when once we have found him. Now when we can be content to accept of *Christ* upon any terms, then are we ready for him, then are we fit to be admitted into him. And when we do seek unto *Christ* for this admission, he regards not so much, how long we were at School under the Law, how often we were lashed by it, or how sorely we have smarted under it: but all that he
C looks

48 *A little handful*
looks after is, whether we be
fit to come unto him. Con-
sider therefore with your
self, had you ever such a sight
and sorrow for your sins, as
made you weary of them;
and out of love with them;
and willing to be eased of
them; and desirous of inter-
est in *Christ*, and ready to
accept of *Christ* upon any
terms, rather then to go
without him? is it your
grief that you cannot be
more sorrowful, and do not
you desire as much to be
kept from sin for the time to
come, as to have all that par-
doned that is past? Surely, if
you stand thus affected, then
are you fitted and made rea-
dy

of cordial Comforts. 49
dy for *Christ*; and whether
your sorrow were great or
little, yet it is a token, that it
was a true and a godly sor-
row, because it worketh re-
pentance unto salvation, ne-
ver to be repented of.

It may be yet further ob-
jected, thus:

The sixth Question.

I Confess that I have been
grieved for my sins, and I
have been desirous to believe in
Christ: but I fear that my sor-
row is not good, nor my faith
sound, because my obedience is
so faulty: for I am not so willing
to forsake all my sins, nor so
careful to yield *Christ* obedi-
ence,

A little handfull

ence, as I should be; or if I am willing so to do, yet mine infirmities and my failings are such, and so many, that I fear my sorrow, and my faith, are not such as they ought to be.

Answer.

Certain it is, that sorrow for sin will nothing avail us without amendment of life; the wicked must forsake his ways, if he expect pardon, *Isa. 55. 7.* And it is he that confesseth his sins, and forsaketh them, that shall finde mercy, *Prov. 28. 13.* If we willingly allow our selves in the practice of anything displeasing unto God, our con-

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dition is dangerous. If we say that we abide in Christ, we must walk as he walked, or else we deceive our own souls, *1 Joh. 2. 6.* If we say that we have fellowship with God, and yet walk in darkness, we lye, and the truth is not in us, *1 Joh. 1. 6.* And if it be not our study and exercise to yield Christ an universal obedience, our Faith is but Presumption, our Peace is but Security, our Hopes are but Shadows, and our Expectation will perish.

But if we have an hearty desire, and a sincere endeavour in all things to live honestly, we may not from our fail-

C 3 ings

52 *A little handful*

ings and imperfections, presently conclude that we are not sanctified at all, that we have no faith, no interest in *Christ*, no love of *God* in us. For perfection is not to be attained unto, while we be in the body; but *sincerity* is that which may be had, and affords unto us matter of comfort; for the Lord loves them that do follow after righteousness, Prov. 15. 9. And they whose sincere desire and endeavour it is to have respect to all the commandments, are accepted of him. If it be our unfained desire, study and endeavour, in obedience unto *Christ*, to do whatsoever he commandeth

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eth; if it be our care to cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of *God*, and not wickedly to depart from him in any thing: I say, if it be our unfained desire, study and endeavour so to do, we may safely conclude, notwithstanding all our imperfections, that our sorrow is good, and our faith sound, and that our sins are pardoned, & our service is accepted, and our souls shall be saved. For in *Gods* account and acceptance, that goes for a *clean life* which is not stained with *wilful pollutions*, and whose obedience is extended

54 *A little handful*
to the utmost of his know-
ledge, and hath withal a
purpose to amend what God
shall hereafter make him
know to be sinful; to that
man is allowed the opinion
of gracious.

See further of this point in
answer to objection 16.

The seventh Question.

IF these things be so, I finde
then that my condition at
the present is good; and, if I
were sure to die in this estate, I
make no doubt but I should be
happy. But I fear that I shall not
continue in this condition; for
my enemies are many, and migh-
ty, and crafty, and watchful, and

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I myself am prone to sin, and apt
to fall from my own steadfastness;
and I finde by experience that
many who have begun in the Spi-
rit, have ended in the flesh, and
their later ends have been worse
then their beginnings. This
makes me to fear that I shall not
continue faithful unto the death;
and yet without this continuance,
I shall never obtain the crown of
life.

Answer.

All these things I confesse
are true; such are our ene-
mies, such is our weakness;
and the misery of those that
do turn back from the Holy
Commandment given unto
C 5 them,

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them; is such, that it had been better for them not to have known the way of truth, 2 Pet. 2. 21. for they shall lose those things that they have done, and their portion shall be with unbelievers. So that a man cannot chuse but have cause to fear. Nevertheless there is comfort in God against this fear also; yea, *this very fear of falling away* hath in it matter of consolation, for it is a means to keep us from departing from God, Jer. 32. 40. *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* Ma-

of cordial Comforts. 57

Many there be that having begun well, do yet at length grow weary of well doing, and so lose what they have done; and therefore let him that thinketh that he standeth, take heed lest he fall: But yet let not our hearts be troubled, let us not be dismay'd with fear; for the perseverance of such as are *justified and sanctified in deed and in truth*, is certain, and the foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth who are his, and he knoweth how to deliver them out of temptation. In further answer to this objection, and the better to comfort us against this fear, take special notice

of

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 of these Texts of Scripture,
 1 Pet. 1. 5. *Who are kept by the*
power of God through faith un-
to salvation, ready to be reveal-
ed in the last time. Joh. 10.
 27, 28, 29. *My Sheep hear my*
voice, and I know them, and
they follow me. And I give un-
to them eternal life, and they
shall never perish, neither shall
any man pluck them out of my
band. My Father which gave
them me, is greater then all:
and no man is able to pluck them
out of my Fathers hand. 2 Chr.
 16. 9. *For the eyes of the Lord*
run to and fro throughout the
whole earth, to shew himself
strong in the behalf of them
whose heart is perfect towards
him.

