

A CONCISE ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE OF LIEUTENANT ILLIDGE,
FIFTY YEARS IN THE MILITIA OF THE COUNTY OF CHESTER:
CHIEFLY COLLECTED FROM HIS OWN PAPERS.

Christian Reader,

It is well observed by the wise man, (Prov. xiv. 10.) that the *heart knows its own bitterness*, and its own fears, cares, desires, joys, and hopes, and expectations; that as there is occasion, it is natural and easy to speak or write most feelingly concerning them. These are those *things of a man that no man knoweth, save the spirit of man which is in him*, (1 Cor. ii. 11.) which is therefore called *the candle of the Lord, which searcheth all the inward parts of the belly*, that is, of his own heart, (Prov. xx. 27.) especially when this candle is lighted by the word and Spirit of God. And when a person makes it his business to accomplish a diligent search, doubtless he may arrive at a certain knowledge of his own state and condition, with reference to God and his salvation, by observing the complexion of his own soul from time to time, and looking at himself in the glass of God's law, he may come to know what *manner of man he is*.

The world sees our ways and actions, and is apt to be either too severe on the one hand, or too favourable on the other hand, in their remarks upon them. but as to this, which is the most hidden, and yet most excellent, part of man, the thoughts, the designs, the various workings of the heart, and the secret and solemn transactions between God and it; here a man is best able to draw his own picture: which this good man has done for his own use, in the manuscripts he has left behind him, that he might know (but not with any design to make known to others) what manner of man he was.

What he had done more at large, his friend has in this extract done in miniature, and taken the liberty to show it to the world. This we find done by some, who, for their eminency in gifts, and learning, and station, have made a much greater figure in the church, and in the world; and it has met with good acceptance, and been of use for the assisting,

quickenings, and warning of others. And we are not without hopes, that this may have the like good effects; that it will not be despised, but be the more acceptable to some, for its plainness and simplicity. as proceeding from an honest farmer, who was a good husband of his time, and was instructed by the grace of God how to cultivate his soul, as well as his ground, and suffer neither to be overgrown with briars and thorns. These thoughts, expressions, prayers, and self-reflections, may suit the case of many others, as well as his; the tradesmen, the farmers, those who are in a public post, the aged and infirm, may here meet with instruction; and especially it may be of use to work in us such a sense of death and eternity as he had, and as, I think, is not common.

I know it will be a surprise to many of his friends, because it represents him to be a better man than it may be, they took him to be, though, ~~hope~~, not a better man than, by the grace of God, he really was. They saw his outside; this shows them his inside: they saw some of his failings, and remember some of his gross sins; here they may see what bitterness they were to him in the reflection. And I cannot but expect, that all good men who loved him, will rejoice and glorify God in him, for the grace given unto him, whereby he was victorious over those foolish and hurtful lusts, to which too many (the more is the pity) still continue in bondage.

The case reminds me of the apostle's remarks on men's sins and good works, (1 Tim. v. 24, 25.) Some men's sins are open beforehand, &c. *that is, their sins are some way open*, or they had not come under censure; and their good words must be some way manifest, or they can have no right to absolution: so the learned Dr. Hammond understands the text. Then by good works understand, such are the genuine fruits of an unfeigned faith, and sound repentance: for God pardons and absolves such, and only such, as truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel.

But then, as to those his friends and acquaintance, who have gone a great length with him in sin, but yet are not conscious to themselves of such reflections on themselves as they find in these papers, it does not become me to threaten or judge; but I would with the tenderest compassion warn and exhort them, that they would bethink themselves, as they are reading the following lines, and assure themselves, that there is an eternal difference between good and evil, how industrious soever some may be to confound the ideas of them; and that when they come to die, and enter on their eternal state, they must expect no true peace on any other terms, than those on which, we trust, this good man has both hope and peace: and on these terms, peace be with you. Amen.

THE LIFE OF LIEUT. ILLIDGE.

He was born in Weston, in the parish of Wiburnbury, in Cheshire; his father was of Cherlton; his grandmother was of the Pools of Blackwell; his grandfather, his father, and himself, had each four sons, and no daughter. His mother was Cecilia, daughter to Mr. Chesnis, of Mickley in Wrenbury parish, who, besides four sons, had seven daughters, who were all married, had children, and died widows.

His father once intended him for the ministry, he having a very good capacity for learning; but neither his father's abilities, nor his own inclination, would permit it. However, he made good proficiency in school learning.

When he was about fifteen years of age, being a younger brother, he was put apprentice to a shoemaker in Nantwich, whom he served faithfully; and it was a comfort to him, in the reflection long after, that he did so. When he was out of his time, he went about to divers cities and towns, to improve himself in his trade. At last he came to London, where he staid about a year; and it was a satisfaction to him in his old age, to be able to say, that in all that time he did not remember that he had neglected the religious observation of one sabbath; and that he did not keep ill company, or haunt ill houses, but delighted in the manly exercises of wrestling, leaping, &c. He was at London at the time of the return of King Charles II. And the spring following came down to Nantwich, married Mary, the daughter of Richard Price, and widow of William Minshul, and set up his trade, which he followed seventeen years.

But his genius led him more to that ancient, innocent, and honourable employment of husbandry, which, he says, was his chief worldly delight; and therefore, when he was about forty years of age, he

took a rack-lease of a farm near Nantwich, on which his father and mother lived and died. It was looked upon by some of his friends as a hard bargain. But by the blessing of God, upon his great ingenuity and industry in improving the lands, he lived very comfortably upon it for thirty years, *rejoicing with Issachar in his tents*. In the first year of his removal into the country, he lost very considerably by suretiship. He said, his father, on his death-bed, gave him much good counsel, to keep the sabbath, to be obedient to his mother and master, and not to take tobacco, (he himself having found great inconveniences by it,) which he had carefully observed; and (said he) if he had given me the same charge against suretiship, it might, perhaps, have prevented that loss.

His father and mother were religious, and brought him up in the fear of God. He relates in some of his papers, that when he was about ten or eleven years of age, there was a solemn fast kept in Nantwich church, upon occasion of a great drought, where his father and the family attended. Divers ministers prayed and preached; but he was particularly affected with a sermon of Mr. Burghal's of Acton; (who was afterwards silenced by the Act of Uniformity;) his opening the evil of sin, and man's misery because of it, brought many tears from his eyes. He had a book written by Mr. Burghal, called "The perfect way to die in peace;" which, when he was old, he delighted much in. After this he betook himself to secret prayer and reading good books, and took pleasure in hearing the word, to which he all along continued a good affection.

After he married, and set up his trade, he was taken into the militia, and continued an officer in it to his death. At the last muster he observed, there was only himself and one more left alive, of about nine score who were in when he entered. He was of a lively, active temper, very bold, and would turn his back on no man, but not abusive or quarrelsome; he loved the soldiers, and they loved him; he took great pleasure in military affairs, and had good judgment in them, which recommended him to the esteem of his superior officers, who loved him.

But this proved a great snare to him; for though he fell not into that height of profaneness that many do, yet he left off to watch and be sober, and for many years lived a vain and careless life; often sitting up till midnight and morning, drinking and mispending his time and money; excusing it to himself, that this was the way to oblige the gentlemen, and get an interest in them, for the promoting of his trade, having but little to begin the world with. His reflections upon this long after are:

"Happy, thrice happy, are they, who not only remember their Creator in their youth, but continue to do so from their youth up; which I humbly confess, to my sorrow and shame, that my conversation has

been loose and extravagant ; I often ventured wickedly upon sin, against knowledge and conscience, and quenched the Spirit, and neglected the day of visitation. But this I can truly say, it was always with regret and reluctance. I have been a great sinner, but, through grace, a penitent sinner ; both my own sins, and the sins of others, were a grief and trouble to me."

The chief thing that induced him to leave off his trade, and retire into the country, was, because he was weary of this evil course of life, and desirous to break off from that company, which he found to be a snare to him ; and he found the benefit of it, and walked much more circumspectly afterwards, and kept a more strict watch upon himself. " Such a day," says he, " I unhappily fell into ill company, and, contrary to my inclinations, designs, and resolutions, was overcome by their enticements to drink to excess : a sin I have been often guilty of, and have cause to repent of all my life long. I have of late years set myself much against it ; and not without success, through mercy." He set down what were the prayers which, with many tears, he offered up to God on this sad occasion. " Good Lord, in mercy, give me strength and power to overcome this, and all the enemies of my salvation ; and hereafter to resist all such wicked and evil temptations, both from men and devils. Lord, thou art merciful to all true penitents, but a consuming fire towards obstinate sinners : in tender mercy, look down upon me thy poor, unworthy, sinful creature, even one of the worst of thy creation, because I have known thy will, but have not done it. Now, O Lord, if thou shouldst be severe and strict with me, I were undone to all eternity. Strike this rock, O Lord, that the waters may gush out, even floods of tears. O purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; wash me in the blood of Christ, and I shall be whiter than snow." He said to one who was no company keeper ; " I wish I had done as you have done. If I were to live my life over again, I would never keep company with those that are given to drinking." Being once at a feast where full glasses were pressed, his parish minister, Mr. Jencks, being present, took him aside, and begged of him not to humour such sots, to his own damage and danger. This good caution confirmed his resolution, and made him more afraid than ever of such company ; and through the grace of God, by degrees he got a victory over temptations to this sin.

Let drunkards, who make a mock at this sin, read this and tremble ; for it will certainly be *bitterness in the latter end*, how light soever they make of it ; taking a pleasure, and taking a pride, in making themselves and others drunk, and turning it off with a jest. Let them know, that they must either

weep for it, and bewail it with godly sorrow, and by a holy violence used with themselves, must break off from it, and become sober, as this good man did, or they must drink of the cup of the Lord's wrath, which is poured out without mixture in a lake of fire and brimstone, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and not a drop of water allowed to cool the tongue. For, whatever they say, the God of truth has said, *Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God :*^a *they shall not have peace who go on to add drunkenness to thirst.*^b *The wine that gives its colour in the cup, at the last bites like a serpent.*^c

And let not those who are unhappily entangled in temptations to this sin, despair of getting a victory over it, through the grace of God, which shall not be wanting to those that desire it, and pray for it, as this good man did, and are careful and faithful in the use of proper means for the improving of that grace. Those who are acceptable to their company, as he was, and upon that account are courted and respected in company, have need to double their guard, lest under pretence of obliging their friends, and entertaining them, and improving themselves and others by conversation, they wrong and ruin their own souls.

And let those who are out of the way of temptations of this kind, keep themselves so, and bless God, that they are so happy as to be strangers to this sin ; and hope the best concerning others whom they see entangled in it, that they repent in secret of their folly, and that they may yet, through the help of divine grace, recover themselves out of this snare of the devil, in which so many are led, and held captive by him.

When he had attained to the age of fifty-seven, at which age both his father and mother died, that consideration, with some others, awakened him to a serious concern about his great change, and his everlasting state, and consequently to a closer application to the business of religion : then he began to be more diligent and serious than before, in prayer, reading, and other devout exercises. It was then, about the year 1694, that he set himself to write down his reflections and observations upon himself, his meditations and pious breathings towards God, memorandums of the sermons he heard, and very large collections out of the Scripture, and other good books he read, with some account of remarkable providences. This practice he continued from that time to his death, which was about fifteen years ; and has left behind him seven books, three quartos, and four octavos, fairly written, which show him to be a man whose heart was very much upon another world, and who made it his great care to prepare for that world.

The reasons he gives for employing himself thus,

^a 1 Cor. vi. 10.

^b Deut. xxxix. 18.

^c Prov. xxiii. 31, 32.

are, because he had made it his chief end to honour the great God of heaven and earth, and his chief business to endeavour the salvation of his own precious and immortal soul; because he would often meditate on death, that he might prepare for his great change; because he would thus employ his vacant hours, that he might keep from idleness, and keep out of idle company. He hoped, likewise, that this practice would increase his knowledge, strengthen his faith, and give him more hopes of salvation. He also hoped it might be beneficial to his grandchildren, whom he desired to take the same method.

Much of what he wrote being transcribed out of the Bible and other good books, which might be thought needless, since the passages might be better read in their proper places, he thus excuses for it: that he transcribed those things which he was himself most affected with, and which, when they were collected and put together, would be the more ready for his use and meditation; that the writing of them over, would better settle them, and fix them in his memory; that both the writing and reading of them was pleasant and delightful to him; and that the time he employed herein, would, if not thus spent, in all probability, be worse spent. I wish others would be prevailed with to use the same expedient for the same good purposes.

The motto he wrote on his books was, "Piety is the way to prosperity, both now and hereafter." And thus he writes, "Should I fill my head with good thoughts, and this book with good sayings and sentences, yet, unless my heart be filled with sincerity and holy zeal, it is all as nothing." When he staid at home on the Lord's day in the afternoons, which he often did, while he lived in the country, that his whole family might go to church, he spent his whole time in this pious and profitable exercise.

And we shall now have little more to say of him, but what shall be gathered out of his own papers, and delivered in his own words, which it is hoped, may be regarded by some who had a kindness for him, and may make good impressions upon them, which may abide. We shall only glean some passages out of many of the same purport, and, for more clearness, reduce them to proper heads.

