

the peace for the said Riding, to be prosecuted against according to law, and hereof fail not at your peril.

Given under our hands and seals the 22nd of May, in the 17th year of his Majesty's reign.

JOHN ARMITAGE. FRAN. WHITE.

JOHN KAY. J. N.

SOLILOQUIES.



MANY of Mr. Heywood's Soliloquies were composed on various events of his life, and are so interwoven with his history that they have necessarily been inserted in the preceding memoirs. Others relate more generally to his religious experience, and may be read with interest by Christians as descriptive of those spiritual feelings common to all the regenerated family of God. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The relation and comparison of religious experience have often proved an effectual means of encouraging weak believers, instructing young converts, and promoting the general welfare of souls. The spiritual experience of David as recorded in the book of Psalms, has been of incalculable benefit to the church of God in every succeeding age, and many who are now on their pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem are thankful for what the inspired Psalmist has declared of the "things God had done for his soul." One end of christian biography, and that too not the least important, is, that the present and future race of spiritual combatants may become acquainted with the conflicts of those who are now inheriting the promises, and with the means by which they "came off" more than conquerors." The following extracts from the remainder of Mr. Heywood's soliloquies, will therefore no doubt be acceptable to the pious reader.

The remarks inserted by Mr. Heywood on a blank leaf of the volume containing his soliloquies, will form a suitable introduction to the extracts. "I intend to write in this book some private soliloquies and ejaculations, wherewith my soul hath been very much delighted under the various pressures and burdens which have frequently encumbered me, and sat heavy on my spirits. I have experienced this divine act of meditation and self-argumentation to be the most sovereign way to dispel the

clouds of distempering thoughts from my mind, or to remove my backwardness to duties, or advance my thoughts heavenwards, or mortify my affections of a worldly and sinful nature. It is begun on the 10th of May, 1653."

SOLILOQUY I.

Advance thyself now, O my soul, be thou thyself and act a spirit's part. Reflect upon, return into thyself, and see how things go there. Hath God given thee these rational faculties and a self-discoursing power, and shall not these be exercised? Begin to confer with thy own heart, and thou shalt not want matter. Let the method be what it will, so that thou mayest profit thyself and gain advantage over thy spiritual foes. Look within thee and without thee, look below thee and above thee, and if there be not matter of meditation then I shall wonder. But surely if thou art not extremely wanting to thyself, this spiritual exercise will bring a return of full, new, and heart-refreshing supplies. O my soul, let me now stimulate thee to this course, whilst I charge thee not to be sluggish in it. Let not trivial matters interrupt thee, but constantly and conscientiously exercise thyself therein. I solemnly require thee, thou deceitful heart, do not here beguile me, do not plead excuses, do not make delays, but begin in good earnest; it is a business of great concern, and I adjure and command thee by the authority God hath given me over thee, to comply with the duty and come and act thy part. Loiter not in unprofitable formality or a vain offer, like the son that said, "I go, sir, and went not." I charge thee, my depraved and backward heart, in the name of God, and upon thy allegiance to thy dread Sovereign, to deal impartially with thyself, to arraign thyself at the bar of conscience, and to imitate, as much as may be, God's calling sinners to account at the general assizes. Keep back nothing now which shall then be revealed. Fear not to know the worst; it is better to know it here by thy own voluntary discovery, than to have such things brought up then, as thou wouldst give all the world to be concealed, if it were possible; it must be better to shame thyself here, where thou mayest be restored, than to be ashamed hereafter without remedy. O the benefit thou mayest get by communing with thy own heart! Hereby thou mayest come to know more of its secret wanderings, windings, and iniquitous turnings. Thou mayest take notice of thy progress in thy journey, of the decaying and rising of thy sensual desires, and of the revival of grace. Thou mayest know more of the method of Satan and the mystery of iniquity. Thy

heart may be blessed with suitable dispositions, as thou seest occasion, to mourn when thou dost not find things well and wisely conducted, and to rejoice when thou hast cause. Sure I am, this secret soul-soliloquy will prove a gainful trade, a sweet delicious feast, and a solemn delightful exercise, that will exhilarate thy spirits better than wine. Try this course, O my soul, and observe if it be not good for thee. See if thy graces do not increase by it, the power of thy sins diminish, and thy duties be better discharged. See if thou dost not enjoy more communion with God, and if others do not observe thy face to shine and thy ways to be more regular, by frequent conversing with God and thyself. By this means thou wilt spend thy days with more solace and delight, and live as in a little corner of heaven. Store up sweet and soul-refreshing comforts against an evil day. Inure thyself to exercise thy graces alone, and if God deprive thee of his saints, thou mayest enjoy the fellowship of God here, and think it no strange thing to remove to his immediate presence at death.