The

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The eighth Question.

But if the perseverance and
 so salvation of such as are
 in deed and in truth the
 Saints of God, be so sure and
 certain, what mean those fre-
 quent caveats which we meet
 with in the Scripture? what mean
 those frequent exhortations to
 perseverance?

Answer.

The perseverance of such
 is sure and certain, howbeit
 God brings it to pass by
 means; it is wrought in them
 by God, and yet their own
 endeavors also are required;
 and

and these caveats and exhortations are the means which God hath sanctified for the exciting of their endeavors, and for their preservation from Apostacy.

Caveats we have many, and many threatnings; exhortations many, and many promises; such as are, *Take heed to your selves. Watch in all things. Be stedfast and unmovable, continue faithful unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life. The later end of backsliders shall be worse then their beginning, &c.* By which, and other like passages, we are not to think either that perseverance is in our own power, or that the condition

of

of Gods peculiar people is mutable in regard of him; but they do imply how prone we are to sin, in regard of our selves; and they shew, that our own endeavours are required for the working out of our salvation; and they are the means sanctified of God, for the preventing of sin, and for the exciting of our care, and so for the preserving of us unto his heavenly Kingdom.

And whereas we are said to be kept by the power of God; We may not so understand it, as if we our selves might in the meantime sit still and do nothing: we are kept by God, and yet

we

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we also must keep our selves; it is *God* that keepeth us, and yet we also must watch and pray. But we are said to be kept by *God*, for our greater encouragement. For if our endeavours be sincere, though they be but weak, yet they will be effectual, because we have such a mighty helper: and withal it is to teach us, to whom we ought to ascribe all the glory when our endeavours become effectual. It is *God* that must have the glory of it, for it is by his power that we are kept, who worketh in us both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

Be strong therefore in the
Lord,

of cordial Comforts. 63

Lord, and in the power of his might; he that is with us is mightier then they that be against us. And therefore we need not fear; for neither the power, nor the policy of hell shall prevaile against the people of *God*: and the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, *Mat. 16. 18.*

The ninth Question.

I *Make no doubt of the power of God, I know that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him: but I doubt of his will, I fear that he will not do it.*

An-

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Answer.

Surely this is a needless fear: for his love is everlasting, his gifts and calling are without repentance; and whom he loveth, to the end he loveth them. And therefore fear not, the Lord will not forsake his people, for his own Names sake, because it hath pleased him to make you his people, 1 Sam. 12. 22. So that if once he hath loved us so well, as to set us apart for himself; he loveth himself better, then to forsake us. And though our unworthiness deserve that God should deny us, yet his faithfulness is such,

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such, that he cannot deny himself.

Think therefore upon his love; meditate upon his power; call to minde his promise; forget not his truth; and commit the keeping of your soul unto him in well doing. Care you to do well, God will care for the rest: for He preserveth the souls of his Saints, he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Psal. 79. 10.

The tenth Question.

But seeing that mine own endeavours are required for the working out of my salvation; and seeing that my assurance

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rance of salvation cannot be
sound, unless my care and dili-
gence, in the constant using of all
good means tending thereunto,
be every way answerable: shew
me, I pray you, by what means
may be enabled to continue pati-
ently in well doing, that so at the
last I may obtain eternal life.

Answer.

Hereunto many things are
 useful, the chiefest of which
 are these following.

1. *Labour to be sincere*, by
 considering that all our ways
 are before God. To walk be-
 fore God is the way to be per-
 fect, and sincerity is the way
 to perseverance. For the
 righ-

if cordial Comforts. 67

righteous shall hold on his
 way, and he that hath clean
 hands, shall grow stronger &
 stronger, Job 17. 9. but he
 whose heart is not upright
 before God, will start aside in
 the time of tryal. See 1 Joh. 2.
 19.

Labour to overcome the world,
 that so neither the cares and
 glory of it may too deeply
 affect us, nor yet the crosses
 and troubles of it, too much
 affright us. For each of these
 are great hinderances to the
 practice of piety. Persecuti-
 on is that heat, that doth wi-
 ther the word, & by it some
 are made to deny their ma-
 ster; and the cares of the
 world, are the thorns that
 choke

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choke the word, & a mean whereby it becomes unfruitful. *For the love of money, the root of all evil, which some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith,* 1 Tim. 6.10. Arm your self therefore against both these; and to this end consider with your self, and think often upon that of our Saviour, *Mat. 16.26. What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* and upon that, *Mat. 8.38. He that is ashamed of me, of him will the Son of man be ashamed, &c.* and upon that 2 Tim. 2.12. *If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him: but if we deny him, he will also deny us.* And learn

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to discern between those things that be seen, and the things that be not seen. For the things that be seen, are but temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal, 2 Cor. 4.18.

3. *Watch in all things*, for our enemies are many, & security is dangerous, and sin is so deceitful, that it will quickly harden us: and this is certain, a man never yeelds to his own corrupt disposition for the committing of any evil, but he is ordinarily more willing to the second act, then to the first; & who then can tell how far he may go astray, that doth but once give way to his own corruption?

