

FAITHFUL SOULS

SHALL BE WITH CHRIST:

THE

CERTAINTY PROVED,

AND

THEIR CHRISTIANITY DESCRIBED AND EXEMPLIFIED,

IN THE

TRULY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DEATH

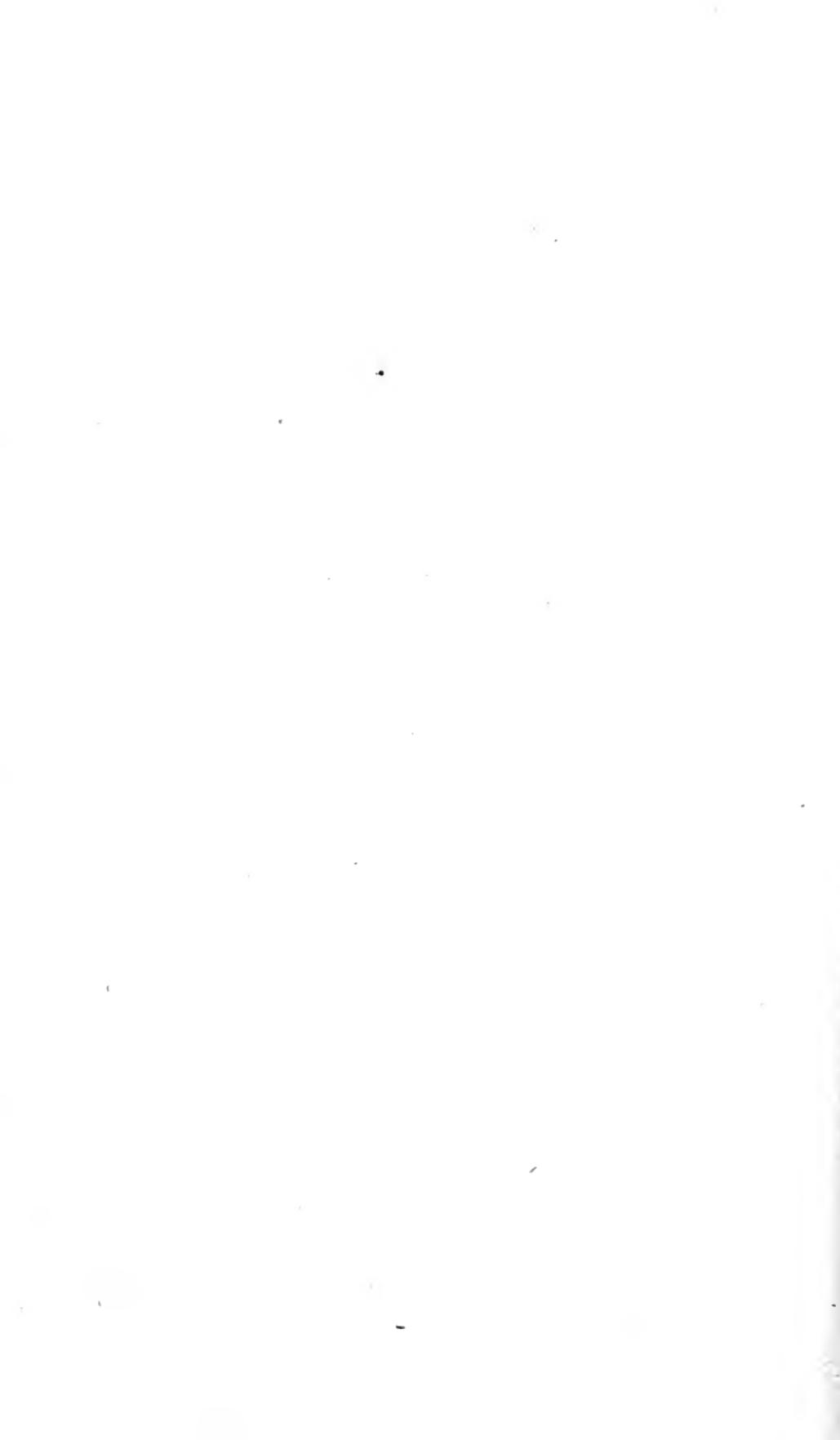
OF THAT EXCELLENT, AMIABLE SAINT

HENRY ASHHURST, ESQUIRE,

CITIZEN OF LONDON.

BRIEFLY AND TRULY PUBLISHED FOR THE CONVICTION OF HYPOCRITES AND
THE MALIGNANT, THE STRENGTHENING OF BELIEVERS, AND THE IMITATION
OF ALL, ESPECIALLY THE MASTERS OF FAMILIES IN LONDON.

“Go, and do thou likewise.”—Luke x. 27.



TO MY WORTHY FRIENDS,
MRS. JUDITH ASHHURST,
WIDOW OF HENRY ASHHURST, ESQ.
AND
MR. HENRY ASHHURST,
THEIR SON,
WITH ALL HIS BRETHREN AND SISTERS,
GRACE AND PEACE.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I AM persuaded, that the image of so good a husband and father cannot but be deeply printed on your minds ; but yet may it not be wholly needless to be told of the comfort and the duty thence to be inferred. It was you, Sir, his eldest son and executor, who called me to the public performance of that which I have thought meet to make more public. I have long known you so well, that I am comfortably persuaded, that your father had great cause to place that great affection on you, and confidence in you which he did. Your dear love to him, and great reverence of him, and hearty love to the good which he loved, and your singleness and uprightness of mind and life, are your amiableness, and better than the greatest earthly birthright. But I did purposely say little in the follow-discourse of your father's example, as consolatory and obligatory to all his nearest relations, because I thought that their special interest in him, did give them right to a special address, which is the intent of this epistle. God's Scripture blessings of the faithful and their seed, doth make this relation honourable and comfortable to you all. How cheerfully may you all follow the footsteps of one so near you, who sped so well in following Christ. The greatest comforts and blessings are the greatest obligations to further duty ; and that duty is the way to get

greater blessings. It will be some help to you to love God and goodness, good men, and all men, to remember how much all these were loved, by one who so tenderly loved yourselves. You have not only heard, but seen and felt, that holiness is not a bare name or dream, and religion a mere art or image, but a divine nature, a real renovation of heart and life, and that the effects of God's Spirit, in sanctifying souls, do greatly difference them from carnal minds. You have seen that godliness, genuine and real, is not a wearisome, uncomfortable life. Live as he did, and it will be a cure of melancholy, passions and discontents, and a constant tranquillity and delight.

What a help is his example to you, to live in true love to one another; to be of an humble, meek, and quiet spirit, neither vexatious to yourselves or others: as also to be absolutely devoted to God, of public minds, and comforts to the poor and needy, and to use all that you have as his stewards, daily preparing for your great account. You have seen how you may live above the world, even while you prosper in it; and how to expound "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.) "For where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also." (Matt. vi. 21.) The Spaniards have a proverb, 'The world is a carrion, and they are the dogs that love it, much more that snarl and fight about it.' One would think, that to read and believe, Matt. v. and vi; Luke xii. and xvi.; and James iv., should affright men from being deceived by such a shadow, whose speedy vanishing all foresee.

You have seen what it is to be a Christian indeed, and how your affairs, your conversations, and your families, should be ordered. And you have seen how the best may suffer and must die; and, therefore, what need we all have to be prepared with strong and well-exercised faith, hope, and patience, and, by daily conversing in the heavenly regions, to get sweeter thoughts of heaven than of the most prosperous state on earth, that we may die like serious believers, and joyfully commit our departing souls to Christ, when we leave these corruptible bodies to the grave. O dear friends, the day is at hand; the day is at hand; the change is of unspeakable importance; the work of faith and hope is high and difficult! Set to it speedily with heart and might, and let not flesh and the world entangle and deceive you.

The great love which your father had to me, and much more

which he had to Christ, his church, and all the faithful, obliged me to be the larger in describing his example for your use and comfort; for as Christ, gone to heaven, hath left here his servants, called his brethren, that men in them may show their love and thankfulness to him, which he will reward as done unto himself, so the way which I must take to express my love and gratitude to your deceased father is by desiring and endeavouring the true felicity of his wife and children, whom he so dearly loved; and that must be, by taking God for your God and Father; Christ for your Saviour; the holy Spirit for your Sanctifier; the holy Scriptures for your rule; the church for the body of which you are members; true pastors for your teachers; the faithful for your most beloved companions; (especially each other who are by so many bonds obliged to more than ordinary endearedness and love;) and Christ for your chief pattern, and such as your father in following him; heaven for your felicity, home, and hope; and this short life for the day of your preparation and salvation; and the world, flesh, and devil, so far as they are against any of this, for the enemies which, with all vigilancy and resolution, must be overcome.

Oh! how great, how good, and absolutely necessary a work is this, which if any one of you should miscarry about, you would be more inexcusable than most persons in the world! But that you will all faithfully imitate such an example of holiness, humility, meekness, mortification, peace, and dearest love to one another, and to all good men, is the comfortable hope and hearty prayer, as it is the present faithful counsel of

Your servant for such ends,

RICHARD BAXTER.

December 7, 1680.

FAITHFUL SOULS SHALL BE WITH CHRIST,

&c. &c.

JOHN xii. 26.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

IF our judgments and wills had been the choosers and disposers of human events, as the affairs of the world would be otherwise managed than they are; so the meeting of this day would rather have been for a joyful thanksgiving for our deceased friend's recovery to health than a mourning solemnizing of his funeral; but it is not we that made the world, or our own or others' souls, and it is not our right to determine of their time and events. It is one prime Agent, supreme Ruler, and ultimate end; one that is infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, who is omnipresent, immutable, and every way perfect, that must actuate, order, and bless a world of such imperfect and differing individuals; and not such ignorant understandings, such partial and ill-guided wills, and such impotent powers as ours are: he that maketh the watch, determineth how many hours it shall go. The giver of life and time, must give us the measures of it; it is our part to spend it well: it is because the Creator having left us to some liberty and trust about ourselves, we are the misusers of it, that there are so many disorders, and, consequently, calamities, in the world, and on ourselves and ours, as there are. And if the God of love did not keep the overruling determination in his hand, and bring good out of all our evil, and harmony out of our discords and confusions, what a chaos, or hell, would the world become! Let us, therefore, humbly and willingly leave God's own work to himself, (he will do all well, and at last we shall understand it,) and let us mind our own. He hath taken up our brother's soul from earth: it is our part to think how to improve this; our own are following: our

hour is at hand: our oil is wasting apace: our glass is almost run; every pulse, every breath, every word leaveth us one less of the number appointed us. It is our great concern to look inwards, and look upwards, and with our utmost diligence to study how to spend the short time that remaineth, that we may die in safety, peace, and hope, and follow the departed saints to glory.