II.

Come, my soul, and let me feel which way thy pulse beats. Is it not heavenwards? and shouldst thou not be heavenly-minded? See what cause thou hast to mind thy God and an eternal state. Canst thou bring to thy recollection no heart-raising considerations to elevate thee heavenwards? What sayest thou? Are there no vestiges of divine distinguishing providences left upon thee? Are there no impressions of free grace experienced, fresh within thee? Then thou art much out of frame. Dost thou not find thyself lost in a labyrinth of God's mercies? Dost thou not feel thyself transported by an angelical admiration of God's bounty and compassion, and art thou not plunged into the depths of self-condemning indignation to see thy strange requitals? O that God should do so much *for thee*, and that thou shouldst do so much *against him*! as if thou wouldst strive with God, to see whether his loving-kindness or thy rebellion shall have the victory! Who but a churlish Nabal would be so ungrateful a requiter? He hath made thee; doth not that deserve thy homage? He hath kept thee from thy birth to the present moment; doth not that require some dutiful obedience? Ah, but thy Saviour hath died for thee and redeemed thee, without which thou hadst been lost for ever! Doth not that merit a thankful remembrance? He did not think his dearest heart's blood too dear for thee, and wilt thou think thy cordial thoughts too dear for him? Suppose the Lord had cast thee into hell, thou wouldst have roared out under thy pangs, and couldst not forget God's

hand of justice ; but now the Lord hath redeemed thee, and bestowed on thee many privileges, why shouldst thou forget his strong arm of mercy ? Poor soul, hast thou any thing to mind but thy God ? Is there any thing worth thinking of besides thy treasure ?

Tell me, O my soul, hast thou not sometimes upon the deliberate comparison of transitory vanities, (gilded over with the fairest gloss of happiness) with the bare naked excellence of soul-refreshing enlargements, which thou hast sometimes enjoyed from God ; hast thou not, I say, preferred this latter with its roughness, before the former with its attractions ? Hast thou not infinitely preferred the pleasures of grace before the pleasures of the world ? and wilt thou now return to the beggarly and weak elements of the world ? Wilt thou now go and counteract thy own persuasions by thy practices ? Nay, nay, my soul, exchange not gold for glass, leave not the tried substance for the shadow ; but come along, I'll lead thee by the hand, and let thee take a glance of what thou canst not fully know because of thy carnality. Or rather, take a full survey of outward sensible favours ; ask thy outward man, and it will tell thee, ask thy senses, and they will testify of multitudes of tender mercies. Propound some queries to thyself, and see what answer a well informed, rectified, and sanctified understanding will dictate upon the right discovery of thy present state. But, O my soul, beware of the ticklings of pride, arrogance, or vain-glory. Poor creature, tell me now what art thou ? A creature of God's making, the workmanship of the great and infinite God, the same God that made the holy angels and highest heavens ! But what creature art thou ? A man ; that is a mercy, God might have made thee a brute. But thou art a man, endowed with a living soul capable of felicity ; a rational and intelligent man ; God might have made thee a fool, an idiot to be scorned, derided and mocked by all ! But what sort of man art thou ? A Christian, one born within the pale of the visible church ! Thou mightest have been born among the rude Indians or savage Turks, and been either a gross idolater, to have adored the creature instead of the Creator, yea, to have worshipped the devil himself ; or have lived in a popish country : and what hopes can there be of salvation where means are wanting ? God hath brought thee up all thy days at the feet of Gamaliel, where light hath shone round thee as in a little Goshen, yea, it hath shone into thee which is best of all ! Thou art a Christian, not nominally only but really, I feel persuaded. Here stand gazing up into heaven, not into thyself : it was God's own work, and is marvellous in my eyes ! But

