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THE

Afflicted Man's Companion:

OR A

DIRECTORY

FOR

PERSONS AND FAMILIES

AFFLICTED WITH

Sickness, or any other Distress.

WITH

DIRECTIONS TO THE SICK,

Both under and after Affliction.

ALSO,

DIRECTIONS to the Friends of the SICK, and others who visit them. And likewise to ALL, how to prepare both for SICKNESS and DEATH; and how to be exercised at the time of Dying.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A Collection of Comfortable Texts of Scripture, very suitable for Dying Believers. The Choice Sayings of many eminent Dying Saints. The Author's Last Advice to his Wife and Children: And his Dying Words, written by himself, and found among his papers after his death.

By the Rev. Mr. JOHN WILLISON,

Late Minister of the Gospel in Dundee,

VERY NECESSARY FOR ALL FAMILIES.

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TO THE READER.

THE ſubject of this Book, however melancholy it may appear to ſome, yet it is neceſſary unto all; ſeeing the word of God, and our own experience do aſſure us, that "man who is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble," and that he is born to trouble, as the ſparks fly upward." Nay, God's deareſt children are not exempted from this common fate. We ſee what is the character God giveth his church, Iſa. liv. 11. "O thou afflicted, and toſſed with tempeſt, and not comforted!"

If in this world then we muſt look for tribulation, it is highly neceſſary for every man to ſeek direction how to provide for it, and behave under it, ſo as he may glorify God, edify others, and attain to eternal happineſs at laſt. The tribulations we have to look for here are manifold; but among thoſe that are outward, I know none about which men ought to be more thoughtful and concerned, than bodily ſickneſs, that uſual harbinger of death, and which uſhers the way to judgment.

This is a ſubject not much handled in public ſermons, which are delivered only to them that are in health, the ſick being incapable to attend them. Wherefore it ſeems the more neceſſary to handle it in writing, that ſo the afflicted may have a book in their houſes, and at their bed ſides, as a monitor to preach to them in private, when they are reſtrained from hearing ſermons in public.

And though ſometimes miniſter's ſermons may be very ſuitable to the caſe of the ſick and afflicted? yet alas! the moſt part are careleſs and forgetful hearers of theſe things while they are in health and proſperity, are reckoning the evil day at ſome diſtance from them. A book then, ſuch as the following directory, being with them in time of ſickneſs and affliction, may by the divine bleſſing, be uſeful to bring to their remembrance the counſels and admonitions which they very much neglected in the time of their health.

Again, miniſters of the goſpel though never ſo much inclined to attend the ſick, yet by reaſon of diſability

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and multiplicity of other work, cannot be always with them, to direct, resolve, and comfort them. But such book as this they may have still at hand to consult with.

And in regard the afflicted, for the most part, are out of case to read for themselves, it would be a most charitable work for friends or neighbours that attend them, to lay hold on proper seasons for reading such a book as this in their hearing, and especially such chapters or directions as they judge most suitable for them. That you might be helped in some measure to exoner your consciences, and do your last offices of kindness to your sick and dying friends, when you can serve them no longer in this world.

I might have brought in and handled some controversies (had I been fond of them) in the ensuing treatise, about the administration of the Lord's supper to the sick, and about extreme unction, which some also begin to plead for, and thence have taken occasion to touch at some other new usages, such as the middle state, prayers for the dead, and other popish errors, that some (called Protestants) would have revived and introduced among us. But I have industriously shunned what is controversial, and kept close to what is practical, and owned by all true Christians.

For preventing the growth of these, and other errors, (from which this nation hath been much longer free than others,) I wish all ranks among us would closely observe the sacred rule of faith, God's word, and remember the solemn and national engagements we of this land are under, to maintain the pure truths of God therein contained, in opposition to all sorts of error, whether Popish, Palagian, Arian, Antinomian, &c. And may we ever abhor the doctrine that would teach us to break these bands asunder.

Have we not ground, this day, to suspect that Satan is carrying on a deep and subtle plot for shaking our covenanted reformation, and weakening a Protestant interest? when, upon the other hand, some are beginning openly to advance and propagate the old abjured Popish doctrines, which our reformers did throw out, and with

axes and hammers would go at once to cut down all our carved work: and at the same time, on the other hand, some would be at the breaking down the excellent fence, of our reformation, *viz.* our covenants, confessions, the magistrates power, *&c.* For this end, papers are spread and positions advanced, impugning the warrantableness of our national covenants and confessions, and the obligation thereof; reflecting also upon our worthy reformers and ancestors, as unenlightened, who framed and took them, or died adhearing thereunto; and also denying the magistrate's power *circa sacra*, (for the support of truth, and suppressing of heresies,) acknowledged by the word of God, and our confession of faith; and all this, forsooth, to make way for a toleration of all errors and sects among us: though they cannot but know, that tolerating of false religions is expresly ranked among the sins forbidden in the second commandment, according to the exposition of our larger Catechism; and is also condemnned by the xxiiid chapter of our confession: in both which we may see the clear scripture texts, cited by the assembly, for refuting and condemning any such toleration. Ah! what joy may all this cause at Rome, therefore tell it not in Gath. &c.

As the Lord did signally countenance our reformers practice, in entering into solemn and national covenants with God, and among themselves, for religion and reformation by the pouring out of his spirit from on high, for bringing in of many souls to himself, and for overturning idolatry and superstition, and advancing reformation to a great pitch, in spite of all the enemies and difficulties that were in the way; so their practice of national covenanting, even under the New Testament dispensation, is sufficiently warranted both by the light of nature and the word of God, and that in both Testaments. And this will appear, if we consider the scripture-precedents, together with the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament relating to gospel-times, and compare them with the New; and especially those which foretel the unchurching of the jewish nation, and the ingrafting of the Gentile nations in their room; and that thereupon

the national church-ſtate and privileges of the Jews, were to be transferred to Chriſtian nations, and particularly this of being nationally in covenant with God. Which prophecies are to have their ſpecial and full accompliſhment at Babylon's downfall. For illuſtrating theſe points, and applying the ſcripture-texts relative thereto, I might expatiate in ſeveral ſheets of paper, if it were proper here. I ſhall only at this time cite ſome of the texts that may be well improven to the foreſaid purpoſes; which the reader may turn to and conſider at his leiſure, ſuch as Iſa. xix. 18, 21, 23, 24, 25. Iſa. xlv. 23. Jer. l. 4, 5. The lx. lxi. and lxii. chapters of Iſaiah throughout. Iſa. lv. 3, 4, 5. Micah iv. 1, 2. Zech. ii. 21, 22, 23. Rev, ii. 15. Rom. xi. 17, 19. Rom. x. 12, 19. Matth. iii. 5, 6. Acts viii. 6, 12. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Matth. xxi. 43. Rom. ix. 24, 25, 26, compared with Hoſ. i. 9, 10, 11. Hoſ ii. 23. Likewiſe I might cite ſeveral prophecies with reſpect to the iſlands, and utmoſt ends of the earth, which were peopled by Japhet, that have a very peculiar and favourable aſpect to this covenanted land.

Beſides all which, it is evident from the firſt and great command of the law, which is directed to Iſrael as a nation, and obligatory under the New Teſtament as well as the Old, that it is a moral duty univerſally and perpetually binding upon nations and ſocieties, as well as ſingle perſons, to chuſe, acknowledge and avouch the Lord to be their God to walk in his ways, and to keep his ſtatutes. This is required in the firſt commandment, according to the expoſition of our Larger Catechiſm, and is there confirmed by theſe texts, that warrant and exemplify the practice of national covenanting, ſuch as Deut. xxvi. 16, 17. Joſh. xxiv. 22. In ſuch a national way did our fathers of old acknowledge and avouch the Lord to be their God, and devote themſelves and their poſterity to the Lord. And bleſſed be the Lord our God, who did many ways declare himſelf to be well pleaſed with the bargain, and eſpecially by filling the temple with his glory.

As the prophets and godly Jews were at great pains

to convey to posterity historical accounts of the wonderful deliverances God wrought for Israel at the Red-sea, and in rescuing them from Egypt, Babylon, and other enemies; so it would be useful to fortify our reformation, if we were careful to hand down to the rising generation a sense of God's distinguishing mercies to this land, in delivering us from spiritual Babylon, and in rescuing us from time to time from these captains that have sought to lead us back thither. Many a time hath he delivered us, when we have been brought very low.

By many instances it hath appeared, that the glorious Jehovah hath not been ashamed to own his covenant-relation to this sinful and unworthy land. God forbid that we of this age should be ashamed to own our covenant relation to him. This hath been both our glory and our safety; and I hope, there will still be found a remnant to own it, and plead it with God in time of danger. Surely, it is not time now to disclaim it, when the enemies of our Zion are combining together, and seeking to raze her to the foundation. Let all her lovers cry mightily to her covenanted Lord, in her behalf, in these shaking times: Let them join to put up that prayer of the Psalmist, Psal. lxviii. 28. "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us;" and that of Habakkuk, Hab. iii. 2. "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years." May 27, 1727.

N. B. The foresaid digression in the preface to the first edition, was occasioned by the broaching of some Sectarian notions, which introduced great reelings and shakings in this corner, and other parts of the church; since which time, alas! she hath enjoyed little peace within her walls, or posterity within her palaces; but instead thereof, she hath been tossed with tempests and troubles of various kinds, whereby the children of Zion have been brought and still lie under great distress and affliction.

The first impression of this book being disposed of, and a second called for, I have more readily consented to it, at this time of general calamity and distress, seeing the book is intended as a directory to Christians under afflic-

tion, whatever ſort it be. It cannot but be obvious to every ſerious obſerver, that the Lord's judgments are in the earth at this day, and that the inhabitants of this land are generally viſited with calamities of divers kinds, both ſpiritual and temporal; which makes a Directory how to manage and carry under them the more ſeaſonable and neceſſary.

Ah! the Lord's hand is viſibly lifted up againſt us at this day, and hath been for ſome years paſt, in ſhutting up the church's womb, blaſting goſpel ordinances, and withdrawing his Spirit from the aſſemblies of his people, and from our judicatories. The flood-gate is opened for error, infidelity, and looſeneſs, to overſpread the land; ſo that the goſpel of Chriſt, the holy ſcriptures, and all revealed religion, are contemned and ridiculed by many. "The angel of the Lord hath divided us both in church and ſtate, and hath mingled a perverſe ſpirit within us;" yea, hath made ſuch woeful breaches amongſt godly miniſters and chriſtians, who are aiming at the ſame things, that no balm can be found for healing them. There is a way opened for a carnal ſelf-ſeeking miniſtry to get into the vineyard, when faithful labourers are thruſt out, and godly preachers and ſtudents are diſcouraged from entering in. Not a few chriſtian congregations, who lately were harmonious and united in partaking of goſpel ordinances, are now ſo miſerably rent and ſcattered, through mournful intruſions, and dividing courſes, that they cannot worſhip God together; and many of them are wandering like ſheep having no ſhepherd, expoſed to beaſts of prey, and liable to periſh in a ſtate of ignorance or negligence.

Likewiſe, the Lord's hand is remarkably lifted up againſt us, in the variety of temporal judgments and calamities brought upon us within a very ſhort time paſt. Sometimes the Lord ſends forth his ſtormy winds with extraordinary violence, ſo as to carry terror and deſtruction along with them, both by ſea and land, and even threaten to bury us in the ruins of our houſes. Sometimes he ſends ſuch long continued rains in time of harveſt, as threatens to deſtroy the whole crop before our

eyes. Sometimes ſuch extraordinary ſtorms of froſt and ſnow, as to bind up the waters and mills, that food cannot be prepared for us, and we are ready to famiſh in midſt of plenty. Sometimes he ſends ſuch deſtructive ſtorms of lightening and thunder from heaven, and kindles ſuch fires on earth, that whole cities, with their inhabitants, are like to be conſumed therewith. Upon our neighbouring countries dreadful inundations have been ſent of late, for deſtroying the inhabitants with their cattle and effects. Again, God hath viſited us with long continued drought, cold, and unnatural ſtorms in the ſpring, and ſometimes with froſt in midſt of ſummer, which have brought on extraordinary ſcarcity and dearth of victual; ſo that there are great diſorders committed in the land by riots and tumults for want of food to ſuſtain them. In the mean time we are engaged in war with cruel enemies, who ſeize our ſhips, carry our countrymen captive, throw them into dungeons and noiſome priſons, where they uſe them barbarouſly; yea, much of their blood is ſhed and many valuable lives are loſt in our defence. And beſides our other calamities, we ſuffer greatly through decay of trade and merchandiſe, and penury of money; in many places merchants, tradeſmen and artificers want buſineſs; there is no work nor hire for labourers, and for thoſe who would uſe honeſt induſtry for bread, whether men or women; ſo that want "is come upon us as one that travelleth, and poverty like an armed man;" and many are reduced to extreme miſery, and ſtarving circumſtances for lack of bread.

By all which proceedings it appears that God hath a peculiar controverſy with Scotland, and threatens to puniſh her remarkably for her heinous ſins and provocations. The Lord's hand hath been long lifted up againſt us, and now it is higher lifted up than ever; and the higher it is lifted up, the blow is like to be ſeverer when given. He hath ſent many leſſer ſtrokes and judgments upon us, as forerunners and warnings of greater, which he hath ſtill in reſerve for us, if we repent not; for his magazine is far from being exhauſted. As there are many cauſes for theſe calamities of ours, ſo I think there is a principal

one mentioned, Matth. xxiv. 12. "Iniquity doth abound, and the love of many is waxed cold." Infidelity, immorality, and contempt of the gospel, are come to a prodigious height; our hearts are become cold and frozen to Christ and his interest, to his people and holy laws; for which cause God is provoked to send such judicial cold and frosts upon our land, and the fruits of the earth, so as to mar and diminish our crops, and reduce both men and beasts to the greatest straits.—And yet so great is our impenitency and perverseness, that we will not see the Lord's hand, nor be reformed by all these judgments.

It might be well expected when the Lord's judgments are so visibly in the earth, that not only his people by profession, but even the inhabitants of the world would learn righteousness, according to Isa. xxvi. 9. But alas! so perverse are we in walking contrary to God, that neither the inhabitants of the world, nor those who profess to be separated from the world, will alter their course nor learn righteousness; nay, instead of that, many are learning still more wickedness. "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Alas! hath he not been provoked to say concerning us, as he did concerning his ancient people, Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. "If ye will not be reformed by these things, but will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins." And likwise to say unto us, as unto them, "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; and when ye fast and make many prayers, I will not hear; but I will consume you with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence," as in Isa. i. 15. Jer. xiv. 12.

The sword, famine, and pestilence, are God's three mortal arrows, which he commonly threatens to shoot against impenitent and incorrigible offenders. Two of these are already shot against us: the sword is drawn, and much of our countrymen's blood is already shed; and what further streams of it may flow before it be put up in its sheath, God only knows. The evil arrow of sa-

mine (as God calls it, Ezek. v. 16.) is let fly againſt us at the ſame time, and famine is the arrow which is the foreſt of the three. When it was put to David's choice which of the three he would be the butt of, he would not chooſe famine. The prophet Joel doth bewail and deprecate this judgment in the moſt pathetic manner, and calls the whole land to faſting and prayer, for removing it, Joel i. 10, 14. And we ſee, when God is moſt angry, and threatens to ſpend his arrows upon a guilty people, he begins with the arrow of famine, as the foreſt, as in Deut. xxxii. 23, 24. "I will ſpend mine arrows upon them; they ſhall be burnt with hunger." And we ſee what the Spirit of God ſaith of thoſe who die by this arrow, Lam. iv. 9. "They that be ſlain with the ſword are better than they that be ſlain with hunger; for theſe pine away, ſtricken through for want of the fruits of the field;" and therefore their death is moſt lingering and miſerable. Likewiſe famine uſeth to bring on the moſt noiſome and mortal diſeaſes, and frequently the peſtilence doth follow upon the back of famine. Is it not high time then, for our land to take the alarm, when God begins to ſhoot his evil arrows? When the lion roars it becomes us to fear, yea to humble ourſelves in the duſt, and mourn for our iniquities, which kindle the fire of his wrath.

Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, from whom we have deeply revolted: and particularly, let us mourn for and turn from theſe ſins which the word of God points out as bringing on famine: ſuch as, 1. Aſcribing our earthly comforts and bleſſings to other things than God, the true author. This ſin we find threatened with ſcarcity and famine, Jer. xliv. 17, 26, 27. Hoſ. ii. 5, 9. 2. Perverting of plenty to luxury and prodigality, ſenſuality and exceſs, revellings and dancings, balls and aſſemblies. We ſee how theſe are threatened, Iſa. v. 11, 12, 13. Amos vi. 4, 6, 7. 3. Rejecting the bread of life, and deſpiſing the food of our ſouls. God uſeth to puniſh men for this ſin, by depriving them of bread for their bodies, Jer. xi. 21, 22.—4. Men's minding their own things more than the things

of God; and neglecting to build his houſe, and put reſpect upon his ordinances. Upon ſuch accounts God brings on ſcarcity and famine, Hag. i. 9, 10, 11. 5. Covenant-breaking and dealing cruelly with the poor, or with ſtrangers that live among us; it is for theſe ſins that God ſent the three years famine upon the land of Iſrael, 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

Moreover, let us look upon all theſe temporal ſtorms ann calamities which are come, or coming upon the land, as warnings to prepare for a more awful ſtorm that we muſt all meet with, namely, the ſtorm of death and judgment; let us ſtand habitually prepared for that ſtorm, and then other ſtorms will not ſo much affect us. If it be aſked, What we ſhall do to be ſafe in the time of that trying ſtorm? the anſwer is, Let us ſee that we be among the broken in heart, or ſincere penitents, who are heartily grieved for all known ſins; that we be true believers in Chriſt, who truſt in nothing but his righteouſneſs and merits for juſtification and ſalvation, that we be born again and made new creatures by a ſaving change both in heart and life; that it be our great buſineſs to clear up our evidences of peace with God through Chriſt, and our title to the manſions which he hath purchaſed by his blood. O that God's judgments when they are in the earth, were means to awaken us to flee from the wrath to come, to Chriſt our refuge! When the floods of great waters are ſwelling up to the brim, our only ſafety is to ſecure a hiding-place in Chriſt's wounds.

Let us follow the example of Noah, who when he ſaw the flood coming, took warning, and prepared an ark for ſaving himſelf and his houſhould, Heb xi. 7. Let us even imitate the Egyptians that feared the Lord; they, when warned of the dreadful ſtorm of hail that was coming on the land, made their ſervants and cattle to flee into the houſes, Exod. ix. 20. God hath in mercy provided chambers for his people to hide themſelves in, when ſtorms are coming, even the chambers of his attributes and promiſes, and the chambers of Chriſt's wounds and interceſſion; in theſe only can we find ſafety: let us

then enter into them by faith, when he invites us, Isa. xxvi.20,21.

Seeing, in these evil days, we have so many harbingers and forerunners of death before our eyes, it will be highly our wisdom to keep ourselves still in a waiting posture, always ready and willing to die. What is there in this weary land to tempt us to desire to abide in it? Is it not a land overwhelmed with sin and sorrow? O believers, are you tossed with tempests here? Seek the wings of a dove, that you may flee away, and be at rest. Be habitually desiring to depart, that you may be with Christ. Surely for you to die is gain, yea, infinite gain! What are the imaginary pleasures of this world to the real happiness of the next? Though the struggles of death be grievous to nature, yet the gain of dying should reconcile you to it. You do not stick at the trouble of putting off your clothes at night, to gain a little rest to your bodies; and why should you stick at unclothing yourselves of the garment of flesh at God's call, to gain everlasting rest to your souls, and the fruition of Christ's glorious presence forever? Let the thoughts of this gain put you upon using all means to get your hearts weaned from the love of the world, and its comforts. Keep the mantle of earthly enjoyments hanging loose about you, especially in these calamitous times, that so it may be easily dropt when death comes to carry you to the eternal world. O for more of the lively faith of that world, and of him that is the Lord and purchaser of it! But seeing this subject is more largely insisted on in the book itself, I shall add no more here upon it. Only I shall subjoin a collection of some sweet and comfortable texts of scripture, very proper for dying believers to meditate and feed on by faith, to grip to and plead with God, and suck consolation from, when they have a near prospect of going through the dark valley, and entering into the unknown regions of eternity. God's word will then be our hope.

Comfortable Texts for Dying Believers.

COME unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt, Matth. xi. 28.—Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out, John vi. 37.

In my father's houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo, John xiv. 2, 3.

Becauſe I live ye ſhall live alſo, John xiv. 19.

Chriſt ſaith, "Surely I come quickly." anſw. "Amen. Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus." Rev. xxii. 20.

There remaineth a reſt to the people of God. Heb. iv. 9.

I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord, Gen. xlix. 18.

Lord now letteſt thou thy ſervent depart in peace. For mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, Luke ii. 29, 30.

He is the rock, and his work is perfect, Deut. xxxii. 4.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me, Pſal. cxxxviii. 8.

Being confident—that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt, Philip. i. 6.

I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another; though my reins be conſumed within me, Job, xix. 25, 26, 27.

Although my houſe be not ſo with God; yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure; for this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, Pſal. xxiii 4.

Into thine hand I commit my ſpirit: thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth, Pſal. xxxi. 5.

For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death, Pſal. xlviii. 14.

Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth: but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Pſal. lxxiii. 24, 25, 26.

The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe, Pſal. li. 17.

O that I had wings liks a dove! for then would I fly away and be at reſt. I would haſten my eſcape from the windy ſtorm and tempeſt, Pſal. lv. 6, 8.

Though ye have lien among the pots, yet ſhall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold, Pſal. lxviii. 13.

The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his ſon cleanſeth us from all ſin, 1 John i. 7.

Having boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, Heb. x. 19.

He hath ſaid I will never leave thee nor forſake thee. Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, to-day and forever.—Heb. xiii. 5, 8.

He retaineth not his anger forever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy, Micah vii. 18.

Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him, Job xiii. 15.

In his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt, Matth. xii. 21.

Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him, Pſal. ii. 12.

He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are duſt, Pſal. ciii. 14.

I lothe it, I would not live alway, Job vii. 16.

We know that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord, 2 Cor, v. 1. 8.

For me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain. Having

a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better, Philip. i. 21 23.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee, Psalm xxxix. 7.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Until the day break, and shadows flee away. Make haste my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or a young hart on the mountains of spices, Cant. ii. 6, 16, 17, and iv. 16. and viii. 14.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.

The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

The day of death is better than the day of one's birth, Eccles. vii. 1.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away, Rev. xxi. 4.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief, 1 Tim. i. 15.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited

and redeemed his people, and hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us in the houſe of his ſervant David, Luke i. 68, 69.

Them which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him. Then ſhall we be caught up together with him in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14, 17.

Unto him that loved us and waſhed us from our ſins, in his own blood, &c. Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power and glory, Rev. i. 5. and 5. 12.

We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren, 1 John, iii. 14.

I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, Romans viii. 38, 39.

I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day, 2 Tim. i. 12.

I count all things but loſs and dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, &c. Phil. iii. 8, 9.

Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30.

We rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh, Phil. iii. 3.

Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, Col. i. 12.

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye ſhall ſee him. Amen. Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, Rev. i. 7. and xxii. 20.

Dundee, 5th June, 1741.

Some of the Author's Dying Ejaculations, as they were written by himself a few days before he died, and left with his Bible lying on his pillow, the — day of May, 1750.

O LET me sleep in Jesus!

I would not live always in this evil world, that has little in it tempting, and seems still to grow worse, and where the torrent of sin and backsliding seems to grow stronger.

I would desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better than to be here. I am willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee: for though my heart, strength, and flesh fail; yet the Lord will be the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

Now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee; I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.

O for Simeon's frame, to be saying, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

When Christ says, "Surely I come quickly;" may my soul answer, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

I am living on the righteousness of Christ, yea, dying in the Lord. Even so, come. I am detained here upon the shore, waiting for a fair wind to carry me over this Jordon. I have waited, and will wait for thy salvation, O Lord. The Lord is a Rock, and his work is perfect: Lord perfect what concerneth me.

O that I could say with Paul, "The time of my departure is at hand. I have kept the faith, I have fought the good fight, I have run my race, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Lord will give me at his coming."

I am vile and polluted, O how shall I be cleansed!—But that is a comfortable promise, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." And so is that, "Though ye have lain among the pots, ye shall be as

doves, whose wings are covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold."

I resolve to obey, to submit to the Lord's will, to die like Moses and Aaron, the one at Mount Hor, the other at Mount Abarim. They went up, and died there at the command of the Lord.

O that when my flesh and strength fail, God may be the strength of my heart and my portion forever! When now the keepers of the house do tremble, O that God may be the keeper! when the grinders cease, because they are few, O that God would feed my soul with manna, that will need none of these implements! when the daughters of music are brought low, O to be fitted for the heavenly music! when the lookers out at the windows are darkened, O that my soul may be enlightened to see Jesus my Redeemer.

Lord, help the unbelief and infidelity of my heart; and help to more of the faith of a risen Jesus, and ascended Redeemer. O let me believe and feel the sweetness of that word of Christ, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

O how shall such an unholy creature as I presume into such a pure and holy place! But the apostle has taught us, we may have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus.

O that when the time of my last combat comes with my last enemy death, I may be helped above all to take the shield of faith, whereby I may be relieved from the sting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

O that I may be helped to adore the sovereignty of God, kiss his rod, and humbly submit to it. Save me from both extremes; let me never despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him.

Now the prince of darkness will study to raise tempests of temptation, to shipwreck the poor weather-beaten vessel of my soul, when it would enter into the harbour of rest above; may Christ come to be pilot, steer the helm, and it shall be safe.

O for more faith! may my faith ripen to a full assu-

rance, that I may go off the ſtage rejoicing, and that an abundant entrance may be miniſtered to me into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

O for more faith, that I may die like Simeon, when he had Chriſt in his arms, ſaying, "Now let thy ſervant depart in peace, mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation."

Lord, one ſmile of thy countenance would baniſh away all my doubts and fears, and make me ſing in pains.

Is my Redeemer gone to prepare a place for us? why ſhould I be ſo ſlothful to follow his ſteps, when he is ſaying come up hither; come up, dwell here; come up, reign here; come up, ſing here.

O Lord, deliver my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. O ſave me from the horrible pit, draw me from out of the miry clay, ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings, and put a new ſong in my mouth.

O give grace to ſtrive by faith and prayer to enter in at the ſtrait gate. Lord, thou haſt bid me knock, and it ſhall be opened; aſk, and ye ſhall receive: ſeek, and ye ſhall find. Lord, I knock, open unto me; Lord, I would be in, I muſt be in; let me but in over the threſhold; let me in within ſight of my Redeemer's face, within ſight of the ſmiles of his countenance; let me within hearing of the ſongs of the Redeemed; let me get to the outſide of that praiſing company; I will be well enough if I get in.

Lord in I muſt be, out I cannot ſtay; O ſhut me not out with ſwearers, ſabbath-breakers, and profane perſons. Lord, I never chuſed their company while in this world; Lord, do not gather my ſoul with ſinners hereafter.

The redeemed are gathering, and the wicked are gathering, Lord, gather me with thy flock; they are faſt a gathering; the church's head is gone; he has left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends, many of them have arrived where he is; I am yet behind. O how great is the difference betwixt my ſtate and theirs. I am groaning out my complaint, they are ſinging God's praiſe: I am in darkneſs, and cannot ſee

thy face, but they behold thee face to face. O ſhould I be ſatisfied to ſtay behind, when my friends are gone! Shall I wander here in a hungry deſart, when they are triumphing above, and dividing the ſpoil? O help me to look after them with a ſtedfaſt eye, and cry, O Lord, how long?

O heavenly Father, draw me after Jeſus, for none can come to him without thy aid. O Father, draw me up there where he is, and I will mount up as on eagle's wings. O draw me; and when thou ſeemeſt to fly from me, Lord, enable me to follow hard after thee.

O thou who remembereſt the dying thief, when on the way to thy kingdom, O remember me when now ſeated in thy kingdom, and ſay to my ſoul, when I am dying, "This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe."

Lord, I am called to the work I never did, O give me the ſtrength I never had. O ſtrengthen me like Sampſon for this once, when at death, to pull down the ſtrong holds of ſin within me. Lord, waſh away my ſins in the blood of Chriſt, and then my ſoul ſhall not ſink in the ocean of thy wrath.

O what is my life but a vapour! a ſand glaſs of ſixty or ſeventy years! O how faſt does it run down! how ſoon runs it out! Vain, vain is the love of life! O give me grace to overcome the love of life, and the fear of death. O for more patience, and leſs fretting. If the damned had hope of being ſaved from hell after a thouſand years of my pain, how willingly would they endure it? Bleſſed be God, my pains are not hell, their ſtate is not mine.

Lord, draw near to me, and ſave me; my body is full of trouble, and my life draws near to the grave. But Lord, thy loving kindneſs is better than life: O make thy loving kindneſs ſure to me, and I will willingly part with this dying life.

Oh that I could make all the world ſee the beauty of my precious and adorable Saviour.

Nothing but an intereſt in Chriſt can give peace in life, or comfort in death. He is the chief among ten thouſand and altogether lovely. My body is in part

dead, but I know I cannot die eternally while Jesus lives. I must go down to the grave; but what is the grave; it is but a refining pot since my Saviour lay in it, it is but a bed of roses. "He is the rose of Sharon, and lilly of the valley."

It was his free grace that drew me, and made me willing in the day of his power; no desire, no merit in me, it was all free and undeserving.

O let the chastisement of my body be the medicine of my soul, to cure me of sin, and bring me to sincere repentance for it: for Christ was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him.

Lord, remember the chastisement of Christ for sin, and let my pains be the chastisement of a father, and not the wounds of an enemy. Let Christ's sufferings mitigate mine.

I rejoice in the prospect of that glorious inheritance reserved safe. I could not comfortably enter eternity any other way but in and through this God-man mediator; if he was not God as well as man, I could not be supported, but he is God.

Oh, this precious Saviour, he is my all in all; he is my all sufficient good, my portion, and my choice; in him my vast desires are fulfilled, and all my powers rejoice; I am travelling through a wilderness to a city of habitation, whose builder and maker is God.

Oh, delightful thought! that I who was going on in sin, should be plucked as a brand out of the burning Oh, how will they lie on a death bed who have nothing but their own works to fly to! with only this to depend on, I should be the most miserable of all creatures; but the long white robe of my Redeemer's righteousness is all my desire. They are truly blessed, they alone are happy who are enabled to exult in the garment of celestial glory, which never waxeth old, in the illustrious robes of a Saviour's consummate righteousness, which are incorruptible and immortal. This is a robe which hides every sin of thought, word, or deed, that I committed. Oh how unspeakably happy are they, who are justified by this all-

perfect righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and who therein can conſtantly triumph and glory!

Lord, I live upon Chriſt, I live upon his righteouſneſs, I live upon his blood and merits; yea I die alſo leaning wholly upon this bottom. It is not paſt experiences or manifeſtations I depend upon: it is Chriſt a preſent all-ſufficient Saviour, and perfect righteouſneſs in him, I look to. All my attainments are but loſs and dung beſides him.

When I find myſelf polluted, I go to this fountain for cleanſing. Lord, give me delight in approaching to thee; delight to be at a throne of grace. O that I could make my bed there, lie and die there.

The kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force. O for ſtrength to offer a holy violence by faith and prayer.

"Thus the Author died as he lived, teſtifying the power of religion upon himſelf; and that at a time when men have moſt need of its comforts. The foregoing words are tranſcribed from his own manuſcript, now lying in the hands of Mr. Bell, miniſter at Aberbrothock."

WILLIAM BELL.

THE

AFFLICTED MAN's COMPANION.

THE INTRODUCTION.

MAN, when he firſt dropt from his Maker's hands, was a holy and innocent creature, pure from ſin, and conſequently free from ſickneſs and trouble, enjoying uninterrupted health and proſperity both in body and ſoul. But no ſooner was he tainted with ſin, but he became liable to all ſorts of miſeries, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal: his ſoul being the reſidence of ſins and luſts, his body turned the receptacle of ſickneſs and diſeaſes. And ſeeing God's own children have the relicks of ſin and corruption in them, while in this world, they are not to expect exemption from ſuch afflictions; and the infinitely wiſe God ſees meet to make uſe of bodily diſtempers to correct the corruptions, and try the graces of his people, and to promote both their ſpiritual and eternal advantage. Hence it is ſaid of Lazarus, John xi. 3, "Behold, he whom thou loveſt, is ſick." He was beloved, and yet ſick. It is no rare thing for the dearest of God's ſaints to be put to chatter like cranes, and mourn like doves, by reaſon of ſore ſickneſs; as Hezekiah did, Iſa. xxxviii. 14. Sanctified and healthy ſouls may be matched with weak and ſickly bodies, as was Gaius 3 John 2. Notwithſtanding the caſe is ſometimes moſt trying and exerciſing to the beſt of God's people; and they are never more ready to queſtion God's love, or quarrel with his providence, than under heavy ſickneſs and bodily diſtreſs. It is therefore highly the concernment of all, whether families or private perſons, to enquire how they ought to behave under or after afflicting ſickneſs; and how they ſhall provide for ſuch an evil time before it come. And for the help of all that deſire inſtruction in this matter, I have written the following directory; which, for method's ſake, I ſhall divide into ſeveral chapters.

I. I ſhall give ſome general directions to all families and perſons viſited with ſickneſs and affliction.

II. Some particular directions to thoſe who are ſharply afflicted with ſore ſickneſs and long trouble.

III. Directions to the children of God under ſickneſs.

IV. Directions to unregenerate perſons under ſickneſs.

V. Directions to the people of God when recovered from ſickneſs.

VI. Directions to unrenewed perſons recovered from ſickneſs.

VII. Directions to thoſe ſick perſons, who are apparently in a dying condition.

VIII. Directions to the relations, acquaintances and neighbours of the ſick, who are themſelves in health for the time.

N. B. Let it be remembered, that what I ſay to thoſe viſited with ſickneſs, is likewiſe applicable to all other afflicted perſons, whatever their diſtreſs be.

CHAPTER I.

Containing general directions to all families and perſons viſited with ſickness.

DIRECT. 1. *Diligently inquire into the ends and deſigns, for which uſually God ſends ſickneſs and affliction upon perſons.*

AN infinitely holy and gracious God hath various and wiſe ends in afflicting the children of men, whether they be converted or unconverted; which ought to be duly conſidered by all, and eſpecially by thoſe who are viſited with ſickneſs; ſome whereof I ſhall inſtance.

I. God viſits with ſickneſs, to cauſe careleſs ſinners bethink themſelves concerning their ſouls eſtate and condition, who perhaps had never a ſerious thought about it

before. There are many who, when in health and ſtrength, are ſo intent upon the pleaſures and profits of the world, that they mind nothing elſe; all the warnings, exhortations, and counſels of miniſters, teachers and friends, are loſt upon them: They cannot endure to entertain a thought of God, of the ſoul, of death, of heaven, of hell, or of judgment to come; till God doth caſt them into ſome ſickneſs or bodily diſtreſs; and then, ſometimes, they begin with the prodigal, to come to themſelves, and bethink themſelves, concerning their ſouls, and a future life. Now, this is God's deſign, 1 Kings viii. 47. "If they bethink themſelves in the land whither they are carried captives, and repent," &c. By ſickneſs, God gives a man, that before was wholly diverted from ſoul-matters by buſineſs, company, and pleaſures, occaſion to bethink himſelf. The man is now confined to his chamber, is deprived of his former company and diverſions, and ſo gets time and leiſure to commune with his own heart, and reflect on his former ways, and to hear what conſcience ſpeaks concerning a judgment day, and a world to come, and the need of a Saviour. And ſo by the bleſſing of God upon ſuch afflictions, not a few have begun their firſt acquaintance with God and Chriſt, and ſerious religion. Nay, the furnace is Chriſt's uſual work-houſe, where he has formed the moſt excellent veſſels of honour and praiſe, Iſa. xlviii. 10. "I have choſen thee in the furnace of affliction." Manaſſeh, the Prodigal, Paul, and the Jailor, were all choſen there.

II. God viſits us with ſickneſs, in order to inſtruct and teach us theſe things we know not, Pſal. xcvi. 12. It was a ſaying of Luther, Schola crucis eſt ſchola lucis. And indeed the ſchool of affliction is the place where many of Zion's ſcholars have made good proficiency in ſpiritual and experimental knowledge.—Now, there are ſeveral remarkable leſſons which God would teach us by the rod.

1ſt. The knowledge of God. It is ſaid of Manaſſeh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13, "When he was brought to affliction, &c. then Manaſſeh knew that the Lord he was God." Though Manaſſeh was well educated, and early

taught the knowledge of God, yet till now he knew not the **Lord**: But now he knew him in his power and greatness, his holiness and hatred of sin; now he knew God in his goodness of mercy, and wondered that he had kept him so long out of hell.

2dly. Another lesson is the knowledge of ourselves. In time of health and prosperity, we are apt to forget ourselves, and our mortality; but sickness causeth us to know that we are but men, and frail men, Psal. ix. 20, that God hath an absolute sovereignty over us, and can as easily crush us, as we do a moth.

3dly. He teacheth us the emptiness of the world. How vain a help is that, which fails a man in the time of his greatest need! and oft-times we see, that worldly means and friends can neither give the least ease to the bodies, nor comfort to the souls of persons under sickness and distress.

4thly. Another lesson is the great evil of sin, which is the cause of all sicknesses and diseases whatever, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you."—Ah! what a root of bitterness must that be, which brings forth such bitter fruit!

5thly. He sheweth us the preciousness and excellency of Christ and his promises; which only can enable a Christian to rejoice in tribulation, and be easy under the greatest pains and diseases. There are many who are indifferent about Christ in time of health, that when sickness comes, do change their note, and cry, O for an interest in Christ, above all things!

III. God sends such trials and distresses, in order to mortify and kill sin in us. Isa. xxvii. 9. "By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin." And indeed sickness and affliction, through the blessing of God, hath a native tendency to weaken and subdue our prevailing sins and lusts. O man, is thy heart turned hard, so as thou art not sensible of thy own sins, or of others sufferings? God sees meet to try the fire of affliction, to see if it will melt thy frozen heart. Hast thou undervalued health, and slighted thy mercies? Now God removes them from thee, that by the

want of them, thou mayſt know the worth of them. Art thou turned proud and ſelf-conceited? God ſends thee a thorn in the fleſh, to prick the ſwoln bladder of pride, that thou mayſt not be puffed up above meaſure; God lays thee low upon thy bed, that thou mayſt be lowly in thy heart. Doth love to the world prevail in thee? God ſends affliction to diſcover its emptineſs, and wean thee from it, Art thou fallen ſecure, dead, and formal? God ſends affliction to awake thee, that thou mayſt not ſleep the ſleep of death.

IV. God ſends ſickneſs, to awaken in us the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication, and make us more earneſt and importunate in our addreſſes to the throne of Grace. There is a great difference betwixt our prayers in health and in ſickneſs, betwixt our humiliations in proſperity, and in adverſity. In proſperity we pray heavily and drowſily, but adverſity adds wings to our deſires. Iſa. xxvi. 16. *Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chaſtening was upon them.* Though they were backward enough to prayer before, yet they pour it out moſt freely now. The very heathen mariners cried aloud to God in a ſtorm—What a famous prayer did Manaſſeh make when he was under his iron fetters! We find it thrice mentioned, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13, 18, 19. And the voice of fervent prayer is what the Lord deſires to hear.

V. Another end is, to looſe our hearts from the things of this world; and cauſe us to look and long for heaven. When we enjoy health and eaſe in this world, we are apt to ſay with Peter on the mount, *It is good for us to be here*: but when diſtreſs cometh, God's people will turn their tongue, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 27. *It is good for me to draw nigh to God.* When things here go well with us, we are apt to think ourſelves at home: but, when trouble ariſeth, we begin to ſay, "ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt." Though heaven was much out of ſight and out of mind before, yet, when afflicting ſickneſs comes, the poor believer will ſigh, and ſay with David, Pſal. lv. 6. *O that I had wings*

like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest; I would hasten my escape from the windy tempest.

VI. God designs to make the world bitter, and Christ sweet to us. By such afflictions, he lets men see, that the world is nothing but vanity, and vexation of spirit; that riches avail not in the day of wrath: then it is, that they may see the insufficiency of the world to relieve them: that, as one saith, "A velvet slipper cannot cure the gout; a golden cap cannot drive away the head-ache; nor a bed of doun give ease in a fever." And as the world turns bitter, so Christ grows sweet to the believer. In time of ease and health, Christ is often very much neglected and forgot. As the disciples, while the sea was calm suffered Christ to sleep with them in the ship, thinking they might make their voyage well enough without his help; but when they were ready to be drowned, then they see their need of Christ, they awake him, crying, *Master, save us, or else we perish.* So the best of saints, when all is easy about them, are prone to suffer Christ to sleep within them, and so to neglect the lively actings of faith on Christ; but when the storm of affliction begins to arise, and they are ready to be overwhelmed with distress, then they cry, "None but Christ, none but Christ."

VII. God trysts with sickness and distress, in order both to prove and improve his people's graces, Deut. viii. 2. Rev. ii. 10. Grace is hereby both tried and strengthened. 1st. Such afflictions do prove both the truth and strength of our graces, as they serve to try if we love God for himself; if we can endure and hold out in serving him, waiting and depending upon him, notwithstanding of discouragements. That faith will suffice for a little affliction, that will not suffice for a great one. Peter had faith enough to come upon the sea at Christ's call, but as soon as the waves began to swell, his faith began to fail, and his feet to sink, till Christ mercifully caught hold of him, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matth. xiv. 31. Little did Peter think his faith was so weak till now.

2dly. They tend to improve our graces also, by quickening and strengthening them. They serve as a whet-

ſtone to ſharpen faith, ſo as the ſoul is made to renounce earthly ſhelters, and to claſp about God in Chriſt, as its only refuge and portion. They excite to repentance and ſerious mourning for ſin; for, like the winter froſts and ſnows, they make the fallow ground of our heart more tender. They prompt us to heavenly mindedneſs, ſelf-denial, and patient waiting on God. Yea, the experience of God's people can atteſt it, that grace is never more lively, than under affliction. David never found himſelf better, as to his ſpiritual ſtate, than when he was perſecuted and hunted as a partridge on the mountains; and hence ſays, Pſal. cxix. 71. "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted."

VIII. God's aim is, to awaken us to redeem time, to prepare for flitting, and clear up our evidences for heaven. In the time of health we are apt to trifle away time, to loiter in our journey, and forget that we are pilgrims on the earth; wherefore God ſends ſickneſs as his meſſenger, to mind us thereof.

Now it highly concerns us, when ſickneſs attacks us, to conſider and meditate upon theſe ends for which God brings on diſtreſs, and pray earneſtly that they may be accompliſhed in us; and ſo our ſickneſs ſhall not be unto death (ſpiritual or eternal) but to the glory of God and good of our ſouls.

DIRECTION II. *Let all who are viſited with ſickneſs, ſearch for the Achan in the camp, and inquire diligently what is the ground and cauſe of God's controverſy with them.*

IT hath been the practice of God's people in ſcripture-times, to inquire into the cauſe and meaning of God's rods which have been laid upon them. So David, 2 Sam. xxi. when the land of Iſrael was three years under the ſtroke of famine, he inquired into the meaning of it. So Job is exceedingly deſirous to know why God ſet him up as a mark for his arrows, Job vii. 20. and hence it is that he makes that petition, Job x. 2. which is moſt ſuit-

able for every man in diſtreſs, "ſhew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me."

I grant indeed, that God ſometimes viſits his people with affliction, for the trial and exerciſe of their grace, and for their ſpiritual inſtruction, more than for the correction of their ſin. But ſin being the original and foundation of all affliction, it is ſafeſt, when it is our own caſe, and moſt acceptable to God, to look on ſin as the procuring cauſe. Or, if our ſins have not immediately procured the preſent affliction, yet the beſt of God's children muſt own that they have at leaſt deſerved it. We ſee the ſin of the Corinthians is mentioned as the cauſe of their ſickneſs, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you." The Pſalmiſt concludes the very ſame thing, Pſal. cvii. 17, 18. "Fools becauſe of their tranſgreſſions and their iniquities, are afflicted: their ſoul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw nigh unto the gates of death." But ordinarily, by ſickneſs, the Lord points at ſome one ſin in us, more than another, ſome Jonah in the ſhip, that hath raiſed the ſtorm, which the Lord would have us to ſearch out and throw over board without delay.

Queſt. But how ſhall we diſcover and find out the particular ſin for which God afflicts us with ſickneſs and diſtreſs?

Anſ. 1*ſt.* Study the Lord's word, and the chaſtiſements there recorded, which he hath inflicted upon people for their ſins; and inquire if you be guilty of the like. Obſerve what hath been God's mind to his people, and what ſin he hath pointed out to them, when they have been brought under ſuch a rod: and ſo you may learn his mind to you, Rom. xv. 4. "For whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning."

2*dly.* Conſider what is the ſin which conſcience doth moſt of all accuſe thee for, in thy moſt ſerious and ſolitary hours. Conſcience is God's deputy, and thy boſom monitor, whoſe voice, perhaps, thou haſt little regarded in the day of thy health; wherefore God hath ſent a ſharper meſſenger, to ſecond the voice of conſcience. Hear

now the voice of the rod, for it is the ſame with the voice of conſcience. In the day of proſperity, carnal profits and pleaſures made ſuch a noiſe, that the voice of conſcience could not be heard: wherefore God hath brought on thee the ſilent night of adverſity, that his deputy may obtain audience. Well then, give ear; what faith conſcience now? may you not hear it ſaying, as Reuben to his brethren in diſtreſs, "Spake I not to you in the day of health, do not commit ſuch a ſin, and do not delay repenting for ſuch a ſin; but you would not hear?" O man, let conſcience get a hearing at laſt, as it got with the patriarchs, when they were brought to diſtreſs in Egypt, and made them to confeſs their ſin in ſelling of Joſeph, Gen. xlii. 21. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us."

3*dly.* Conſider what are theſe evils, that others have obſerved in you, whether they be friends or foes. Hearken to what a chriſtian friend noticeth in you, either when ſpeaking to you, or others about you. "Let the righteous ſmite me (ſaith David) and it ſhall be a kindneſs." Yea do not diſregard what even enemies ſay of you; as David got good by the malicious reproaches of Shimei, in the day of his affliction, ſo may you in the time of diſtreſs; for ſometimes malice itſelf will ſpeak truth. Enemies are ſharp-ſighted to ſpy out our faults, and ſo may, through the divine bleſſing, prove monitors to us, both with reſpect to ſin and duty.

4*thly.* Conſider the nature and circumſtances of thy diſtreſs. Oft-times the affliction is ſo ſuitable to the tranſgreſſion, that we may clearly read our ſin written on the forehead of our puniſhment, as in the caſe of Adonibezek, and many others. And alſo you may be helped to find it out by the Lord's timing of the rod to you. Was it ſent when you was under much formality in duty? or when you was eagerly purſuing the things of the world? or when you was under the power of ſome prevailing luſt or other? then the rod comes to reprove you, and awake you to ſee the evil thereof.

5thly. Consider what is the sin that hath been formerly most affrighting to thy thoughts, and perplexing to thy conscience, when thou hast been in the immediate view of death and a tribunal. It is very likely (if thou hast not truly repented of it) that is the sin which God now intends to awake thee to see the evil of, that thou mayst sincerely mourn for, and turn from it, looking to God in Christ for pardon and mercy.

Object. Ah (saith one) it is my lot to lie under a dumb and silent rod, I do not understand its language, I cannot hear its voice, I cannot find out the sin that is pointed at by it; what course shall I take?

Answ. 1. Be deeply humbled under this trial, and bewail thy case before the Lord; for it very much aggravates the affliction to God's people, when they know not the language of it: Hence was it that Job lamented so heavily, that his way was hid, and he knew not the reason of God's contending with him, Job iii. 23.

2. A believer's case may be sometimes so dark, that it requires a great deal of spiritual art and wisdom to enable him to hear the voice of the rod, and understand its language. Hence it is said, "He is a man of wisdom that seeth God's name upon it," Micah vi. 9. Now, this wisdom must only come from above; Therefore,

3. Go to God, and earnestly beg for this wisdom, that you may know his mind, and the meaning of the rod. Do as Rebekah, when the children struggled in her womb, she went to enquire of the Lord, saying, "Why am I thus?" Gen. xxv. 22. Cry to God to give you his spirit, to teach and enlighten you to see sin in its evil, and the particular evils you are guilty of. This was Job's course in his affliction: "Shew me (says he) wherefore thou contendest with me That which I see not, teach thou me. Make me to know my transgression and my sin." There is no better way for a prisoner to know the reason of his confinement, than to ask the magistrate who committed him. God is a wise agent, and can give best account of his own actions.

4. If thou canst not find out the particular sin for which God afflicts thee, then labour to repent of every known

ſin, and cry for pardon, of every unknown and forgotten ſin alſo. Do that out of wiſdom, which Herod did out of malice, who becauſe he could not find out the babe Jeſus, killed all the children of Bethlehem, that he might be ſure to kill Jeſus among them. Let us ſeek the utter ruin and death of all our ſins, that we may be ſure to deſtroy that ſin for which God afflicts us.

5. Study to exerciſe a ſtrong faith, and a humble ſubmiſſion, while God keeps you under the ſilent rod. Believe firmly, that God is juſt, though you know not what he contends. And however long he thinks fit to make you walk in the dark, reſolve humbly to wait on him, and commit yourſelf to him, who has many times guided the blind in the way they knew not.

DIRECT. III. *When any fit of ſickneſs attacks you, think ſeriouſly upon death, and make diligent preparation for it.*

I DO not mean that any man may delay the work of preparation for death, till ſickneſs cometh: No, no; this ſhould be the great and uptaking buſineſs of every man, in the time of his health and ſtrength. But ſickneſs and diſeaſes being the harbingers of death, and the meſſengers ſent from God to warn us of its coming; every man is thereby called to renew the work of preparation for death, with all earneſtneſs and application. God's voice, by every fit of ſickneſs, is that in Deut. xxxii. 29. "O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end?" God knows our folly, and readineſs to forget this great work in the day of health; and therefore, in his mercy, he ſends ſickneſs and affliction, to teach us ſo to number our days that we may apply our hearts to this piece of heavenly wiſdom, of making preparation for death.

And here I ſhall drop, 1*ſt*, Some motives to preſs it. 2*dly*, Advices for the doing it aright.

I For motives conſider theſe things:

1ſt. Conſider God's mercy and patience towards you, in giving you ſo many warnings, and ſo many years to

prepare for death; and in ſending his meſſengers and warnings ſo gently and gradually, to excite you to this work; when many younger and ſtronger than you, are hurried into eternity, and little or no time given them to think where they are going. Have you not been ſpared many years, in the midſt of dangers, when you have ſeen that bold archer Death ſhooting his arrows, and killing thouſands of your neighbours and friends round about you? Sometimes the arrow hath glanced over your head, and ſlain ſome great man, your ſuperior: Sometimes it hath alighted at your feet, and cut off a child or a ſervant, your inferior: Sometimes it hath gone by on your left hand, and killed your enemy; at other times it hath paſſed on your right hand, and killed your near relations. So that you have ſeen friends and foes, ſuperiors and inferiors, relations and ſtrangers dropping down dead round about you; and all this for a long tract of time, to give you warning to prepare for death. O let the goodneſs and forbearance of God, towards you, lead you to repentance, and perſuade you to flee ſpeedily to Chriſt, for refuge and protection from wrath.

2dly. Conſider how terrible death will be if it meet you in an unprepared ſtate, in a Chriſtleſs and impenitent condition. What a fearful change will it bring upon you! A change from earth to hell, from hope to deſpair, from pleaſure to pain, from comforts to terrors; a change from the offers of grace, to the revelation of wrath; a change from probabilities, to utter impoſſibilities of ſalvation. Death will cut off all your hopes and expectations of mercy forever, Job xxvii. 8. There is no coming back, to amend what hath been done amiſs here: and there is no work nor device in the grave, whither you go. As the tree falls, ſo it will lie, throughout all eternity.

II. I come to give ſome advices, in order to the right preparation for death. 1*ſt*, Set about ſelf-examination work. Inquire if you be in Chriſt or not; if you be yet far off from God, or if you be brought near by the blood of Jeſus. And ſee that you be impartial in this ſearch, and willing to find out the truth of this important queſtion. Be not fooliſhly tender of yourſelf, and

apt to beliveve that you are ſafe, when it is not ſo; for, this way, thouſands do ruin themſelves. But be content to know the worſt of your caſe, and thoroughly to underſtand your ſoul's danger, that you may be moved to take the right way to eſcape it. Wherefore take a view of the marks of Chriſtleſs and unconverted perſons ſet down in God's word, and judge yourſelf by them: And conſider alſo the ſigns of true grace recorded therein, and ſee if they be applicable to you or not.