To instruct myself and you herein, I have chosen this text, as giving us both sure directions, and such great and comfortable promises as in life, and at death, we may boldly trust.

They are spoken by no doubtful messenger, but by the mouth of Christ himself; and that to men who were under our temptations, and earnestly desired to see Christ glorified on earth, and to partake of outward greatness here; to see that famous man who had wrought so many miracles, and lately raised the dead. But he tells them that both he and they must die before they can be glorified, and that they must overcome the inordinate love of this life, if ever they would attain a life of blessedness; (John xii. 23—25;) and that they might not, by uncertainty of the end or way, say, as Philip, "We know not whither thou goest, and how shall we know the way," he summarily tells them both; the way is to serve him, and follow him; the end that is promised is, to be where he is, and to be honoured of his Father.

As if he should say, 'I know that your weakness and remaining carnality is such, that you would fain see me reign as an universal king on earth, that you might be advanced by me in the flesh; and it is a hard lesson to you to learn to lay down this life, which is so dear to you, and to pass into a world which you never saw, and know so little of. But have I not, by my doctrine, life, and frequent miracles, and newly by raising Lazarus from the dead, convinced you that I am the true Messiah, sent of God, to whom you may boldly trust the conduct and disposal of your lives and souls? If so, then see that you absolutely trust me, learn of me, serve me, and follow me. And let this satisfy you living and dying, that you shall speed as I myself do, and be with me where I am, though the place and state be yet unseen to you; and there you shall, by my Father, be advanced to far greater dignity and honour, than in this sinful life and world you are capable of. And of all this I give here my promise, which you must believe and trust, if you will be saved by me.'

This is the plain exposition of the text. But let us more distinctly inquire. I. What is here meant by serving Christ. II. What it is to follow him. And, afterwards, III. What it is to be where he is. IV. And what to be honoured by his Father.

I. Some, that by false and narrow notions have received a wrong opinion of saving faith, may be puzzled at this, that serving Christ and following him are made the necessary terms or conditions of being where he is. And some say, that justifying faith, and saving faith, are two different things; and some say, that Christ himself did not clearly preach the doctrine of justification by faith, but left it for St. Paul. But the plain truth is, that in the gospel it is all one, to be a believer, a Christian, and a disciple of Christ, in covenant with him as the true Messiah. And in those times the disciples of any great and famous teachers were taken into their families, and were their servants; not in a worldly common work, but in order to the ends of their office and instructions; it is the same word which we often translate "deacons;" and as it was then usual with Jews and heathens, at their great feasts, for the servitors to give every guest his part, by the appointment of the ruler of the feast; so the Spirit, by the apostles, did institute church deacons to be servants to distribute the provisions made at their love-feasts, and the proportions allowed for each one's relief, to look to the poor, and to execute such church orders as the present bishops or elders did appoint (by which you may see how big the bishop's church then was). And so Christ calleth all Christians his deacons, ministers, or servants, and some above others, peculiarly in office, as those that were to serve him as the Saviour of the world, for their own and men's salvation; as his relation to us partaketh by analogy of many, so is our service to him. It is as the service of a scholar in obedient and diligent humble learning; as the obedience of a patient to his physician; as the obedience of a beggar in asking, and thankfully accepting; as the obedience of a malefactor, who thankfully taketh a pardon; and if a rebel, promiseth to lay down arms, and live in true subjection to his prince; as the service of a child that liveth dependently in dutiful gratitude and love. It is not to give Christ any thing that he needeth; but to be readier to hear him, than to offer him the sacrifice of fools, who, by thinking to oblige him by their gifts, do but offend him.

The matter of our required service is, 1. To confess, with grief, our sin, our misery, and our need of him, his grace and mercy.

2. To learn, understand, and believe his word.

3. Thereby to know God, from whom we were revolted; and to return to him in the hand of our Mediator, by absolute resignation, devotion, and subjection; to obey, and trust, and love him, and joyfully to hope for everlasting happiness in his love.

4. To give up ourselves to Christ as our Saviour, by his sacrifice, merits, teaching, government, and intercession; to bring us home to God, by justifying, sanctifying, and finally glorifying us.

5. To obey the motions of his Spirit to that end, which are but to bring us to a conformity of his word.

6. To love God in his saints and creatures, and do all the good to one another that we can, and cherish a holy unity and peace, and to do wrong to none.

7. To watch against and resist all the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil, which would draw us from any of this duty.

8. To bear our medicinal corrections patiently and profitably, and pray, seek, and wait for blessed immortality.

9. To pray long, and labour for the public good, the church's welfare, and the conversion of the dark, unbelieving world.

10. To do all this for the glorifying of God and our Redeemer, and the pleasing of his holy will, as the end and only rest of souls.

This is the service which Christ requireth; and is there any thing in all this which is not safe, delightful, honourable, profitable, and exceedingly desirable, to every one that knoweth what it is to hope for happiness, and to live like a Christian or a man?

II. And what is it that is meant by following Christ? Disciples then were wont to dwell with their Master, that they might be always at hand to do what he bid them.

To follow Christ, includeth, 1. The absolute taking him for the guide and Saviour, to whom we trust our bodies and souls. 2. The obedient following of his instruction and commands. 3. The following of his example, in all the imitable parts of his life. 4. The submissive following him through all the sufferings wherewith God trieth us, and by what death he chooseth for us, into the heavenly mansions, whither he is ascended.

This is the following of Christ, which the straits of this hour allow me but to name.

Use. Before we proceed, let us consider how to improve what is said, and open the two promises after in our application.

I. And, first, it is hence evident what it is to be indeed a Christian: it is to serve and follow Christ in trust, as the Procurer, the Captain, the Giver of salvation. Our relation to him, by a sacred covenant and vow is the thing from which we are named Christians. Deceitful covenanting may give us the name among men, that cannot see the heart, and may deceive ourselves and others. But if the soul consent not, God doth not consent to justify or save us. O sirs! try quickly, try faithfully, before death say, 'It is now too late,' whether you are such as God, as well as men, will judge to be Christians indeed. Oh! be not self-deceivers, for God will not be mocked with names and shadows, and heartless words, and the false pretences of a worldly, fleshly, un sanctified mind. You will find one day that Christ came not to be a shadow, nor a steppingstone to worldly ends, nor a patron of pride and fleshly lusts. You will find, ere long, that to be a Christian is a great and serious business, on which lieth the everlasting saving of our souls; greater than life or death, crowns and kingdoms, or any concerns of this corruptible flesh; a business which will not be done asleep, nor with a careless mind, nor with a slothful, unresoluted soul, nor with the thoughts and hours which pride and vanity can spare, and which are the leavings of fleshly lusts and pleasures. To be a Christian is to turn our backs on all these deceitful vanities and sinful pleasures, and to place our absolute trust in Christ, and to serve and follow him to the death, in hope of everlasting glory obtained by his manifold grace. Have you no careful thoughts of another life; and no fear what will become of your departing souls at death? If not, your reason is asleep. If you have, what is it that quieteth and comforteth you? Is it only a careless venture, because God is merciful, as if his mercy saved all? God forbid that your souls should go out of your bodies, without a better preparation than this! But if finding yourselves undone by sin, and liable to God's destroying justice, and believing that Christ is the only sufficient and faithful Saviour, you give up soul and body in trust to him, resolvedly consenting to serve and follow him who hath purchased and promised you blessedness with himself. This is true Christianity, and this is a trust which will not deceive. Sirs, you send for us in sickness, and perhaps we

cannot come, or we find men overwhelmed with pain and fear, and with a feeble body, and fainting spirits, unfit to try and judge themselves, and to do so great a work as is here described, if not unable to hear much discourse of it. Oh! what a sad time is that for a minister to give you that instruction, which a long time of strength was too little to improve. What a dreadful thing is it for a soul then to have all the work that you lived for to begin and do, and for to have but a sick and fainting hour or day to do that which you could not do in all your lives, and which turneth the key for heaven or hell. The Lord give you awakened reason and wisdom before it be too late! The name of Christian is not to be used to deceive fleshly men into damning presumption, but to signify a soul that trusteth in Christ and followeth him in obedience and patience to salvation.

O that you all feelingly knew how much it concerneth you, presently to set home and resolve this question, 'Do I trust, serve, and follow Christ?' Let us now look a little to his footsteps, that we may know.

1. Christ lived in the world to do his Father's work and will, to glorify and please him. (See John iv. 34, and ix. 4, and viii. 29, and xii. 27, 28, and xvii. 4.) Is it God's work that you live for, and his will that you chiefly study to please in your inferior degree and place?

2. Christ was the greatest lover of souls. His business on earth was to seek and save them, and he is still about that work in heaven. He thought not his strange condescending incarnation, his sufferings and heart-blood, his labour and life, too dear to save them. Are your own and others' souls thus precious in your eyes? Do you think no labour loss, no cost or suffering too dear to save yourselves and others? Do your prayers and your practices prove this to be true?

3. Christ's great work was to gather a church on earth, which should be his peculiar kingdom, spouse, and body, to glorify God, and be glorified with him. (Eph. iv. 1—17, and v. 25—32, and iii. 21; Acts xx. 28.) If you are Christians indeed, Christ's church is to you as your body to the members, that are all ready to serve it, abhorring abscission and separation from it, and every painful, perilous disease.