I. His deep concern about his soul and eternity. His soul was his darling, for thus he writes:

"O my soul, my precious soul, shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in the world? Surely there is an immortal spirit dwelling in the fleshly tabernacle, of more value than all earthly things, for it must live to all eternity, either in bliss or woe. This never-dying soul I value above all things here below. There is no greater folly or madness practised in this world, than over-caring for the body, and neglecting the immortal soul. The body hath no assurance of life one moment, nor of that dross and dung which most men so inordinately covet,

which is transitory and fading, and not to be compared with our eternal concern. Even heathens, by the light of nature, did set a great value upon the soul of man; and shall not I then, who own myself to be a Christian, have the light of the gospel, and the knowledge of Christ, and many other benefits which tend to the advantage of my soul, shall not I above all things prize and take care of my immortal soul? Sad and miserable is their condition, who neglect their own souls, as the generality of men do. O my soul, let it be thy chief and continual care to seek and secure heaven!"

As he was walking in his fields, and looking on his improvements, he said to a friend who was with him, "All prospers, if the soul prosper. The most precious and valuable thing, that I am concerned for in this world, is my immortal, never-dying soul; which must fare in the next world according as I behave myself in this. O! it is rest for my precious and immortal soul, which I desire and aim at above all things whatsoever." He wondered at those who spent their precious time so contrary to reason and their own interest, when their immortal souls lie at stake, and are in danger to be lost to all eternity. "All my concerns here below (says he) will shortly end in death; and therefore it is my soul that I set so high a value upon, as the most precious jewel in the world, bought with the precious blood of the Son of God."

He writes this saying of Mr. Mede's: "O take heed thou art not found overvaluing other things, and undervaluing thy precious soul! Shall thy flesh, nay, thy beast, be beloved, and thy soul slighted? as if a man should feed his dog, and starve his child."

In a letter to his friend, who was concerned for his spiritual state, there are these passages: "I have read over and over your good advice, and seasonable admonitions. I take them very kindly, and give you great thanks, and do bless God, and shall do upon my knees, that any take so much care of my immortal soul. I may well take it as a message from God, whose assistance I humbly beg in the performance thereof, with your continued prayers on my behalf, against all the enemies of my salvation. With God's assistance, I shall endeavour to observe and keep your instructions, which are both necessary and pious. Your reproofs are sharp, but just and real. Should I go about to vindicate my past course of life, it is in vain; had I done any thing that were well, I am but an unprofitable servant, but shall daily beg for repentance and amendment of life. I desire two things of you; 1st, A frequent part of your prayers. 2dly, When you see or hear of any thing amiss in my conversation, that you would reprove me sharply: I shall take it kindly." So he writes, though to an inferior.

Dec. 16, 1690.

II. His exercise and expressions of repentance.

"It is my heart's desire to repent of all my sins. And I humbly and earnestly beg of God, that he would herein assist me with his Holy Spirit. It is with sorrow and shame, that I call to mind my sins, the sins of my whole life, humbly confessing them to the Almighty God. Lord, I repent, help my repentance, and make it sincere; Lord, I repent, accept my repentance through my blessed Saviour; in whose merits is my only hope of salvation. Lord, I repent, increase my repentance, that I may mourn for my sins all my days. Lord, I heartily grieve for them, and stedfastly purpose, by thy grace, to lead a new life. O seal my pardon in the blood of my Saviour, whom I stedfastly believe in. Lord, accept of sighs for tears; O that I could weep a flood of tears for my sins! O wicked wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death? I desire to continue my repentance to my last moment, and to die repenting."

He writes many passages out of the books he read concerning repentance: as thus; "True repentance is a change of the whole man, the judgment, will, affections, conversation; it turns a man not only from this or that particular sin, but from all sin.—He whose mind and desires were before to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and to prosper in the world, and enjoy the pleasures of it, now strives as hard to kill those desires, takes the world for vanity and vexation, and turns it out of his heart. No sin is rightly killed, till the love of every sin is killed. True repentance is turning to God, and setting our hearts and hopes on heaven, so that we now love holiness, and seek God's kingdom above all things in this world. To say we repent, and not to reform, to be sorry for sin to-day, and return to it to-morrow, is but counterfeit repentance."

Many confessions and lamentations of sin we find in his papers, with petitions for mercy: such as these;

"O God, when I call to mind the sins of my youth, the many and great offences, which I ungratefully committed against thee, my God; and when I consider my present state, how subject I am to failings and infirmities, and how apt I am to come short of my good designs and resolutions, I am almost ready to despair, and am full of doubts and fears: but when I call to mind the goodness and mercy, and the sufferings of my blessed Redeemer for me, I conceive some hopes."

"Lord, I am a sinful unworthy creature, that have made no suitable returns for the great and many mercies I have received from thee all the days of my life. Thou mightest justly have cut me off, and thrown me into utter darkness long ago; but good Lord, pardon my sins, and be reconciled to me, through the merits of my blessed Saviour. I have too much pampered this perishing body, and have taken too much delight in the vanities of this sinful world, little regarding the shortness and uncertainty

of my life, and the greatness of that account I have shortly to make. My good desires, endeavours, and resolutions are often frustrated and disappointed; temptations overcome me; these are my daily grief. There is nothing in this world that troubles me more than sin: good Lord, remedy and amend all that is amiss in me, for Jesus's sake."

"O my soul, seek thou the Lord, humble thyself before him, beg for his grace, without which I can do nothing. Lord, I repent, and am ashamed when I look back, and consider how vile and wicked a creature I have been, the many great sins I have committed, none of which are hid from thine all-seeing eye; my sins of omission and commission, of weakness and wilfulness; many in number, heinous in nature. Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, thy poor sinful servant, who am not worthy to breathe in thine air, or to take thy holy name into my polluted lips."

"I cannot melt into tears, as I should, for my sins; but when I consider what my dear Saviour suffered for my sake, I find my mind greatly troubled, and the hardness of my heart is my grief. Where must I seek for succour, but from thee, my God? O help me, and deliver me for thy mercy's sake. Thou art the only Physician that canst heal maladies; O heal this hard distracted heart of mine; compose it, mollify it, make it such as thou wouldst have it, for Christ's sake."

"I have known the will of my heavenly Father, but have not done it; therefore deserve to be *beaten with many stripes*. O let me with regret and sorrow look back upon a loose, ill spent life, which I must be afflicted in soul for now, and must amend, or suffer for eternity. O let me cry out with the gaoler, *What shall I do to be saved?*"

"When I look back and consider the number and greatness of my sins, I cannot but admire the mercy of God in sparing me so long: O how often have I provoked his great Majesty to be angry with me, till he has destroyed me, and cast me into hell; but he had spared me, because his mercy and compassions never fail. Ever blessed, praised, glorified, and magnified be thy great and holy name."

"Lord, give me hearty sorrow for all my offences, and grant that I may never be at peace with myself, till I am at peace with thee."

"I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me; when I address myself to any spiritual or heavenly employment, when I design to draw nigh to God, and promise myself comfort in communion with him, then is evil present. Could I but enjoy a freedom from it in the season of my duty, and the time of my communion with God, what a comfort would it be! but then am I molested with wanderings and distractions, then is sin most busy. O this is my great misery and burthen. Good Lord, help me out of these troubles."

"Two things lie very heavy upon me at this present, and greatly trouble me; ingratitude under great mercies, and impenitence under great sins; Lord, help me under these great straits."

"I strive against sin, but am often overcome; fight, but am often foiled: Lord, assist me in my spiritual warfare, and make me a conqueror."

"The longer I live, the more sensible I am of my own frailties and infirmities, hardness of heart, distraction in duty, want of zeal in the service of God; these are my grievances; the *spirit willing*, but the *flesh weak*. *O wretched man that I am! My sin is ever before me*. But I am resolved, by the help of God, it shall have no rest or quiet in my heart; I will continue to fight against sin and Satan, and all the enemies of my salvation; and though, like the sons of Zeruiah, they are *too hard for me*, yet I will daily beg and pray for thy help, O Lord, and the assistance of thy Holy Spirit against them, without which I can do nothing that is good. *Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me*; but *I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin*."

III. His particular striving against the sin of passion, and hastiness of spirit.

"Lord, thou knowest my frame; I humbly confess, to my shame and grief, that I have been passionate and impatient; it is a misery that has too much attended me in the whole course of my life: the Lord in mercy pardon me, and change my corrupt vile nature. Lord, give me patience and meekness, and an humble spirit, that I may bear with submission all the afflictions that come from thee, my God, and all the disturbances and injuries that are offered me by men."—Through the grace of God, he got very much the mastery of this corruption toward his latter end.

"I bless the Lord, I do what lies in me to live at peace with all men; I am willing to bear many wrongs, and freely forgive all men that have done me wrong; and were I satisfied that I had wronged any man, I would freely make restitution. I wish harm to no man: if any do to me, I pray God forgive them, for I freely do, as I desire to be forgiven myself. I confess, through passion I may jar with a neighbour, but I dare not bear malice, or harbour revenge in my heart, against any man living, nor ever had one suit or trial with any man in any court in all my life."

"I have read (says he) of a good man, who, when one wondered at his exceeding great patience in bearing injuries, answered, "When my heart is ready to rise against those that have done me wrong, I presently begin to think of the indignities and injuries that were done to Christ, which he bore patiently for me. If my own servant should pluck my beard, or smite me on the face, yet this were nothing to what my Saviour suffered; and I never leave off

thinking on this, till my mind is still and quiet.—Who am I, that I should not be crossed?"

He found great advantage against this sin, by the frequent receiving of the Lord's supper; for, (says he,) "When I meet with wrongs and abuses, affront and injuries, they disturb and vex my mind, and often put me into a passion; and then, in haste, I threaten to go to law. But I presently consider that I am a Christian, that I was lately at the Lord's table, and must appear there again ere long, if not prevented by sickness or death; and how dare I then harbour malice or revenge? Then I soon alter my mind; for my great Creator hath said, *Vengeance is mine*, and my blessed Saviour hath strictly charged us to *love our enemies, and bless them that curse us*."

IV. His doubts and fears about his spiritual state, with his good hopes and resolutions.

"When I inspect the state of my soul, doubts and fears arise; especially when I recollect the number and greatness of my sins, and observe the present hardness of my heart, and dryness of my eyes. I am subject to a wandering fancy and distractions in duty: God seems to frown, and to withdraw himself from me. It is sin that is the only cause of this my present misery; but when I think of God's mercies and Christ's merits, and the comfortable promises of the gospel, my hope revives. Lord, my sins are great, but thy mercies are greater; therefore, I will never despair: if I perish, it shall be at thy feet. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be confounded*."

"I seldom miss any opportunity of coming to the Lord's table; but I want that sensible joy and communion with God, which many good Christians have, and that inward comfort, which is of more value than all the riches in the world. My heart is hard, my affections dull, I am often lukewarm, and unfit for holy duties. Lord, it is thou alone that canst help me, and vain is any other help; of myself I can do nothing; I have none to fly to but to thee; Christ is the rock on which my foundation shall be laid: O pluck me as a brand out of the fire. Thou hast said, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*: these are comfortable words to a poor sinner. Assist me by thy Spirit, good Lord, that I may embrace them, and rightly apply them."

"O when will the happy time come, that I shall be set at liberty from sin and corruption, from the body and the world? When will the cares of this life cease to trouble me, that I may repose in God? His love and favour is the greatest comfort in the world, that will make a death-bed easy, and dying hours comfortable."

"It is the great mercy of God, that hath supported me under many temptations. I have often fallen; but, through the goodness of God, I have risen again. I have been long troubled with doubts

and fears, yet have not despaired of God's mercy. Let not his goodness encourage me to presumption or vain hopes, or to think my own case better than really it is ; but put me upon striving to enter in at the strait gate, and working out my salvation with fear and trembling, that I may make my calling and election sure, while it is called to-day, because the night is very near, when I shall work no more. Lord, give me grace, though I want comfort."

It was some encouragement to him when he read the lives of good men, to find that they had the same exercises, particularly that of Mr. Philip Henry. "If such an eminent holy man" (said he) "that lived a life of communion with God, yet complained of wanderings and vain thoughts in duty, &c. I will not despond, who have the same burthens to complain of."

He also took comfort from a passage he transcribed from the present Lord Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, which was this: "The strongest encouragement of our endeavours towards heaven, is, that all our defects shall be supplied by the infinite merits of our Lord and Saviour, who knows the infirmities of our nature, takes the will for the deed, and admits honest endeavours in lieu of perfect obedience. The goodness of God is infinite, and his mercy is over all his works."

"I believe (says he) that vain and groundless hope of salvation is the ruin of many, who say they hope in Christ, but keep not his commandments ; whereas, it is not saying, *Lord, Lord*, that he will accept, but doing the will of our Father ; it is not my prayers, nor my reading good books, nor writing good things, that will bring me to heaven, without faith and repentance, and serving God in sincerity."

V. His self-examination, and evidences for heaven.

"Were I capable, I would write something of the hardness and deceitfulness of man's heart, since I can say so much on that subject by woful experience, for it hath been a continual trouble to me most of my days. "The heart" (says one) "is that which the eye of God is, and the eye of a Christian ought to be, chiefly fixed upon." Many an earnest prayer have I put up to God to soften this stony heart, and fix this wandering mind : O that at length my heart might be wrought into a right frame. Could I win my heart to God, and keep my heart with God, I should think myself a happy man. I pray daily that God would *create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me*. O that I could obtain the favour of God, and communion with him, which I value more than all the riches of this world. The light of his countenance, an interest in Christ, and the assistance of his Holy Spirit, I desire above all worldly treasures."

"Lord, thou knowest all the secrets of my heart,

and all my thoughts afar off, all my present designs and purposes, which, I hope, are well intended ; but I want thine assistance. The heart is deceitful, and doubtless mine as bad as any ; how then shall I judge of my spiritual state, which most judge too favourably of in their own case ? If the heart be filled with sin, and so continues with delight, there is no room or habitation for God and Christ in it. O that I could put away all the evil of my doings, and repent with that repentance which is not to be repented of. So far as I know my own heart, these are my unfeigned desires. Help and assist me, O God, for thy mercy's sake. Let thy strength appear in my weakness."