2*dly*. If after inquiry, you find your ſtate is bad; that you have been a lover of the world more than of God; you have minded your body more than your ſoul; you have lived in the neglect of precious Chriſt; allowed yourſelf in known ſin: O then be convinced of your inability to help yourſelf, and your need of Chriſt to help you. And labour to be deeply humbled before God, under a ſenſe of your ſin and folly. "Ah, how fooliſhly, how rebelliouſly, how unthankfully have I carried? I have abuſed God's mercies, and left undone the work for which I was made, and preſerved, and enjoyed the goſpel. Oh! I had all my time given me, to make preparation for endleſs eternity, and I have never minded it, till now that ſickneſs, the harbinger of death, is come upon me: And now, what ſhall I do to be ſaved?" Well then, in order to convince and humble you the more, caſt back your eyes upon the ſins of your nature, and of your by-paſt life; view them in their nature, number, aggravations and deſervings. O do not ſo many years' ſins need a very deep humiliation! O do you not ſtand greatly in need of ſuch a perſon as Chriſt, to be your Saviour and Ranſomer from ſuch a vaſt number of ſins? O but their weight will preſs you eternally down to the loweſt hell, if left to yourſelf, and laid upon your back.

3*dly*. O ſinner, art thou deeply humbled, and deſirous of mercy upon any terms? Believe then, that thy caſe is not remedileſs, but that there is a ſacrifice provided for your ſins, and an able and all-ſufficient Saviour in your offer. Believe that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and become fleſh to be a ſurety for you; that he is

both able and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him. Though your ſins, your dangers and your fears were never ſo great, yet he is able and willing to ſave. O flee preſently to this refuge-city, whoſe gates are open to receive you. Truſt your ſoul upon Chriſt's ſacrifice and meritorious blood, for mercy and ſalvation. Apply humbly to him, that he may teach you the will of God, reconcile you to his Father, pardon your ſins, renew you by his Spirit, and ſave you from eternal wrath.

4thly. Give up yourſelf to God in Chriſt, by way of covenant and ſolemn reſignation. Every man doth this ſacramentally in baptiſm; but you muſt alſo renew it perſonally and explicitly, and thereby give a cordial and voluntary conſent to the covenant of grace. Acquieſce cheerfully in the goſpel-way of ſalvation through Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; and accept of God in Chriſt, as thy portion. Make choice of God the Father, as thy reconciled Father in Chriſt; and God the Son as thy Redeemer and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghoſt, for thy Sanctifier, Guide and Comforter. And likewiſe give up thyſelf, ſoul and body, and all thou haſt, to be the Lord's; engaging, in Chriſt's ſtrength, to live for God, and walk with him in newneſs of life. And ſtudy to do all this deliberately, unfeignedly and cheerfully. Though, perhaps, you have done this, hypocritically at former times, you have profaned God's covenant, and behaved unſteadfaſtly and perfidiouſly therein; yet now endeavour to be ſincere with God for once.

5thly. Be living daily in the exerciſe of faith and repentance: renew the acts thereof frequently, in proportion to your renewed ſins and guiltineſs. Cleave cloſe to glorious Chriſt, your High Prieſt and Surety, and be ever waſhing in his blood. As long as you are in the world, you'll need to waſh your feet, John xiii. 10. Come death when it will, let it find you at the fountain, always looking to, and making uſe of Jeſus Chriſt. You have great need of Chriſt every day of your life, more eſpecially in ſickneſs; but moſt of all, at a dying hour. O what need will you have of Chriſt, then, as an Adve-

cate with God, when the queſtion is to be determined, Where your manſion is to be aſſigned, through all eternity, whether in heaven or in hell? O then, be looking always to Chriſt, with the eye of faith. Live in the conſtant thoughts of this bleſſed Mediator. Let him be firſt in your thoughts in the morning, and laſt in your thoughts at night.

6thly. Be ſtriving to mortify every ſin and luſt, both outward and inward. Be dying to ſin daily, that ſo you may not die for ſin eternally. O that ſin may be daily loſing its ſtrength, and dying in you! ſo that it may be certainly dead before you. Pray earneſtly, that your ſins may die, before you die: For, if they die not before you, but out-live the dying body, they will live eternally to ſting and torment the never-dying ſoul.

DIRECT. IV. *Be not anxious for recovery to health: but leave the iſſue of the preſent ſickneſs, to the will and pleaſure of the infinitely wiſe God.*

REMEMBER, O man, thou art the clay, and God is the Potter; he is abſolute Lord of thy life and times, therefore learn to adore his ſovereignty over thee, and all thy enjoyments. David did ſo, when he ſaid, "Lord, my times are in thy hand," Pſalm xxxi. 15. And indeed they are only beſt in his hand, for he beſt knows how to diſpoſe of them. The prophet ſaith, Iſa. xxx. 18, "The Lord is a God of judgment, bleſſed are they that wait for him." Judgment there ſignifies wiſdom: The Lord is a God of wiſdom, and will order and time all things well; and therefore it becomes us quietly to wait for his pleaſure, ſaying, "The will of the Lord be done." It is taken notice of, as a great ſin in the Iſraelites, that they waited not for his counſel, but limited the Holy One of Iſrael, Pſalm lxxviii. 41. What an unaccountable folly and preſumption is it, for worms of the earth, to ſeek to ſtint and limit the Sovereign of Heaven, to their meaſures! It becomes us at all times, and eſpecially in ſickneſs and affliction, to have low, ſubmiſſive thoughts of ourſelves, and high exalted thoughts of

God's ſovereignty, ſuch as Nebuchadnezzar had, Dan. iv. 35. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: And he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What doeſt thou?" We ſhould therefore refer all to his wiſe determination, and be willing to die or live, as he ſhall be pleaſed to appoint. I remember I have read of a godly woman, who, in her ſickneſs, being aſked by one, Whether ſhe was moſt deſirous to die, or to live? She anſwered, "I have no choice in that matter, but refer myſelf to the will of God." "But (ſaid the other) ſuppoſe God ſhould refer it to you, whether to die, or to live, which of them would you chooſe?" "If God (replied ſhe) ſhould refer it to me, I would even refer it back again to him." It becomes thee, O man, to be entirely reſigned to the will of thy Maker, and to ſtand like a ſentinel in thy ſtation, ready to move, as thy great General and Commander ſhall give order, concerning thee. It would be pleaſant and acceptable to God, to ſee thee more deſirous to be delivered from ſin, than from ſickneſs. O but ſin is a far worſe diſeaſe, than any ſickneſs in the world! beg importunately, that the great Phyſician may cure this woful ſoul-diſeaſe, and let him do with the body what he pleaſeth. This was David's practice in his affliction, Pſalm xxv. 18, "Look upon my affliction, and my pain, and forgive all my ſin." As for his pains and afflictions, he aſks no more, but that God would regard them, and look upon them, and do with them as he thought fit; but, as for his ſins, no leſs will ſatisfy him than a pardon, and blotting them entirely out, ſo as they might be remembered no more.

DIRECT. V. *Bind yourſelf with holy purpoſes and reſolutions, in Chriſt's ſtrength, to be more watchful againſt ſin, more diligent in duty, and to improve the time of health better, if God ſhall be pleaſed to reſtore it again to you.*

WHEN God is viſiting your iniquities with rods, and pleading a controverſy with you for your o-

miſſions and ſlackneſs in duty, he expects that you will return from your backſlidings, and ſet about a ſerious reformation and change of life. Hoſea v. 15, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face: In their affliction they will ſeek me early." See then that you open your ear to diſcipline: ſtudy to anſwer God's call and expectation, and in his ſtrength reſolve to enter upon a new life. "Surely now it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have borne chaſtiſement. I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me: If I have done iniquity, I will do ſo no more," Job xxxiv. 31, 32. Now is the ſeaſon you ſhould ſay with Ephraim, Hoſea, xiv. 8, "What have I to do any more with idols?"

Having duly examined yourſelves, and ſearched out your ſins, you ought to put a bill of divorce into each of their hands. Deliberately reſolve againſt all your ſins, whether ſecret or open; and eſpecially reſolve againſt your darling and beloved ſins, theſe ſins of which do moſt eaſily beſet you. Reſolve alſo againſt all temptations to ſin, and particularly againſt the ſnares of bad company, whereby you have been formerly enticed; ſay now with David, Pſalm cxix. 115, "Depart from me, ye evil doers: For I will keep the commandments of my God."

You muſt not only purpoſe to forſake all ſin, but alſo to mind every known duty: That you will make religion your one thing needful; the pleaſing of God, the chief buſineſs of your life; that you will ſet the Lord always before you, give him your heart in all duties, aim at nearneſs and communion with God in every one of them; and ſtill preſs forward to the full enjoyment of God in heaven, through eternity.

Reſolve alſo, through grace, that you will, in a ſpecial manner, mind ſecret duties, which the eyes of men do not obſerve, and theſe duties which conſcience doth moſt challenge you for neglecting. And you that are heads of families, reſolve to make more conſcience of family religion, of worſhipping God with your families, both morning and evening; inſtructing your children and ſervants in the knowledge of Chriſt, and recommending reli-

gion and godlineſs to all round about you, whether relations or ſtrangers.

And if you would have your reſolutions effectual, ſee that they be accompanied with a deep ſenſe of your inſufficiency to perform them in your own ſtrength. Bear always in mind the corruption and deceitfulneſs of your own heart, and make all your reſolutions in a humble dependence on the ſufficiency of Jeſus Chriſt your ſurety. Obſerve the apoſtle Paul's advice to his ſon Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 1, "Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt." All your ſtock, O believer, is in his hand, ſo that without him you can do nothing; but, through Chriſt ſtrengthening you, you are able to do all things.

DIRECT. VI. *Set your houſe in order by making your latter-wills, and ſettling your domeſtic and ſecular affairs, while you have freedom and capacity for doing it.*

AFTER the heart is ſet in order, the next work is to ſet your houſe in order, according to God's counſel to Hezekiah, Iſa. xxxviii. 1. It is recorded of the patriarch Abraham, that he was careful to ſettle the affairs of his family before his death, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. He diſpoſed of his eſtate to Iſaac, and legacies to the ſons of his concubines. It is too general a fault, that men delay and put off making their wills, as they do their repentance, to the very laſt, and ſo too frequently never make them at all. Conſider the evil of deferring or neglecting this neceſſary affair: For if you, upon whom God hath beſtowed means, ſhall die inteſtate, your eſtate may deſcend otherwiſe than you intended; much of it may be ſpent in tedious and expenſive law-ſuits: ſuch differences may fall out among relations that ſhould live in friendſhip and mutual affection, as cannot be healed; ſome of them may be reduced to extreme want, when a ſmall legacy might have them put them in a way of living: And many ſuch inconveniencies may follow. Well then, if your neglect ſhould bring on theſe evils, and involve poſterity into endleſs ſtrifes and contentions; may you not juſtly fear that the guilt thereof will purſue you into

another world, whofe wretched carelefsnefs was the occafion of all that mifchief?

Pray, what is the reafon that men put off this affair? Is it not, becaufe they do not incline to think fo ferioufly on death, as this will occafion them to do? Doth not this fmell of abominable earthly-mindednefs, and fpeak as if a man defired all his portion in this life, and cared not for a better? and that he is fo far from preparing for death, that he cannot endure to think of it? Alas that this worldly difpofition fhould fo far prevail among us! But furely there is no wife man will fay, that the putting off the thoughts of death, will keep death at the greater diftance; or that preparing for death, and making our wills, will bring on death the fooner.

It were furely beft to order our affairs timeoufly: yea, do it in time of health, rather than delay it unto a fick bed, or a death-bed; for either you may be fnatched off fuddenly, and have no time for it; or you may be taken with fueh a diftemper as fhall feize your tongue, fo as you cannot exprefs your mind; or feize your underftanding, fo as you cannot rationally difpofe of your effects. And though none of thefe fhould happen, yet certainly it proves a great difturbance to a dying man, to be cafting up, ordering and fettling the affairs of his family, when he fhould be fecuring a heavenly manfion for his foul, and clearing up his evidences thereunto. It is great wifdom to put this affair by hand; that you may have as little to do with the world as may be, and all occafions of diftraction to your immortal foul may be prevented, when it is near to its flitting into an eternal and unchangeable ftate.

Moreover, in fettling your fecular affairs, obferve thefe following advices. 1. Make your wills cheerfully, and freely lay down whatever you enjoy, when God calls you to it. Praife God that you had thofe things while you needed them, and when you have no longer ufe for them, leave them without repining, to thofe that come after you. Look not back to Egypt, when you are upon your march to Canaan.

2dly. See that you deal juſtly, in providing for your family, paying all your juſt debts, and making reſtitution if you have wronged any. Abhor all deſigns of defrauding any of your lawful creditors: For, if your laſt act ſhould be unjuſt, you leave a blot upon your name here; and ſince you cannot repent of this wickedneſs, it being among your laſt deeds, you expoſe yourſelf to a fearful doom in the world whither you are going.

3dly. In ſettling your eſtates, ſee that God and good uſes be not forgot nor left out. When you are leaving the world, and can glorify God no longer here by your words or actions, ſee to honour the Lord with your ſubſtance, by leaving ſome part thereof to a pious and charitable uſe. I know, it is a work of charity to give for maintaining the bodies of the poor; and eſpecially the poor of God's people, who belong to his family; But it is much more pious and charitable, to leave ſomewhat for propagating Chriſtian knowledge in dark places, for educating poor children to read the ſcriptures, and inſtructing ignorant ſouls in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. It is much to be lamented, that ſo many rich men among us die, and leave nothing to ſuch pious uſes. The liberality of papiſts on their death beds, may give a ſharp challenge to many profeſſed proteſtants. O what a ſhame is it to the profeſſors of the doctrine of grace, that the falſe doctrines of merit and purgatory ſhould produce ſo many donations and mortifications among the papiſts, and the faith of Chriſt's moſt glorious goſpel ſhould not do the like among true belivers! Shall the proud conceit of merit, and the imaginary fear of purgatory, prompt men to do more this way, than the certain perſuaſion of the love of God in Chriſt, and the well grounded hope of eternal life through the alone merits of Jeſus Chriſt? O what a reproach is this to our holy religion!

4lhly. It might be much to the glory of God, and good of ſouls, that a great part of our teſtaments and latter-wills ſhould conſiſt of ſolemn charges, and exhortations and bleſſings to our children, or thoſe to whom we bequeath any legacy; ſo as they can never open our teſtaments, or look into them, but they might hear ſomething

that may make impreſſions on their ſouls, for their ſpiritual edification, and for quickening them to the diligent practice of both family and perſonal godlineſs.

CHAPTER II.

Containing ſome particular Directions to thoſe who are ſharply afflicted with ſickneſs and long trouble.

DIRECTION I. *Juſtify God in the greateſt afflictions which befall you.*

THOUGH God ſhould condemn you, ſee that you acquit him, and ſay, he is righteous in all his dealings. When the church was under the heavieſt diſtreſs, ſhe finds cauſe to juſtify God, Lam. i. 18, "The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled againſt his commandment." So doth godly Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 33, "Howbeit thou art juſt in all that is brought upon us; for thou haſt done right, but we have done wickedly." The ſame doth holy David acknowledge, Pſal. cxix. 75, "I know O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulneſs thou haſt afflicted me." Now, in order to bring you to this agreeable frame, and to convince you of the equity and juſtice of God in his diſpenſations, however heavy and long your diſtreſs be, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations:

1*ſt.* Conſider the infinitely holy and righteous nature of that God who ſmiteth thee, Pſalm cxix. 137, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." We preſume it of a righteous man, that he will do righteous things; and ſhall we not much more believe ſo of a holy and righteous God? We cannot be infallibly certain that a righteous man will always do ſo; for a righteous man may leave his righteouſneſs, becauſe the creature is mutable: but God is immutably righteous; ſo that we may be confident of it, that the Judge of all the earth will do right, for it is impoſſible he can do otherwiſe, Zech. iii. 5, "The juſt Lord is in the midſt there-

of, he will not do iniquity." He will not, he cannot; for it is contrary to his nature.

2*dly*. Consider that God never brings on any affliction without a cause, 1 Cor. xi. 30, "For this cause many are sick." He hath still just ground for the heaviest affliction, from thy sins and provocations, and may always say to thee as to Israel. Jer. ii. 17, 19, "Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord." There is still ground enough for affliction to be found in the best of God's people; and therefore it is said, Lam. iii. 33, "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grive the children of men." No; it is our sins that oblige him to it. As Christ whipped the sellers of oxen and sheep, out of the temple with a whip (as is generally thought) made of their own cords; so God never scourgeth us but with a whip made of our own sins, Prov. v. 22, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." If we consider the mighty God as a Lord dispensing grace, then we find he acts sovereignly, and according to his will and pleasure, Matth. xi. 26, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." But, if we consider him as a judge, dispensing judgments, he never doth it without a foregoing cause on the creature's part. God's treasure of mercy is always full and ready to be let out to them that seek it; but his treasure of wrath is empty till men fill it up by their sins, Rom. ii. 16, "Thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath." We do always provide fuel for God's wrath before it kindle and break out upon us.

3*dly*. Consider farther this instance of God's equity, that when there is a cause given, God doth not presently take it, but continues to threaten oft, and warn long, before he execute the sentence of his word. He sends lesser strokes as warnings of greater, if we repent not; and he repeats his warnings many times, both by his word

and providence before he ſmite. Yea, even when repeated warnings are ſlighted, he delays a long time, and waits to be gracious, Iſa. xxx. 18. And when man's obſtinacy and incorrigibleneſs arrive to ſuch a height, that he can ſpare no longer; yet how loth is he to give them up to ſevere judgments! Hoſ. xi. 18, "How ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim? How ſhall I deliver thee, Iſrael? How ſhall I make thee as Admah? How ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." When the Lord hath ſinners in his arms, ready to give them up to ſevere judgments, yet he makes a ſtand, and would fain be prevented before he proceed to his ſtrange work; for ſo he calls his acts of judgment, Iſa. xxviii. 21. Acts of mercy are co-natural, moſt agreeable and pleaſant to God, Micah vii. 18 "He delighteth in mercy: but judgment is his ſtrange act, and his ſtrange work.

4*thly*. Conſider that when at laſt he ſends ſtrokes on us, they are always ſhort of the cauſe; he exacts not the whole debt that ſinners owe to his juſtice, as Ezra doth acknowledge, Ezra ix. 13, "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." The ſtroke he is there ſpeaking of, was a moſt heavy judgment; fearful ruin and deſolation came upon Jeruſalem, and the whole land of Judah; the city and temple were burnt to aſhes, the people carried captives to a ſtrange land, and treated as bond ſlaves among the heathens: Yet, ſaith the holy man, "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." *q. d.* It is true we have been carried to Babylon, but in juſtice we might have been ſent to hell: our houſes were burnt, but our bodies might have been burnt too: We have been drinking water, but we might have been drinking blood: We have had grievous burdens on earth, but we might have been groaning in hell: We were baniſhed from the temple, but we might have been eternally baniſhed from God's preſence. We think it a great favour among men, when any puniſhment is mitigated, when the ſentence of death is changed into baniſhment, or when baniſhment is turned into a fine, or a great fine is made ſmaller: And will you think that God deals ſeverely or

rigorouſly with you, when he lays you on a ſick-bed, when he might have juſtly laid you in hell, and poured out all his wrath upon you there? You but taſte of the brim of the cup, when God might cauſe you to drink of the bottom and dregs thereof.

Have you not cauſe then to acknowledge God's juſtice, nay, even his mercy too, in his dealings with you, however rough they ſeem to be? May you not, with good reaſon ſay, any thing leſs than hell is a mercy to ſuch an ill-deſerving creature as I am? If even a hard-hearted Pharaoh, under diſtreſs, came the length to own the juſtice of God, Exod. ix. 27, "I have ſinned; the Lord is rightous;" ſhall any profeſſed Chriſtian fall ſhort of that obſtinate Egyptian?

DIRECTION II. *Labour ſtill to be ſenſible of God's hand under heavy affliction, and beware of ſtupidity and unconcernedneſs under it.*

IT is a ſin to faint under heavy affliction, but it is a duty to feel it, Heb. xii. 5, "My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." The Apoſtle there doth caution againſt two extremes which every chriſtian under the rod ſhould be careful to avoid, 1. Deſpiſing or making light of affliction. 2. Sinking or deſponding upon affliction. We are in great hazard of running into the one or the other. As to the firſt, We may be ſaid to deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord when we do not obſerve God's hand in our affliction, ſo as to reform the things whereby he was diſpleaſed: Or when we reſolve to abide the trial, by the ſtrength of our own reſolutions and ſtout-heartedneſs, without looking to God for ſupporting grace: Or when we turn ſtupid and inſenſible under the heavy and long continued rod. This deſpiſing and ſlighting the rod is not patience, but ſtupidity; it is not chriſtian magnanimity, but a ſtoical temper of mind, moſt ſinful and provoking to God. We ſee how angry God is with ſinners, when his ſtrokes are not felt, Iſa. xli. 25, "He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and it hath ſet

him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it hath burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." Jer. v. 3, "Thou haſt ſtricken them, but they have not grieved: thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refuſed to return." There is little hope of a ſcholar minding his leſſon, that is regardleſs of whipping. It is a dreadful ſign to be like Pharaoh, ſleeping in our ſins, when God is thundering in his wrath. He that will ſleep when his houſe is on fire, or lie ſtill in bed, as if he was not concerned, may aſſuredly expect to be conſumed in its flames. As David could not bear it, when the meſſengers, he ſent to the Ammonites out of good will, were affronted and deſpiſed; ſo neither will God endure it, when the meſſengers he ſends to ſinners are ſlighted; for he that ſlights a meſſenger, affronts his maſter. Thoſe who make light of affliction, make light of God that ſends it, and make light of ſin that procures it.

Queſt. But, when is it that people are ſuitably concerned under a heavy rod. *Anſw.* When they ſee God's hand, hear God's voice, anſwer his intent, are curious to know his mind, deſirous to do thoſe things he requires, and reform thoſe things he is diſpleaſed with.

Remember, every affliction is a meſſenger from God, and deſerves a hearing from you. It comes to thee with ſuch a meſſage as Ehu did to Eglon, Judges iii 20, "I have an errand from God to thee, O king:" I have a meſſage from God to thee, O chriſtian, O ſinner. Well, lend an ear, and hearken with reverence and attention to this errand; ſay, "Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth, what wouldſt thou have me to do?" Believe it, that God ſpeaks as really to you by his rod, as by his word; therefore he ſays, "Hear ye the rod." God ſpake as truly by his ten plagues to Egypt, as he did by his ten precepts to Iſrael. And if the calm voice of the word were more regarded, we ſhould hear leſs of the rough voice of the rod. As Gideon took briers and thorns of the wilderneſs, and with them taught the men of Succoth, who would not be taught by fairer means, Judges viii.

16. so God takes the sharp prickles of sore afflictions, to teach you his statutes, when you will not be taught by softer methods. Beware then of grieving God's Spirit, by turning stupid and insensible under sharp or long continued trials: But, the more pains God is at with you by his rod, hearken the more carefully to his voice; and labour to make the greater proficiency in the school of affliction, where he thinks fit to continue you; that so you may inherit that blessing, Psal. xciv. 12. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law."

DIRECTION III. *Beware of misconstructing God's dealings towards you, and of charging him foolishly.*

WE are apt to believe satan's suggestions, under heavy trials, and to entertain wrong thoughts of God and his dispensations. Now, these you ought to guard against. As, for instance, 1*st*. Beware of harbouring atheistical thoughts, as if there were no Providence, no wise Governor of this lower world, no distinction betwixt the good and bad; and that it is to no purpose to be religious, like those mentioned in Mal. iii. 14. "Ye have said it is vain to serve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinances, and walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?" Yea, even the Psalmist, when he begins to compare his own sharp trials with the wicked's ease and prosperity, is tempted to think all religion is vain, and say, Psalm lxxiii. 13, 14. "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." But these are nothing but the hellish suggestions of satan, that irreconcileable enemy of God, and precious souls, against which we should closely stop our ears.

2*dly*. Beware of charging God in your hearts with rigor or injustice in his dealings, like these, Ezek. xviii. 25. "Yet ye say the way of the Lord is not equal." How highly unjust and injurious, are such thoughts to

him, who is the judge of all the earth, and cannot do but right?

3*dly*. Beware of thinking that heavy afflictions do always ſpeak wrath in God againſt thee. No, ſometimes they ſpeak forth love, and God may be carrying on a love-deſign thereby to thy ſoul, viz. to ſubdue thy ſtrong luſts, and draw thee nearer unto himſelf. As for thoſe who think that the ſmarting rod and divine love cannot dwell together, let them read that paſſage, Heb. xii. 5, 6. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you as unto children, My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chaſtenetb, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth."

4*thly*. Beware of deſponding and diſtruſtful thoughts of God, under ſharp afflictions. Some are ready to raze the foundation, quit their intereſt in God, and the promiſes, and caſt away their hope and confidence, ſaying with Gideon, Judges vi. 13, "Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this evil befallen us?" So David was ready to draw a haſty concluſion, Pſalm xxxi. 22, "I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes." But this was the effect of unbelief; for he that believeth will not make haſte.

DIRECTION IV. *Under ſore trouble and diſtreſs, labour to exerciſe a ſtrong and lively faith.*

IT was a noble and heroic reſolution in that holy man Job, under his ſingular trials, Job xiii. 15. Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him. *q. d.* Let my ſtrokes be never ſo ſore and heavy, yet I will not let go my grips of his word and promiſes; I will not raze theſe foundations of my hope. It was the way the Pſalmiſt kept himſelf from ſinking under his heavy burdens, Pſal. xxviii. 13. I had fainted unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord, in the land of the living. Conſider but a little the noble influence that faith hath to ſtrengthen and ſupport the ſoul under ſore trials.

1*ſt*. Faith grips to the great goſpel promiſe of ſalva-

tion in and through Jesus Christ, and so secures the soul's main interest through eternity; which may may make the soul easy in every lot.

2*dly*. Faith views God in Christ, at the helm in the greatest storm, and so it *endures, as seeing him who is invisible*, Heb. xi. 27.

3*dly*. Faith casts the soul's anchor upon the Rock of Ages, and stays itself on God, and the faithful promises; whereby the soul is eased and disburdened of its fears and melancholy apprehensions, Psal. iv. 22. Isa. l. 10.

4*thly*. Faith brings new strength and auxiliary supplies of grace from heaven, when the former supply is exhausted and spent; whereof David had the sweet experience, Psal. xxvii. 13. As God doth plant and actuate grace in the soul, so he is pleased to come in with seasonable supplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, answerable to their present exigencies and pressures—And thus he doth from time to time feed the believer's lamp with fresh oil, give in more faith, more love, more hope, and more desires; and thereby he gives power to the faint, and strengthens the things which remain, when ready to die.

5*thly*. Faith keeps the soul from sinking under heavy trials, by bringing in former experiences of the power, mercy and faithfulness of God to the afflicted soul. Hereby was the Psalmist supported in distress, Psal. xiii. 6. Psal. lxxxvii. 4. O, saith saith, remember what God hath done both for thy outward and inner man; he hath not only delivered thy body when in trouble, but he hath done great things for thy soul; he hath brought thee out of a state of black nature, entered into a covenant relation with thee, and made his goodness pass before thee; he hath helped thee to pray, and many times hath heard thy prayers and thy tears. Hath he not formerly brought thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and put a new song in thy mouth, and made thee resolve never to give way to such unbelieving doubts and fears again? And how unbecoming is it for thee now to sink in trouble?

6*thly*. Faith supports the soul, by giving it a pleasant

view and prospect of a happy outgate from all trouble; when it shall be admitted to see and dwell with Christ hereafter. Thus was Job supported in his greatest distress, Job xix. 25, 26, 27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth —Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold," &c. A believing view of the soul's meeting with its Redeemer, and receiving a crown of glory from him at last, is an excellent support to a christian under the heaviest affliction, and so was it to Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

7thly. Faith gives great support, by the encouraging representations it makes of Christ, and of his present concern for the believer while under affliction. As for instance, 1*st.* Faith represents Christ to a believer under trials, as sympathizing with him under his distress, feeling his pain, hearing his groans, bearing his burdens, and ready to relieve him in in his own appointed time, which it well becometh him to wait for.

2*dly.* Faith represents Christ as putting in his almighty arm under the believer's head, and conveying invisible strength to support and hold him up, under his greatest pressures.

3*dly.* Faith represents Christ as pleading the afflicted believer's cause with God, and answering all the charges of the law, the challenges of conscience, and accusations of satan against him.

4thly. Faith represents Christ as standing by the furnace as a refiner where his gold is melting, carefully overseeing the trials of his people, that they may work for their good; and ready to bring them out thereof, when they are sufficiently purified from their dross.

5thly. Faith represents Christ as smiling on his people under the cross, whispering peace into their ear, and saying, *Well done, good and faithful servant.*

DIRECTION V. *Labour to bear with patience, whatever load of trouble the Lord appoints for you.*

WE shall, perhaps, observe some who are strangers to religion, contentedly enduring very painful evils;

and this they may do by virtue of a natural hardineſs and reſolution which ſome are endowed with, or upon the account of arguments furniſhed by human prudence. This is only patience as a moral virtue which ſome attain to. But it is patience as a ſpiritual grace, or a fruit of the ſpirit, which we muſt aim at under our trials; that we may bear them contentedly from divine principles, to divine ends. Now this grace of patience we muſt earneſtly beg from God, under heavy afflictions, for it is only he that muſt work it in us; and therefore he is called the God of patience, Rom. xv. 5. And in order to your attaining of this grace, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations, which may be uſeful, through the Lord's bleſſing, for that end.

1*ſt*. Conſider the patience of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, under ſufferings inexpreſſibly greater than yours. When it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and put him to grief, how patiently did he bear all? according to that remarkable word, Iſa, liii. 7. "He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before his ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth." Now, Chriſt ſuffered as an example of patience, though it was not his chief end; and ſurely all the members of the body ſhould ſtudy to imitate the head in patience. Did your bleſſed Saviour patiently endure ſuch agonies and preſſures of wrath for you; and will you decline to undergo ſome ſhort pains or ſickneſs, in obedience to his commands?

2*dly*. Conſider God's ſovereignty over you. He is the great potter and you are his clay; and why may he not do with you as he pleaſeth? If your children offend you, you ſcourge them, and perhaps do it ſometimes without reaſon; yet how ill do you take it, when they refuſe to ſubmit? How will you drive and ſpur your horſes under you, and may be ſometimes unreaſonably? Yet they bear all quietly and make no reſiſtance. Shall they take blows from their maſter, and will not you from your Maker, that has far more power over you? If any challenge you for cruelty to your children or beaſts, you take it not

well, becauſe you think you may do what you will with your own, and no man hath a right to quarrel with you: But, hath not God a greater property in you, than you in your children and cattle? And, will you not patiently ſubmit to your wife and abſolute Sovereign?

3dly. Conſider thy ſin as the meritorious cauſe of all thy afflictions, however heavy they be. If thou haſt right thoughts of thy ſins, and the aggravations thereof, thy mind may be compoſed to a patient ſubmiſſion to God's hand. If ſin be heavy on thee, all thy afflictions will be light. Luther gives this as a reaſon why he ſlighted the rage of the pope and emperor, and all his outward troubles—They are all little to me, becauſe ſin is ſo weighty on me. Hence it was that Paul complained not at all of his ſufferings, as great as they were; but he cried out much of his ſins, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death? Senſe of ſin doth ſwallow up the ſenſe of affliction, as the ocean doth little brooks. For with whom ſhouldſt thou quarrel, but with thyſelf, when thou bringeſt troubles on thyſelf? This conſideration ſhould bring thee to reſolve and ſay with the prophet Micah vii. 9. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.

4thly. Conſider, how ſharp ſoever the pains are, you are called to bear, yet they fall infinitely ſhort of what you have juſtly deſerved at God's hands. It is of his infinite mercy that death and everlaſting deſtruction have not been your portion long ſince, and that you are not now roaring under the extremity of his indignation in the bottomleſs pit, together with the devil and his angels. And conſequently, whatſoever falls ſhort of this, is truly a great mercy; and is ſo far from being ground of quarreling, that the greateſt ſufferer on this ſide hell, hath juſt cauſe to admire God's clemency in dealing more favourably with him than he hath deſerved.

5thly. Compare thy caſe with others that have been, or preſently are in diſtreſs. Do not ſay there is none ſo hardly dealt with as thou art; for thou knoweſt not the

affliction of others. Consider duly the trials of that eminent saint Job, in all the circumstances thereof, and see if you can say your sorrow is near so great as his sorrow was. Again, compare your case with that of the damned in hell, who lie and fry in endless and ceaseless flames, so that they have no rest day nor night, but the smoke of their torment ascends for ever. And think what a blessing it is, that you are yet in a state of salvation, and not delivered over to these everlasting burnings, which were the due demerits of your sins, and to which you might long ago have been justly condemned, had it not been for the patience and long-suffering of Almighty God, who waiteth to be gracious to guilty sinners. When you consider these things, instead of being dissatisfied with the divine dispensations, you have cause to bless God, that matters are not worse with you, and that you are kept out of hell to this day, where thousands, no more guilty than you, are presently roaring in endless desparation.

Unto these considerations I shall subjoin some few helps or advices, in order to the attaining of patience under sore troubles.

1. Labour to get pardon of sin and peace with God, secured to thy soul, and this will enable you to bear the heaviest cross with patience. Hence it was that Luther cried, "Smite, Lord as thou wilt, I take all in good part, seeing my sins are pardoned. O! pardon of sin is the crowning blessing! therefore will I bear any thing, I will swallow up quarrelling into admiring, I will welcome the pruning knife, seeing there is no fear of the bloody axe to fell me down."

2. Labour to see God's hand in thy affliction. Do not, like the dog, snarl at the stone, but look up to the hand that throws it And surely a view of the hand of a holy God, may serve to calm all the boisterous waves of thy corruption; so did it with David, Psalm xxxix. 9. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." When he looked to the instruments and second causes of his afflictions, his heart waxed hot, and the fire of his inward passion began to burn and break out; but when he once espied God's hand and seal to the war-

rant for his correction, he became silent, and patiently submitted to the divine will.

3. Get a humble and self-denied frame of spirit, that you may have low thoughts of yourselves, and of all your attainments whatsoever. A proud man cannot think of submitting to the divine will, but will break before he bow. Hence we see a vast difference betwixt a proud Pharaoh, and an humble Eli, under the rod: The one says, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?* But the other saith, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.*

4. Get love to Jesus Christ. Love is an enduring principle, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. It endureth all things. It makes the soul, like the kindly child, draw nearer to Christ, the more it is beaten.

5. Interpret God's ways and dealings with you always in the best sense. And, *lastly*, Be earnest in prayer, that God may conquer your rebellious will, and subdue those mutinous risings of heart within you against himself.

DIRECTION VI. *Beware of envying wicked men, when you see them in health and prosperity.*

THE Psalmist, when he was chastened every morning and in great adversity, was liable to this evil, Psal. lxxiii. 3. I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Corrupt nature doth strongly incline us to this sinful disposition, especially in the day of sore affliction; for the spirit that dwelleth in us, lusteth to envy, James iv. 5. But, did we rightly consider the state of wicked men, we would see greater reason to pity than envy them, in the most prosperous condition: Why? The prosperity of the fools shall destroy them, Prov. i. 32. It makes them forget God, and turn hardened and secure in sin, which hastens their ruin. Who would envy a malefactor's going up a high ladder, and being mounted above the rest of the people, when it is only for a little, and in order to his being turned over and hanged? This is just the case of wicked men, who are

mounted up high in prosperity; for it is so, only that they may be cast down deeper into destruction. Observe that word, Psalm xxxvii. 1, 2—Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against those that work iniquity; For they shall soon be cut down like grass, &c. And that word, Psalm xcii. 7—When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of inquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever. It would be a brutish thing to envy an ox his high and sweet pasture, when he is only thereby fitted to the day of slaughter. Who would have envied the beasts of old, the garland and ribbons with which the heathen adorned them when they went to be sacrificed? These external ornaments of health, wealth, pleasures and preferments, wherewith wicked men are endowed, cannot make their state happy, nor change their natures to the better. Whatever appearance these things make in the eyes of the world, they are but like a noisome dunghill covered with scarlet, as vile and loathsome in God's sight as ever.—How quickly is the beauty of earthly things blasted? The triumphing of the wicked is short, Job xx. 5. They live in pleasures on the earth, for a while; but God sets them in slippery places, from whence they soon slide into perpetual pain and anguish. They have a short time of mirth, but they shall have an eternity of mourning. The longer their prosperity is, their sins are the greater, and their sufferings will be more grievous. But, O believer, it is in mercy to thee, that God doth hedge up thy way with thorns, that thou mayest not find thy paths; whilst he turns the wicked loose, and suffers them to stray and wander whither they will, to their eternal ruin. God takes this method with thee, to make you meet for an inheritance, and to prepare you for a crown of glory; but he takes a contrary way with the wicked, to fit them for destruction; Therefore you ought not to be fretful under his hand, but thankful. We read of Queen Elizabeth, when she was in prison, how she envied the poor milkmaid she saw passing by, and would have thought herself happy to have been in her condition; but had that afflicted princess known the glorious reign of forty-four

years ſhe was ſoon to enter upon, ſhe would not have repined at the happineſs of ſo mean a perſon. But, O afflicted believer, it is not a glorious reign for a ſet number of years, that is provided for thee; it is even a reign with glorious Chriſt thy Redeemer, for ever and ever: And, haſt thou any ground to be diſcontented or envious?

DIRECTION VII. *Guard againſt repining complaints and diſcontented murmurings againſt the Providence of God, under heavy ſickneſs and affliction.*

WE ſee, the murmurers and complainers are claſſed with thoſe that walk after their own luſts, Judge ver. 16. I know, the people of God are liable to murmuring and impatience alſo under affiiction; but there is a great difference betwixt them and the wicked. I'll have occaſion to ſpeak of believers' murmurings afterwards, when I come to ſpeak of their caſe in particular; but here I ſhall handle the ſin of murmuring in general, and as it appears mainly in the unregenerate, under heavy affliction.

This ſin of murmuring is the froth of impatience, and ſcum of diſcontent; it is firſt cheriſhed by repining thoughts, and then vented by unſuitable complaints and expoſtulations, taxing the adminiſtration of Providence, as if God dealt too hardly with us. Our very thoughts are audible with God, yea, as loud in his ears, as words are in ours; but it is yet worſe, when repining thoughts are not cruſhed, but ſuffered to break out into words tending to the diſhonour of God.

Queſt. But, it is altogether unlawful to complain of affliction, whatever be our caſe?

Anſw. Humble complaints are not murmurings, nor ſinful in themſelves; otherwiſe there would be no room for prayer, and for ſpreading out our diſtreſſed caſe before the Lord. We find God's children making complaints in affliction; but then they do not complain of God, but to God, with a humble inquiry into the cauſe and meaning of his diſpenſations, and laying all the blame upon themſelves, as did Job, chap x. 1. 2—I will leave my

complaint upon myſelf; I will ſpeak in the bitterneſs of my ſoul, I will ſay unto God, do not condemn me; ſhew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me. Thus the bleſſed Son of God himſelf did, in his diſtreſs, when he cried, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? But there we may obſerve, he complains to God, not of God; he hath not a hard word or thought of God, but expreſſeth a holy confidence in God, My God, my God; he hath two words of faith for one word of fear, he humbly inquires into the cauſe of the diſpenſation, and deſires to bring up his will to God, not that God ſhould bring down his will to him—If it be poſſible, ſays he, let this cup paſs; however, glorify thy name, provide for thy own glory, and do with me what thou pleaſeſt. In this matter our Lord doth ſet himſelf as an example of patience to us, teaching us to beware of impatient murmuring and quarrelling with God's providence in our affliction; which many times we are guilty of, either when we harbour hard thoughts of God's dealings, or break forth into raſh and unadviſed ſpeeches; when we charge God fooliſhly, and complain either of too much ſeverity, as Ezek. xviii. 2. 25. or too long delay, as Iſa. xlix. 14. or when our complaints are mixed with unbelief and diſtruſt, as Pſalm lxxviii. 19. or when we complain more of our puniſhment than we do of our ſin, and nothing will ſatisfy us but deliverance from trouble.

Now to deter you from theſe murmurings and complaints in trouble, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations:

1*ſt*. They who deſerve worſt, do commonly complain and murmur moſt, and are moſt ready to think that they are hardly dealt with. The unthankful Iſraelites were ſtill murmuring. Ambitious Abſalom was diſcontented. Bloody Haman, in midſt of all his greatneſs, cries out, What doth all this avail me? But humble Jacob ſaith, he was not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies and truth which God had ſhewed him. And holy Job bleſſes God, and patiently ſubmits, when he took from him, as well as when he gave him.

2*dly*. Murmuring is a ſin that God takes ſpecial notice

of, and looks on as an injury and affront done immediately against himself. Numb. xiv. 27—I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. He that gives ears to the groans of his own Spirit, doth also hear the grumblings of thine, and will reckon with thee for them.

3dly. It can no wise benefit or relieve us in distress. I may say of sinful complaining, (as Christ of sinful care) Which of you, by complaining, can add one cubit to his stature? What ease or relief can you get by contending with God? Nay, instead of easing you of your burden, it will make it the heavier; as a child, the more he struggles with his parents, he is the more beaten. The Israelites were once within eleven days journey of Canaan; but by their murmurings they provoked God to lead them forty years march in the wilderness before they could reach it.

4thly. Whatever be your distress, there is no just ground for complaints, whilst thou hast thy life for a prey. Remember that word of the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 39—Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins! A man living, a man upon the earth, a man out of hell, hath no cause to complain, whatever be his affliction. For, let him compare his sin and punishment together, he will find there is no proportion: sin is a transgression against the infinite God; punishment is but an affliction upon the finite creature: sin strikes at the very being of God; but punishment only at the comfort of the creature. So that whatever your punishment be, you have more cause to give thanks than to complain; and to say with Ezra, Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve. It might have been a thousand times worse, if strict justice had been the rule: It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed.

5thly. When you murmur under sickness, you quarrel with the messenger of that sovereign God, who gave you your lives, and can take them again when he thinks fit; and we know that messengers ought not to be maltreated or abused, whatever be their commission, and far less when they are sent upon a good design. Now, if you

conſider the deſign of this meſſenger and his errand to you, inſtead of fretting and quarreling at his coming, you ought rather to bleſs God that ſends ſuch a ſuitable harbinger and forerunner, to tell you that death is approaching, and that he vouchſafes to take ſo much pains on you, to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone, by long continued trouble; when he might have ſeized you in a violent manner, and driven you away by main force, without uſing any means to obtain your conſent. Have not many, who were moſt unwilling to die, at the beginning of a ſickneſs, been brought, by the increaſe and continuance of it, to be well ſatisfied to leave the world, and long to be with Chriſt? And was not this for their advantage?

6thly. Conſider the great evil and ſinfulneſs of impatient murmurings, complaints and qarrelings under affliction.

1. Murmuring hath in it much unbelief and diſtruſt of God, Pſalm cvi. 24, 25—They believed not his word, but murmured in their tents. They could not believe that the wilderneſs was the way to Canaan, that God would provide and furniſh a table for them there, and relieve them in all their ſtraits. So it is with us in trouble, we quarrel with God's providence, becauſe we do not believe his promiſes; we do not believe that this can be conſiſtent with love, or can work for good in the end.

2. It hath in it unthankfulneſs. While we complain of one affliction, we overlook a thouſand mercies. The Iſraelites murmured ſo for what they had not, that they unthankfully forgot all they had. Whereas a thankful perſon is ſo far from fretting that God doth not give him every thing, that he wonders that God ſhould give him any thing. I am leſs than the leaſt of all thy mercies, ſaid Jacob; We are perplexed, ſaid Paul, but not in deſpair: we have God to go to, which is matter of praiſe. But the murmurer unthankfully overlooks all his preſent, and forgets all his former mercies; and gives not God thanks for any thing. Becauſe God removes his comforts, his health, ſtrength and eaſe for a time; all the

years he formerly enjoyed them, though most undeserved-ly, are quite buried in oblivion.

3. It implies much pride and self-conceit. He that complains of God's dealings, secretly applauds his own deservings. Only by pride comes contention. When men have a conceit of themselves, they pick quarrels with God's providence, being apt to think they deserve better treatment at his hands: Whereas the humble soul is sensible he deserves nothing but wrath, and therefore lays his hand on his mouth when the Lord afflicts him.

4. It involves men into rebellion against God. When God strikes men for sin, murmurs fly in his face, and kick against his strokes, like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke. They in some respect resemble that desperate apostate Julian, of whom it is written that he shot up his darts against heaven, when he was in distress. They fulfil that word, Prov. xix. 3—The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord. The repining heart boils with rage against God and his dispensations, like these Jews when hungry and hardly bestead, Isa. viii. 21—They shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward

5. It imports much impenitency and unhumbledness for sin; and that we have seen little of the intrinsic evil of sin; and of our ill-deservings for it. Can we truly believe that our sins deserve hell-fire, and yet impatiently repine at sickness, and lesser strokes upon our bodies?

6. It includes much atheism and blasphemy against God, and his infinite perfections in several respects:

(1.) by our impatient murmurings, we either virtually deny that things here below are governed by God's providence; or else,

(2.) We tax his providence with unrighteousness in the management thereof; as if God did withhold from us what is due, or inflict on us what we have not deserved. Oh what atheism is this! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? May he not, upon the justest ground, answer every murmur, as Matth. xx. 13—Friend, I do thee no wrong!

(3.) We in effect grasp at the sovereignty, and usurp

the throne of the moſt high God, and would have the diſpoſal of things in our hands; yea, we preſume to ſummon God to our bar to give account of his adminiſtration, when we take upon us to quarrel at any of his diſpenſations. Alas, we little remembered that wo is pronounced againſt ſo doing, Iſa. xlv. 9—Wo unto him that ſtriveth with his Maker; ſhall the clay ſay to him that faſhioneth it, What makeſt thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

(4) We on the matter, take ſin's part againſt God; we either juſtify it, or extenuate its evil, and alledge, by our murmurings, that God is unrighteous to puniſh ſuch ſmall ſins with ſuch heavy afflictions

(5) We virtually queſtion God's power to reach us a a greater blow, when we enter the liſts with God, and contend with our Maker; is it not in effect to ſay, we know how to reduce him to our terms, or make our party good againſt him.

(6.) We diſparage his wiſdom, and take upon us to be his counſellors, as if we could inſtruct him better in the management of affairs, and teach him what is fit to be done with his creatures. Hear what the Lord ſaith, Job xi. 2 - Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty, inſtruct him? He that reproveth God, let him anſwer it. Murmuring is a reproving of God, and a charging him with ill conduct, ſaying, in effect, with Abſalom, There is none that takes care to order mens affairs: O that I were king of the world! then ſhould things be better ordered than they now are. So blaſphemous is the language of our impatient murmurings. Let us therefore be aſhamed of them, and abhor ourſelves in duſt and aſhes for our fooliſhneſs in cenſuring the actions of the only wiſe God. Shall a poor ignorant paſſenger that underſtands not the uſe of the compaſs, be angry that the ſkilful pilot will not ſteer the veſſel according to his pleaſure?

(7.) We hereby ſlight and undervalue the riches of divine goodneſs, of which we have formerly ſhared, and do ſtill partake: Like fooliſh and pettiſh children, if they cannot have their will, or get ſome things they want, do

prefently throw away the things which they have, faying with unthankful Haman, *All this availeth me nothing.*

Laftly, I might add, This fin hath fome refemblance to hell itfelf; for there the damned do continually vex and torment themfelves with their fretting and impatient thoughts, which caufe them to break out in fearful rage and blafphemy againft God.

Queft. But how fhall we prevent fuch difcontented murmurings? for fometimes trouble is fo great, we cannot bear it patiently.

Anfw. God hath given you reafon, to bear rule over paffion, and furnifhed you with ftrong arguments to prevail againft difcontents. Why then fhould you be fo brutifh as to dethrone reafon, and fuffer fenfe and paffion to govern in you? Are you not chriftians, and fworn to live according to the rules of that excellent religion? Why then do you act fo contrary to your profeffion and engagaments?

Befides what I have already faid, I fhall add fome few remedies more, for the cure of this murmuring diftemper.

1*ft.* Look on thy murmurings as worfe than all thy pains and troubles whatfoever; thofe are but afflictions from God, but thefe are fins grievous and provoking unto God.

2*dly.* Remember the judgments which murmuring hath brought down from heaven upon finners. Miriam was fmitten with leprofy for it; Dathan and Abiram were fwallowed up alive; fiery ferpents, plagues, and exclufion from Canaan, were Ifrael's judgments for this fin, 1 Cor. x. 10—Neither murmur ye, as fome of them murmured, and were deftroyed of the deftroyer. The arrows which murmurers fhoot againft heaven, do foon return upon their own heads.

3*dly.* Whatever thy fufferings are for the prefent, yet ftill believe thy cafe might be worfe. The troubles that light upon the body are nothing fo terrible as thofe that light on the foul, Prov. xviii. 14—A wounded fpirit who can bear? They are nothing to what thy innocent Saviour fuffered upon the crofs, yea nothing to what fome martyrs have endured for the truths of the gofpel.

4*thly*. Get very low thoughts of yourself, and a deep sense of ill-deservings for sin. O! should a fire-brand of hell murmur for temporal afflictions?

5*thly*. Be still examining thyself, rather than censuring God. Doth God seem to neglect thee, say alas! it is most just! Have not I neglected him, and given a deaf ear to his calls many a day?

6*thly*. Bear in mind that these troubles will not last, there is a great change near; either they will issue in life or death. If life, you will be ashamed you had no more patience when sick; if death, then if you belong to Christ, it will give a finishing stroke to all troubles and complaints, and heaven will make amends for all. But if you be not in Christ, whatever your afflictions be now, troubles a thousand times worse are abiding you in another world; death will turn thy crosses into pure unmixed curses; and then, how gladly wouldest thou return to thy former afflicted state, and purchase it at any rate, were there any possibility of such a return? You now fly out in a passion, and say, you are not able to bear what you complain of: But consider, if you will not obediently bear God's rods now, you will then bear more, whether you will or not; and God will make you able to bear more, when there will never be any hopes of relief.

7*thly*. Study to give vent to thy sorrows in a way of prayer and praise. An oven stopped is the more hot within; but the breath of prayer or praise gives ease. If we did complain more to God, we should complain less of God. What a mercy is it that you have still God to go to? improve the privilege, confess unworthiness, and beg the grace of patience and submission out of Christ's full treasures, Be also praising God for mercies received; and however bad thy case is, bless God it it is not in hell, you are in the land of hope.

CHAPTER III.

Containing ſpecial Directions to the Children of God, when under Sickneſs or any other affliction.

DIRECTION I. *Let believers eſpecially guard againſt fainting or deſponding under God's afflicting hand.*

THIS is an exhortation which God in a peculiar manner directs unto his children, Heb. xii. 5—My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. There are two extremes mentioned, deſpiſing and fainting. I ſpoke of the firſt before, in Chap. II. Direct. II. It is a duty to feel our affliction, but a ſin to faint under in it. God's people may be ſaint under their trials, when they ſink or deſpond, or give way to fretting or repining under them. In the preceding Direction, I ſpoke of the evil of murmuring in general, here I ſhall ſpeak of the believers' faintings in particular.

I. I ſhall inquire whence their fainting under affliction doth proceed.

II. Bring ſome arguments and helps againſt this evil.

1. As to the firſt, Whence theſe faintings in believers do proceed. 1*ſt*. They proceed from the grievouſneſs of their affliction, and the heavineſs of their burden, which is ready to amaze and ſtagger their thoughts, and ſink their ſpirits with fear and deſpondency. Hence did the Pſalmiſt complain, Pſal. lx. 3—Thou haſt ſhewed thy people hard things: thou haſt made us to drink the wine of aſtoniſhment. And Pſalm lxix. 2—I ſink in deep mire, where there is no ſtanding; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

2*dly*. From the ſmallneſs of their ſpiritual ſtrength, and particularly the weakneſs of their faith, Prov. xxiv. 10—If thou faint in the day of adverſity, thy ſtrength is ſmall. Whence was it that Peter fainted and began to ſink in the waters, but from the weakneſs of his faith? Matth. xiv. 30, 31. We know not our ſtrength, till it be tried. Sometimes we have ſuch a conceit of it, that

we think, like Peter, we can walk upon a ſea of trouble; but in a little, behold, ſome ſurpriſing blaſt aſſaults our confidence, and then we faint, or cry out with him, Help, Lord, or elſe we periſh. Peter reckoned only upon the ſea, but he did not think of the boiſterous wind; and he looked to dangers, more than to the power that was to carry him through them.

