

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ; and present it justified and spotless to the Father ! And O, our Forerunner, take me to thyself ! who, being risen, sentest this message even to sinners : " Say to my brethren, I ascend to my father and your father ; to my God and your God." Amen.

*Short Instructions for the Sick, to be read by the Master of the Family to them, or by themselves ; the unprepared.*

THOSE happy persons who have made it the chief care and business of their lives to be always ready for a dying hour, have least need of my present counsel. It is, therefore, those unhappy souls who are yet unprepared whom I shall now instruct. And O that the Lord would bless these words, and persuade them yet, ere time be gone.

If sin had not bewitched men, and made them monsters of senselessness and unbelief, it could not be that an endless life, so sure, so near, could be so sottishly made light of all their lives, as is by most, till they perceive that death is ready to surprise them. But, poor sinner, if this have been thy case, supposing that thou art unwilling to be damned, I earnestly entreat thee, in the name of Christ, for the sake of thy immortal soul, that thou wilt presently lay to heart these instructions, before time and hope are gone for ever.

I. At last, bethink thee what thou art ; and for what end and work thou camest into the world. Thou art a man of reason, and not a brute ; and hast a soul which was made to know, and love, and serve the Maker ; and that not in the second place, with the leavings of the flesh, but in the first place, and with all thy heart and might. If this had been, indeed, thy life, God would have been thy Portion, thy Father, and thy Defence, and thou mightest have lived in peace and comfort with God, and then have lived with God for ever. And, should not a creature live to the ends and uses which it was made for ? Must God give thee all thy powers for himself, and wilt thou turn them from him, to the service of the flesh, and that when thou hadst vowed the contrary in thy baptism ? How wilt thou answer for such treacherous ungodliness ?

II. It is time for thee now to have serious thoughts of the life thou art going to. If thou couldest sleepily forget it all the

† Deut. vi. 5 ; x. 12, and xi. 1, 13.

way, it is time to awaken when thou comest almost there. When thy friends are burying that flesh in the earth which thou didst more regard than God and thy salvation, thy soul must appear in an<sup>a</sup> endless world, and see those things which God foretold thee of, and thou wouldest not believe, or set thy heart upon. As soon as death hath opened the curtains, O what a sight must thou presently behold ! A world of angels, and of holy souls, adoring, and praising, and admiring that God whom thou didst refuse to mind, and love, and serve ; a world of devils and damned souls, in torment and despair, bewailing their contempt of Christ and grace, their neglect of God and their salvation, their serving the flesh and loving the world, and wilfully losing the time of mercy, and all the means which God vouchsafed them. Believe it, sinner, there is an endless joy and glory for the saints, and an<sup>r</sup> endless misery for all the ungodly ; and one of these must quickly be thy case. Thy state is changeable while thou art in the flesh ; if thy soul be miserable, there is yet a remedy ; it is possible Christ may renew and pardon it ; but as soon as thou goest hence, thou enterest into a state of joy or torment, which must never change ; no, not when millions of years are past. And dost thou not think now, in thy conscience, that such an endless misery should have been prevented with greater care and diligence than all the sufferings of this life ; and that the attaining of such an endless glory had been worthy thy greatest care and labour ; and that it is far better to see the glory of God, and be filled with his love, and joyfully praise him with his saints and angels for evermore, and, by a holy life, to have prepared for this, than to please the flesh, and follow the world a little while, and be undone for ever ? Hast thou got more by the world and sin than heaven is worth ? Thou art almost at the end of worldly pleasures, and hast all that ever they will do for thee ; but if God had had thy heart and service, he would not thus have cast thee off ; and his rewards and joys would have had no end. O how much happier are the blessed souls in heaven than we !

III. And seeing you are so near to the judgment of God, where your soul must receive its final sentence, it is high time now to<sup>s</sup> judge yourself, and know what<sup>t</sup> estate your soul is in ;

<sup>a</sup> Deut. xxxii. 2 ; Matt. vi. 19, 20, 33, and xxv. ; Rom. ii. ; 2 Cor. iv. 18, and v. 1, 7—9 ; Phil. iii. 18, 20.

<sup>r</sup> 2 Thess. i. 9, 10 ; 1 Pet. iv. 1, 8.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 31 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

<sup>t</sup> 2 Pet. i. 10.

whether in a state of justification or of damnation; for this may be certainly known if you are willing. And, first, you must know who they be whom Christ will justify, and whom he will condemn; and this the word of God will tell you, for he will judge them by that word. In a word, "all those whom Christ will justify and save, are made new<sup>a</sup> creatures, by the renewing work of the Holy Ghost; their<sup>a</sup> eyes are opened to see the vanity of this world, and the certainty and excellency of the glory of heaven, and to see the odiousness of sin, and the goodness of a holy life, and to believe that Christ is the<sup>7</sup> only Saviour to cleanse them from their sins, and bring them to that glory. And therefore they forsake the sinful<sup>a</sup> pleasures of the flesh, and set their<sup>a</sup> hearts on the everlasting blessedness, and seek it before all things; and lamenting and hating their former sins, they give themselves sincerely to their God and Father, their Saviour and their Sanctifier, to be<sup>b</sup> taught and ruled, justified,<sup>c</sup> sanctified, and saved by him; resolving, whatever it<sup>d</sup> cost the flesh, to stand to this choice and covenant to the death." This is the case of all that Christ will justify and save: the rest who never were thus renewed and sanctified will be<sup>e</sup> condemned, as sure as the Gospel is true. Therefore, let it be speedily your work to try whether this be your case or not. Have you been thus enlightened, convinced, and renewed to believe in Christ, and the life to come, and to give up yourself in a faithful covenant to God your Father, your Saviour, and Sanctifier, to hate your sin, and to live and love a holy life, in mortifying the flesh, and seeking heaven before the world? If this be not your case, I should but flatter and deceive you to tell you of any hope of being saved, till you are thus renewed and justified. Never imaginé a lie to quiet you till help is past. No one that is unregenerate, or unholy, shall ever dwell with God. Yet you may be saved, if yet you will be truly converted and sanctified; but without this, assuredly there is no hope.