You love, you long, you pray for the true enlargement, concord, and holy prosperity of the church: that God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will done on earth as it

is in heaven, is the first and chief of your desires. (See 1 Cor. xiii.; Col. i. 18, 24.) Are you thus followers of Christ?

4. Love to God and man was the very nature and life and work of Christ; manifested in constant doing good, and praying for his persecutors, and reconciling enemies to God. (Rom. v. 8—10; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20; John xv. 13; Mark x. 21; John xv. 9; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. ii. 4.) And if you follow Christ, love will be you nature, life, and work, and you will walk in love as Christ loved us. (Eph. v. 2; 1 John iv. 11.) Even as he hath loved us, he requireth that we love one another, (John xiii. 34, and xv. 9, 12,) which is not with a barren, unprofitable love. (James ii. 14, &c.; John xiii. 35.)

5. In order to these ends, Christ lived quite above all the pomps and vanities of the world, and above the love of worldly dominion and fleshly pleasure, and life itself; and refused not to die a shameful death, as a reputed malefactor, to redeem us, "Making himself of no reputation, enduring the cross and despising the shame. (Phil. ii. 7, 10; 1 Pet. iii. 18, and iv. 1.) And if you follow Christ, though you must not be cross makers, you must be cross bearers, and above the love of worldly vanity, and life itself in comparison of eternal life. For Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, (1 Pet. ii. 21,) and will have us take up our cross and follow him, forsaking all that stands against him, (Luke xiv. 29, 32, 33,) and submit to be in our flesh partakers of his sufferings. (1 Pet. iv. 13.) We cannot equal him in patience, but we must so far imitate him, as not to sin and forsake the truth for fear of suffering, nor to account our lives dear, that we may finish our course with joy. (Matt. v. 11, 12; Acts xx. 24.)

6. Christ, though he were the Lord of all the world, did condescend to a humble, low condition, and chose not a prince's court for converse, but the poor, and men of low degree. And he hath commanded us to learn of him to be meek and lowly, (Matt. xi. 29,) and to be the servants of all, as that which is above worldly greatness. (Mark ix. 35; and x. 44.) And he blesseth the meek, and the poor in spirit. (Matt. v.) Do we follow him in this? And condescend to men of low estate, (Rom. xii. 16,) remembering that not many great and noble are called, (1 Cor. i. 26,) and that God hath chosen the poor of the world, that are rich in faith, to be heirs of his kingdom; (Jam. ii. 5; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28;) or do you not as those reprov'd,

(Jam. iv.) show a worldly, carnal mind, by too much valuing the high and rich, and too much vilifying the poor? Our flesh and health is nearer us far than our clothes and riches. And yet how far is flesh and strength from making a bad man more valuable and amiable than a weak and sickly saint.

7. Though Christ was the greatest lover of souls, yet was he the greatest hater of sin: so great that he came into the world to destroy it, as the devil's work; and would rather die than sin should not be condemned and die, (1 John iii. 7, 8; Matt. i. 21,) and to save men from it was his office. And for all his meekness, he forbearth not to call Herod fox, and sharply reprove the scribes and Pharisees, (Matt. xxiii,) yea, and to give Peter the rebuke which he gave the devil, when he did his work, by dissuading him from his sufferings: "Get thee behind me, Satan." (Matt. xvi.)

And if we look on sin as a harmless thing, and the profit, honour, or pleasures reconcile us to it, and we are indifferent towards it on pretence of moderation and avoiding rash zeal and indiscretion; this is not to be followers, but enemies of Christ, reproaching his office and cross, as if he had needlessly been born and died.

8. A heavenly mind and life is the chief imitation of Christ: his kingdom was not of this world; his glory is at the right hand of the Father: and our glory must be in seeing his glory. (John xvii. 22, 24.) It is in heaven that he promiseth his followers a reward. (Matt. v. 12; Heb. xi. 16, and xii. 22; Luke xvi. 9, and xxiii. 43.) And it is in heaven that our treasure must be laid up, and our hearts, affections, and hopes must be set, and our conversation must be. (Matt. vi. 19—21; Col. iii. 1, 3, 4; Phil. iii. 19, 20.)

You see now what it is to be followers of Christ: is this your case? I mean not in degree, but in sincere imitation. O try and judge!

Use 2. Whatever it hath been, shall it be so for the time to come? O that this might be a day of effectual resolution and engagement to us all! Do I need to tell you that it is not Christ that leadeth men to gluttony or drunkenness, or chambering and wantonness, to idleness, and pride, and worldly vanity, and fleshly lust? (Rom. xiii. 13; Gal. v. 21, 22; Rom. viii. 1, &c.) It is not Christ that teacheth men to doubt of the immortality of the soul, and of the life to come, and of the truth of the gospel: nor is it Christ that teacheth them to play the

hypocrite, and scorn and hate and persecute the serious practice of that religion which their tongues profess : these are the works of the devil, which Christ came to destroy. O bethink you whom you follow, and whither you go, before you come to your journey's end. The world, flesh, and devil have undone all that ever followed them to the end. But if you will serve Christ and follow him, I will tell you what encouragements you have.

1. You have the greatest and most honourable master in all the world, that is able to make good all his undertakings.

2. You have the surest, infallible leader, that never was deceived nor did deceive, nor hath he need of deceit to govern us.

3. You have love itself to lead you ; one that hath done more than all the world besides can do, to show you that he loveth you, and therefore doth all for your good.

4. You have a humbled, condescending leader ; God in flesh, that hath spoken face to face with man, and came near us to bring us up to God.

5. You have a plain, familiar teacher, who hath not set your wits on artificial, logical tricks, like the undoing of a pair of tarrying irons, but hath brought light and immortality to light, and taught us to know God and our everlasting hopes, and a safe and joyful way thereto.

6. And yet you have a complete, perfect teacher, who teacheth you by words and works and inspiration, and can make you what he bids you be, and leaveth out nothing that is necessary to your salvation.

7. And you have the only sufficient guide to happiness. He is the way, the truth, and the life ; and no man cometh to the Father but by him. No man but he hath revealed the God and glory which he hath fully seen and known. All men are liars and deceivers, not to be trusted, further than some way they have learned of him, by the teaching of his works, or word, or Spirit.

And now shall we need to say more to men, that are already vowed to Christ in their baptism, who profess themselves Christians, who know that they must die, and who know that there is no other hope or way, to persuade them to be what they profess, that they may not miss of what they hope for ? But the following promises, if believed, will persuade you.

III. "Where I am there shall my servant be." They that serve and follow Christ, shall, in their measure, speed as he

doth, and be with him where he is. Quest. And where is that? Answ. It is certainly in no ill place: though it be a controversy, whether Christ descended to hell, it is certain that now he is not there; and therefore his members shall not be there. He is certainly in Paradise, for there he promised the converted thief to be that day with him. He is in heaven. (Acts i. 11.) This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts iii. 21.) "Whom the heaven must receive till the time of restitution of all things." (John xvii.) "And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self." (Verse xiii.) "And now I come to thee." It is in the glorious presence of God that Christ now abideth in our nature: even at the right hand of God. (Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xiv. 62, and xvi. 19; Luke xxii. 6, 9; Acts vii. 55, 56; Rom. viii. 34; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Heb. i. 3, 13, and viii. 1, and xii. 2, and x. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 22.)

Therefore, though many texts do seem to intimate that he will return to earth again, and that the new Jerusalem shall come down from heaven, and that we look for a new heaven and earth in which righteousness shall dwell, yet these texts do fully prove that faithful souls go presently to Christ who is in heaven, and that there will be no such descent to earth as shall be any diminution of the glory of the saints; for it shall be no diminution of the glory of Christ; and we shall be where Christ will be. If heaven come down to earth, and the veil be drawn, it will be no loss.

2. That departed, faithful souls go to him, the Scripture elsewhere also tells us. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) When we "fail" here, we shall "be received into" the everlasting habitations. (Luke xvi. 9.) "The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom," (v. 22,) "now he is comforted." (Ver. 25.) "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. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 1, 8.) "We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the

Lord." (Ver. viii.) "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain—having a desire to depart to be with Christ, which is far better." (Phil. i. 21, 22.) "We are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." (Heb. xii. 22—24.) "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. xiv. 13.)

I heap all these texts together for myself as well as you, that we may see that as the faithful shall certainly have a blessed resurrection, so their departing souls at death shall certainly be with Christ in glory. For I take the assurance of the soul's immortality, and felicity at death, to be a point that deserveth as much of our thoughtful diligence, as any one that we have to think of. He is mad that doubteth whether there be a God, if he live with his eyes open in the world: and as for Christianity, it is life and immortality which Christ came to secure us of and bring to light. And he that by the light of nature doth but believe the soul's immortality and a life of retribution, is much prepared to be a Christian; so suitable will he find Christianity to our everlasting interest.

But yet all will be dark to men, and seem uncertain till Christ be their teacher, and they truly believe in him, and take it on his certain word.

Truly believe that Jesus is the Christ, and his gospel true, and there is no room for a doubt of the immortality of souls, and future blessedness, so plainly is it expressed in all the gospel. The Socinians, that look for nothing till the resurrection, dream of a dreaming sleep of souls, but dare not talk of any cessation or annihilation of them. For then a resurrection is a contradiction, another soul may be created, but it cannot be the same that was annihilated.