4. *La-*

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4. *Labor to grow in grace,* and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, by considering that our labour cannot be in vain in the Lord. This *endeavour to grow in grace* is a special means to keep us from being drawn away with the error of the wicked: but standing still, is in danger of turning back, & luke-warmness is the way to grow key-cold.

5. *Despise not prophesying* if you would not quench the Spirit; if we would not be weary of w^el^doing, we must wait upon the word: For that is able to build us up, & to give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified. *Act. 20. 32.*
And

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And lastly, we must pray without ceasing, that he who hath begun a good work in us, would also finish it, and grant that our whole Spirit, Soul and Body may be kept blameless unto the coming of our Lord *Jesus*. This is the way to continue in well doing, and so running we shall obtain.

The eleventh Question.

But though my soul may be cared for, yet my body may be in want. I want already many things that be necessary; or at least I fear that I shall want such things as be needful for me; and this fear makes my life the more uncomfortable. D An-

Answer.

Doubtless, if our souls be cared for, other things may the less trouble us; howbeit against those things also there is matter of comfort in *Jesus Christ*. He that regards the soul, will not neglect the body; and he knows what we have need of: and if we be of his family, he will be sure to provide for us. He is able enough to help us, for the whole earth is the *Lords*, and the fulness thereof: and of his will we have no cause to doubt, for he hath promised that if we seek first the kingdom of *God*, and his righte-

ousness,

ousness, all these things shall be added as it were over and above, and into the bargain, *Mat. 6. 33.* and he hath said, that he will withhold *no good thing* from them that fear him, *Pf. 34. 9, 10.* Whereupon we may safely conclude, that if he keep any thing from us, it will be good for us to be without it: so that we may well say with the Prophet *David*, *The Lord is my Shepherd, I cannot want, Pf. 23. 1.* For he that hath given us *Christ*, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? *Rom. 8. 32.*

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The twelfth Question.

I Have been a man of sorrows,
and acquainted with grief; I
have gone through much misery
already, and many are the crosses
and troubles that are upon me at
the present, and I fear that there
be more and worse yet to come: so
that sometimes I begin to think
that the Lord doth not love me,
and I am ready to doubt what
will become of me; and I fear
that my patience will one day be
tried, and that I shall faint in the
day of evil. Shew me therefore, I
pray you, how I may be comforted
against this fear, and how I may
be enabled to wade through all
with Christian patience.

An-

of cordial Comforts. 75*Answer.*

True it is, that the crosses
and troubles, which men
shall meet withal in the way
to heaven, are matters of of-
fence, and unto some they
are very powerful, turning
them back from the hope
laid before them, to the em-
bracing of this present world.
But if we would think upon
things aright, in the midst of
misery, we should have com-
forts enough to refresh our
souls. Neither is there any
trouble that can betal us, in
the midst of which they have
not matter of strong conso-
lation. *and justified by*
D 3 *faith,*

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faith, are at peace with God, through Jesus Christ.

Now to the end that we may be the better comforted against all crosses, let us make use of these few considerations following.

1. Consider that it is no new or strange thing to be exercised with afflictions; neither are crosses and troubles *of themselves* an argument of Gods hatred, but rather a token of his love, & a witness of our adoption, if we bear them patiently, and make good use of them. There is not any affliction incident to the nature of man, which some one or other, even of Gods own dear servants and chil-

of cordial Comforts. 77

children, have not been exercised withal. Look upon *David*, and *Jacob*, and *Joseph*, and *Job*, & *Paul*, & all that cloud of Witnesses made mention of *Heb. 11.* and we shall find, that through *many afflictions*, they all entred into the kingdom of God. Nay, look upon the Captain of our salvation, and we shall finde, that even he himself was made *perfect through sufferings*, *Heb. 2. 10.* and this must needs be a special means to enable us to bear all with the greater patience, when we shall know & consider, that though our afflictions be for number many, & for nature grievous, yet they are but the measure of our Betters. D 4 2. Con-

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2. Consider that *God* hath promised never to leave us nor forsake us, *Heb. 13.5.* and his presence alone is support sufficient even in the worst of miseries. How can *Jacob* be afraid to go down into *Egypt*, when *God* himself hath said, he will go with him? *Gen. 46. 34.* *God* hath made the like promise unto us, and therefore if he bid us go into troubles; if he command us to walk even through the valley of the shadow of death, yet we need fear no evil, as long as he is with us: for, if *God* be with us, who can be against us? *Rom. 8. 31.*

3. Consider, that unto such as do believe in *Christ*, the

na-

of cordial Comforts. 79

nature of afflictions is wholly altered; for their sting is pul'd out, & their bitterness is allayed: they may savour of *anger*, of *wrath* they do not: *crosses* they may be, *curse*s they are not: they may be *chastisements* for our correction, but they are not *judgments* for our confusion. For *Christ* hath suffered *whatever wrath* was due unto us by reason of our sins: and if we be once reconciled unto *God* by faith in *Christ*, there is more matter of comfort in the assurance of his love, then there can be of dejection in the greatest trouble.

4. Consider that *God* intends nothing but good unto us in

D 5 his

80 *A little handfull*

his sharpest dealings with us : for it is all to humble us, and to prove us, and to do us good at our later end ; all is for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. For *hereby* he reforms what hath *been amiss* in us in times past ; *hereby* our iniquity shall be purged, and this is the fruit, to take away our sin, Isa. 27.9.

Hereby he prevents sin in us for the time to come, as he did S. Paul, unto whom there was sent the messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should have been exalted above measure, 2 Cor. 12.7.