what kind of Christian art thou? Not of an inferior rank but a teaching Christian—a minister of the gospel. O what riches of grace are here! For whom hath God done all these observable things? Not for a prince, nor one descended of noble blood, nor for a subtle politician, eminent scholar, critical linguist, acute philosopher, profound mathematician, or learned divine; no, no, the Lord hath not bestowed these mercies on any such accounts; yet God hath made choice of thee, and made use of thee, yea, hath accounted thee faithful to bear his message to a wicked world. O what an infinite ocean of mercy is this! Were there not many thousands in England of more admirable natural abilities and acquired learning, some of whom were not permitted to enter upon these sacred studies, and so are incapable of being employed in the Lord's vineyard. Others are commissioned outwardly and qualified excellently with all external endowments, yet answer not to their call; instead of being faithful labourers they are fruitless loiterers, are wretchedly profane, and the ringleaders in every scene of iniquity, instead of leading their people heavenwards. But I see grace is free, and that alone hath made the difference. Should not God then have all the praise? And how canst thou express his praise more than in a due and diligent minding of thy God, waiting upon him, walking with him, and working for him?

III.

Raise up thyself, O my soul, and aspire in thy desires towards the highest heavens. Mount up like flames of fire with heat and height of zeal and love towards the chief good. What else can content and satisfy thee but thy God? Will creatures do it? O no. Dost thou not behold a vanity and vexatious quality in whatever is presented to thee? The heaven-born soul will overlook inferior objects, and, if it be itself, will trample under foot whatever is under the sun. Was my seraphic soul created for these things below? Can its desires be terminated on inferior objects? Was it shaped of the earth as my body, and must it return to the earth again? No, no, it comes from God, and to God must return or never be content. The misery of hell consists in exclusion from the chief good, and the souls in that land of darkness can never be satisfied. O my soul, where art thou but as in a present hell whilst separated from God? Thou art like little silly birds that wander from their nests, and lose themselves in woods and groves. Art thou not like Noah's dove that could not find a place adapted for a constant residence? or like a little rivulet that is left behind the proud, tempestuous tide, that runs and slides along

the even sands, and cannot rest till it returns again to be swallowed up in the mighty ocean? O my soul, be not thou a willing prisoner, but make trial whilst thy fetters are on thee, to soar aloft on the wings of faith and love; whilst on the stormy deep, put thyself forward towards the haven, and thou shalt find a happy gale of the spirit of grace to drive thee heavenwards. I bid thee not, my soul, make too much haste, or seek to break open the prison door, or pull down the wall, only look with longing expectation from the window God hath opened for thee. If thou art not wanting to thyself, thou mayest look through, by the eye of faith, towards the new Jerusalem which is above; as Daniel once did. When God sees good to set thee at liberty he will come unto thee, as to Peter, and strike off thy bolts, and gently open the gates and let thee out. Till then, labour to enjoy the presence of thy God, and employ thyself in acts of holiness till thou art taken hence and seen no more.

IV.

What a wretched life do I, poor creature, lead, who am tormented between hope and fear, suspended betwixt heaven and hell, and tortured between two thieves that come to steal my comforts from me—my own corruptions and Satan's temptations. Alas, I am almost weary of my life, my soul is giving up the ghost. O that I could say, "it is finished!" my sins finished, my sorrows finished, my work finished, my woe finished, my life finished; I would bid farewell to all sinful objects, my soul would be free from all corporeal organs, and I would take my leave of all carnal things, those enemies to God and destroyers of my desirable soul-comforts. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest," from all molesting cares, and hide myself from my enchanting enemies. Methinks I live as on a field of battle, where I hear the terrible noise of combatants, and clashing of warlike weapons. Methinks my darling soul stands just at the mouth of a destructive cannon, ready to be shattered to pieces every moment. Ah! how often doth my soul withdraw and leave my God, which makes him hide his face and bend his bow to shoot at me as an enemy: and though sometimes I cast down my arms and cry for mercy, yet I break my covenant with him and cast his laws behind my back. My greatest enemies are within, and these heart-wars and soul-dissensions are my greatest woes; if I were free from them, my soul would be serene and quiet. Methinks my heart is like Abraham's house, that had a Sarah and a Hagar in it, who could not well agree; an Isaac and Ishmael, who thwarted and contradicted each other. O my soul,