And as no man can believe that Christ speaketh truth and is Christ indeed, but he must needs believe his promise that the faithful soul shall be where he is, so no man can truly believe that all faithful souls, and only such, shall be with Christ and partake of blessedness, but it will constrain him to a life of serious holiness at least, if it feast him not with the foretaste of heavenly joys. Can you imagine that any man can firmly be-

lieve that all and only holy souls go to Christ in glory when they leave the body, and yet not seek first the kingdom of God, and make the securing of this his chiefest care and business in the world? It cannot be: every man loveth himself; and no man can be indifferent whether his soul be in heaven or hell for ever. Dulness and present diverting things, may make a man negligent and inconsiderate about lesser matters, where the loss seemeth tolerable; but I cannot believe that if a man be awake and in his wits, any thing but secret unbelief and doubting can make one so dull or inconsiderate about his everlasting joy or misery, as not to make it his chiefest care. For I see that if a man have but a law-suit, on which all his estate depends, or a trial on which his life depends, he cannot forget it or make light of it: he will not drink or jest or play away the little time in which his business must be done. And can any one soundly believe that his soul at death shall go to Christ in glory, and not set more by such a hope than by all the riches, and sport, and pleasure, and vain-glory of so short a life as this? Or can any man soundly believe that the wicked and unholy shall go to everlasting punishment, and yet not make it his chief care to escape it? Sure, as mad and bad as man's corrupted mind is, this will scarce stand with human nature. I judge of others by myself: if I had never had at the worst a secret uncertainty whether the gospel be true, and souls immortal, I might have been surprised indeed to a sudden temptation to some sin, but I could never have thought that a man in his wits should choose any life but resolved holiness; nor could I have chosen any other.

If I see a man a careless neglecter of his soul, that maketh no great matter of sin or duty, or maketh not God, and Christ, and heaven the subject of his most serious ruling thoughts, and his greatest business in the world; but showeth us that his health, and wealth, and honour, and pleasure are better loved and more earnestly sought, and faster held; I will not believe that this man taketh the gospel and the soul's future state therein described, to be a certain truth; let him say what he will, he doubteth of it at his heart: and such men use to say when they speak out, 'I know what I have here, but I know not what I shall have hereafter: could I keep what I have, I would let others take what is promised in heaven.'

But, O man, thou knowest thou canst not keep what thou hast! Shortly thy soul must be required and called away, and

then whose are the things which thou hast loved? (Luke xii. 19, 20.)

I will therefore say more. Though men had no certainty of dwelling with Christ, and doubted whether his word be true, yet it were worse than madness not to prefer the bare probability (that I say not possibility) of a future endless glory, (when endless misery is probable to the refusers,) before all here that can be set against it. Oh! what is this transitory dream of worldly, fleshly pleasure to everlasting joy or misery! Verily every man at his best estate (in worldly respects) is altogether vanity. (Psalm xxxix. 5.) Oh! mark how emphatical every word is. Verily (it is no doubt) every man high and low, good and bad, in bodily and worldly respects only, at his best or settled estate (not only in pain, and poverty, and age, but in his strength, and wit, and wealth, and honour, on the throne as well as on the dunghill) is vanity. That is an untrusty lie and shadow that seemeth something and is next to nothing, and this altogether (in mere worldly, corporal respects, in all that he hath to glory or take pleasure in.) What need we more to prove all this, than to foresee how the dream and tragedy endeth? A little while we run up and down, and eat and drink, and talk and sport, and sometimes laugh, and sometimes weep, and then change our pomp and pride for a shroud and coffin, and are laid to rot in a grave of earth, where these idol, pampered bodies, be turned themselves into the quality of their darksome habitation. And if these were our best, were not every man at his best estate altogether vanity?

And if a mere probability of the life to come, in reason should resolve all men for serious holiness, how can we think that a certain or firm belief would not do it?

By this, then, it is past doubt, that hypocrisy reigneth in all mere, nominal Christians, and in all that live not a holy life, and, indeed, in most men in the world. They are false in professing to believe, that Christ is true, and his gospel certain truth, and that at death they must go to heaven or hell, if their lives show not that heaven and hell are greater, and more prevailing matters with them, than all the fleshly provisions, pleasures, and glory of this world.

Hypocrites are distinguished from professed infidels; but if they were not unbelievers at the heart, they were not hypocrites in professing faith. The Scripture giveth these titles or attributes therefore to saving faith; it is called, "faith unfeigned,"

or not hypocritical; (1 Tim. i. 5;) and (Philem. 6) it is called "effectual;" and (Gal. v. 6) "Faith that works by love;" and (James ii.) "Faith that is not dead, but working to perfection;" it is not "unfeigned," if it be not "effectual." You cannot make a man believe that a bear pursueth him, or his house is on fire, or his life in danger, but he will accordingly bestir himself. You cannot draw a man to other business from the care of his life, if he believe that it lieth on his present care.

O sirs, the hypocrite's belief of another world, and his lifeless opinion, conquered by secret unbelief, will shortly fall as an house built on the sand; (Matt. vii. 23;) and no heart can now fully conceive how terrible to him the fall will be. When you see that there is no more tarrying here, and that death and an endless life are come, a dead profession, and secret unbelief, will leave you then to despair and horror. It is not the name of a Christian that will then serve to comfort, or to save your souls. I do not say, that no man shall be saved that hath any doubting, even of the gospel and the life to come; but I say, you cannot be saved, if your belief of it prevail not to engage you in a holy life, and conquer not the flesh, the world, and the devil. It must be a prevailing faith.

But, I suppose, you are convinced, that a sound and firm belief of the passage of departing souls to Christ, or unto misery, would certainly resolve men for a holy life; but some say, 'If we be uncertain, how can we help it? We are out of sight, and we have not the command of our own understandings. We would be sure what becomes of souls' with all our hearts, but we cannot attain it.'

Answ. Christ came into the world to teach it us; such knowledge is too high and precious to be attained with a slothful wish, or to be had without the use of the means which Christ hath appointed us. Have you learned of Christ, with a humble and teachable, willing mind? Have you not been diverted and blinded by the things which you knew were but deceitful vanity? Have you set your understandings a work with such serious consideration, and so long as the trial of so great a matter doth require? Have you sought to able and faithful ministers of Christ to help you where you found yourself insufficient? Have you daily begged the help of the Spirit of God, as knowing that heavenly things must be discerned by a heavenly light? Have you honestly obeyed so much as you did know? If you have done this, which reason requireth, I do not think that thus

waiting on God, he will leave you to any damnable unbelief, or to an unholy, sensual life.

But because the strengthening of our belief herein is the most needful thing, even to the best, both for their hope, and joy, and duty, and all that understand themselves must earnestly desire, that their belief of the gospel, and the life to come, did reach to a satisfying certainty; I will shortly repeat the proofs that must ascertain us, though I have largely done it in my books called 'The Life of Faith,' and 'The Reasons of the Christian Religion,' and 'The Unreasonableness of Infidelity;' I care not how oft (when necessary) I repeat them, and wish that they were more of the daily study of those that now study controversies, or only superstructures.

I. And first, nature giveth us these arguments to prove man's future state.

1. God hath made man with an essential capacity, to think and care, as his greatest concern, what shall become of his soul when he dieth; and God maketh none of his works in vain, much less so noble a one as man.

2. A bare probability of the life to come, as now revealed, with our certainty of the brevity and vanity of this life, maketh it the interest and certain duty of all men in the world, to be far more careful for their future state, than for the body, and this present life. He liveth against reason that doeth not this.

3. And can a wise man believe that God bindeth all men, by their essential reason, to make the care of a thing that is not, or ever shall be, to be the chief business of their lives, and that deceit and falsehood should be the guide of all our greatest actions, and man should be made to follow a lie, to his everlasting disappointment? Judge reasonably, whether this be like to be the work of the most great and wise and holy God.

4. History and experience assureth us, that it is the expectation of a life to come, the hope of reward there, and the fear of punishment, which are God's means, for the actual government of mankind. And though many atheists are in the world, and more Sadducees and unbelievers, yet few, if any, are wholly such, but have consciences that keep them in some awe; and laws and professed religion tell you, that it is hopes and fears of another life, which are the ruling principles; which, as they reign in the best, so few of the worst will directly contradict; and were it not for such fears of punishment hereafter, the lives of no princes or enemies would be safe from destroying malice,

policy, or power. And is it likely that this world is governed by a lie, by that God who wants no power, wisdom, or love, to govern it by truth; and who maketh the best men the greatest haters of lying, that they may be like him?

5. And how comes the belief of the soul's immortality to be so common a principle in the nature of man, if it be not true?

II. But seeing it is the gospel that must give us the full and satisfying certainty, keep these few evidences of its truth continually printed on your minds.

1. Remember that promises, types, and prophecies foretold Christ's coming long before; even prophecies sealed with miracles and fulfilled.

2. Remember that Christ's own person and doctrine did bear that image of God, which is unimitable; and had that power, wisdom, and love, which prove them to be of God. God's image and superscription discernible by holy minds, doth difference the gospel from all the words of fallible men.

3. Remember that it was proved to be of God, by multitudes of open and uncontrolled miracles; and God will not work miracles remedilessly to deceive mankind, especially the great miracle of Christ's resurrection, (long by him foretold,) and his visible ascending up to heaven.

4. The sending down the promised Spirit on the apostles, and on other believers then, for languages, miracles, prophesying, &c.; and the long exercise of these tongues and miracles by many, and in many parts of the world, and the gathering of the churches by them.

5. The full and certain historical conveyance of these matters of fact to us, in and by the sacred Scriptures, church ordinances, and tradition, (as the statutes of the land are delivered us,) without any weakening contradiction of the said history or fact.

6. Above all, the continued testimony of God's Spirit in all true believers, that is, the same Spirit which endited the Scripture, writeth it out on all holy souls, or formeth, reneweth, and disposeth them to answerable holiness; even to the image of God, in holy light, and love, and life, and to a heavenly mind and conversation, and to be sober, just, and loving to all. And God would never bless a lie, to do the greatest work in this world, to make men good and like himself; and, remember, that the whole frame and tendency of the Spirit's sanctifying work on souls, is to prepare them for a life to come, by

causing them to believe it, desire it, hope for it, and seek it, and hate sin, and part with any thing to obtain it. All sound believers have this work upon them, and are of such a mind and spirit; and this spirit or holy nature in them, is Christ's witness and theirs. They have the witness in themselves. (1 John v. 10.)

7. And remember that even the malice of Satan affordeth us much help to confirm our faith. It is notorious that he keepeth up through all the world a war against Christ, and against our hopes of future glory. How he followeth men with inward, importunate temptations against their own interest and reason, and what proof of his malice we have in human wickedness, and in witches, witchcrafts, or operations on bodies, apparitions, &c., I have so often proved to you that I will now forbear the repetition. And doth not all this contain assuring evidence of the truth of Christ, his gospel, and our future hopes?