Hereby he doth wean us from the love of the world and worldly vanities. As long

as

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as all goes well with us, we are ready to say with S. Peter, *It is good to be here* : but when once we begin to be afflicted, then presently with the *Prodigal*, our *minde* are homewards.

Hereby he deals with us as the husbandman doth by the Vine, he pares and prunes us, to make us the more fruitful, Job. 15.2.

Hereby he doth exercise our faith and patience, & makes trial of our sincerity, as he did by Job. And so in this he lays the ground of our greater glory: for greater afflictions require greater patience; and the greater our patience is, the greater shall be our future happiness.

And

And the consideration of this must needs be a means to perswade us to patience: for if we can willingly endure smarting-water for the clearing of our eyes; & bitter pills, and sharp lances for the health of our bodies: much more ought we to bear with patience the smarting hand of Almighty God for the health of our souls. There is no affliction indeed joyous, for the present, but grievous; but after it worketh the peaceable fruit of righteousness to such as are exercised thereby, *Heb. 12. 11.*

Consider that if we do continue faithful unto the death, we shall receive a crown

crown of life. And if we do but have an eie to *that recompence of reward*, we shall easily be drawn, as *Moses* was, to esteem the *reproach of Christ* greater riches then the treasures of *Egypt*; and to chuse rather to suffer affliction with the people of *God*, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, *Heb. 11. 25, 26.* For the happiness of that kingdom, which is to come, is such, that our blessed Saviour accounts it matter of comfort against all fear whatsoever, as it doth plainly appear by those words of his, *Luke 12. 32. Fear not little flock, for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

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dom. Where the only argu-
 ment that he makes use of
 for the encouraging of his
 little flock, is the hopes of
 the Kingdom. And again
 by that place, *Mat. 5. 11, 12.*
Blessed are ye, when men shall
revile you, and persecute you,
and shall say all manner of evil
against you falsely for my sake.
Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad:
for great is your reward in hea-
ven, for so persecuted they the
Prophets which were before you.
 Wherein our Saviour doth
 hearten his Disciples against
 Persecution, only upon this
 ground, because their re-
 ward should be great in hea-
 ven. And surely in *S. Paul's*
 computation, the present af-
 flict-

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 affliction is not worthy the
 speaking of, in regard of that
 glory that shall be revealed.
Rom. 8. 18. neither is there
 indeed, any comparison at
 all between them; for the one
 is but a light & momentary af-
 fliction, the other is a far more
 exceeding and eternal weight of
 glory, *2 Cor. 4. 17.* So that
 this goodness of God in the
 Land of the living, is enough
 to keep us from fainting un-
 der the heaviest burden: for
 though our outward man
 decay, yet while we have an
 eye to this joy set before us,
 our inward man will be re-
 newed day by day. Fitly
 therefore is the hope of this
 happiness, called the *Anchor*
 of

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of the soul, and the *Helmet of Salvation*; for by this *Anchor* we are preserved in the deep waters, by this *helmet* we are protected in the times of danger; and by flying unto this *hope*, we are sure to finde refuge in the day of evil.

And thus we may be comforted against evils present. Now as for those that are yet to come, we may thus resolve, *either they shall not come at all*: for *God* will stand between us & harm, and keep us quiet from fear of evil: without his providence nothing can befall us, and therefore nothing shall befall us to do us hurt: for he is a *God* that delighteth in the prosperity of his servants. Or

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Or if they do come, yet the *Lord* will deliver us out of all: there shall be an end. Enlargement will come, and he will deliver his people, even because he hath a favor unto them.

And in the mean time, he will support us in them, till deliverance do come: & his grace will be sufficient for us. For *God* is faithful, & will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able: but with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it, 1Co. 10. 13.

And he will also give us benefit by them: for he maketh all to work together for good, to those that love him, Rom. 8. 28. And thus we may be com-

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comforted against our fears also. In a word, there's none can know the way to heaven, better then he that dwells there. And therefore which way soever God leads us, it is safe to follow him. The uneasiness of the way, makes us think that it is the farthest way about; but the Lord knowes it is the next way home. And whatsoever they seem to us, yet *all the ways of the Lord are mercy & truth, unto such as keep his Covenant, & his testimonies.* Psal. 25. 10.

The thirteen Question.

M*r troubles are great, exceeding weighty and burdensome, and there are no sor-*
rows

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rows like unto my sorrows; and this is that, that doth so break my heart, & drink up my spirit.

Answer.

This is answered in a word. It is but a conceit of our own, to think our own troubles the worst, when as indeed they are but *common* temptations: but say the worst, grant that there be none like them; yet if we shall compare them either with that which we have deserved; or with that which *Christ* himself for us hath suffered; or with that weight of glory that shall be revealed, we shall then esteem them all as nothing. And as
great

great as they are, if we would but only look up and consider duly from whence they come, even that alone would be enough to make us patient: for thus was it with *David*, he was dumb and opened not his mouth, considering who did it, *Psal. 39.9.*

The fourteenth Question.

But my affliction is such, that I am kept from enjoying the liberty of the house of God, and from praying him in the congregation.

Answer.