3*dly*. From their impatience of delay, when deliverance is long a coming, it is not eaſy to wait God's leiſure, and to keep the heart from deſperate concluſions, Pſalm xxxi. 22—I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes.

4*thly*. From the power of ſatan's temptations and furious aſſaults. When ſatan is ſet looſe in time of affliction to throw in his fiery darts, the believer is ready to faint, and ſay, as Pſalm lxxvii. 8—Is his mercy clean gone for ever, &c.

5*thly*. For their weariſome conflicts with a body of death and an ill heart. Theſe in time of affliction do add affliction to the afflicted.

6*thly*. From long and great deſertions. When God hides his face from the believer in affliction, his ſoul faints under it, as in Iſa. xliv. 14—Zion hath ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, my God hath forgotten me.

7*thly*. From the conſcioufneſs of their guilt, and ill deſervings before God, upon the account of old ſins, abuſe of mercies, and untender walking before God. Affliction doth revive old ſins, as with Job, Job xiii. 26—Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, and makeſt me to poſſeſs the ſins of my youth. His old ſins, and guilt of his youthful follies now revived upon him, and ſat cloſe to his conſcience, which occaſioned his fainting under his burden.

Laſtly. Great afflictions do frequently cloud the believer's graces and evidences for heaven, and diſcover their corruptions; whereby they are made to ſink under their trial. They ſee more unbelief, impatience, diſtruſt and enmity to God in them, than they ſaw before: Whereby they are ſometimes tempted to raze the foundation, and ſay all their former attainments were but deluſions, and

their professions but hypocrisy. These things make afflictions sometimes very heavy and sinking to the people of God.

II. In the next place, for preventing and helping this evil of fainting under afflictions, let believers consider,

1*st*. These heavy trials are all needful for you. Deep waters are not more needful to carry a ship into the haven, than great afflictions are to carry the vessels of our souls into the port of bliss. Strong wind and thunder are frightful, but they are necessary to purge the air. One of the sharpest calamities that ever befel Israel, was the Babylonish captivity, yet even this was in mercy to them; for the Lord saith, Jer. xxiv. 5—I have sent them out of this place, into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. Strange! Of freemen, to be made prisoners, and that in a strange land among the heathen; to be removed far from their own houses, vineyards, friends, nay, and from the temple of God and his ordinances; and yet all this for their good! why? they were hereby effectually weaned and broke off from their darling sin of idolatry.

2*dly*. Consider, that your affliction, however heavy it be, will soon have an end; Isa. lvii. 16—For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. The goldsmith will not let his gold lie any longer in the furnace than it is purified. The wicked have a sea of wrath to drink: but, O drooping believer, take comfort; you have but a cup of affliction, which will soon be exhausted. The time is near when all thy trials shall have an end: In heaven there is no cross, no complaint, no tears nor sorrows for ever.

3*dly*. Faint not, O child of God; for these afflictions are all the hell which thou shalt have; thou hast nothing to fear hereafter. Judas had two hells; one in time, by terror in his conscience, another after this life, which endures to eternity: but all the hell a believer hath, is but this light affliction, which is but for a moment.

4*thly*. Desponding or murmuring in affliction, is evil in any, but in none is it so bad as in the children of God. It doth very ill become their covenants, their privileges,

their hopes. Have they resigned and given up themselves and all they have to God, by a solemn covenant, and will they fret when he disposeth of them? Didst thou not say, O believer, in the day when thy heart was stung with sin, and the terrors of God made thee afraid, O let me have Jesus Christ for my Saviour and portion, and I will be content, though I should be stricken with boils like Job, or beg my bread with Lazarus? Now, God tries thee, if thou wilt stand to thy word: O beware of retracting. Hath not that soul enough, who hath an all-sufficient God for his portion? If God be thine in covenant, that comprehends all things.

5thly. It doth discompose and unfit the soul for any duty. It is ill-sailing in a storm, so it is ill-praying when the heart is in a storm of disquiet and despondency.

6thly. Your fainting under affliction, and carrying as if the consolations of God were small, is enough to stumble others at religion, and make them call the truth of it in question. When they see those that profess religion, and have oft declared that their rejoicing is in Christ Jesus as their portion, begin to sink and despond under outward affliction, O may they not be tempted to say, Where is the truth of religion? Where are those divine supports and consolations which we have often heard of?

Lastly. O then seek to get faith revived, and strengthened, and resolve with Job to trust in God, though he should slay you. This would be of noble use to keep the heart from sinking under pressures of affliction, as the Psalmist found it to his sweet experience Psalm xxvii. 13—I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

III. I come to answer some objections or excuses of fainting believers, which they do commonly alledge as the ground of their discouragement in their afflictions.

Object. I. "O (saith one) my afflictions are not ordinary: they are sore pressures I lie under, and of various kinds too."

Answ. 1. O believer, God hath taken the ordering of your lot in his own hand, and he knows what is fittest for you. Should a man be left to carve out his own por-

tion, it would soon appear he would be his own greatest enemy. We would all be for the dainties of pleasure and prosperity, which would not be for our soul's health; as children think green fruit the best diet, because they please their taste; but their parents are wiser to keep them from them.

2*dly*. God may see that you have many and strong lusts to be subdued, and that you need many and sore afflictions to bring you down. Yoor pride and obstinacy of heart may be strong, your distempers deeply rooted, and therefore the physic must be proportioned to them; as with the Israelites, Psalm cvii. 11, 12—Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsels of the Most High: therefore he brought down their heart with labour. O believer, your God and Father, that hath the mixing of your cup and portion, is a wise and skilful physician, who knows your constitution and your need, 1 Pet. i. 6—If need be you are in heaviness through manifold temptations. And as he knows your need, so he understands your strength, 1 Cor. x. 13—Faithful is he, that will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able.

3*dly*. God sends great and sore troubles, that you may have the more experience of God's wisdom and mercy in your support and deliverance, Psalm lxxii. 20—Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken and bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

Object. II. "But (saith another) my affliction is singular; there was never any in my condition."

Answ. 1*st*. It is very ordinary for every man in great distress, to reckon his case singular, because he feels best what is nearest himself, but is a stranger to what his neighbour feels.

2*dly*. This suggestion is one of satan's devices, that he may tempt a child of God to question his Father's love; but he is a liar and not to be credited in what he saith: For others of your brethren have been afflicted in the same kind and degree, if not worse, 1 Peter, v. 9—Know-

ing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world.

3dly. Whatever your caſe be, you muſt own your ſufferings are not ſo great as your ſins. The trials of God's people in Babylon were ſingular; yet Ezra owns, Ezra ix. 13—Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve. If our provoked Judge ſhall in his clemency ſend us to Babylon inſtead of hell, we have no cauſe to complain.

4thly. But, O child of God, however thou complaineſt of the ſingularity of afflictions now, all ſuch complaints will be taken out of thy mouth ere long, and that time is near when thou ſhalt be made to wonder at the wiſdom of God in guiding ſo many ſons and daughters to glory, through ſuch a variety of trials, exerciſes, afflictions, and temptations, and made to ſay as thoſe in Mark vii. 37—He hath done all things well.

Object. III. "But, ſaith one, my affliction is long continued, and I ſee no out-gate; and how can I but faint under it?"

Anſw. 1*ſt.* It is not ſo long as your ſins deſerve; for in juſtice it might be for ever, it might be, the worm that never dieth and the fire that is never quenched.

2*dly.* Your ſufferings on earth are not ſo long as your reward in heaven, Rom. viii. 18—For I reckon that the ſufferings of the preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us.

3*dly.* No length or continuance of affliction here ſhould hinder a believer's comfort, if we take a view of our head and pattern Jeſus Chriſt. How long did his afflictions continue! No end was put to them, till he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghoſt. Though he was the Son of God, yet from the hour of his birth to the moment of his death, from his manger to his croſs, his afflictions ſtill increaſed and he ended his days in the midſt of them. Now, Chriſt is the head of the church, and your great repreſentative, O believers, into a conformity with whom you are predeſtinated: be content then to be like your head and pattern, to have no eaſe or reſt from afflictions, till you lie down in the grave; it is "there the wicked

ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary be at reſt," Job iii. 17.

4thly. Remember that your afflictions are a part of Chriſt's croſs, which your loving Redeemer hath contrived for your good, and hath appointed you to take up and bear with him. Now love to Chriſt ſhould keep you from wearying to bear off a part of Chriſt's croſs, eſpecially when he himſelf bears the heavieſt end of it, nay, bears you and your croſs both. It is ſaid of Jacob, Gen. xxix. 20, that he ſerved ſeven years for Rachel, and they ſeemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her. And, ſhall we not endure a few years affliction for our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who lived a life of ſorrows, and died a curſed death for our ſakes? Had we more love to Chriſt, his croſs would not be ſo tedious to us.

5thly. Should it not be good news to thee, that there is a deliverance for thee at death from all thy troubles, and that this time is haſtening and very near? Be not anxious for an outgate here in time, for that ſavours too much of unbelief and love to the world. Doth it not ſeem to ſay, that you would be better content to be turned back again to the ſtormy tumultuous ſea of this world, than to be ſafely landed at your reſt above? That you would be gladder of a few temporal mercies on earth, than to enter upon your eternal inheritance with Chriſt?

Object. IV. "No wonder (ſaith one) that I faint under my affliction, for I want theſe conſolations and ſupports which God uſeth to reſerve for afflicted ſaints."

Anſw. 1ſt. If God be preſently chaſtening you for your ſins, you muſt be content to feel the bitterneſs of ſin, before you can taſte of the ſweetneſs of God's conſolations.

2dly. Can you ſay that your afflictions have duly humbled you, and fitted you for comfort? Have they yet brought you to a willingneſs to quit and renounce all your beloved ſins, and even to part with all your earthly enjoyments and comforts at God's call, and be content with God in Chriſt alone for your happineſs and portion? If this be not done, your afflictions have not had their due

effect, to prepare you for comfort, and till then you cannot expect it. You are in the hands of a wise and skilful physician, who will not too hastily heal and bind up your sores, so as to let them spoil and fester at the bottom

3*dly*. Though you have no sensible consolations from God in your present trials, yet you must still labour to keep in the way of duty, and live by faith on his promises. Believe firmly that God is good to them that love him, and that there is forgiveness with him to the penitent sinner. And if all stars withdraw their light whilst you are in God's way, then assure yourself the sun is near the arising.

Object. V. "But my affliction is such, that it disables me from duty, and makes me useless and unprofitable; and this makes me faint under my burden."

Answ. 1*st*. God sends afflictions never to unfit, but to quicken you for the performance of duty; to make you repent more thoroughly, pray more fervently, flee to Christ more earnestly, and mind heaven more intensely.

2*dly*. If it be your duty to others that your affliction incapacitates you for, then remember, if God in his providence disable you for that, it is no longer a duty incumbent on you, and you must not grudge if God take you off, and put others in your room. God is a free and sovereign agent, and will be tied to no mean or instrument whatsomever for carrying on his work.

DIRECTION II. *Let all the children of God be exemplary in patience and submission, to God, under their affliction.*

I TREATED of patience, and gave some motives and helps to it, to all afflicted persons in general, Chap. II. Direct. V. But here I shall bring some special argument to Christian patience and submission proper for believers. You that God hath done so much for beyond others, ought to shine in this grace of patience, and be examples to others for it, when God chastens you, though with very sore affliction.

1*st*. Study patience under affliction; for it is the com-

mon path and beaten road to heaven, that all the ſaints have trod, who have gone thither before you. Behold the print of the foot-ſteps of all the cloud of witneſſes in this road; and would ye be ſingular, and chooſe a way of your own? When God ſolemnly renewed his covenant with Abraham, and he had prepared the ſacrifice, whereby it was to be ratified and confirmed, God made a ſmoking furnace to paſs betwixt the pieces of the ſacrifice, Gen. xv. 17. to let him know that there was a furnace of affliction attending the covenant of grace and peace, and all that entered thereto. God has appointed that all the ſtones of this ſpiritual and heavenly building ſhall be hewed and poliſhed by affliction here; and we are not to think that God's ordinary way will be changed for us. We muſt not think to walk on roſes, when ſo many worthies have marched through briars and thorns to heaven.

2*dly*. Conſider, that the greateſt afflictions you meet with are conſiſtent with the love of God, nay, ſpring from his love to you. Every ſanctified rod is a gift and royal donation ſent by the hand of God to you, Phil. i. 29—To you it is given, in behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake. Now ſurely, if we looked on the croſs as a gift, an honour, an advantage, and bleſſing, we would bear it patiently, Pſalm xciv. 12, Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord. O believer, thy temporal croſs comes from the ſame love that thy eternal crown comes from, according to Rev. iii. 19, 21. Men will not take pains to correct ſtubborn ſervants, but will turn them out of doors; but love conſtrains them to chaſtiſe their ſons. God out of hatred lets many a ſinner go unpuniſhed in this world: for, why ſhould he prune or dreſs the tree which he intends for the fire; the malefactor eſcapes ſcourging that is condemned to the gallows, Job xxi. 3—The wicked is reſerved to the day of deſtruction; they ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath. But it is far otherwiſe with the children of God. That is a ſtrange word which Job hath, Job vii. 17, 18—What is man that thou ſhouldeſt magnify him; and that thou ſhouldeſt ſet thine heart upon him: And that thou ſhouldeſt viſit him every morning, and try

him every moment? Now, if we compare this place with others in the context, we will ſee how he acknowledgeth that the moſt overwhelming diſtreſs proceeds from the love and care of God, yea, from his fixing his heart on him, to magnify him, and do him good; and that for this end he doth chaſten him every morning, and try him every moment; and that with ſuch afflictions as for the preſent are ſo far from being joyous, as that they give the ſoul no reſt, but even make the man weary of his life; as he expreſſeth what effects his affliction had on himſelf, Yea, it may be obſerved in the Providence of God from the foundation of the world, that thoſe who have had moſt afflictions have had moſt grace, and the moſt eminent teſtimonies of acceptance with God. Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, had the moſt afflictions of any; and yet the Father always loved him, and was well pleaſed with him.

3*dly*. Conſider the bright examples of patience which God ſets before you in his word. Beſides that of his dear ſon, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of which I ſpoke before; conſider the patience of Job, when he was ſtript of all earthly comforts, and laid under the greateſt afflictions, yet he calmly falls down and worſhips God, Job i. 21. and ſaid—Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job ſinned not, nor charged God fooliſhly. Conſider the patience of David, when he was driven from his throne, from his houſe, and from God's ſanctuary, and all this by his own ſon: yet how ſubmiſſive is he to God? 2 Sam. xv. 26—Behold, here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good to him. And when Shimei curſed him, and threw ſtones at him, he patiently bore it, and would ſuffer no harm to be done him for it, ſaying, as in 2 Sam. xvi. 11—Let him alone, and let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him. Conſider the patience of holy Eli, when, though he heard ſuch news as like a ſudden clap of thunder made the ears of ſuch as heard it, to tingle, and their hearts to tremble, yet he calmly and quietly ſubmitted to it, 1 Sam. iii. 18—It is the Lord, let him

do what ſeemeth him good. He doth not fly in God's face in a paſſion, but falls down at his feet in a humble ſubmiſſion. Obſerve alſo the wonderful patience of Aaron, when God afflicted him very ſore he is ſilent and ſubmiſſive under the Lord's hand, Lev. x. 3—And Aaron held his peace. If we conſider the greatneſs of the puniſhment, we will ſee the more cauſe to commend the greatneſs of his patience. 1. Aaron loſt his children; not his eſtate or worldly ſubſtance, but his children, theſe are a part of a man's bowels; other earthly loſſes are not comparable to this; therefore it was that ſatan, that cunning enemy, reſerved the loſs of Job's children to the laſt onſet, as his great maſter-piece and ſharpeſt attack. How ſadly did Rachel lament and weep for her children! Matth. ii. 18—Aaron held his peace. 2. Aaron loſt his two ſons at once. How pathetically did David bewail the loſs of one ſon, 2 Sam. xviii. 33—O my ſon Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon, &c. yet Aaron loſt both his ſons together, and ſaith not one word; He held his peace. Aaron loſt them by a ſudden death, of which he had no warning: Sickneſs uſually prepares men for the ſtroke that is coming by death; but Aaron met with a ſurpriſing blow, yet he held his peace. 4. Aaron's ſons were not taken away by an ordinary ſtroke of God's hand, but by an extraordinary ſupernatural rod; for it is ſaid—There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord, Lev. x. 2. He loſt them in ſuch a manner as might ſpeak forth God's anger; now, a religious father had rather looſe all his children in the favour of God, than one child in his anger; yet, whatever were the bitter ingredients of this cup, Aaron was not impatient againſt God that mixed it for him, but held his peace, becauſe God did it.

4*thly*. To engage you to patience under your trials, do but compare your caſe with that of others. Do not ſay there is none afflicted as you are; for there are many far deeper plunged in the waters of Mara than you are; ſome are ſtill upon the rack and ſpend their whole days and years in continual fighting and ſtruggling; as in Pſalm xxxi. 10—My life is ſpent with grief and my years with

ſighing. Have you ſore diſtreſs in your bodies? others have grievous wounds in their ſouls. Do you bear the wrath of man? others bear the wrath of God. You have but one ſingle trial, others have many twiſted together. Some are ſtript of all comforts, you have comfort ſtill remaining. You may have had many ſad things in your trial, but you have not ground as yet to complain as the Pſalmiſt doth, Pſalm xlii. 7—All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Take a view of what the Son of God, what the apoſtles, and what the martyrs and other worthies have endured. They had trial of cruel mockings, ſcourgings, bonds and impriſonments: They wandered in deſarts, in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented. They were tempted, they were crucified, ſtoned to death, ſawn aſunder, ſlain with the ſword, &c. And yet how well did they take with the croſs? ſaith Paul—We glory in tribulation, Rom. v. 2. And what ſaith James? James i. 2—My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. As if he had ſaid, Rejoice aye more and more, that you are afflicted: God is magnifying you, he is viſiting you, doing you good, taking the more pains on you, and fitting you for glory.

5*thly*. The conſideration of God's former mercies and kindneſſes to you, ſhould engage you to patience in trouble, and make you bluſh to take any thing ill out of God's hand. Thus Job taught his impatient wife, Job ii. 10—What? ſhall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil? O believer, let not thy afflictions cauſe thee to bury thy mercies in oblivion.—Has not God brought thee from ſatan's family, and put you among his children; and will you forget to undervalue that hour? Hath he ſtruck off thy fetters, taken off thy priſon-garments, and ſet you at liberty; and will you be unthankful? Hath he given thee Chriſt for thy treaſure and portion, and entitled you to his unſearchable riches; and will you be diſcontented? hath he given you the graces of his ſpirit, which are more precious than rubies; and will you quarrel when he ſmites in ſome outward things? hath he made you an heir of glory, and pro-

vided eternal mansions above for you; and will you be fretful for want of some trifles here? The view Moses had of the recompence of reward in heaven, caused him to choose to suffer affliction patiently with the people of God.

6*thly*. The time of affliction is usually God's gracious trying season with his people, in the time of their rarest comforts and sweetest foretastes of heaven, according to 2 Cor. i. 5. Paul and Silas did never sing more joyfully than when they were laid in the inner prison, with their backs torn with scourges, and their feet fast in the stocks, Acts xvi. 24. And when was it that Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder that reached betwixt heaven and earth, but at the time when he was in a destitute case, forced to lie in the open field, having no canopy but the heavens, and no pillow but a stone? When was it that the three children saw Christ in the likeness of the Son of Man, walking with them, but when they were in the furnace, and when it was hotter than ordinary? When was it that Ezekiel had a vision of God, but when sitting solitary by the river Chebar in the land of his captivity? When was it that John got a glorious vision of Christ, but when he was an exile in the isle of Patmos? And, when was it that Stephen saw the heavens opened, and Christ standing at the right hand of God pleading for him, but when they were stoning and bruising him to death? So that the most remarkable experiences of God's kindness, that believers get in this world, have been traced to the time of affliction: the consideration whereof should move every christian to wait on the Lord, and bear his cross with patience.

7*thly*. When you are helped to christian patience and submission under God's hand, it doth contribute much to the credit of religion, and to the conviction of the world, that there is a certain reality in the truths of the gospel, and a great efficacy in the grace of God, which bears you up, and carries you through, beyond the strength of nature.

Lastly. O believer, bear up with patience under the cross, for thou hast not long to bear it. God's wrath on

the church abideth but for a moment, yea, a little moment, Isa. xxvi. 20—Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. Surely a moment, a little moment, which is the smallest part of time, will soon be over; and wilt thou not have patience for a moment? The Psalmist supported himself with this consideration, Psalm ciii. 9—He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever. The time of indignation will soon be overpast, and the time of consolation will succeed. O believer, the end of all thy trials is near, think on it, and look for it. Is it bodily pain or sickness that is thy affliction? then consider the end of it will be either life or death; if death, then what thou suffereſt is the last brunt, bear it patiently. These enemies you now see, you will see them again no more. In the mansions above there is no pain nor crying; the inhabitants there shall never say they are sick; and one hour with them will make thee forget all thy momentary afflictions. If the issue shall be life, you will be ashamed, when well, that you had no more patience whilst sick.

I shall close this direction with the words of the apostle James, James v. 10—Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

DIRECTION III. *Let believers be much employed in the praises of God, while they are under affliction, by sickness or otherwise.*

AS we should bless the Lord at all times, and keep up good thoughts of God on every occasion, so especially in the time of affliction. Hence we are commanded to glorify the Lord in the fires, Isa. xxiv. 15. And this the three children did in the hottest furnace. So Job blessed God when he had taken away his greatest com-

forts, Job i. 21. And this is agreeable to that command, 1 Theſſ. v. 18—In every thing give thanks. I grant indeed we cannot give thanks for affliction, as afflicton, but either as it is the means of ſome good to us, or as the gracious hand of God is ſome way remarkable therein towards us. In this reſpect there is no condition on this ſide of hell, but we have cauſe to praiſe God in, even in the greateſt calamities. Hence it was that David, when he ſpeaks of his affliction, Pſalm cxix. 67, adds preſently—Thou art good and doſt good. And he declares, ver. 65—Thou haſt dealt well with thy ſervant, O Lord, according unto thy word. Hence Paul and Silas praiſed God when they were ſcourged and impriſoned.

Well then, O believer, obey the command of thy God, and imitate his worthies, by praiſing God under thy affliction. 1. This practice would be very pleaſant and acceptable to God; for as muſic is ſweeteſt on the waters, ſo praiſe is moſt agreeable to God from an afflicted ſoul on the waters of trouble. It is a ſign of a noble and generous ſpirit, to ſing the praiſes of God's goodneſs, while his hand is afflicting us. Diſtreſs and danger will make the wickedeſt to pray; but it is a principle of love and gratitude that makes the ſoul to praiſe. 2. It would bring credit to religion, to ſee ſaints thankful and praiſing God under the croſs; it would make people ſay, ſurely they find ſweetneſs in God and his ways, that we ſee not; they have meat to eat that the world knows not of. And this would invite ſtrangers to come and try a religious life. The joyful praiſes of the martyrs at the ſtakes, and in the flames, made people go home with love to religion in their hearts. 3. If the iſſue of your affliction ſhould be death, this employment of praiſe would be a ſweet preparative to fit and diſpoſe you for the work of heaven. Uſe yourſelf much to this heavenly life, and be oft trying to ſing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb in time of ſickneſs and trouble; and this would ſweeten the thoughts of death, and make you incline to be there, where praiſe is their conſtant work.

Queſt. What ſhould be the ſubject of a believer's thankſgiving and praiſe under affliction?

Anſw. He hath manifold grounds of praiſe: as—1*ſt.* Upon the account of God's mercies to him through the by-paſt part of his life. His mercies to thee, O believer, cannot be numbered; compare thy mercies with thy croſſes, and thou wilt ſoon ſee thy receivings are far greater than thy ſufferings. Thou haſt had many days of plenty for one day of ſcarcity, many days of liberty for one day of ſtraits, many days of health for one day of ſickneſs. And are not theſe to be remembered with praiſe?

2*dly.* And more particularly, in thy greateſt affliction, thou haſt ground to praiſe God, O believer, thou waſt born in a land of light, where thou hadſt the means of converſion to God, and acquaintance with Jeſus Chriſt; and eſpecially, that God of his free grace made theſe means effectual to work a ſaving change on you, when others were paſſed by. Is not this matter of praiſe, that he opened your eyes, humbled your ſoul, and renewed your heart? that he gave you Chriſt, forgave your ſins, and adopted you into his family, and made you an heir of heaven? Oh! what a ſad caſe would it be, if you were yet in your ſins, and in the bondage of Satan; if you had converſion work to begin to, if you had your faith and juſtification and intereſt in Chriſt all to ſeek, and all your preparations for heaven to make: if you had all this to do with a ſick and pained body, and a diſordered mind that cannot command one ſettled thought with the terrible view of death and eternity before your eyes. This is the caſe that God in juſtice might have left you to.—Well then, ought you not to praiſe God, that ſent his Holy Spirit in time to determine your heart to cloſe with Chriſt, and be reconciled to that God you are ſhortly to appear before; and that theſe ſins, which now would have been your terror are all forgiven and waſhed away, through the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.

3*dly.* Is it not matter of praiſe in thy greateſt trouble, that thou haſt a great High Prieſt, that is paſſed into the heavens, to provide a manſion with the Father for thee, and to receive thy ſoul when ſeparated from the body? that, where he is, there you may be alſo!

4thly. You have cauſe to bleſs God, that he ſends ſuch ſuitable harbingers, as ſickneſs and trouble, to tell you that death is approaching, and that he ſhould take ſuch pains on you to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone. Many of God's people that have been averſe to dying at the beginning of a ſickneſs, by the increaſe and continuance of it, have been brought to be well ſatisfied to depart that they may be with Chriſt.

5thly. You have ground to bleſs God for timing your afflictions ſo well, that he ſent them not till he ſaw you ſtood in need of them; he ſaw a need for them, as 1 Peter, i. 6. and he would not let you want what was needful.

6thly. You ought to praiſe God, that he mitigates your trials, and proportions your burden for your back, that when he takes a rod to you, he hath not made it a ſcorpion; that when he deprived you of one comfort and enjoyment, he did not ſtrip you of all, and leave you wholly comfortleſs; that when you ſuffer in one thing, he hath not made you to ſuffer in every thing, in ſoul, body, eſtate, relations, and all together; that inſtead of afflicting you for a few days, he hath not made your whole life a ſcene of miſery and affliction. Bleſs God that he puniſheth you leſs, unſpeakably leſs, than your iniquities deſerve; that your ſick bed is not in hell, your fever is not everlaſting burnings, your pain is not the gnawing of the worm that never dieth.

7thly. You have cauſe to praiſe God, that your affiction is not ſo great as that of ſome others, and even of ſome that were very dear to God, and had not grieved him ſo much as you have done. Remember the trials that ſome have endured, of "whom the world was not worthy," which I mentioned before as recorded Heb. xi. Yours are nothing to theirs, nothing to Job's, that eminent ſervant of God. Obſerve the difference with thankſgiving and praiſe.

8thly. You have reaſon to bleſs God for the ſtrength and ſupport he hath given you under affliction. You would ſoon ſink and ſuccumb under a ſmall burden, if he did not ſupport you by his grace; but, when he bears

you up, the heavieſt trial ſhall not ſink you. Have you not met with ſome afflictions, you have thought, at a diſtance you would never have been able to bear up under them? yet, when they have come, you have found them light and portable, by reaſon of the ſtrength God hath beſtowed on you.

9thly. You have ground of thankſgiving that the mercies and bleſſings which God hath continued with you, are far greater than thoſe he hath taken from you; for though he hath taken this and that temporal bleſſing from you, yet he hath not taken Chriſt from you, nor his holy Spirit from you; he hath not ſeparated you from his love, nor cut you off from all hopes of heaven. However great your trials be, yet ſtill there is a mixture of mercy in your lot, which ſhould be matter of praiſe.

Laſtly. You have cauſe, O believer, to bleſs God, that all the afflictions he brings on you are in love, and for your profit. All his ways are mercy and truth to you. If he ſmile, it is in mercy; and if he ſmite, it is in mercy. God may change his diſpenſations, but his heart is ſtill towards them, and the cords wherewith he ſcourgeth them, are cords of love. Their profit is the great thing he aims at, in all their chaſtiſements, Heb. xii. 10. He deſigns thereby to reclaim them from their wanderings, cut off proviſions for their luſts, make them pant and long for a better ſtate, and cauſe them to mend their pace toward it. Hence David ſaith—It is good for me that I was afflicted: For before I was afflicted, I went aſtray, but now I have learned to keep thy word, Pſalm cxix. 67, 71. From all which it appears you have manifold grounds of praiſe, even in the time of affliction.

DIRECTION IV. *Let the children of God, when viſited with ſickneſs, ſet about actual preparation for death and eternity.*

EVERY believer hath his main work done, and is always in a gracious ſtate, by reaſon of his union with Jeſus Chriſt, his reconciliation with God, through the merit of his blood, and the univerſal change that is

wrought in him by regenerating and ſanctifying grace; upon which account every child of God hath habitual preparation for meeting with death. Yet becauſe frequently, when ſickneſs cometh, there are many things out of order with them, that make death frightful and undeſirable, they muſt ſet about actual preparation for death, and ſeek to have their ſouls made ready for the bridegroom's coming. And here I ſhall ſhew wherein this actual readineſs of believers doth conſiſt, which ſhould be their proper work and exerciſe in time of ſickneſs, eſpecially when ſickneſs is lingering, and doth not deſtroy the uſe of reaſon. But beware of thinking that this ſhould be delayed till ſickneſs come: No, no, the time of health is the main working ſeaſon, and all ſhould be then by-hand as far as poſſible. But, ſeeing even the beſt generally find much to do at the very laſt, I ſhall give the following advices for your actual preparation.

1*ſt*. Seeing ſickneſs is a mean appointed of God for his people's good, and particularly for fitting them for a better world; labour earneſtly to reap the benefit of ſickneſs, ſeek God's bleſſing upon it, that thereby you may be helped to diſcover more of the evil of ſin, that you may hate and abhor it the more, and that you may ſee the more effectually the vanity and vexation of the world, and get your heart looſed from all the things of time, and brought to a willingneſs to be diſſolved, that you may be with Chriſt.

2*dly*. Seeing the time of ſickneſs and death is the time of your greateſt need, beg earneſtly of God, for your Redeemer's ſake, ſuch ſpecial aſſiſtance, influences and operations of his holy ſpirit, as he knows needful for you in your preſent low and weak condition, in order to carry on and complete your actual readineſs for meeting with himſelf at death, and entering into the inviſible world, and being fixed unalterably in your everlaſting ſtate.

3*dly*. Renew the exerciſe of repentance, and of faith in the blood of Chriſt, for removing all grounds of quarrel and controverſy betwixt God and your ſoul. And in order thereto, review your paſt life, and look into your heart alſo, and ſearch out every predominant ſin and idol

of jealouſy; for if there be any iniquity regarded in your heart, and unrepented of by you, it may occaſion no little anguiſh and bitteneſs of ſpirit in a dying hour. Well, when thou haſt diſcovered ſin, humbly confeſs and bewail it before the Lord, and aſk forgivneſs for it thro' the blood of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, which cleanſeth from all ſin. Yea, make confeſſion of all thy ſins, and particularly reflect upon the fountain and ſpring of them, *viz.* thy *original ſin.* Know the plague of thine own heart, and mourn over it, mourn for the loſs and mis-ſpending of much precious time. Mourn for the unprofitableneſs of thy life. Now when the ax is laid to the root of the tree by ſickneſs, it is high time to mourn for your unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace and waterings of the holy Spirit. Mourn for your ſinning againſt ſuch light and love as have been many days displayed to you in the glorious goſpel. And, in a ſpecial manner, mourn for your ſins of omiſſion, which commonly are but little minded by us. Thus mourn for all thy ſins, till thou doſt water thy couch with tears. It is moſt ſuitable that death ſhould find every man, even every child of God, in the exerciſe of mourning and repentance: for they that thus ſow in tears ſhall eternally reap in joy. But ſee that your tears run much in the goſpel channel, and flow from the believing views of a crucified Chriſt, whom you have pierced by your ſins. And in the midſt of your mourning, be ſtill aiming to take faith's grips of the clefts of this rock, for ſheltering thy ſoul from the guilt of by paſt ſins; ſay, "Lord Jeſus, I have no refuge but thy wounds, no fountain but thy blood, no covert but thy righteouſneſs. And ſeeing thou freely makeſt offer of thy merits for my protection and inviteſt even the chief of ſinners to come unto thee, ſaying, *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved;* Lord, I embrace the offer, and flee to thee to cover me." O believer do this, not once or twice, but do it a hundred times over: do it as long as thou haſt breath to draw in the world. Be ſtill breathing to the very laſt, after a crucified Jeſus for relief againſt the guilt of ſin, which thou art always contracting; and wilt be till the earthly houſe of this tabernacle be diſſolved.

4*thly*, In order to your actual readineſs to go forth to meet the bridegroom, when coming to you by death, you muſt do as the wiſe virgins, Matth. xxv. 7. "Ariſe and trim your lamps." As it is not enough to have a fair lamp of a profeſſion, ſo it is not ſufficient to have only the oil of grace in the lamp; nay, or to have it burning in ſome degree. There is more requiſite at this time, that the ſoul may be actually ready; the lamp muſt be trimmed, which imports, 1*ſt* A ſupplying it with more oil; you muſt ſeek to have your grace increaſed, to have new degrees, new ſtrength, and new ſupplies of grace given you from God, to fit you for the laſt conflict with your ſpiritual enemies, and eſpecially the laſt enemy death. 2*dly* It imports a ſtirring up of the oil, and raiſing the wick ſome higher: So there muſt be an exhortation of grace, which may be in a low declining condition: you muſt endeavour to ſtir and raiſe it up to a more lively exercise, and more elevated acts. *Stir up the gift that is in thee:* make the oil burn clear and ſhine bright. Bring faith, love, repentauce and holy deſires, to a lively exercise. 3*dly*, This trimming imports the cleanſing of the lamp, by taking away the dead aſhes that hinder the light, or prevent its burning ſo clearly as otherwiſe it would. So you muſt labour to take away the dead aſhes of corruption, that hinder the ſhining of grace: remove all unbelief, earthlineſs, deadneſs, ſelf, and formality, and whatever elſe doth ſuppreſs the exercise of faith, love, and heavenly mindedneſs: let all theſe dead aſhes be ſnuffed away by repentance and mortification. As you ought to ſtrive earneſtly againſt all theſe heart-evils in time of health, ſo now labour to give them a dead ſtroke when death's harbinger gives you a ſummons.

5*thly*, Be diligent in gathering and ſumming up all your evidences for heaven and eternal life, that ſo you may not venture into the dark valley at an uncertainty. The comfort of dying will much depend on the clearneſs of your evidences; it is therefore your wiſdom to examine them carefully, and ſee if you can ſay, "I know in whom I have believed; I have conſented with my ſoul to the method of ſalvation laid down in the covenant of grace. I am deſirous

that the glory of it ſhould be eternally aſcribed to the free grace of God, and the creature be wholly abaſed in his ſight. I have choſen God for my portion, and Chriſt for my only Saviour: and the happineſs which I aim at is, to enjoy God in Chriſt for ever. And, in order thereto, I depend on the holy Spirit to apply the redemption which Jeſus Chriſt hath purchaſed to me, and to ſanctify me perfectly. There is no ſin but what I hate and deſire to part with. I would rather have more holineſs, than to have health and all the pleaſures in the world. I earneſtly deſire the flouriſhing of Chriſt's kingdom, and prefer Jeruſalem to my chiefeſt joy." If this your evidences, be clear, you may cheerfully take death by the cold hand, and welcome its grim meſſengers and long to be gone that you may be with Chriſt. You may ſay as Pſalm xxiii. 4. "When I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." You may go off the ſtage with the Pſalmiſt's words in your mouth, Pſalm xxxi 5. "Into thine hand I commit my ſpirit, for thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."

6thly, Labour earneſtly to overcome the love of life and fears of death, ſo as to be content to part with all things here at God's call. O believer, what is there in this earth to tempt thee to hang back, when God calls thee to depart? While you are here, you may lay your account with many loſſes, croſſes, diſappointments, griefs, and calamities of all ſorts. Friends will fail you, enemies will hate you, luſts will moleſt you, Satan will tempt you, and the world will deceive you. Death is the way that the deareſt of God's ſaints, and all the cloud of witneſſes have gone before you; yea, the Lord Jeſus your head hath trod this path and hath taken the ſting out of death, and hath paved a way through its dark valley that his people may ſafely follow him. Hath the Captain of your ſalvation gone before you, and will any of his ſoldiers ſhrink to follow him? Art thou content to remain always at the ſame diſtance from him, and to enjoy no more of his preſence than now you have? are you ſatisfied to live for ever with no more knowledge of God, no more love to Chriſt, no more holiness or hea-

venly-mindedness, than at present you have? Do you not groan under your remaining ignorance, deadness, wanderings, pride, passion, unbelief, selfishness, worldliness, and other sins and lusts that here beset you? And are you not desirous to go to the place where you will be eternally free of them all, and where you shall never complain of a dull, dead, and senseless frame of heart, or of any heart-weariness or wandering in duty any more? For the heart shall then be as a fixed pillar in the temple of God, and shall go no more out: the eternal adoration and praises of God shall be the soul's delight and element forever. By such considerations strive to conquer the fears of death and desires of life, which are often great clogs to the people of God in their preparations for sitting.

7thly, Be oft meditating upon the heavenly glory which shortly all believers will see and enjoy. Be much in the contemplation of the glorious company above; behold Christ upon his glorious throne, at the right hand of God and Abraham, David, Peter, Paul and all the rest of the faithful ones, with their crowns of righteousness, triumphing about their Redeemer. Think, O believer, how happy will that day be, when thou shalt meet with thy father, and brethren, and thou shalt see thy elder brother on the throne, ready to pass sentence in thy favour. What melody will that sentence sound in thine ears, *Come ye blessed of my Father, &c.* What frame wilt thou be in, when he sets the crown of glory on thy head! O eternally free love! wilt thou cry, "O Saviour, thou didst wear a crown of thorns, that I might wear a crown of glory; thou didst groan on the cross that I might now sing. Wonderful free love, that chused me, when thousands were passed by; that saved me from ruin, when my companions in sin must burn in hell for ever." Think how ravishing it will be to meet with your godly acquaintances in heaven, with whom you prayed, praised, and conversed here? Will you not then cry out, "O my brethren what a change is here! this glorious place is not like the poor dwellings we had on earth; this body, this soul, this state, this place, our

clothes, our company, our language, our thoughts, are far unlike those we had then? The bad hearts, the body of death, the corruptions and temptations we then complained of, are all now gone. We have no more fears of death or hell, no more use for repentance or prayer, faith or hope; these are now swallowed up in immediate vision, eternal love, joy and praise." And for thy help, O believer, in meditating on these things, read some part of the book of Revelations, or cause them to be read to you; and suppose with yourself you had been a companion with John in the Isle of Patmos, and had got such a view of the glorious Majesty, the bright thrones, the heavenly hosts, and shining splendour which he saw; the saints in their white robes, with crowns on their heads and palms in their hands, and heard them singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and trumpeting forth their eternal hallelujahs; what a heavenly rapture wouldst thou have been in? Well then, O believer, thou shalt shortly have clearer and sweeter sights than all those which John or any of the saints ever saw here upon earth. Surely that heavenly glory is a subject worthy of thy thoughts, and most suitable for thee to meditate on in time of sickness, and when in the view of death.

8thly, It would be also very suitable at this time, in order to your actual readiness for death, to be frequently looking out and longing for Christ's coming. As Abraham stood in his tent door, ready to go forth to meet the angels that were sent unto him, so should the believer keep himself in a waiting posture at this time. He should be like the loving wife, that longs and looks for the coming of her absent husband, according to his letters to her. By this time (thinks she) he will be at such a place, and against such a time he will be at another place, and so in a few days I will see him. In the character of believers, they are such as love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. They desire his coming, Cant. viii. 14. *Make haste, my beloved: even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Believers should look upon themselves as pilgrims here, wandering in a wilderness, absent from home, and at a distance from their father's house; and in time of af-

fliction it is very proper for them to be crying as David doth, Pſal. lv, 6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at reſt; I would haſten my eſcape from the windy tempeſt." "O when ſhall the time of my pilgrimage, and the days of my baniſhment be finiſhed, that I may get home to my country and and friends above! Oh! my Lord is gone, my Saviour hath left the earth, and entered into his glory! my friends and brethren are gone to their bleſſed reſt, where they ſee God's face, and ſing his praiſe for ever: and, how can I be willing to ſtay behind, when they are gone? Muſt I be ſinning here, when they are ſerving God above? Muſt I be groaning and ſighing, when they are triumphing and dividing the ſpoil? Surely I will look after them, and cry, O Lord, how long? when ſhall I be with my Saviour and my God?

DIRECT. V. *Let believers in time of ſickneſs endeavour all they can to glorify God, and edify thoſe that are about them, by their ſpeech and behaviour.*

IF ever a child of God be active to promote the honor and glory of God, it ſhould be in time of ſickneſs, and when death may be approaching. And there is good reaſon for it; for 1*ſt*, This may be the laſt opportunity that ever thou ſhalt have to do any thing for God, and therefore thou ſhouldſt ſtudy to improve it to the utmoſt. Heaven, to which thou art going, is the place where thou ſhalt receive thy reward; but thou canſt have no acceſs there to advance God's glory, by commending God and Chriſt, and religion to ſinners, or weak believers. Upon this account, many of God's children have been content to ſuſpend their heavenly happineſs for a while, and to ſtay upon the earth for ſome longer time. I have read of a certain martyr, when going to ſuffer, who expreſſed ſome ſorrow that he was going thither, where he ſhould do his God no more ſervice, to wit, in the ſenſe above explained. And of another, that ſaith, "If it were poſſible there could be place for any grief in heaven, it would ariſe from the Chriſtian's conſidering, that he did ſo little for God while he was upon the earth." Now

is the working ſeaſon, O believer, be buſy while it laſts, according to the example of thy bleſſed Saviour, John ix. 4. "I muſt work the work of him that ſent me, while it is day; for the night cometh wherein no man can work." This conſideration ſhould make thee beſtir thyſelf with the greateſt activity, like Samſon before his death, who, when he could have no more opportunity to ſerve God and his church, he cried to God, and ſaid, Judges xvi. 28, "O Lord God, remember me I pray thee, and ſtrengthen me this once." And, then, he bowed himſelf with all his might, to pull down the pillars of Dragon's temple, being willing to ſacrifice his life to the ruin thereof.

2*dly*, The holy ſpeech and carriage of dying believers, may, through the bleſſing of God, make deep impreſſion upon the hearts of unregenerate men that are witneſſes to them. Theſe who have derided the people of God for the ſtrictneſs of their lives, and deſpiſed their counſels and reproofs, as proceeding from humour or preciſeneſs; yet have begun to notice their words and actions, when they have ſeen them on ſick-beds, and on the borders of eternity, and to have other thoughts of religion and holineſs than formerly they had. Now they think the man is in good earneſt, and ſpeaketh the thoughts of his heart; and, if ever he can be believed, it muſt be now. It is moſt convincing to carnal perſons, to ſee believers bearing up with patience in their ſickneſs; to hear them ſpeaking good of God, commending his ways, and rejoicing in God as their portion, in midſt of all their ſharpeſt pains; to ſee them behaving as thoſe that are going to dwell with Chriſt, ſmiling and praiſing God, when friends are ſighing and weeping about them. This inclines them to think, ſurely there muſt be a reality in religion, there is a viſible difference betwixt the death of the righteous and of the wicked. Hence a wicked Baalam wiſhed to die the death of the righteous, and to have his laſt end like his. It left a conviction upon that young man's conſcience, who ſaid to his looſe companion, after they had viſited godly Ambroſe on his death-bed, and ſaw how cheerful he was, and triumphing over approaching death. "O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambroſe!" Nay, ſuch

ſights might draw them not only to deſire to die the death of the righteous, but alſo to reſolve to live their lives. If carnal men ſaw believers going off the ſtage with ſuch confidence and joy, as becomes theſe that are entering into eternal reſt with Chriſt, and theſe that are going out of a howling wilderneſs to a glorious Canaan; it might be a powerful invitation to them to go and ſeek after the ſame felicity.

3*dly*, This likewiſe would be very edifying and confirming to all that fear God. How much would in contribute to eſtabliſh them in the practice of holineſs, and to quicken them in their diligence in ſerving and glorifying God in the days of their health, to hear a dying believer ſay, "Of all the time which I have ever lived, I have no comfort now in reflecting upon one hour, but what I ſpent in the ſervice of God. Were I to begin my life, I would redeem time more carefully than ever. One hour in communion with God, is far ſweeter than many years ſpent in worldly pleaſures. Come here, then, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my ſoul. O taſte and ſee that God is good?"

4*thly*, Conſider the examples of God's children in former ages, how uſeful and edifying their words have been, at ſuch a time, to all round about them. But this head I intend to inſiſt fully upon afterwards.

Queſt. But how ſhall I behave ſo as I may glorify God and edify others, when I am ſick or dying? I would have ſome particular directions for it.

Anſw. 1*ſt*, You may do this by your patience under pain, and ſubmiſſion to God's will, with reſpect to the event, whether life or death. It is ſtumbling to others, to ſee believers fretful in trouble, and unwilling to leave the world, when God calls them. But it is moſt convincing and confirming to ſee them frankly reſigning themſelves to God's diſpoſal, ſaying, "Let God himſelf chooſe for me: he is wiſe, and knoweth beſt what is needful and moſt proper for me: I have no will but God's will." For any man to deſire to live when God calls him to die, or to deſire to die when God calls him to live, is equally a ſign of cowardice: for he that deſires to

live, is afraid to look death in the face; and he that desires to die, would flee from some calamity, and take shelter in death. But he is the most valiant man that can die willingly when God would have him die, and live as willingly when God would have him live; this is true christian valour.

2dly, By pious exhortations and warnings to these that are about you. It may be the last occasion you may have of glorifying God in this way. O do not loose the season which may be usefully improven to the good of souls. For thus a believer may bring more honour to God, and more advantages to precious souls by his sickness and death, than ever he did by all his health and life in the world; for their speeches have more weight with people at such a time than any other. Hence the Patriarchs, knowing the prevalency of such words, do urge Joseph with Jacob's dying charge, Gen. i. 16, 17, "And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren," &c. And as we ought to be ready to give good counsel to all when we lie on sick beds, so especially we should be concerned for children and near relations, they are more affected than others with our sickness, and so will they be with our sayings; our admonitions may do them good when we are rotting in the dust.

Quest. What ought to be the subject of our discourses and exhortations to others at such a time?

Answ. 1st, It is very proper to be much in commending the master you have served, and the excellency of his service, to those that are about you. Tell them of the equity and goodness of these laws which you have obeyed, and of the bounty and faithfulness of that Lord whom you have worshipped, loved, and praised; and of the greatness and eternity of that reward you are going to possess. Let the children of God extol their father, and his care of them, and kindness to them. Let the ransomed of the Lord magnify their Redeemer, and his wonderful love and sufferings for them. Tell others what sweetness and satisfaction you have found in your own

experience in attending God's ordinances, and in secret duties; what comfort you have found in Christ, and the promises of his covenant. And thus let your last breath be spent in exalting and commending Christ and religion to others.

2dly, Be warning others of the vanity of the world, and of all its wealth and pleasures. Tell them that they may see by your case, that these things which people are bewitched with in the day of their health, can signify nothing to a a sick or dying man; they cannot ease us in our pains, they can afford no peace to a troubled soul, they cannot lengthen our lives one hour, and far less can they save from the wrath of an angry God. "Oh," may you say, "what a miserable case had I been in at this time, if I had no better portion than this world, and nothing else to look to but its riches and pleasures! Wherefore, Sirs, set not your hearts upon it, but forsake it before you are forsaken by it, and make choice of that which will be supporting to you in the evil day."

3dly, Be warning them of the evil of sin, and what mischief and deceitfulness you have found in it. Tell them, that though the devil and the flesh would tempt you to look upon sin as a harmless thing, yet the pleasure will soon be gone, and a sharp sting will be left behind. Sin will appear no light matter, when the soul is going hence into the awful presence of a holy God. You would give a thousand worlds then for Christ, and the blood of atonement to answer for your sins.

4thly, Tell them of the great difference betwixt the godly and wicked man's choice. The godly man chuseth the better part that cannot be taken from him; he lays up his treasure in heaven where none can reach it, so that it yields him rich supplies when sickness and death come upon him. But O how foolish is the wicked man's choice, that for a moment's fleshly pleasure, doth loose his immortal soul, and everlasting happiness! Warn them to mind the one thing needful in time, and not to pamper their bodies for the worms, but to set themselves presently to close with the offers of Christ, and make sure an interest in his righteousness to cover them in the evil day.

5thly, Be telling them of the evil of ſloth and negligence in the work of their ſalvation: and be exhorting them to mind it, and do it with all their might. For however ſome may cenſure and deride God's people now for their ſtrictneſs, diligence, and zeal in the matters of religion; yet when they come to die, they will be ready to wiſh that they had been more diligent in ſalvation work; that they had loved God, fled to Chriſt, and had ſought and ſerved him with all their hearts and ſouls: and to cry, "O for a little more time! O if God would recover and try us once more with health, how diligent would we be!" And tell them that theſe who have been moſt ſerious and painful in ſalvation work, yet when they come to die, do much lament their ſloth and negligence: yea, theſe that have been moſt reproached by the world for their diligence and fervency, do often wiſh at that time, "O that we had been a thouſand times more diligent and laborious in God's ſervice!"

6thly, Labour to perſuade others of the preciousneſs of time, the wiſdom of improving the time of youth, and of health; and the great folly of delaying repentance, and putting it off to a ſick bed, ſaying to them, "I now find by experience, that a time of ſickneſs is a moſt unfit ſeaſon to do any thing to purpoſe for the ſoul; my mind is ſo diverted and indiſpoſed for ſpiritual work by ſickneſs and pain, that I cannot attain to any ſuitable compoſure for it. And how miſerable were I, if I had all my work to begin at this time! O take warning, and improve precious time, and eſpecially the day of the goſpel, the time of the ſpirit's ſtrivings, and the time of youth, which is the moſt uſual ſeaſon of the converſion of ſouls, and of bringing ſinners into acquaintance with Jeſus Chriſt.

DIRECT. VI. *Let God's children, when ſick and dying, be expreſſing a great concern for the advancements of the kingdom of Chriſt, and of true religion in the riſing generation.*

ZEAL and public ſpiritedneſs for Chriſt's intereſt is very becoming his people in all the periods of their life, but more eſpecially at this time. When Chriſt is

ready to take you to his kingdom in heaven, O be not unmindful of his kingdom on earth. It would be acceptable to God, and pleasing in the sight of men, to see you expressing a warm concern for the rising age, and for promoting the welfare of the souls of your children, and others that survive you: and seeing you can be no longer useful to these you leave behind, by your counsels, examples, or prayers, as formerly; do your utmost for them now. And this concern the children of God in time of sickness may evidence several ways.

1*st*, By earnest prayers to God, both for the prosperity of his church, and the flourishing of religion in general, and also for your children and relations in particular, that they may be a holy seed, and a generation to serve God, and shew forth his praise in the world, when you are gone off the stage.

2*dly*, By intrusting the care of your children's education to such tutors and guardians as will be much concerned for their souls, and will set before them godly examples and instructions in their young and tender years.

3*dly*, By filling your latter-wills and testaments with many pious advices and solemn charges to your children and relations, with respect to their serving of God, and worshipping him in their families, and in secret; so as they can never look into your testaments, and the legacies left to them, but they will hear something that may be affecting, upstirring, and edifying to their souls.