"Let me not censure others, but begin at home, and examine my own conscience, and judge my own heart : I am in the sight and presence of God, whose all-seeing eye beholds all my thoughts, words, and actions ; and it is dangerous to dissemble with God, or flatter myself."

Mr. Corbet's inquiry into the state of his soul, was of great use to him in this part of his work. "Doubts and fears arise, (says he,) I feel many conflicts between flesh and spirit ; and though the flesh often prevails in some particular instances, yet I trust, through grace, the spirit hath the predominant power. Vain thoughts, unruly passions, often intrude into my heart, but they are unwelcome guests there, and soon turned out. I hope I shall never offend my God willingly ; and that I do not delight or allow myself in any known sin."

"Some of my weak imperfect evidences for heaven are these : 1. My hope is built purely upon the mercy of God and the merits of Christ. 2. My designs, endeavours, and resolutions are frequently good. 3. It is my desire, delight, and practice to hear the word of God preached. 4. I have a great esteem for all that love and fear God, of what persuasion soever. 5. When I have done any action that I think is pleasing to God, it is my great joy and heart's delight. 6. When I have done any ill action, or committed any sin, it is the grief of my soul. 7. It is a very great trouble to me, to hear the name of God profaned, or his word undervalued, or evil spoken of. 8. I have been averse to law-suits, and, to my power, am a peace-maker. 9. I have been always willing and desirous to keep holy the Lord's day. 10. There is not that person living that I envy or hate, or seek to be revenged on ; if any hate me, I pray God forgive them, for I forgive them freely. 11. Though I have been a vile sinner, yet, I hope, I can truly say, that I am a penitent sinner, and desire from the bottom of my heart, to sorrow for all my sins, and to amend my life : Good Lord, help me so to do. 12. I had rather have a heart to love God above all, to love him perfectly, than have all the riches, honours, and pleasures in this world. I would rather lose all things, than the grace and

favour of God, and the benefit of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. I hope I can truly say, with Mr. Corbet, as far as I am able to discern my own heart and ways, I have chosen the Lord for my portion; I take up my rest in him, and not in the creature. To love, fear, admire, and bless him, and to have communion with him, is my chief joy. I am heartily grieved for loving God so little: yet I am certain, I love nothing more than God, and in my esteem and choice, I prefer a spiritual, heavenly life above all things upon earth."

"Lord, I love thee, for I am grieved at thy absence, and rejoice in thy presence; I love those that are like thee; I love the place and duties where thou art wont to meet thy people; I am grieved when thou art dishonoured by myself or others; I would have a heart to love, and look, and long for thy coming and appearing in glory."

His particular actions he examined by the twelve questions in Mr. H.'s Communicant's Companion, *ck.* 4. which he transcribed and enlarged upon, concluding: "I have, to the best of my knowledge, examined myself upon these queries, and find that in many things I have fallen short, through negligence and human frailty; but in some things, conscience witnesseth for me, that according to my ability, I have kept my integrity; and I trust for the time to come, that, through the assistance of Almighty God, I shall walk more circumspectly."

VI. His contentment with his lot, and gracious contempt of this world.

Though he lived upon a rack-rent, yet he was very well pleased with the little he had of this world. Thus he writes: "It hath been my great happiness, through the goodness of God to me, that my passage through the world, thus far, hath been mostly pleasant and plentiful; I have had Agur's desire, neither poverty nor riches, being ever content with what God appointed for me. I always had a very grateful esteem of my own condition, and have not been subject to murmur and repine."

"It is my trouble, that the care and business of the world doth often take my thoughts off from better things; but I am endeavouring to bring my worldly affairs into less compass, that I may hang the world loose about me, may use it as if I used it not; setting my affections on things above, and seeking, first, the kingdom of God, not doubting, but that then other things shall be added."

"There is not one day of entire peace in these things; but either something troubles, or nothing satisfies. We may be happy without riches and honours, but cannot be happy without grace. It is madness in men, to lose their immortal souls for the dross and dung of this world. He that sets his heart upon this world, can never seek the world to come as he ought; therefore, O my soul, use all the care and diligence imaginable, to take thine affections off

from the vanities of this world." Thus little do the things of time appear to those, to whom the great things of eternity are revealed by faith.

Archbishop Tillotson says, "Nothing doth so besot the mind, and extinguish in it the sense of divine things, as sensual pleasures do; if we fall in love with them, they will steal away our hearts from God. Let my soul therefore despise the world, and devote itself wholly to the fear and service of God."

"Worldly things often hinder the good designs of good men, and as for bad men, they carry them headlong to ruin; for they swim down the stream of pleasure, not considering what account they have to make, nor how it will be with them, when they lie gasping and groaning on their death-beds."

He had but little (in comparison) of the good things of this present time; yet he often said, "I have enough of this world, and as much as I desire:" and that he would not thank any one to give him 100*l.* per annum: For, "I have enough to maintain me, and am content with it; and if I had such an addition to what I have, instead of doing me good, it might perhaps do me hurt." Thus *godliness with contentment is great gain*; it is all the wealth in the world. They who think what they have enough, have enough; and who would desire more? Happy they who bring their mind to their condition.

VII. His private devotions.

It appears, by his papers, that he conversed much with God in solitude. Thus he writes in 1698: "It is my desire, my real purpose and full resolution, to do these two things for the future, as God shall enable me: 1. To fall down upon my knees three times a day to pray, and give thanks to God; so Daniel did, and David, evening, and morning, and at noon. 2. That the first and last thoughts of every day shall be of God; and that as soon as I lie down to sleep, I will call to mind the passages of the day: and how can I spend my time better, when I lie awake in the night, than in communing with God and my own heart. I know the fittest posture for prayer is upon my knees; yet, I believe, God will accept of prayers and ejaculations from his people, at any time, in any place, if they come from an upright heart."

"I bless God, according to my abilities, I frequently make my addresses to my great Creator, though I am unworthy to take his holy name into my polluted lips: I am sensible of my insufficiency for prayer, yet, I hope, my merciful Father will accept me; for he regards not so much the words of prayer, as the heart and the spirit of prayer; and he rejects no humble faithful suppliant, be his speech ever so weak; even broken words will serve, if they come from a broken heart. Prayer without sincerity is a lie to God. Lord, give me wisdom from above, and teach me to pray, so that my prayers may be acceptable to thee, my God; that every prayer may come warm from the heart, may be an effectual fervent

prayer, which availeth much. If we employ both head and heart in the service of our prayers, then we may pray at all times, and in all places. Whenever we have a heart to pray to God, he has an ear to hear. It is the heart God requires in this duty; for a dead, dull, heartless prayer is an abomination unto the Lord."

He much esteemed a book, called "The Liberty of Prayer," written by Mr. Jencks of Harley, read it much, and wrote many excellent passages out of it. He was for praying *always with all prayer*; and despised neither prayers by a form, nor extempore prayers, thinking each to have their excellences at several times; and that he who truly loves prayer, will truly love both.

In his family he prayed daily, and usually read the Scriptures, or caused them to be read, and sung psalms. There he used mixed prayers, as Dr. Fuller calls it; partly a form, which he wrote down in his book, containing the essential parts of prayer, which always remained unaltered; but adding many movable petitions to it, as the Spirit of God enabled him, and as there was occasion.

"A prayerless family (says he) is no better than a beast-house, and indeed a den of thieves, where God is robbed of his tribute, and their souls of the benefit. He that will undertake to prove that prayer is needless in families, shall oblige them to be his humble servants, or any one's, but his that made them."

VIII. His worship of God in public.

He attended the public worship of God in his parish church every Lord's day, and was sure to come early, though he was near two miles distant from it; yet he could say, he had never been absent from it any Lord's day for seven years, except twice, and then his occasions called him to other parish churches. In the afternoon, when he lived in the country, he often staid at home that he might send all his family to church, because he thought he could spend his time better at home than any of them could; but when he came to live in the town, he constantly went to church both parts of the day; and, at noon, on the Lord's day, a chapter was read to his family, a psalm sung, and concluded with prayer.

He wrote down, when he came home, the text, and what he could remember of the sermons he heard, that he might have the benefit and comfort of reviewing them afterwards.

But he was in a special manner exemplary, for his diligent and serious attendance on the ordinance of the Lord's supper; which he rarely omitted whenever there was an opportunity for it in his parish, which usually was eight times a year; and he made very solemn preparation for it. Much of what he has left behind him in writing, is sacramental meditations, partly his own, and partly gathered out of good

books; Mr. Gouge's, Mr. Flavel's, Mr. Shower's and others.

"According to the dying charge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, (says he,) I do frequently attend at the Lord's table, and do that *in remembrance of him*, as he hath required. Lord, I dislike none of thy commands, they are all good and reasonable; but I find fault with my own wicked heart, that I do not more heartily love, and more readily obey, them. I bless the Lord, I have been seldom absent from his table these many years, and have found great benefit by frequent communion. I am sorry when I see but a small appearance at the Lord's supper. Some are absent, because they love their sins and will not part with them, and so slight their souls; others, because they overcharge their hearts with the cares of this world. Mr. Jenks our minister told us, 'All worldly business is either lawful or unlawful: that which is unlawful, in the name of God, renounce it; that which is lawful, and used with moderation, rather fits a man for the sacrament than otherwise.' Others are absent upon a mistake, that they can never be well prepared to receive."

He usually spent one day in fasting and prayer in secret, before the Lord's supper; and sometimes two. "These two days, (says he,) I desire to set apart for the worship and service of God, with a full purpose to make what preparation I can, by the grace of God, for receiving the holy sacrament of the *Lord's supper*. To that end, I will, as God shall enable me, humble myself, and with sorrow and shame confess my manifold sins to my merciful Father, who is a sin-pardoning God; I am ashamed, and do repent, of all my sins; and it is my heart's desire not only to confess them, but to forsake, detest, and abhor all manner of sin whatever. Lord, grant that I may not bring one beloved sin to thy table. Thou hast promised pardon to all that truly repent, and eternal life to all that believe in thy Son. Behold, O Lord, I heartily repent of my sin, and steadfastly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, putting my whole trust in him alone for salvation. Enable me, O Lord, by thy grace, to persevere to the end, that I may be blessed for ever, through Jesus Christ. Amen."

Thus he writes; "To-morrow is a day of great concern, not for our bodies, but our souls, for we are to meet the Lord at his own table. O with what humility, reverence, repentance, faith, charity, ought we to appear there! I have endeavoured to prepare myself, setting this day apart for prayer and meditation, especially on the sufferings of my dear Saviour for my sins, both in his life and at his death. I hope that my striving and struggling is a sign that I am not dead in trespasses and sins; for a dead man strives not. I beg of God often, and heartily, that I may be upright in all my duties."—But he

afterwards writes; "At this sacrament my heart was but dull and sluggish, which is my great trouble; I thought I took some pains with my hard heart in my preparations, yet my endeavours proved ineffectual at this time. God be merciful to me a sinner, for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Another time he writes: "I did appear at the Lord's table, and receive the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, I hope to the benefit and advantage of my precious and immortal soul; I found much joy and comfort in the ordinance, and it was very delightful to my soul. Lord, bless and sanctify it to me, and grant, O God, that I may ever bear upon my heart those promises and resolutions which I make at thy holy table."

And thus: "O Lord, I dare not approach thy holy table in my own strength or merits, but in the strength and merits of my dear Saviour Jesus Christ; for I know, when I have done all that I can, to fit and prepare myself for thy table, my endeavours will be found imperfect; yet, I will hope and trust in thee, my God, for thy help and assistance, and the free pardon and forgiveness of all my sins, through the mediation of my dear Saviour, and this I beg for Jesus' sake, and for thy mercy's sake. Amen, Amen."

And thus: "I often call to mind that memorable saying of Mr. Flavel: 'The Lord's supper and the point of death require equal seriousness; we should go to that ordinance, as if we were going into another world.' O what need is there of an awful, composed spirit, when we approach the Lord in this ordinance. O that I could humble myself at this time, and examine myself, and search and try my heart and ways, that I may find out my errors, and where my unfitness lies, that I may repent and amend! O how unsuitable is a dry eye, and a hard heart, to such an ordinance as this! Now would I free myself from all my cares of this world, be in perfect charity with all, and be affected in prayer and meditation. The chief things this vain world affords, are honours, riches, and pleasures: I desire no greater honour than the love and favour of God; no riches, but an interest in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and benefit by him; nor value any pleasure like communion with God: Lord, grant me these, and I desire no more."

"Lord, I stretch out the weak arm of my faith towards thee; O stretch out the mighty arms of thy power and mercy, and come and save me. I am fearful that I am not rightly prepared, but I hope this is an error on the better hand; then are we most fit, when we are most humble and ashamed in the sense of our own unfitness. I will, by the grace of God, use my best endeavours, acknowledging my own insufficiency. The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak; therefore will I beg of my heavenly

Father, that he will direct, assist, and accept of me, through Christ my Saviour. Let this unspeakable love of thine constrain me to obedience."

Once when he was prevented from this ordinance by an unexpected throng of worldly business, which he thought did for the present unfit him for it, he writes, "It was a great trouble to me that I lost such an opportunity; Lord, pardon this great neglect, this sin of omission, and prepare me, by thy grace, to embrace the next opportunity."