This must needs be troublesome to minds well affected; howbeit if God himself re-

restrains us, we may then be sure that he requires not our presence. And in such a case, if our desires be with the congregation, even that desire will be sufficient. Neither is the Lord so confined to the congregation, but that he is near to all, that call upon him faithfully wheresoever they be, when necessary, and not neglect is the reason of their absence. And besides all this, if at any time, by reason of age or sickness, we are not able to do those things which we do desire, and did perform in the times of our health and strength, then shall a willing mind be well pleasing unto God, and good

good desires shall be accepted. Yea furthermore, this we must know for our consolation, that a patient submitting to the good will of *God*, is a *worshipping of him*, as appears by that, *Job* 1. 20, 21. where *Job* is said to worship *God*, when he did with patience and contentedness submit unto him. This is indeed, a glorifying of *God*, and herein we acknowledg him to be our *God*, and in thus submitting we shall performe unto *God* as good service as ever we did in all our lives. For this is the passive part of true obedience, and the tryal of sincerity in other things. To serve the Lord when all goes well

well with us, is much; and it is altogether as much, if not more, to resolve to trust in him, though he should kill us. And if we can with *Job* hold fast our righteousness, and in the hour of temptation not fall away, this is a true note of pure religion, and a manifest argument of sincerity and truth.

The fifteenth Question.

ANd yet after all this I must die; and when a few years are come, I shall go the way whence I shall not return: and the fear of death doth much amaze me.

An-

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Answer.

Verily there is no solid reason why it should: for God hath given us victory over death it self, through our Lord *Jesus Christ*. The death of *Christ* was the death of death. Death fastning upon him, to whom it was not due, lost it's sting, and so became less able to hurt those that had deserved it. *Christ* hath puld out the sting of death, by dying for sin; so that now, like a Bee, or Snake without a sting, it may buzze about us and affright us, but it cannot hurt us. All the hurt that death
can

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can do to such as believe in the Lord *Jesus*, is to free them out of prison, to put an end to their days of sin, to carry them home, to their fathers house, to let them in to their masters joy, to pull down those mouldring cottages, wherein they dwell, and to build them up to immortality. For if we believe that *Jesus* died and rose again, them also that sleep in *Jesus*, shall God bring with him, and they shall be for ever with the Lord. And of this Happiness the worst kinde of Death, that can befall us, cannot deprive us. A Man may die in
E Po-

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Poverty, he may die with Extreamity of Torments, he may die by common Calamities, and yet he may die in Faith; and so dying, his End shall be Peace: *For blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit, &c. Rev. 14. 13.* So that if we did but throughly understand the Nature of Death, and what it is to the People of God, we should be so far from being afraid of it, that with Saint Paul, we should rather desire to be dissolved, because then we should be with Christ, which is the best of all.

To shut up this Point,
and

of cordial Comforts. 95

and so likewise the whole matter concerning Afflictions, this let me adde to all the rest, That if we do desire to get Good by these Meditations, and to be upheld with Comfort in the time of Trouble, we must *Continue instant in Prayer.* This is that Receipt, which the Holy Ghost prescribes to all sorts of Persons, against all manner of Grievances whatsoever: *James 5. 23.* This is that Remedy that is alwayes at Hand, and never out of Season. Yea, This is that Messenger, which being dispatched aright, was never sent em-

E 2 pry

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pty away. Believe it, If a Man were in a case more desperate then Death, in a place worse then Hell, yet if there he could pray heartily, he should finde Comfort and Strength, even beyond Hope: for our Prayers use to be with the utmost of our Hopes, if not beyond them; and yet God doth use to be better to us then our Prayers.

The sixteenth Question.

I See now that there is matter enough of solid Comfort in the Word of God. But the uncerthenness of my walking makes me to doubt, that

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of cordial Comforts. 97

I have no Part nor Portion in those precious Promises, which God hath made unto his People.

Answer.

Promises I confess that are misapplied, can afford to the Soul no solid Comfort. But from our Failings we may not presently conclude, That they do not at all belong to us: for God looks upon the Heart; and, where Ability is wanting, the Will is accepted.

Are not your Failings your Grief? are they not besides your Will? are they

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not contrary to the current of your Desires, and the main bent of your Resolutions and Endeavours? is it not your Endeavour to do the Will of God, though it cost you the parting with the sweetest Sins, even your own Iniquity? and is it not your Resolution, that you will not wickedly Depart from God? if it be so, then notwithstanding your Failings, you may say with *David*, *I have kept thy word*: for though this be not such a measure of keeping as the law requireth, yet it is such a keeping as God accepteth: for he accounteth such as keep themselves from wil-

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wilful sins, upright and innocent, through *Christ* their strength and their Redeemer, as appears by that passage, *Psal. 19. 13.*

And this is a true rule, whereby to proceed in the judging of our selves. If a man, that believes in *Christ* continues in an unknown sin, that cannot hinder the uprightness of his heart, so the ignorance be not wilful; but the least touch of knowledge or wilfulness mars sincerity. So that if our failings be not wilful, though they be many, yet they cannot hinder our interest in the promises of God.