4*thly*, By honouring the Lord with your substance, and leaving something of what God hath blessed you with to pious uses; particularly for the religious education of the children of the poor, for buying Bibles for them, and other good books; and for propagating of Christian knowledge in ignorant places, such as the highlands and islands, by erecting and maintaining schools therein; which glorious work is happily begun, and pretty far advanced by that honourable society at Edinburgh, whose treasurer is ready to receive donations from all such as the Lord pleaseth to move to make a free-will offering for promoting that pious design. Many pious persons have contributed already thereto; and it were desirable that

others, whom God hath enabled for it, ſhould mind it before they die; for by fatal experience we may obſerve, that the moſt godly parents do not know how their children will employ the eſtate they leave them, whether as fuel for their luſts, or as oil to feed the lamps in God's ſanctuary. It is proper for themſelves then, before they go off the ſtage, to diſpoſe of ſome part of their ſubſtance, for the glory and ſervice of that God who gave it unto them.

5thly, It might contribute to promote piety, and to make the deeper impreſſions upon the minds of your children and friends, if under the warnings of death, you ſhould imitate the example of the prophet Elijah, who in his life time made a writing which he procured to be delivered to king Jehoram after his death, 2 Chron. xxi. 12. So in like manner you might write letters, and leave them in the hands of your friends and executors, full of advices, charges, admonitions, conſolations, or threatnings, to be delivered to your children or friends, upon occaſion either of their good or bad canverſation after your death: which probably would be more regarded by them, than the counſels you gave them in the time of your life: for in ſome reſpect they would be received and read by them, as if they were letters from heaven.

DIRECT. VII *Let the children of God labour to fortify themſelves what they can againſt all Satan's temptations and aſſaults, which they may expect to meet with in time of ſickneſs and affliction.*

A TIME of affliction is commonly a time of temptation: for the old ſerpent knows the fitteſt ſeaſons for aſſaulting the children of God; and he will not be wanting to improve this opportunity of advantage for ſetting upon the poor ſoul. When Pharaoh heard that the people were entangled in the wilderneſs, he purſued them; ſo, when Satan ſees a ſoul entangled with diſtreſſes and troubles, he thinks it high time to make an attack. He ſeeks to winnow and ſift away the believer's grace, and therefore he comes when the corn is a threſhing by the rod. When Job was ſmitten in his eſtate, health,

and all other comforts, then this coward falls upon him, and tempts him to impatience, murmuring, and wrong thoughts of God.

At this time, O believer, you have ſpecial need to be on your guard, and look out. Reckon always, when ſickneſs or trouble cometh, the prince of this world cometh, alſo. Stand then to your defence, and put on your armour, eſpecially the ſhield of faith, that you may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil. You have need at this time to put in practice our Lord's direction, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Pray for wiſdom and ſkill to counteract him, and that you may not be ignorant of his devices; and pray particularly for grace to make you proof againſt all his falſe repreſentations of God and his providence to you; for he that durſt repreſent Job falſely to an all-ſeeing and all-knowing God, will with much boldneſs repreſent God falſely to you, who ſee and know ſo little. He will be ready to tempt you to think that God is angry with you, and dealing with you as an enemy. Thus was Job tempted, Job xxxiii. 10, 11. "Behold he findeth occaſions againſt me, he counteth me for his enemy: he putteth my feet in the ſtocks, he marketh all my paths." But obſerve what Elihu anſwers, "In this thou art not juſt: God is greater than man. Why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." But ſeeing I ſpoke before of the wrong thoughts of God, which we are apt to harbour in time of affliction, Chap. II. Direct. 3. I ſhall proceed to ſpeak of ſome other temptations wherewith Satan doth aſſault God's people when in diſtreſs, and furniſh ſome anſwers thereto.

1. Saith the tempter, "Thou art nothing but a hypocrite; all thy religious performances have been done in hypocriſy, to be ſeen of men: thou never haſt repented or believed ſincerely in the ſight of God."

Anſw. I acknowledge there hath been much hypocriſy in me, but I hope it is not allowed and reigning hypocriſy; I always wreſtled againſt it; wherefore I am not an hypocrite. I regarded the eſteem of men too much, but I hope I value the eſteem of God much more. My faith and repentance are weak, but I hope they are ſincere.

And whatever defects and ſhort comings have formerly cleaved to theſe graces in me, I do now unfeignedly repent of all my ſins, I look to him that I pierced, and mourn. I am heartily willing to be juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone, and to be cleanſed and ſanctified by his Spirit: and here I give up myſelf to Chriſt as my only Saviour. And this I hope is, through grace, true repenting and believing, which God will accept for Chriſt's ſake, what ever my former defects have been.

Tempt. 2. But ſaith the tempter, "Thy repentance cannot be true; for thy heart is not broken, and thine eyes do not ſhed tears for ſin."

Anſw. It is my very great burden, and conſtant complaint to God, that I cannot attain to a greater meaſure of ſorrow and contrition for ſin: but yet it is my comfort that repentance is not to be confined to ſuch degrees and ſymptoms of ſorrow as ſome do win at. I hope I can ſay through grace, that my heart is ſet againſt all ſin, great and ſmall: and I would give all I have in the world to be wholly delivered from ſin.

Tempt. 3. Saith the tempter, "But thy day of grace is paſt, it is too late for thee to think of repenting or believing; God will not accept of thee now."

Anſw. But I hope it is not ſo with me, ſeeing God gives me a heart that pants after God, and Chriſt, in the way of commanded duty. The offers of ſalvation through Chriſt are made to all who believe and repent: and late penitents are not excluded from the benefit of theſe gracious offers more than others.

Tempt. 4. But ſaith the tempter, "Thou art none of God's elect, and if thou be not choſen to ſalvation, thou canſt not be ſaved."

Anſw. Secret things belong to God, and it were preſumption in me to pry into his ſecret decrees; but one thing I am ſure of, that every ſoul that is choſen to faith and repentance, is alſo choſen to ſalvation; but I truſt God hath choſen me to the former, and therefore to the latter.

Tempt. 5. But ſaith the tempter, "You over-value your graces and duties, and ſo they cannot be true and real."

Anſw. But I count them all but loſs and dung in comparison of Chriſt. I deſire always to be deeply humbled under a ſenſe of my ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs, and to abhor every motion that would carry me away from Chriſt and his righteousneſs, and would tempt me to rely on my grace or duties, or put them in the leaſt in Chriſt's room.

Tempt. 6. "The iſſue of thy ſickneſs may be death, and thou art not ready; for thou haſt no aſſurance of thy ſalvation."

Anſw. A perfect certainty is not to be expected here; there will be ſtill ſome queſtions, ſome doubts and fears; but theſe I reſolve not to indulge now, but to break through all, that I may embrace Chriſt, and be found in him. The deſires of my ſoul are to Chriſt, and the remembrance of his name: and ſuch, I believe, he will not ſuffer to periſh. "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

Tempt. 7. "But thou art a ſtranger to the inviſible world; how wilt thou adventure into that world of ſpirits, with which thou haſt ſo little acquaintance?"

Anſw. But Chriſt, who is my head and beſt friend, is no ſtranger to it; he is the Lord of that land, and provides manſions for all his people there; and he will receive every one of them home, and lodge them ſafely. "The ſpirits of juſt men made perfect," were once what my ſpirit now is; they were ſtrangers to that world before they came to it, as well as I: but their head being in it, encouraged them to go to it: and now they rejoice in it as the kindly dwelling-place of all the ſaints.

Tempt. 8. "But thou art vile, and God is infinitely pure and glorious; how canſt thou think of approaching ſo near to him?"

Anſw. Though a weak eye be not able to look upon the ſun, yet I hope to be fitted and ſtrengthened for that glorious ſight. Beſides, God doth now appear to us in his Son Chriſt, where his infinite glory is pleaſantly vailed ſo as the ſaints may behold him. Theſe glorified ſouls above were once vile as well as others? but their Saviour did cleanſe them, and preſent them to the Father with-

out ſpot or wrinkle. And whatever be my unworthineſs, I am relieved by conſidering my union with Chriſt, and looking on the glory and dignity of my head. Surely God will not deſpiſe the members of his dear Son, nor trample on any that are his fleſh and bones.

Tempt. 9. But what will become of thy wife and children, when thou art taken from them?

Anſw. If I truſt God ſo willingly with my ſoul, and my eternal concerns, why may I not truſt him with my relations alſo? Have I not ſeen how wonderful he hath provided for others? Doth not every thing in the world depend on his will and pleaſure? How eaſy is it then for God to ſupply his own?

Tempt. 10. "But ſtill death is terrible to nature, even the king of terrors."

Anſw. But my Redeemer hath taſted death for me, and taken out its fearful ſting; he hath conquered death, and keeps the keys of death and hell. Wherefore through him will I ſing, "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Tempt. 11. "But it is terrible to think of appearing before God's tribunal, to be tried and judged."

Anſw. But my friend and interceſſor will be the judge there. Will Chriſt condemn the members of his own body, and theſe he hath ſo often comforted?

But beſides all theſe, a holy God may ſometimes ſuffer the tempter to aſſault his own people in time of their affliction with his fiery darts and his fierceſt battering engines, ſuch as temptations to Atheiſm, blaſphemy, deſpair, &c. whereby their ſouls may be terribly ſhaken, and ſore amazed.

Your relief in this caſe is to look to your head, and remember how he was himſelf buffetted by this enemy, aſſaulted with the moſt odious temptations, that he might thereby get an experimental touch and feeling of your condition, in order to his ſympathizing with you, and relieving you from this enemy, whom he hath already conquered in your name. But for theſe things he will be inquired of by the houſe of Iſrael. You muſt act faith on your exalted head.

CHAPTER IV.

Containing ſome ſpecial directions to unregenerate perſons, when afflicted by ſickneſs or otherwiſe.

DIRECT. 1. *Take a ſerious view of the miſerable condition of a Chriſtleſs perſon under ſickneſs or heavy affliction.*

1ſt, CONSIDER the vaſt difference betwixt your caſe, and that of a true believer; he hath ground of conſolation in the greateſt diſtreſs, but you have none. However ſharp the rod of correction be to him, yet it is the hand of a Father; but you have to do with an angry and ſin-avenging God: and who may ſtand in his ſight, if once he be angry? for he commands both the firſt and ſecond death, and he can caſt you both into the grave and hell at once, Rev. vi. 8. "Hell followed the pale horſe." Death is the king of terrors, but hell is a thouſand times more terrible. When God afflicts his children, he ſtands to them in the relation of a loving father; but he deals with you as an incenſed judge. Though he ſees it neceſſary for their good to chaſtiſe them, yet he doth it with a relenting hand; yea, every ſtroke goeth as it were to his heart, Iſa. lxiii. 2. "In their affliction he was afflicted." But when he ariſeth to puniſh his enemies, he ſtrikes them with hatred and deteſtation, as a man would do a toad or venomous creature. Though they cry, he hath no pity, Prov. i, 26. "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

2dly, If your ſickneſs threaten you with death, what a dark and melancholy proſpect muſt you have of your approaching change? Why, O Chriſtleſs ſoul, it is what you are wholly unprepared for. The old houſe falls down about your ears, before you have another lodging provided. When death caſts you to the door, you have no where to lay your head, unleſs it be on a bed of fire and brimſtone. O how ſurpriſing and fearful will the change be, that death will make on you! A change from earth to hell, from light to darkneſs, from comforts to terrors, from hope to deſpair, from the offers of grace to

the revelation of wrath; a change from the ſociety of ſaints on earth, to the company of the damned in hell. Whatever fond hopes of ſalvation you have now, your hopes ſhall lead you no further than to the king of terrors, and then "your hopes ſhall be cut off, and your truſt like a ſpider's web," Job viii. 14. Though it coſt you much pains to weave and ſupport this web now, it will prove a weak and ſlender defence to your ſoul, when death comes with his beſom of deſtruction, and ſweeps both you and it away to hell. You will then be taken from all the means of grace you have abuſed, and be forever deprived of an opportunity of buying oil; your lamp ſhall go out to death, and never be lighted any more. 3*dly*, In this extremity, you have no airth to look to for comfort. O Chriſtleſs ſinner, what will you do in the day of viſitation? To whom will you flee for help? Your houſes, your lands, your money, your honours, your companions, your relations, will all be miſerable comforters to you. Every thing will look black and diſmal round about you. If you look without you for help, you may ſee your friends weeping and lamenting your caſe; but this will do nothing but increaſe your vexation and miſery. If you look within you for relief, conſcience, that before you would not ſuffer to ſpeak, will meet you with bitter ſtings and upbraidings. It will bring to your view the ſins you had forgot, the time you have miſſpent, the health you have miſimproven, the offers of grace you have refuſed, the great ſalvation you have neglected. What folly was it for thee to provoke God, and ſlight Chriſt, for a little worldly profit, or a little brutiſh pleaſure? Can theſe relieve thee when the arrows of the Almighty ſtick within thee, and the terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt thy ſoul? In the mean time, the devil, that tempted you to your ſoul-ruining courſe, will ſtep in, and repreſent your ſins in their blackeſt colors and aggravations, to render you altogether hopeleſs and deſperate. O ſinner, thou that refuſeſt reſt from Chriſt in the day of health, and grace, ſhalt find no eaſe from the creature in the day of ſickneſs and death. Your ſickneſs will allow no reſt to your body, and your ſins will permit

no eaſe to your ſoul. You may expect the fulfilling of that threatening Deut. xxviii. 65—67, "The Lord ſhall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind. And thy life ſhall hang in doubt before thee, and thou ſhalt have fear day and night. In the morning thou ſhalt ſay, Would God it were even, and at even, thou ſhalt ſay, Would God it were morning," becauſe of the pain of thy body, and anguiſh of thy ſpirit.

DIRECT. II. *Let unregenerate perſons carefully improve their ſickneſs and affliction, as means to further their converſion, and pray that God may bleſs it for their end.*

MANY have begun their acquaintance with God, and with themſelves in the time of affliction; the furnace is frequently the Spirit's work-houſe, where he forms his veſſels of praiſe. There are many who, while health and ſtrength continue, mind nothing but vain pleaſures; one day they go to their games and ſports, another day to their cups and lacivious company, another day to viſiting their friends; and thus they ſpend the whole time of their health and proſperity in ſin and vanity. All the warnings, counſels, and exhortations of parents, friends, and miniſters, do them no good, they cannot endure to entertain a ſerious thought of God or of Chriſt, of death, of heaven, of hell, or judgment to come. But when God doth caſt them into ſickneſs, or ſome great affliction, they, through the bleſſing of God, begin to come to themſelves, like the prodigal, and think of returning again to their Father. Several inſtances to this purpoſe might be given. The earl of Rocheſter is a late one, whoſe life was notoriouſly lewd, profane, and atheiſtical, and who had wickedly employed his wit and parts to ridicule all religion; yet when he was afflicted with pain and ſickneſs, and brought to the gates of death; he began to entertain quite other apprehenſions than he had done before; he profeſſed he had ſerious and reverend thoughts of religion and holineſs, which before he laughed at; he moſt earneſtly and affectionately warned others to abandon their evil courſes, and to live religiouſly and ſoberly, and to look upon religion as the greateſt reality in the world; he retracted all his impious and

profane language, wherewith he used to reflect on the ways of godliness, and willingly attested all this under his hand.

Pray then for the divine blessing on your sickness, that it may contribute to the conversation of your soul; which it doth several ways. 1st, By opening men's eyes to get a true sight of things, to behold religion in its true shape, and sin in its proper colours; hence the rod is said to *give wisdom*, Prov. xxix. 15. They who have mocked at religion, and made light of sin all their days, have been taught by bodily sickness to change their tune. Then they begin to have an esteem of the Bible, and to value and send for a pious minister, and to desire the prayers of the people of God. Now they perceive sin to be bitter as gall and wormwood, they lothe and abhor that which they liked before; now the word of God makes deep impression on them, and particularly such a word as that, Jer. ii. 19. "Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God."

2*ndly*. Sickness helps to set the word preached home upon the heart. When God speaks to us in the day of health and prosperity, we oft give him a deaf ear, Jer. xxii. 21. But when distress comes, it brings the words of God, and of his ministers, to our remembrance, as it brought Joseph's to the remembrance of his brethren, Gen. xlii. 21.

3*dly*. Sickness contributes to loose a man's heart from the world, and to cool his love thereto; whereby a great hindrance of conversion is removed out of the way, and the man is made to say, "How vain and helpless are the world's comforts to me now! these things I delighted in formerly are tasteless to me at this time. There is no portion can suit my soul's needs, but God himself."

4*thly*. It spurs a man on to prayer that formerly neglected it. When the prodigal is brought to distress, he says, "I will arise and go to my father." He forgat his father before, but now he will address him, Hos. v. 15. "In their affliction they will seek me early." Thus the Lord frequently begins and promotes the conversion of

ſouls to himſelf. And O ſinner, if this be the fruit of thy ſickneſs, it will not be unto death, but the glory of God.

DIRECT. III. *Be careful to obey God's voice in the rod, and beware of ſlighting it.*

EVERY ſickness hath a meſſage from God, and his voice you ought to harken to with reverence and attention, Micah vi. 9. What ſaith he to you at this time? O ſinner, he ſaith, "Retire from the world, think on death and eternity, abhor theſe luſts and idols which God is ſmiting you for, flee ſpeedily to the ſtrong hold; repent, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out." This is God's voice to you, and conſider how provoking it will be to him, if you ſlight it.

1*ſt*, You will provoke God to ſlight your voice when you cry to him, and ſtop his ear againſt the voice of your ſupplications, Zech. vii. 13.

2*dly*, You will provoke God to ceaſe from being a reprover to you, ſo that he will ſpeak to you no more.

3*dly*, You will provoke him to bring heavier judgments on you, yea, ſo to draw his ſword of juſtice againſt you, that he will ſheathe it up no more, as he threatens, Ezek. xxi. 5.

4*thly*, God may break off all intercourſe and correſpondence with you, as with thoſe, Ezek. xx. 31. "As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you."

5*thly*, He may ſeal you up forever under your ſins, hardneſs, and pollution; and ſay to you, as to ſome we read of, Ezek. xxiv. 13. Hoſ. iv. 7. Rev. xxii. 11. "Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou was not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee: Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone. He that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill." He that is hardened againſt the voice of my rods, let him be hardened ſtill. Well then, O ſinner, while God is in ſpeaking terms with you, harken to his voice, and obey it; ſay, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

IRECT. IV. *Caſt back your eyes upon the ſins of your by-paſt life, and labour to be deeply humbled for them before the Lord.*

SEEING you are ſummoned to prepare for going to the judgment ſeat of God, where your ſoul is to receive its final ſentence; labour to prevent the terror of that appearance, by your judging yourſelf beforehand. And this you muſt do, by ſummoning yourſelf before the bar of conſcience, examining narrowly into your ſtate, accuſing and condemning yourſelf for your ſins. And ſee that you be impartial in this work, willing to know the truth and diſcover the worſt of your caſe. You muſt ſee and be duly ſenſible of your danger, otherwiſe you cannot think to eſcape it. Take a narrow view of your ſins in their nature, number, aggravations, and deſervings. And in order to this, if thou haſt any meaſure of ſtrength for it, let the expoſition of the ten commandments in our Larger Catechiſm be diſtinctly read over unto thee. Make a pauſe upon every queſtion, and ſay within thyſelf, "Have I not omitted what is here required by God? And have I not committed what is here forbidden by God? How oft have I repeated theſe ſins? How long have I lived in the practice of them? O! do not ſo many years ſins need very ſerious repentance, a very deep humiliation? "O! doth not ſuch a vile ſinner as I, ſtand greatly in need of Chriſt to my cautioner and ranſomer for ſuch a vaſt number of ſins? will not their weight preſs me eternally down to the loweſt hell, if they remain unpardoned, and be laid upon my back!" Therefore view them cloſely, and confeſs them particularly before God.

1*ſt.* In the firſt place, bewail thy original ſin, the fountain of all thy actual tranſgreſſions, as did David, Pſalm li. 5. "Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me."

2*dly.* Acknowledge and mourn over the ſinful outbreakings of thy life, whereby thou haſt diſhonoured God, and grieved his holy Spirit; and eſpecially ſins againſt light.

3*dly*, Be humbled for thy ſins of omiſſion, for neglecting of commanded duties, particularly for the neglect of prayer in ſecret, and of family religion.

4*thly*, Mourn for the loſs of precious time. Alas! for the time of your youth miſſpent, many Sabbath days trifled away!

5*thly*, Lament thy long ſliting of Chriſt, and ſalvation through his righteouſneſs, which ſo preſſingly hath been offered to thee in the goſpel.

6*thly*, Bewail thy ſtifling the convictions, and quenching the motions of the Spirit, and thereby provoking him to depart from you.

7*thly*, Mourn for thy unthankfulneſs to God for mercies and deliverances, which might have allured you to repentance and newneſs of life.

8*thly*. Confeſs thy ſtubbornneſs under former afflictions, which have provoked God to ſend new trials upon you.

9*thly*. Be humbled for thy earthly-mindedneſs, in that thou haſt all thy days been careful and cumbered about many things, and haſt neglected the one thing neceſſary.

10*thly*. Mourn for the lateneſs of thy repentance, and thy prodigious folly in delaying ſo long to bethink thyſelf, and turn to the Lord. "O how unwiſely have I acted, to miſſpend the time of health, and delay ſo great a work till now, that I am laid on a ſick bed! and now, if I die before I am converted, I am loſt forever. O Lord, I am aſhamed and confounded at my madneſs and folly, and have no excuſe to plead for myſelf, but muſt ſtand afar off with the poor publican, and ſmite upon my breaſt, and cry, God be merciful to me a ſinner."

DIRECT. V. *Flee preſently to Jeſus Chriſt by a true faith, and cloſe with him as offered in the goſpel.*

ART thou ſenſible, O ſinner, of thy grievous guilt and ill-deſervings before God? then do not deſpair; for Jeſus Chriſt, who hath offered to divine juſtice an all-ſufficient ſacrifice for ſin, is offering himſelf to thee, ſaying, "O diſtreſſed ſinner, look unto me, and be ſaved. Turn unto me, why will ye die? Come unto me, heavy

laden ſoul, and I will give you reſt. He that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out." Will not ſuch gracious words, ſuch moving calls, melt thy heart within thee, and make thee cry to him, "Lord Jeſus, I flee to thee as my refuge, for deliverance from ſin, and protection from the wrath to come: I look to thy wounds, I truſt in thy righteousneſs, I depend on thy merit, I lie at thy feet, and this I am reſolved to do as long as I have breath to draw in the world."

DIRECT. VI. *Call for the elders of the church that they may pray for you in your ſickneſs.*

THIS is the apoſtle James, his direction to the ſick, James v. 14. He doth not ſay, if any be ſick, let him ſend for the phyſicians, but for the elders or miniſters.

It is true, phyſicians are to be called, but not in the firſt place. It was Aſa's fault that in his diſeaſe he ſought not the Lord, but to the phyſicians; and, alas, how many follow his example! Miniſters are only called for in the laſt place, and very often when time is paſt, the ſick being at the point of death; and ſcarce capable to ſpeak or hear. But if you deſire to reap benefit by the inſtructions and prayers of miniſters, call for them timeouſly, and open your caſe unto them; ſeek their counſel, and beg for their prayers. It is their office to teach and pray for you, and they have authority to offer ſalvation to you through Chriſt, and to miniſter comfort to them that are caſt down; wherefore a bleſſing may be expected on their miniſtrations and performances more than others. Hence God ſaid to Abimelech of Abraham, Gen. xx. 7. "He is a prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee." And to Job's friends concerning Job, Job xlii. 8. "Go to my ſervant Job, and he ſhall pray for you, for him will I accept: leſt that I deal with you after your folly."

And *Laſtly*, Remember that as the apoſtle James enjoins the ſick to call for the elders to pray over them, ſo at the ſame time he directs you, James v. 16. to confeſs your faults one to another, Chriſtian to Chriſtian, one

friend to another, the people to their minister. Not that this gives any warrant for the Papists their auricular confession, which they force upon all men to their priests as a satisfaction for sin, and when they rack their consciences, (when they feel no distress) to confess their most secret sins, to enumerate them all under pain of damnation, and which they use as a politic to dive into the secrets of princes, states, and all private persons: But as Luther, Calvin, Beza, and many others of orthodox divines do teach, it is very profitable and necessary for these that are inwardly troubled with a sense of their sins, to ease and disburden their consciences, by confessing of them to the faithful ministers of Christ, in order to their receiving suitable counsels and consolations from them, such as Christ hath left in his word for contrite-hearted penitents.

Thus let every man in sickness use all appointed means for preparing his soul for a future state. Thy preparation will by no means hasten death, but sweeten it to you. Death must surely have a most formidable aspect to an unprepared sinner: he may salute it as Ahab did Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" why? it brings heavy and doleful tidings to him. But a prepared soul may salute death, Welcome, O my friend, thou bringest me tidings of great joy; everlasting deliverance from sin, and all the bitter fruits of it. I shall never complain of these any more.

CHAPTER V.

Containing directions to the people of God, when the Lord is pleased to recover them from sickness and distress.

DIRECT. I. *It is very proper, both under sickness and after it, to examine if the affliction be sanctified to you, and hath come from the love of God.*

IT would be very comfortable for us to know that the afflictions which God visits us with, are not the pun-

iſhment of a judge, but the chaſtiſement of a father; that they do not proceed from wrath, but from love; that they are not curſes, but bleſſings to us. Now, the beſt way of knowing this is by the effects which they work and produce in us, through the bleſſing of God.

1*ſt.* Canſt thou ſay, that thy affliction hath humbled thee in the ſight of God, and made thee confeſs and bewail thy ſins and ſtrayings from God as the procuring cauſe thereof? Hath it been like Moſes's rod, that ſmote the rock, and fetched out much water? Did you water your couch with tears, and mourn humbly before God for all thy God-provoking ſins? Then it is a good ſign ſickneſs is ſanctified.

2*dly.* Doth thy affliction drive thee nearer God, and cauſe thee aim at cloſer communion with God in duty than formerly, ſaying, "However careleſs and overly I have been in time paſt, it is ſurely good for me now to draw near to God?" Then thy ſickneſs is a bleſſing to thee.

3*dly.* Affliction is ſanctified, when the corruption and deceitfulneſs of the heart is the more diſcovered and laid open to the view of the ſoul; ſo as the man is made to abhor himſelf in duſt and aſhes, and cry out as the leper, "Unclean, unclean." I never could have thought my heart was ſo wicked as now I ſee it.

4*thly.* It is a ſanctified ſickneſs, that purgeth the heart, and changeth the life, and gives a dead ſtroke to thy ſins and idols, and makes thee to loathe and abhor them more than ever, ſaying with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?"

5*thly.* It is a bleſſed rod, when grace is more quickened and ſtirred up thereby, and the man turns more fruitful in holy duties and good works; when it is a budding, and bloſſoming rod, like to Aaron's, Numb. xvii. It is recorded there of Aaron's rod, that it brought forth buds, bloomed bloſſoms, and yielded almonds. So it is happy with us, when our rods and ſickneſſes do produce in us, not only the buds of a profeſſion, or the bloſſoms or ſome beginnings of a reformation; but even cauſe us to yield almonds, fruit ſavoury to God. Is

conſcience become more tender with reſpect to ſin! Are we more jealous over our hearts? Are we more fervent in prayer, more lively in praiſe, more mortified to the world, more deſirous of communion with God? Then may we ſay with David, "It is good for us we have been afflicted?" and with Hezekiah, "Thou haſt, in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit of corruption."

DIRECT. II *Make conſcience of offering to God the ſacrifice of thankſgiving, upon his recovering thee from ſickneſs or any diſtreſs.*

THE Pſalmiſt gives us this direction from God, Pſal. l. 14, 15. And he ſhews us that it was his own practice in a ſuch caſe, Pſal. cxvi. 17. Pſal. ciii. 1, 2, 3, *&c.* The command is juſt, let us obey it; the example excellent, let us imitate it. Praiſe is comely for the upright. Here I ſhall give ſome motives and advices.

1*ſt*, God, who is the author of all thy mercies and deliverances, gives you tongues for this very end, that you may bleſs and praiſe him for theſe mercies, James iii. 9. Hence man's tongue is called his glory above the reſt of the creatures, Pſal. lvii. 8. There is none in the creation ſo endued and qualified for praiſing God, as man is. Angels have reaſon and minds, whereby they adore and admire God's goodneſs and excellency, but have no tongues to praiſe him; beaſts have tongues, but without ſpeech or reaſon to uſe them: but man hath both reaſon and ſpeech, that he may both admire God's goodneſs, and with his tongue ſound forth God's praiſe. See then, O believer, that you uſe your tongue to anſwer the end of your creation. God loſeth his due rent of praiſe from the reſt of the world, but he expects it from his children, whom he hath formed for this end, and on whom he hath beſtowed many diſtinguiſhing favours.

2*dly*, The ſacrifice of thankſgiving is moſt pleaſing and acceptable to God. He loves your tears and prayers, O believer, but much more your praiſes. How well pleaſed was our Lord with the poor leper Samaritan, that returned and gave him thanks for curing his bodily diſtemper? Luke xvii. He diſmiſſed him with a ſpecial bleſſ-

ing, and cured him of his ſoul's diſeaſes, as well as of his body's. And therefore,

3dly, Conſider that thankfulneſs for thy mercies received is a moſt profitable courſe for ourſelf; for it is the way to get more and better bleſſings beſtowed upon you according to Pſal. lxvii. 5, 6. "Let the people praiſe thee, O God. Then ſhall the earth yield her increaſe: and God, even our own God, ſhall bleſs us." Thankſgiving for former mercies is a kindly way of petitioning for new favours, and God will underſtand it in this ſenſe.

4thly, God is ſo well pleaſed with the duty of thankgiving, that he honours it to be the eternal work of heaven. Whereas other graces, ſuch as, faith, hope, and repentance, will then be melted into love and joy forever, ſo other duties of worſhip, ſuch as, reading, hearing, and prayer, will then be changed into that of praiſe and thankſgiving; the glorified company above will never be weary of this work; and ſhall not we delight in it now, when God is calling us to it by ſo many new mercies?

In the next place, that thou mayeſt offer the ſacrifice of thankſgiving to God for thy recovery, with geacious acceptance, I ſhall lay before you the following advices.

1. See that your heart be touched with a ſenſe of the greatneſs of the mercy, and of the goodneſs of God manifeſted therein. We muſt put a due value upon our mercies, and have our hearts affected with God's kind dealing towards us in them, if we would be rightly thankful to God the author of them.—Hence it was that David called upon his heart, and all within him, to bleſs the Lord for his benefits, Pſal. ciii. 1. and in Pſal. cxxxviii. 1. he ſaith, "I will praiſe thee with my whole heart." As in an inſtrument of muſic, the more ſound comes out of the belly of it, it is the ſweeter; ſo our praiſe is the more acceptable to God, when the heart is full of gracious affections;

2. Let your praiſe be the native reſult of faith and love in your ſoul, otherwiſe it will be but an empty ſound. Faith is neceſſary to draw by the veil, and ſhews us the perfections of the inviſible God, who is the ſpring and author of all our mercies; love gives a deep ſenſe of his

goodneſs, enlargeth the heart towards God, and opens the lips to ſhew forth his praiſe.

3. Study to have a deep ſenſe of your own unworthineſs and ill deſervings at the Lord's hand, upon the account of your ſins, and ill improvements of former deliverances, ſaying with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies."

4. Look above inſtruments and ſecond cauſes, and do not aſcribe your recovery to phyſicians or outward means, but to the Lord, the prime author of it, whoſe bleſſing alone it is that gives efficacy and ſucceſs to the appointed means, and by whoſe mercy only we are ſpared and brought back from the gates of the grave. To this the apoſtle attributes Epaphroditus his recovery, Phil. ii. 27. "Indeed he was ſick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him." Hence we are told, 1 Sam. ii. 6. "The Lord bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up."

5. Obſerve narrowly the remarkable circumſtances of the Lord's goodneſs, and the ſweet ingredients of thy mercies. As for inſtance, (1.) How diſcernible the Lord's hand was in thy deliverance, which obliged thee to ſay, Surely this is the finger of God? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in mine eyes. (2.) How thy deliverance came to thee as the return of prayer, makes thee ſay, Surely he is a prayer-hearing God. (3.) How deliverance came when there was but little ground to hope for it. See how Hezekiah obſerved this ingredient in his recovery from ſickneſs. Iſa. xxxviii. 10, 11. "I ſaid in the cutting off of my days, I ſhall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the reſidue of my years. I ſaid, I ſhall not ſee the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I ſhall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world." verſe 15. "What ſhall I ſay? he hath both ſpoken to me, and himſelf hath done it." Sometimes God ſends deliverances to his people when they are moſt hopeleſs, and ſaying, with the captives in Babylon, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. Behold our bones are dried, and our hope is loſt, and we are cut off for our parts." (4.) Remember how the extremity of thy diſtreſs was God's opportunity of ſending relief.

Abraham never forgat the seasonableness of God's appearing for him in his extreme need upon mount Moriah, when he called the name of the place JEHOVAH JIRAH, for preservnig the memorial of it; "In the mount of the Lord it will be seen." So doth David. Psal. cxvi. I was brought low, and he helped me."

6. Let the present deliverance bring all former mercies to thy remembrance, that so thou mayest praise God for them all, whether they be national or personal mercies, public or private, spiritual or temporal. New mercies should revive the memory of the old, and all of them should come above board at such times? so doth the Psalmist direct, Psal. cv. 2. "Sing to the Lord, talk ye of all his wondrous works." And what he directs others to, he practiseth himself in such a case, Psal. cxvi. 12. "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

7. Be ready to communicate to others an account of the Lord's kind dealings towards you, and the sweet ingredients of his mercies; and particularly of his sending spiritual deliverance to your soul, as well as outward deliverance to your body, when he is pleased to do so. And do this in order to recommend the service of God to others, and to engage and invite them to assist you in blessing and praising the Lord. We see how David observed his soul deliverances, Psal. cxvi. 7, 8. and declares his experience to others, Psal. xxii 22. I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Psal. lxvi. 16. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."

Lastly, Remember always to give thanks for mercies to the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as directed, Eph. v. 20. Your spiritual sacrifices are only acceptable to God, when you offer them up by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As we must seek all our mercies in Christ's name, so we must give thanks for them also in his name. He is the Mediator of our praises, as well as of our prayers. Believers have not one mercy, but what comes swimming to them in Christ's blood, and is the fruit

of his death and purchase to them: and therefore he is to be owned and looked to in the receiving of every mercy. And as Christ is the only mediator for conveying blessings and mercies from God to us, so he is the sole mediator for conveying all our services and spiritual sacrifices to God. God accepts of them only as they are perfumed by Christ's meritorious sacrifices, and potent intercession.

DIRECT. III. *When the Lord is pleased to grant thee any signal mercy or deliverance from trouble, beware of forgetting the Lord's kindness towards thee.*

FORGETTING of God's remarkably kind providences is an evil we are naturally prone unto when we are in a prosperous state. Hence it is that the spirit of God gives so many cautions against it in his word; and the saints of God do so solemnly charge their own souls to beware of it, as in Psal. ciii. 2. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction." Forget not his benefits, but carefully preserve and treasure them up in thy memory. It was usual for saints under the Old Testament to set up some visible monument to remind them of God's singular favours to them; they erected stones, and built altars, to be memorials of the mercies they received, and put names on the places for this end. Let all this teach you to guard against this evil of forgetting the Lord's kind providence in recovering you from sickness.

You are guilty of this evil, when you do not duly value the mercy, but let it pass as a turn of common providence. When you let the impression of the mercy wear soon off your hearts; when you make bad use of it, or do not rightly improve it to God's glory, and your own soul's good; when you do not put on new resolutions to walk more exactly, live more fruitfully, and serve God more holily and humbly; then are you guilty of forgetting his benefits.

This is an evil most grievous and provoking, to a good and gracious God, as is evident from the many heavy

complaints he makes of his people for it, as in Judges viii. 34. Pſal. lxxviii. 11. Pſal. cvi. 13. Wherefore watch and pray againſt it.

DIRECT. IV. *Inquire after theſe fruits of righteouſneſs, which are the genuine effects of affliction in the children of God, who are duly exerciſed thereby.*

THE apoſtle ſpeaks of theſe fruits, Heb. xii. 11. as natively following upon ſanctified afflictions, and a kindly exerciſe of ſpirit under them. And therefore it is your duty to inquire if they be produced in you.

1*ſt*. The increaſe of true repentance is one of theſe fruits which is the product of ſanctified trials. Job found it in himſelf on the back of his affliction, chap. xlii. 6. "Now I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes." It would be happy, if we could find our hearts more ſoft and melting upon the view of ſin, after we have been in the furnace of affliction.

2*dly*. Another fruit is the improvement of faith. The afflicted believer is taught to look to, and depend more upon God in time of need, and leſs upon the creature. He now ſees that vain is the help of man in the day of calamity, and that God in Chriſt is the only proper object of the ſoul's truſt. This was the fruit of the apoſtle's affliction, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. "We were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life. We had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God that raiſeth the dead: who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver."

3*dly*, Humility and low thoughts of ourſelves is one of the fruits of righteouſneſs which ſanctified affliction doth yield. How proud and lofty was Nebuchadnezzar before he was afflicted, Dan. iv. 29, 30. But afterwards he is made to own God, and humbly ſubmit to him as his ſupreme and incontrolable Sovereign, and to acknowledge, that thoſe who walk in pride, he is able to abaſe, ver. 37. This was God's deſign in the various trials of his people Iſrael in the wilderneſs, Deut. viii. 16. "That he might humble thee, prove thee, and do thee good at

thy latter end." See then, O believer, if this fruit be produced in thee.

4*thly*, Another fruit is the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication. This was viſible in the Pſalmiſt's caſe, after God had delivered him from the ſorrows of death, and heard his voice, Pſalm cvi. 2. "Therefore, ſays he, will I call upon him as long as I live." O, faith the true believer, God's mercy to me in trouble, and his ſending me relief when I cried to him, will make me love prayer the better, and engage me to be more diligent in it all my days; for I ſtill ſee I have daily need of his helping hand.

5*thly*, Heavenly-mindedneſs is a fruit of ſanctified affliction. Before the man was inclined to that language, It is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles in this lower world. But now he turns his tongue, and changeth his thoughts, and ſaith, with the Pſalmiſt, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God. Ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt." This world is nothing but the houſe of our pilgrimage, heaven only is our home.

6*thly*, Another fruit of ſanctified trials, is greater love to God than formerly. How much was David's heart warmed with love and gratitude to God, upon the back of his affliction, ſo that he wants words to expreſs the affections of his ſoul? Pſal. cxvi. 1, 8, 12. "I will love the Lord becauſe he hath heard my voice. I was brought low, but he helped me. Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from failing. What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

7*thly*, Learning and keeping God's word is a fruit of ſanctified affliction, Pſalm cxix. 67, 71. Let us inquire if this fruit be produced in us after ſickneſs. Do we attend to the word more cloſely? do we believe it more firmly? do we embrace its offers more earneſtly? and do we live more in the expectation of that glory which the word doth reveal to us? "Then it is good for us we have been afflicted: for we have learned more of God's word."

8*thly*, Tenderneſs of conſcience is a happy fruit of ſanctified trouble; when the believer, after it, becomes

exceedingly afraid of ſin, and of making new wounds in his conſcience. He cannot think of adventuring again upon any known ſin; for the ſmart of former wounds, and the pain they occaſioned in the ſoul, when diſtreſs lay upon him, makes deep and laſting impreſſion on his mind, as it did on the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 19, 20. "Remember mine affliction, and my miſery, the wormwood and the gall, my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled within me." Now, ſuch fruits of righteouſneſs are an evidence we have been ſuitably exerciſed under affliction: O to find them produced in us after ſickneſs is over!

DIRECT. v. *Be careful to perform theſe reſolutions, engagements or vows, you have come under in the time of ſickneſs, and walk ſuitably to them.*

AS a time of ſickneſs and affliction is a proper ſeaſon for making vows to God, and binding our ſouls with resolutions to mortify ſin in the heart, and purge it away from the life, and to be diligent in duty, and walk more humbly with God: ſo a time of recovery from ſickneſs is a proper ſeaſon for paying and performing theſe vows. This was the royal Pſalmiſt's practice in ſuch a caſe, Pſalm cxvi. 6, 16, 17, 18. "I was brought low, and he helped me. Truly I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant. I will offer to thee the ſacrifice of thankſgiving. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the preſence of all his people." Now for your aſſiſtance in this matter, I offer you theſe few advices.

1*ſt*, Defer not to pay your vows, but be ſpeedy, and take the firſt opportunity to pay them. Delays in this caſe are moſt dangerous; Solomon, that wiſe man, was ſenſible of this, which made him give thee this advice, Eccl. v. 4. "When thou voweſt a vow unto God, defer not to pay it."

2*dly*, Be ſtill jealous of thy heart, which is prone to deal treacherouſly with God after affliction is over. The Iſraelites practice is a ſad inſtance of his truth, Pſalm lxxviii. 34, &c. "When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and inquired early after God, &c.

Nevertheleſs, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they ſteadfaſt in his covenant." The purpoſes of many in affliction are like to the vows of mariners in a ſtorm; they are the firſt things which they forget and break when once they win ſafe ſhore. However penitent ſome ſeem to be in ſickneſs, yet when they recover from it, they ſoon return to their old ſins again. They are like metals in a furnace, they melt and turn liquid while in it, but when out, they ſoon return to their old hardneſs. There is good reaſon for that caution the Lord give us, Mal. ii. 16. "Therefore take heed to your ſpirit, that you deal not treacherouſly."

3*dly*, Cry continually for ſtrength from above to enable you to perform your vows. The Pſalmiſt took this courſe, and found it ſucceſsful, Pſalm cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried to thee, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength, in my ſoul." And forget not, O believer, that God has treaſured up ſtrength for thee in thy head and ſurety Chriſt Jeſus; wherefore be ſtill borrowing from him, for the performing of all thy engagements, 2 Tim. ii. 1. "My ſon be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus." Put thy treacherous heart in thy ſurety's hand: for though thou art weak, yet thy Redeemer is ſtrong. Whenever then you firſt perceive your heart begins to ſtart aſide from God, be ſure to check it, and look up to God in Chriſt for ſtrength to ſecure it againſt treachery and perfidious dealing: cry with the Pſalmiſt, "Be ſurety for thy ſervant for good."

4*thly*. Guard diligently againſt thy predominant ſin, the ſin that hath moſt eaſily beſet thee, the ſin that was moſt bitter and uneaſy to thee in the day of diſtreſs. Keep a narrow eye upon it now; for if once that ſin be got vaniſhed, the reſt will the more eaſily be put to flight.

5*thly*. Be frequently meditating on thy vows, and on the condition thou waſt in when they were taken on, and ſtudy to keep alive in thy heart the ſame apprehenſion of things after ſickneſs which thou hadſt in the time of it.

How vain and comfortleſs did the world and its vanities then appear to thee! how awful were the truths of God on thy ſpirits! how far preferable was the loving-kindneſs of God to thee than life! how precious was Chriſt then in thy eyes! O that your judgment, thoughts, and impreſſions of theſe things, may continue ſtill the ſame!

6thly, Keep up the impreſſions of the preciouſneſs of time, that you may diligently improve it; and ſhake off ſloth and idleneſs. Remember what a view you got in the time of ſickneſs, of long-laſting eternity; and what a trouble it was to you to look back, and ſee how much time you had loſt in ſin and vanity. When ſometimes we are brought to the brink of eternity, the near views we then get of its vaſtneſs and unchangeableneſs, are ſometimes ſo awful and amazing to us, that we are ready to think, though we had Methuſalem's years to live, it would be unreaſonable wilfully to miſſpend one hour of them all. Well then, is ſickneſs over, or time ſo ſhort, and ſo little of it remaining behind? will we be ſo fooliſh, as to be laviſh of it ſtill, and trifle it away as before?

7thly. Set a ſpecial mark upon all theſe ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, that made death to look grim and ghaſtly upon you in the time of ſickneſs, and againſt which you reſolved; and ſee to get every one of them amended and removed. Remember and conſider how ſad it will be for you, if ſickneſs find you again in the very ſame ſins which formerly ſtung you. What will you ſay to conſcience, when it ſhall challenge you? How will you look death in the face, if it ſhould find you living in the very ſame ſins you formerly mourned for, and promiſed againſt! Death would then be the king of terrors to thy ſoul indeed.

O then, mind thy vows, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lvi 12, 13. "Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praiſes to thee. For thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death: wilt thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living."

CHAP. VI.

Containing directions to the unregenerate, when they are recovered from sickness, and restored to health.

DIRECT. I. *Seeing the afflictions of the wicked are unsanctified, it is necessary you examine what sorts of affliction yours hath been, and what fruits it hath produced in you.*

I HAVE in the preceeding chapter shewed, that the afflictions of believers are fatherly chastisements proceeding from love; that they are sanctified, and yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness: I have given the marks of sanctified afflictions, and mentioned the happy fruits which they produce in the children of God.

On the other hand, it is necessary to let Christless persons know, that their afflictions are of a different kind: they are even punishment from God as a judge, proceeding from wrath: they are unsanctified to them, and produce no fruits, but what are bitter and unsavory.

Well then, O Christless soul, thou hast reason to suspect the worst concerning thy sickness, that it hath not been sanctified, and its fruits are not good. O then, labour to know the truth of the matter, that thou mayest be humble under a sense of thy misery, and flee to Jesus Christ for relief. And for thy assistance in this inquiry, I will give some marks of unsanctified afflictions.

1st. If sickness hath not humbled thee under a sense of thy sins, the procuring cause thereof, nor any wise hath weakened sin in thee, nor reclaimed thee from it, but it remaineth in thee as strong as ever; it is a sign thy affliction is unsanctified. This was the case of those of whom God complaineth, Jer. ii. 30. "In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction." As if he had said, The physic I gave them did not purge out sin; nor weaken corruption in the least. They have been stricken, but not grieved for sin; the fire hath burnt round about them, but they have not laid sin to heart, that kindled the flame.

2dly. It is a mark of unsanctified affliction, when, it hath no influence upon a sinner to bring him to a serious

communing with his own heart concerning the eſtate of his ſoul, and to inquire in what terms he ſtands with God that afflicts him. God's voice by affliction is that in Hag. i. 7. "Now conſider your ways." In the day of adverſity conſider where you are, what you are, what you have done, and what is the meaning of the rod, and what will be the iſſue of it through eternity, in caſe it hath a commiſſion to cut the thread of life. Now when a man remains ſtupid and careleſs about theſe important matters, and never noticeth the voice of affliction, ſo as to inquire ſeriouſly about his ſoul's condition; "Am I under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Am I a child of God or an enemy of God? Have I fled to the city of refuge, or am I ſtill in a ſhelterleſs ſtate? Am I ſtill under a cloud of wrath, or am I brought under the banner of love?" I ſay, where there are no ſuch inquiries, the affliction is unſanctified.

3*dly*. It is a certain ſign of unſanctified affliction, when a perſon grows worſe by it, and revolts the more he is ſtricken, like theſe, Iſa. i. 5.

Queſ. When may it be ſaid, that a perſon grows worſe by affliction?

Anſw. 1. When the ſinner's heart turns harder than it was before: ſo every plague on Egypt, increaſed the plague of hardneſs in Pharaoh's heart. It fares with many hearts, as with iron that is often heated in the fire and quenched in the water, it ſtill increaſeth in hardneſs. 2. When a perſon gives way to impatience and murmuring againſt God while he afflicts him. 3. When the luſts of the heart grow more ſtrong and impetuous, and afterwards rage the more, that they may have been ſtopt in their courſe by affliction. In ſuch caſes a perſon grows worſe by the rod.

DIRECT. II *Conſider the great danger of not being bettered by ſickneſs, and of not complying with the voice of God's rod.*

GOD's voice by his rod doth loudly call ſinners to repentance, and fleeing to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for refuge from wrath. Now, when this voice is not hark-

ened to, but men go in their ſecure and ſinful courſe as before, God is highly provoked, and the iſſue will be terrible. For,

1*ſt*. Though ſickneſs be removed, and the furnace of affliction be cooled for the time; yet the wrath that kindled it, continues ſtill to burn. And you have ground to fear leſt you be ranked among theſe who are the generation of God's wrath, againſt whom he will have indignation forever.

2*dly*. If leſſer rods do not awaken you, you may expect greater and ſorer judgments are coming on you. Yea, God may cauſe them to come rolling thick upon you, as waves and billows in a ſtorm, one upon the neck of another. The great depths, both above and below, may be opened together; the diſpleaſure of God, and wrath of men, may conſpire and meet to pour out themſelves as water-ſpouts upon you at once: and to whom then will ye look for help?

3*dly*. The Lord may give over dealing with you, or uſing any further means to reclaim you; he may refuſe to correct you any more, or beſtow a rod upon you for your good, and ſay of you, as of Ephraim, Hoſ. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone."

4*thly*. The Lord may give you up to ſpiritual plagues and judgments; and indeed this commonly is the reſult of obſtinacy and incorrigibleneſs under outward rods. When Iſrael would not harken to God's voice, he gave them up to their own hearts luſts, Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 12. Now, theſe plagues are the ſevereſt. External judgments are God's rods, but ſpiritual judgments are his ſwords, which pierce the very ſoul. Blindneſs of mind, hardneſs of heart, ſearedneſs of conſcience, vile affections, and a reprobate ſenſe, are the very forerunners of hell and damnation. Theſe who are impenitent and unfruitful under outward afflictions, have cauſe to tremble leſt God be provoked to inflict theſe ſpiritual judgments.

5*thly*, Be aſſured, though God ſpare you long, yet the glaſs of his forbearance will at length run out. God's patience towards ſinners hath a term and bound, over which it will not paſs. The time will come, when a long ſuffer-

ing God will at last say, "My spirit shall no longer strive;" and the angel will cry, as in Rev. xiv. 7. "The hour of God's judgment is come." You that abuse God's patience, and presume upon it, his treaty of peace will end with you in a little, and the master of the house will rise up and shut to the door. Then patience will come down, and justice will ascend the stage, and trample upon, and triumph over, all that abuse divine patience. Sodom was a wonder of God's patience for a long time, but now it is a lasting monument of his anger.

6thly, If you be not bettered by God's rods or sparing mercies, then your preservation at present will be nothing but reservation for the day of God's wrath. And the longer your cup of sin is a filling, the fuller shall the cup of God's patience, you treasure up wrath for yourselves against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 4. and though you be delivered from some judgments, you are reserved for worse, yea, seven times worse, according to Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. Nay, there is a ruining blow designed against you, both soul and body, as soon as your cup is full; and the axe is already laid to the root of the tree, Matth. iii. 10. One blow of God's axe will cut you off forever.

Remember this, O sinner, though God's hand be lifted off you at present, and his messenger death be for a little recalled, yet he will quickly return, and knock so loud at your door, as not to be refused. And what will you do in the day of visitation? How ghastly must the pale horse be, when hell follows him at the heels? And how hot and fiery must that hell be, which is inflamed and blown up by so long impenitence, and abuse of patience?

DIRECT. III. *Wonder at the patience of God in sparing such hell-deserving sinners as you are, and be thankful for it.*

HATH a long suffering God preserved the thread of your life, when it was almost snapt asunder by the violence of sickness? hath he freed you from racking pains, under which you were groaning? nay, saved you from the grave and hell, into which you were falling?

and have you not cauſe of wonder and thankſgiving? To move you to it, conſider theſe few things.

1*ſt*. How miſerable had you been through all eternity, if your ſickneſs had carried you off to another world in your ſins? You had been howling with damned ſpirits, under endleſs and ceaſeleſs torments, and forever cut off from theſe hopes, and offers of mercy you now have. Then the maſter of the houſe would have had the door ſo barred againſt you, as it could never have been opened again to you, knock as you would, Luke xiii. 25.

2*dly*. Conſider how heavily you had burdened his patience with your henious ſins, and frequent relapſes thereinto: and that after convictions, calls, and various rods ſent to reclaim you: ſo that he was put to ſay, as in Amos ii. 13. "Behold, I am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves." He was overburdened with your ſins, ſo that the axel-tree of patience was ready to break, and let you fall into hell; and yet, behold he bears with you ſtill.

3*dly*. Conſider how ſoon he could have eaſed himſelf of the load, and ſhaken you off into the pit of deſtruction. In a moment could he have done it, and yet he bears many years with your ſins that are ſo grievous to him. Yea, it is with a ſort of reluctancy that he eaſes himſelf of ſinners, after he gets the utmoſt provocation, Iſa. i. 24. "Ah! I will eaſe me of mine adverſaries."

4*thly*, How ready is he to turn away his anger, and reprieve ſinners from deſtruction, when in their diſtreſs they make but a ſhew of repentance, and turning unto God! as we ſee in Pſal. lxxviii. 36, 38, He, like a tender-hearted prince, calls back the warrant for their execution, after it was gone forth.