His prayer, sometimes, after the receiving was, "O most glorious Lord God, let me now sing praise to thy great name; for blessed are they that dwell in thy house, and are fed, though it be with the crumbs that fall from thy table; and now I have tasted and seen how good thou art, and that thou hast heard my prayers, and granted my request: O that I might never depart from thee, or be weary of thy service. Strengthen me, O Lord, against all manner of sin, that I may say, with the princely prophet, *I have sworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* Direct me, O Lord, by thy Holy Spirit, and carry me through this vale of tears, this valley of the shadow of death, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

When he received the Lord's supper, upon the account of his office, he writes, "I doubt there are many who come upon this occasion, and neglect the duty at other times, which is a sad thing; but let me begin at home, and not judge other men, but examine myself."

IX. His thankfulness to God for the mercies he had received.

He often expresses himself much affected with the goodness of God to him, the memory of which he abundantly utters. In August 1697, he thus writes: "This being the 60th year of my age, I thank my God, who hath spun out my days to this length. I praise the Lord, that he hath made me a reasonable creature, a man, and not a beast; a Christian, and not a heathen; that he hath planted me in a protestant nation, blessed me with the light of the gospel, which I value above all things: *Come, behold the works of the Lord, what he has done for my soul!* I have a competency to live upon; though it seems but little in the eyes of some, yet, I bless my God, I think it sufficient, and am therewith very well content. I have enough to keep me while I live, and bury me when I am dead, and that is sufficient. Naked came I into the world, and brought nothing with me, and naked shall I return, and carry nothing away with me."

"If I look back, and review the mercies of my life, they are innumerable. I shall only name some: I never was arrested or imprisoned in all my life; never had a joint put out, or a bone broken; never received any great hurt or wound, to use a surgeon; have been long in the militia, yet never was in one

battle, so peaceable have our days been. I have had much dealing in the world, yet never had a trial in any court, which has made my life the easier. I never was assaulted by thieves, nor had my pockets picked. I have lived in repute and credit, and never under any disgrace or scandal; and what false reports have sometimes been raised of me, never turned much to my prejudice. I have had many creature-comforts, good wives, good children, hopeful grand-children, kind friends, and loving neighbours, &c. My lot is cast in a fruitful soil, where the gospel flourisheth, and is frequently preached, when many, more deserving than I, have lived in poverty and affliction, or have been grieved with wicked relations, that have brought down *their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave*. My passage through the world has been very pleasant."

How may this good man's thankfulness to God shame those who, instead of caring and working for a livelihood, and paying a great rent, as he did, live at ease, receive great rent, and deliver all their care and business upon the heads and hands of others, and have every thing about them pleasing to a nicety, and yet seldom think of their obligations to the God of their mercies, or give him praise for his favours to them.

But see how he was affected with these mercies: "Lord," (says he,) "it is owing to thy goodness, not to any desert of mine, that my life has been so comfortable. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? I will acknowledge his goodness to me, and praise him while I have a day to live in this world. O that I could in some measure walk answerably to the goodness of God to me! Lord, thou hast given me abundance of temporal good things, give me spiritual grace, and I ask no more. Yet (he adds) the present pleasures of my life shall never extinguish in me the thoughts of death, because the one is certain, the other uncertain."

He often expresses his thankfulness to God for public mercies; for peace, and plenty, and health in the nation, especially our happy enjoyment of the gospel; that not only our civil rights and liberties, but our religion, is secured to us by law; that our land is not a seat of war. And he writes with great compassion concerning those countries that are so: "Sure no nation under the sun enjoys more mercies than we in England do at this time. I am obliged to praise God, not only for particular mercies to me and mine, but for his common mercies to the land wherein we live. Blessed be the God of heaven for them; and again, I say, blessed be his great and holy name for evermore. How great is the patience and forbearance of God towards us, though our sins cry aloud for vengeance; and we are very ungrateful for the mercies we receive. Some do not like the present government; others grudge at the taxes; others are highly offended at the toleration;

and some are scarce content with any thing, not considering the calamities of other nations. How barbarously the poor protestants of France have been used by their tyrannical prince, and what desolations he has made with fire and sword in many of his neighbouring countries, though of his own religion!"

X. The sense he had of his afflictions.

Undertaking in his old age to give an account of his troubles, thus he begins: "My greatest trouble is for the sins that I have committed." Which he took all occasions to reflect upon with godly sorrow, abhorring himself, groaning under the burthen of corruption, longing for deliverance, and crying to heaven for help. His books are full of passages to this purpose: wondering at those fools who can make a mock at sin; who plead for it, laugh at it, turn it into a jest, and glory in it; forgetting the nature of God, the worth of their souls, and the awful eternity they are so near. Though such may have the name of Christians, it is but the name. O what heart-piercing thoughts will such have of eternity shortly; and they will be themselves astonished to think, how they could possibly make so very light of these great things.

His next trouble was, worldly care and business; "Which" (says he) "is often a great hinderance to my devotion, distracts my head, disturbs my mind, and makes me unfit for holy duties. An affable temper hath been injurious to me: I have been always ready to serve my neighbour or friend in any business that I was capable of, whereby I have lost much time; but I have therein endeavoured to do good, and show that I love my neighbour as myself. But I earnestly desire, that I may desist from worldly business one year or two before my death, that I may have the more time to prepare for it."

His next trouble was, the painful infirmities of old age; stone or gravel in the kidneys, sciatica, and the like. "Though I live (says he) with much content, yet not without a thorn in the flesh; scarce a night passes without smarting pain; but it is God's goodness that it is not worse. I have reason to bear it patiently; for it is less than my sins have deserved. Though the outward man grows weaker, I hope the inward man grows stronger. Lord, cast me not off in the time of old age." A book written by Mr. Corbit of Chichester, when he was grievously afflicted with the stone, was of great use to him, and he collected much out of it; concluding, "Lord, put thy Spirit of grace and meekness into my heart, that I may bear with patience whatever thou art pleased to lay upon me, and help me to follow this good example. I can truly say, my pains and distempers have very much drawn my mind off this world. *It is good for me I have been afflicted.*" He wrote down divers passages of Scripture, to comfort himself with under his pains: *Happy is the man whom God cor-*

steth, for he maketh sore, and bindeth up. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest. And any the like.

Being once wonderfully delivered from hurt by a dangerous fall from his horse, his foot hanging in a stirrup, so that he had been in all likelihood killed, if his shoe had not happily come off, he writes us of it; "In my distress, I said, Lord, have mercy on my soul, for I see that my life is gone; my hope is in God, to whom I cried for deliverance, and he heard me according to his word: *Call upon me in the time of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* God granted me deliverance; and will not I now endeavour to glorify thee, O thou preserver of men? O let this for ever engage me to keep close to Christ my refuge; and make me say, with Ezra, Since thou, Lord, hast given me such a deliverance as this, should I again break thy commandments? Lord, grant that I may never forget thy goodness." He failed not to give thanks to God for the mercy, upon the yearly return of the day.

XI. His zeal for the suppression of vice and profaneness.

When the minister of his parish, and others of his neighbours, (well affected to religion and virtue,) joined in a society to promote the design of her Majesty's pious proclamation, *for the preventing and diminishing of vice, profaneness, and immorality*, by reforming against offenders, in order to the putting of the laws in execution, he was an active man among them. Though many opposed this good work, and reproached them that acted in it, yet he knew he had the law of God and the land on his side, and was not discouraged in it. This good design was countenanced and encouraged by the Archbishop of Canterbury's circular letter to the bishops of his province, dated April 4, 1699, the printed sermons of the Bishops of Ely, Salisbury, Chester, Chichester, Dr. Stanhope, Dr. Willis, Dr. Kennet, and other dignitaries of the church. The Lord Bishop of Oxford thus addresses himself to those societies: "Ye brave and truly heroic souls, who have entered into a holy confederacy, not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, &c. your adversaries are numerous and powerful; the prince of the power of the air, with his rulers and companies, and the children of disobedience upon earth, in whom he worketh, all evil spirits, and all wicked men; and from these you must expect the most vigorous and obstinate opposition. But be not afraid of their terrors; remember that the battle is not yours, but God's." &c. Much to the same purpose is collected in the Account of the Progress of the Reformation of Manners, the thirteenth edition. It is therefore a great surprise and grief to all good men, to find those societies

represented quite otherwise by Dr. Sacheverell, in his assize sermon at Derby, Aug. 15, 1700. Where he says, "That under the sanctified pretence of reformation of manners, they turn informers, assume an odious and factious office, arrogantly intrench upon others' Christian liberty and innocence, and under the show of zeal and purity, the most infallible token of a dexterous and refined hypocrite and knave, turn the world upside down. And these troublesome wasps erect themselves into illegal inquisitions; and whatever godly and fallacious glosses they may cast upon their actions, they are doubtless the unwarrantable effects of an idle, encroaching, impertinent, and meddling curiosity, the base product of ill-nature, spiritual pride, censoriousness, and sanctified spleen, pretending to carry on the blessed work of reformation, by lying, slandering, whispering, backbiting, and tale-bearing, the most express character of the devil, who is emphatically styled, The grand accuser of the brethren. No wonder then, that St. Paul has so severely stigmatized these busy-bodies in other men's matters, by ranking them with *murderers* and *thieves*, as the most proper persons to keep one another company."

When this good man was told, he would be accounted a busy-body for joining to this society; he said he valued it not, so that he was doing good, and were honouring God. He gives this account of it; "We met about twenty of us at our minister's house, the last Lord's day in the month, after evening prayer, to consult about carrying on the good work of the reformation of manners in the parish; and we had pretty good success, many were restrained from open profaneness, the poor relieved; but we met with discouragement from some, whom we hoped would have encouraged us."

Once coming into a public house, and hearing a gentleman most profanely swearing, though a stranger to him, he desired him to forbear. Said he, "Thou art some presbyterian, I warrant thee." Said the lieutenant, "Pray sir, what church are you of?" "Of the church of England," said he. Then said the lieutenant, "I am sorry you are of the same church that I am of, for you are a disgrace to it."

"I once" (says he) "heard a friend of mine talk atheist-like, very profanely. I reproved him, saying, 'Sir, why do you talk so wickedly? Do you think there is neither God nor devil, heaven nor hell?' He answered, 'It may be there are such things, but I know not where they are.' I answered, 'Sir, in time you may know, to your own sorrow and amazement.' By this time he doth, for he died lately."

XII. His charity, especially for the teaching of poor children.

He was very liberal to the poor, according to his ability. A worthy knight giving away many of Mr. Gouge's tracts, entitled, *Surest and safest way*

of thriving, one of them came into his hand. After he had read it, he wrote down his resolution, which was, from that time forward to double his charity. He loved to employ poor workmen, and was kind to them, saying, they worked hard for a little money.

He wrote down such passages as these, to stir up himself to charity: "It is not he that possesses wealth, and keeps it by him, that is rich, but he that distributes it in charity, which will make men rich for ever. When thou givest to the poor, thou securest to thyself; and what thou withholdest another shall possess. Give to the poor, and it shall be given thee; it is lent to the Lord, and God twice repays it; in this world by a blessing on thy wealth, and in heaven he repays it over again. Thou shalt have in grace, what thou partest with in money."

He contributed very cheerfully to the teaching of poor children, and bought divers of that little book, called, *The guide to heaven*, to give away, and had a great esteem for that book; generally carried one about him to read at his leisure. He much rejoiced in the increase of the charity schools, and was pleased to see the children taught at those schools carry themselves reverently at church, and hear them say their catechism. When he died, out of his little, he left ten pounds to the charity-school in Wibunbury parish.

XIII. His respect to good ministers, and his grief concerning those who were otherwise, and his lamenting our unhappy divisions.

As he had a reverence and love for God, so he had for all his; his day, his people, his ordinances, his ministers. He was, in judgment and practice, for the church of England, as by law established; "for" (says he) "it is my belief that a man may, by the grace of God, live as holy a life in this church as in any." He does in his books bless God for the learned and pious clergy of the church of England. It rejoiced him to hear (a few days before he died) the present Lord Bishop of Chester preach so excellent a sermon at Nantwich, that had the marrow and substance of the gospel in it, on 1 Tim. i. 16. and to hear of that excellent charge he gave his clergy, to teach their people the necessity of divine revelation, the divine authority of the Scripture, and the divinity of our Saviour, and to press holiness of life; and that they should set a good example, and deny themselves in lawful things for the good of their people; and refrain from public houses: and as to those protestant dissenters, that carried it humbly, and as they ought, they should not be behind-hand with them in love and kindness. He rejoiced that the church had many such.

He had a great value for Mr. Jenks, who was minister of Wibunbury, and died July 19, 1700. "I got much benefit to my soul (says he) by his good preaching, and exemplary living. He was a man of a good natural temper, an ingenious preacher, sober and temperate, very charitable, and of a public

spirit. He used his best endeavours to promote religion in the parish. I have heard him reprove sin and idle talk very boldly. He was diligent in the duties of a minister. He was a constant reader of the prayers, and frequently administered the Lord's supper; carefully catechised the children and servants in the summer time; visited the sick in all quarters of his parish, both poor and rich: would go to any part of the parish to baptize children that were sick, and not fit to be brought to church; took a deal of pains to get subscriptions for the maintaining of petty schools, to teach children to read. He did his utmost towards the suppression of vice, particularly the punishing of the filthy sin of fornication in the parish; but herein he was opposed by some, to his great grief, which made him often say, that Christianity was come to a very low ebb among us, when men that profess Christianity hinder the punishment of vice and debauchery. I asked him once to spend his two-pence with me: says he, "I never went to an ale-house on purpose to spend two-pence, in all my life." For repairing the vicarage-house, and improving the glebe, he exceeded most men, and endeavoured all that in him lay, to promote all the concerns of the church. Mr. Lancaster preached his funeral sermon, on Acts xx. 20. *I have taught you publicly, and from house to house*; and gave him a very high character, which he well deserved." After the funeral, Mr. Lancaster came to Lieutenant Illidge, took him by the hand, and said, "You were none of those that grieved your minister."