And what can we now object

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jest more? Do we doubt the truth of all these promises? surely we need not: for God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he spoken, and shall he not do it? hath he said, and shall it not come to pass? was he ever yet worse then his words? and have not we had experience of his love, as well upon our selves as others? is he not the faithful and true witness, and a God that is most zealous of his own glory? why then are we disquieted? and why are our hearts dejected within us? still trust in God, make straight steps to your feet: pray for faith
in

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in the promises, and stir up your self to take hold of God, tarry the Lords leasure, and fear not; light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for such as be upright in heart; it may lie buried in the ground out of sight for a season, it may be somewhat long in coming up, and very unlikely to come to any perfection: nevertheless, in *due season* we shall reape, if we faine not. And therefore cast not away your confidence. For the worst is past, the good is begun, the best is at hand: lift up therefore the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees; and run with
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102 *A little handful*

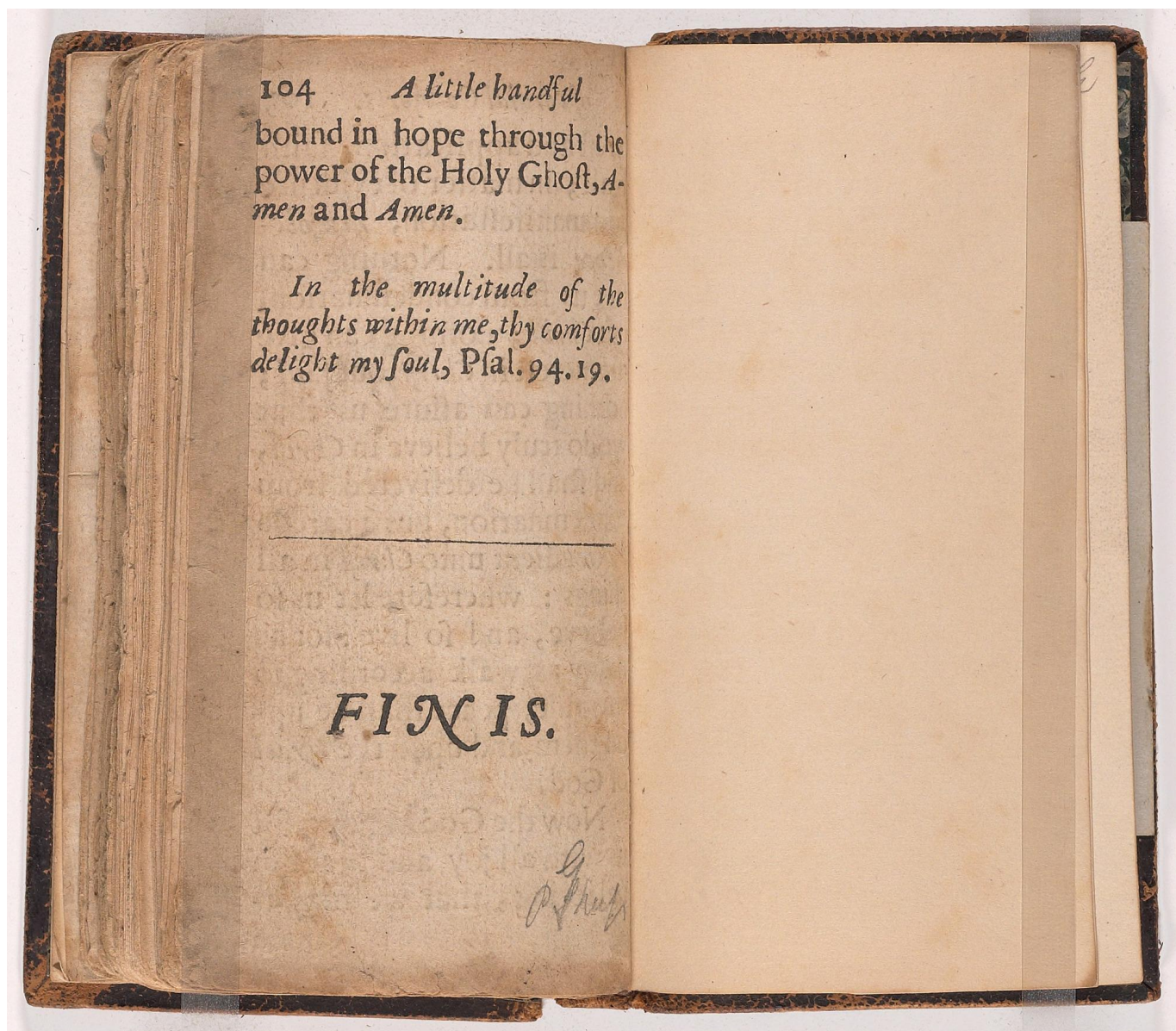
patience the race set before us; and being partakers of such precious promises, let us think upon them, believe in them, and live in them: and in so doing, we shall rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Hear the the sum of all. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. 8. 1. There is no condemnation, & there's our comfort: the ground hereof, is Christ; the way unto it, is by faith to be in him; the evidence of it, is to walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. In the matter of merit, Christ is all; in matter of interest*