5*thly*, Conſider how much many Chriſtleſs ſinners are beholden to Jeſus Chriſt for ſparing mercy. He is repreſented by the dreſſer, Luke xiii. interceeding that the fruitleſs fig-tree might be ſpared and tried ſome time longer, after orders given to cut it down. Were it not for Jeſus Chriſt, O ſinner, however much you forget and ſlight him, you had ſurely been in hell long ere now. How oft doth he obtain another year, and after that ano-

ther, for the unfruitful ſinner, and unthankful abuſers of divine patience!

6thly, Conſider how ſparing mercy hath diſtinguiſhed you from many others, who lived not ſo long, nor ſinned ſo much as you have done. God hath wounded the hairy ſcalp of many, and taken them away in their youth; when he hath continued you to manhood, and perhaps to old age; though your ſins and ill deſervings be greater than theſe of many, on whom he hath long ſince taken vengeance.

God hath left many also toſſing and groaning on beds of pain, when he hath eaſed and raiſed you up. O then, return like the thankful leper, and magnify the God of your health. Hath God diſtinguiſhed you from others, by his goodneſs? It becomes you to diſtinguiſh yourſelves from others, by your thankfulneſs. O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs! undeſerved and diſtinguiſhing goodneſs!

To move you to this, let me ſet the example of Hezekiah before you, Iſa. xxxviii. and there ſee how thankfully and affectionately he remembered the Lord's mercies in recovering and delivering him from the bitter affliction he had been under. "I ſaid, I am deprived of the reſidue of my years, I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Like a crane or ſwallow, ſo did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove. Behold, for peace I had great bitterneſs; but thou haſt in love to my ſoul delivered it from the pit of corruption. The living ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day." Yea, he was ſo overcome with a ſenſe of the Lord's patience and mercy towards him; that he is at a loſs how to expreſs it, verſe 15. "What ſhall I ſay? He hath both ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done it."

Let all who are recovered from ſickneſs, ſtudy to imitate that good king in holy admiration and thankfulneſs to the God of their life.

DIRECT. IV. *Study to improve the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God to you in a right and ſuitable manner.*

O SINNER, hath God brought you back from the gates of death, and brink of hell, reſtored you to

health, and given you a new offer of mercy and ſalvation through Chriſt in a preached goſpel, which you formerly deſpiſed? Strive now to improve the Lord's patience and kind dealings towards you with the utmoſt care, and abuſe his patience no longer. And in order thereto, take the following counſels.

I. Be deepiy humbled for your former obſtinacy and impenitency, notwithſtanding of God's gracious and patient dealing. O let the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God towards thee, lead thee to repentance, which is the native deſign of it, according to Rom. ii. 4. "Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?" As if he had ſaid, "Doſt thou not ſee, O man, the kind providence of God in ſparing and recovering thee from ſickneſs, taking thee by the hand, and pointing out to thee to go to thy cloſet to mourn and weep for all thy bypaſt ſins, and particularly for thy miſſpending the time of health, and abuſing of the Lord's patience?" The conſideration of David's goodneſs and forbearance towards Saul, melted Saul's heart, for as hard and rugged as it was, and made him to lift up his voice end weep, and ſay to David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 17. &c. "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou haſt ſhewed this day, how that thou haſt dealt well with me; for as much as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedſt me not. For (ſays he) if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" O far more reaſon haſt thou, O man, to weep and cry, "God hath found me his enemy, yea in my enmity and ſins, fighting againſt himſelf; he had me on a ſick-bed, and on the very brink of hell, and the leaſt touch of his hand would have thruſt me in: but yet he hath ſpared his enemy, and let me go well away. Oh, will not theſe cords of love draw me, and this matchleſs goodneſs invite and hire me to repent? Can any conſideration in the world be more powerful than this to melt my hard heart into tears of holy ſhame and ſorrow for my ſtiff-neckedneſs and rebellion againſt a gracious and

long-ſuffering God? Away with theſe curſed God-provoking ſins of mine! down with theſe weapons of rebellion? let me never lift them more againſt ſuch a merciful Sovereign!"

II. Zealouſly improve the time, which God in his long-ſuffering hath lengthened out to you in working out the ſalvation of thy ſoul. Have you ſo long been loading the patience of God with your ſins? have you many a day been grieving his holy Spirit, by trifling away your time, ſlighting his motions and venturing on ſins againſt light? O then beware of burdening his patience any more; but diligently harken to every motion of God's ſpirit, and of your own conſcience for the time to come. You have much work to do and but little time to do it in; therefore lay hold on every opportunity for carrying it on. The conſideration of the much time you have already loſt and miſſpent, ſhould make you the more diligent in what remaineth. How much of it have you loſt in youth? how much in ignorance? how much in negligence? how much in worldlineſs! how much in paſtimes? how much in idle words? how much in actual ſins and provocations againſt God? and now it may be near the evening of your day. And will you not ſpend the evening (which God is mercifully lengthening out) with extraordinary care and diligence? If a traveller looſe the beginning of the day, he muſt travel the faſter in the evening, otherwiſe he may fall ſhort of his journey, and have his lodging to ſeek when night comes. Paul had miſſpent much of the beginning of his life; and this conſideration (when his eyes were opened) did ſtir him up to be more diligent in the ſervice of God ſo that he was more zealous than any of the reſt of the apoſtles. O man, follow his example, and trifle no longer in the work of God. Art thou not convinced thou haſt ſquandered away enough of this precious treaſure of time already? And wilt thou alſo miſſpend and throw away the little that remains? Oh! be not ſo fooliſh.

III. Be careful to raze all falſe foundations, and build your hopes of ſalvation, upon the only ſure rock, Jeſus Chriſt. Let it not diſcourage thee to dig to the foun-

dation, that so much of thy day is lost; for it is better to do it late than never. Remember how miserable is the condition of that house which is built upon the sand, Matth. vii. 27 "For when the flood comes, and the storm ariseth and beats upon it, great and dismal will the fall of that house be." Do not build your hopes of heaven upon God's absolute mercy, upon your convictions, upon your freedom from gross sins, upon your prayers or tears upon your morality and just dealings with men: though these be necessary and excellent in themselves, yet they are false foundations for to build the hopes of your justification and salvation upon, seeing they are wholly insufficient to bear such a weight. However much these things have been esteemed and valued by you formerly, in the matter of justification; yet if you resolve to be a wise builder, you will let them all now go, yea, count them all but loss and dung, that you may win Christ, (our only hope) build on him alone, and be found in him, not having on your own righteousness, which is but filthy rags.

Well then, raze and tear up every false foundation, dig deep, till you win to the rock Christ. Dig deep into the holy law and nature of God; dig till you see the infinite strictness of divine justice, the unspeakable evil that is in sin, the hidden vileness and abomination of the heart, your own inability to do any thing for your help and relief. Dig yet further, till you see the infinite fulness and freeness of God's peace in Jesus Christ, that suitable remedy that answers all a poor sinner needs. Dig deep, and dig on, till you win to this rock; let your cry be still to God, Lord, lead me to the rock Christ, and his all-sufficient righteousness only. Act faith upon this rock, rely on it, build all your hopes on it, and say, this is my rest forever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it. Lord, the desire of my soul is only to Christ, and the remembrance of his name. His name is an ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love him."

IV. If you would rightly improve the sparing mercy and goodness of God, let it lead you to repentance and reformation of life. Turn from all these sins, whether of

omiſſion or commiſſion, now in the day of health, which conſcience challanged you for in the time of ſickneſs. Mind Chriſt's caution and warning to healed ſinners, John v. 14. "Behold, thou art made whole; ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing befal thee." O let ſin die with thy ſickneſs; and do not relapſe into thy former ſecurity and ſinful ways. Beware of returning with the dog to thy vomit, and like the ſow that is waſhed, to the wallowing again in the mire of thy former ſins and uncleanneſſes; leſt being entangled and overcome again with the filthineſs which now thou haſt eſcaped, thy latter end prove worſe than thy beginning.

Laſtly, And to ſum up all I ſhall ſay in this chapter, be careful to redeem time, and active in providing for an eternal ſtate. O prize and value the mercy of health and ſtrength more than ever. Sympathize with theſe who are ſtill lying on ſick beds, and under languiſhing diſtempers; neglect not to pity and pray for them. Remember the diſtreſſed caſe you were in yourſelves, when you had no reſt in your bones, when weariſome nights were appointed to you, and you were full of toſſing to the dawning of the day. Conſider how ſlippery is your ſtanding. Though the late ſtorm of trouble be over, yet the clouds will return after rain.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing directions to thoſe ſick perſons, who are apparantly in a dying condition, and drawing near to another world.

I HAVE already in the firſt, third, and fourth chapters, given ſeveral directions concerning our ſubmiſſion to the will of God, making preparation for death, calling for miniſters, edifying others by our diſcourſe, ſettling our worldly affairs, &c. which are very proper for dying perſons, and therefore I ſhall not repeat them, but proceed to ſpeak of other things. Only let me add this word, if you have hitherto neglected to make your wills, ſettle your worldly affairs, ſend for miniſters to

discourse with and pray over you; delay it no longer, but do it speedily, while you have the use of your reason and understanding. And what I have more to say, take it in the following directions:

DIRECT. I. *Consider when death stares you in the face, that now is the time if ever to exert the utmost activity in preparing to meet with it.*

ALAS, it is to be regretted that the most part of men neglect their souls, misspend their lives, misimprove their healths, and leave undone the work for which they were created, preserved and enjoyed the gospel. Surely a near prospect of death and judgment cannot but be uneasy to such persons. What a melancholly thought must it be for a dying man, "Oh! I had all my time given me to make preparation for endless eternity: and alas, I never minded it till now, that I must leave the stage of this world. Is there any hope for such a careless and miserable sinner?" I acknowledge the case is sad, but yet it is not remediless nor desperate; seeing there is a sacrifice provided for your sins, and there is an all-sufficient Saviour in your offer, who never did cast out any humbled soul, that came to him for mercy. You have great reason indeed to abhor and condemn yourself before God, for your sin and folly; yet despair not, but believe, whatever be your sins, your dangers, your fears and temptations, that Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; and that his grace aboundeth more than your sin aboundeth. O how glad would devils and damned souls in hell be, if they were but in your case, and had your offers and hopes! how diligently would they improve the time of mercy! O be persuaded then to spend the little time that now remains with the utmost care, in making penitent confession of sin to God, and apply the blood of Christ for pardon. Nay, even the best of God's people have need to be diligent at this time, in making actual preparation for dying. God is now saying to you, as Joshua did to the Israelites, Josh. i. 11. "Prepare your victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land

which the Lord your God giveth you." Lay in provision for your passing over this Jordan of death: you know not how rough the passage may be.

I shall give some motives to press this diligent and active preparation; and therefore consider,

1st. The short time of your life that remains is all the time you have for working out your salvation. What you do for attaining heaven, and avoiding hell, must be done now or never; for there is no work nor device in the grave whither thou goest, nor is there any coming back to this world to amend what hath been amiss, Dying is a thing you cannot get a trial of, it is what you can only do once, and no more, Heb. ix. 27.

2dly. Be diligent now, for as soon as death gets commission to cut you off, it will execute it: it will not spare you, nor allow you one minute more time to prepare for eternity. The most merciless enemies have sometimes been overcome by the prayers and tears of such as on their knees do beg a little more time to prepare for another world, and do harken to their requests: but this enemy, death, will not grant one moment's respite.

3dly. Consider that your eternal state and condition will be according to the state in which you die. Death will open the doors either of heaven or hell to you, in one of which you shall take up your eternal abode. As the tree falls at death, so will it lie through eternity.

4thly. Consider what a serious and awful matter it is to die, and go into another world, for then you will have immediately to do with God your judge; there will be no veil betwixt him and your soul. You will then enter into a world of spirits, wherewith you are so little acquainted: you are frighted now to go in a room alone, that is said to be haunted by a spirit; how frightful then must the case of those be, who are hurried into a world of spirits, not knowing but devils must be their companions forever? Surely then it is your interest to give all diligence now, to make your acquaintance with the Lord of that world, before you enter into it.

5thly, Put forth all thy utmost activity for thy soul now; for, to be sure, Satan will put forth his utmost

againſt it. If thou be in a Chriſtleſs ſtate at this time, he will uſe all his efforts and ſtratagems to keep thee from Chriſt; either by flattering thee that thy ſtate is good, thereby to lull thee aſleep in ſin and ſecurity; or by telling thee, it is out of time to help matters with thee, thereby to drive you into deſpair. The devil will leave no method unattempted to ruin thy ſoul, when death is near: for he knows his time is ſhort; and if he catch not the ſoul then, he will never get it: and neither can he hurt it hereafter; for if once it enter heaven, he can trouble it no more.

If thou art a believer in Chriſt, Satan, thy malacious enemy will not fail to attack thee, at this time, with all his might; for though he may know he cannot keep thee out heaven, yet he will labour to render the paſſage towards it, as dark, tempeſtuous, and uncomfortable as poſſibly he can. But it is the believer's happineſs, this cruel enemy is under a ſtrong chain, and cannot do all he would; for Jeſus Chriſt is the good ſhepherd that hath undertaken for all his ſheep. Nevertheleſs, by his wiſe permiſſion, this adverſary may ſometimes give great diſturbance to a dying ſaint; which calls thee to the greateſt diligence and watchfulneſs at this time. It is the obſervation of one, that as the devil is moſt buſy at the concluſion of a duty, as of prayer, that the Chriſtian may be moſt diſturbed and diſtracted when he is to cloſe up all in the name of Chriſt, and ſo all his deſires be fruſtrated: ſo he is moſt buſy in the concluſion of our days, and when death is at hand, ſeeking by temptations, diſtractions, and falſe imaginations, to do us all the miſchief he can, and all becauſe he knoweth his time is ſhort; according to that word, Rev. xii. 12. "The devil is come down, having great wrath, becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort time." He may fitly be called, *the wolf of the evening*, mentioned in Jer. v. 6. in regard he comes forth moſt fiercely in the evening of men's lives, to ſet upon their precious ſouls. Yea ſo buſy is he ſometimes with believers under dangerous ſickneſs, ſeeking to overthrow their faith and aſſurance, that it is the obſervation of a good man, that he ſeldom ſeeth a ſick ſaint,

followed close with temptations, recover of that sickness; for Satan, knowing he hath but little time, proves as uneasy to him as he can. Hence that great man of God, Mr. Knox, said, when he came to die; "In my lifetime the devil tempted me to despair, casting my sins in my teeth; but now in my sickness, he tells me, I have been faithful in the ministry, and so have merited heaven: but blessed be God, who brought these texts into my mind, Not I but the grace of God in me: What hast thou that thou hast not received!" The children of Israel had never such hot work from their enemies as when they just came to enter into the promised land.

What need then hast thou, O believer, to be diligent, in thy preparations on a dying bed to quicken grace, put forth thy utmost strength, bring all the assistance thou canst from the Captain of thy salvation, when thou hast such a cruel enemy to encounter with! Now is the time for action, though yet it will be your wisdom to leave as little to be done at this time as possible.

DIRECT. II. *Continue to the last in the exercise of true repentance and humiliation for sin.*

POSSIDONIUS, who wrote the life of Augustine, saith, that he heard him often say in his health, that repentance was the fittest disposition both for dying christians and ministers; and for himself, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for sin. When death approacheth nearest, we should thus stir up ourselves to give sin the most deadly blow of any we have given it all our life. As it is most laudable to die forgiving sinners that have wronged us, so also taking revenge upon sin that hath injured a gracious God. The apostle tells us, 2 Cor. vii. 11. that indignation and revenge attend true repentance. Wherefore, as Samuel took vengeance on Agag a little before his death, and Moses (at God's command) avenged the children of Israel of the Midianites just before he was gathered to his people, Num. xxxi. 2. and dying Sampson gave the most fatal blow to the Philistines of any he had given them before; so a dying Christian should take the severest revenge on sin at last,

which hath ſo oft through his life diſhonoured God, pierced Chriſt, and grieved his holy ſpirit. It is the laſt opportunity you will have to ſhew your indignation at it, and therefore do it effectually.

Again, conſider it is old ſins unmourned for, that many times keep believers ſo much in the dark, when they come to die, theſe do raiſe ſo many thick clouds about their evening ſun, and hinder them from going off the ſtage with ſuch comfortable aſſurance of God's love as otherwiſe they might attain to. Theſe did very much hinder Job's peace and ſettlement, in the day of affliction, as he complains Job xiii. 26. "He makes me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth." It is a ſad thing when young ſins and old bones meet together. O that young people would mind this in time! you are doing that now which will abide with you to age, if not to eternity. Sin muſt be bitter ſome time or other, for God calls it a root that bears gall and wormwood, Deut. xxix. 18. Iſrael could not have peace nor ſucceſs while there was an Achan in the camp; ſo neither can you have conſolation or aſſurance while any ſin lies unreckoned for in the conſcience. Make a thorough ſearch then into old ſins and mourn over them. We find Paul frequently calling over the ſins of his life, and even theſe he was guilty of before converſion; "I was injurious, a blaſphemer," &c. whereby he maintained much inward peace and conſolation. Be oft looking back to old ſins, with inward ſorrow and faith in Chriſt's blood, if you would have a death-bed eaſy and ſoft to you.

DIRECT. III. *Be mindful of all acts of juſtice and charity, which may be incumbent upon you at this time.*

IT is great wiſdom in men to ſettle their worldly affairs in the time of health, that ſo their minds may be free for ſpiritual exerciſes, and not diſturbed with earthly cares and buſineſs when they come to a dying-bed; but if this hath been neglected hitherto it muſt not be omited now. I have given directions about it, chap. I. direct. 6, ſo that I ſhall ſay little here: only be careful to do juſtice to every man, as much as in you lieth; and particularly, 1. By

making a juſt and rational provision for your wife and children. 2. By ordering payment of all your juſt debts, without defrauding any of your lawful creditors. 3. By making reſtitution in caſe you have wronged any man. If juſtice be not done in theſe matters how can your ſouls be diſburdened of guilt?

In the next place, forget not the acts of charity which God requires of all the profeſſors of the goſpel.

1*ſt*. Seek reconciliation with your neighbours, where any difference or miſtakes have fallen in; that ſo you may die in peace and charity with all about you.

2*dly*. Be ready from the heart to forgive theſe that have done you any wrong. If the natural ſun ſhould not go down upon our wrath, much leſs ſhould the ſun of our lives. If you carry an unforgiving ſpirit with you into another world, how can you expect to meet with a forgiving God there; when he hath expreſsly declared, Matth. vi. 15. "If ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes neither will your father forgive your treſpaſſes?" O then imitate your glorious Saviour and his martyr Stephen, who at their death begged mercy from God, for thoſe that mortally hated them, Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60.

3*dly*. If the Lord hath given you ſubſtance, honour the Lord with it, by leaving ſome part of it to the poor, and to pious uſes. I have preſſed this once and again before; but I mention it frequently, becauſe it is much forgotten by dying perſons in our age. Remember, it is not left arbitrary to you to give or not, as you pleaſe: no, for God doth charge it upon you as a duty, yea a debt that you owe him, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. "Charge them that are rich in this world, &c. that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute." And he pronounced them bleſſed who conſidered the poor, Pſal. xli. 1. I grant that people are not to leave all their works of charity to a death-bed; theſe ſhould alſo be minded in our lifetime, ſo as to make our own hands our executors, and our own eyes our overſeers of our charitable projects: but ſurely it is a proper ſeaſon for ſhewing charity to God's poor, when we are leaving them, and cannot have occaſion for ſhewing it more. Re-

member what is recorded of Dorcas after her death, Acts ix. 36. that she was a woman full of good works and alms-deeds. And her friends, vers. 39. shewed the effects of her charity to Peter after her death. All which is written for our example and admonition, that we may be rich in such good works, that our friends may have them to show after our death. Surely it is a sign of the degeneracy of this age, and that religion is on the declining hand, when people generally fall so short of the zeal and piety of their fathers in his matter.

4thly. It would be a commendable work of charity in dying persons, to be giving many good counsels to their relations and children, and to be putting many fervent prayers to God for them. So Christ, when near to death, committed his spiritual children to his Father, and earnestly begging his protection and care of them, John xvii. 11. "I am no more in the world, but these are in the world: keep them through thy name, keep them from the evil," &c. In like manner, cry to God for your children: "Lord, thou hast graciously given them to me, I now restore them back to thee.—They are born to me once, O that they may be born to thee a second time! I am leaving them in the midst of snares and temptations, O that it may be their happiness to be preserved in Christ Jesus! Keep them by thy power through faith unto salvation. O take them within the bond of thy covenant, and be thou their Father, to protect, direct, and provide for them. Give them a name in thy house better than of sons and daughters, that I may meet with them at thy right hand with everlasting joy."

Lastly, Be suitably concerned also for the whole church of Christ, and especially for these that are in affliction, that God may loose their bonds, send them liberty and prosperity in his due time, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build up the walls of thy Jerusalem. Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces."

DIRECT. IV. *Labour what you can to overcome the love of life, and fears of death: that you may attain to willingness to die, and leave the world when God calleth you to it.*

IT is no wonder that a wicked man, or one that hath no interest in Christ, be unwilling to die: why, he is affrighted with the guilt of past sins, and the fears of future torments; and it is impossible to be rid of these till he become a true believer in Christ. No man hath ground to welcome death but the believer; yet it is to be regretted that so many of them should appear unwilling to leave this world, which is nothing to them but a wilderness and weary land. Lot's soul was vexed and troubled in Sodom, yet he was loth to leave it; so some believers, when called to leave a vexing world, do shew much hankering towards it, and linger behind. This proceeds partly from nature, which dreads a dissolution, and partly from the weakness of grace. But O let all God's children labour to overcome this aversion, and go forth to meet death half way, and bid it welcome. And for their help in this matter, I shall lay before them the following arguments.

1*st*, Consider how little reason a believer hath to be much in love with this present life. 1. It is a sinful life; sin dwells in your nature, breaks out in your life, and pollutes all your duties. How often have you groaned under this burden? and should you not be willing to be eternally delivered from it? 2. It is a life of diseases and infirmities, and should you not be glad to be cured of them all at once? 3. It is a life of temptation, satan is still harrassing thee, and should you not be desirous to be out of his reach? 4. It is a life of persecutions from the wicked: they hate, reproach, and injure you many ways; and is it not desirable to be "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest?" 5. It is a life of clouds and darkness: your sun is often veiled, and your evidences obscured, which occasions many bitter complaints, and should you not desire that time when the day shall break, and all shadows fly away? 6. It is a life of

calamities and fears: It is like a ſtormy ſea, where one wave rolls upon the back of another, and when one calamity is paſt, we many times fear a greater is coming; and ſometimes the heavens turn ſo black and gloomy, that we fear a hurricane of judgments is ready to blow; and ſhould you not bleſs God when he comes, by death, to houſe your ſouls, and ſet you out of harm's way? It is in mercy that God takes away the righteous from the evil to come, Iſa. lvii. 1. So dealt he with Joſiah, 2 Kings, xxii. 20. "I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou ſhalt be put into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes ſhall not ſee all the evil which I ſhall bring upon this place." So it is obſervable that Methuſelah died the very year before the flood; Auguſtine a little before the ſacking of Hippo; Pareus juſt before the taking of Heidelberg. Luther obſerves that all the apoſtles died before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. And Luther himſelf died before the bloody wars broke out in Germany. Thus God frequently hides his people from the temptations and troubles that are coming on the earth. Why? he ſees many of them not in caſe to endure them; and therefore he in mercy takes them away from a tempting and ſinning world, to a land of holineſs and reſt. While we are here, we live in a world that lies in wickedneſs; every ſenſe of the body betrays the ſoul into ſin; the poor ſoul can ſcarce look out at the eye, and not be infected; nor hear by the ear and not be diſtracted; nor ſmell at the noſtrils and not be tainted; nor taſte at the tongue and not be allured; nor touch by the hand and not be defiled.

O believer, what is this life that thou art ſo fond of: it is but a living death, or a dying life. It is full of grief for things paſt, full of labour for things preſent, and full of fears for things future. The firſt part of our life is ſpent in folly; the middle part is overwhelmed with cares; and the latter part of it is burdened with infirmities and age. And what gain we by the prolonging of this life? nothing but to do more evil, ſee more evil, and ſuffer more evil. And ſhould a chriſtian be unwilling to be rid of thoſe grievances?

2*dly* Consider that dying is appointed as the way, and the only way to glory: there is no way to enter the promised land, but by crossing the Jordan of death. And should not a stranger desire to be at home with his friends, though he hath a rough way and stormy sea to pass? Is there any home like heaven, where your incomparable friend Christ is? O what a happiness is it to be with Christ, and to see him as he is? how happy do you think Peter, James, and John were, in being taken up to mount Tabor, to be eye-witnesses of their Saviour's transfiguration? but, O believer, death procures a greater happiness to you; it ushers you to Mount Zion, where you shall not only see your Saviour whiter than the snow, and brighter than the sun, but yourself transfigured with him, made like him, and eternally secured of his presence. The three apostles saw but two prophets, but you shall see all the prophets, all the apostles, all the patriarchs, all the martyrs, all the holy persons you once conversed with on earth, and in general all the saints in heaven, each of them shining as the sun; and how sweet will their company be? O how soon will the trifles of the world vanish and all its pleasures be forgot, when once the believer gets a view of that captivating glory above! When the shepherds heard but some few notes of the angels songs, who praised God at the nativity of our Saviour, they presently left their flocks, and ran to Bethlehem to behold the child Jesus lying in the manger; but much more cause hath a believer to leave all the pleasures of the world, and run to behold an exalted Jesus sitting on the throne of his glory, with all his saints and angels, singing praises around him.

If Cato and Cleombrotus, two heathens, after reading Plato's book of the immortally of the soul, did voluntarily, the one fall on his sword, the other break his neck from a precipcie, that they might the sooner come (as they fancied) to partake of these joys; what a shame is it for Christians, who have a far surer and clearer discovery of these things from God's own book, to be found unwillingly to enter into these heavenly joys, when their blessed Redeemer calls for them thither?

3*dly*, Consider how willing Christ was to come from heaven to earth for you; and should you be unwilling to remove from earth to heaven for him? yea, for yourselves, for the gain is yours? O did Christ assume your nature, become obedient to death, and purchase an inheritance for you with his blood; and will you be backward to go and take possession of it? O for a Christ-like obedience at death!

Lastly, Consider what a reproach is cast on christianity by a believer's unwillingness to die. For christians to pray, and speak much of Christ, of heaven and glory, and yet be unwilling to enter into that glory; what is it but a misbelieving of God, and a tempting of strangers to think there is no reality in religion?

Quest. Since death is not easy to grapple with, how shall I attain to this blessed disposition, a willingness to die?

Answ. 1*st.* Be frequently putting forth the acts of faith upon the righteousness of Christ; and believe that Christ died to bring in perfect righteousness for believers, that they all might be complete in him. Now why should a believer be afraid to appear before God in Christ's righteousness, which is so pleasing and acceptable to him? Rev. xiv. 4, 5. they are said to be *without fault before the throne of God.* If a believer were to appear before God in his own righteousness, clothed with his own duties and performances, it would be dreadful to think of dying; but to have the white garment of an elder brother to put on, gives another view of death. Alas, it is our neglecting the daily exercise of faith in the righteousness of Christ, that makes the thoughts of death so unwelcome.

2*dly*, When you attain to peace and reconciliation with God, labour to preserve it. Be stating and clearing accounts with God every day, and watch against these sins that wound conscience, waste comfort, and grieve the Spirit of adoption. When we think God is displeased with us, we will be afraid of going to him.

3*dly*, Study to be more denied to the enjoyments of this life, and to use them with a holy indifferency; otherwise there will be an unwillingness to leave these things.

4thly. Labour to be deeply ſenſible of the burden of indwelling ſin and corruption, and the workings thereof in your hearts; and this will make the thoughts of death welcome, becauſe it eternally delivers you from it.

5thly, Seek further diſcoveries of the lovelineſs of Chriſt, and the daily exerciſe and increaſe of your ſoul's love to him; for it is the nature of love to long after communion with the perſon that we love.

6thly, Make death familiar to you by the frequent forethoughts of it. Retire oft from the world to think of dying, when you are in beſt health.

7thly, Be much taken up in the ſweet employment of praiſing God, and exalting the worthy Lamb that was ſlain; and this will incline you to be there, where this is the continual work.

Laſtly. Be oft thinking of theſe warnings and forerunners of death, which God ſends to wean your heart from the love of life, and diſpoſe you to a willingneſs to die. For this end, God ſends manifold diſeaſes, pains, infirmities, wants, ſtraits, loſſes, croſſes, diſappointments, &c. And in a ſpecial manner, let old people view the forerunners and harbingers of death, which God ſends to prepare his way: ſuch as the decays and infirmities of old age, which we have elegantly deſcribed in figurative expreſſions, Eccleſ. xii. 2. "Then the light of the ſun, moon, and ſtars ſhall be darkened;" *i. e.* in old perſons, the intellectual powers and faculties, which are as lights in the ſoul, ſhall be weakened. And then do "the clouds return after rain;" *i. e.* their diſtempers are frequent, like a continual dropping in a rainy day; and the ending of one is but the beginning of another.—Verſe 3. "Then the keepers of the houſe do tremble;" *i. e.* the head and hands which were employed for the preſervation of the body do ſhake.—The ſtrong men bow themſelves," *i. e.* the legs and thighs which are the pillars of the houſe become weak and feeble.—"The grinders ceaſe becauſe they are few;" *i. e.* the teeth which like the upper and nether millſtone do grind our meat and prepare it for concoction then ceaſe to do their part.—"Thoſe that look out of the windows are darkened;" *i. e.* the eyes wax

dim, whereby God calls us to turn them away from beholding vanity and to look after the things that are not ſeen.—Verſe 4. "The daughters of muſic are brought low;" *i. e.* they have neither voice nor ears; they can neither ſing themſelves, nor take pleaſure in the voice of ſinging men or women. Then death pulls us, as it were by the ear, to think on the muſic above.—Verſe 5. "The almond-tree flouriſheth;" *i. e.* the hair grows white, like the almond-tree in the bloſſom. And as the outward parts of the body do weaken and decay, ſo alſo do the inward parts thereof: therefore it is ſaid, Verſe 6. "The ſilver cord ſhall be looſed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, the wheel broken at the ciſtern;" *i. e.* the ſilver cord of the ſinews is looſed, which carries the faculty of ſenſe and motion from the head, through the body. The head, which like a golden bowl or box, contains the brain, that is the fountain of ſenſe and motion through age is broken, and turns crazy. The many pitchers of the veins, which carry the nouriſhing blood from the well to the liver unto each part of the body, become like broken veſſels. And the wheels of the arteries, which convey the vital ſpirits from the heart to the ſeveral members, for quickening them begin to turn faint and languid. All theſe things do warn old perſons to take their affections off time's things, and ſet them upon things above, that they may be helped to ſay, we "deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt."

But after all, ſome believers will have objections againſt willingneſs to die, ſome whereof I ſhall conſider.

Object. I. "I am threatened to be cut off in the flower of mine age."

Anſw. Inſtead of fretting on this account, you ought rather to adore and praiſe a gracious God, that is willing to beſtow the reward of the whole day upon thee, who haſt only laboured ſome hours of it. Praiſe him that he is willing to take you ſo ſoon home; whereby you will prevent much ſin and ſorrow in the world.

Object. II. "I have houſes and lands, and a comfortable dwelling on the earth."

Anſw. Theſe are only needful in your paſſage through the world; above there is no uſe for theſe comforts. There God provideth manſions for his people a thouſand times more comfortable, John xiv. 2. 2 Cor. v. 1. Surely houſes of God's building, and of Chriſt's furniſhing, are preferable to the cottages built by men's hands.

Object. III. "But I am loth to leave God's ordinances, and the ſweet communion I have had with him therein."

Anſw. Above there will be no need of ordinances, ſacraments, bibles, or miniſters; for the Lamb will be the light of the heavenly temple, and all hid things in religion will be diſcovered in Chriſt's face. There you will celebrate an eternal Sabbath, drink the fruit of the vine new with Chriſt, be ever with the Lord, without any cloud or interruption of your communion with him. Is it any loſs to be taken from the ſhallow ſtreams, and ſet by the fountain that is ever full and running over?

Object. IV. "I am loth to leave the company of godly friends and relations."

Anſw. Death will take you to your friend Chriſt, that is far better than them all. And for one friend you loſe upon earth, you ſhall find an hundred in heaven; and theſe godly relations you leave here, you ſhall ſoon meet with them again there; where you will have far ſweeter communion than poſſibly you can have upon earth with them, or the beſt of men, who, while here, have ſeveral infirmities and paſſions, that many times make their converſe uncomfortable.

Object. V. "But I would fain ſee the glory of Zion upon earth, when God's promiſes to her ſhall be accompliſhed."

Anſw. So Moſes would fain have had Iſrael's happineſs in the promiſed land: but his dying in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promiſes to them there, was more acceptable to God, than his beholding the performance. And the glory of the church militant is a ſight nothing comparable to that of the church triumphant above.

Object. VI. "But I would incline to ſtay to do God

more ſervice in his church below, whoſe neceſſities are claimant."

Anſw. 1. You will not want opportunity for ſerving and glorifying God above, and where you will be in far better caſe for it. Here our hearts are oft out of tune for God's work, and we are forced to hang our harps upon the willows; but above there are no willows to hang them on; no ſaint there will ever complain of any indiſpoſition of heart or tongue.

2*dly*. God knows the neceſſities of his church, and is more concerned for them than thou canſt be; and it is eaſy for him to raiſe up inſtruments to carry on his work when thou art gone.

Object. VII. "I am afraid of the pain and pangs of death. The thoughts of theſe make me ſhrink back."

Anſw. 1ſt. Many die without much ſeeming ſenſe of pain, and it is probable have leſs pain at the hour of death, than they have felt under ſeveral former diſeaſes.

2*dly*. If they be ſharp, they are ſoon over; and each pang of death will ſet ſin a ſtep nearer the door, and thy ſoul a ſtep nearer home: and therefore it becometh a Chriſtian to die cheerfully, and to be glad when he can find the grave.

Now, what I have ſaid in this chapter is to the believing ſoul: for it is no wonder though the ſouls of the ungodly, at death, ſhrink back into the body, and tremble to go forth, when they can have no proſpect of any better lodging than utter darkneſs.

DIRECT. V. *Study to imitate the ancient worthies, by dying in faith.*

THIS was the character and epitaph of the old Teſtament ſaints, Heb. xi. 13. "Theſe all died in faith." As they had lived by faith, ſo they died in faith. They not only continued true believers to the laſt, dying in the ſtate of faith, but they died in the exerciſe of faith alſo. Now, the exerciſe of faith in dying includes ſeveral things, worthy to be imitated by all dying believers.

1*ſt*, An open and profeſſed adherance to the doctrine

of faith, and truths of chriſtianity. This faith all Chriſtians ſhould zealouſly own in the view of death, and perſevere in it to the laſt without wavering. This would be to die like martyrs, though we die in our beds. How ſteadfaſtly did old Polycarp adhere to Chriſt and his truths to the laſt, and ſo died in faith! When he was urged by the proconſul to deny Chriſt, he anſwered, "Theſe fourſcore and ſix years have I ſerved him, and he never once offended me: and how ſhall I now deny him?"

2dly, Dying in faith imports an inward, hearty, and firm belief of the fundamental articles of the chriſtian faith: and improving them ſo, as to make them the foundation of our comfort and hope at the hour of death. As for inſtance, we muſt yield our departing ſouls, in the firm belief of their living and exiſting in a ſeparate condition after this life, and of that future ſtate of bleſſedneſs and reſt which God hath prepared for all believers. Again, we muſt diſmiſs the body to the grave, in a firm belief and hope of a joyful reſurrection at the laſt day. Thus that holy man, Job, both lived and died in faith, Job xix. 25, 26, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh I ſhall ſee God." A Chriſtian then dies in faith, when he believes theſe truths ſo, as cheerfully to obey God's call, and venture into the inviſible world, upon the teſtimony which God hath given concerning it: as Abraham did in going out to an unknown land, Heb. xi. 8. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whether he went."

3dly, The believer dies in faith, when he makes freſh application to Chriſt as his only hope and Saviour, takes him in his arms of faith, as old Simeon did before his death, ſaying, "In the Lord Chriſt I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength;" though I have neither righteouſneſs nor ſtrength in myſelf, yet I have both in him, my bleſſed ſurety and redeemer. We have many uſes for faith

in Christ at the hour of death. By faith we must depend upon Christ's blood for making atonement, and washing away the guilt of all our bypast sins. By faith we must put on the righteousness of Christ for covering our naked souls, when they are to appear and stand before God.—By faith we must rely on Christ for strength to suffer pain, resist temptations, and conquer death and all our enemies. By faith we must look to Christ as our leader, and trust him for our safe conduct through the dark valley of death, and for safe landing on the shore of glory.

4thly, The believer dies in faith, when he trusts his departing soul with confidence in his Redeemer's hand, saying with Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." This was the Psalmist's practice, Psal. xxxi. 5. "Into thy hand I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." So the man that dies in faith, commits the jewel of his soul to his Redeemer's keeping, and confides in his care of it. Why, he made it, he hath redeemed it, he loves it, it is his own, a member of his body, and he will not hate his own flesh. He loves his dying saints much better than we love an eye, a hand, or any other member of our body, which, to be sure, we will not loose, if it be in our power to save it.

5thly, Dying in faith imports, that the dying saint confides in God's faithfulness and truth for making good all these promises to his church and people after his death, which are not yet accomplished. We should go off the stage in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promises concerning the prosperity of his church, the calling of the Jews, the destruction of Antichrist, and the second coming of our Lord; and likewise concerning our families, that God will be as good as his word, and be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow.

Would we then be so happy as to die in faith, let us take these advices.

1st, Let us be careful to get faith beforehand: for death is a time to use faith, not to get it. They were

foolish virgins who had their oil to buy when the bridegroom was come.

2*dly*, Study to live every day in the exercise of faith, and be still improving and making use of Christ, in all his offices, and for all these ends and uses for which God hath given him to believers.

3*dly*, Be frequently clearing up your evidences for heaven, and beware of letting sin blot them to you.

4*thly*, Record and lay up the experiences of God's kind dealings with you, and be often reflecting upon them, that you may have them ready at hand in the hour of death.

Lastly, Meditate much on these promises which have been sweet and comfortable to you in the time of strait; and beg that the Lord may bring them to your remembrance when you come to die.

DIRECT. VI. *Set the examples of other dying saints before you, and study in like manner to shine in grace, heavenly discourse, and be exemplary in piety, and for the glory of God, and good of souls, when you are going off the stage.*

THIS is the last opportunity you have of doing service to God, and the interest of religion; wherefore strive to improve it dilligently for the honour of God, and the edification of those that survive you. How pleasant is it to see God's people leaving the world, commending Christ and his service, and perfuming the place they lie in with their last breath! I have, Chap. III. Direct. 5. and 6. adduced several modes to press this point, and given directions concerning the speech and behaviour of the children of God when on sick-beds, which I shall not repeat.

That which I design here is, to set before you the examples of some eminent saints, and their examplary, pious and holy speeches and sayings, when they were a-dying; and that in order to confirm and establish others in religion, and also to excite them to imitate these shining worthies when they also come to die. Surely it is for this very end, that God hath ordered us to be compassed a-

bout with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, Heb. xii. 1.— Thus doth the apoſtle improve their example, Heb. xi. And how earneſt is he in this matter? Heb. vi. 11. 12. "And we deſire, that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who thro' faith and patience inherit the promiſes."

I ſhall begin with ſome examples from the ſacred hiſtory; and, in the firſt place, with the King of ſaints, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. O how ſweet and comfortable were his diſcourſes unto his diſciples, when his death drew nigh! and what a heavenly prayer did he make for them, and all his elect ones at that time! Theſe we have recorded in the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of John, which are moſt ſeaſonable at all times for us to read and meditate upon, but eſpecially when death is approaching. And likewiſe let us read the hiſtory of our Lord's paſſion, in which we may obſerve the wonderful expreſſions of his faith in God, his patience under ſufferings, his pity to his enemies, his love to his mother and his diſciples, his concern for his Father's glory, his obedience in his death, and his willingneſs to be offered up. Thus the bleſſed Sun of righteouſneſs did ſhine forth moſt glorioufly at his ſetting, with the radiant beams of his heavenly graces and virtues; and herein he hath ſet himſelf a pattern to all dying ſaints to the end of the world.

Jacob, when he was on his death bed, called his ſons together, and gave them many ſpecial charges and bleſſings; we have his excellent words recorded in Gen. xlviii. and xlix. chapters. And in particular, how ſweetly doth he ſpeak of the coming of the Meſſiah to them? Gen. xlix. 10. 18. And how affectionately doth he commend God's goodneſs and kind providence towards him through his life? Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day," *&c.*

Joſeph, when he was a-dying, ſpoke lovingly to his brethren, who had dealt cruelly with him; and aſſured them of the Lord's faithfulneſs in keeping his promiſe

to their fathers, Gen. l. 20. "I die, and God will ſurely viſit you, and bring you out of this land."

Moſes, when he was to go up to mount Nebo to die there, left many bleſſings, and gave many weighty charges to the children of Iſrael; we have his holy and raviſhing words recorded, Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii. chapters. And particularly how pleaſantly doth he commend God, and his ways to the people? Deut. xxxii. 4. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he."

Joſhua, when he was near his end, gave many ſolemn charges and exhortations to the people, which we have narrated, Joſh. xxiii. and xxiv. chapters. And there we may ſee the remarkable methods he takes to rivet impreſſions and convictions upon them, now when he can inſtruct them no longer. And, particularly, he appeals to their conſciences concerning the faithfulneſs of God in keeping his word to them, that ſo he might engage them to fidelity to him, Joſh. xxiii. 14. "And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts and in all your ſouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you."

David, when his end was near, aſſembled the people, and ſolemnly charged them, as in the audience of God, to keep his commandments, 1 Chron. xxviii. 8, 9. And particularly, he charged his ſon and ſucceſſor Solomon, to "know the God of his father, and to ſerve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind."

The apoſtle Paul, when taking his laſt farewell of the elders of Epheſus, he moſt ſolemnly charges them, to "take heed to themſelves, and the flocks over which the Holy Ghoſt had made them overſeers," Acts xx. 28.—And how ſweetly doth he ſing in the view of approaching death! 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. "I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous

Judge ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them alſo that love his appearing."

In imitation of theſe ſcripture ſaints, the people of God in all ages have ſtudied to glorify God and edify men at their death, by commending God and godlineſs to their friends and families. Theſe we ought to teach by our example, both how to live and how to die, as others have done before us. Thus ſaid once a dying ſaint to his family, "I have formerly taught you how to live, and now I teach you how to die."

Now, becauſe in all ages the ſpeeches of dying Chriſtians have been much obſerved, and God hath remarkably bleſſed them to the eſtabliſhment and confirmation, quickening and exciting of others to imitate them; I ſhall bring ſeveral examples from human hiſtories and writings, and moſtly from Clark's Lives, of ſundry eminent ſaints, whoſe graces have ſhone brighteſt, and their ſpeeches were moſt heavenly, when the ſun of their life was at the ſetting.

1. That old diſciple, Polycarp, when he came to the ſtake at which he was burnt, deſired to ſtand untied, ſaying, "Let me alone, for he that gave me ſtrength to come to the fire, will give me patience to endure the flame without your tying."

2. So holy Cyprian triumphed over death, ſaying, "Let him only fear death, who muſt paſs from this death to the ſecond death." When he heard the ſentence of death pronounced againſt him, he ſaid, "I thank God for freeing me from the priſon of this body."

3. Baſil, when the emperor Valens ſent his officers to tempt him with great preferments to turn from the faith, he rejected them with ſcorn, ſaying, "You may offer theſe things to children." And when they threatened him with ſufferings, he ſaid, "threaten your purple gallants with theſe things, that give themſelves to their pleaſures."

When Modeſtus the perfect threatened Baſil, to confiſcate his goods, to torment him, to baniſh him or kill him, he anſwered, "he need not fear confiſcation, that had nothing to looſe: nor baniſhment, to whom heaven

only is a country: nor torments, when his body would be dashed with one blow: nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty." The perfect telling him he was mad, said, *Opto me in æternum, sic delirare*, I wish I may forever be thus mad.

4. Ignatius being led from Syria to Rome to be torn in pieces of wild beasts, he expressed his fear lest it should happen to him as to some others, that the lions out of a kind of reverence, would not dare to touch him. And therefore he oft wished, "that their appetites might be whetted to dispatch him. For (said he) the lions teeth are but like a mill, which though it bruiseth, yet wasteth not the good wheat, only prepares and fits it to be made pure bread. Let me be broken by them, so I may be made pure manchet for heaven."

5. The great Mr. Knox, our reformer, when he lay a dying, was much in prayer, ever crying, "Come Lord Jesus; sweet Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Being asked by those that attended him, if his pain was great? he answered, "That he did not esteem that a pain, which would be to him the end of all trouble, and the beginning of eternal joys." Oft times, after some deep meditations, he said, "O serve the Lord in fear, and death shall not be terrible to you; Blessed is the death of those that have part in the death of Jesus."

After a sore temptation from Satan, (which I formerly mentioned) over which he triumphed at length, he said, "Now the enemy is gone away ashamed, and shall no more return. I am sure now my battle is at an end, and that without pain of body, or trouble of spirit, I shall shortly change this mortal and miserable life, with that happy and immortal life which shall never have an end." After one had prayed for him, he was asked whether he heard the prayer? he answered, "Would to God you had heard it with such an ear and heart as I have done! adding, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." With which words, without any motion of hands or feet, as one falling asleep, rather than dying, he ended his life.

6. Dr. Gouge, when he was old and dying was sore afflicted with the stone, and other painful maladies; yet

though by reaſon of his pains he was oft heard to groan, he never once grumbled againſt the diſpenſations of God. He never cried out, *a great ſufferer*, but oft, *a great ſinner:* yet ſtill comforted himſelf, that there is a great Saviour. In his greateſt torments he would ſay, "Well, yet in all theſe there is nothing of hell, or of God's wrath. O my ſoul, be ſilent, be patient: it is thy God and Father that thus orders thine eſtate. Thou art his clay; he may tread and trample upon thee as he pleaseth; thou haſt deſerved much more. It is enough that thou art kept out of hell; though thy pains be grievous, yet they are not intolerable, thy God affords ſome intermiſſions; he will turn it to thy good, and at length put an end to all; and none of theſe comforts can be expected in hell." In his greateſt pains, he oft uſed holy Job's words, "Shall we receive good from the hands of the Lord, and not evil alſo?" When any of his friends would have comforted him, with telling him of his eminent gifts and ſervice in the miniſtry, he would anſwer, "I dare not think of any ſuch thing for comfort: only Jeſus Chriſt, and what he hath done and endured, is the ground of my ſure comfort." The thoughts of death were pleaſant to him, which he often termed, his beſt friend, next unto Jeſus Chriſt. And he would bleſs God, that he had nothing to do but to die.

7. I have read of another miniſter under the like extreme pains. When he was aſked, how he did? his frequent anſwer was, "The buſh always burning, but not conſumed; though my pains are above the ſtrength of nature, yet they are not above the ſupports of grace." He would pray, "Lord drop comfort into theſe bitter waters of Marah. Let the blood of ſprinkling which extinguiſheth the fire of thine anger, allay my burning pain. Oh if my patience were more, my pains would be leſs; Lord, give me patience, and inflict what thou wilt. This is a fiery chariot, but it will carry me to heaven. O my God, break open the priſon door, and ſet my poor captive ſoul free: I deſire to be diſſolved, but enable me willingly to wait thy time." He would again cry, "When ſhall the time come, that I ſhall neither ſin more, nor ſorrow

more: Lord, keep me from dishonouring thy name by impatience. Oh, who would not, even in burnings, have honourable thoughts of God! Lord, thou gavest me no occasion to have hard thoughts of thee. Blessed be God, for the peace of mine inward man, when my outward man is so full of trouble. This is a bitter cup, but it is of my Father's mixing; and shall I not then drink it?"

8. Mrs. Jean Askew, who was a martyr in king Henry's reign, to her confession in Newgate she thus subscribed; "Written by me Jean Askew, that neither wisheth death, nor feareth its might, and as merry as one bound towards heaven." When the chancellor sent her letters at the stake, offering her the king's pardon, if she would recant; she refused to look upon them, gave this answer: "That she came not hither to deny her Lord andMaster."

9. Mr. James Bainham, when he was at the stake in the midst of the burning fire, which had half consumed his legs and arms, spake these words; "O ye Papists! behold ye look for miracles, and here now ye may see a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain, than if I were in a bed of down; it is to me as a bed of roses."

10. John Lambert, as he was burning in Smithfield, and his legs were quite consumed with the fire, he lifted up his hands, his fingers flaming like torches, but his heart abounding with comfort, crying out, "None but Christ, none but Christ."

11. Mr. Robert Glover, a little before his death, had lost the sense of God's favour, for which he was in great heavinefs and sorrow; but when he came within sight of the stake at which he was to suffer, he was on a sudden so filled with divine comfort, that, clapping his hands together, he cried out to his servant, "He is come, he is come;" and so died most cheerfully.

12. It was a saying of Augustine, "Boughs fall off trees, and stones out of buildings; and why should it seem strange that mortal men die?"

13. Mr. John Dodd had a violent fever, that there was but little hope of his life; yet at length his physician coming to him, said, "Now I have hope of your recove-

ry." To whom Mr. Dodd anſwered, You think to comfort me with this, but you make my heart ſad. It is as if you ſhould tell one who had been ſore weather-beaten at ſea, and conceiving he was now arrived at the haven where his ſoul longed to be, that he muſt go back again to be toſſed with new winds and waves."

He would often ſay in his ſickneſs, "I am not afraid to look death in the face. I can ſay, Death where is thy ſting? death cannot hurt me." He uſed to ſay, "The knowledge of two things would make one willing to die, viz. What heaven is, and that it is mine." "Yes, (ſaid one) if a man were ſure of that." To whom he anſwered, "Truly aſſurance is to be had; and what have we been doing all this while?"

Some others of the ſayings of this holy man were ſo pithy and remarkable, I cannot paſs them here.

Once Mr. Dodd coming to viſit a godly miniſter on his death-bed, who was much oppreſſed with melancholy, and complained to him, ſaying, "O Mr. Dodd, what will you ſay of him who is going out of the world, and can find no comfort?" To whom Mr. Dodd anſwered, "What will you ſay of our Saviour Chriſt, who, when he was going out of the world, found no comfort, but cried out, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?"—He ſaid of afflictions, "they are God's portions, which we may ſweeten by faith and faithful prayer; but we, for the moſt part, make them bitter, putting into God's cup the evil ingredients of our impatience and unbelief.—He calls death the friend of grace, though it be the enemy of nature; for whereas the word ſacraments, and prayer, do but weaken ſin, death kills it." He uſed to ſay, "A man is never in a hard condition, unleſs he have a hard heart, and cannot pray." He inſtructed Chriſtians how they ſhould never have a great nor laſting affliction, and that was, by looking upon the things that are not ſeen, which are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. For what can be great to him that counts the world nothing? And what can be long to him that accounts his life but a ſpan long?—When he ſaw a Chriſtian look ſad, he would ſay as Jonadab did to Amnon, "Art thou a king's

ſon, and lookeſt ſo ill?" And when ſuch complained to him of their loſſes and croſſes, he would uſe the words of Eliphaz to Job, "Do the conſolations of God ſeem ſmall unto you? God hath taken from you your children, your goods, &c. but he hath not taken from you himſelf, his Chriſt, nor his Spirit, nor heaven, nor eternal life."

To a friend of his that roſe from a mean to a great eſtate, he ſent word, "That this was but as if he ſhould go out of a boat into a barge or ſhip; but he ought ſeriouſly to remember, that whilſt he was in this world, he was but upon the floating ſea.

He oft ſaid, "That if it were lawful to envy any, he would envy thoſe that turn to God in their youth, whereby they eſcape much ſin and ſorrow, and are like Jacob, that ſtole the bleſſing betimes. He uſed to compare reproofs given in paſſion, to ſcalding potions, which the patient could not take down; in reproofs we ſhould labour for meekneſs of wiſdom, uſing ſoft words and hard arguments.