how long must thou be forced to hear the sound of the trumpet and the alarm of war? Must thou always see these sworn adversaries running upon and struggling with each other? The word of God doth quickly answer me, that the flesh and spirit will thus lust against each other, while we have bodies of flesh and regenerated souls united. It is so in thee, my soul, and it is thy happiness it is so and no worse. Thou thinkest thou hast great cause to complain, but thou hast also infinite cause to bless thy God for these heart-battles which are evidences of regeneration, means of thy deeper humiliation, and occasions of the manifestation of God's goodness, and wisdom, and power. O my soul, thou art abundantly indebted to free grace for these tokens of undeserved love, that the strong man armed does not keep secure possession, that God hath infused a living principle within thee, to incline thee towards heaven as thy nature doth towards hell. O never be at rest till corruptions have received their final doom; be not at truce or peace with any darling sin, for thou lovest most ground when thou art parleying with the enemy; when thou art tampering with him, he leads thee captive. Come, my soul, be valiant for the truth, put on the whole armour of God, and at last thou shalt prevail against thy foes, and have an everlasting triumph.

V.

O sad, afflicted, and agitated soul! Art thou so enamoured with the world as to make thee loth to leave it? What pleasure canst thou take in feuds and battles? Is not peace better than war? Is it not far better to be at home, under thy father's safe and succouring wings, free from all intestine disturbances and foreign invasions, than to be travelling thy journey, sometimes wet and battered with wind and weather of severe afflictions, and at other times overcome with the sultriness of a prosperous condition? One would think, O my degenerate soul, there would not be so much difficulty to persuade thee freely to lay down this house of clay. But I feel thou art too carnal and corrupt, and, like an angry child, unwilling to go to bed. It is true thou canst not leave it but when thy time is come; but shouldst thou not die daily, and be realizing death as if it were already at the door, as who knows but it is? Shouldst thou not always be prepared to die? Shouldst thou not still carry thy life in thy hand, because thou art not at thy own disposal? Thou art at the disposal of him who will not give thee an account of his proceedings; he will not gratify thee so much as to let thee know the length of thy days, or give thee a lease of thy life, lest it should breed presumption and nourish thy

security. Shouldst thou not therefore be trimming thy lamp, girding thy loins, standing on thy watch, and be ready whenever it shall please God to call? Argue thyself into a dying posture. 'Tis a matter of great moment to pass into eternity, and all a man's time from the cradle to the grave, were it stretched out to the length of the antediluvian patriarchs' lives, would be little enough to be employed in preparation for it. The happiness or misery of this precious and immortal soul depends upon the well or ill improvement of this inch of time. Well then, O my soul, if thy pilgrimage in this tabernacle of clay is spent in the enjoyment of God, O what a double heaven wilt thou have hereafter!

VI.

Sometimes I can remember, that through consciousness of my duty and sense of necessity, I have been drawn to my knees, when at the first my heart was dull, frozen, and stupid; but ere I was aware, I have been greatly enlarged, and have been carried away by the wings of the Spirit as in the chariot of Amminadib. But now woe is me! I felt a strong inclination, (as I thought) to engage in duty, and perceived some movements of a spirit of grace and supplication; but I sensibly discerned the withdrawing of my God by being left to sad, distracting, and disturbing thoughts. Discover to me, dear and gracious God, what is the cause of thy contending thus with me. I know it must be just, and I do first acquit thee before I do expostulate. Is it because I lie under the guilt of some fresh committed sin, or some omitted duty? Is it because at other times I did not watch over my own heart, but gave too much sway to my extravagant affections, and freely entertained wandering thoughts, and now thou wilt punish one sin by another, and make my sin, my judgment? O my soul, what mercies hast thou sinned against, and what miseries art thou now involved in! Had any one ever more cause to be humbled, and was ever any one less humbled? Did ever mercy and folly meet in such degrees in any soul? Alas, dost thou get any good in thus departing from thy God? Art thou not undone without him, and is there not necessity to approach him? Come then, up and be doing, be resolved in the case, and trifle not about things of such moment. Thou must be serious about it, speak to thy heart and ask it, if it will not practise what is so much for its good. If it refuse, provoke it to it; if it draw back urge it on; if it linger, like Lot in Sodom, hasten it forward, let it not stay, nor make delays, nor plead excuses. The longer thou deferrest this duty the more dangerous is thy state. Fall on thy knees this morning, see what God will give thee,

and O do thou give thyself, thy heart, thy hand, thy head, thy all to God.