of cordial Comforts. 103

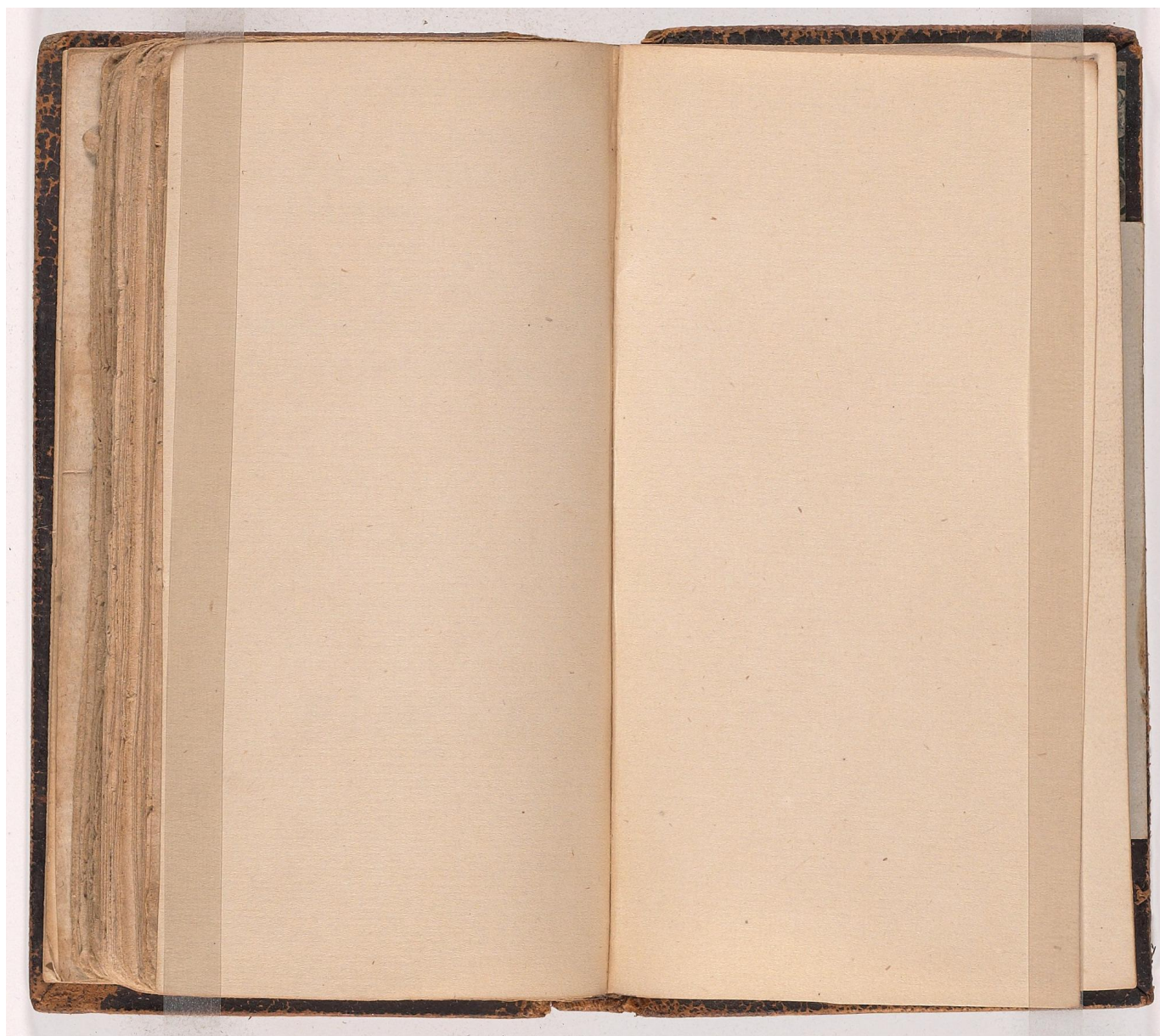
interest and application, faith is all; in matter of evidence and manifestation, *new obedience* is all. Nothing can free us from condemnation, but *Christ*; nothing can give us interest in *Christ*, but *faith*; nothing can assure us that we do truly believe in *Christ*, and shall be delivered from condemnation, but a care to be obedient unto *Christ* in all things: wherefore let us so believe, and so live: for as many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be upon them, and upon the *Israel* of God.