"In the time of our vacancy," (says he,) "it was my frequent prayer to Almighty God, that he would be pleased to send us a minister that truly feared God and loved religion." He also took the boldness, in his great zeal, to write to my Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, who is patron, beseeching him, for Christ's sake, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, to provide for this great parish (being eighteen townships) such a minister as may answer the great charge and trust he undertakes; one truly religious, laborious, and an able preacher, that may bring honour to God, and our holy religion, &c. praying God to direct his Lordship in the choice. And when his lordship had presented Mr. Bromfield, the present incumbent, and he had had some trial of him, he writes, "What great cause have I to thank and praise the Lord, who hath heard my prayers, and sent us such a good minister." Some time after he wrote to Mr. Bromfield, expressing his great satisfaction in him as his spiritual guide, and begging his pious advice and instruction in his spiritual concerns; "for it is from your mouth (saith he) that I receive the good word of God, and from your hand I receive the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, and according to your counsel I purpose to proceed, as God shall enable me." He prayed earnestly for his minister, that he might live long to the glory of

God, and might be an instrument of the converison and salvation of many souls.

Concerning the divisions among us, he thus writes: "I own myself to be a member of the church of England, which, I think, is not exceeded by any other in purity: I was baptized, and have continued in that communion all my days, yet have great charity for protestant dissenters, that truly fear God, and love religion: I am much troubled when I hear such abused, and reproached, and scorned by wicked and profane wretches, that will swear, and curse, and be drunk, and stick at no manner of debauchery; and yet boast that they are church-of-England men. God knows, these are a disgrace to our church, and a great scandal to religion. . These are the men that undermine the church, and are drawing down judgments on themselves and the whole nation. And some of our high clergymen will preach against profaneness in the pulpit, but allow it, and laugh at it, in the ale-house; and will rather reproach and persecute an honest dissenter, for truly serving God, than make complaint of, or endeavour to punish, a profane swearer, a drunkard, or a debauched wretch, that blasphemes the great God. We have good laws against profaneness, but not put in execution: it is as the prophet Hosea says, *like people, like priest*. I once reproved a minister for sitting in idle company, and hearing a deal of obscene and wicked talk. He answered, "I am not to reprove such things out of the pulpit." So careless and lukewarm in religion are many of them. They live loose lives themselves, and grow envious at those who serve God after a more serious manner, though of their own communion, and true sons of the church. Doubtless it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for such men, especially those that persecute and reproach the servants of God; whose offends one of these, better he were thrown into the sea with a millstone about his neck. Good Lord, in mercy turn the hearts of those blind guides, who call themselves the ministers of Christ, but discover the contrary, by their ambition and pride, and seeking revenge upon their poor dissenting brethren, rather promoting animosities than using means for peace."

"Another time" (says he) "I was in company at dinner, where there were many that count themselves of the high church, and abundance of cursing and swearing there was among them; and though there were some clergymen at table, they showed no dislike of it, nor gave one word of reproof to the swearers. I very much suspect that such men are no ministers of Christ, who can stand by, and hear their Master abused, and have nothing to say on his behalf. Indeed of late, there is a generation of young clergymen among us, who are proud, and idle, and loose, and fitter to go to school than to the pulpit."

Let none blame him for his zeal in this matter, since he himself knew, by sad experience, what influence the ill examples of the clergy have upon others; for he remembered with grief, that above twenty years ago, when he himself lived a careless life, he sat up one sabbath night, drinking till the next morning, and two clergymen were in company with him all that time; one that had preached that day, and the other the minister of the parish. Towards morning, when they had drunk the house dry, one of the ministers gave money, to knock up another house to get more drink. When he came home, his wife asked him, how he could answer his mispending the evening of the Lord's day so; he replied, he had been with two ministers, and he did but as they did.

Then when he lived at large himself, he was very severe against the dissenters; but when he saw the errors of his ways, he was troubled for it, and became very moderate towards them. Hearing them often reviled by those, who themselves led bad lives, he set himself to inquire concerning them, acquainted himself with some of them, and looked into their books, and found they were not the men they were represented to be, but men worthy to be loved; and then, though he continued in full and constant communion with the church to his dying day, he was himself reproached as a presbyterian; which very much confirmed him in his good opinion of them: "For" (says he) "our high churchmen will scarce admit of one serious Christian among us; for if a man begin to have that character, he is branded with the title of a presbyterian." Certainly they cannot do the presbyterians a greater kindness, nor the church of England a greater diskindness, than using such language.

It grieved him to hear some make such a noise against those whom he knew to be good Christians, calling them schismatics, when they themselves who made that noise, he thought unfit for so great a charge of souls, by reason of their immoralities, their small qualifications, or their envious, unchristian, malicious tempers. He wondered how men could make so light a matter of souls, as by their unnecessary impositions, to force men either to a sinful compliance, or (as they call it) a "damnable schism." Upon his reading the conference at the Savoy, between the bishops and the ministers, commissioned by King Charles II. he told his minister his judgment was, that the fault of our divisions lay at those bishops' door, who had power, and might have prevented them.

He prayed often for the healing of our divisions, and comforted himself with those words of the learned Bishop Stillingfleet; "God will one day convince men, that the union of the church lies more in the unity of faith and affection, than in uniformity of doubtful rites and ceremonies."

XIV. His spiritual improvement of common occurrences.

Some of the many occasional good thoughts which we meet with in his papers we shall set down.

Nov. 1st. 1699. "This, I understand, is my birthday. I now enter upon my climacteric year sixty-three, a year in which it has been observed that many die: I have found, in reading lives, that Tertullian, St. Bernard, Luther, Melancthon, Justus, Jonas, and many others, died in that year of their lives. Death is a debt I owe, and must pay ere long, whenever the great God demands it. Lord, I am willing to submit to thy holy will; do with me what thou pleasest. My time is short, my work is great, my strength is small. Lord, help me to improve that short minute of time which yet remains."

"I have lately set my house in order; and, I hope, have made an honest and equal distribution of that worldly estate my good God hath given me, endeavouring, in all things, to die with a good conscience, which will be comfortable in a dying hour."

"I have now past one month of the doubtful year, and am so much nearer my end. I endeavour to stand upon my guard, and to watch, because I am uncertain when my Lord cometh."

At the latter end of the following summer he writes, "Now the days begin to shorten, an emblem of my estate; my days decline; winter and death are coming on; wise men provide for both. Most men take care of their bodies and earthly concerns; but most wise and happy is that man that takes due care of his soul, and his eternal concerns, that in health prepares for sickness and death."

At the return of the year he writes: "I have now out-lived the doubtful year; and, I praise God, have meditated more of death this year than formerly; and, I hope, shall continue to do so all the days of my life. Death will come, and that ere long. The young may die, but the old must die. A friend of mine, not long since, said, rejoicingly, 'Now I have outlived my climacteric year, I hope I may live a great while;' but he died the year following. And I know death hath the same power over me this year that he had the last, only waits for a commission from him, in whose hand are all men's lives; nay, I cannot assure myself of one day, so uncertain is the life; and the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. I hope I shall never live out of the expectation of death, while I continue on earth. Lord, help me to watch and pray. My glass is still running, my dissolution draws near, but the time is uncertain; therefore I must wait the Lord's leisure, whose creature I am, and to whom I owe all possible obedience,—his time is the best time."

When he entered upon his seventieth year, he writes, "I may very well expect death may seize me before this year be ended: I find great decays in myself of late, so that the time of my dissolution

must of necessity draw near. Should I outlive the year, and God should add more days and years to my life, I am sensible they would be but labour and sorrow, as Moses speaks; but I will refer all to my merciful Father, and resign myself wholly to his will and pleasure. It is high time to bestir myself; for the day is far spent, and the night is coming, when I must work no more. I am now arrived near the end of my journey: I have almost done with the world, and the world with me: I have hitherto passed without any signal troubles; and if now, in the close of my days, God gently lays his afflicting hand upon me, I have no reason to complain; but must own it is what I have deserved, and it is good for me that I have been afflicted. No man is more miserable than he that has no adversity."

"Such a time there was great cock-fighting and horse-races about the town; but I saw none of them, having a more serious concern in hand, to prepare for my great change. What will all the pleasures of this world avail us, when we come to lie upon a death-bed?"

When he had completed his seventieth year. "Lord," (says he,) "make me wise to salvation: teach me so to number the few minutes of my time that yet remain, that they may be spent to thy glory, and the benefit of my own immortal soul. I have lived much longer than ever I expected. Lord, as thou hast given me length of days, with much comfort and contentment, grant me the joys and comforts of thine everlasting kingdom for Christ's sake." Jan. 1st. "Lord, as thou hast given me life and health to enter upon a new year, so I pray thee give me a new heart, renew a right spirit within me, order all my affections according to thy will, that I may love what thou lovest, and hate what thou hatest; that I may abominate all my old sins, and may become a new creature in Jesus Christ; that I may spend the ensuing year to thy glory, and the good of my own soul. One year passeth away, and another comes; and still I am nearer the time of my dissolution: as the old year is expired, Lord, grant that all my sins may expire; as the new year is begun, Lord, give me a new heart, and new and earnest desires, to persevere in godliness all the days of my life."

"Old Mr. Henry desired, that if it were the will of God, he might live no longer than he was useful; and my desire is, that I may not live so long as to be troublesome."

"Now autumn is come. The days grow short, so doth my life; it declines every day, and is near expiring. It is the greatest wisdom, in time of health and strength, to prepare for sickness and death: he that really doth so, his business of dying is half done. A diseased, pained body will unfit the mind for holy duties; therefore it is good to labour in health, and make our peace with God then. Gray

hairs tells us, as the golden leaves on the trees in autumn, that our fall is near, and it is highly dangerous to defer our repentance to the last. Many on their death-bed are sorely handled; some seized in their heads, and rendered insensible; and how can the great work be done then? A virtuous life never thought ill of death. A good conscience, and a well-grounded hope of salvation, will encourage a dying man: yet good men may be oppressed with doubts and fears upon a death-bed, and go to heaven even by hell-gates."

One year he writes: "There is a great show of a plentiful crop this year; which yet our God, if he pleaseth, can deprive us of. The famous Mr. Hooker, (as I have read in his life,) when he was offered a benefice in London, desired rather to have a country parsonage, where he might see the blessings of God spring out of the earth. And a pleasant thing it is to see the fruits of the earth spring up, grow, and in a little time come to maturity. O that we may not set our hearts too much upon those things, so as to neglect the main business."

Another year he writes: "We have had a plentiful crop, and good harvest weather: What shall we render to the Lord for his mercies? Lord, with these, give us thy grace, and peace, and truth, in our days."

He records an awakening providence, which fell out to his great grief: "This day a dear friend of mine was suddenly killed by a fall from his horse. He was well and dead in a moment. O how uncertain is the life of man! Lord, imprint this upon my heart, that I may bear it in my mind, while I have a day to live; and may watch and pray, because I know not at what hour my Lord comes. O that I may from henceforward be more diligent than ever in making preparation for death, that whether it be natural or violent, sudden or slow, it may be happy."

About the same time, a young man wickedly set himself to drink brandy to that excess, that he died upon the spot, a self-murderer. And another lusty young man suddenly fell down dead in his master's shop, and never spoke a word more. These three sad accidents happened in and about Nantwich, in less than three weeks' time. On which he writes, "How foolish are they that set their hearts upon this world, which we are to look upon as an enemy, that will flatter us with its pleasures, but will deceive us, will kiss, and kill. We have heard of many that have spent their time very ill, yet, at their death, have had their eyes opened, and their consciences awakened; one crying out, 'Call time again!' Another, 'Alas! my life is done, and my work is undone!' Another, 'O that God would try me once again!' O that men were of the same mind now, that they will be of then! and do that which they will wish they had done, when it is too late!"

"Such a time Mr. Bromfield preached excellently

of repentance, and the danger of delaying it, at the funeral of a young man struck dead with lightning in a moment, in his full strength. It was indeed a thunder-clap, for warning to us all that are left behind, to watch always; for who knows what a day, what an hour, what a minute may bring forth."

"Though death doth not come suddenly to all, yet it comes unexpected to many, and unwelcome to most: but, as Archbishop Tillotson saith of Mr. Gouge's death, 'To him no death could be sudden, because the constant employment of his life, was the best preparation for death;' so that it was rather a favour and blessing; the more sudden, the more easy."

"Such a day my mother-in-law died, (in 1708,) the only person, save one, that has died in my family of thirty-six years; and now it has pleased God, by death, to make a breach in my family; how it may proceed, the only wise God knows, who doth all things well, to whom I humbly submit myself, trusting in him, that he will give me strength and patience to bear whatever he is pleased to inflict upon me, living or dying; for he is my merciful Father."

"O let me not lose one moment of this precious time; let me not waste it in idle trifles and folly, but employ every moment of it in doing that work, which my Father hath sent me to do. If I do this, my time, how short soever, will be long enough; but if I squander it away in doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose, I shall find the want of it when it is too late."

As he thus improved the occurrences of his own time, so he delighted very much in reading church-history, especially the lives of good men, both ancients and moderns, and made large collections out of them. "It is my delight to read the lives of good men, and my earnest desire to imitate their good examples: the Lord enable me so to do."

He read with much affection the lives of the martyrs, admiring what they suffered for their dear Lord and Master. "Methinks, (says he,) I that have lived to a sufficient age (then near sixty-two) should embrace a natural death willingly, when so many, in the midst of their days, have, with great joy and satisfaction, suffered cruel and violent deaths, and have declared they would rather die than live. A well-grounded hope of salvation will make a death-bed easy." He gathered many things that were very helpful to him out of the life of Mr. Philip Henry.