Use. Come, then, fellow-Christians. Let us pray, "Lord, increase our faith;" let us detest all suggestions which tend to unbelief, and so would bring us to the rank of brutes, and to despair; let us live according to our most holy faith, and show ourselves and others that we heartily believe that the servants of Christ that follow him, shall be with him where he is. Oh, pray for faith! Meditate for faith. Lament your unbelief. O fools that we are, and slow of heart to believe a gospel so revealed and confirmed! Why are we so fearful of dying, O we of little faith! Were but this one text written on our hearts, and turned into faith and hope, yea, did we believe Christ speaking it but as confidently as we believe and trust a parent, or a tried friend, for any thing promised which is in their power, yea, or but as confidently as we can trust their love without a promise, oh, how joyfully should we live and die! Oh! bend your prayers and best endeavours against the unbelief and doubtings of the gospel, and the unseen world. Were your faith here strong, it would bring you to that holiness which would much end your doubts of your own sincerity and part in Christ.

Had we nothing else to prove the sinful weakness of our faith, but our uncomfortable thoughts of the life to come, and the state of our departing souls, alas! how sad an evidence is it. Come on then, Christians. Think further what this text containeth, and beg of God that you and I may believe it as we need, and as Christ deserveth to be believed. Think what it is to be with Christ. We shall be with our compassionate, great

High Priest; with him that came down in flesh to us; with him that loved us to the death, and redeemed us by his blood to God, and will make us kings and priests for ever. We shall be with him that is gone to prepare a place for us; in his Father's house he hath many mansions. (John xiv. 3.) It was not a mere man; it was not an angel that made us this promise, but the Son of God, who hath confirmed it by four seals, his blood, his miracles and resurrection, his sacraments, and his Spirit.

Are you afraid that your souls shall die with your bodies? Christ is not dead, and we shall be with him. It is his promise, "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) The article of his descending to Hades, called hell, is to tell us that Christ's soul died not with his body, yea, it went that day to Paradise. Our Head and we shall not be separated. Are you afraid of going to hell? Christ is not there. Are you afraid lest God forsake you? He forsaketh not Christ, though, for our sakes, he once in part forsook him that we might not be forsaken.

Can you fear devils, or any enemies? Where Christ is glorified, there come no devils, enemies, or fears. We are here with him as chickens under the wings of the hen. (Matt. xxiii. 37.) How safely and how joyfully then shall we be lodged in the bosom of eternal love!

But we see not the place, nor what our departed friends enjoy. But Christ seeth it, who is there.

But we see not Christ. But firm belief will make us love him, and rejoice with unspeakable, glorifying joy. (1 Pet. vi. 8, 9.)

But we cannot conceive of the state and operations of a separated soul, nor where it is, nor how God is there enjoyed.

But is it not enough to believe that we shall be with Christ, and fare (in our measure) no worse than he? If you are afraid lest Christ be deceived, or deceive you, that is a sinful fear indeed. But if you only fear lest you have no part in him, consent to his covenant, do but give up yourselves in obedience and trust, though not in perfection, yet in sincere desire and resolution, and then you have no just cause to fear it.

O sirs, why do not our hearts rejoice, when we think that we shall shortly be with Christ? Here we have ill company too oft; implacable enemies, unsuitable and sinful friends, and worst of all, a foolish and perverted heart, that is in effect our greatest enemy. But where Christ is, none of this is so. With

him we shall have the company of our holy, departed friends; even all of them that we conversed with in the flesh, whom we lamented and wept over as if they had been lost. We shall with Christ have the company of innumerable angels, and all the faithful from the days of Adam.

And oh! how much better will Christ's own glorious presence be, than his presence in humbled flesh was to his followers on earth. Here Christ was a despised, crucified man. There even his body is more glorious than the sun, and the heaven or holy city needs no sun, because God and the Lamb is the light thereof. Spirits are there in confirmed holiness, and not left to that imperfect liberty of will, which lets in by abuse all sin and misery on the world. They strive not in the dark in ignorant zeal, or mixtures of error and selfish partiality as we do here. There are no silencers of the holy ministers that continually sing Jehovah's praises. There is no malignant calumny or persecution, no envious reproach of one another, or striving who shall have his will, or be master of the rest. But holy love uniteth, animateth, and delighteth all, for it is God that they love in one another. There is no selfish, foolish fear lest individuation cease, and saints shall be too much one, and all be one common soul. In a word, to be with Christ is to be perfect in holiness and glory, in God, in the heavenly society, in the joys of sight, and love, and praise, delivered from the bondage of corruption, from sin and fear, and from temptation and troubles of all our enemies.

IV. But yet the promise here saith more, "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." The Father's love did give us the Redeemer, and the Father's love shall glorify us with him. What is the honour that is here meant? Honour sometimes signifieth advancement in general, making one great and happy. (Numb. xxii. 17, 37, and xxiv. 11, and xxvii. 20; 1 Kings iii. 13; 1 Chron. xvi. 27; Psalm viii. 5; 1 Sam. ii. 30.) And sometimes it signifieth the provision and maintenance which is due to deserving superiors, which is half the double honour due to the elders that rule well, especially that labour in the word and doctrine. (1 Tim. v. 17.) And sometimes it is taken for a magnified, praised state. God will honour faithful Christians all these ways; he will advance them to the highest dignity they are meet for; he will give them the most bounteous provisions of his household, even more than they can now desire or believe. He will make them kings and priests to God, and

coheirs with Christ in the glorious inheritance. (Rom. viii. 17; Rev. i. 6, and v. 10, and xx. 6.) They shall judge the world, and angels. (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) They shall see God, (Matt. v.,) and be called his children, and all together the spouse and body of Christ. (Eph. v.; Rev. xxi. and xxii., &c.) They shall at Christ's appearing (who is their life) appear with him in glory. (Col. iii. 4.) When he cometh to be admired in his saints, and glorified in all them that believe. (2 Thess. i. 10, &c.) We shall see face to face, and shall see him as he is. (1 John iii. 2.) We shall behold the glory that God hath given him. (John xvii. 24.) The righteous shall have dominion in that morning, and shall shine as stars, (Dan. xii. 3,) yea, as the sun in the firmament of the Father. (Matt. xiii. 34.) God will put his name upon them, and they shall be pillars in his temple, and go out no more. (Rev. ii. and iii.) Yea, they shall be equal with the angels. (Luke xx. 36.) Thus shall it be done to them whom God delighteth to honour, even to all in their several degrees who faithfully serve and follow Christ.

And yet, Christians, are we afraid of dying? I even hate my own heart for the remnant of its unbelief, which no more rejoiceth, and no more longeth to be with Christ, while I read and speak of all this to you. I know that clear and full apprehensions are proper to possessors, and therefore not to be here expected, but, Lord, give us such a light of faith as may let in some such tastes of glory, as are needful to us in our hoping state! How can we cheerfully labour, and suffer, and overcome without them? How shall we go through a tempting and troubling world? And entertain with joy the sentence of death, and lay down the body in the dust without the joy of the Lord, which is our strength? Had our hearts this one promise deeply written in them, we should live in holiness and die in joy.

I have spoken of my text to myself and you. I have now a copy of it to describe. Let none think that the praise of the dead is a needless or inconvenient work, Christ himself praiseth them, and will praise them whom he justifieth before all the world. "Well done, good and faithful servant, &c." (Matt. xxv.) "He will be admired and glorified in them." (2 Thess. i. 2.) The 11th of the Hebrews is the praise of many of them, of whom the world was not worthy; (this wicked world which know neither how to value them, or to use them). Christ

will have the tears and costly love of a poor penitent woman who anointed him, to be spoken of wherever the gospel is read. The orations of excellent Gregory Nazianzen, (greater than Gregory the Great,) with many such, show us that the ancients thought this a needful work. Many live in times and places where few such men are known, and they have need to know from others that there are, and have been such. Had not I known such, I had wanted one of the greatest arguments for my faith. I should the hardlier have believed that Christ is a Saviour, if I had not known such as he hath begun to save, nor that there is a heaven for souls, if I had not known some disposed and prepared for it, by a holy mind and life. I thank God, I have known many, many, many such, of several ranks, some high, more low. Oh! how many such (though not all of the same degree of holiness) have I lived with, who are gone before me; holy gentlemen, holy ministers of Christ, and holy poor men! I love heaven much the better when I think that they are there. And while I am so near them, and daily wait for my remove, though I here yet breathe and speak in flesh, why may I not think that I am nearlier related to that congregation than to this. The saying is, 'a friend is half our soul.' If so, sure the greater half of mine is gone thither long ago. It is but a little of me that is yet in painful, weary flesh. And now one part of me more is gone, the holy and excellent Henry Ashhurst, and God will have me live so long after him, as to tell you what he was, to his Father's and Redeemer's praise, and to provoke you to imitation.

God saith, "The memory of the just shall be blessed, while the wicked's name shall rot." Methinks even the natural pride of princes, who would not be the scorn of future ages, but the praise, should accidentally incline them to do good, and seem good at the least; while the common experience of all the world tells us, that God doth wonderfully show himself the Governor of the world, by ruling fame, to the perpetual honour of good, and the shame and scorn of evil.

Even among heathens, what a name is left of Titus, Trajan, Adrian, and above all the Roman emperors, of Antonine the philosopher, and Alexander Severus. And who nameth a Nero, Domitian, Commodus, Heliogabalus, &c., without reproach? Yea, I have observed that though malefactors hate that prince that punisheth them, and ungodly men hate piety and the persons that condemn and trouble them in their sins, yet such a

testimony for goodness is left in common nature, that even the generality of the profane and vicious world speak well of a wise, just, godly prince, even living, and much more when he is dead. And so they do of other public persons, magistrates and ministers of the gospel; and they will praise goodness in others that will not practise it, especially that which brings sensible good to men's bodies or to the commonwealth.