IV. Therefore I counsel you, in the name of Christ, to look back upon your<sup>f</sup> sinful life with sorrow; not only because of the danger to yourself, but also because you have offended God. What think you now of a sinful, and of a holy life? Had it

<sup>a</sup> John iii. 3, 5; 2 Cor. v. 17.

<sup>7</sup> John iii. 16, 19.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. vi. 21, 23.

<sup>e</sup> Heb. xii. 14.

<sup>f</sup> Prov. xi. 7; Job viii. 13, 14.

<sup>f</sup> Luke xliii. 3, 5, and xv.; Matt. xviii. 3.

<sup>a</sup> Eph. i. 18.

<sup>a</sup> Gal. v. 24; Rom. viii. 9.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20.

<sup>d</sup> Rev. ii. 7, 10.

not been better that you had valued Christ and grace, and lived in the love of God, and in the joyful hopes of the life to come, and denied the sinful desires of the flesh, and been ruled by the law of God, and spent your time in preparing for eternity? Do you not heartily wish that this had been your course? Would you take this course if it were to do again, and God recover you? Repent, repent, from the bottom of your heart, of the time you have lost, the mercy you have abused, the grace you have resisted; of all your fleshly, worldly desires, words, and deeds; and that you gave not up your soul and life to the love of God, and life eternal.

V. And now resolvedly <sup>a</sup> give up yourself in a hearty covenant to God: though it be late, he will yet accept and pardon you, if you do it in sincerity. Take God for your God, your portion, and felicity, to live in his love and praise for ever; take Christ for your Saviour, to teach, and rule, and justify you, and bring you unto God; and the Holy Spirit for your Sanctifier; and certainly he will take you for his child. But see that you be truly willing of his grace, and resolved never to forsake him more. O happy soul! if at last the Lord will make this <sup>b</sup> change upon thee: and I will tell you certainly how to know whether this late repentance will serve for your salvation or not. If it be but fear only that causeth your repentance, and the heart and will be not renewed, but you will turn again to a fleshly, worldly, and ungodly life, if you be recovered, then it will never save your soul; but if your heart, your will, your love be changed, and this change would hold if God recovered you to health again, then doubt not of pardon and salvation.

VI. And if God have thus changed your heart, and drawn it to himself, be thankful for so great a mercy. Oh! bless him for giving you a Redeemer and a Sanctifier, and the pardoning covenant of grace. And now be not afraid or loth to <sup>1</sup> leave a sinful world, and come to God. Pray harder for grace and pardon than for life. Commit and trust your souls to Christ: he had never done so much for souls, if he had not loved them and been willing to receive them. How wonderfully came he down to man, to bring up man to the sight of God! He is gone before, to <sup>k</sup> prepare us a mansion in the city of God; and hath promised to take us to himself, that we may dwell with him

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 5; Acts xi. 23.

<sup>b</sup> Psalm lxxviii. 24—27; Heb. viii. 10, and x. 16; Jer. xxvii. 40.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. i. 21, 23; 2 Cor. v. 8; Rev. xiv. 13; Acts vii. 9.

<sup>k</sup> John xvii. 24, and xii. 26.

and see his glory. The world which you are going to is <sup>1</sup> unlike to this : there is no pride, or lust, or cruelty, oppression, deceit, or any sin ; no wicked men to scorn or persecute us ; no vanity to allure us ; no devil to tempt us ; no corruption of our own to burden or endanger us ; no fears, or cares, or griefs, or discontents ; no poverty, sickness, pain, or death ; no doubtings of the love of God, or our salvation ; but the sight of God, and the feelings of his love, and the fervent flames of our love to him, will be the everlasting pleasure of the saints. These will break forth into triumphant and harmonious thanks and praise in the presence of our glorified Redeemer, and in concord with all the heavenly host, the blessed angels, and the spirits of the just. This is the end of faith and holiness, patience and perseverance ; when hell is the end of unbelief, ungodliness, sensuality, and hypocrisy. How justly are they condemned who sell their part of endless joys for a shadow, and a dream of transitory pleasures ; and can delight more in the filth of sin, and in a fading vanity, than in the love of God, and the forethoughts of glory ! What love can be too great ; what desires too fervent ; what prayer and labour can be too much ; what sufferings too dear, for such a blessedness ?

VII. Lastly, because there are many cases of the sick which require the presence of a <sup>m</sup> judicious divine ; if it be possible, get the help of such ; if not, remember that God is just in denying of men that mercy in their distress which in time of their health and prosperity they rejected with scorn and contempt : and <sup>n</sup> cleave to him whom you may enjoy for ever.

*The Shortest Catechism.*

Q. 1. WHAT is the Christian religion ?

A. The Christian religion is the baptismal covenant made and kept : wherein God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, doth give himself to be our reconciled God and Father, our Saviour and our Sanctifier ; and we believing, give up ourselves accordingly to him, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, which covenant is to be oft renewed, specially in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Q. 2. Where is our covenant part and duty more fully opened ?

A. 1. In the Creed, as the sum of our belief. 2. In the Lord's Prayer, as the sum of our desires. 3. And in the Ten

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxi., and xxli.

<sup>m</sup> Mal. ii. 7 ; Jam. v. 11.

<sup>n</sup> Psalm lxxiii. 26.