He was a moſt popular miniſter, but much perſecuted. Once he took a journey to ſee his father-in-law, Mr. Greenham, and to bemoan himſelf to him, upon account of his croſſes and hard uſage. Mr. Greenham, having heard all he could ſay, anſwered him thus: "Son, ſon, when affliction lieth heavy, ſin lieth light." Mr. Dodd uſed oft to bleſs God for this ſpeech, ſaying, "If Mr. Greenham had bemoaned him as he expected, he had done him much hurt." He forgot not this ſaying in his old age, but made excellent uſe of it for himſelf and others,

14. Oecolampadius, that famous divine of Switzerland, when lying on his death-bed, and being aſked, whether the light did not offend him? he anſwered, pointing to his breaſt, *Hic ſat lucis*, "Here is abundance of light;" meaning of comfort and joy. He aſked one of his friends, What news? His friend anſwered, none. Then, ſaith he, I will tell you ſome news; I ſhall preſently be with my Lord Chriſt.

15. A certain godly man paſſing through his laſt ſick-

neſs with extraordinary calmneſs of conſcience, being aſked by ſome of his friends about it, he anſwered, that he had ſtedfaſtly fixed his heart upon that ſweet promiſe, Iſa. xxvi. 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whoſe mind is ſtaid on thee; becauſe he truſteth in thee." And my God, ſaid he, hath graciouſly made it fully good unto my ſoul.

16. Mr. Robert Bolton, miniſter at Broughton, well known by his writings, in the time of his laſt ſickneſs, which was long and ſharp, he often breathed out theſe words: "Oh, when will this good hour come? when ſhall I be diſſolved? when ſhall I be with Chriſt?" Being told, that to be diſſolved was indeed better for him, yet it would be better for the church that he would ſtay here; he anſwered, "If I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew me both it and his habitation; but if otherwiſe, lo, here I am, let him do what ſeemeth him good in his eyes." Being aſked by another, if he could not be content to live, if it pleaſed God? he anſwered, "I grant that life is a great bleſſing of God, neither will I neglect any means that may preſerve it; and do heartily ſubmit to God's will; but of the two, I infinitely deſire more to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt." He bade all that came to ſee him, make ſure of Chriſt before they came to die, and look upon the world now as a lump of vanity. He encouraged the miniſters that came to him, to be dilligent and courageous in the work of the Lord, and not to faint nor droop for any affliction that ſhould ariſe thereupon.

When he found himſelf very weak, he called for his wife and children. He deſired her to bear his diſſolution, which was now at hand, with a Chriſtian fortitude, a thing he had been preparing her for by the ſpace of twenty years; and bade her make no doubt but ſhe ſhould meet him again in heaven. He exhorted his children to remember theſe things he had frequently told them before; adding, "That he hoped and believed, that none of them durſt think to meet him at that great tribunal in an unregenerate ſtate."

Some of his parish coming to watch with him, it was moved, that as by his doctrine he had discovered to them the exceeding comforts that were in Christ, so he would now tell them what he felt in his own soul. "Alas," said he, "do you look for that of me now, that wants breath and strength to speak? I have told you enough in my ministry; but yet to satisfy you, I am, by the wonderful mercies of God, as full of comfort as my heart can hold; and I feel nothing in my soul but Christ, with whom I heartily desire to be." And observing some weeping, he looked to them and said, "Oh, what a deal ado there is before one can die."

When the pangs of death were upon him, being told, that some of his dear friends were about him, to take their last farewel, he caused himself to be raised up in his bed; and after a few gaspings for breath, he said, "I am now drawing on apace to my dissolution; hold out, faith and patience, your work will speedily be at an end." And then shaking them all by the hands, he prayed heartily and particularly for them, and desired them to make sure of heaven, and to bear in mind what he had formerly told them in his ministry, protesting to them, that the doctrine he had preached to them for the space of twenty years was the truth of God, as he should answer it at the tribunal of Christ, before whom he should shortly appear.

When he was struggling with death, a very dear friend taking him by the hand, asked him if he felt not much pain? "Truly no (said he) the greatest I feel is your cold hand."

17. Mr. John Holland, a godly minister, continued his usual practice of expounding the scripture in his family to the last; and the day before his death he called for a bible, and causing another to read the 18th chapter of Romans, he discoursed upon it, verse by verse; but on a sudden he said, "O stay your reading; what brightness is this I see? have you lighted up any candle?" A stander by said no, it is the sunshine, (for it was about five o'clock in a clear summer's evening) "Sunshine, said he, nay, it is my Saviour's sunshine. Now farewel

world; welcome heaven; the day-ſtar from on high hath viſited my heart: O ſpeak it when I am gone, and preach it at my funeral; God dealeth familiarly with man; I feel his mercy, I ſee his majeſty; whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God he knoweth; but I ſee things that are unutterable." And in this rapture he continued till he died.

18. I knew not long ago, an eminently godly man, G. M. that fell into ſeveral ſuch extraordinary raptures ſometime before his death, ſuch as his bodily ſtrength and ſpirit were not able to ſupport under, though he had no ſickneſs. Sometimes he was ſo ſwallowed up and overcome by the manifeſtations of God's love to his ſoul, that his words could not be well underſtood; his natural colour, heat, and ſtrength, would ſo go off, that all about him would conclude him to be dying: but when he was able to get words uttered, they were ſo heavenly and raviſhing concerning the love of Chriſt, and freedom of grace, that by-ſtanders could not hear him without weeping. Sometimes miniſters, when they came to viſit him, and found him in theſe raptures, were forced to turn all their prayers in his behalf into praiſes; except ſome petitions they would put up to God, "That he might graciouſly ſpare and be tender of his weak body, and enable him to bear that load of loving kindneſs God was pleaſed to let out to him, and which his preſent bodily ſtrength was not ſufficient for." Yea, they would be put to cry, "Lord, if it be thy will, hold thy hand, for he is but a clay veſſel; this new wine will burſt the old bottle; preſerve him in life as a monument of the rich grace of God, for the conviction of Atheiſts and carnal people, and for the confirmation of the faith of the children of God."—Sometimes he would cry in abrupt expreſſions, "O angels! help me to praiſe him! O ſaints admire his love, and wonder at him.—Again, O flames of love! my ſoul ſeeth Chriſt! the heavens open! I ſee a throne, and the Lamb in the midſt of the throne! O what think ye of Chriſt? my ſoul breathes, breathes towards him! my ſpirit is exhaled out of me by the manifeſtations of God!" He uſed frequently to

ſay with a heavenly air to his friends, "O what think ye of Chriſt?" When his ecſtacy did ſomewhat abate, ſo that he attained a pleaſant calmneſs of thought, and freedom of ſpeech, he would diſcourſe of the myſteries of religion, the electing love of God, the freedom of grace, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and the glorious contrivance of redemption through his death and ſacrifice; I ſay, he would talk of all theſe things more like an angel than a man. For ſuch was his heavenly eloquence, fluency of words, and facility of ſpeaking upon theſe ſubjects, (which otherwiſe was not natural to him) that thoſe who came to ſee him were exceedingly ſurpriſed and aſtoniſhed to hear him. His body gradually weakened under theſe raptures of ſpirit, and he longed much to be off the world, becauſe he thought he could be ſo little uſeful in it for advancing God's honour. He reckoned himſelf bound to improve the ſhort time he was like to have here, in commending Chriſt and religion to all that he had acceſs to, and alſo to admoniſh them of any thing he knew amiſs in them, which he did moſt convincingly. And having occaſion to ſee ſome who vilipended the eſtabliſhed church and the ordinances, and told them, that from his own ſweet experience he could ſay, that God was to be found in them. He ſeemed to have ſin wonderfully mortified; for he complained of no other heart-plague but ſelf, and it was his great exercife to get ſelf wholly ſubdued; he purſued it through many of its windings and lurking places, and after all he would regret his little ſucceſs againſt it. "For (ſaid he) when I am in my moſt elevated frames, and admitted to the neareſt acceſs to my Redeemer, that ſubtle enemy ſelf will enter in with me, and offer to pull the crown off his head before my face."

Once after hearing a ſermon on Pſal. lxxxv. 8. "I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak," he broke out in a rapturous diſcourſe to one that came to ſee him, bleſſing God that he had ſpoke to him in that ſermon. "And O (ſaid he) what am I that the Rock of Iſrael ſhould have ſpoke to me theſe three ſermon-days bygone, aſſuring me that all my ſins are forgiven! What am I, a

vile worm, that he ſhould be ſo kind and condeſcending, as to diſcover Chriſt and heaven in ſuch a manner to me, and aſſure me that I will ſhortly be with him! Oh I thought that I had ſinned him away from me, but I ſee he will not bide away! O admirable free grace! O help me to praiſe him!"

When death drew near, there was ſome alteration in his caſe; yet he never queſtioned his intereſt in Chriſt; but ſtill aſſerted, "I know he is my God and my Redeemer, and I will ſhortly be with him." And once when he was ready to complain for want of God's wonted manifeſtations, he ſaid, "The Lord knew his body was now weak, and could not bear what formerly he had met with, yet (ſaid he) glory to his name, he hath given me three blinks ſince my laſt illneſs began."

19. Dr. Harris, head of Trinity-college in Oxford, in his laſt ſickneſs uſed to exhort all about him to get faith above all things. "It is (ſaid he) your victory, your peace, your life, your crown, and your chiefeſt piece of ſpiritual armour. Howbeit, get on all other piece, and go forth in the Lord's might: Stand to the fight, and the iſſue ſhall be glorious. Only forget not to call in the help of your General. Do all from him and under him."—On the Lord's days he would not have any kept from the ordinances upon his account; and, when they returned from the ſermons, he would ſay to them, "Come, what have you for me?" And when any gave him account of what they had heard, he would reſume the heads thereof, and ſay, "O what excellent truths are theſe! Lay them up carefully, for you will have need of them." When friends came to viſit him, he would ſay, "I cannot ſpeak, but I can hear." Being aſked, where his comfort lay? He anſwered, "In Chriſt, and in the free grace of God."

One telling him, that he might take much comfort in his labours, and the good he had done; his anſwer was, "All is nothing without a Saviour, without him my beſt works would condemn me. Oh, I am aſhamed of them, they are ſo mixed with ſin. I have done nothing for God as I ought. Oh, loſs of time ſits very heavy

upon my ſpirit. Work, work apace; aſſure yourſelves nothing will more trouble you when you come to die, than that you have done no more for God, who hath done ſo much for you."

Sometimes he uſed thus to breathe out himſelf, "I never in all my life ſaw the worth of a Chriſt, nor taſted the ſweetneſs of God's love in that meaſure as now I do." Being aſked by miniſters, what they ſhould chiefly requeſt for him? he anſwered, "Do not only pray for me, but praiſe God that he ſupports me, and keeps off Satan from me in my weakneſs; beg that I may hold out. I am now a good way home, near the ſhore, I leave you toſſing on the ſea; Oh, it is a good time to die in."

In all the letter-wills which he made, he took care this legacy ſhould ſtill be inſerted; "*Item*, I bequeath to all my children, and to their children's children, to each of them a bible, with this inſcription, None but Chriſt." He uſed to ſay, "It is a hard thing for a ſaint to forgive himſelf ſome faults, when God hath forgiven them."

20. David Chitræus, when he lay a dying, lift up his head from the pillow to hear the diſcourſes of his friends that ſat by him, and ſaid, "That he ſhould die with the greater comfort, if he might die learning ſomething."

21. Mr. Cooper, when a-dying ſaid, "I ſaw not my children when they were in the womb, yet there the Lord fed them without my care or knowledge. I ſhall not ſee them when I go out of the body, yet ſhall they not want a father." Again, death is ſomewhat driery, and the ſtreams of that Jordan between us and our Canaan run furiouſly, but they ſtand ſtill when the ark comes."

22. The Reverend Mr. Halyburton, that ſhining light in St Andrews, when a-dying commended Chriſt and godlineſs with great earneſtneſs, to all that came to ſee him. He exhorted his brethren to diligence in the miniſtry. "It was the delight of my heart (ſaid he) to preach the goſpel: I deſired to decreaſe, that the bridegroom migh increaſe; and to be nothing that he might

be all. I repent I did not more for him. O that I had the tongues of men and angels, to praiſe him!" When he was adviſed to lie quiet, he ſaid, "Whereon ſhould a man beſtow his laſt breath, but in commending the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God clothed in our nature, dying for our ſins?"

He cauſed read one of Mr Rutherfod's letters, viz. that to Mr. John Mein, and thereafter ſaid, "That is a book I would commend to you all, there is more practical religion in that letter, than in a book of a larger volume."

He exhorted ſome miniſters that came to ſee him to faithfulneſs. "As for the work of the miniſtry (ſaid he,) it was my deliberate choice, were my days lengthened out much more, and days as troubleſome as they are like to be, I would rather be a contemned miniſter of God, than the greateſt prince on earth."—He ſaid, when taking farewell of his wife, children and ſervants, "Here is a demonſtration of the reality of religion, that I a poor, weak, timorous man, as much afraid of death as any, am now enabled, by the power of grace, compoſedly and with joy to look death in the face, I dare look it in the face in its moſt ghaſtly ſhape, and hope within a little to have the victory. I cannot but commend the Lord Jeſus. As far as my word will go, I muſt proclaim it, he is the beſt maſter that ever I ſaw." To his ſon who was a child, he ſaid, "If I had as many ſons as there are hairs in your head, I would beſtow them all on God."—To ſome preſent he ſaid, "O ſirs, I dread mightily that a rational ſort of religion is coming in among us; I mean by it, a religion that conſiſts in a bare attendance on out-duties and ordinances, without the power of godlineſs; and thence people ſhall fall into a way of ſerving God, which is mere deiſm, having no relation to Chriſt Jeſus and the ſpirit of God."—He expreſſed his fears of a ſtorm coming on the church of Scotland; but he ſaid, "The day would break, and the Lord would ariſe, and he hoped the church would be made a wonder, and the Lord will ſay, Lo, this people have I formed for myſelf; he can make a nation to be born at once." He cri-

ed often with the ſpouſe in the ſong, "When ſhall the day break, and the ſhadows fly away? Turn my beloved, and be thou as a roe, or a young hart on the mountains of Bether."

He ſaid, "Shall I forget Zion? Nay, let my right hand forget her cunning, if I prefer not Jeruſalem to my chieſeſt joy. O to have God returning to this church, and his work going on in the world; if every drop of my blood, every bit of my body, every hair of my head, were all men; they ſhould all go to the fire to have this going on."—He ſaid, "If I would ſay, that I would ſpeak no more in the name of the Lord, it would be like a fire within me. I am calling you to ſee a miracle. God is melting me down into corruption and duſt, and yet he is keeping me in a calm.—I could not believe that I would have borne, and borne cheerfully this rod ſo long; this is a miracle, pain without pain; and this is not a fancy of a man diſordered in his brain, but of one lying in full compoſure. O bleſſed be God, that ever I was born. I have a father and mother and ten brethren and ſiſters in heaven, and I ſhall be the eleventh. I ſhall ſhortly be at that glory that I have been long expecting. Though I come not near Mr Shield's glory, nor Mr. Anderſon's, yet I will be well enough if I win it. Worthy is the lamb to receive glory."

24. Mr Hugh Mackaill, in his ſpeech before his death, ſaith, "I have eſteemed the ſolemn engagement of this nation to the Lord, pregnant performances of that promiſe, Iſa. xliv. 5. where it is evident that where church reformations come to any maturity, they arrive at this degree of ſaying, I am the Lord's, and ſubſcribing with the hand unto the Lord. So was it in the days of the reforming kings of Judah, and after the reſtoration from the captivity of Babylon in the days of Nehemiah. This ſame promiſe did the Lord Jeſus make yea and amen to us, when he redeemed us from ſpiritual Babylon —I glorify him, that he hath called me forth to ſuffer for his name and ordinances, and the ſolemn engagements of the land to him. Hereafter I will not talk with fleſh and blood, nor think on the world's conſola-

tions. Farewell all my friends, whose company hath been refreshful to me in my pilgrimage. I have done with the light of the sun and moon. Welcome eternal life, everlasting love, everlasting praise, everlasting glory. Praise to him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb forever."

24. The famous Mr. Durham being visited by a minister in his last sickness, which was long and lingering, who said to him, sir, I hope you have so set all in order, that you have nothing else to do but die, I bless God (said Mr. Durham) I have not had that to do neither these many years.

25. Mr. Rowland Nevet, his dying prayer for his children was that the Mediator's blessing might be the portion of every one of them. Adding to them, I charge you all, see to it, that you meet me on the right hand of Christ at the great day. When he was sometimes much spent with his labours he would appeal to God, that though he might be wearied in his service, he would never be weary of it. Being oft distempered in his body, he would say, he was never better than in the pulpit, and that it the best place that he could wish to die in.

26. Mr. Philip Henry, when a-dying, his pains were very sharp, he said to his neighbours who came to see him, O make sure work for your souls by getting an interest in Christ, while you are in health; for if I had that work to do now, what would come of me. A little before his last illness he wrote to a reverend brother, "Methinks it is strange, that it should be your lot and mine to abide so long on earth by the stuff, when so many of our friends are dividing the spoil above; but God will have it so; and to be willing to live in obedience to his holy will, is as true an act of grace as to be willing to die when he calls." One asked him how he did, he answered, "I find the chips fly off apace, the tree will be down shortly." He was sometimes taken with fainting fits, which when he recovered from, he would say, "Dying is but a little more." Once he said after recovery, "Well I thought I had been putting into the harbour, but I find I must yet to sea again,"

27. Mr. Matthew Henry, his death was ſomewhat ſudden, he ſaid a little before, to ſome about him, "You have been uſed to take notice of the ſayings of dying men; this is mine, That a life ſpent in the ſervice of God, and communion with him, is the moſt comfortable and pleaſant life that any one can live in this world."

28. Holy and learned Mr. Rutherford, a little before his death, let a written teſtimony to our covenanted work of reformation; and therein he proves the warrantableneſs of nations entering into covenant with God under the New Teſtament times, and ſhews, that this practice is the accompliſhment of ſeveral Old Teſtament prophecies, ſuch as Jer. l. 4. 5. Iſa. ii. 3. Zech. viii. 2. Iſa. xix. 23, 24, 25. which relate to goſpel-times. And when he was dying, he ſent ſeveral meſſages to the preſbytery of St. Andrews, deſiring them to adhere to God's cauſe and covenant.—In his ſickneſs he oft broke out in ſacred raptures, extolling and commending the Lord Jeſus, whom he often called his bleſſed Maſter, his kingly King. When his death drew near, he ſaid, I ſhall ſhine, I ſhall ſee him as he is, I ſhall ſee him reign, and all his fair company with him, and I ſhall have my large ſhare: my eyes ſhall ſee my Redeemer, theſe very eyes of mine, and no other for me."—When exhorting one to be diligent in ſeeking God, "It is no eaſy thing to be a Chriſtian; but for me, I have gotten the victory, and Chriſt is holding out both his arms to embrace me."—He was wonderfully ſtrengthened againſt the fears of ſuffering and of death, "For," ſay he, "I ſaid to the Lord, if he ſhould ſlay me five thouſand times, I would truſt in him; and I ſpoke it with much trembling, fearing I ſhould not make my heart good. But as really as ever he ſpoke to me by his Spirit, he witneſſed unto my heart, that his grace ſhould be ſufficent for me."—He ſaid to ſome miniſters that came to ſee him, "My Lord and Maſter is the chief of ten thouſand of thouſands, none is comparable to him in heaven or in earth. Dear brethren, Do all for him, pray for Chriſt, preach for Chriſt, feed the flock committed to your charge for Chriſt; viſit and catechiſe for Chriſt: do all for Chriſt, and beware of man-pleaſing.

Feed the flock out of love, the chief ſhepherd will appear ſhortly."——Once when he recovered from a fainting fit, he ſaid, "I feel, I feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoice, I feed on manna."—As he took a little wine in a ſpoon, Mr. Robert Blair ſaid to him, You feed on the dainties of heaven, and think nothing of our cordials on earth. He anſwered they are all but dung, yet they are Chriſt's creatures, and in obedience to his command, I take them —After ſome diſcourſe Mr. Blair ſaid to him, what think you now of Chriſt! to which he replied, I ſhall live and adore him, glory, glory to my Creator, and to my Redeemer forever. Glory ſhines in Immanuel's land.—Afterwards he ſaid, O that my brethren did know what a maſter I have ſerved, and what peace I have this day! I ſhall ſleep in Chriſt, and when I awake I ſhall be ſatisfied with his likeneſs." Then he ſaid this night ſhall cloſe the door, and put my anchor within the veil; I ſhall go away in a ſleep by five o'clock in the morning:" which exactly fell out. That night, though he was very weak, he oft had this expreſſion, O for arms to embrace him! O for a well tuned harp!

When ſome ſpoke to him of his former painfulneſs and faithfulneſs in the work of God; he ſaid, "I diſclaim all that; the port I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveneſs of ſins through his blood." His laſt words were, "Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land."

29. Hugh Kennedy, provoſt of Ayr, when he was a-dying, a miniſter ſaid to him, You have cauſe, Sir, to be aſſured that the angels of God are now waiting at the ſtoups of this bed to convey your ſoul to Abraham's boſom: to whom his anſwer was, "I am ſure thereof; and if the walls of this houſe could ſpeak, they could tell how many ſweet days I have had in fellowſhip with God, and how familiar he hath been with my ſoul."—He was one of the greateſt wreſtlers with God that was in the age wherein he lived, and had moſt remarkable returns of prayer. The great Mr. Welſh, in a letter from France, ſaid to him, "Happy is that city, yea, happy is that nation, that hath a Hugh Kennedy in it; I have

myſelf certainly found the anſwers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalf."

30. The great Mr. Robert Bruce, miniſter of Edinburgh, when dying through weakneſs and old age, being aſked by one of his friends, How matters ſtood now betwixt God and his ſoul? anſwered, "When I was young, I was diligent, and lived by faith on the Son of God; but now I am old, and not able to do ſo much; yet he condeſcends to feed me with lumps of ſenſe." That morning before he died, he came to breakfaſt at his table, and having eat, as he uſed, one ſingle egg; he ſaid to his daughter, I think I am yet hungry, you may bring me another. But preſently he fell into a deep meditation; and having muſed a while, he ſaid, "Hold, daughter, hold, my Maſter calls me." With theſe words his ſight failed him, whereupon he called for the Bible; but finding his ſight gone, he ſaid, "Caſt me up the eighth chapter of the epiſtle to the Romans, and ſet my finger on theſe words, 'I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, &c. ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.' Now, ſaith he, is my finger upon them? they told him it was. Then, without any more, he ſaid, "Now God be with you, my children, I have breakfaſted with you, and ſhall ſup with my Lord Jeſus Chriſt this night." And ſo gave up the ghoſt.

31. John Stewart, provoſt of Ayr, was a ſingularly pious man; yet when he lay a dying, he ſaid to ſome about him. "I go the way of all fleſh; and it may be ſome of you doubt nothing of my well being: yea, I teſtify, that except when I ſlept, or was on buſineſs, I was not theſe ten years without thoughts of God, ſo long as I could be in going from my houſe to the croſs; and yet I doubt myſelf, and am in great agony, yea, at the brink of deſpair." But a day or two before he died, he turned his face to the wall from company for two hours. Then Mr. Ferguſon the miniſter coming in, aſked what he was a-doing? upon which he turned himſelf with theſe words, "I have been fighting and working out my ſalvation with fear and trembling; and now I bleſs God,

it is perfected, sealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone."

32. Luther, when he fell sick, made his will, in which he bequeathed his detestation of Popery to his friends, and to the pastors of the church, having before made this verse,

Festis eram vivus, morsens ero mors tua, Papa,

In his last will, he saith, "O Lord God, I thank thee that thou wouldst have me live a poor and indigent person upon earth. I have neither house nor lands, nor possessions, nor money to leave. Thou, Lord, hast given me wife and children; them, Lord, I give back unto thee. Nourish, instruct, and keep them. O thou the father of orphans, and judge of the widows, as thou hast done to me, so do to them."

In his last prayer, Feb. 18th. 1546 he hath these words: "I pray God to preserve his gospel among us; for the Pope, and the Council of Trent, have grievous things in hand. O heavenly father, I give thee thanks that thou hast revealed to me thy son Jesus Christ, whom I believe, whom I profess, whom I glorify, and whom the Pope and the root of the wicked persecute and dishonour." Mr. Fox saith of Luther, "That a poor friar should be able to stand against the Pope was a great miracle; that he should prevail against the Pope was a greater; and after all to die in peace, having so many enemies, was the greatest of all."

33. Mr. Joseph Allein, a most painful, laborious minister, being deprived of the use of his arms and legs before his death, was asked by a friend, how he could be so well contented to lie so long in that condition? He answered, "What! is God my Father, Jesus Christ my Saviour, and the Holy Spirit my Sanctifier and Comforter; and shall I not be content without limbs and health? He is an unreasonable wretch that cannot be content with a God, though he had nothing else."

When his people of Taunton came to Dorchester to see him, where he lay; he was much revived, and would be set up in the bed, have his curtains drawn by, and desired them to stand round about the bed; and caused to

take out his hand, and held it out to them, that they might take it, as he uſed formerly to do, when he had been abſent from them. And though very weak, yet he ſpoke to them thus, "O how it rejoiceth my heart to ſee your faces, and to hear your voices, though I cannot ſpeak as heretofore unto you. Methinks, I am now like old Jacob, with all his ſons about him. Now you ſee my weak eſtate; thus I have been for many weeks ſince I parted with you, but God hath been with me. My friends, life is mine, death is mine; in that covenant of which I preached to you, is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire: Although my body do not proſper, *I* hope through grace my ſoul doth. *I* have lived a ſweet life by the promiſes, and I hope through grace can die by a promiſe. It is the promiſes of God that will ſtand by us. Nothing but God in them will ſtand us in the day of affliction. My dear friends, I feel the power of theſe doctrines I preached to you on my heart, the doctrines of faith, of repentance, of ſelf-denial, of the covenant of grace, of contentment, &c. O that you would live them over, now I cannnot preach them to you! It is a ſhame for a believer to be caſt down under afflictions, that hath ſo many glorious privileges, juſtification, adoption, ſanctification, and eternal glory. We ſhall be as the angels of God in a little while; nay, to ſay the truth believers are, as it were, little angels already, that live in the power of faith. O my friends, live like believers, trample this dirty world under your feet; be not taken with its comforts nor diſquieted with its croſſeſs, you will be gone out of it ſhortly."

When they came to take leave of him, he would needs pray with them, as his weak ſtate did ſuffer him. Then he ſaid, "Farewell my dear friends; go home and live over what I have preached to you, and the Lord provide for you when I am gone. Now I cannot preach to you, but let my waſted ſtrength, and uſeleſs limbs, be a ſermon to you. I am afraid of ſome of you, after all I have ſpoken to you. There are many profeſſors, who can pray well, and talk well, whom we ſhall find at the left hand of Chriſt another day. You have your trades,

your eſtates, your relations; be not taken with theſe, but with God; O live on him. For the Lord's ſake, go home and take heed of the world, worldly cares, worldly comforts, worldly relations, &c. Oh! let not my labours and ſufferings, let not my waſted ſtrength, and uſeleſs limbs, riſe up in judgment againſt you at the great day of the Lord," Then he ſaid, "The Lord having given authority to his miniſters to bleſs his people, accordingly I bleſs you in his name," (uſing the words he always uſed after ſacraments) "The Lord bleſs you and keep you, the Lord cauſe his face to ſhine upon you, and give you peace. And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

In the morning, his firſt ſpeeches would be, (which he alſo uſed in his health) "Now we have one day more; this is one more for God; now let us live well this day, work hard for our ſouls; lay up much treaſure in heaven this day, for we have but a few to live."

Being taken to the Bath, where he met with extraordinary kindneſs from ſtrangers, for many reſorted to him, to ſee him, and hear him ſpeak, having heard what a monument of mercy he was? he did delight himſelf much in the conſideration of the Lord's kindneſs to him, and the token's of ſtrangers their love, and would often ſay, "I was a ſtranger, and mercy took me in; in priſon, and it came to me; ſick and weak, and it viſited me." N. B. He had been much perſecuted, and put in priſon, for no other crime but preaching the goſpel.

He had a moſt pious and affectionate wife, that waited cloſely upon him, to whom he ſaid, "Now, my dear heart, my companion in all my tribulations and afflictions. I thank thee for all thy pains and labors for me at home and abroad, in priſon and liberty, in health and ſickneſs." And he prayed, that the Lord would requite

her, fill her with all manner of grace and consolations, and support and carry her through all difficulties.

He had some conflicts with Satan a little before his death: once he uttered these words, "Away thou foul fiend, thou enemy of all mankind, thou subtle sophister, art thou come now to molest me? Now I am just going! Now I am so weak, and death upon me! Trouble me not, for I am none of thine! I am the Lord's; Christ is mine, and I am his, his by covenant; I have sworn myself to be the Lord's, and his I will be; therefore be gone." These last words he repeated often, as pleading his covenanting with God, as a mean to resist the devil and his temptations. When he looked on his weak consumed hands, he would say, "These shall be changed: this vile body shall be made like to Christ's glorious body. O what a glorious day will the day of resurrection be! Methinks I see it by faith: how will the saints lift up their heads, and rejoice? and how sadly will the wicked world look then! O come let us make haste; our Lord will come shortly! If we long to be in heaven, let us hasten with our work: for when that is done, away we shall be fetched, O this vain, foolish, dirty world! *I* wonder how reasonable creatures can so doat upon it! What is in it worth the looking after! I care not to be in it longer than while my Master hath either doing or suffering work for me: were that done, farewell to earth."

This eminent saint had this testimony given him by one; It may be said of him, in as high a degree as of most saints on earth, that each thought was to him a prayer, each prayer a song, each day a Sabbath, each meal a sacrament, and so his life on earth a foretaste of that eternal repast, to which he hath now arrived.

34. The noble Marquis of Argyll, being a zealous friend of our covenanted reformation, was put to death May 27, 1661. His friends contrived methods for making his escape out of the castle of Edinburgh; but he thanked them, and told them, he would not disown the cause he had so publicly espoused, but resolved to suffer the utmost. When the sentence of death was passed by the parliament, on Saturday May 25th, he said, "*I* had

the honor to set the crown upon the king's head, and now he hastens me to a better crown than his own." Then he was sent to the tolbooth. His excellent lady embracing him when he entered, wept bitterly, saying, several times, "The Lord will require it." Not any in the room could refrain from tears; but the Marquis himself was perfectly composed, and said, "Forbear, forbear; truly *I* pity them, they know not what they are doing: they may shut me in where they please, but they cannot shut out God from me. For my part, *I* am as content to be here as in the castle, and as content in the castle as in the tower of London," (where he was first put,) "and as content there as when at liberty; and *I* hope to be as content upon the scaffold as any of them all."—He added, that he remembered a scripture cited to him lately by an honest minister in the castle, and endeavoured to put it in practice, when Ziglag was taken and burnt, and the people spoke of stoning David, "He encouraged himself in the Lord his God." All his short time, till Monday, he spent with the greatest serenity and cheerfulness, and in the proper exercises of a dying Christian. He said to some ministers allowed to be with him in the prison, that shortly they would envy him who was got before them—And added, "Mind that *I* tell you, my skill fails me, if you who are ministers will not either suffer much, or sin much: for though you go along with these men in part, if you do it not in all things, you are but where you are, and so must suffer; and if you go not at all in with them you shall but suffer."

The Marquis was naturally timorous, but he desired those about him to observe, as he could not but do, that the Lord had heard his prayers, and removed all fear from him. And indeed his friends work was to restrain and qualify his fervent longings after his dissolution, and not to support him under the near views of it. The Lord was exceeding kind to him at this time: for upon Monday morning, that day he suffered, when he was in the midst of company, and thronged in subscribing papers relating to his estate, he was so overcome with a singular manifestation from God, that he broke out in a

raptnre, and ſaid, "*I* thought to have concealed the Lord's goodneſs, but it will not do; *I* am now ordering my affairs, and God is ſealing my charter to a better inheritance, and juſt now ſaying to me, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.*" After he had retired ſometime alone, when he opened the door, Mr. Hutcheſon, one of the miniſters that attended him, ſaid to him, What cheer, my lord? he anſwered, "Good cheer, Sir, the Lord hath again confirmed and ſaid to me, from heaven, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.*" And he guſhed out in abundance of tears of joy, ſo that he retired to the windows, and wept there. Afterwards he ſaid in a perfect rapture to Mr. Hutcheſon, "I think his kindneſs overcomes me; but God is good to me, that lets not out too much of it here, for he knows I could not bear it: get my cloak and let us go." But being told that the town-clock was kept back, ſo that the hour was not yet come; he anſwered, "they are far in the wrong;" and preſently kneeled down, and prayed before all preſent, in a moſt ſweet and heavenly manner, to the refreſhment of all that were there.

When he was going out to the ſcaffold, he ſaid, I could die like a Roman, but I chooſe rather to die as a chriſtian. Come away, gentlemen, he that goes firſt, goes cleanlieſt."——When going down, he called Mr. James Guthrie to him, and embracing him in the moſt endearing way, took his farewel of him. Mr. Guthrie, at parting, addreſſed the Marquis thus, "My lord, God hath been with you, he is with you, and God will be with you; and ſuch is my reſpect for your lordſhip, that if I were not under the ſentence of death myſelf, I could cheerfully die for your lordſhip." So they parted for a ſhort ſeaſon, in two or three days to meet in a better place.

The Marquis, in his ſpeech on the ſcaffold, hath theſe words, "God hath laid engagements upon Scotland; we are tied by covenant to religion and reformation. Thoſe that were then unborn are engaged to it, and it paſſeth the power of any under heaven to abſolve a man from the oath of God."

35. Mr. John Welsh, minister of the gospel at Ayr, whom Mr. Rutherford (in his preface to his survey of Antinomianism) calls that apostolic, heavenly and prophetical man of God; and there tells us, that he had it from those that were witnesses of his life, that of every twenty-four hours he gave usually eight to prayer, and that he spent many nights in prayer to God, interceding for suffering Protestants abroad, as well as for his mother-church. This holy man, when prisoner in the castle of Blackness, and in the view of death, (being condemned to it for maintaining the liberties of this church, though afterwards the sentence was changed into banishment,) in his letter to a christian lady hath these words:

"I long to eat of that tree which is planted in the midst of the paradise of God, and to drink of the pure river clear as chrystal, that runs through the street of the New-Jerusalem, I long to be refreshed with the souls of them that are under the altar, who were slain for the word of God, and the testimony that they held; and to have these long white robes given me, that I may walk in white raiment with these glorious saints, who have washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Why should I think it a strange thing to be removed from this place, to that where my hope, my joy, my crown, my elder Brother, my Head, my Father, my Comforter, and all the glorious saints are, and where the song of Moses and the Lamb is sung joyfully; where we shall not be compelled to sit by the rivers of Babylon, and hang up our harps on the willow trees, but shall take them up, and sing the new hallelujah, Blessing, honour, glory and power, to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever? What is there under the old vault of the heavens, and in this old-worn earth, which is groaning under the bondage of corruption, that should make me desire to remain here? I expect that new heaven and new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth, wherein I shall rest forever more. I look to get entry to the New-Jerusalem at one of these twelve gates, whereupon are written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. I know that Jesus Christ hath

prepared them for me. Why may I not then, with boldness in his blood, step into that glory, where my head and Lord hath gone before me? Jesus Christ is the door and the porter; who then shall hold me out? O thou fairest among the children of men, the delight of mankind, the light of the Gentiles, the glory of the Jews, the life of the dead, the joy of angels and saints, my soul panteth to be with thee. I refuse not to die with thee, that I may live with thee; I refuse not to suffer with thee, that I may rejoice with thee. O when shall I be filled with his love! Surely, if a man knew how precious it is, he would count all things but dross and dung to gain it. I long for that scaffold, or that ax, or that cord, that might be to me that last step of this my wearisome journey, to go to thee, my Lord — Who am I, that he should first have called me, and then constitute me a minister of the glad tidings of the gospel of salvation these many years, and now last of all to be a sufferer for his cause and kingdom? These two points, *1st*, That Christ is the head of his church: *2dly*, That she is free in her government from all other jurisdiction, except Christ; yea, as free as any kingdom under heaven. not only to convocate, hold, and keep her meetings and assemblies; but also to judge of all her affairs amongst her members and subjects: these are the cause of our sufferings. I would be most glad to be offered up as a sacrifice for so glorious a truth; but, alas! I fear that my sins, and the abuse of so glorious things as I have found, deprive me of so fair a crown. Yet my Lord doth know, if he would call me to it, and strengthen me in it, it would be to me the most glorious day, and gladest hour I ever saw in my life; but I am in his hands, to do with me whatsoever shall please him."

This eminent saint spent much of his time in the mount of prayer and wrestling with God; was admitted to very intimate nearness with him, and had many secret things revealed to him from God. He used to say, "He wondered how a christian could lie in bed all night, without rising to spend some of the night in prayer and praise."

In his last illness he had a great weakness in his knees, caused by his continual kneeling at prayer, the flesh thereof became insensible, and hard like a sort of horn; but when in his weakness he was desired to remit somewhat of his former painfulness, his answer was, "He had his life of God, and therefore it should be spent for him." During his sickness he was so filled with the sensible enjoyment of God, that he was sometimes overheard in prayer to have these words, "Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more."

36. Mr. Christopher Love, minister of Laurence-Jury in London, who was beheaded on Tower-hill, August 22, 1651, in time of Cromwell's usurpation, and for suspected plotting against his government; his words on the scaffold were most pathetic and weighty.—"Altho' (said he) there be but little between me and death; yet this bears up my heart, there is but little between me and heaven. It comforted Dr. Taylor the martyr, when he was going to execution, that there were but two stiles between him and his Father's house: there is a lesser way between me and my Father's house, but two steps between me and glory. It is but lying down upon that block, and I shall ascend upon a throne. I am this day sailing towards the ocean of eternity, through a rough passage, to my haven of rest, through a red sea to the promised land. Methinks I hear God say to me, as he did to Moses, Go up to Mount Nebo, and die there; so to me, Go up to Tower-hill, and die there. Isaac said of himself, that he was old, and yet he knew not the day of his death: but I cannot say so. I am young, and yet I know the day of my death; and I know the kind of my death, and the place of my death also. I am put to such a kind of death, as two famous preachers of the gospel were put to before me; John the Baptist, and Paul the apostle, they were both beheaded. I read also in Re . xx. 4. *The saints were beheaded for the word of God, and testimony of Jesus.* But herein is the disadvantage which I lie under in the thoughts of many; they judge, that I suffer not for the word of God, or for con-

ſcience, but for meddling with ſtate matters. To this I ſhall briefly ſay, that it is an old trick of Satan, to impute the cauſe of God's peoples ſufferings, to be contrivements againſt the ſtate, when in truth, it is their religion and conſcience they are perſecuted for. The rulers of Iſrael would have put Jeremiah to death upon a civil account, though indeed it was only the truth of his prophecy that made the rulers angry with him: and yet upon a civil account, they pretend he muſt die, becauſe he fell away to the Chaldeans, and would have brought in foreign forces to invade them. The ſame thing is laid to my charge, of which I am as innocent as Jeremiah was. So Paul, though he did but preach Jeſus Chriſt, yet his enemies would have had him put to death, under pretence that he was a mover of ſedition.—Upon a civil account, my life is pretended to be taken away; whereas it is, becauſe I purſue my covenant, and will not proſtitute my principles and conſcience to the ambition and luſts of men. I had rather die a covenant-keeper, than live a covenant-breaker. Beloved, I am this day making a double exchange: I am changing a pulpit for a ſcaffold, and a ſcaffold for a throne; and I might add a third, I am changing the preſence of this numerous multitude on Tower-hill, for the innumerable company of ſaints and angels in heaven, the holy hill of Zion; and I am changing a guard of ſoldiers for a guard of angels, which will receive me and carry me to Abraham's boſom. This ſcaffold is the beſt pulpit that ever I preached in: in my church-pulpit, God through his grace made me an inſtrument to bring others to heaven; but in this pulpit he will bring me to heaven." Afterwards he ſaid, "Though my blood be not the blood of nobles, yet it is Chriſtian blood, miniſter's blood, yea more, it is alſo innocent blood. I magnify the riches of God's mercy and grace towards me, that I who was born in Wales, an obſcure country, and of obſcure parents, ſhould be ſingled out to honourable ſuffering.—For the firſt fourteen years of my life I never heard a ſermon preached; yet in the fifteenth year of my life, it pleaſed God to convert me. Bleſſed be God, who not

only made me a Christian, but also a minister, judging me faithful and putting me into the ministry, which is my glory. I had rather be a preacher in the pulpit than a prince upon a throne; I had rather be an instrument to bring souls to heaven, than that all nations should bring tribute to me. Formerly (said he) I have been under a spirit of bondage; yea, sometimes I have had more fear in drawing out a tooth, than now I have for cutting off my head. When fear was upon me, death was not near; now when death is near me, my fear is evanished. I am comforted in this, though men kill me they cannot damn me; though they thrust me out of the world, yet they cannot shut me out of heaven.—When I have shed my blood I expect the full declaration of the remission of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. I am going to my long home, and ye to your short homes; but I shall be at my home before ye be at yours." He prayed, that seeing "he was called to do the work which he never did, he might have the strength which he never had."

Dr. Wild, in his elegy, hath these lines:

Methinks I hear beheaded saints above
Call to each other, Sirs, make room for Love.
Who when he came to tread the fatal st ge,
(Which prov'd his glory, and his en'mies rage)
His blood ne'er run to's heart; Christ's blood was there,
Reviving it: his own was all to spare;
Which, rising in his cheeks, did seem to say,
Is this the blood you thirst for? Take't I pray.
Spectators in his looks such life did see,
That they appear'd more like to die than he.
Light'ning, which fill'd the air with blazing light,
Did serve for torches at that dismal night;
In which, and all next day for many hours,
Heaven groan'd in thunder, and did weep in showers:
Nor do I wonder that God thunder'd so.
When's Boanerges murder'd lay below.

37. Mrs. Joyce Lewis being condemned to be burnt for the Protestant religion in queen Mary's reign, when she heard that the writ for her execution was come, she said to her friends, "as for death, I fear it not; for when I behold the amiable countenance of Jesus Christ

my dear Saviour, the ugly face of death doth not much trouble me."

38. Bullinger of Zurich, in his ſickneſs, ſaid to his friends, "If the Lord will make any further uſe of me and my miniſtry in his church, I willingly obey him; but if he pleaſe, (as I much deſire) to take me out of this miſerable life, I ſhall exceedingly rejoice, that he pleaſeth to take me out of this corrupt and wretched age to go to my ſaviour Chriſt. For (ſaid he) if Socrates was glad when his death approached, becauſe as he thought he ſhould go to Homer, Heſiod, and other learned men, whom he expected to meet with in the other world; how much more do I joy, who am ſure that I ſhall ſee my ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt, as alſo the ſaints, patriarchs, prophets, apoſtles, and all the holy men who have lived from the beginning of the world? Now, when I am ſure to ſee them, and to partake of their joys, why ſhould I not willingly die, to enjoy their perpetual ſociety and glory?"

39. Mr. Theodore Beza, a famous paſtor in Geneva, when he apprehended the approach of death, reviſed his will; and ſo eaſing himſelf of all worldly thoughts, wholly betook himſelf to expect the time of his departure, which he had much longed for. He oft uſed the apoſtle's ſaying, "We are his workmanſhip, created in Jeſus Chriſt unto good works." And that of Auguſtine, *Domine quod capiſti perfice, ne in portue naufragium accidat.* "Lord, perfect that which thou haſt begun, that I ſuffer not ſhipwreck in the haven." And that ſaying of Barnard; *Domine, ſequemur te, per te, ad te:— Te, qui averitas; Per te, quia via: Ad te, quea vita.—* "Lord, we will follow thee, by thee, to thee. Thee, becauſe thou art the truth; by thee, becauſe thou art the way; to thee, becauſe thou art the life."

40. Melacthon of Wittemberg, Luther's dear companion, ſaid, "That he much longed to be diſſolved; and that for two reaſons: 1*ſt.* That he might enjoy the much deſired preſence and ſight of Chriſt, and of the heavenly church. 2*dly.* That he might be freed from the cruel and implacable diſcords of divines."

41. Mr. John Bradford, a minister and martyr in Queen Mary's reign, when the keeper told him that the next day he was to be burnt in Smithfield, he put off his cap, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, "I thank God for it, it comes not now to me on a sudden, but as a thing waited for every day and hour; the Lord make me worthy thereof." One Creswell offering to interpose for him, and desiring to know what his request was, he said, "I have no request to make; if the queen give me my life, I will thank her; if she will banish me I will thank her; if she burn me, I will thank her; if she will condemn me to perpetual imprisonment, I will thank her." The Chancellor pressing him to do as others had done, in hopes of the queen's mercy; he said, "My lord, I desire mercy with God's mercy; that is, without doing or saying any thing against God and his truth.—But mercy with God's wrath, God keep me from.—God's mercy (added he) I desire, and also would be glad of the queen's favour to live as a subject without clog on conscience; but otherwise the Lord's mercy is better to me than life. Life in his displeasure is worse than death, and death with his favour is true life."

In his letter to Dr. Cranmer, Dr. Ridly, and Dr. Latimer, he hath these words; "Our dear brother Rogers hath broken the ice valiantly. This day or to-morrow at the uttermost, hearty Hooper, sincere Saunders, and trusty Taylor, will end their course, and receive their crown. The next am I, who hourly look for the porter to open me the gates after them, to enter into the desired rest. God forgive me my unthankfulness for this exceeding great mercy. Though I suffer justly, (for I have been a great hypocrite, unthankful, &c. the Lord pardon me, yea, he hath done it, he hath done it indeed,) yet what evil hath he done? Christ, whom the prelates persecute, his truth which they hate in me, hath done no evil, nor deserved death. O what am I, Lord, that thou shouldst thus magnify me? Is it thy wont, to send for such a wretched hypocrite in a fiery chariot, as thou didst send for Elias?"

In one of his meditations, after confessing of sin, saith

he, "O what now may we do! deſpair? no, for thou art God, and therefore good; thou art merciful, and therefore thou forgiveſt ſin: with thee there is mercy and propitiation, and therefore thou art worſhipped.—When Adam ſinned, thou gaveſt him mercy before he deſired it; and wilt thou deny us mercy, who now deſire the ſame? Adam excuſed his fault, and accuſed thee; but we accuſe ourſelves, and excuſe thee: and ſhall we be ſent empty away? How often in the wilderneſs didſt thou ſpare Iſrael, and defer thy plagues at the requeſt of Moſes, when the people themſelves made no petition to thee? Now we do not only make our petitions to thee, but alſo have a Mediator, far above Moſes, to appear for us, even Jeſus Chriſt thine own Son; and ſhall we (dear Lord) depart aſhamed?—O merciful Lord, for thine own glory ſuffer not the enemy of thy Son Chriſt, the Romiſh Antichriſt, thus wretchedly to delude and draw from thee our poor brethren, for whom thy dear Son once died, &c. Suffer him not to ſeduce the ſimple ſort with his fond opinion, that his falſe gods, his blind, mumbling, feigned religion, or his fooliſh ſuperſtition, doth give him ſuch conqueſts, ſuch victories, and ſuch triumphs over us. But, O Lord, this is thy righteous judgment, to puniſh us with the tyrannical yoke of blindneſs, becauſe we have caſt away from us the ſweet yoke of the wholeſome words of thy Son our Saviour."

In his letter to Mrs. Anne Warcup, he ſaith, "My ſtaff ſtandeth at the door. I look continually for the ſheriff to come for me; and I bleſs God I am ready for him. Now go I to practiſe that which I have preached. Now I am climbing up the hill; it will cauſe me to puff and blow before I come to the cliff. The hill is ſteep and high, my breath is ſhort, and my ſtrength is feeble. Pray therefore to the Lord for me, that, as I have now through his goodneſs even almoſt come to the top, I may by his grace be ſtrengthened, not to reſt till I come where I ſhould be."

He was ſingular for humility and ſelf-abaſement, tho' a moſt eminent ſaint. He ſubſcribed ſome of his letters,

the most miserable hard-hearted unthankful sinner, John Bradford. A very painted hypocrite, John Bradford. *Miserrimus peccator*, John Bradford. The sinful John Bradford.

42. Mr. Edward Deering, a little before his death, said to his friends, "As for my death, I bless God I feel and find so much inward joy and comfort to my soul, that, if I were put to my choice, whether I would die or live, I would a thousand times rather choose death than life, if it may stand with the holy will of God."

43. Mr. Robert Rollock, when a-dying, prayed, "Lord, I have hitherto seen but darkly in the glass of thy word; now grant that I may enjoy the eternal fruition of thy countenance, which I have so much desired and longed for. Haste, Lord, and do not tarry; I am weary both of nights and days: come, Lord Jesus, that I may come to thee. Break these eye-strings, and give me others; I desire to be dissolved, and to be with thee; haste, Lord Jesus, and defer no longer. Go forth, my weak life, and let a better succeed. O Lord Jesus, thrust thy hand into my body and take my soul to thyself. O my sweet Lord, set this soul of mine free, that it may enjoy her husband."

44. Galeacious Carracciolus, marquis of Vico, when a-dying, took his leave of his wife, and all his Christian friends, telling them, he would lead them the way to heaven. And he cried to Jesus Christ, that "As he had sought him all his life, so now he would receive and acknowledge him as his own."

45. The famous Lord Duplessis in France, when a-dying, was much concerned for the church of God in distress, praying earnestly for her deliverance. He particularly blessed such of his grandchildren as were following the studies of learning, saying, "that he was assured they should be blessed with the blessings both of heaven above, and of the earth beneath." When a minister spoke of the service he had done the church by his writings, he said, "Alas, what was there of mine in the work? Say not, that it was I, but God by me." Then, lifting up his hands above his head, he cried three times,

"Mercy, mercy, mercy." Adding, "that he did it, to ſhew that it was the alone mercy of God to which he had recourſe." And declared, that his faith was altogether founded upon the goodneſs of God in Jeſus Chriſt, who by the Father had been made unto him, as to all others that believe in him, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption. "Away (ſaid he) with all merit; I call for nothing but mercy, free mercy." When one was bleſſing God for giving him ſuch peace and comfort at his end, he ſaid, "I feel, I feel what I ſpeak." As to his faith of the truths of God, he ſaid, "He was entirely perſuaded thereof, by the demonſtration of God's holy Spirit, which was more powerful, more clear, and more certain, than all the demonſtrations of Euclid."—When ſecretly praying, he was overheard ſaying in broken ſentences, "I fly, I fly to heaven. Let the angels carry me to the boſom of my Saviour." Afterwards ſaid, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I ſhall ſee him with theſe eyes, *Hiſce oculis*;" which words he repeated four or five times.

46. Jerome of Prague, when he was faſtened to the ſtake, and the executioner began to kindle the fire behind him, he bade him kindle it before his face. "For (ſaid he) if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had ſo many opportunities offered me to eſcape it."

47. Mr. Hooker, a miniſter in New-England, when one that ſtood weeping at his bed-ſide, when he lay a-dying, ſaid to him, "Sir, you are going to receive the reward of all your labours;" he replied, "Brother, I am going to receive mercy."

48. Mr. Heron, another miniſter there, when dying, and leaving a family of many ſmall children: his poor wife fell a-weeping, and ſaid, "Alas! what will become of all theſe children?" He preſently and pleaſantly replied, "Never fear; he that feeds the young ravens, will not ſtarve the young Herons." And indeed it came to paſs accordingly. It was an ancient obſervation concerning the Engliſh martyrs under the bloody Marian perſecution, "That none of them went more joyfully to

the ſtake, than thoſe who had the greateſt families to commit unto the Lord."

49. Chryſoſtom, when the empreſs Eudoxa, (an Arian,) ſent a threatening meſſage to him, he ſaid, "Go tell her, *Nil niſi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but ſin."

When he was ſentenced to baniſhment, he ſaid, "None of theſe things trouble me; for I ſaid before within myſelf, if the empreſs will, let her baniſh me; the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof. If ſhe will, let her ſaw me aſunder; Iſaiah was ſo uſed: If ſhe will, let her caſt me into the ſea; I will remember Jonah: If ſhe will, let her caſt me into a burning fiery furnace, or to the wild beaſts; the three children and Daniel were ſo ſerved: If ſhe will, let her ſtone me, or cut off my head; I have St. Stephen and the Baptiſt for my companions. If ſhe will, let her take away all my ſubſtance; naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither again."

But I muſt break off, for time would fail me to enumerate the many inſtances of the faith, love, patience, hope, courage, and conſtancy of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus, when in the view of death. Some have told the perſecutors, "That they might pull the hearts out of their bodies, but they could never pluck the truth out of their hearts." Others have ſaid, "That if every hair of their heads were men, they ſhould all ſuffer death for Chriſt and his truths."—"Oh (ſaid one of them) can I die but once for Chriſt?"