And therefore great men should hate that counsel which crieth down popularity, as a trick to make them contemn the sense of those below them. For usually it is the best rulers that are most praised by the vulgar, by reason of the self-glorifying light by which true goodness shineth in the world, and by reason of the experience of mankind, that good men will do good to others. How commonly will even drunkards, whoremongers, and unjust men, reproach a magistrate or teacher that is a drunkard, whoremonger, or unjust, and praise the contrary? Much more will the wise and good do it, who indeed are as the soul of kingdoms and other societies, and the chief in propagating fame. It is true that the *bellua multorum capitum* is liable to disorders, and unfit for secrets or uniting government, and it is hypocrisy to affect popular applause as our felicity or reward, or to be moved by it against God and duty. But many men see more and hear more than one, and single men are apter to be perverted and judge falsely by personal interest and prejudice, than the multitude are. *Vox populi* is oftentimes *vox Dei*. I have read Dr. Heylin, vilifying a Bishop Abbot, and saying, the church had no greater a plague than a popular prelate (or to that sense). And I have heard some reproach the late Judge Hale as a popular man; but as my intimacy with the last assured me that he set very little by the opinion of high or low, in comparison of justice and conscience, so, while God keeps up a testimony for goodness in human nature, men will not think ill of a man because his goodness hath constrained even the most to praise him. Nor will it prove the way to please God or profit themselves or others, to make themselves odious by cruelty or wickedness, and then to despise their judgments that dispraise them, and to cry down popularity. "Wo to you when men speak well of you," meaneth when either you do the evil that the wicked praise, or forsake truth and duty lest they dispraise you; or, as hypocrites, make men's praise your end.

It is not so low a matter as great birth or riches, or any other worldly honour, which I am to remember of our deceased friend.

Multitudes that are now in misery, did once excel him in all these. But yet, as a touch of the history of his life is fit to go before his exemplary character (which is my work), and because it is a great honour and blessing to the seed of the faithful, I shall premise a little first of his parentage, and then of that part of his life which I knew not, but give you on the unquestionable credit of others.

He was the third son of Henry Ashhurst, of Ashhurst, in Lancashire, Esq., by Cassandra, his wife, daughter of John Bradshaw, of Bradshaw, of the same county, Esq. His father was a gentleman of great wisdom and piety, and zealous for the true reformed religion in a country where papists much abounded. And when king James (the more to win them) was prevailed with to sign the book for dancing and other such sports on the Lord's-day, he being then a justice of peace, (as his ancestors had been,) and the papists, thus emboldened, sent a piper not far from the chapel to draw the people from the public worship, he sent him to the house of correction; and being for this misrepresented to the king and council, he was put to justify the legality of what he did, at the assizes; which he so well performed, that the judge was forced to acquit him; (though he was much contrary to him;) and an occasion being offered to put the oath of allegiance on his prosecutors, their refusal showed them papists, as was before suspected.

God blessed this gentleman in his three sons. The eldest was a man eminent for his wisdom, integrity, and courage, a member of the long parliament called 1640; though all such by interested, partial men are accounted and called what their prejudice and enmity doth suggest, and though, with many more such, he was by the conquering army abused and cast out. The second son was a colonel; and Henry, the youngest, about fifteen years old, was sent to London, and bound apprentice to a master somewhat severe. And whereas such severity tempteth many proud and graceless young men to be impatient and weary of their masters, and to break out to seek forbidden pleasures, at play-houses, taverns, and perhaps with harlots, and to rob their masters to maintain these lusts, till they are hardened in sin, and break their own hopes, and their parents' hearts, (alas! how many such wretches hath this city!) God's grace in our friend did teach him to make a clean contrary use of it. This affection did help to drive him to hear good preachers for his comfort, and to betake himself to God in prayer, and to search

the Scripture for direction, in which way he found the teaching and blessing of his heavenly Master, which helped him to bear all harshness and hardness in his place.

And having no place of retirement but a cold hole in the cellar, in the coldest nights, he spent much time in prayer and meditation; and his good father allowing him a yearly pension for his expenses, he spent it mostly in furnishing his poor closet with good books—not play-books or romances and idle tales, but such as taught him how to please God and to live for ever.

From his childhood he had a humble meekness, and sweetness of temper, which made his life easy to himself and others, and made him so acceptable to godly ministers and people, that their acquaintance and converse and love became to him a great confirmation and help to his growth in grace, especially good Mr. Simeon Ash, a man of his plainness, and of the primitive strain of Christianity.

His master, I need not tell how, so wasted his estate, that he shut up shop when Mr. Ashhurst was gone from him, whose great fidelity had helped to keep him up, and he took care of his indigent children afterwards.

His portion was but five hundred pounds and a small annuity, and one Mr. Hyet, a minister, lent him three hundred pounds more; with which stock he set up in partnership with one Mr. Row, a draper, and so continued three years. Mr. Row took up his stock, and was a major in the Earl of Essex's army, and left Mr. Ashhurst to the whole trade. Narrowly escaping the misery of an unsuitable match, he married, on Mr. Ash's motion, the daughter of one Mr. Risby, who is now his sorrowful widow, having with her about fifteen hundred pounds. He began his trade at the beginning of the wars, when others left off theirs. He dedicated yearly a good part of his gain to God, in works of charity; and it increased greatly: and as his trustiness made men desirous to deal with him, so God strangely kept those men that he trusted from breaking, when the most noted tradesmen in the same towns broke, to the undoing of those that trusted them. And though his trading was great about thirty years, he managed it with ease and calmness of mind, and was not by it diverted from duties of religion. He usually was at one word in his trading.

His body being healthful, he rose about four o'clock, or five, and in secret usually spent about two hours in reading, medita-

tion, and prayer, and then went to his family duties, as is afterward described. He was a great improver of his time, or else he could never have done what he did for so many persons, usually saying, he desired to live no longer than he might be serviceable to God and men. But he was most regardful to lose no part of the Lord's-day, in which he did all towards God and his family with great reverence and humble seriousness; and as he much desired godly, trusty servants, he had much of his desire, and his house was a school of piety, meekness, and as a church.

When his faithful pastor, Mr. Simeon Ash, was buried (the very day before the new Act of Uniformity would have silenced him, being an old non-conformist), he used to go, at the end of the week, to Hackney, to his country-house, and there spend the Lord's-day.

In the common fire his house was burnt, as well as others, but is rebuilt with advantage; and all God's corrections, and the hurt which, by his permission, we undergo from bad men, will turn to our gain, if we believe and patiently expect the end.

Thus far I have given you, for the most part, but what his best knowing friends have most credibly given me of the history of his pilgrimage; but I will next tell you what I knew myself, in above twenty years' familiarity with him, and that shall be more descriptive than historical, though, in what is already said from others, you may much know what he was.

Mr. Ash's praise, and his own free love, first brought on our acquaintance; and, indeed, my many restraining hinderances have kept me from so much familiarity with many.

Those that knew him need little of my description. Those that have been much in his house, and seen his children and servants carry themselves as reverently and respectfully to him, as if he had been a lord, when yet he was so lovingly familiar with them, will think there was some cause for this. Those that hear it the common speech of magistrates, godly ministers, and people, 'We have lost the most excellent pattern of piety, charity, and all virtue that this city hath bred in our times,' will think that there is some reason for this praise. Some of us seem to shine to strangers, who are cloudy and contemptible to those that are near us: and many excellent, obscure, poor Christians are taken little notice of, in a low, retired, or unobserved station: but his esteem, and honour, and love, was at home and abroad, by his children, servants, neighbours, fellow-citizens, that I say

not even by some that loved not his religiousness, or that took him to be too much a friend to those whom their opinions and interest engaged them against.

And if you would truly know what was the meritorious cause of all this love and honour, I will tell you: it was the image of Christ, and the fruits of his holy doctrine and his Spirit. No man believeth that there is a God, who doth not believe that the liker is any man to God, the better and the more honourable he is. All is glorious that is holy, that is of God, and for God, separated to him from all that is common and unclean. Base fools may more admire and reverence a proud man, or gilded idol; but all that know God, and the almost nothingness of vain man, do value all things and persons in the measure, as they are dispositively, actively, and relatively divine. The Spirit of God, by David, begins the Psalms with describing such blessed men as these: and Christ, next after his preaching repentance, begins with such men's characters and blessedness, Matt. v. I shall, therefore, now truly tell you what our deceased brother was, and what of God so shined in him as commanded all this love and praise; while far greater men, by their filth and folly, their sin and hurtful cruelty, have made themselves the plague and burden of their times, as the children of him whose name is but the contract of 'do evil.'

I. His religion was only the Bible, as the rule. He was a mere Scripture Christian, of the primitive spirit and strain. No learning signified much with him, but what helped him to understand the Scripture. The Bible was his constant book, and in it he had great delight; and he loved no preaching so well as that which made much and pertinent use of Scripture, by clear exposition and suitable application. He liked not that which worthy Dr. Manton was wont to call 'gentlemanly preaching,' set out with fine things, and laced, and gilded, plainly speaking self-preaching, man-pleasing, and pride; for when pride chooseth the text, the method, and the style, the devil chooseth it, though the matter be of God: therefore he also highly valued those books which are much in such wise and seasonable use of Scripture; of which he commended, above all, the lectures of Mr. Arthur Hildersham.

II. He neither much studied books of controversy, nor delighted in discourse of any of our late differences. I scarce ever heard him engage in any of them; but his constant talk was of practical matter, of God, of Christ, of heaven, of the

heart and life, of grace and duty, or of the sense of some practical text of Scripture. He so little savoured and minded the quarrels that many lay out their greatest zeal on, and find matter in them to condemn and backbite one another, that he either carried it as a stranger or an adversary to such discourse.

III. Accordingly, while men were guilty of no damning heresy or sin, but held all great and necessary truths in love and holiness, and righteousness of life, he made little difference in his respects and love. A serious, godly, independent, presbyterian, or episcopal Christian, was truly loved and honoured by him. Indeed, he loved not church tyranny, nor hypocritical images of religion, on one hand, nor confusion on the other; but the primitive spirit of seriousness, purity, and charity, he valued in all. A differing tolerable opinion never clouded the glory of sincere Christianity in his eyes. He was of no sect, and he was against sects as such, being of a truly catholic spirit: but he could see true godliness and honesty in many whose weakness made them culpable, in too much adhering to a side or sect.