VII.

O my soul, thou hast been playing the prodigal, and grown exceedingly sensual and grovelling; thou hast been indolent in seeking after things above, and hast been thinking to take up thy rest in things below. Dost thou not hear the voice of God, saying, "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest?" What satisfaction hast thou gained from creatures, as distinct from the Creator? Have not the most hopeful ways to settle and compose thyself proved very ineffectual? God bids thee "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils;" and as to worldly means they have proved the greatest disturbers of thy peace. Are not the church's troubles many and likely to be more? Are not thy own troubles many and likely to increase? Art thou not molested from without and from within? Art thou not troubled to see the work of God go on so slowly, and the work of man to be so successful? Doth it not trouble thee to see the afflictions of Joseph and the scattered stones of Jerusalem? Doth it not trouble thee to see the child of Reformation in the birth, and yet no strength to bring forth? Doth it not trouble thee to see the Lord of life and glory so little regarded, and to hear the name of God lamentably blasphemed? Doth it not trouble thee to see so few converted, and so many hardened by the means of grace? to see so many backslide and quite desert the right paths of religion? to see so many loathe the purest and plainest truths and follow after fables? Doth it not trouble thee to see so many precious saints grow cold and dull, and quite relinquish their first love? Doth it not trouble thee to see saints look so shyly one upon another, as if they were not any thing related, because they differ in their judgments? Do not the wicked rejoice in their contentions, and the weak take just offence? Doth it not trouble thee that all these things do trouble thee no more? If thou dost look no farther than thyself, there will appear a sea of personal troubles. Art thou not often troubled that thou art not better qualified for thy work, and that it is no more successful, that sinners are not called and converted, and that saints are not comforted and confirmed? Do not thy bowels yearn over poor ignorant, hard-hearted people, and for some wicked and wretched souls that know not their right hands from their left in spiritual things? Do not these things beat up a march for the removal of thy pitched tent? O my soul, methinks these things should shame thee out of thy security, and provoke thee to industry. Alas, my soul, there are many things amiss in thee that ought to be

amended, many things are perishing that should be repaired, many graces dying that should be recruited, and many lusts reviving that should be mortified. Surely thy work is great, thy time short, and thy strength small ; therefore apply to the business with diligence. Be serious in matters of eternity, be resolute for God in his work, be upright with God in his ways, and let all thy actions testify, thou mindest thy everlasting interests more than thy transitory pleasures. Let graces have their perfect work, Christ alone his due esteem, and whatever is against him be perfectly hated in thy breast: at last thy glory shall make amends for all thy misery.

VIII.

How long is it, O my soul, since thou didst delightfully enjoy the presence of thy God in secret? Time hath been, when there was sweet intercourse of love between thy God and thee, when thy heart was melted with tenderness and affection. Time hath been, when the Lord gave thee some special testimonies of his unchangeable love and let thee see thy interest in himself, when he transported thee with the sacred communications of his Spirit, so that thou hast been loth to part with divine employments. But of late there hath been a great strangeness betwixt thee and God, private duties and public exercises have dwindled mostly into outward forms. Will not Nadab and Abihu tell thee that the fire of God's anger is hottest near the altar? Art thou so much exercised in public employments and yet neglectest private and secret humiliation? Dost thou think the one will obtain a dispensation for the neglect of the other? Because thou art exercised much publicly, shouldst thou not so much the more prepare in private? Thou hast said, (and dost thou not believe thyself?) that a man is so far a Christian, as he is one in secret between God and his own soul, and that secret acts of religion are precious tokens of sincerity. Thou mayest do much before men, pray zealously, preach affectionately, and take much pains to divide the word of God aright, and yet all be tainted with the secret leaven of hypocrisy; yea, if thou dost not make conscience of private as well as public duties, thy ends are very liable to suspicion, thy case dangerous, and thy heart too, too deceitful. Thou mayest study hard to obtain human accomplishments, preach in the best manner thou canst to gain credit with men, and pray with fluent expressions to be heard of men, and all this for thy maintenance; but if that be all, alas, pity thyself, and lay thy state to heart. Why dost thou make others believe thou enjoyest something of God in secret, if it be not so? Doth not God scan all thy ways and