Having collected many excellent passages out of Mr. Burghal's book, called, "The perfect way to die in peace." He adds, "I knew Mr. Burghal of Acton very well: he was a serious godly divine, was cast out of his living at Acton on black Bartholomew-Day, 1662, among a great number of his pious brethren all England over. The more the pity. I have heard him preach often; once in Nant-

wich church a soul-searching sermon, that did much affect me."

XV. His desire of retiring from the hurry of worldly business.

When he grew near seventy years of age, he grew very weary of the hurry of the world. "It hath been my desire (says he) several years, to desist from business, and retire into privacy, that I might give myself wholly to the great work of preparing for the world that is to come. I have often wished, and am still of the same mind, that I were in some private place, where I knew none, and none knew me, provided it were a place where piety was practised; I would fain make an end with the world, before death thrusts me out of it."

He had designed it several years before, but it was not till a little more than a year before his death, that he removed from his dwelling in the country into the town of Nantwich, that he might be free from the encumbrance of the world, which he found had been an hinderance to him in his soul's concerns, and that he might be near the church. He was sensible the town had more temptations of another kind, which had formerly been sometimes too hard for him; but he put his trust in the grace of God, to deliver him from them, and armed himself with these considerations: "If I should now relapse, and return with the dog to his vomit, how miserable would my condition be! I should account myself a cast-away, and undone to all eternity, and it had been better I had never known the way of righteousness; *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.* I must daily watch and pray, lest I enter into temptation: and happy they, whose last days are their best days, and their last good works more than the first."

He reserved but very little to maintain himself; but said, "I have enough of this world, and as much as I desire; and now I hope not to remove again, till I am removed by death; which, I suppose, will be in a very short time. Lord, thy will be done in all things, whether life or death."

Some time after his removal into the town, he wrote thus: "I praise the Lord, I find much comfort and satisfaction in my late removal: I am quit from a great deal of worldly care and trouble, which I have been a long time cumbered with. O then, (my soul,) since I am retired into privacy, according to my desire, let me strive and endeavour, all that in me lies, to make the best use of it, that I may more and more condemn the things of this vain world, and set my affections on things above."

Yet still he found his true rest was not in this world. All our removals, while we are on this side Canaan, are but from one wilderness to another. It is in the future state, not in this, that there is a true and everlasting rest remaining for the people of God.

XVI. His advice to his grandchildren.

He directs one of his little books to his three grand-daughters. "My blessing (says he) I freely give you; and my earnest prayers are to Almighty God, that he will bestow his blessing and grace upon you, that you may live holy and die happy. This is the earnest desire of your poor aged grandfather. I am not capable to give you that advice that I fain would; however, I will do my best, and hope you will all take notice of it, and observe it, when I lie rotting in the dust.

"In the first place, and above all things, serve the Lord in spirit and in truth; love him with all your heart; count all things here below of no value, in comparison of God and Christ; be careful to keep God's holy laws and commandments; be frequent in prayer, and hearing the word. He that will taste the love of God, must be no stranger to meditation and prayer, and must not be cold or inconstant in them, but dwell and walk above with God. He must be wholly addicted to improve the talent he is intrusted with. His design and trade on earth must be to do all the good he can, and to keep his soul clean from the flesh and worldly vanities, and to such a soul, God will make known his love. Good children, I entreat you again and again to serve God, and then he will bless you; live religious lives, then you will be happy here and hereafter too. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth; for godliness is great gain; as you sow, you will be sure to reap. Think not to do ill, and yet hope that all will end well. I love both your bodies and souls, and would have you do well for both, by living in the fear of God."

"Have a special care of your reputation; for it is better than precious ointment, and rather to be chosen than great riches. Remember the verse you learned;

Thy credit wary keep, its quickly gone;
By many actions got, but lost by one.

"The way to get and keep a good name, is to live in the fear of God; to be modest, and chaste, and virtuous, will please your God, rejoice your friends, and turn to your own comfort. I charge you all, in the name of God, to take heed of the society of vain, loose young fellows; let not such come into your company, nor scarce into your sight, or thoughts, but flee from them as from a lion or a bear."

"Earnestly implore divine grace to guide, counsel, and establish you; for without that we can do nothing. Remember, God's eye is ever and every where upon you. Endeavour to live in godly families; dwell where God dwells, and be in such company as you hope to be with in heaven; then at death you will only change your place, not your company. As death leaves us, judgment will find us. Nothing flies so swiftly, as the soul out of the

body. Eternity hangs on a moment, for such is our life. Ask your hearts every night what you have done this day, because any night may be your last: work, pray, believe, repent, get assurance of heaven, and be happy for ever. Earthly comforts are short-lived; riches have wings, beauty is but skin-deep; all is but vanity. A frothy wit and a vicious life will carry directly to atheism, which is the master-mischief of this age. Thoughts are not free, nor words kind; they will both judge us another day. Get ready for death; it is a great word to say upon good grounds, *I dare die*. Redeem time, for how cutting will the remembrance of good hours ill-spent be!

"Be obedient, loving, and dutiful to your father; take his advice in all your concerns, both spiritual and temporal. O that you would all of you be as great a comfort to your father as he hath been to me. He is now above forty years of age, and I can truly say he never vexed or grieved me in his life, but was always dutiful, loving, and obedient to me. I must own that he hath been a great assistance to me in my spiritual warfare: be you sure that you all strive to rejoice and comfort your father's heart, as he hath rejoiced and comforted mine."

"As to your mother, you had but little knowledge of her. It pleased God to take her out of a troublesome world, when you were but infants. She was a pious, modest, good woman. I pray God you may be like her; and that her virtues may, by the grace of God, be stamped upon all your hearts. She was a pattern of piety and patience. From a child she was discreet and serious, not in the least given to pride or vanity. In disposing of herself, she took the advice of her pious and judicious parents. She was of a solid, serious disposition, and mighty cautious what company she entertained, or came into.

"Good children, as you tender your own good, or expect the blessing of God, and comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter, do not slight or despise the advice or counsel of a poor dying grandfather. Though I yet live, it cannot be long, this being the sixty-seventh year of my age; therefore I am daily expecting and preparing for my great change, which you may observe, if you will take the pains to read over the following weak meditations; and as I wrote them for my private use, I desire they may not be exposed to the scorn of bad people."

"Dear children, I shall conclude my weak advice with some few profitable texts of Scripture. Rom. viii. 13. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Heb. xiii. 16. *To do good, and to communicate, forget not.* Ps. l. 22. *Now consider this, ye that forget God.* Deut. xxxii. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.*

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"Now the God of all mercy, power, and love, bless you all, and keep you in his true faith and fear, in the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, for evermore. Amen."

XVII. His expectation of, and preparation for, death.

This was indeed the chief subject of the papers he wrote. One might collect a little volume of his serious thoughts about death, and the passages he wrote referring to this. It was the sense he had of death approaching, that put him upon all this concern about his soul, and he had the comfort of it in his dying hours.

"Sept. 6, 1698. It is my serious thought, and heart's desire, to note down, or compose, something in way of preparation for my approaching dissolution. I am now above sixty, my head hoary, my eyes dim, my strength fails, the chips fly off, and the tree must fall. It is great wisdom in all to prepare for death, especially the aged. The young *may*, the old *must*, die. It is an unwelcome messenger to most men; but it is great folly to strive against such a stream, and neglect a work that must be done. Death is most certain, and nothing more necessary than a due caring for the soul, and a serious preparation for the hour of death, and the day of judgment, which is my real purpose. Good Lord, for thy mercy's sake, direct and assist me in this most great and necessary work, by thy Holy Spirit, that I may persevere in this my duty, all the days of my life, till my change come. To this end, it is my design to collect some texts of Scripture that treat of death and judgment; also the sayings of some good men, and my own weak sentiments adapted to my own condition: *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayers. Cast me not off in the time of old age. Be not far from me, O my God, make haste to help me. Now, when I am old and gray-headed, forsake me not. Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Job xiv. 14. *If a man die, shall he live again?* &c. Rev. xiii. 14. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,* &c. Ps. lxxxix. 48. *What man is he that lives, and shall not see death?* Gen. iii. 19. *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.* Isa. lx. 6. *All flesh is grass.* Jam. iv. 14. *What is your life but a vapour?* Ps. xxxix. 5. *Every man at his best estate is vanity.* Matt. xxiv. 44. *Watch, therefore. Few days and full of trouble. Lord, make me to know my end.* Heb. ix. 27. *After death, the judgment.* Eccl. xii. 14. *God shall bring every work into judgment.* 2 Cor. v. 10. *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.*"

"It has been my earnest desire and endeavour to leave sin before it leave me. Who will not arm himself against an enemy that threatens every hour? Our breath is in the hand of God: we may be well one moment, and dead the next. Many have gone well to bed, and been dead before morning. The time

when, the place where, the manner how, are all uncertain. Many are taken away, not only in the midst of their days, but in the midst of their sins. It is my earnest desire to make my peace with God in time of health; that I may not have oil to buy when I should burn it. It is dangerous deferring repentance; that makes a death-bed uneasy, and dying hours uncomfortable."

"Mr. George Herbert, on his death-bed, said, 'I am sorry I have nothing to present to my merciful God but sin and misery; but the first is pardoned, and a few hours will put a period to the latter.'"

"He that lives well cannot die ill; but he that lives without fear shall die without hope: he that hath no grace in his life, can have no true peace in his death. The longest day has its night, and the longest life has its death; that man's soul is in no good case, that is loth to think of dying."

"When death calls, I believe I shall be as willing to go as flesh and blood will allow; for I am willing to part with every thing in this world. I desire to live in continual expectation of death; for that will make a man more careful to serve God, and will make a pious life the more pleasant; it will check inordinate desires of the world, and it is our Saviour's express command, *Watch always*."

"It is a serious thing to die: it is a work by itself. A dying friend once said to me, 'It is a hard thing to die.' It was the saying of one; 'If thy youth have been faulty, it is a comfort if thy age be otherwise.' It is bad to be wicked, but worse to continue so."

"What thoughts hast thou of thy dying hour, and thy departing soul? It must ere long be required of thee; will Christ receive it? Hast thou made sure of that? If not, thou hast done nothing, but art undone to all eternity. If life be of such value as we think it is, what are our souls worth? But we are earnest in pursuing shadows, and let go the substance; we busy ourselves about trifles, and neglect the most weighty matters."

"July 15, 1700. I desire it may be my daily practice while I live, and am capable, to meditate something of death, and of my dying hours." Mr. B. in his treatise of self-denial, gives many reasons why we should submit to death, and be willing to die. 'Our lives are not our own, but his that doth require them, and he is Lord of them. The greatest potentates must undergo the stroke of death. All things in heaven and earth are at God's disposal: he gives and takes life at pleasure. How many beasts, birds, and fishes die, to feed us! The best saints have trodden this path before us. Our Lord Jesus drank of this bitter cup, to conquer death, and unsting it for us: the best may be afraid, but death puts an end to all their fears; it is joy when it is over. We should be willing to leave this wicked world, to go to the glorious society above. One

would think these considerations sufficient to make any Christian willing to part with life freely."

And afterwards he writes, "It is the greatest wisdom, in time of health and strength, to prepare for sickness and death: he that really doth so, his dying work is half done. I ought to do so more especially now; for my parents both died before my age. I had three brothers, and all dead; and this is my climacteric year. I desire, that thoughts of death may fill me daily, that I may make it familiar to me."

—"One says, O foolish soul, I wish thou wert as covetous after eternity, as thou art after a fading, perishing life; and after the blessed presence of God, as thou art for continuance with earth and sin. Did we but love God as strongly as the worldling doth his wealth, or the ambitious man his honours, we should not be so loth to leave the world, and go to God. Turn thy thoughts from the vanities of this world; set thyself to study eternity, and busy thyself about the life to come; labour to get your hearts into heaven, and doubtless yourselves will follow after shortly."

—"I have here no abiding city. Let me not set my affections on the things of this world; let me often consider, that this poor body of mine shall become as noisome as the vilest carrion, must be laid in the earth, and become a prey to worms; but my soul shall still live to all eternity. Death hath no power over that immortal part. I praise the Lord, and it doth rejoice my heart, that I have of late fallen into this method of considering and meditating much on my latter end."

—"I often see younger and stronger than I go before me; yet it must be my lot ere long. Forbearance is no acquittance; death will not be put off, or bribed."

—"It is the greatest concern of life to prepare for death; but, alas! it is too much neglected by the most of men, who put the evil day far off, and promise themselves long life, when they know not what a day may bring forth. They that will not remember death, death will be sure to remember them; and they that put off the thoughts of death, will certainly be surprised at last, and seized unawares, to their everlasting amazement. O deceitful hopes, how many have you deluded! And while you promise men old age, you have cut them off in their youth. Then all the treasures, pleasures, and honours of the world will avail nothing: then, to have the favour of God, an interest in Christ, and a good conscience, are the things that will stand us in stead, and make a death-bed easy. Good Lord, in mercy help me, that I not only write these good things in my book, but may practise them."

—"I doubt too many never think of dying till their dying day comes; and then what would they give to escape it? Then what promises of new obedience, which yet prove abortive, like Pharaoh's!

Many are like seamen ; they never seek God for help, as long as they are able to help themselves. O my soul, remember death, remember that eternity, which thou mayst begin to-day, or to-morrow, but never end."