IV. He greatly hated backbiting and obloquy. "Speak evil of no man," was a text which he often had in his mouth. I never knew any noted men so free from that vice as Judge Hale and Mr. Ashhurst. If a man had begun to speak ill of any man behind his back, either they would say nothing, or divert him to something else, or show their distaste of it. Sin he would speak against, but very little of the person. Only one sort of men he would take the liberty to express his great dislike of, and that was the hinderers of the gospel, and silencers of faithful preachers of it, and persecutors of godly Christians, and oppressors of the poor: and their pretences of government, and order, and talk against schism, could never reconcile him to that sort of men: but his distaste was never signified by scurrility, nor any thing that savoured of an unruly or seditious spirit.

V. His heart was set on the hallowing of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is done in heaven; on the propagating of religion, and encouraging of all able, faithful preachers and practisers of it to his power. Ever since I knew him, it seemed much more of his serious business in the world than his trade or worldly gain was. He was a right hand to his faithful pastor, good old Mr. Simeon Ash. How seldom did I visit Mr. Ash, at any time, but I found

or left them together; and now they are together with Christ. He did not love with barren words, nor serve God of that which cost him nothing. Few but I knew from his own mouth, that he gave these eighteen years (since August 24, 1662,) an hundred pounds a year to the ejected ministers of Lancashire, and some schools there and in the neighbouring parts, and many Bibles, catechisms, and other good books, to divers places, besides the said one hundred pounds a year: and a friend of his and mine tells me that it was to him that he yearly delivered it to be distributed, save that lately twenty pounds a year of it went to Northumberland.

VI. Indeed, charity was his life and business. Another mean man that was oft with him, saith that he hath had of him many score pounds to give away, which few ever knew of. I do not think that there are many that can say that ever they were denied when they asked him for money to a charitable use. I am sure I never was.

About 1662 and 1663, he endeavoured hard to have got the pious citizens of London to contribute yearly to the relief of the poor ejected ministers of the several counties where they had been born; and I was employed to the Lord Chancellor Hyde to acquaint him with it and get his consent, that it might not be taken for a fomenting of faction: but though he said, 'God forbid that he should be against men's charity,' yet most durst not trust him, and so it fell.

Since then he and others set up a conventicle, which, methinks, might be tolerated by bishops themselves. They met often to consult and contribute for the relief of poor housekeepers; and they chose an ancient, active godly man, fit for that work, to be as a deacon; I mean, to go about the city, and find out such housekeepers as were very poor, sick, or impotent, or any way in want, and to bring in a catalogue of their names, places, and degrees of need; always preferring the pious, honest poor. And they made Mr. Thomas Gouge their treasurer, (one of the same trade, whose hands could not be tied from doing good when his tongue was tied by the silencers,) and the foresaid messenger brought them their contributions, with good instructions, and prayer when there was need; for which use, sometimes, they procured a minister for the ignorant,

Indeed, he was the common comforter and reliever of distressed ministers and others. I know of none in London that they so commonly resorted to as him.

VII. And so large was his desire of doing good, that not only England, Scotland, and Ireland knew it, but it specially extended to the natives in America; of whose conversion to Christianity he had a fervent desire. In Oliver Cromwell's time, a public collection was made all over England for the educating of scholars, and defraying other charges in New England for that work, of which good old Mr. Eliots, the Indian's evangelist, was the chief operator: with that money, lands were purchased to the value of about eight hundred pounds a year, and settled on a corporation of citizens in trust, and Mr. Ashhurst must be the treasurer, on whom lay the main care and work. When the king was restored, the corporation was dead in law; and one that sold most of the lands which were settled for that use (Colonel Bedingfield, a Papist) seized on his sold land, and yet refused to repay the money. The care of the recovery, and of restoring the corporation, and all the work, was the business of Mr. Ashhurst; for which he desired my solicitation of the Lord Chancellor Hide, who did readily own the justness of the cause and goodness of the work, and first gave us leave to nominate the new corporation, and Mr. Boyle for president, and Mr. Ashhurst for treasurer; and afterwards, when it came to suit before him, did justly determine it for the corporation.

And so these nineteen years last past, it was he, by the help of Mr. Boyle, and the rest, who hath had the main care of the New England assistance, by which a printing-press hath been there set up, and the Bible translated into the Indian's tongue, and other books also, for their instruction, and the agents encouraged to help them, till the late unhappy war there interrupted much of their endeavours; and of their victory in that war the converted Indians were not the least cause.

Oh! how sad will the news of his death be to old Mr. Eliots, if he live to hear it, and to his American converts: and he hath left by his will an hundred pounds to the college there, and fifty pounds to their corporation.

IX. Some may think that he wanted a public spirit, because he avoided being a magistrate, and paid his fine rather than take an alderman's place: but it was only to keep the peace of his conscience, which could not digest, 1. The corporation declaration and oath; nor, 2. The execution of the laws against non-conforming ministers and people. I never heard him plead that the solemn oath, called the National Covenant, was not unlawfully imposed or taken. His thoughts of that I knew not;

but he was not ignorant that the words showed ill effect ; but promise or vow to God, and that a vow made notwithstanding, to the lawful and necessary part of his children and he thought that to oppose, in our places, lions of love, popery, and schism, and to repent of sin and amendment. He ful and necessary things ; and therefore to say that ‘ the men used obligation, by that oath, on me or any other person, ’ without, incepting any of these aforesaid, was a thing that he would rather I believe, have suffered death than do. He would not do that which he thought perjury himself, much less justify it in thousands whom he never knew : and he feared lest he should become guilty of constituting all the cities and corporations of England by perjury, and stigmatizing the front of the nation with such a fearful brand. Some men think that the mark of the beast in Revelations, without which none might buy or sell, was ‘ perjury ’ and ‘ persecution ; ’ finding that the Lateran council, *sub Inoc. III.*, and others, which are of their religion, do absolve subjects of their temporal lords, whom the Pope excommunicateth from their oaths of allegiance, which was ordinarily practised against emperors and kings ; and finding that these lords or princes themselves were to swear to exterminate all called heretics, on pain of excommunication, deposition, and damnation ; and that every such ruler that professeth himself a papist knowingly, bindeth himself to destroy all protestants, or exterminate them, if he can do it without injury to the papal church : and also finding that all their clergy must swear the Trent oath, by which they cannot but be perjured ; and they say that they never heard or read that ever such a thing was done by heathens, infidels, or Mahomedans ; and Mr. Ashhurst was afraid of any thing that seemed to him such a brand. Yet I never heard him speak uncharitably of those worthy men who do what he refused, supposing that they in words or writing declared as openly as they swore and took the declaration, that they took it but in such or such a lawful sense ; though he could not do so himself.

IX. He had an earnest desire of the welfare of the city, that it might flourish in piety, sobriety, justice, and charity, and that good men might be in power ; believing that the welfare of the world lieth not so much in the forms of government, as in the goodness of men ; and that that is the best form which best secureth us from bad men. And all such service as he could do, no man was readier to do, as when he was master of the

VII. And so, ors' Company, and on many other occasions, he England, Sco. relations tell me, that he then gave them about tended to thown money, and greatly promoted the improvement Christianity k, to the rebuilding of their hall, and abatement of a public co'.

of schole never was a soldier, even when London was a garrison, that always for the ways and works of peace. He was ever ge' against tumults, sedition, and rebellion; and I never heard a word from him injurious to the king and higher powers. He was greatly troubled at the late resistance made by the assemblies in Scotland, and glad when his letters thence told him, that they were but a few hot-headed men, whom the generality of the godly presbyterians disclaimed, and would oppose. Peace was his temper, and peace with all men, to his power, he kept and promoted; and I never knew man that lived in more peace with his conscience, and with all men, good and bad. I never heard that he was an enemy, or had an enemy, save sin, the devil, the world, and the flesh, as all good men renounce them. Nay, I never heard of any one man that ever spake evil of him, so strange a reconciling power hath such a mind, and such a life.

XI. He excelled all that ever I knew in the grace of meekness; and Christ saith, "That such shall inherit even the earth." For men know not how to fall out with such, while no public employment doth, by cross interest, cause it. They that were nearer him than I, say, that they never saw him in any undecent passion; he knew not how to show himself angry, nor nor displeased, otherwise than by mild and gentle words. His countenance was still serene, and his voice still calm and quiet; never fierce or loud, no, not to a servant. He oft used to women the words of saint Peter, "A meek and a quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price;" (1 Peter iii. 5;) which is the ornament there commended, instead of gold and gaudiness, which now are grown into so common and excessive use, as if it were the design to avoid the imputation of hypocrisy, by wearing the open badges of folly and pride, lest they should seem wise and humble; as some will rant and scorn, lest they should be thought religious hypocrites.

God fitted him for his place; had he been a magistrate or a preacher, a little more sharpness had been needful. And though I once knew one, that for want of just anger, was too like Eli, and could not sufficiently reprove or correct a child,

yet it pleased God, that his mildness had no such ill effect ; but his family loved and revered him the more.

XII. I never observed a father carry himself to his children (as well as to his wife) with more constant expressions of love, and with a greater desire of their holiness and salvation. He spake to his children with that endeared kindness, as men used to do to a bosom friend, in whom is their delight. And, indeed, love is the vital spirit, which must make all education and counsel effectual, which, without it, usually is dead, both to children, and all others; though there are seasons when we must be angry and not sin.

XIII. Indeed, he was so made of love and gentleness, that I may say, that love was his new nature, and his temper, his religion, and his life, and that he dwelt in love; and, therefore, in God, and God in him. His looks, his smiles, his speech, his deeds, were all the constant significations of love.

XIV. And no less eminent was his humility; his speech, company, garb, behaviour, and all his carriage, did declare it. He was a great disliker of proud, vain attire, boasting speech, and pomp, and inordinate, worldly splendour, especially that which was chargeable, while so many thousands were in want. He was poor in spirit, suited to a low condition, though he was rich, and condescended to men of low estate. The poor were his pleasing friends. He loved the rich, that were rich to God, but he hated ambition, and flattering great men.