know whether things be as they seem? True, indeed, thou mayest cast dust before the eyes of the most eminent saints and make them believe thou art a close walking Christian, and yet remain a licentious atheist in thy closet. God cannot be mocked as men may, nor doth he see as man seeth. Fair words and a false heart will not pass current in the court of heaven. Dost thou not sometimes mention secret communion with God before others? Now, where is it? Wilt thou lie to the Lord, and horribly profane his sacred name? Nay, my soul, do not so wickedly. Art thou not ashamed that others should think better of thee than thou art? Ah, blush when thou dost mention a soul's sweet enjoyment of God, of which thou thyself hast so little experience. Be ashamed of thy negligence in the performance of duties, or thy ready entertainment of strange distracting thoughts therein. Of all the burdens that oppress me, this hard and stupid heart is the greatest load, and is the most dangerous, except the Lord work a miracle in raising the dead.

IX.

Consider, O my soul, what are the actions thou shouldst perform as a preparation for the sabbath which is so near, on which thou hopest to enjoy the gracious presence of thy God. Thou art to preach to God's people to-morrow, preach to thyself to-day. God hath appointed thee to dispense the mysteries of the gospel to others, and do not those mysteries concern thyself as well as them? Wouldst thou be willing that thy people should be saved, and care not if thyself be damned? Is not heaven large enough for all? Art thou so mad as to provide a rich feast, though served up in mean dishes, and to invite others to eat thereof, and wilt thou thyself famish and pine away? Will not the feast prove delightful to thy taste and refreshing to thyself? Mayest thou not then with greater confidence invite thy people to partake abundantly of this spiritual provision, and tell them how good and wholesome it is from thy own experience? The celestial bread of this feast, this divine manna that descends from heaven, is enough to feed all true Israelites for ever. If any want, it is not through deficiency in the treasure, but the insufficiency of the conveyers to poor needy souls. If any die by thirst, it is not that there is a want of the water of life, the fountain is full and overflowing, but because, either with Hagar, men want light to discover the well, or, with the woman of Samaria, they want a bucket to draw with. Well, my soul, seeing there is enough, get thy share; thy people will have none the less but more. Wilt thou not then speak as having been taught those saving truths thou deliverest? When thou dost

mention truths indifferently and heedlessly as if thou gavest not credit to them thyself, how canst thou believe that others will embrace them? Surely if thou failest in this, thou failest in thy duty. Is this course any more than the necessary duty of a Christian? and dost thou cease to be a Christian when thou dost begin to be a minister? God forbid. Dost thou not sometimes instruct the people that their duty, when they have heard the word, is to ruminate upon it; and shouldst not thou do so much the more, seeing there is the concurrence both of thy general and particular calling?

X.

O my soul, hast thou not much to do in preparation for the sabbath? Thou art to pray on behalf both of thyself and people to-morrow. Go to thy God, lie low before him, commence thy suit, and wrest a blessing from his hands by importunity. Thou hast often met with God's presence in his work, but doth that engage him in thy favour so that he should not act freely? He hath never left thee to thyself, but doth that evince either that thy piety or abilities are the stronger? or that, if God should leave thee, thou wilt be able to go on as successfully as before? No, no, if he hath been thy helper, thou art the more beholden to free grace. O praise him for these former supplies of his grace, prize at a higher rate the influences of his Spirit, admire him for those sweet tokens of love sent in public ordinances to thee, and pray hard for his assisting and accepting grace to-morrow. Plead promises with him, bewail thy inability without him, wrestle for a blessing from him, and do not let him go till thy heart be affected as a presage of future mercies. Shouldst thou not likewise, O my soul, put in a word for thy people? If God enlarge thee ever so much in speaking, and give thee a wide and open door of utterance, what good will that do except he bow the ears of the people, and give them a door of entrance? The rain of heaven may fall and yet the earth remain barren, the seed may be sown yet never come to perfection, except God cause it to fructify. The spiritual husbandman may dig and take much pains to little purpose; the plants of the Lord springing in the church will never bear much fruit, except they be well rooted below and well watered above;—and can mortal man do this? If the word come to man only by the strength of man, the power of man can easily resist it; but if it come with God's power it shall prevail; then the security of man cannot abide its force, and the wilful impenitency and obstinacy of man cannot counteract or withstand it; it will prove itself the power of God unto salvation. Apply to the throne of grace, take no denial, and God will own thy