Now the God of hope, fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound



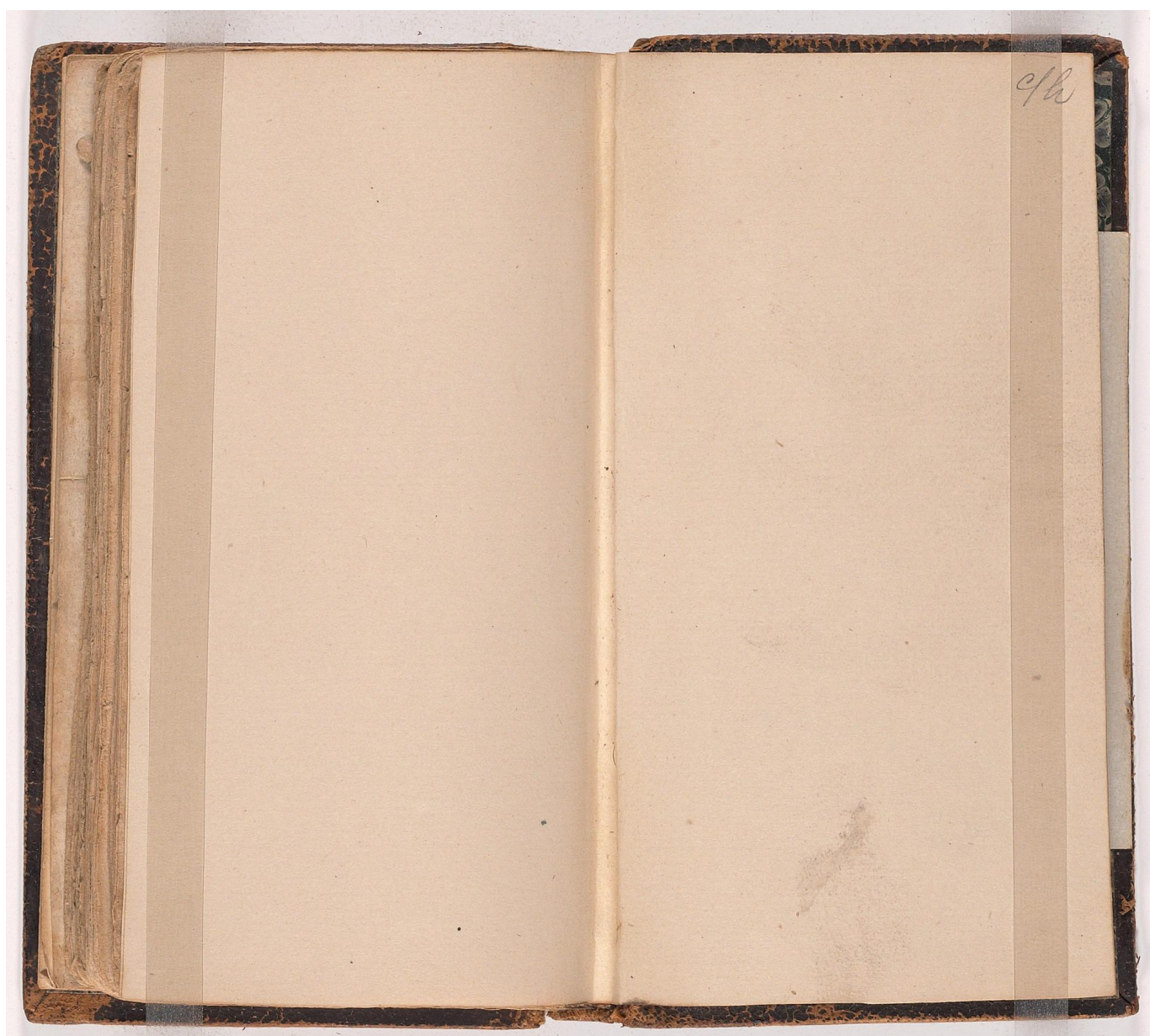
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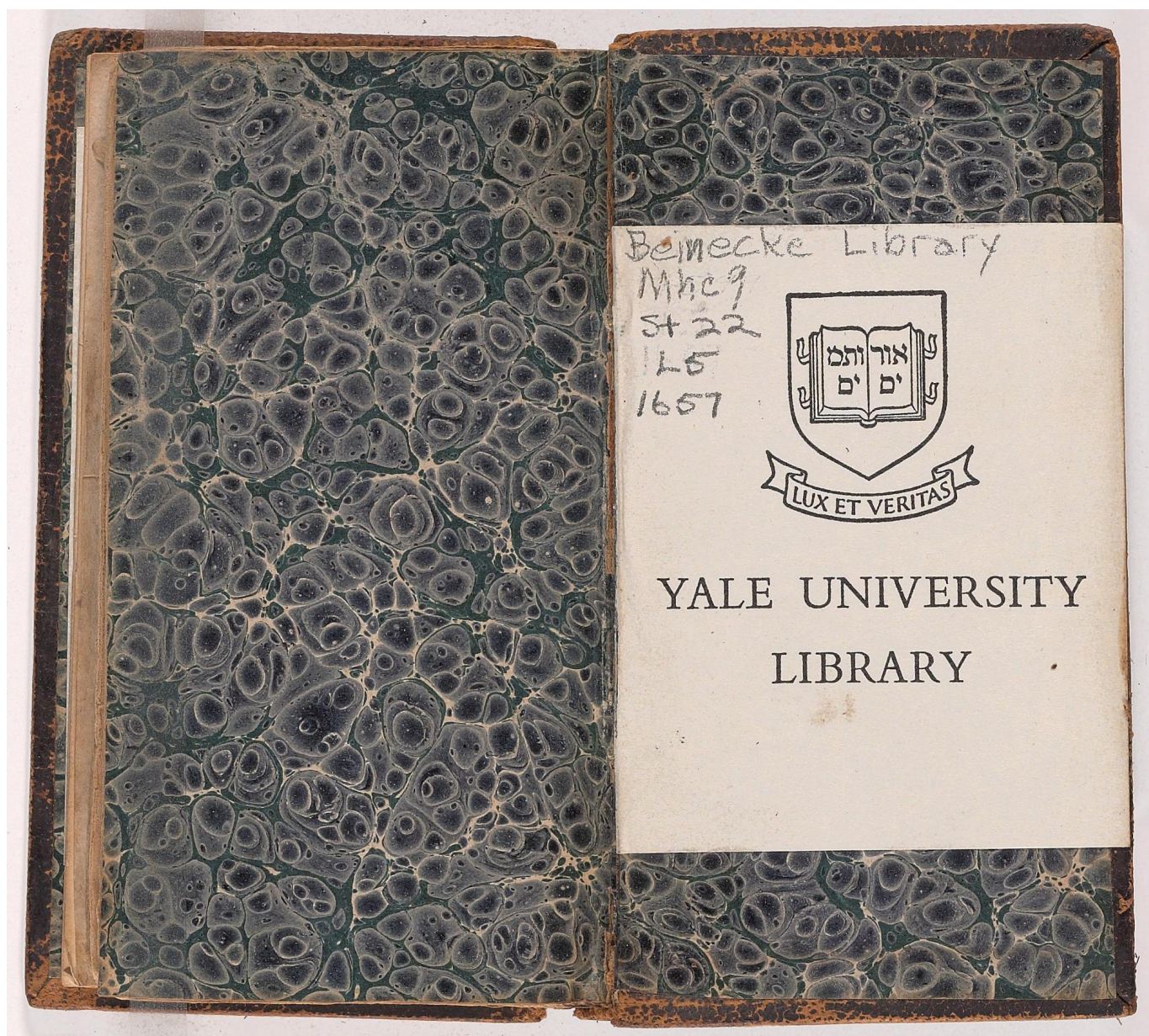
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