XV. Indeed, he was a plain Christian, of the primitive stamp, strange to hypocrisy and affectation, and all that is called the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life; and the sins of Sodom, pride, idleness, and fulness; his habit, his furniture, his provisions were all plain; nothing for excess, as provision for the flesh, to satisfy the lust thereof; yet all that was needful for right ends. No niggardly parsimony, but sparing to do good; sparing from all the ways of pride and pomp; but never sparing from decency, or good works.

XVI. The government of his family, and the worship of God there performed, was wise, cheerful, grave, and constant. He worshipped God as other good Christians use to do; besides his secret devotions, reading the Scriptures, (after the craving of God's help,) and giving some plain, short notes, which were suited to his family's use, catechizing, and taking an account of

their profiting; singing psalms, and prayer; and, on the Lord's-day, hearing, and repeating the sermons. A non-conformist preaching an early sermon to many in his house, which so ended, that none might be hindered from the further work of the day. The whole day seemed not too long to him for the delightful employment of his soul toward God. Oh! how far was he from being weary, or needing any vain recreation. In his family-worship he played not the orator, nor was very tedious; but in conference of good things, and in his counsels plain and short; much like the style of Mr. Greenham's writings.

XVII. He had a special care to place his children in a way of employment, and with good relations; out of the way both of idleness and ill company, and worldly vanity and temptations. And God hath so blessed him in his wise and holy endeavours for them, that of four sons and two daughters, there is not one whom we have not good cause to hope well of, that they will, in piety and welfare, answer his endeavours.

XVIII. Others can tell you more than I of his management of his trade; only this I will say, that God greatly blessed his honesty and liberality; and men knew that they might trade with him, without any danger of deceit, so that he grew up to a very considerable estate; and yet was never so intent on his trade, but he was ready for any service of God, and help to others, or public work.

And those that say, they shall lose their custom, except they tittle and make their bargains in ale-houses, coffee-houses, or taverns, or use much prating and enticing words, may see here that one hath thriven more than most have done, that yet took a quite contrary course.

XIX. He was a stranger to vain talk and frothy jests, and also to a sour, morose converse; but good, short, cheerful discourse, was his ordinary attainment.

XX. It is no wonder, if in such a life, so absolutely devoted to God, he lived in a constant serenity of mind; he that had peace with God and men, had peace of conscience. I never heard him speak one word which savoured of any doubt of his salvation, or discouraging thoughts of the life to come; he lived not in bondage to tormenting fears, or sad apprehensions; but studied fully to please God, and joyfully trusted him, rejoiced in his love, and hoped for his kingdom; but without any over-

valuing of his own worth, or works; having much in his mouth those words of St. Paul, "I have nothing to glory of," and "I am nothing."

XXI. The last part of his example, which I have to commend to you, and specially to myself, is his marvellous patience, as through all his life, so specially in his last and sharp affliction. It was a providence which posed many of us, that God should so smartly handle such a man as this; till God's oracles told our faith enough to silence all murmuring thoughts of God. For God had given him before the blessings of Job, a healthful body, and constant prosperity; and shall sinners taste no correction, and receive nothing of God, but pleasant things? All God's graces must have their exercise and trial; and faith and patience are most tried and exercised in a suffering state: God loveth not martyrs less than others. 2. And he had served God before by action, and usually, our last service is by patience; and Lazarus, in sores and wants, was in a safer way to Abraham's bosom, than Dives in his silks and sumptuous fare. 3. And we are naturally so loth to leave this world and flesh, that God seeth it meet to help our willingness, by making us weary of it; and affliction, though grievous to the present, tendeth to the quiet fruit of righteousness, and making us partakers of God's holiness, certainly tendeth to make us partakers of his glory; cross-bearing, and partaking of the sufferings of Christ, is an indispensable christian duty; we must be conformed to him in his sufferings, if we will reign with him, and be partakers of our Master's joy. And in heaven all tears are wiped away, and there are no groans nor moans, no sorrows nor repining, or accusing God, for any of our former sufferings. What need have I, yea; what need have you all to remember this?

Flesh will feel, and faith will not avoid pain and present torment, no more than death; but it fortified our dear brother's soul, that it should not too much suffer with his body.

Several years he was molested most with some cloudy troubles of his head, which Tunbridge waters eased for a time; and next with acrimony of urine; and next, it too painfully appeared, to be the stone in the bladder. He long resolved to endure it to the death; but at last extremity of torment and despair of any other ease, did suddenly cause him to choose to be cut. Two stones were found, and one of them in the operation was broken into pieces; many of which were taken out, by very

terrible search, and about thirty pieces after came away through the wound ; physicians and all present admired at his patience. No word, no action, signified any distressing sense ; and, though he was about sixty-five years old, God did recover him, and heal the wound ; but we were too unthankful, and his pains returned : gently at first, but afterwards as terribly as before. And, after that, a strong fever, of which, unexpectedly, he recovered. And, then, oft inflammations, and at last, a dangerous one ; and finally, so great torment, that a French lithotomist being here, he was over-persuaded to be searched, and cut again, and a third stone was taken away, with competent speed and ease, and divers big fragments of it, which had been broken off in the first operation. Thus was he cut twice in about a year's space ; and the wound seemed marvellously to heal for divers months ; and when we had prayed hard for him, we turned it to thanksgiving, and thought the danger of death was past ; but after, his strength failed, and he died in peace. God gave him those months of ease and calmness, the better to bear his approaching change.

In all this, none heard him express any querulous impatience. Most of his words were telling men how tolerable his pain was, and how good God was, and thankfully acknowledging his mercy. The last words which I had from him, were of the goodness of God, 'O that we could love God more.' And when he thought he should recover, he was very solicitous in his inquiry, what God would have him do in gratitude. And one of the chief things which he resolved on to one of his old friends, was, that he would set upon as many parliament men as he could speak with, to repeal all the laws which hinder good men from preaching Christ's gospel. Adding moreover, 'And countrymen,' saith he, 'you and I will take care for Lancashire, that the gospel may be more preached among them.' (It being their native country, and abounding with papists, and many parts having scarcity of preachers.)

But suddenly he passed from the exercise of faith and patience, unto sight and rest.

His last words (save his farewell, and "Come, Lord Jesus,") were to an old friend, Mr. Nathaniel Hulton, 'to walk in the way of God, will be comfort at death ;' being not of their mind, who for fear of fetching too much comfort from our own duty (which they call works) do think Christ's merits injured by such thoughts and words as these : as if the cure were a

disgrace to our physician, or Christ (Matt. xxv.) had mis-described the last judgment; or God were no "rewarder of them that diligently seek him," and "laying up our treasure and hearts in heaven," were no means to be "received into the everlasting habitation."

And thus passed this faithful soul to Christ.

And now, reader, have I not shown thee a true copy of the first part of my text? One that indeed served Christ and followed him. Is not this his image and imitation? And is it not sure then that he is where Christ is? and that God that maketh it our duty to honour his memory on earth, hath given him another kind of honour in the heavens?

And to what other end have I said all this of him?

In general, "Go and do thou likewise."

I. I do it much for the use of the magistrates and people of this city? I commend this example to them all. Oh, what an honourable and happy city would this be, if you were all such as our deceased brother was? We joyfully thank God for so much goodness as flourished among you? The Lord make London still the glory of the cities on earth! But were all families used as his family was, and all men here lived as this man lived, we should suspect we had the "new earth, wherein dwelt righteousness." And were princes and nobles such, the world such, or but the christian church such, what a taste of heaven should we have on earth. But should we not then be too loth to die? and too little difference earth from heaven? But, oh, that London, who know that I do not over-praise this holy man, would but imitate his example!

II. I do it much for his children's use. Their honour, their comfort, but especially their everlasting good. Will they ever forget the instructions, the love, and the life of such a father?

III. I do it partly for the use of the clergy and their agents, that have judged such men as this to be worthy of all the reproach and sufferings which some canons and late laws have laid on such: I write not to cast reproach back upon them. But, reverend fathers and brethren, as you believe a God, a Christ, a judgment and a life to come, bethink you whether such men as this should be fined, or excommunicated, *ipse facto*, as your canon doth it? And when Christ hath promised, that if they serve him, they shall be where he is, and his Father will honour them, dare you make your church-doors too narrow to receive them, when Dr. Heylin tells us how far Bishop Laud

would have had it widened to receive the papists, if they would come in : do not such men as this serve and follow Christ ? And are they yet excommunicate schismatics if they will not serve and follow you, in the things that neither Christ nor his apostles commanded or practised ? yea, which they forbid (as I have proved in my First Plea and my Treatise of Episcopacy). I am in great hope that if you knew but the tenth part of the now silenced ministers, and prosecuted people, that I do, your consciences would constrain you to publish your repentance, and petition king and parliament for better terms of unity and peace. For I will hope that most silencers and afflictors do it more through ignorance and unacquaintedness with the men than in diabolical malignity.

IV. And I have done this for my own use. To discharge my duty ; to set before me this pattern of sincerity, love, and patience, for my reproof and imitation. We were of the same year for age ; and of the same judgment, and desire, and aim ; but I have not attained to his degree of goodness and patience. Being not unlikely to be exercised with some like afflictions, after a life of wonderful mercy, and quickly to follow my departed friend ; I beg of God that he will not try me beyond the strength which he will give me, but so increase my faith and patience, that I may finish my course with joy.

V. Lastly, I have written this for the comfort of all serious, suffering believers. Christians, let us not think that we serve Christ for nought, or that our labour for holiness and heaven is in vain ? Nor let us faint when we are tried and chastised. Labour and sorrow will quickly have an end : angels are ready to convoy us home : how low soever you are here in your bodies, estates, employment, or reputation, you have Christ's promise that his Father will honour you ! Look then to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of your faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, lest you be weary and faint in your minds ; and comfort one another with these words, that " we shall be ever with the Lord." Amen.