— "One says, I must be at God's disposal, whether I will or no : there is no rest for souls, but in the will of God. Our own wills have undone us ; they have misgoverned us ; they are our greatest enemies, our disease, our prison, our death, till they are brought over to the will of God. There is no true peace or felicity, but in the conformity of our wills to the will of God."

— "To prepare for my great change is my chief concern in this world ; it is an important business of a high nature ; it is the concern of my soul, which is of more value than all the world. Mr. Shower has many excellent sayings suited to my present purpose. The life of man is short and fleeting ; our days on earth few and uncertain : how careful then should I be to manage every hour well ! All the time that is past is irrecoverable, and the little that remains flies apace : how quickly will it be gone ! How suddenly may an unexpected stroke of death conclude it ! And this is all the opportunity I have of making my peace with God, and preparing for an everlasting world. I can have no business of greater moment, than to secure the happiness of my soul in another world ; for what will all other business signify in the end, if this be neglected ? but how have I trifled away my precious time in sloth and idleness, in foolish mirth and hurtful company, in vain thoughts and impertinent discourses ! Lord, make these meditations effectual, to prevent my loss of time for the future, which, sooner or later, will be esteemed precious. O how swift, how short, is my time of trial, in order to eternity ! How difficult, how important, a work is it to prepare for an everlasting state ! What is all this world ! how little, what a mere nothing, to a departing soul ? And shall I continue to pursue shadows, and please myself with empty dreams, being so near my final judgment ?

"Let me therefore endeavour to impress the consideration of death and eternity, as at hand, more deeply on my heart, that I may walk and live, may discourse and pray, and demean myself in every thing, as near an unchangeable state. My time is near an end ; I must shortly take death by the cold hand ; Lord, direct and assist me in this great concern."

— "Remember this, (O man,) that *dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*. This is a mourning verse, which God himself delivered to Adam. Thou art but a bubble ; thy life as the passing of a shadow. Why dost thou heap up riches, O thou covetous wretch, when as this night thy wealth may be taken from thee, or thou from it."

— "I praise God, the thoughts of death are

often in my mind, and my great change still before my eyes. My time is short, my days that remain are but few ; yet, I fear, I do not make that preparation for death that I ought. *In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing. To will is present, but how to perform that which is good I know not.*"

— "I may well expect the summons of death every day : the most earnest business I can set about, is to prepare for it ; and, in order to that, to consider often how it will be with me, when I lie gasping and groaning upon my death-bed."

— "Therefore I often think of death, because it is my earnest desire, that when it comes it may not be terrible to me. Death has some terror in it, therefore I would learn how not to fear it. The way never to fear death, is always to think of it."

"To meditate on mortality is necessary for all, especially the aged. Our glass is always running, and now almost run out : our time always going, and now almost gone ; we have one foot in the grave ; death stands daily over our heads, ready to strike : I ought therefore to say, this day I stand at the door of eternity, because we die daily. Still think of thy hour-glass."

— "I often think of death, but cannot live up to what those thoughts require as I would, and should, nor perform my duty to God with such life and zeal as I ought. O my soul, think what will all the world avail a dying man ! The peace with God, and peace of conscience, are of more value than all the world."

— "The learned Salmasius said upon his death-bed, 'O ! I have lost a world of time ; time, that most precious thing in the world, whereof had I but one year more, it should be spent in David's psalms and Paul's epistles.' O sirs ! mind the world less, and God more. The fear of God is true wisdom."

— "I see or hear every day of the death of one or other younger than myself ; they go to the grave before me ; I survive, but am in expectation. I know the lot will fall on me whenever it pleaseth God. I hope I shall with meekness and patience submit to the will of my heavenly Father, and freely resign my soul to him that gave it."

— "One says, To thee, O my Saviour, I commit my soul : it is thine by redemption, thine by covenant, sealed by thy Spirit : thou hast promised not to lose it, hast promised rest to weary souls. Lord, I am not only weary of suffering, but weary of sin, weary of the flesh, weary of my darkness, dulness, distance ; weary of this wicked, blind, unrighteous world ; and whither should I look for rest but homewards to my heavenly Father. To thee I am but a bruised reed, but thou wilt not break me : I am but smoking flax, but thou wilt not quench what thy grace has kindled."

— "O let me not be surprised, and think it strange when death seizes me, and throws me upon

a sick and dying bed ; then let me submit to my Father's good pleasure, and resign myself up to him. I have fair warning given me by the death of others, day after day, time after time, to prepare for my great change : Lord, direct and assist me in this great concern. I have here no abiding city, and therefore seek one to come ; for how can I be in love with this world, which is so vain, sinful, and uncertain."

— " Have not we seen and known some that have been suddenly struck, sound and sick, quick and dead, in the space of one hour and less ; how dare we then defer our repentance ? Death may seize us in our delays, and deliver us up into eternity. Lord, grant that every day I may remember my last day, may every day take a turn or two with death ; so shall I be acquainted with its face, and not feel its sting. To trust to a death-bed repentance, is a very high affront to Almighty God : what do those make of him, who think to live in sin all their days, and then expect pardon when they can live no longer ?"

— " Dr. Taylor says, We complain our life is short, yet we throw away much of it. We want company, seek out arts to drive the time away, and then weep, because the time is gone too soon. He that desires to die well, must not live a soft voluptuous life."

— " An idle man is never ready to die, and is glad of any excuse : a busy man hath always something unfinished, and is ready for every thing but death : but remember, thou must carry no more out of the world than thou broughtest in ; therefore be satisfied with a little ; thou must be gone shortly, eternity is always at hand."

— " I often resolve to observe these good instructions which I read and write, but am too often disappointed, and taken off by worldly business. Such are my present concerns, being born to no estate, that I must pay my rent, and make necessary provision for my family, and this will not be done without care and pains in worldly business ; yet I count all things here below but dross and dung, in comparison with God and Christ : on them I desire to set my heart and affection."

— " One says, The raising up of the soul to God is indeed the greatest work ; but the mortifying of the flesh, and denying self, is surely the next to it ; for selfishness is the most treacherous, deceitful enemy in the world ; and, of all views, the hardest both to find out, and cast out. The world is so great with some men, that God and everlasting life are as nothing : they are so full of the creature, that they have no room for the Creator ; so busy about earth, that they have but little time for heaven. Lord, let my meditations of death prove effectual, to wean me from the world, and to make me live a holy life, without which my meditating, speaking, and writing

of death, will avail me little. Lord, work in me both to will and to do of thy good pleasure."

— " I am told, that if I be heartily concerned about my soul and eternity, and carefully seek the favour of God through Christ ; if I strive against sin, make conscience of my words and ways, and have respect to all God's commandments, I have reason to hope, that notwithstanding my daily infirmities, my spiritual state is good. I think I can truly say, that I neither love nor delight in any sin, and desire always to be found in the way of my duty. Lord, grant I may not deceive myself."

— " One says, It is my certain duty to seek heaven with all the fervour of my soul, and diligence of my life. Everlasting glory should be preferred before perishing vanity. I am sure this world will shortly be nothing to me, and therefore it is next to nothing now. Either joy or misery is near at hand to every man. This should awaken us to cry, to search, to beg, to strive, to watch, to spare no care, or cost, or labour, to make all sure in a matter of such weight. This should be done with speed, with zeal and earnestness, and a full resolution of soul. Who can stand dallying, as most men do, at the door of eternity, when they believe their immortal souls must be there shortly ?"

" I cannot say that I am prepared for death as I ought to be, but am endeavouring it the best I can. I am sensible that my time on earth is short and uncertain. Mr. Fox says, ' You gray-headed sinners, against whom death hath raised his batteries, you have but a few sands in your glass, your departing hour cannot be far off ; your candle is in the socket and will be a stinking snuff shortly ; the next blast the house may fall. You that lean on staves, and look through your spectacles, you are just ready to enter into eternity ; if you do not mind your great work immediately, woe, woe be to you for ever ! Poor mortals, since you cannot prevent death, make all the preparation you can for it ; for it is the grand business of this life.' These good sayings of Mr. Fox I often consult, and am much affected with them. I take them to be spoken to myself ; for I am under those symptoms of old age he mentions." On this occasion he writes these verses, which we will insert, though divers such pieces of his plain poetry we have omitted :

My head is gray, my time is almost spent ;
Prepare for death, O wicked heart, repent.
When death doth call away, then go I must,
My soul to God, my body to the dust.
Christ died for me, my hope is fixed there ;
I hope in mercy, yet I live in fear.
I fear my God, yet other fears I have ;
I've broke his laws, why should he own and save
A wicked one, that spent his days in sin,
That knew his word, and what's contain'd therein !

In mercy pardon all I've done amiss,
Through Christ, my Lord, my happiness and bliss.

—"I am now at the last stage of my life; I may well expect the summons of death every day; my time is even at an end; O let not me be one of those that desire to die the death of the righteous, but will not live the life of the righteous; but let it be my chief care, my earnest endeavour, to serve God, and please him, lest death should come upon me like a thief in the night, or surprise me at midnight, as the bridegroom did the sleeping virgins that had no oil."

"Mr. Gouge says, 'O sinner, it had been better for thee never to have been born, than not to be born again; it is as necessary as heaven and happiness. I beseech thee, for thy precious soul's sake, stir up thyself to work out thy salvation.' This is excellent advice; Lord, give me grace to take it."

"I will not for a few merry hours hazard my eternal safety; I desire not to flatter myself, or think better of my state than it is; but would judge myself, that I may not be judged of the Lord; for, as old Mr. Henry used to say, when we set our sins before our faces in repentance and confession, God casts them behind his back in pardon and remission; but if we carelessly cast them behind our back, God justly sets them before his face."

"Whether we are ready or unready, death will not stay; it is the greatest change that can pass upon us; it carries us from all present enjoyments, turns the body to dust, brings the soul into the presence of God, removes us from time to eternity. The awfulness of the change should make us careful to get ready; and it is no easy thing to prepare, as we should, for death. The whole time of our life is not more than sufficient; we have no time to lose or squander away; we have many sins to repent of, many graces to obtain, temptations to resist, difficulties to break through, duties to perform: we must get our guilt removed, our hearts purified, our natures refined; the image of God impressed on us, and all our corruptions mortified. O strive to live much in a little time: live apace in this sense; despatch the great business of life out of hand." This paragraph he gleaned out of Mr. Calamy's sermon on the death of Mr. Sylvester.

"Meditation of death hath been my frequent practice many years; but, as Mr. Burghal says, it is but lost labour, unless that meditation draw us to serious preparation for it. Bishop Patrick says, O let it please my God, to strengthen me in my holy resolutions, till I arrive at his heavenly court: O let his Spirit breathe upon me, and carry away my soul in holy desires towards him; let him guide my course through this troublesome sea, on which I am tossed, and bring me safe to a quiet haven of eternal rest and peace."

—"Death, and preparation for it, I desire to make the chief subjects of my meditation, according to my weak and mean capacity. I hope my merciful Father will accept me, who knows my frame, and remembers I am but dust. A religious life is certainly the happiest life we can live in this world: it is pleasant while we live, and comfortable when we die; it makes a death-bed easy."

"God in his great wisdom hath left us all at uncertainties, as to the time of our death, that we may be always on our guard, and improve our time. Let us frequently put this question to ourselves, Where must I be for ever? I have lived so long, what have I done all this while? Do I find myself better than I was some years ago? Am I more heavenly-minded? Do I prepare for another world before I am called out of this?"

About two months before he died, he began to read Monsieur Drelincourt's *Consolation against the fear of death*. "I propose" (says he) "to transcribe several things out of it, since it is a book which treats much of death; for such books I have studied much of late years." The last thing he wrote in his book, and we suppose the last he ever wrote, was a prayer proper for one dying, out of Drelincourt.

June 1, 1709, (which was about ten days before he died,) he thus wrote: "It hath been my desire these many years, to prepare for my death: to that end, I have used my best endeavours to make my peace with God. It is my great comfort, that I have taken this method for eight or ten years, to be always expecting death's approach. These endeavours I have used with much weakness and imperfection, so that I may well say I am but an unprofitable servant. If my heart doth not much deceive me, I desire to renounce all things, and to rest only upon Christ: Lord, what need have I of thy grace and favour, and the assistance of thy Holy Spirit! which I humbly beg, for the sake of my blessed Lord and Saviour."

Almost every page of his books hath some passage or other concerning death. Over his chamber door was written *Memento mori—Remember death*. Many of those Scriptures which speak of death, he got fairly written, and hung in a frame, with a death's head under them.

XVIII. The meditations and prayers which he prepared for the use of his death-bed.

He began these about 1700, and continued them at times after: he called to his son to read them to him a few hours before he died.

"I am going the way of all flesh, and find that death is very near me, and I am now launching into eternity. What may be the issue of this illness, God knows, who is only wise.—I am often assaulted with doubts and fears concerning the state of my precious soul, which is my chief concern; yet I hope I shall never despair of the mercies of God, for

they are infinite, and the sufferings of Christ are meritorious. Here is my main stay and strength: here is the hope of my salvation."

"I humbly confess, to my shame and sorrow, that my sins have been many and great: I cannot plead innocency of life, no, nor justify the best of my actions, but acknowledge myself sinful, and an unprofitable servant. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death? None but Christ, none but Christ."

"My only hope and comfort is, I have to do with a merciful God, who will abundantly pardon all penitent sinners; and a blessed Saviour, who hath redeemed me with his precious blood, and is now interceding with his Father in my behalf: O what a comfort is this to a poor doubting sinner."

