

his kingdom which you expect, that the hopes and desires of others may be excited.

And turn your last words to God in prayers and praises, beginning the work which you must do in heaven. Imitate your dying Lord, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit;" (Luke xxiii. 46;) and his first martyr, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." (Acts vii. 59.)

*The Prayer of a Dying Believer.*

THY mercy brought me into the world; thy mercy chose my parentage, education, and habitation; it brought me up; it kept me from a thousand dangers; it attempered my body, and furnished my mind; it gave me teachers, books, and helps; yea, it gave me a Redeemer, and a promise of life, and the word of salvation! It gave me all the operations of thy Spirit, which touched and turned my sinful heart. All my repenting and resolving thoughts; all the forgiveness of my manifold sins; all the sweet meditations of thy love, and the experience of thy good and pleasant service; the comfortable hours which I have had in secret thoughts, in public worship, on thy holy days, at thy holy table, among thy people; all these have been the dealings of thy love. All my deliverances from temptation and sin; from enemies, death, and danger; all my preservations from the deceits of the world, and from its troubles; from errors against thy sacred truth, and from backsliding; all my recoveries from my too frequent falls, and pardon of my daily sins; the quietness thou hast given my troubled conscience; and the tranquillity of my life, notwithstanding my sins: all the use which it hath freely pleased thee to make of me, an unworthy wretch, for the good of any, for soul or body: all these are the pledges of thy wondrous love; and shall I be afraid to come to such a God? Hath mercy filled up all my life, and brought me now so near the end, and shall I not trust it after so much trial? It is heaven that thou madest me for; and heaven that Christ did purchase for me; it is heaven that thou didst promise if I would be thine; and it is heaven which I consented to take for my portion,<sup>m</sup> and for which I did covenant to forsake the world: and O that I had more entirely done it; for I now find how little reason I have to repent of my covenant. It is heaven which thy Spirit of Grace, and merciful providences have all

<sup>m</sup> Luke xviii. 22, 23; Matt. vi. 20, 21, 33; Col. iii. 2, 4.

this while been preparing me for ; and shall I now be fearful and unwilling to possess it ?

O thou that knowest how deadly an enemy unbelief is to thy honour and my soul, I beseech thee, show that thou takest not me but it for thy foe. O send that heavenly light to my mind, which may banish and confound it ; let it not blaspheme thy truth, and imprison, blind, and torment my soul. O thou that givest the world, the Saviour, the heaven, which I must believe, deny me not that faith by which I must believe them : earth and flesh are dungeons of darkness and despair : there is with us no sun to show us thy face. It must be thy glory whose reflections must reveal thy glory to us ; and a light from heaven which must show us heaven ! O send one beam, one beam, Lord, of that heavenly light into this darkened, sinful soul ; that, with Stephen, I may see in my passage the glory of my blessed Lord, to whom I go ! and, with Simeon, may gladly say, " Lord now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation ! " One beam of thine will drive away the powers of darkness, and banish all these doubts and fears, and let in somewhat of heaven into my soul, before it is let into heaven. O blessed Spirit, the illuminator of dark, imprisoned souls, remember not all my resistance of thy grace, and forsake me not in this last necessity of my life, and leave me not to the power of darkness and unbelief ! Though glory be not openly seen till it is enjoyed, let me now, when I am so near it, have such a sight of it by faith, as is suitable to this low and darker state. O thou that art the Spirit of life, so quicken and actuate this sluggish soul, that the last part of my race may be run with vigour, and the last act of my life may be done in evidence of the heavenly influence, and may be liker to the heavenly employment than all the rest hath been ! O thou that art the Sanctifier and Comforter of souls, now kindle the fire of heavenly love in me, and give me some taste of the celestial joys, which may feelingly tell me that there is a heaven indeed ; and may be the witness within me, and the pledge and earnest that I shall live with Christ ! My flesh and my own heart now fail : the world and all therein is nothing to me ; I am taking my everlasting farewell of them all : but one beam of his face, and one taste of his love, who is my portion for ever, will be strength and joy to my departing soul, and <sup>a</sup> better than this life and all its pleasures. Come, Lord, with these seasonable comforts into my soul, that

<sup>a</sup> Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26.

my soul may comfortably come to thee ! My life had been but death, and darkness, and disaffection to God, if thou hadst not been in me, a spirit of life, and light, and love ; the tempter had else been still too strong and subtle for me ; and how then shall I deal with him myself, when the languishing of my body disableth my soul ? Thou despisest not art and reason : I thank thee for the use I had of them in their season. But one beam of thy light, and spark of thy love, one motion of thy heavenly life, will better confute the enemy of faith than my disputes can do : the divine nature, incited by divine inspiration, must do much more than human art. Teach me, effectually, but to love and praise thee, and it shall powerfully prove to me that there is a heaven, where I shall joyfully love and praise thee for ever.

Alas, dear Lord, I am ashamed that to love and praise thee, should be to my soul a work of difficulty ! That it is not more natural and easy to me, than to love and praise any created thing or person whatsoever ! What shall I love, if not goodness and love itself, which made me purposely to love him ? who redeemed me, that by love he might win my love ; and sanctified me, to dispose my soul to love him ? What shall I praise, if not infinite perfection ; the glory of whose power, wisdom, and goodness, doth shine forth in the whole creation ? Heaven and earth praise thee ; and am I no part of heaven or earth ? The whole creation doth proclaim thy glory ; and am I none of thy creation ? Thy very enemies when redeemed reconciled, and forgiven, do praise the love and grace of their Redeemer ; and am I not one of these ? The great teacher of the church, is the schoolmaster of love and praise ; and have I not learned them yet, who have so long had so excellent a teacher ? Thy saints all love thee ; for it is the essence of a saint : they praise thee ; for it is the work of saints : and am I none of these ? I am less than the least of all thy mercies. But it is not the least of thy mercies which I have received : and if a life full of mercies have not brought forth a life full of love and praise ; O yet let it end in a loving and a praising death !

Glory be to God in the highest ; on earth, peace ; and goodwill towards men ! Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come : of thee, and through thee, and to thee are all things ; thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory :

• Psalm cxlii. 3.

For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created. Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever; even to our Redeemer who washeth us in his blood, and maketh us kings and priests to God. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints! Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name; for thou art holy. Amen; Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Praise our God all ye his servants; and ye that fear him, both small and great. Praise ye the great Redeemer of the world, who is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: the beloved Son, in whom we are reconciled and adopted, and in whom the Father is well pleased: who will smite the nations with the sword of his mouth, and rule them with a rod of iron, and treadeth the wine-press of the wrath of God: who hath the keys of death and hell, and is King of kings, and Lord of lords. My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour; who hath redeemed me from my low and lost estate; for his mercy endureth for ever. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name: bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and hath often healed thy diseases. Who redeemed thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with love and tender mercies. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And what is there on earth desirable besides thee? The Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation. In thy light we shall see light; thou shalt make us drink of the rivers of thy pleasure. In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, and thou hast showed me the path of life. Let my heart, therefore, be glad, and my glory rejoice; and let me leave this flesh to rest in hope. Let the heavens rejoice; and O that the earth were taught to imitate them in thy praise! Thy angels and the triumphant church do glorify thee: O train up this militant church on earth, in love and concord, to this joyful work! And let all flesh bless thy holy name, for ever and ever! Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord! And so let me breathe out my departing soul! And thou wilt not cast away the soul that cometh unto thee in love and praise. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; who art the Father of spirits, and my Father in Christ!

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.