To conclude: let theſe examples prompt us to ſeek grace from God, and make it our earneſt ſtudy to imitate and follow ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, that we may die martyrs in reſolution, our graces may be moſt lively at the laſt, our evening ſun may ſhine brighteſt, and we may go off the ſtage glorifying God, and leaving a ſweet ſavour behind us, as theſe famous worthies, whoſe praiſe is in the churches, have done before us.

DIRECT. VII. *Let dying persons be much in prayer and ejaculations to God.*

PRAYER is the native breath of renewed souls; it is as necessary to their spiritual life, as breath is to the natural life, Lam. iii. 56. "Hide not thine ear at my breathing." The first thing a child of God doth, when he is new born, is to breathe by prayer. Acts ix. 11. "Behold he prayeth." And it is also his last work in the world to pray, Acts vii. 59, 60: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." A dying Christian hath many to pray for; he is to pray for the church of God, for his friends and relations, and also for his enemies, as Stephen did; of which I spake before. But especially he must pray for himself, that sin may be forgiven and that he may have safe conduct through the dark valley. I have heard of some that have been found dead upon their knees; a noble posture to die in! How agreeable is it to enter praying into the land of praise! So did Stephen, yea, so did our blessed Saviour himself; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."—The last words that holy Usher uttered were, "But, Lord, in special forgive my sins of omission." "Lord, (said dying Beza) perfect that which thou hast begun, that I suffer not shipwreck in the haven." I remember to have read of an old minister, when he found death approaching, he said, "I desire to die like the poor thief, crying to the crucified Jesus for mercy. I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing, except what is unworthy. My eye, and hope, and faith, is to Christ on his cross. I bring an unworthiness like that of the poor dying thief unto him, and have no more to plead than he. Like the poor thief crucified with him, I am waiting to be received by the infinite grace of my Lord, into his kingdom." Let us in like manner die, crying

to a crucified Jesus for mercy. Lord, remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom.

O dying Christian, remember the time of prayer is near an end; after death there will be no more occasion for prayer. O then beg that the spirit of prayer may be so poured down upon you at this time, that you may be enabled to pour out your heart before God, both for yourself and others. O how earnestly should you pray then, when you are taking your leave of prayer! Mind the example which your Redeemer gave you; it was before his death that he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto God. I acknowledge, sick and dying persons are frequently out of case for making prayers of any great length or continuance, (which consideration should excite us to the greater diligence in prayer in the time of our health) and therefore they ought to be the more frequent and fervent, in short and suitable ejaculations and petitions to God, as their exigencies do require.

Some Meditations and Ejaculations, proper for sick and dying persons, and especially for a dying believer.

O LORD, thou art the God of my life, and hast the keys of death in thy hand. Thou hast measured the length of my life, and appointed the hour of my death. The number of my months and days is with thee, and thou hast appointed the bounds over which I cannot pass.

What is my life but a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away! At the longest, how short is it! and at the strongest, how weak! "What man is it that liveth here, and shall not see death? When a few days are come, I will go the way whence I shall not return." God hath decreed it, sin hath deserved it, my frailty demonstrates it, death's harbingers proclaim it, and I must expect it.

There is no discharge in this war, no exemption from

death's ſtroke. Death's meſſengers are come to warn me, that my laſt day and laſt hour draweth nigh. The ſound of their maſter's feet is behind them. This clay-houſe muſt be diſſolved, my ſoul diſlodged, and my place here ſhall know me no more; I will be quickly as water ſpilt on the ground, that cannot be gathered up again.

O that I may be ſuitably exerciſed in my preſent weak and dying condition! When my fleſh faileth, and my heart fainteth within me, O that God may be the ſtrength of my heart, and portion forever! When the keepers of the houſe do tremble, let God watch over it, and be the keeper of my ſoul! When the grinders do ceaſe, becauſe they are few, let my ſoul be fed with manna from heaven. When the daughters of muſic are brought low, let my ſoul be diſpoſed for hearing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb, in the temple above. When theſe that look out at the windows are darkened, let the eyes of my ſoul be enlightened to behold, with the dying martyr Stephen, the heavens opened, and the glorious Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God, making interceſſion for me, and ready to receive me. Let my hope and deſire look out at the windows, and ſay, "Why is his chariot ſo long a-coming? and why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether."

O that I may obſerve the afflicting hand of God in my preſent ſickneſs! Surely affliction cometh not out of the duſt, nor doth trouble ſpring out of the ground. O Lord, rebuke me not in thy indignation, nor chaſten me in thy hot diſpleaſure. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; and heal me, for my bones are vexed. When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth: ſurely every man is vanity. The ſorrows of my heart are enlarged, O bring me out of my diſtreſſes. Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my ſin. I look for ſympathy to my great High Prieſt, who is touched with the feeling of my infirmities. My help and ſtrength is in him.

O that when I am afflicted, I may not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him! Let me hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it. Let me kiss the rod, and accept of the punishment of mine iniquity. O that in my affliction I may be helped to humble myself greatly before the God of my fathers, and make a true and penitent confession of my sins!

Oh! what shall I say to thee, O thou preserver of men? I will say, Lord, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. I acknowledge, that through an evil heart of unbelief, I have many a time departed away from the living God. O how vainly and foolishly have I lived in the world! How lavish of my precious time! How unmindful of my latter end! How careless of my immortal soul! How little in preparation for eternity! Oh, my own heart condemns me, my sins testify against me; and thou who knowest them better than I do myself, together with their several aggravations, mightest justly condemn me too. But my comfort is, that with thee the Lord there is mercy, that thou mayest be feared; and with thy Son there is plenteous redemption: wherefore, for his sake, be pleased to forgive me all my past transgressions, whether in tho't, word, or deed, those I remember, and those I have forgotten, and let them neither be charged on me to my shame and confusion in this world, nor to my everlasting ruin in that which is to come. Lord, forgive the follies of my childhood, the extravigancies of my youth, and all the iniquities of my riper years.

Oh! I am polluted with sin, and dare not appear before God with my own filthy rags upon me. When Adam lost the garment of original righteousness, he fled from God, and dreaded the summons of offended justice. Now, there is no appearing before God with acceptance, but in the garment of his Son, my elder brother. Now none can have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, but by the blood of Jesus. O enable me to disclaim whatsoever duties I have performed, or graces I have exercised, and to rely on a crucified Christ alone for par-

don and life. Though thou ſlayeſt me, let me die truſting in and cleaving to a crucified Jeſus.

Now the powers of darkneſs will ſeek to raiſe a tempeſt to ſhipwreck the veſſel of my ſoul, when it would enter into the eternal haven: O that like the wiſe mariner, when the ſtorm approacheth, I may endeavour to ſecure the veſſel with the anchors of faith and hope faſtened on the Rock Chriſt!

O that, when the time of combat with my laſt enemy cometh, I may above all take the ſhield of faith, whereby I may be ſheltered from the ſting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

O that the Lord of hoſts, the captain of my ſalvation, may be with me in my laſt conflict, and may help me to put on the whole armour of God, and give me ſkill to uſe it, that I may be able to ſtand in the evil day! Teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, that through thee I may do valiantly, and tread down all mine enemies. O that now I may ſo finiſh my courſe, and fight the good fght of faith, that at death I may receive the crown of righteouſneſs, which the righteous Judge will give to all that love his appearing. O that my faith may ripen into a full aſſurance, that I may go off the ſtage with joy, and an abundant entrance may be adminiſtered unto me into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt!

O that the night of my death may ſhine bright with the ſparkling ſtars of heavenly grace! Lord, increaſe my faith! let the pilgrim's ſtaff of faith be never out of my hand, till I come to my journey's end. O let me get Chriſt all in my arms, like old Simeon before his death, that I may ſay, like him, "Now let thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation." Kindle the fire of heavenly love in my ſoul, and give me a taſte of heavenly joys. O for one beam of thy light, to baniſh away all my doubts and fears! Lord, let in ſomething of heaven to my ſoul, before itſelf go into heaven.

Lord, take me not out of this life till thou haſt fitted me for a better. May I be fitted for heaven before I leave the earth, and finiſh my work before I finiſh my

courſe! Make me ready to meet thee at thy coming, that ſo thy coming may not be the matter of my terror, but the matter of my hope, deſires, and joyful expectations. O that I may be in a longing frame for that bleſſed time, when he will come, and put a period to all my ſins, ſorrows, troubles, and temptations here; and when I ſhall exchange my preſent being in the body, for an everlaſting being with the Lord! Lord, ſtrengthen my faith, and hope, that ſo neither the ſweetneſs of life, the pain of death, nor apprehenſions about my future ſtate, may make me unwilling to die. Is my Redeemer aſcended, and gone before me to prepare a place for me; why then ſhould I be ſlothful to go in, and poſſeſs the good land?

Mercy hath filled up all my life, and brought me near to the end of it; O let it not leave me now, when all the enjoyments of the world are nothing to me, and I am to take an everlaſting farewel of them all. Now one ſmile of thy face, one taſte of thy love, would be ſtrength and joy to my departing ſoul. O remember the word to thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope; haſt thou not ſaid, "I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee?" O fulfil this word to me in the time of my need, O let me never go off the ſtage with a heavy heart, or a guilty conſcience; but may I depart in peace, and ſleep in Jeſus. Let me breathe out my departing ſoul to thee, and truſt it in thy hand and ſafe keeping: and let my fleſh reſt in hope of riſing glorioufly at the laſt day, thro' him who is the reſurrection and the life, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Love and praiſe is the exerciſe of ſaints for ever: may I be acquainted with it here! O ſhall I not love and praiſe him, who hath forgiven all my iniquities, healed all my diſeaſes, redeemed my life from deſtruction, and crowned me with loving kindneſs and tender mercies? He hath cauſed goodneſs and mercy to follow me all the days of my life; and ſhall not I follow him with praiſes at the end of it?

Now the time of my departure is at hand, and the lamp of life is ready to be extinguiſhed. O that I may

die in faith, that whether the lamp go out of its own accord, or by ſome ſudden blaſt, it may be lighted again by the immortal beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs! And though I be overtaken with the ſleep of death, and lie down in the bed of the grave; yet ſhall I awake again in the morning of the reſurrection, that morning which ſhall never be ſucceeded by an evening; when I ſhall behold thy face in righteouſneſs, and be eternally ſatisfied with thy likeneſs.

¶ Now I am going the way of all the earth, ready to launch forth into eternity, where I ſhall be fixed in my everlaſting condition. Grant me, Lord, the perfect uſe of my ſenſes, of my reaſon and underſtanding, that I may glorify thy name, and edify my neighbours to the laſt moment of my departure. And now, when I am to conflict with the king of terrors, O ſupport and aſſiſt me in my foreſt extremities and laſt agonies. O mercifully mitigate death's pangs, and let my paſſage be eaſy, and my landing ſafe. Stand by me in my dying moments, and ſuccour my ſoul in thy hands from all its deadly enemies. And when I am numbered among the dead, let me alſo be numbered among the redeemed and bleſſed of the Lord for ever.

O Lord, thou determineſt both the bounds of man's life, and the bounds of his habitation. If a hair of my head cannot fall to the ground without thy providence, far leſs can my whole body fall into the grave without it. Thou haſt told me plainly, that I muſt die; but mercifully haſt concealed the time, place, and manner, that I might always ſtand upon my guard, every hour expect thy coming, and have my accounts in my hand, always prepared to give them up to thee my Judge.—Juſtly mighteſt thou have ſnatched me away by a ſurpriſing call, and ſudden ſtroke: but in thy goodneſs thou giveſt me warning, and time to ſet my houſe and ſoul in order. O graciouſly finiſh what is now wanting of the work of thy grace in my heart and ſoul, and thoroughly accompliſh and furniſh me to appear in thy bleſſed preſence. May I now die to ſin every hour, that I may not

die for sin hereafter. Cause sin wholly to die before me, that it may not rise in judgment against me after death.

O God, be thou my refuge and strength, and a very present help in trouble; and then I will not fear, though the waters of affliction rage, and be troubled, and tho' all the mountains of earthly comforts shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. O let my soul dwell beside these living streams, and drink of them for ever. In the valley of the shadow of death, Lord, be thou present as the good Shepherd with thy guiding rod, and supporting staff; and make my departure easy, and full of peace and hope. Lord, carry me safe through the dark passage upon which I am entering, and let me find it a gate of glory, a door opened into the everlasting kingdom and joy of the Lord. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and let it be presented, justified, and spotless to the Father, that it may come to the spirits of just men made perfect, and join with them in singing the new song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, honour, glory, and blessing for ever. Amen."

Some Meditations for drooping believers, when death is near.

TRAVELLERS, who have met with many storms, troubles, and dangers in their journeys, rejoice when they come near to their own country; and shall not I, a stranger and pilgrim, that hath been long wandering in a wilderness, be glad when I come near my blessed home, my dear friends, and eternal habitation?

With what cheerfulness do some women endure the pains of child-bearing, being supported with the hopes of a child's being born in the world? And what is the joy of a man-child being brought into this sinful and miserable world, to the joy of a sanctified soul's being brought out of it into heaven for ever? It is pleasant when the hard winter goeth over, the messengers of the spring, the

ſinging of birds doth come, and ſhall not I rejoice, when ſickneſs and forerunners of death do tell me, that the winter of my darkneſs and trouble is paſt, and the ſummer of my eternal light and joys is at hand ?

What though death be the king of terrors ? is not glorious Chriſt the king of comforts ? Have not I met already with this bleſſed King : and why ſhould I fear to meet with the other ? O let my ſtrength and ſupport at this time come from Chriſt, my covenanted Redeemer.

O Lord, deliver my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from failing ! O bring me out of the miry clay, ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings, and put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſes to our God !

If Jacob went down ſo cheerfully into Egypt, when God ſaid unto him, "fear not to go down ; for I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again" why ſhould a believer fear to go down to the grave, when God hath undertaken to go down with him thither, and to bring him up again ? His body may be turned into duſt, but God is in covenant with his duſt and will not ſuffer the leaſt particle of it to be loſt.

Are not the righteous taken away from the evil to come ? Do they not reſt in their beds, and enter into peace ? Why then ſhould I grudge at dying ? When the Lord is to bring heavy wrath and judgments upon a land, he frequently houſeth many of his people in heaven before-hand : and how happy are theſe that win the houſe before the ſweeping hail-ſhower doth fall. A believer needeth not to look for any ſettled fair weather in this world : it will be nothing but one ſhower up, and another down, till he be houſed in heaven. O why then ſhould I linger in this wilderneſs !

How highly dignified is the believer, in being made an heir of God, and a joint heir with his own Son Jeſus Chriſt ! ſo that Chriſt and the believer do, as it were, divide heaven betwixt them ; they have the ſame Father, dwell in the ſame houſe, ſit at the ſame table, reign on the ſame throne, and partake of the ſame glory. O what honour is this, which is put upon a worm of the

earth! It is indeed but little that the young heir enjoys of the inheritance while in this world; no more than will ſerve to bear his charges to heaven, where he ſhall get all, forget his preſent ſtraits, and remember his poverty no more. O why then ſhould not I, like a young heir, be looking and longing for the expiring of my minority, when I ſhall arrive at ripe age, and enter upon the full poſſeſſion of the inheritance! O that I could ſend out faith and hope, theſe two faithful ſpies, to ſurvey the promiſed land, or at leaſt to viſit the borders of my elder brother's country! what an encouraging report would they bring back! My glorious Lord is gone, he hath left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends have many of them arrived there alſo. How great is the difference betwixt my ſtate and their's! I am groaning out my complaints, but they are ſinging God's praiſe: I am in darkneſs and cannot ſee God; but they are in light, and ſee him face to face. O my Lord, ſhall I ſtay behind, when they are gone? Should I be ſatisfied to wander in the wilderneſs, far diſtant from my Father and my God, when they are triumphing above, dividing the ſpoil? No, I will look ſtill after them with a ſtedfaſt eye, and cry, O Lord, how long? I will wait now in hope, yea, rejoice in the forethoughts of the day, when my minority ſhall be expired, my pilgrimage finiſhed, my baniſhment over, that I may get home to my country and friends above.

What though my days be dark and gloomy now, my winter be ſharp and ſtormy? why, it is but ſhort, and near over; the eternal ſummer approacheth: the long day, the high ſun, and the fair garden of my well-beloved, above theſe viſible heavens, will quickly make amends for all. Let me get up by faith, and viſit the new land, view the fair city, and behold the white throne, and the Lamb that ſits thereon, that I may rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Shall many of the heirs of wrath go ſinging and rejoicing to hell; and will an heir of God go drooping and ſorrowing to heaven? Oh, let me not, by my behaviour on a death-bed, bring up a bad report upon Chriſt's good way, and the land which he hath purchaſed.

Have I ſuch great and precious promiſes left me, and ſhall I not live and feed upon them in the time of my need?

Shall I not truſt the word of him that is faithful and true? Hath he not ſaid to me, "When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee; when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee!" When the diſciples were ſore toſſed with winds and waves, thou cameſt to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking on the waters; and when their fears were increaſed, thou ſaidſt, "It is I, be not, afraid." Thou rebukeſt the winds, and there preſently followed a great calm. My Redeemer's compaſſions continue; his bowels are not ſhut up this day, more than in the days of his fleſh. "Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame to day, yeſterday, and forever."

Ah! I have too little improven my acquaintance with precious Chriſt in the day of my life! how ready am I miſken and miſtake him, when he changeth his diſpoſitions towards me! Though I have been long at Chriſt's ſchool, what ſmall proficiency have I made in the work and myſtery of faith? How little have I learned to believe in the dark, and to drop an anchor at midnight upon the rock of ages, and to look out for the dawning of the day?

Surely the day ſhall break, and the ſhadows flee away: my King cometh, my well-beloved is on his way; he hath ſent his letter before him to warn me of it, ſaying, "Behold I come quickly." O that like the cold and wearied night-watch, I may be looking out for the appearing of the morning-ſtar, and the breaking of the eaſtern ſky; and may be ſtill crying, "Even ſo come Lord Jeſus, come quickly."

Thou haſt ſaid, "Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart." Surely God's ſeed ſhall not lie always beneath the clods; the time is at hand, when it ſhall ſpring; and joyful will the crop be at laſt. O that, like David in affliction, I would encourage myſelf in the Lord my God, and ſay, "the Lord liveth,

bleſſed be my rock!" why ſhould I droop while my Lord liveth, and my rock ſtandeth? My hopes may die, my comforts may die, my gifts die, my riches die, my relations die, and my body die; but good news, "The Lord liveth, bleſſed be my rock!" The diſciples had a melancholy time while Chriſt was dead, and laying in the grave; but that ſad time is over, he is now riſen, and will die no more. Nay, he hath proclaimed it for my comfort, ſaying, "Fear not, I am the firſt and the laſt. I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and death."

When my ſoul is caſt down within me, let me remember God from the land of Jordan, and the hill Mizar; that I may reaſon myſelf out of all my fears and diſcouragements; for yet, "the Lord will command his loving kindneſs in the day time, and in the night his ſong ſhall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life."

"Why then art thou caſt down, O my ſoul, and why art thou diſquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Now, when death is at hand, let not my Saviour be far off. He who remembered the dying thief, and ſpoke comfortably to him, let him now remember me when he is ſeated in his kingdom, and ſay to my ſoul, "This day thou ſhalt be with me in paradiſe." When it is abſent from the body, let it be preſent with the Lord. Let the angels now be ready to do their office, to carry my departing ſoul into Abraham's boſom. Let me now depart, that I may be with Chriſt; yea, be forever with the Lord, that I may ſee his face. Let me dwell there, where they have no night, need no candle, nor light of the ſun forever; where God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there ſhall be no more death, neithre ſorrow nor crying.

Father, into thy hands I commit my ſpirit. By the hands of him who hath redeemed it, let it be preſented to thee without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing.

An addition of ſome further Meditations, proper for any ſick perſon in the view of death.

THE Lord is pleaſed ſometimes to caſt men down on beds of ſickneſs, and draw the curtain betwixt the world and them, that they may take a view of their by-paſt life, and future ſtate. Now is it time for me to look into my ſoul, and examine my ſtate. Oh, how many do miſs ſalvation, when they think themſelves ſure of it! They miſtake a form of godlineſs for the power of it, and thereby deceive themſelves, thinking themſelves ſomething, when they are nothing.

Some come the length as to ſhed tears, as Eſau did; profeſs fair, yea, fight for the Lord, as Saul and Jehu did; wiſh for the end of the righteous, as Baalam did; deſire God's people to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; walk ſoftly, and mourn for fear of judgments, as Ahab did; joy in goſpel ordinances, and reform in many things, as Herod did; prophesy and ſpeak well of Chriſt, as Caiaphas and Judas did; be convinced and tremble at hearing a ſermon, as Felix did; yea, taſte the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, as apoſtates have done: and yet for all theſe attainments, remain ſtrangers to the ſaving work of the Spirit on the heart.

O that the conſideration of hypocrites attainments might alarm me out of my ſecurity, and make me reſtleſs till I find the diſtinguiſhing marks of true grace, and ſincere faith in my ſoul! O that I could ſay, there is a principle in me, that will not ſuffer me to build on any foundation in the world but Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; that makes me content with Chriſt, with all his offices, with all his precepts, and with his very croſs for his ſake! Doth the love of Chriſt keep me back from ſin, more than the law, or fear of hell? Have I aimed at God's honour in all my actions, civil, natural, and religious? Am I humbled, and denied to mine own will, wit, credit, eaſe, and honour, and to all the enjoyments of the world? Am I acquainted with the throne of grace, and deſirous to keep up a conſtant correſpondence with

it? O let me not rest till I perceive these things in my soul which accompany salvation.

O how comfortable would it be to me now, if I could say with good Hezekiah in his sickness, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." O that I could pray, and say, with Jesus my Saviour, when in the view of death, "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which thou hadst ordained for me before the world was!"

Alas, Lord, I must confess, my iniquities have gone up above mine head; my misspent time, my unfruitfulness under the means of grace, and waterings of ordinances, may cause me to cry out, Woe is me for the leanness of my soul, and barrenness of my heart! I have been an empty vine, bringing forth fruit only to myself, I have hid my Lord's money, and therefore deserve the doom of the wicked and slothful servant. But my relief is in my Surety's righteousness. Blessed be the Lord, who hath sent his Son to bless those who by nature lie under the curse, and to intercede for those that cannot speak for themselves. O how suitable is he to my soul's case! I have indeed a multitude of sins, but he hath a multitude of tender mercies; I have deep and heinous guilt, but he hath a deep fountain for washing it out; I am sold under sin, but he hath a ransom to buy me back again; my sore is broad, but his plaister is answerable; my wound is great, but his balm is excellent. Surely it is my wisdom to go to Christ with all my grievances, and always to lie and cry at my Redeemer's door.

O that now, when the sun of my life is sitting, the blessed Sun of righteousness may arise and shine upon my soul! Goodness and mercy hath followed me while I lived; O that Christ and glory may meet me when I die! I must acknowledge thy goodness; were this the last hour I had to live, and this the last word I had to speak in the world, I behoved to say, Lord thou hast been a

merciful and gracious God to me; my whole life hath been a continued tract of mercy; Lord, crown the end of it with mercy alſo. Surely the ſea is not ſo full of water, nor the ſun ſo full of light, as thou art full of grace and mercy. O let not my ſins ſtop the current of thy tender mercies at this time. Lord, drown all my ſins in the ſea of Chriſt's blood, that my ſoul may not be ſunk by them in the ocean of divine wrath. Lord Jeſus, embrace my periſhing ſoul in thy arms: let thy croſs be my ſecurity, and thy wounds my refuge.

O thou that hearest the young ravens which cry, be not ſilent to me at this time, leſt if thou be ſilent to me, I be like them to go down to the pit.

Lord, I am now called to the work I never did; give me the ſtrength I never had. Surely it is an important matter to die, and my eternal ſtate dependeth upon dying aright. What I do amiſs in my life one day, I may amend it in the next: but not ſo here, I can die but once: if I mar this piece of work, I cannot come back to mend it again; if I forget any thing neceſſary for my journey, I cannot return to fetch it. Oh, a wrong ſtep in going out of this life is highly dangerous. In one reſpect it is like the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and can never be forgiven; for I cannot come back to mourn for it. Of all the buſineſs I ever undertook, I have moſt need to take care of my dying.

Oh, is death coming to take down this earthly tabernacle, and to put the one half of me in the dark grave, and the other half of me in heaven or in hell; and ſhall I give ſleep to mine eyes, or ſlumber to mine eye-lids, till I find myſelf in that caſe, that I dare look death in the face, and dare hazard my ſoul upon eternity?

O to have right impreſſions of the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of life! What is my life but a vapour, a ſand glaſs of ſixty or ſeventy years, which will ſoon run out? Eternity and a judgment-ſeat are now hard upon me. The blaſt of the laſt trumpet is at hand. There will ſhortly be a proclamation by one ſtanding in the clouds, that time ſhall be no more. The world looks big in men's eyes in time of health; but when the eye-

ſtrings break, the breath turns cold, and the impriſoned ſoul looks out at the windows of the clay-houſe, ready to leap out into eternity, can the world give any ſatisfaction? No, no; a lamp full of oil will be valued then more than a houſe full of gold. The ſineſt things on earth will then appear nothing but a piece of painted duſt, and gilded clay. How gladly would the greateſt worldling, then, give all his gold and ſilver, riches and honours, for one ſight of Chriſt's fair face, one ſmile of his countenance? O wherefore ſhould men in health neglect the market of grace, and ſlight the pearl of great price? Why ſhould they ſpend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which ſatisfieth not?

Lord, ſave me from the hypocrite's caſe at death, whoſe candle of profeſſion and of hope burns and blazes fair all the way with him, but goeth out in the dark trance of death; and there he ſtumbles and falls, and ſhall riſe no more. O that my profeſſion and hope may be of God's creating! If God light my candle, then ſhall my feet be enlightened through the dark valley, and death nor hell ſhall not be able to put it out.

Lord, ſubdue ſin in me, and let it be continually dying now, that it may certainly be dead before me. God forbid that my ſins ſhould ſurvive me.

O that, when the ſtroke of death diſſolves my body, my ſoul may eſcape as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowler, and may aſcend to the heavenly regions to enjoy God himſelf.

O let me look through the grates of mortality, and long for the jailor's coming to ſet me at liberty. God help me to overcome the love of life, and fears of death. If my neighbour lend me any thing, I pay it again with thanks; and ſhall I not reſtore my life to God with thanks, who hath been pleaſed to lend me it ſo long? Ariſe, and let me depart, for this is not my reſt; heaven is my home, Lord, bring me to it; the joys of it are too great to enter into me, O make me fit to enter into them.

While I lie on a ſick bed, Lord, help me to patience in my ſickneſs without murmuring.

How willingly would the damned in hell endure my pains a thouſand years, if they had my hopes of being ſaved at laſt! Bleſſed be God, that my ſickneſs is not hell, that my pains are not eternal.

O that I may look on my affliction as coming from the hand of him that is the Lord of health and of ſickneſs, of life and of death; who killeth and maketh alive, bringeth down to the grave, and raiſeth up again! That ſovereign and wiſe Lord hath determined the time when my affliction ſhall end, as well as the time when it began.—Thirty-eight years were appointed the ſick man at Betheſda pool; eighteen years the woman that Satan kept bound; twelve years to the woman with the bloody iſſue; ten days tribulation to thoſe of Smyrna; three days plague to David. The number of the godly man's tears is regiſtered in God's book; yea, the hairs of his head are numbered.

When David got his choice of his own chaſtiſement, he choſe rather to be corrected by the hand of God, than by any other means, ſaying, "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great." I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it. Glory to God, that I am fallen into his merciful hand. Hath God appointed that man's coming into the world ſhall be attended with pain and crying, and his going out of it with grief and trouble; and ſhall I quarrel at it? No, I deſire humbly to underly the correction of mine iniquity, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him. O that the ſickneſs of my body may be a means of health to my ſoul! May I be chaſtened of the Lord, ſo that I may not be condemned with the world!

It is good for the believer that he is afflicted, why? it ſprings from divine love, and it works for his ſoul's good. Affliction is a ſeal of his adoption, and no ſign of reprobation. The pureſt gold is ofteſt tried, the ſweeteſt grape is hardeſt preſſed, and the trueſt chriſtian is heavieſt croſſed. But O how ſoon will the chriſtian for-

get all his groans when he comes to heaven! As ſoon as Stephen ſaw Chriſt, though at a diſtance, he forgot all his wounds and bruiſes; he minded no more the terror of the ſtones about his ears, but ſweetly yielded his ſoul into his Redeemer's hands.

I read of many in the goſpel, that by ſickneſſes and diſeaſes were driven unto Chriſt, who, if they had enjoyed health and proſperity, would have neglected, like many others, to come to him. O bleſſed is that croſs, that draweth a ſinner to Chriſt, to lay open his own miſery, and implore Chriſt's mercy. And bleſſed be that Chriſt, who never refuſeth the ſinner that cometh to him, though driven by affliction and miſery. To whom ſhall ſuch a diſtreſſed creature as I go, but to him who is the only phyſician, that can both cure my ſoul from ſin, and my body from ſickneſs?

Lord, thou never deniedſt thy mercy to any ſinner that aſked it with a penitent heart. There were many ſorts of ſick ſinners that came to thee in the days of thy fleſh; the blind, the deaf, the lame, the lepers; thoſe that were ſick of palſies, dropſies, fevers, fluxes, and were poſſeſſed with devils; and yet never one of them came crying for mercy, that went away without his errand, were his ſin never ſo great, his diſeaſe never ſo grievous. Nay, ſo merciful is my Redeemer, that he offered and gave his mercy to many that never aſked it, being moved with the bowels of his own compaſſion, and the ſight of their miſery; ſo dealt he with the woman of Samaria, the widow of Nain, and the man that lay thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda. Oh, if he gave his mercy ſo willingly to them that did not aſk it, and was found of them that ſought him not, will he deny mercy to my ſoul that is crying for it?

There is but a ſtep betwixt me and death; Lord, ſeal my pardon to me, before I go hence, and be no more.—O draw nigh to me, and ſave me; for my ſoul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. Thy loving kindneſs is better than life; O make me ſure of that, and I will willingly part with this mortal life.

O thou who willeſt not that any ſhould periſh, but

that all ſhould come to repentance; be pleaſed to make uſe of the chaſtiſement of my body, as a medicine to cure my ſoul, and bring me to a true and ſincere repentance. One day is with thee as a thouſand years; O work in me in this, which may be my laſt day, whatſoever thou ſeeſt wanting in me. Enable me to preſent unto thee the ſacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, which thou haſt promiſed not to deſpiſe. Give a true and lively faith in the bleſſed Jeſus, who is the propitiation for our ſins! He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him; O heal me by his ſtripes. Let the cry of his blood drown the clamor of my ſins. I am indeed a child of wrath, but Chriſt is the Son of thy love; O pity me for his ſake, and let my ſoul find ſanctuary in his wounds.

O Lord, the waters of affliction are come in even upon my ſoul; O let the ſpirit of God mo e on theſe waters, that, like the pool of Betheſda, they may cure whatever ſpiritual diſeaſes thou ſeeſt in me. O Lord, conſider my affliction, accept my tears, aſſuage my pain, increaſe my patience, and finiſh my troubles. Correct me with the chaſtiſement of a father, and not with the wounds of an enemy; and though thou take not off thy rod, Lord, take away thine anger.

Lord, the prince of this world cometh, O let him have nothing in me; but, as he accuſeth, do thou abſolve. I have nothing to ſay for myſelf, but be thou my advocate, Lord; and do thou anſwer for me. I am clothed with filthy garments, and Satan ſtands at my right hand to reſiſt me; O Lord, rebuke him, and pluck me as a brand out of the fire. Cauſe mine iniquities to paſs from me, and clothe me with the righteouſneſs of thy dear Son. I know, O Lord, that no unclean thing can enter into thy kingdom, and thou ſeeſt I am nothing but pollution, yea, my very righteouſneſs is filthy rags; O waſh me, and make me white in the blood of the Lamb, that I may be fit to ſtand before thy throne. O take me from the tents of Kedar, to the manſions of light and purity. When my earthly houſe of this taber-

nacle is diſſolved, O let me have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. O bring my ſoul out of priſon, that I may eternally give thanks unto thy name. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

Containing directions to the friends and neighbours of the ſick, who are themſelves in health for the time.

WHEN the Lord ſends ſickneſs and affliction to our neighbours, we ought not to be idle and unconcerned ſpectators of his diſpenſations; but we ſhould harken to the voice of God's rod upon others, and conſider what it is that the Lord is calling for at our hands. Theſe following directions may be uſeful to thoſe that are in health.

DIRECT. 1. *Be very thankful to God for the great mercy of health and ſtrength, and improve it to his glory.*

SURELY an healthful perſon hath ſtill great cauſe to be a thankful perſon. Health is a mercy that doth ſeaſon and ſweeten every other temporal mercy; without it the greateſt wealth and honours, nay, a king's crown, can give no ſatisfaction. It is far more eligible to be a healthy beggar, than a ſickly king. What comfort could it afford us, under toſſing ſickneſs, and torturing pains, to have the greateſt heaps of money to look to, or thouſands coming to pay us homage; alas, for our unthankfulneſs to him who is the God of our health! How little do we prize his goodneſs in continuing with us ſuch a long tract of health and ſtrength, together with the uſe of our reaſon and ſenſes, when many others are deprived of them. Surely God were righteous, ſhould he teach us to value the worth of theſe mercies by the want of them.

Let us conſider how many miſerable perſons there are in the world, and who it is that maketh us to differ from

them; how many diſeaſed, diſtracted, deformed, lame, blind, deaf, and dumb people, there are; and how eaſy it had been for God to have put us in their condition, and them in ours! The difference is not owing to any thing in us: their ſins are not greater than ours. Had we a due ſenſe of our ſins and ill deſervings, we could acknowledge ourſelves unworthy of the leaſt of all God's mercies; we would reckon every common mercy a ſpecial bleſſing, and unmerited favour to us. Again, let us take a view of the fainting ſickneſs, racking pains, and reſtleſs nights of others. Let us look upon our ſick friends ſweating and burning under fevers; let us hear them groaning and moaning under ſtrong pain. "Their ſoul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death." Sometimes we ſee them panting and fainting, and not able to ſpeak a word to us. And what is the language of all this to us? Is it not, that we ſhould thankfully adore our gracious God, and bleſs and magnify him, for his diſtinguiſhing goodneſs to us? O how much are we bound to the Lord, that it is not ſo with us as with others! While weariſome nights are appointed to them, and their bones are full of toſſing; all the comforts, of this life are taſteleſs to them, their friends are weeping about them, but cannot help them: "It is far otherwiſe with me, (may you ſay) my mercies and relations are comfortable and helpful to me, I reliſh my food, my bed gives me eaſe, my ſleep is refreſhing: I have freedom to read and pray, meditate and attend the public ordinances. Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name. Forget not this benefit of health, that is the chief of all my outward bleſſings. Some would part with all their worldly wealth, to have ſo much bodily health as I have. Long have I undervalued and abuſed this choice mercy of health; O that I could mourn for my neglect, and reſolve in God's ſtrength to improve my remaining health, for the praiſe and ſervice of that merciful God who is the author and preſerver of it! let me ſpend, and be ſpent for God, that gives me all my health and ſtrength for his glory. Let me abhor the ingratitude of thoſe who em-

ploy the health which God giveth, in the ſervice of his enemies; and make a ſacrifice of it to the devil, the world, and the fleſh. O what prodigious folly are theſe guilty of, who, for ſatisfying their ſenſual appetite, do often deprive themſelves of health, which is in itſelf a thouſand times of more value than all their brutiſh pleaſures; God help me to prize this mercy, that can never be prized enough."

DIRECT. 11. *Make conſcience of viſiting your ſick friends and neighbours, believing that it is your duty and intereſt ſo to do.*

VISITING of the ſick is not only the duty of the miniſters of Chriſt, but likewiſe of all the members of Chriſt; for we are all enjoined to remember them that are in adverſity, and to ſympathize with the afflicted, as being ourſelves alſo in the body. "To him that is afflicted, pity ſhould be ſhewn by his friends," ſaith Job. And our Lord gives it as a character of thoſe whom he will own and acquit at the great day, Matt. xxv. 36. "I was ſick, and ye viſited me." This is the way to be like him, who is the Father of mercies, and whoſe ſoul was grieved for the miſeries of Iſrael, Judges x. 16.—We read how tenderly David ſympathiſed with his enemies when they were ſick, Pſal. xxxv. 13, 14. and much more ought we to viſit and ſympathize with our ſick friends. To viſit the proſperous, and healthy, is an act of courteſy and civility; but to viſit the afflicted and ſickly, is an act of charity and chriſtianity.

And as it is your duty, ſo it is your intereſt and advantage to viſit the ſick. The wiſe man tells you, Eccleſ. vii. 2. "It is better to go to the houſe of mourning, than to the houſe of feaſting." King Joaſh went to ſee Eliſha in his ſickneſs, and wept over him; and he loſt nothing by ſo doing, 2 Kings xiii 14. for he obtained thereby three famous victories over the Syrians. Tho' it be not warrantable to inquire at the dead, Deut. xviii. 11. yet we may learn many wholeſome leſſons from the dying, and even though they be ſpeechleſs. As for inſtance, we may hereby be inſtructed how to prize health,

mind our own frailty, and provide for the time of ſickneſs. When we behold their ſtrength languiſhing, their tongues faultering, their eyes failing, their countenance pale; we ſhould think with ourſelves, "This will be my caſe ere long; the next arrow that death ſhoots, may be levelled at me; how much is it my concern to prepare for it!" Alſo we may think, what a bitter thing ſin is, that is the cauſe of all theſe pains and diſtreſſes, and how mad they are who love ſin and take pleaſure in it. We may ſee likewiſe, the great folly of courting and truſting the world, which leaves the ſick and dying man in the time of the greateſt extremity. And we may obſerve, how happy the man is, that hath an intereſt in Chriſt, the peace of a good conſcience, and a well grounded hope of heaven; to yield ſupport and confidence to him under his ſtrugglings with ſickneſs and death. When we hear the dying man's complaints of his ſins, and his lamenting his neglect of duty, and miſpending of precious time, we may learn repentance and reformation. When we obſerve their profeſſions of love to Chriſt, and their hope in him to the laſt, it doth contribute to the quickening and ſtrengthening of our faith. A right ſight of dying perſons, is a good mean to increaſe the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication in us. We may fitly allude here to the anſwer which Elijah gave to Eliſha, when he ſought a double portion of his ſpirit, 2 Kings ii. 10. "If thou ſeeſt me when I am taken from thee, it ſhall be ſo unto thee." A double portion of the ſpirit ſhall be the allowance of theſe who make conſcience of this duty.

DIRECT. III. *Let the friends of the ſick, and thoſe who viſit them, deal faithfully with them about their ſouls.*

CONSIDER, this may be the laſt opportunity you may have of doing any thing for your friend's ſoul. If he die, he is fixed in his everlaſting ſtate, ſo that all advices and counſels then will be fruitleſs. It is now, or never, you muſt exert yourſelf for your friend's advantage; there is no knowledge nor wiſdom in the grave, to which he is going, "God's loving kindneſs cannot be declared in the grave, nor his faithfulneſs in deſtruction,"

Pſal. lxxxviii. 11. Now is the proper time for doing good to your neighbour's ſoul. When affliction opens the ear to diſcipline, be careful to drop in wholeſome inſtructions into it; and when the heart is made tender by ſickneſs, it is a fit ſeaſon for good counſel to make impreſſions on it. Let the opportunity then be improved with faithfulneſs and prudence. And, in order thereto, obſerve the following advices.

I. Labour to know the ſick man's ſpiritual condition, that your applications may be ſuitable thereunto. The knowledge of the diſeaſe is previouſly requiſite unto the cure: as the miſtake of a phyſician about a man's diſeaſe, may be as dangerous as the diſeaſe itſelf; ſo here it is highly dangerous to miſtake the caſe of the ſick man's ſoul; for then lenitives may be applied, when corroſives are needful; promiſes may be adminiſtered, when threatnings are more proper.

II. Beware of flattering the ſick with vain hopes of life, when he is more likely to die; leſt he be thereby tempted to delay or ſlacken his preparation for another world. It is fit that plainneſs be uſed with reſpect to his danger, that he may be quickened to his work.

III. The ſick perſon is to be admoniſhed and told, that ſickneſs comes not by chance, nor by ſecond cauſes merely; but by the wiſe direction and ſpecial providence of God: that ſometimes God ſmites, out of diſpleaſure for ſin, and for the ſinner's correction and amendment; and ſometimes for the trial and exerciſe of his people's graces; that the ſharpeſt afflictions ſhall work together for good to them that love God, and are rightly exerciſed under God's hand: that it is a great mercy to a ſinner, when God by his rod gives him warning and ſpace to repent, and flee to the blood of ſprinkling, and to cry to God for pardon; and doth not ſnatch him out of the world by a ſudden death. Upon which account the voice of the rod ſhould be carefully harkened to, and thankfully obeyed.

IV. If the ſick perſon be ignorant, he is to be catechiſed and inſtructed in the principles of religion, eſpecially concerning his faith and repentance, and his up-

taking of the covenant of garce, and the method of pardon and ſalvation through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt apprehended by faith. And it may be proper to demand his aſſent to ſome of the fundamental truths of chriſtianty, or his anſwer to ſuch queſtions as theſe: 1ſt, Do you believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, one God in three perſons, the maker and governor of the world? *2dly*, Do you believe that Jeſus Chriſt, who aſſumed our nature, obeyed the law, died on the croſs, roſe from the dead, and aſcended to heaven, is the eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of ſinners? *3dly*, Are you ſenſible that you are a loſt ſinner by Adam's fall, and, beſides that, guilty of innumerable actual ſins; and that you have broken God's holy commandments in thoughts, words, and deeds, and for ſo doing, do deſerve God's wrath both in this life and that which is to come? *4thly*, Are you truly grieved and ſorry for breaking God's law, neglecting his worſhip, miſpending your time, and purſuing the vanities of the world? And would you do as you have done, or live otherwiſe, if you were to begin your life again? *5thly*, How do you think to get your guilt removed, your ſins pardoned, and your peace made up with God? Are you deſirous from your heart to be reconciled to God through Jeſus Chriſt, the bleſſed peace maker? *6thly*, Do you heartily approve of the goſpel method of reconciliation, by the righteouſneſs and ſacrifice offered up by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as your ſurety, in your name and ſtead? And is your ſoul deſirous to chooſe and accept of Chriſt for your mediator and Saviour, in all his offices, of prophet, prieſt, and king? *7thly*, Do you renounce all confidence in any other, all dependence on your own duties and righteouſneſs, and put your whole truſt and confidence in Chriſt, and the merits of his blood, ſaying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I deſire beſides thee." Do you believe that there is no ſalvation in any other; and that there is no name under heaven whereby you can be ſaved, but Jeſus Chriſt only? *8thly*, Do you deſire to be wholly renewed and ſanctified by virtue of Chriſt's blood, and to ſhew forth the reality of your faith

by good works and a holy life for the time you have to live in the world? And, as an evidence thereof, are you willing to restore what you have taken wrongfully from any, and to forgive all wrongs done to you by any, and to cast out all malice or hatred you have borne to any, and ask forgiveness of any you have injured? *9thly*, Do you believe that Christ is coming at the last day to judge all the world, both the quick and the dead, whom he shall then raise from the grave, and that your dead body shall rise with the rest? *10thly*, Do you believe the immortality of the soul, and its living in a separate state after death, and that the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory, where they shall be ever with the Lord?

V. In dealing with the sick you are to separate betwixt the precious and the vile, and make a difference betwixt the converted and the unconverted. And seeing different applications are requisite, you are, according to your knowledge, to study to suit your counsels, admonitions and prayers, to their state and condition; not using the same words to the ungodly as you use to the godly, lest you flatter them with ill-grounded hopes that their state is safe, while they are strangers to a work of regeneration. That great truth is to be declared to all, that "unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." O it is dangerous to speak peace, where God speaks war.

VI. If the sick person seem to be secure, or have not a due sense of his sins, endeavours must be used to convince him of the guilt, pollution, and danger of them, in order to his humiliation. Presumptuous sinners are not to be flattered, lest we betray their souls into eternal ruin, and so their blood be required at our hand. No fond love, no slavish fear, must keep us from telling them the hazard of their present state. The secure conscience must be awakened to see the demerit of sin, and the terribleness of the justice of a sin-revenging God, before whom no Christless impenitent sinner can stand: this is necessary in order to a sinner's discovering his lost case in himself, and his fleeing to Christ for refuge. It is God's method, first to cast down the soul before he lift it up;

to plow the heart by conviction, before he caſt in the ſeed of conſolation.

VII. If the ſick perſon hath ſtudied to walk uprightly, but is at preſent diſcouaraged upon account of the ſharpneſs of the rod, Satan's temptations, the guilt of ſin, fear of death, or the like; then ſuitable counſels, reſolutions, and comforts, are to be tendered, in order to his ſettlement and ſupport. Particularly he may be told, that ſharp rods are no wiſe inconſiſtent with divine love; nay, frequently, they are a ſign of it: for as ſtanding waters turn corrupt, becauſe they have no current; and theſe who are not poured from veſſel to veſſel, their taſte remains and their ſcent is not changed; therefore, God, in order to take away the ſcent of the corrupt nature from us, is pleaſed to change us from ſtate to ſtate, by croſſes and ſickneſs, to ſalvation. And as Noah's Ark, the higher it was toſſed with the flood, the nearer it mounted towards heaven; ſo the ſanctified ſoul, the more it is exerciſed with affliction, the nearer it is lifted towards God. Again, it is proper to ſet before him the freeneſs and fulneſs of God's grace, the ſufficiency of righteouſneſs in Chriſt, and his rich and gracious offers in the goſpel, by which we are aſſured, that all who repent and believe with all their heart in God's mercy through Chriſt, renouncing their own righteouſneſs, ſhall not periſh in their ſins, but have life and ſalvation in him; and that believers in Chriſt are aſſured of victory over Satan, death, and all their enemies, becauſe Chriſt their head hath by his croſs conquered the devil, unſtinged death, triumphed over the grave, and obtained victory for all his members. So that neither life nor death, principalities nor powers, ſhall be able to ſeparate them from God's love in Chriſt.

VIII. If a ſick man be ſo tempted and troubled in conſcience, that he is in hazard of deſpairing of God's mercy; it is neceſſary to inform him of the greatneſs and infiniteneſs of God's mercy; that the moſt notorious ſinners have been pardoned and ſaved by it, and it is ſtill offered in the goſpel to the vileſt of ſinners. Though God foreſaw all the ſins which the world would commit, yet theſe did not hinder him from loving the world ſo,

that he gave his only begotten Son to death, to save as many as would believe and repent; so that the sins of one man can never hinder God from loving his soul, and forgiving his sins, when he sincerely desires to repent and believe. The cry of the most grievous sins that are recorded (such as those of Sodom) could never reach higher than unto heaven, Gen. xix. 13. But David assures us, Psal. cviii. 4. that the mercy of God is great, and reaches higher than the heavens, so that it overtoppeth the greatest of all our sins. If the mercy of God be greater than all his works, it must surely be greater than all our sins. Again, lay before him the infinite virtue of Christ's blood: why? it is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. And are there any sins so great, or guilt so henious, but the blood of God can wash away? This was godly Cranmer's support that day he suffered martyrdom, when his sin of renouncing the Protestant doctrine stared him in the face: "Surely (said he) God was made flesh, and shed his blood, not for lesser sins only, but for greater sins also." He was sadly discouraged, and wept abundantly, till he eyed this meritorious blood; and then he took heart and died with courage. O this price was so great, that it could have merited pardon for the sins of all the devils in hell, as well as of all the men on earth, though every one of them had been red as crimson. Yea, the least drop of this blood is of more merit to procure the mercy of God for our salvation, than all our sins can be of force to provoke the wrath of God for our damnation; why, the greatest of our sins are but the sins of a man, but the least drop of Christ's blood is the blood of God.

Moreover, Let him be put in mind of the willingness and readiness of our Redeemer to receive all sinners that came to him in the days of his flesh, through driven to him by sickness and affliction; so that he never put any of them away without their errand, that came crying for mercy. Nay, he many times sought out objects for his mercy, that were not thinking of coming to him, as shewed before. Observe the gentleness of our Lord's carriage to Judas himself, in calling him Friend, after his

most treacherous dealing, Matt. xxvi. 50. "Friend, (said he) wherefore art thou come?" Had wretched Judas laid hold on the word Friend, out of the mouth of Christ, as Benhadad did the word Brother from the mouth of Ahab; doubtless Judas should have found the God of Israel more merciful than Benhadad found the king of Israel.

Lastly, Let him consider, that to despair of God's mercy, casts the greatest dishonour upon the divine Majesty, and is a sin more henious than all the sins which we have before committed: why, it doth charge the great God as guilty of perjury, who hath solemnly sworn, that he desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, Ezek. xxxiii 11. God was more displeased with Cain for despairing of his mercy, than for murdering his brother; and with Judas for hanging himself, than for betraying his Master: why, because that by their despair they would make the sins of mortal men greater than the infinite mercy of the eternal God.

DIRECT. IV. *Be earnest in prayer to God for your friends when sick or dying. Pray with them and for them.*

FREQUENTLY sick persons are so disquieted with pain and trouble, that they are out of case to pray for themselves, and therefore they have the more need of the prayers of others. David fasted and prayed for his enemies when they were sick, Psal. xxx. 13. much more ought we to pray for our friends in that case. Never did they need our prayers so much, as when they are called to enter upon an unchangeable condition, to go to their long home, even that place wherein they must abide forever Now they are in the land of prayer, and it is now or never that you must pray and beg mercy for them.—When their life is gone, they go from the land of prayer, and are fixed in that place whence they shall never remove: then all your prayers and cries for them will be in vain. If your friend be a stranger to Christ, he is on the brink of hell, and knows it not; and will you not cry to God to open his eyes, and save him from falling

into that devouring pit, out of which there is no redemption? You would be willing to sit up a whole night for the relief of his body, and will you not spend a part of a night for the good of his soul, that is a thousand times more valuable? Now the question is, whether this precious soul shall be Christ's or the devil's for ever? And when will you wrestle for your friend, if you do it not now? If the sick person be a child of God, you may pray with him with the more comfort, and expectation to be heard. You may, in that case, send the same message by prayer to Christ, that the sister of sick Lazarus did, John, xi. 3. "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Lord pity him, comfort him, abate his distemper, and relieve him from it if it be thy will; if not, grant him thy gracious presence and safe conduct thro' the Jordan of death, and a happy landing in the Canaan of glory.

We are told, that the prayers of the righteous, in such cases, doth avail much, James v. 16. And this to encourage us to pray one for another. Whatever be the sick person's condition, such confessions and petitions as these following may be made use in prayer for him.

PETITIONS FOR THE SICK.

LORD, thou first breathedst into man the breath of life; and when thou takest away that breath, he dies, and returns again to his dust. May we be duly sensible of our dependence on thee for all that we enjoy. We acknowledge, that our great abuse of the many days of health and welfare thou affordest us, doth justly deserve the visitation of sickness and diseases. Wo's us, we lie under a burden of sin, both original and actual; we are all children of wrath by nature, aad under the curse of a broken law; and all other miseries temporal and spiritual, distempers, pains, death, and hell itself, are the issues thereof. Be merciful to the sick person under thy hand; discover to him his sins, and the cause why thou contendest with him. Make him see that he is lost in himself, and wholly unable to satisfy the demands of

offended juſtice; and do thou reveal Chriſt to his ſoul for righteouſneſs and life. O give him thy holy Spirit to create and ſtrengthen faith, that he may lay hold on Chriſt as offered in the goſpel; work in him the grace of true repentance. Enable him to ſearch his heart, and try his ways, ſo as he may diſcover every accurſed thing, every Achan in the camp, that hath provoked the Lord againſt him. When thou putteſt him in the furnace, be pleaſed to ſtand by it, and overſee the metal while it is melting in it. Try him as ſilver is tried, and bring him out purified, and let him looſe nothing in the furnace but his droſs. Remove his ſins from thy preſence as far as eaſt is from the weſt, that they may never trouble his conſcience, nor riſe in judgment againſt his ſoul. However bitter the cup may be, let it be medicinal to cure all the diſeaſes of his ſoul. O that theſe afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, thro' Jeſus Chriſt the purchaſer.