"I will say, with Mr. Gearing, 'O Lord, thy Son hath offered satisfaction, and thou hast accepted it.—Thou, O my Saviour, hast laid down thy life for mine; and thy Father and my Father is well pleased with it. Blood is paid, justice is satisfied, heaven doors are widened, thy arms open to receive me, nothing wanting but my heart. Make it such as thou wouldst have it, (good Lord,) then take it to thyself. I have sinned against mercy, but not above mercy; for thou art a God of infinite mercy to all that repent.'"

"Lord, I owe thee a death, O let it not be terrible! Then take thy own time. What shall I say or do to make my peace with God, whom I have so much offended: Lord, I repent of all my sins from the very bottom of my heart; I will, with sorrow and shame, confess them, and will beg pardon and forgiveness of my merciful Father; I will cast myself on the rock Christ Jesus, my only Saviour, who laid down his life to save my precious soul; blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the inestimable gift. Lord, increase my faith, without which it is impossible to please thee."

"Why should I be loth to part from this troublesome world, or unwilling to die, and enter into those joys which my blessed Saviour hath purchased for me? All this is for want of assurance: doubts and fears are apt to arise; yet in thee, O Lord, do I put my trust."

"O merciful Lord God, whenever thou pleasest to cast me upon my sick-bed, and bring the bitter pangs of death upon me, then be with me, support and comfort me in that time of my distress; strengthen me and help me, that I may have power to resist my enemy, who may strongly assault me when I am weakest: O bring me through that great trial with some ease and comfort; and, for thy mercy's sake, lay no more upon me than I am able to bear; for thou knowest my frame. When thou requirest my soul, embrace it in the arms of thy tender mercy: let thy good angels guard it into its everlasting rest, for Christ's sake."

"Lord, give me wisdom from above, that I may duly consider the shortness and uncertainty of life. Give me grace to make preparation for the hour of death, which time draws very near. It is my resolution, by divine assistance, to submit to the will and pleasure of my merciful Father. *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* If he lay his hand heavy upon me, I confess it is my deserts; if he be favourable, it is his mercy and goodness: therefore I hope I shall never repine at the Lord's dealing, nor despair of his mercies."

"When pain, and sickness, and anguish beset me on every side, and death seizeth me, then let me call to mind the sufferings of my dear Saviour for my sins, though he committed no sin; how his precious body was torn, and his precious blood spilt, yet he patiently bore all with submission to his Father's will: and shall not I, a poor, sinful, vile, wretched creature, patiently suffer whatever the only wise God pleaseth to lay upon me? Then let me call to mind the folly and wickedness of my younger days, even the sins of my whole life. Sins bring all miseries upon us: *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. Correct me, O Lord, but with judgment, not in thy anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.* I have deserved thy hot displeasure, but, Lord, in judgment remember mercy, and comfort thy poor servant in distress."

"Truly my soul waits upon God; from him comes my salvation. Thy loving-kindness is better than life. Lord, help me in this trouble, be merciful to me, for my soul trusteth in thee: in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge."

"*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness, &c.* Ps. li. 1—3. It is my greatest trouble that I have sinned against so good a God; yet this comforts me, That a troubled spirit, a broken contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies. Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me,* Ps. xxv. 16—18.

"When the pains of death get hold of me, then, good Lord, give me sense to pray, and patience to bear what thou layest upon me; then be thou with me, and comfort me for thy mercy's sake. Prayer and patience are the best remedies for a dying man: then let thy strength appear in my weakness, and enable me to overcome all the enemies of my salvation."

"Let the promises of the gospel be comfortable then to my distressed soul. As that, John iii. 16, 17. 1 Tim. i. 16. *Lord, preserve my soul,* for I desire to be holy, Ps. lxxxvi. 2—6. When the pains of death beset me, where then shall I seek for help, ease, and comfort, but with thee, my God? Then, good Lord, be thou with me, support and comfort me, smile upon me, for thy benignity is better than life."

"Christ is the only physician that can give ease

a poor dying sinner. Remember me then, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest to thy chosen, visit me with thy salvation. Upon my sick-bed I desire to remember thy word, (Prov. iii. 11, 12.) *Despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither faint.* O let me have such a perfect subjection to the Father of spirits, that this chastisement may be for my profit, that may be a partaker of thy holiness. O thou Captain of my salvation, who wast made perfect through suffering, sanctify to me all my pains and terrors, make me to bear them cheerfully and thankfully: hasten me as thou pleasest here, so that I may not be condemned in the world to come."

"Our afflictions, though sometimes severe and sinful, are but for a moment; and they are nothing in comparison with the torments of hell, which are eternal and intolerable. Our God is gracious, and will not always chide."

"If in health I have made preparation for death, when it comes I have not a new work to begin, but a old work to renew."

"Stay thyself, O my soul, upon the rock Christ Jesus, who is a merciful and faithful Priest, a sweet shepherd, his rod and staff shall comfort thee. In the agonies of death cast thyself into the arms of thy lessed Saviour. If Satan assault thee, by setting before thee the greatness and multitude of thy sins, remember that sweet place, (Mic. vii. 18.) *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?* And that, (Isa. 18.) *Though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.*"

Out of Dr. Andrew Rivet's last hours; "Lord, let not this trial exceed my strength: O how light is this chastisement if compared with my fault! and his temporal pain, if compared with eternal torments, from which I am redeemed by him that poured out his soul unto death for me! Lord, let not thy good Spirit depart from me, that in this conflict I may be more than a conqueror. Lord, let nothing separate me from thee, or cause me to doubt of thy love and favour."

"Lord, make my pains tolerable, or furnish me with fortitude to bear them, that I may not offend with my tongue. Crucify, O Lord, the old man, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and I may rise again to a new life."

"Help me to wait with patience till my change comes; continue thy wonted mercy to thy poor servant. Make thou my bed in my distress and misery, that I faint not under thy hand."

"I have cast the care of me, of mine, of all my affairs, upon God; let him do with my body as pleaseth him, so it be well with my soul. I lament not my leaving the world; I have lived long enough in it, have made trial of it, and find it is all vanity and vexation of spirit."

"To whom shall I go for help, O Lord? In whom is my hope? Truly in thee. I desire to depart and

to be with Christ. It is enough, Lord, receive now my soul. When I leave my body to the earth, I commit my spirit into the hands of God who gave it. I know this tabernacle cannot be dissolved without pain, the flesh must suffer and fall; but it matters not, provided the soul obtain new strength, and I arrive at a better place. Lord, strengthen me, and help my infirmities; be not far from me in the day of my sorrow; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Have pity on me, O God, and deal graciously with me; let death be my passage to life eternal. I hope the combat will not continue long. Bring to pass, O Lord, that the end may crown the work. Receive my soul to thyself, O Lord; I yield it into thy hands, thou hast redeemed it, O God of truth. The Lord shall perfect that which concerns his glory, and my eternal salvation."

"I desire and hope, that I shall submit to God's good will and pleasure, and not wish to live any longer. When God calls, and my appointed time is come, then will I call on the Lord and say, *I have waited for thy salvation*, leave me not. When my heart fails, Lord, be thou my helper. *Deliver my soul from hell, my darling from the power of the lion.* Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee."

"Lord, loose these bands; how long, Lord Jesus, how long! Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me, and receive my soul! O happy day, when shall I depart out of this sinful world, and go to heaven! Lord, I feel my strength failing me in this earthly tabernacle; I am ready to depart, breath fails, and death appears ready to strike the last stroke; but I know I shall rise again to behold thy glory."

"It is my thoughts, that these poor meditations may be useful and comfortable to me, when I lie upon my sick and dying bed; then I hope the Lord will in mercy remember me, and take pity on me, and accept of me and my poor services, through Christ my Saviour. Lord, if it please thee, grant me that favour, that when I lie dying I may have the use of my reason."

HIS DEATH.

In these his meditations of death, and preparations for it, there appears something extraordinary; and one cannot but wish now to know what was the end, the exit, of such a conversation, and how he finished his course at last. Of which, take this short account.

On Friday, June 10, 1709, he rode to Cheerbrook, where he had lived about thirty years, walked with his son in the gardens and orchards; there he was taken with the gripes, a distemper he had been afflicted with some time before, but he rode near two miles after, designed to have given his old minister

at Wibunbury a visit, but his pain increasing, he hastened home, and had a bad night. In the morning, when his son came to him, he said, "I am very bad, but I am willing to die, having lived above the age of man." He expressed his hopes of salvation through Christ. He said his house was in order, and he hoped his soul also. He would by no means have any physician sent for, but said, it was time for him to leave the world, and it did not become him at that age to use a physician. About noon on Saturday, he was persuaded to take some drops to ease his violent pain, and had for a few hours great ease; but at night his pain returned again. On the morning of the Lord's day, he spoke to his wife and son about his burial, which he would have to be private, and ordered matters, as if he had known that that must be his dying day, as it proved, though they about him thought he might recover, or at least have continued many days, being of a strong body, and considering his age, of a healthy constitution, and because he bore his pains with such patience, without groan or complaint. But when he was asked how he did, he said, "Worse and worse, I cannot live long in these pains."

At noon, being the Lord's day, he desired to be prayed for publicly; and called to his son, to read to him the foregoing meditations of death, which he did at several times; and he said, they refreshed and comforted him; and it was for such a time as this that he had drawn them up. They were also very affecting to those about him. He also repeated divers of them himself.

He said to his son, "I would not, for all the world, that I had my work of preparation for death to do now." About two o'clock, he called to his son to pray by him; which he did; and at the close of his prayer, added some of the petitions which the good man had prepared in his book for such a time. He then bid him go to the public worship; which he did, not thinking his father's end had been so near as it proved. In about an hour and a half, he returned, and found a great change. His voice was gone, and it appeared he was dying; but he did not groan, or make any complaint. His son kneeled down to speak some comfortable words to him in his dying conflict; to which he answered, "I shall be well presently," and scarce spoke a word more. The minister of the parish came in, and prayed with him, and commended his soul into the hand of the Almighty. He had just before put out his hand to a friend that came in to see him, by which it appeared he was sensible; but quickly after, while the minister was with him, about six of the clock, he breathed his last, June 12, 1709.

On Tuesday following, his corpse was carried on a mourning carriage to Wibunbury, attended by a great number of people. The captain of his company, who was major of the train-bands of the

county, attended the funeral with his company, put the drum in mourning, marched with their arms, and gave him several volleys over his grave.

Mr. Bromfield preached his funeral sermon on the text which he himself chose, Ps. ciii. 18, 14. *Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him; for he knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust.* The reason he gives for choosing that text was, because he had chosen that excellent psalm (as he calls it) for the subject of his morning meditations for a great while; and usually repeated it all to himself as soon as he awaked, before he rose: and these words particularly he thought very comfortable to a doubting, drooping soul. He had himself drawn up meditations upon those words, to the length of a sermon.

The minister, in the close of his discourse, spoke of him thus: "A good name has this our deceased brother left behind him; and a good character do all those deserve that are so diligent in the discharge of their duty, both to God and man, as he was. He gave proof of his love to God, by his constant resort to his house and ordinances, his affection to the prayers of the church, and devout joining in them, his attentive hearing the word read and preached, and his frequent and devout communicating; and he kept a constant course of religious exercise in his family; a thing too much neglected among us. I doubt not, but his worshipping of God in secret was daily and devout, agreeable to his care of family worship. He took great care that the Lord's day was kept holy, both by himself, and by his family; and further evidenced his love to God by his bold and ready appearing against profaneness and immorality."

He was a very useful man in his neighbourhood, being ready to do good to all, both rich and poor, according to his ability and opportunity. He was very happy in the love of his neighbours, was active and successful in the blessed work of peace-making among them; was just in his dealings, a faithful friend, a careful father, and a very affectionate husband; in a word, his conversation showed him to be a true lover of virtue and goodness, and a very serious Christian.

Upon his death-bed he was patient, and wholly resigned to the will of God, in a humble hope of his mercy in Christ; and at his departure, had the prayers of his minister, by whom his soul was commended into the hands of the Almighty, and into the state of blessed souls. I question not but that our deceased brother is received; for, *like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust.*

He was generally lamented at his death, as he had been universally beloved and respected by all that knew him while he lived. The members of par-

ament for the county, and other gentlemen of the
rst rank would visit him at his house. When the
oubles were in Ireland, Col. Cook's family lodged
t his house for some time, and always after ex-
ressed a great kindness for him; and he retained
mighty respect for that worthy Colonel, and his
amily, and friends. He made some verses to be
dded to the inscription on his grave-stone, if his
on thought fit; but this, says he, or any other, or
one at all, I leave to your discretion.

Lieutenant Richard Illidge died June 12, 1709,
ged seventy-two. In his life-time he had served
our sovereigns, three kings, and one queen, as a
ub-officer in the militia of this county, for the space
f near fifty years.

Now slain by death who spareth none,
And lies full low under this stone:
Take heed, and read, and thou shalt see,
As I am now so shalt thou be.
Rotting in dark and silent dust;
Prepare for death, for die thou must.

Life is uncertain, death is sure;
Sin is the wound, Christ is the cure.

MEMENTO MORI.

He was of a middle stature, strong and well set;
of a healthy constitution, comely visage, inclining
to feed, which made him spare in his diet, eating
little but at dinner.

When his friends told him, that if he should leave
off worldly business, and retire into privacy, he
would find it a melancholy sort of life; he answered:
"I thank God, my time never lies upon my hand,
I can cultivate the little garden of my soul, when I
have no other business, and I have good books for
my companions.—I may with shame and sorrow
(says he) look back upon an ill-spent life; my
childhood and youth were folly and vanity; my
riper years were mostly spent in carking and caring,
and seeking after the profits and pleasures of this
world; and I have too much neglected the main
business, my duty to God: Lord, I repent: Lord, I
believe, help thou my unbelief; free me from every
weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset me."