prayers and crown thy pains with desired success in the conversion of souls.

XI.

Advance thyself once again, my soul, and mount up heavenwards; up and be doing, and delight thyself with anticipations of thy rest. Look upon heaven as a reality, and view thy property therein; survey the delights thereof, and see if all these things will not affect thy heart with admiration, and transport thee with holy ecstasy beyond thyself? Let others dream of golden mountains and glittering sands, and hang their hopes on castles in the air; yet keep thou to this orthodox truth, that heaven is above,—that the celestial city hath foundations, whereas the earth hath none but hangs on nothing in the air. Do thou fix the anchor of thy hope beyond the mortal veil of flesh, in the vast and boundless ocean of eternity. Bathe thyself in the rivers of pleasure, and see if it will not set thee longing for full enjoyment. O my soul, what a life mightest thou live if heaven were as much in thy thoughts as earth, if thy mind were lifted up above this inferior world, conversing with the Lord of life and glory. Say now, what is it thou canst desire that heaven cannot afford? If thou wouldst have a confluence of all good things, behold enough to satisfy the enlarged desires of the most capacious mind. Whither wouldst thou aspire? Canst thou be exalted higher than into the highest room? But mayest thou enjoy this felicity? Yes, surely; God is serious in offering it, why then should I question it? Did God ever dissemble to obtain proselytes? Harbour not such a blasphemous thought. Yes, he will give it to some, but may I have any share therein? Why not thou, O my soul? Hath he made such large and liberal promises to give a kingdom to his flock, and why not to thee? But I am a poor sinful, wretched, worthless creature? What then? Art thou beyond the reach of free grace? Canst thou think to be accepted on thy own account? Was ever any one admitted for his deserts, or excluded for want of merit? Are not those thrust out who come to buy heaven, and such received as come to beg entrance? The poor receive the gospel, which is the kingdom of heaven, and that kingdom of heaven will receive them. Canst thou but get to be poor in spirit, God will make thee rich in faith; the poorer thou art in thyself the richer in him. If poverty were all, that I know would be dispensed with; but I am not only poor but a bankrupt, being many thousand talents in debt in the book of heaven; and dost thou think that will hinder? Is not he that is willing to make thee rich, able also to pay thy debt? Did Christ die to enrich thee and not to set thee free?

Or dost thou think thy debts are beyond the price of his infinite satisfaction? Are thy garments filthy? Fear not, he hath change of raiment; all he bids thee do is, to be willing to part with thine and change them for his glorious robes; and art thou not desirous of that? Ah, yes, fain enough long since, God knows. My sins have been my burden, and shall I not thank the hand that takes off such a load? O my soul, wouldst thou not have the Lord Jesus on his own terms, to be thy Sovereign as well as Saviour, to be thy lawgiver and to rule thee according to his will, though against thy carnal bias? My soul, if thou art willing, he is very willing; then the engagement is made, and nothing now shall part us asunder. Thou hast the Lord firm enough in his word, the writings are made in the scriptures, the debt is cancelled, the promises ratify it, the oath of God seals it, and the blessed Trinity confirm it by all their united acts for thy salvation; the saints in heaven and earth are legal witnesses. Hath not God wrought something in thee above and beyond nature, and doth he not act towards thee as if he meant to save thee? Else, what mean those strong convictions thou once hadst, taking thee from all thy carnal rests? What mean those pangs of regeneration formerly, and those constant warrings in thy breast against Satan? What mean that fearfulness to offend God, carefulness to walk according to his revealed will, those withdrawals of thy heart from sublunary vanities and resting on the chief good? Surely these footsteps of free grace and traces of undeserved love upon thy heart, indicate more than a common work. Look on heaven as thy own, and rejoice therein as thy peculiar portion. Will not the heir of an estate be delighted with the consideration of what he shall hereafter enjoy? And wilt not thou, O my soul, delight thyself in heaven though at some distance? Advance thyself and soar heavenwards in panting ejaculations.