Look down from heaven, the habitation of thy holineſs, behold his affliction and his pain, and forgive all his ſin. Shew ſuch pity to him as a father doth to his child, and lay no more upon him, than he is able to bear.—Lord, give patience and ſtrength anſwerable to the burden of trouble thou haſt laid on him. In time of his weakneſs, uphold him by thy ſtrength. Relieve his wants out of thy infinite fulneſs. Lord, thou knoweſt his frame, and remembereſt that he is duſt; ſave him from extremity of trouble; either abate his pain, or increaſe his patience to endure what thou meaſureſt out to him. Give him the evidences of all the graces of thy Spirit. Arm and defend him againſt all the ſuggeſtions and temptations of Satan. Take his heart wholly off the world, and ſet his affections on things above. Lord, make uſe of this chaſtiſement of his body as a medicine to cure his ſoul, by drawing his ſoul, that is ſick of ſin, to thyſelf. O enable him in a penitent believing manner to come by repentance to Chriſt his ſoul-phyſician, to get it healed of all its maladies. Sanctify his ſickneſs, and let the fruit of it be to purge away his ſin.

If God ſhall be pleaſed to add to his days, bleſs all means of his recovery. Remove the diſeaſe; renew his ſtrength both outward and inward; heal his ſoul as well as his body. And enable him to walk tenderly before God, and carefully to remember and perform ſuch vows and promiſes of obedience as men are apt to make in time of ſickneſs.

If God hath determined to finiſh his days by the preſent viſitation; let him find ſuch evidence of the pardon of his ſins, of his intereſt in Chriſt, and eternal life, as may cauſe his inward man to be renewed, while his outward man decayeth; that he may meet death without fear, caſt himſelf wholly on Chriſt without doubting, and deſire to be diſſolved, that he may for ever be with Jeſus Chriſt. Lord, make his laſt works better than his firſt, and the day of his death better than the day of his birth. Make his laſt words his beſt words, his laſt thoughts his beſt thoughts, and his laſt hour his beſt hour. O let him die the death of the righteous, and let his laſt end be like his. Let the eyes of his ſoul be opened to ſee his ſins and his Saviour, before the eyes of his body be ſhut by death. Take away the ſting of death, the guilt of ſin, that he may walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, and fear no evil. Open thou his lips, that his mouth may ſhew forth thy praiſe, before he go to the place of ſilence. And when his ſtrength doth fail, and his tongue is not able to utter words, let the blood of Chriſt ſpeak for him in heaven: and let thy holy Spirit within him make requeſts for him with ſighs and groans that cannot be uttered. When the ſight of his eyes doth fail him, let the eyes of his faith be ſtrengthened, that his ſoul (with Stephen at his death) may behold Jeſus Chriſt in heaven ready to receive him. Lord, ſtand by him in his laſt conflict with his enemies, Satan and death, that he may overcome both, and be more than n conqueror through Chriſt that hath loved him. Into thy hands we commend his ſpirit.

Lord, teach us who do ſurvive, by this and other like daily ſpectacles of our mortality, to ſee how frail and un-

certain our condition is, and so to number our days, that we may seriously apply our hearts to heavenly wisdom, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

DIRECT. V. *Be careful to furnish your friends with suitable company, and spiritual converse, when they are sick or dying.*

AS worldly company and converse are great hindrances, so spiritual company and converse are special helps to the sick and dying. Now, that the friends of the sick may prevent the one, and provide the other, let the following advices be remembered.

1*st*, Mind your friends timeously to make their wills, and dispatch the settlement of their worldly affairs, that so they may not be disturbed at the last, nor any wise diverted from their main work, by thoughts or discourses about the world. A mind abstracted from the world is a most suitable disposition for a dying man. You cannot carry the things of this world with you when you go hence; and it is not fit you should carry the thoughts of them.

2*dly*. Keep carnal company from them as much as possible, and all these that would divert them by idle or worldly discourse. It is both impertinent and cruel, to throw in such impediments in the way of those that are going speedily to their endless state.

3*dly*, Do what you can to get faithful ministers and godly Christians to be much about them, who are fit to instruct and counsel them about their soul's matters, and also to pray with them and for them.

4*thly*, Be often minding your sick friends of their chief work, and those things which belong unto their peace. Whatever be their state, whether gracious or graceless, it is proper to be minding them, 1. Of the vanity and emptiness of the world, that can neither give ease to the body, nor comfort to the soul, when either of them is in trouble. 2. Of the sinfulness of sin, which is the spring of all diseases and miseries whatever. 3. Of the preciousness and usefulness of Christ to a sinner in all cases,

and especially at a dying hour. 4. Of the inexpressible felicity of believers in Christ after death, &c.

Lastly, If you think yourselves not able to instruct or advise your sick friends as they stand in need, then read some good book to them, that may be suitable to the condition of their souls; and if you have not a fitter at hand, read some chapters or directions of this book to them, as you may see most proper for them. But above all books, read to the sick the holy scriptures, particular chapters and Psalms there, such as the three last chapters of Gen. the last chapter of Deuteronomy, the 17th chapter of the 1st book of Kings, and 2d chapter of the 2d book of Kings, the 14th and 19th chapters of Job, the Psalms of David; and particularly the 6th, the 23d, 25th, 30th, 38th, 41st, 42d, 49th, 51st, 71st, 73d, 77th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 103d, 116th, 118th, 130th, 142d, 143d, and several other Psalms—the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes; the 38th, 53d, 54th, and 55th Isaiah; the three last chapters of Luke; the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, and 20th chapters of John; the 18th chapter of the Romans; the 15th chapter of the 1st Cor. the 5th of the 2d Cor. the 4th of 1st Thess. the 11th and 12th of Heb. the three last chapters of the Revelation, and the like.

DIRECT. VI. *Be likewise suitably concerned for the bodies of your friends, when they are sick.*

IF you would evidence a suitable concern for them, then you must deal tenderly and compassionately with them in their sickness, bear with their impatience and fretting, weary not of them, nor grudge at the trouble they put you to; for shortly you yourselves may be in the like case, when you shall be as great a trouble to others, as your friends are now to you.

Again, it is necessary to employ physicians, and use the best means for the recovery of your friend's health. The means indeed must not be trusted to instead of God, but used in subserviency to him, who hath appointed them, and can only give success to them. We must beware of Asa's sin, that sought to the physicians, and not

to the Lord. Let us neither take food nor phyſic without prayer to God for his bleſſing thereupon.

DIRECT. VII. *When the ſickneſs of your relations or neighbours doth iſſue in death, ſtudy a Chriſtian and ſuitable behaviour under ſuch a diſpenſation.*

WHEN a parent looſeth a promiſing child, or a child looſeth a loving parent, or when death deprives us of any near relation, it is a ſpeaking and trying providence; and we have much need of grace and counſel from God to carry a right under it. Let us obſerve theſe advices.

I. It is neceſſary in ſuch a caſe, that we have a tender ſenſe and feeling of God's afflicting hand. There are two extremes which we muſt equally avoid, *viz.* to make light of the death of relations; and to be exceſſively grieved on that account. God will have us neither to deſpiſe his rod, nor to faint under it, Heb. xii. 5. God is diſpleaſed with thoſe that are ſtupid and inſenſible under ſuch afflictions. Why? They deſpiſe his rod, and make light of his corrections. Hence he complains of theſe, Jer. v. 3. "I have ſmitten them, but they have not grieved." God will have us to feel his hand, to inquire into the meaning of the rod, and ſearch for theſe ſins that have provoked God to ſmite us. It is a ſign of a naughty, ſelfiſh, and unchriſtian ſpirit, to be unconcerned for the death of friends; and it is much more ſo in children, who have a ſecret ſatisfaction in the death of parents, becauſe of the worldly riches or liberty which they get thereby. God uſeth to follow this wicked temper with his heavy judgments even in this life.

II. Conſider, that God is calling you, by the death of others, to keep up lively and laſting impreſſions of death and eternity upon your ſpirits. God knoweth how advantageous it would be for men ſo to do; and therefore he ſets frequent ſpectacles of mortality before their eyes for this end. But ſuch is the corruption and earthlineſs of our minds, that we ſoon forget the thoughts of death. When we ſee our friends in the pangs of death, or laid in the grave, it ſtrikes us with ſome fear

and concern, to think, that one day this will be our own caſe; but no ſooner is the dead interred, and the grave filled up again, than all theſe ſerious thoughts begin to vaniſh, and men return to their ſins and pleaſures as before. Ah, what folly is this! Should not men always keep alive the ſerious thoughts of death and a future ſtate? Are we not always alike mortal? Are we not as liable to death's arreſt at other times, as when examples are before our eyes?

III. When God takes away your children or relations, let it draw your hearts and affections more towards God and things above. As when a ſhepherd taketh up in his arms a lamb of the flock, the ewe followeth him of her own accord, and will not leave him; ſo when the great ſhepherd of the ſheep taketh a child or friend from you, it ſhould cauſe you to follow after him, and deſire to be with him. But one may ſay, that is not the caſe with me; I fear the wolf hath got the ſtraying ſheep, and devoured it. Then even that ſuſpicion ſhould make you run to the good ſhepherd, abide with him, and keep cloſe by the footſteps of the flock, and beware of ſtraying in theſe paths wherein deſtroyers go. When God taketh from you theſe relations whom you dearly loved, he calls you to take your love off the fading creature, and ſet it on the eternal Creator; when the weak branch is lopt off, then claſp to the body of the tree, which will not fail you.

IV. In ſuch trials, ſtudy a humble and patient ſubmiſſion to the will of God, who in his ſovereign wiſdom and pleaſure hath taken your child or friend from you. Remember who hath done it, even he, who gave all men their lives, and hath the abſolute power and right to diſpoſe of men's lives as he thinks beſt. If your fellow-creature do any thing that diſpleaſeth you, you may both aſk who did it, and why he did ſo? But when God doth any thing to you, you muſt remember he is the Potter, and you are the clay; and that he may make or mar his clay veſſels, yea, break them in pieces at his pleaſure; and "there is none can ſtay his hand, or ſay to him, what doſt thou? be ſtill, and know that I am

God," Pſal. xlvi. 10. The maſter of a family gathers at his pleaſure the flowers and fruits of his garden; ſometimes he cuts off the buds, ſometimes he ſuffers them to bloſſom; ſometimes he gathers the green fruit, ſometimes he ſtays till they be ripe, and every body thinks he may do with his own what he pleaſeth; and ſhall not the almighty God have liberty much more to diſpoſe of all that grows in his own territories at his pleaſure? The maſter of the family hath not created the trees and plants of his garden, but God hath made and faſhioned all the children of men with his almighty hand.

It is the ſenſe of this ſovereign right and dominion of God over his creatures, that hath made his people to be ſilent under the greateſt loſſes. Hence Aaron when he loſt his two ſons by a ſudden and extraordinary ſtroke, it is ſaid of him, Lev. x. 3. "And Aaron held his peace." He opened not his mouth, becauſe it was a ſovereign God that did it. So holy Job, when he loſt all his children by one blow, patiently ſubmits to this abſolute Lord, Job i. 21. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord." Job knew that God's relation to them was far nearer than his, and his right to diſpoſe of them was indiſputable.—It was a holy and excellent ſpeech of that honourable perſon, Lord Dupleſſis, at the death of his only ſon; "I could not have borne this from a man, but I can from God."

V. Guard againſt immoderate grief and exceſſive ſorrow for the death of children or near relations; for this is ſinful and offenſive to God. Now, grief is ſinful and immoderate, when it makes you grudge at God's diſpenſation, murmur at his will, turn unthankful to him for the mercies you enjoy, overlook all bypaſt favours, and lament a temporal more than a ſpiritual loſs. Alas! there are many who can bewail a dead friend far more than a dead heart, and the loſs of a child more than the loſs of God's countenance. Now, for preventing this exceſſive ſorrow, conſider theſe things.

1*ſt*. If you be Chriſtleſs and impenitent, you have reaſon to bleſs God that the ſtroke was not at your own life,

for then you had been eternally miſerable, and without hope. What is the temporal loſs of a child, to the eternal loſs of thine own ſoul? O it is far better to be childleſs and friendleſs on earth, than to be hopeleſs and remedileſs in hell.

2dly. Conſider how little ground you have to complain of any loſs or ſtroke you meet with on earth. 1. If you eye God's ſovereignty and power over you, you have cauſe to be thankful that he hath not annihilated you and your relations both long ere now, ſeeing he hath as full a dominion to reduce you to nothing, as to bring you from nothing. Though God ſhould daſh us againſt the walls as a potter doth his veſſel, no man could have reaſon to ſay, What doſt thou? or why doſt thou uſe me ſo? Jer. xvii. 6. "O houſe of Iſrael, cannot I do with you as this potter? ſaith the Lord." Nay, he hath a greater right to deal ſo with us, than a potter with his veſſel, for God hath contributed all to his creature that it hath; but the potter never made the clay which is the ſubſtance of the veſſel, nor the water that is needful to make it tractable. All that the potter doth, is only to mould the clay into ſuch a ſhape; beſides the potter's body is no better than the clay he makes his veſſel of; nay, perhaps that very clay might once have been ſome part of the body of a man as good as the potter himſelf. Now, ſhall the potter have ſuch abſolute power over that which is ſo near alike to him; and ſhall not God have it over that which is infinitely diſtant from him? That word, Dan. iv. 34, 35. "The Moſt High doth according to his will," is enough to ſilence the murmurings of all men under ſtrokes and loſſes.

2. If you eye the hand of God, as moſt juſt and righteous in what you have met with, you have no good ground to complain. "Have you not procured all this to yourſelf?" Is not God moſt juſt in all that hath come upon you? Nay, if you conſider your ſins, and God's abſolute dominion over you, you muſt own he might have dealt with you in a ſmarter way than he hath done; inſtead of one affliction, you might have had a thouſand.

3. Look to the mercy that is mixed with the rod.—

It is a wonder that this great Sovereign, who is so provoked by us, should allow us any mercy at all, and yet we receive innumerable benefits from him. Whatever be our afflictions, surely they are far less than our iniquities deserve. Hath he cast your child into the grave? he might justly have thrown your soul into hell. It is of the Lord's mercies you are not consumed. Why should a living man complain? a man out of a grave, and out of hell too, hath surely no reason.

4. If you compare your affliction with the trials of other's of God's people, yea, and these saints who have been most eminent, you have no reason to grudge at your loss. You have one child dead, but Aaron (who is called the saint of the Lord, Psal. cvi. 16) had two at a stroke; nay, Job, whom God commends above all the saints in his day, had all his children slain by one blow, and both these eminent saints had their losses by an immediate and extraordinary stroke from God. Some godly parents have seen their children live to prove scandals to religion, and a grief of mind to themselves, and would have thought it a mercy if God had taken them away when young. Say not then, there is no sorrow like your sorrow; for the cup which many others have drunk, hath had more bitter ingredients in it than yours.

3*dly*, Consider that excessive grief cannot better your case, it may well make it worse. If you struggle and contend under God's hand, you act a foolish part; as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, that by his struggling galls his neck, and makes the yoke the more uneasy: or like a bird fluttering in a net, that, instead of freeing, doth the more entangle itself. Thus by immoderate sorrow and fretting under the stroke, you sin the more against God, and make your burden the more heavy.

4*thly*, Remember the transactions of thy soul with God in the day thou enteredst into covenant with him. When thou saweſt thyself on the brink of hell, and a burden of sin pressing thee down, and no hope for thee but in Christ; then your cry was, "none but Christ: take children, relations, riches, and all things in the

world from me, and give me Christ. I give up myself, and all I have, to be disposed at thy pleasure; thy will, Lord, shall be my will," &c. Now, God is taking thee at thy word, and trying thy sincerity in what thou saidst and professedst to him so solemnly. He hath disposed of thy dear relation as pleased him: O believer dost thou rue the bargain? wouldst thou take thy word again? where is thy covenanted submission to the will of God, and thy promised contentment with all his disposals?

5*thly*, Dost thou not believe that a covenanted God is better to thee than all the friends in the world? cannot God soon make up the greatest loss to thee, if thou turn to him by prayer, and pour out thy heart and sorrows in his bosom? what are the world's comforts to God's comforts? a smile of God's face in prayer, can soon sweeten thy bitter cup, and make thee forget all thy sorrows, Psal. xciv. 19. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul." The author of the fulfilling of the scriptures tells us of one Patrick Macilwrae, an eminent saint, in the west of Scotland, who having lost his dear and only son, got to his closet, and there poured out his soul to the Lord. When he came out to his friends at length, who were waiting to comfort him, and fearing how he would take such a heavy stroke, he returned from prayer with a cheerful countenance, and told some of his friends who asked him the reason of his cheerfulness, "that he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that to have it afterwards renewed, he would be content to lose a son every day."

6*thly*, Seriously consider that you are but a few days journey behind him for whom you mourn, and that you will quickly overtake him, and be with him again. This allayed David's sorrow for his child, 2 Sam. xii. 23. "I shall go to him." It is our expecting, to live here, to enjoy the comforts of relations, that commonly makes us grieve so much for their death; for if we looked on ourselves as men that were to die in a few days we would not be so troubled for our friends that are gone but a little space before us.

7*thly*, If your friends are gone to heaven you have

more reaſon to rejoice with them than to mourn for them; ſeeing they are unſpeakably happier where they now are, than they could have been with you. It is the moſt fervent deſire and wiſh of every true chriſtian to be in heaven: and will you grieve, becauſe God hath taken your relations thither, where you deſire to be yourſelf above all things? As Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples before his death, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me you would rejoice becauſe I go unto the Father:" ſo, if your departed friend could ſpeak to you from heaven, he would ſay, "If ye loved me with a pure ſpiritual love, ye would rejoice that I am gone to my Father, where I am more happy than you can poſſibly conceive of me."

Object. "Had I ground to think that any friend is gone to heaven, it would eaſe me; but, alas, I fear it is otherwiſe."

Anſw. 1. It doth not belong to us to dive into the eternal ſtate and condition of theſe that are gone off the ſtage. Theſe ſecret things belong to God, who exerciſeth his mercy or juſtice towards ſinners according to his ſovereign will.

2. Suppoſing the worſt, you ought to ſubmit to the incontrolable ſovereignty of God who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. "He is of one mind, and who can turn him?"—The Lord cut off Aaron's two ſons in the very act of ſin and rebellion againſt him, and yet Aaron held his peaee, and ſo ought you.

3. Whatever be the lot of others hereafter, you have reaſon to be thankful to God, for his diſtinguiſhing mercy, in ſaving you from theſe flames that others fall into, and giving you good hope through grace of glorifying God above forever.

DIRECT. VIII. *Let the ſickneſs and death of others be a warning to you in time of health, to make due preparation for the time of ſickneſs and of dying, which is before your hands.*

WHEN you ſee your friends and neighbours in a ſickly, weak, or dying condition, the language

of the dispensation to you that are in health is, prepare for sickness also. Nay, the feeble voice of the sick doth proclaim this warning as loudly, as if they should lift up their voice like a trumpet, and say to you, "Remember that you must lie in the same case ere long; you must also groan under pain, loose your strength and beauty, leave your mirth and company, bid adieu to all the world, and look out for the grim messenger death, that is a coming to dissolve the earthly tabernacle, send the body to lie in a putrifying grave, and the soul to stand before God's tribunal, to be sentenced to an endless state."—This will be thy case, O young man, strong man, healthful man, as really in a little, as it is of these now before your eyes. O how soon will it come! what thoughts will you then have of the world, of sin, and vain company? Will any thing comfort you then but the favour of God, the love of Christ, and the review of a holy well spent life? Wherefore do with all thy might now what thy hand finds to do, employ the time of health well in preparing for sickness, and leave nothing to do in time of sickness, which is a most unfit season for a man to do soul work, and salvation work in.

I. I shall begin with those of the family where the harbingers of death do presently reside. Surely the warnings of sickness and death ought to be louder in your ears than others, and most diligently harkened unto by you, that lodge under the same roof with the messengers of the king of terrors. 1*st*, Remember that word, 1 Pet. v. 6. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." It well becomes guilty sinners, all the members of the family to be humble before a holy God, when he is smiting any of them. Humbly acknowledge his sovereignty and absolute dominion over you, saying, "Lord, thou art the author and founder of families, and thou mayst afflict and punish them as thou thinkest fit. Thou settest the solitary in families, and multiplies their number; and thou mayest diminish them, yea, lay them desolate according to thy pleasure. Thou mightest have made all the members of the family sick, as well as one; thou mightest have given a deadly

blow to parents, children, and ſervants, at once, yea, have made the houſe in which we live a common grave, and buried us all together in its ruins." Humbly acknowledge the juſtice and mercy of God in the preſent viſitation. "Lord, inſtead of one, we all deſerved to ha e been thrown on ſick beds, and all of us to have been ſmitten by death. Thou puniſheſt us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." Acknowledge alſo God's wiſdom and love in the preſent affliction, and humbly ſubmit to take the cup which he hath mingled for you. "The cup which our heavenly Father hath ordered for this family, ſhall we not drink it? It is a gracious and wiſe God that doth what is done in the family; therefore it is our part to be dumb, and not to open our mouths to quarrel it."

2dly, The command which the king of Ninevah gave to all his ſubjects, when threatened with ruin, Jonah iii. 8. is very proper for a maſter of a family to give to all under his charge, when ſickneſs doth rage among them; "Faſt, and cry mightily to God, and turn every one from his evil way—Who can tell if God will turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?" When the deſtroying angel gets a commiſſion to ſmite families with mortal and infectious diſeaſes, which ſometimes go from houſe to houſe like a plague, ſweeping many old and young off the ſtage; then eſpecially it ſhould be a time of mighty crying and pleading with God for mercy.—And ſince our pleading is wholly ineffectual without an atoning ſacrifice to incenſed juſtice, let us not forget to bring the all-ſufficient ſacrifice of Chriſt's blood along with us, and plead it with God for averting his wrath from our houſes and families. As Moſes ſaid to Aaron in a time of common calamity, Num. xiv. 46. ſo may I ſay to you that are heads of families, "Take a cenſer and incenſe, and go quickly and make an atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun." Bring the incenſe of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, that great atonement to divine juſtice, which was typified by the legal ſacrifices and oblations. Humbly and earneſtly plead that great ſacrifice with God,

for turning away the fierceneſs of his wrath. Get the bunch of hyſſop, faith, in order to the ſprinkling of your houſes with that atoning blood, that ſo you and your families may be among the preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus."

Laſtly, Let all the family where ſickneſs is, and eſpecially the head of it, remember that word, Job xxii. 23. "Thou ſhalt not put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles." God hath ſent ſickneſs with this meſſage to you, "Search out family ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion; mourn over them, turn from them, baniſh them far away. Let no vice lodge under your roof.—Let family worſhip be no more neglected, nor ſlightly performed. Let God have both the morning and evening ſacrifice." Now, if the members of theſe families viſited with ſickneſs, who are in health for the preſent, would thus humble themſelves, cry to God, plead the blood of Chriſt, and reform what is amiſs among them; the preſent affliction would be ſanctified, and they in ſome meaſure prepared for the like trial, when God ſhall be pleaſed to put the cup in their hands.

II. In the next place, let me warn all the friends and neighbours of the ſick, whether they be in the family or not, to improve the day of health, in making ready for the time of ſickneſs. Be much in the exerciſe of ſelf-examination, humiliation for ſin, believing in Chriſt, renewing covenant with God, mortifying of ſin, trimming the lamp, meditating of heaven, living by faith, deniednefs to the world, ſtudying to overcome the love of life, and fears of death. Concerning all which I have given directions in the foregoing chapters of this book, when ſpeaking to the ſick and diſtreſſed. Theſe exerciſes are not only proper for the ſick, but alſo for theſe in health; and are ſuitable preparations for ſickneſs and death, to be ſtudied by all men in every condition. But there are ſome things further moſt neceſſary to be minded by people in time of their health, in order to prepare them for the time of ſickneſs and of dying, before it come.

1*ſt*, Make your latter-will, and keep it by you, that

you may not be encumbered with your worldly affairs, in time of ſickneſs, or at a dying hour. Surely it is great wiſdom to put this by-hand in time of health. But I have ſpoken largely of this, Chap. I. Dir. 6.

2*dly*, Take heed in time of health, that you lay not up ſad proviſion againſt the day of ſickneſs, by your careleſs and untender walk. As it is ſin that brings on ſickneſs upon us, ſo it is ſin that embitters it unto us. O beware of all known ſin, and particularly the ſin of earthly-mindedneſs, unthanfulneſs for mercies, luke-warmneſs in religion, neglect to improve Chriſt, neglect of prayer, and formality in it, quenching of the ſpirit, falling from your firſt love, breach of vows, miſcarrying under ſignal mercies, ſianing after afflictions, turning to old ſins.—Guard againſt theſe evils now in time of health, otherwiſe they will put thorns in your pillow when ſickneſs cometh. Dare not to live in ſuch a courſe as you would not adventure to die in. How do you know but your next ſtep may be into the grave? and would you be willing to lie down there in your ſins, with earthly, dead, formal, wandering, and unbelieving hearts?

3*dly*, Sit looſe from the world, and live as ſtrangers in it, that you may be able to pack and be gone from it upon ſhort warning. Let death find you dead before hand, dead to the world. If your affections be glewed to the world, it will be a violent rending and ſad parting you will have with it when the dying hour cometh. You will be ready, like Lot's wife, to linger, hanker, and look greedily back again.

4*thly*, Keep ſhort reckonings with God and conſcience, that you may not have old ſcores to reckon upon when you come to the death bed. O what ſtinging pain and torment may one ſin unmourned for coſt you at that time! Let conſcience then bring in the accounts of every day before you ſleep, and ſpeedily take up every controverſy that may fall out betwixt God and thy ſoul.

5*thly*, Dwell much upon the thoughts of death, that you may learn to be acquainted and familiar with it; as Job was, who ſaid, before-hand, "to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother

and my ſiſter," Job xvii. 14. For this cauſe the Egyptians uſed to place a dead man's ſcull in ſome conſpicuous place of their rooms; likewiſe the Jews had their ſepulchres in their gardens of pleaſure, that ſo in midſt of their delights they might think on their dying time.—We read of Philip king of Macedon, that ordered a page every morning to rouze him from ſleep with theſe words, "O king, remember thou art a mortal man." By this often repeated leſſon, he laboured to humble his lofty mind, and make his acquaintance with death, that it might not ſeem ſtrange or ſurpriſing to him when it ſhould actually come and ſnatch him away.

6thly, Study to ſpend every day as it were to be your laſt, and perform every duty as it were the laſt, ſtill looking on ſickneſs and death as very near. That which makes moſt men ſo unconcerned about ſickneſs, death, and eternity, is, they view them as things afar off, at thirty or forty years diſtance. "They think their time will be long here: why, they are healthy, of a ſtrong conſtitution, and their fathers lived ſo long;" which ſurely are falſe rules to judge by. It was the expectation of many years that helped on the ruin of that rich fool in the goſpel. It were far better for every man to look on himſelf as ſtanding every day and night at the very door of eternity; and hundreds of diſeaſes ready to open the door and let him in. When you lie down at night, leave your heart with Chriſt, and compoſe your ſpirits ſo, as if you were not to awake till the heavens are no more; for certainly that night cometh, of which you will never ſee the morning, or that morning, of which you will never ſee the night. But which of your mornings, or nights theſe will be, you know not, ſeeing your times are not in your own hands.

7thly, Set apart ſome time, daily, for thinking, in a retired way, on your time that is paſt, and upon eternity that is to come. The neglect of this duty of meditation, and retired thinking, is very prejudicial, both to the godly and ungodly. It was David's practice to think, and to think upon his ways; which engaged him to reform whatever he found amiſs in them, Pſal. cxix. 59.

Oh! it is the ruin of many a ſoul, they are utter ſtrangers to this way of thinking. I have read of a father, who on his death-bed, left it as a ſolemn charge upon his only ſon, who was a prodigal, that he ſhould ſpend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking, and let him chuſe any ſubject he pleaſed. The ſon thinks this an eaſy taſk, undertakes it, and after his father's death ſet himſelf to perform his promiſe. One day he thinks upon his by-paſt pleaſures; another day he contrives his future delights; after a while he begins to think ſeriouſly what might be his father's deſign in laying this taſk upon him: at length he thinks, his father was a wiſe and good man, therefore ſurely he intended and hoped that among the reſt of his meditations, he would ſome time or other think of religion. When this had truly poſſeſſed his thoughts, one thought and queſtion comes upon the back of another, about his by-paſt life and future ſtate, that he could not contain himſelf in ſo ſhort a confinement, but was that night without ſleep; yea, and afterwards could have no reſt till he become ſeriouſly religious. O that I could perſuade all careleſs and unthinking ſouls to go and do likewiſe! Ah! how many ſpend their days in a hurry about their worldly affairs, and periſh for want of thinking!

8*thly*, Among other ſubjects of your retired thoughts, ſpend ſome time in thinking, how awful and terrible a thing it muſt be for a poor Chriſtleſs ſoul to make its appearance before an angry God after death. "For who (ſaith the prophet) can dwell with devouring fire? who can abide with everlaſting burnings?" I have read of a certain king of Hungary, who being on a time marvelloufly ſad and heavy, his brother, who was a briſk and gallant man, would needs know the reaſon: "O brother, (ſays he) I have been a great ſinner againſt God, and I know not how I ſhall appear before his judgment-ſeat." —His brother anſwered, "theſe are but melancholy thoughts;" and ſo made light of them, as moſt courtiers uſe to do. The king replied nothing at that time; but the cuſtom of that country was, (the government being abſolute) if the executioner ſounded a trumpet at

a man's door, he was presently to be led to execution. The king sent the executioner in the dead time of the night, and caused him to sound his trumpet at his brother's door, who hearing and seeing the messenger of death, sprang in trembling into his brother's presence, falls down upon his knees, and beseeches the king to let him know wherein he had offended him. "O brother, (said the king) you never offended me, but loved me; but is the sight of an earthly executioner so terrible to thee; and shall not I, who am so great a sinner, fear much more to be brought to the judgment-seat of an angry God?"

9thly, Think often how religiously men use to wish they had lived, when they come to the sick and dying time. These who have spent their time most carelessly, begin to have other notions of religion when they see the grim messenger approaching. Go to their bed-sides, and ask them, whether sloth or diligence, formality or servency, drinking or praying, loving the world or loving Christ, be the best? would they not tell you that there is none so wise as they that are most religious? Think, O man, in health, with thyself, if thou wast just now upon thy death-bed, and saweſt thy friends standing mourning round about thee, but unable to help thee, what would be thy thoughts and discourse at that time? O then, let some of the same thoughts and discourse fill up every day and hour of thy life now. Why thou knoweſt not but this moment thou mayst be as near death, as if thy friends and physicians too were despairing of thy life, and had given you over for dead.

10thly, Be employed now in fighting the good fight of faith. You have many enemies to deal with, and death is the last of them. Would you obtain the victory over them? Then get on the Christian armour, and make much use of the shield of faith. We read in the book of Esther, that king Ahasuerus would not recal the proclamation he had emitted against the Jews; but he gave them full liberty to take up arms to defend themselves, and attack their enemies; so here, God will not recal the sentence of death he hath past upon all men in the garden; but nevertheless he allows, yea

commiſſionates all true Iſraelites to take up arms againſt death, to conquer and trample it under foot by faith.

Laſtly, Be buſy now in health, providing and laying up a ſtock againſt the time of ſickneſs and affliction; which may contribute to your comfortable living then, when the world's good things will be taſteleſs and comfortleſs to you. As theſe who have a voyage to go, do victual the ſhip; and theſe who have a ſiege to hold out, take in proviſions; even ſo do ye.

1. Get a ſtock of graces againſt that time, eſpecially a ſtock of faith, of patience, of humility, ſelf-denial, &c. There will be uſe for all theſe then. A little grace, or a little faith, is not enough; for this will faint under afflictions. We read, Matt. xiv. that, when the winds began to blow fiercely, Peter's little faith began to fail. You have need of a great meaſure of patience againſt that time, that you may wait quietly on God, till he come to your relief. You know not but he may lengthen out your trials and tarry till the fourth watch of the night before he come with deliverance.

2. Provide a ſtock of evidences or marks of grace, and of the love of God, that you may be able to aſſert your intereſt in him as your portion in Chriſt, and may be perſuaded, that neither death nor life will ever ſeparate you from him.

3. Get a ſtock of divine experiences. Lay up all the experiences you have had of God's loving kindneſs, and theſe will give great relief and encouragement to the ſoul in the day of diſtreſs.

4. Lay up a ſtock of Sermons. Treaſure up the counſels and cordials which they bring you from God's word, that ſo you may, according to Iſaiah xlii. 23. "Hear for the time to come;" and eſpecially for ſick-beds, when you cannot get ſermons to hear. Then it is, that you ought to live and feed upon the ſermons you have heard.

5. Lay up a ſtock of prayers. Be much in wreſtling with God for help and through bearing in the day of affliction; and ſo you may expect the gracious returns thereof in the day of calamity.

6. Provide a ſtock of promiſes. Be now gathering theſe ſweet cordials from God's word, lay them up in your heart and memory, and they will be very refreſhing and ſupporting to you in the day of affliction.

DIRECT. IX. *Let theſe who are in health ſet about the work of repentance, and turning to God in Chriſt timeouſly and quickly; and beware of delaying this work until the time of ſickneſs and of dying,*

GOD's command to you is, to ſet about the work preſently, without any delay, Heb. iii. 15. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."—Matt. xxi. 28. "Go work to-day in my vineyard."—Eccleſ. xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Well, God's voice to you, O man in health, is to-day. But the devil's voice to you is to-morrow. And which of the two will you harken to? Surely it is your wiſdom to obey the voice of your Creator and friend, and not of your enemy and deſtroyer. Why, to-day thou art in health, to-morrow thou mayſt be in ſickneſs; to-day thou art on earth, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in hell; to-day Chriſt is inviting you to come to him, to-morrow he may be ſentencing you to depart from him. And conſider, that the devil, who tempts you to delay this day, will be as ready to tempt you to the ſame to-morrow: and ſo the devil's to-morrow will never come, It will ſtill be to-morrow with him till the laſt hour, that ſo he may get you cheated out of your whole time and ſalvation together.

Here I ſhall endeavour two things; 1. Bring arguments to perſuade you to repent and cloſe with the offers of Chriſt preſently, without any delay, as God requires. 2. Shew the evil and danger of delaying till the time of ſickneſs and of dying. As to the firſt, *viz.* Arguments for preſent repentance, and againſt delaying the work.

1*ſt*, Conſider the uncertainty of your life and time to repent. Your life is but a vapour, a little warm breath that is going out and in at your noſtrils, which may be ſtopped by death ere you be aware; thou knoweſt not what will be to-morrow, Prov. xxvii. 1. It was the

faying of a godly man, when invited to a feaft upon the morrow, "I have not had a morrow, for thefe many years." It was a bad ufe thefe Epicures made of this uncertainty, Ifa. xxii. 13. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we fhall die." It is much wifer to fay, "Let us pray, and turn to the Lord, for to-morrow we fhall die." Nay, you have not fecurity for one hour to repent in; for God hath a thoufand difeafes and accidents ready to ftop your breath, and end your days, whenever he pleafeth to give them orders There are many fecure finners, who prefume on long life, but there are none nearer deftruction than fuch; for God loves to difappoint thefe that promife themfelves a long life in fin and impenitency, as he did that rich man who was laying up for many years, Luke xii 19. "This night fhall thy foul be required of thee." And O what a dark and difmal night will it be, if death comes before thy repentance! O man, thou never didft lie down one night with affurance of rifing again; thou never heardft one fermon with affurance of hearing another; thou never didft draw one breath with affurance of drawing another. What madnefs is it then to delay falvation work one day or hour longer, and fo to leave the weightieft matter in the world at the greateft uncertainty!

2*dly*, Confider, that though God in his wonderful mercy and patience fhould prolong your days, yet the longeft life is fhort enough for the work you have to do, fuppofe you begin it prefently. Nay, had you Methufalem's years to fpend, they would be no more than fufficient to repent and mourn for the fins and guilt which you have been fo long contracting; to reform and amend the many things that have been amifs; to perform all the duties incumbent on you; to make fure your calling and election, and put your fouls in a good poffture and preparation for an eternal ftate, and get them made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the faints in light. Now, do ye think that all this work can be done in an inftant, or in a time of ficknefs, or old age, when ye are hardly fit to do any thing? When a man's fpirit is unable to bear the infirmities of nature, how will he be able

to bear the lashes of a guilty conscience, or a wounded spirit? When the understanding is weak, the memory frail, the will obstinately bent the wrong way, by a long custom of sinning, and neglecting of duty; will that be a fit time to begin the work of repentance and conversion to God? When nature is decayed, and the candle of life just sinking in the socket, will you begin then to act for God, and make your light shine before men to his glory? O remember, your work is long, your time is short; and though you begin this very hour, you will have no time to spare.

3*dly*, Delay not this work, because it is not in your power to do it when you please. It is a delusion of the devil, to imagine you may repent when you will. No, no; it is God only that giveth repentance, and he gives it when, and to whom he pleaseth, Acts v. 13. And it is a mere peradventure, if ever he give it to a delaying sinner, 2 Tim. ii. 25. When is it that you may have hopes he will give repentance, but when he calls you to it, and prescribes means to be used for that end? Now that is to-day. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice: now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."—To-day, when God is calling, and the Spirit striving, is the time of finding the Lord, and getting repentance from him. To-morrow it may be too late; the Lord's hand may be closed, and the door of mercy shut. If you refuse the Spirit when he strives with you, he may leave you, and never put another serious thought in your heart of turning to the Lord. O defer not seeking repentance till it be too late: for there is a time when the Lord will not be found, and then repentance will not be found, though you seek it with tears. Indeed, God hath promised mercy to penitent sinners: but he hath no where promised the aids of his grace and Spirit to them that put off their repentance: and he hath no where promised acceptance to mere grief and sorrow for sin without faith, and fruits meet for repentance: he hath no where promised to pardon these, who only promise to leave their sins, when they can keep them no longer.

4*thly*, The longer repentance and closing with Christ

is delayed, the difficulty thereof is every day increaſed. Why, 1. Becauſe of the deceitful nature of ſin, which doth daily bewitch and harden the heart more and more in the practice of it. 2. Cuſtom in any thing hath a ſtrong influence on us, and becomes a kind of ſecond nature, and breeds an almoſt invincible inclination to whatſoever we have long addicted ourſelves unto, whether it be in actions natural or moral. Hence Ovid gives that good advice,

Sed propera, nec te venturas differ in horas;
Qui non eſt hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

"Be ſpeedy, put not off till another time;
"He who is not prepared to-day, will be more unprepared to-morrow."

He that goes on from day to day in ſin, will find his indiſpoſition to repent daily increaſed, the habits of ſin ſtrengthened, and himſelf brought at length under the power of an inveterate cuſtom. And if it be hard to break any cuſtom, much more a cuſtom in ſinning, which is ſo agreeable to depraved nature. Hence ſaith the Spirit of God, Jer. xiii. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? Then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil." 3. The longer Satan keeps poſſeſſion, the more difficult will his ejection prove. The devils that poſſeſſed the man from the womb up, could not be caſt out but by ſome extraordinary way. 4. Delays bring on ſpiritual judgments from God, ſuch as judicial hardneſs on the heart, which will make repentance impoſſible, according to that terrible place, Iſa. vi. 9, 10. "Make the heart of this people fat," &c. which is quoted no leſs than ſix times in the New Teſtament, as if it belonged only to them that linger and ſit impenitent under goſpel calls.

Laſtly, We would reckon ſuch delays madneſs in earthly affairs, which are but trifles when compared to ſalvation work. If a man's houſe were on fire, we would count him mad, if he ſhould ſay, it is time enough to

quench it to-morrow; or, if he were ſtung with a venomous ſerpent, he would be mad that neglected to ſeek a preſent cure: or, if he had got poiſon in his ſtomach, he would never think he could ſoon enough vomit it up. If a malefactor were condemned to a cruel death to-morrow, but had a promiſe of a remiſſion if he ſhould look after it to-day; would he be ſo fooliſh as delay it till next morning? But how much greater madneſs is it to delay repenting and fleeing to Chriſt, when God's calls and promiſes relate to the preſent time, and our danger in delaying is infinitely greater than in any of the foreſaid caſes? Surely there is no ſting ſo dangerous, no poiſon ſo deadly as ſin; and can we too ſoon ſeek after the balm of Gilead, the blood of Chriſt for its cure? There is no death like the ſecond death, no fire ſo dreadful as the eternal fire of God's wrath: Now, this fire is already kindled againſt your ſouls; and if it be not timeouſly quenched, it will burn to the loweſt hell. Loſe no time to get it extinguiſhed, by fleeing to the blood of Jeſus.

II. The next thing is to ſhew the evil and danger of delaying this work until the time of ſickneſs and of dying. Alas, it is the common practice of the moſt part! But conſider, 1*ſt*, What wretched ingratitude and baſeneſs there is in it. Whether is it fit ye ſhould give the beſt of your time to God that made you, or to the devil that ſeeks your deſtruction? Is it reaſonable that the devil ſhould feaſt on the flower and prime of your youth and ſtrength, and your Creator have no other but the fragments of the devil's table? When the dregs of your time are come, your ſtrength gone, your ſenſes failed, your underſtanding and memory weak, your affections ſpent upon the creature, yea, when you are good for nothing elſe; will ye be ſo baſe as think, you are then good enough for God, and for ſalvation-work, which requires all your ſtrength and might? But remember, if you be ſo baſe as reſerve the dregs of your time for God, you may expect he will be ſo juſt as reſerve the dregs of his wrath for you, according to that word, Mal. i. 14. "Curſed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and ſacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing." Your youth,

ſtrength, health, gifts, and talents, are the males of the flock; if you give theſe to the devil, and reſerve the weakneſs of ſickneſs and old age for God, you draw down his curſe upon your heads; and how long will you be able to bear up under the weight of God's curſe? Now, O delaying ſinners, why ſhould you be ſo ungrateful to God, and injurious to yourſelves? God had early thoughts of mercy to you; and will you have nothing but late thoughts of duty to him? Chriſt did not defer his dying for us till he was old; and ſhall we defer living to him, till we be old? Oh, we do not deal with God as we would have him to deal with us. When we need help in trouble, we cry, as Pſal. cii. 2. "Lord, hear me; in the day when I call, anſwer me ſpeedily." To-day we ſtill make the ſeaſon of mercy, but to-morrow the ſeaſon for duty. When mercy is delayed, we impatiently cry, How long? how long? We will not wait God's holy leiſure. But alas! we would have God to wait our ſinful leiſure. Oh, let us be aſhamed of ſuch diſingenuous dealings with our Creator.

3*dly*, Death may get a commiſſion to take you off ſuddenly, without giving you any time to repent. You are not ſure to ſee the evening ſtar of ſickneſs, before the night of death overtakes you, or that you will have any warning given you before the fatal ſtroke. For how many are there who project long lives, and look for time before death to repent, that get a ſurpriſing call to flit from the earthly tabernacle, and have not one minute to provide another lodging? How many are drowned by a ſudden ſtorm at ſea? And how many killed by outward accidents on land? Some drop down ſuddenly in the ſtreets; ſome die ſitting in their chairs; ſome go well to bed at night and never ſee the morning; ſome die as quickly by a fit of an epilepſy, or apoplexy, as if ſhot with a gun. Thus thouſands are hurried into eternity, and preſented before a tribunal, without being allowed ſo much time as to think one ſerious thought, or ſpeak one word? not one moment to conſider where they are going, or to cry to God for mercy. And how know you but this may be your caſe at death? Muſt it not be the

greatest folly then to delay your repentance to a dying time, when it may not be one minute long?

3*dly*, Though you may have some time to lie on sick-beds, how know ye but your sickness may be such as shall incapacitate you for spiritual work? Some we see are so oppressed with continual slumbering and sleeping, even when death is nearest, that they are in no case to think or speak of these things that belong to their eternal state. Others, in high fevers, are troubled with rovings; and have no use of their reason, so that they are not capable to settle their worldly affairs; and how much less are they fit to secure their soul's eternal concerns, at that time? Some again are so racked with pains and agonies, impatient frettings, and bitter uneasiness, that they cannot get one settled thought about their soul's present or future state. Others are so filled with terror and amazement at the view of approaching death and eternity, that they cannot compose their thoughts to examine themselves, confess their sins, act faith in a Saviour, or follow any direction that is given them; but go off the stage in a confusion, being incapable to do any thing to purpose for their souls. Some their distemper is such, that they are brought to a great strait betwixt the word of God and the physician. The word of God and his ministers tell them if they do not mourn for their sins, and wrestle for mercy, they cannot be saved: but saith the physician, if you trouble yourself with sad and melancholy thoughts, you prejudice your body and hazard your life. Oh! is this a fit time then to begin your preparation for another world?

4*thly*, The Spirit of God being long resisted and vexed by many in the day of health, he is provoked to leave them on death-beds to the hardness of their own hearts: And so they remain like stocks and stones, dead and stupid to the last.

5*thly*, The devil, that was busy all your lives to keep you from repentance, will not be idle at this time; nay, he will be more active then than ever to ruin you, either by causing you to split on the rock of presumption or of despair. Sometimes he will tell sinners then, "You need

not trouble yourſelves about your ſouls: God is more merciful than to damn you; the repentance you have already will ſerve the turn." But if this will not quiet them, he will ſtudy to drive them to deſpair, by telling them, "They have loſt the ſeaſon of repentance and cloſing with Chriſt; and now there is no remedy, no hope for them, and it is in vain to uſe any further means." O then, do not harken to Satan now, when he tempts you to delay your repentance.

6thly, Whatever appearance of repentance ſome dying perſons may have, let that be no encouragement to put off till that time. Why, there lieth a juſt ſuſpicion upon a late repentance, that it is ſeldom ſound and ſincere. It is no ſound work, that ariſeth more from fears of hell, than from any real hatred of ſin; more from love to ſelf, than love to God. And it is to be feared, that death-bed repentance is moſtly of this ſort, ſeeing ordinarily it conſiſteth more in grief and fear, prayers and promiſes, than in a hearty loathing of ſin, love to holineſs or willingneſs to accept of Jeſus Chriſt: for have we not ſeen many of theſe penitents, who, in the view of death, have profeſſed great ſorrow for their wicked lives, and made ſolemn promiſes of amendment; yet when they have happened to recover, all their righteouſneſs hath vaniſhed, and they have returned to their former ſins as greedily as ever? And, O delaying ſinner, what ground have you to think that your death-bed repentance will be any better than theirs? Be wiſe then in time, ſet heartily about ſalvation work in the day of your health, and do not leave the weightieſt work to the weakeſt time.

Object. I. "But hath not God promiſed mercy to them that repent of their ſins at any time?"

Anſw. Yes, to them that repent truly and ſincerely: but do not think that it is in your power to repent ſo, at any time you pleaſe: no, it is impoſſible you can do it without the influence and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God. And God hath no where promiſed this to theſe who put off their repentance to a death-bed. There is a great difference betwixt a ſick man's howling upon his bed, and ſincere goſpel repenting. I grant, true repentance is

never too late; but O! late repentance is ſeldom true. True repentance is that which hath a care to walk holily, or hath works meet for repentance joined with it. Hence repentance is not only called METANOIA, a change of mind; but alſo METAMELEIA, an after care. Now for a death-bed repentance, that hath no ſuch holy care or good works, I know no promiſe in the bible that annexeth ſalvation unto it.

Object. II. "Do not we read in Chriſt's parable of the labourers, Matth. xx. that ſome were hired and brought into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, and got the ſame reward with thoſe that were hired at the third and ſixth hour?"

Anſw. 1. Theſe that were brought in ſo late could ſay for themſelves, verſe 6. "that no man had hired them," or had offered to hire them before; they did no ſooner hear the goſpel-call, and offers of ſalvation through Chriſt tendered to them. But O! this will ſtand you in no ſtead, who have had many a call and offer made you at the third, ſixth, and ninth hour, and have reſiſted and refuſed them; you will not have it to ſay at the eleventh hour as theſe had, "No man hath hired us."

2*dly*, Theſe men, though they came in but at the eleventh hour, and not being ſooner hired, yet they were labourers in the vineyard, and wrought one hour therein faithfully, in obedience to their Lord's command, and ſo brought forth ſome fruits meet for repentance, and were accepted. But this is no encouragement to any to expect to be brought in at the twelfth hour, when there is no time to work, nor bring forth any fruits to teſtify the ſincerity of their repentance; we have no promiſe of acceptance made to ſuch.

Object. III. "The penitent thief on the croſs ſought mercy from Chriſt at the laſt hour and got it."

Anſw. That is a ſingular inſtance, and gives no encouragement to delaying ſinners. The ſcriptures contain a hiſtory of more than four thouſand years, and yet during all the time we have but one example of a man that truly and ſincerely repented when he came to die. And in this man's caſe there was ſuch an extraordinary conjunction of circumſtances, as never happened before,

and can never fall out again to the end of the world.—This man had the happineſs to die cloſe by the newly pierced and bleeding wounds of a crucified Jeſus, when he was lifted up from the earth in the height of his love, drawing ſinners to ſalvation; which was a juncture that can never have a parallel. Again, the man never had any offer of Chriſt nor day of grace before now; he ſurrendered himſelf upon the very firſt call: and his faith in Chriſt at this time was truly ſingular and miraculous. He was deſigned by heaven to be made a rare monument of the power of Chriſt's grace, and a ſpecial trophy of his victory over the devils and wicked men, at a time when they ſeemed to triumph over him, as one crucified through weakneſs.

From all which we may ſee, that this example was extraordinary, and affords no ground for the preſumption of delaying ſinners. You may as well caſt yourſelves into the ſea in hopes of preſervation by a whale, from the example of Jonah, as defer repentance now, in hopes of repenting on a death-bed, from the example of the thief on the croſs. Beſides, your way of ſinning differs vaſtly from his. He was not guilty of preſumption, as you are; he did not ſlight Chriſt's calls and offers in the day of his health, and delay his repenting and cloſing with Chriſt, in hopes of an opportunity for them at the hour of death, as you do. Do you know what God determines concerning preſumptuous ſinning? You may ſee it, Numb. xv. 28, 30, 31. "And the prieſts ſhall make an atonement for the ſoul that ſinneth ignorantly, &c. But the ſoul that doth ought preſumptuouſly, (whether he be born in the land, or a ſtranger) the ſame reproacheth the Lord: and that ſoul ſhall be cut off from among his people; becauſe he hath deſpiſed the word of the Lord." O preſumptuous delaying ſinner, let this word of the Lord awaken you to a ſpeedy and preſent reſolution to obey his voice. "Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good," Jer. xviii. 11. Now is the accepted time: if ye will hear his voice it muſt be to-day. Lord, ſave us from hardening our hearts. Amen.

SOME

DYING WORDS

OF THE LATE REVEREND

MR. JOHN WILLISON,

TO HIS

WIFE AND CHILDREN;

Found among his papers after his death, dated the 10th of November 1749.

TO MY WIFE.

My Dear,

MY diſtreſs calls me to think of parting with you; the will of the Lord be done. I thank you for your tender care of me; may the Lord bleſs and reward you for it, and ſanctify your own tenderneſs, and ſupport you under it. As you have ſtudied to live a life of faith and prayer all your days, ſo I hope and believe you will continue to the end. In all your difficulties and fears encourage yourſelf in the Lord your God. Commit your ways to him; truſt him that is faithful and true. I reſign you, my dear, to the HUSBAND of huſbands, our deareſt Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

TO MY CHILDREN.

DEAR children, your earthly father muſt leave you; your heavenly Father is immortal. O! cleave faſt to him: Trifle not about your ſouls' concerns in time of health; mind theſe things as the one thing needful; this you will not repent of when you come within a near view of death, and endleſs eternity. O Sirs! preſs for clear views of your intereſt in Chriſt, the only Surety and Saviour of ſinners. Among other evidences of it, live by faith on him, and ſtudy holineſs in heart and life. Dear Sirs, think how you will be able to ſtand before

Chrift your judge at the laft day, unlefs you have Chrift's image on you, and be made new creatures. Lord make you all fuch, and blefs you with his beft bleffing! My bleffing be upon you all. What means God gave me, I have beftowed them on you, or left them to you. Be kind and careful of your mother while you have her.—And let none of you forget, that though I go before you to the duft, you muft all quickly follow me. O! that we may all meet together at the right hand of our bleffed Redeemer, to fee his face, and fing his praife. The time is near, be ye therefore alfo ready.

Now, my dear wife and children, remember what is above as the words of your affectionate hufband and loving father, who being dead, yet hereby fpeaketh to you for your eternal good and happinefs; may they fink into your heart! So prayeth,

JOHN WILLISON.

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