XII.

Thou hast now been, my soul, to visit a dear friend on a sick bed, and hast delighted thyself in holy conference about matters of great concern. Follow those tender sensations thou hast felt, until thou art as full of comfort as thy heart can hold. Miss not so fair an opportunity, but spread thy sails, for now a gale of grace blows, so that the ship of the soul may be conveyed nearer the haven. Blow up the small spark into a flame, for it may do thee much good in consuming thy corruptions, and thawing into godly sorrow thy hard, frozen, and icy heart. It may be of use in warming and kindling thy cold and indifferent affections. It is true, alas! that it is only as a little spark

compared with a mighty ocean; but is not God omnipotent? Can he not preserve as well as create grace in the heart? Then fear not, O my soul, all the enemies of thy salvation; they may disturb thee, but cannot ruin thee. Christ who "is mighty to save," hath taken the government of the world on his own shoulders; he bears up the pillars of his church, and preserves all his people; he can "save to the uttermost," because he can keep to the utmost extremity, yea, and beyond the utmost malice of the fiends of hell; they are but finite, he is infinite. If, upon solid grounds, thou believest thyself to be a partaker of grace, or if any spark of it be in thee, that divine nature shall not be lost. Blessed be that God who hath devised an extraordinary method for the salvation of poor souls, and doth resolve to carry them through by his almighty arm. My soul is the Lord's deposit, in safe custody, and I am persuaded that "he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." My spiritual life may be hid from me, but it is safe enough if it be "hid with Christ in God." He that hides can surely find, though I cannot, and make me so to find my God that I shall never lose sight of him for ever.

XIII.

What changes are there, O my soul, in this thy passage to eternity! What sudden alterations dost thou experience in a little time! Thou art travelling through a wilderness, wherein the way is hills and dales. No sooner dost thou pass over one mountain of opposition in thy journey, than thou art involved in the contrary extreme of a low condition. Sometimes thou art sinking in deep mire, and then again thou art set upon the rock that is higher than thou; sometimes the meridian sun doth enlighten the Goshen of my soul, and then again black Egyptian darkness overspreads me. My God sometimes, for reasons of his own and for ends best known to himself, doth leave me to seek far for spiritual evidences, so that I doubt whether I have any spiritual life at all. My pulse at times beats very slowly heavenwards, nay, I give up myself as dead: yet Christ comes and tells me, I am not dead but sleeping. Ah! thought I, this is a dead sleep: canst thou awake me? Then came my merciful Saviour and subdued my unbelief with a soul-reviving word, saying, "Come forth." Then I felt as Peter, James, and John, on the mount when Christ was transfigured, willing still to be in such a place and state. I thought I was as with the two disciples going to Emmaus, my heart burnt within me when I heard him speaking. Never did a poor fatigued traveller, in a hot summer's day, find such a shadow to shelter his

wearry body. I was as happy as Jonah under his gourd, but Jonah's gourd was quickly gone and so was mine. Then I seemed to myself in a worse state than before. What was the cause of the change I know not, but I partly guess that some secret sin was the worm that gnawed the vitals of my spiritual comforts. Ah sin ! must thou always come to interrupt me in my spiritual enjoyments ? Shall I always carry in me a proud, hard, sensual, backsliding heart ? Will these corruptions always take away my communion with God ? Must weariness and distracting thoughts still prevail against me ? It is a hard case, that God the owner of my soul cannot bear rule in his house as he pleaseth, but these unmannerly lusts will always be intruding, and when he thrusts them out and bolts the door, my treacherous heart within opens to Satan without. But I must not despair, for the Lord will help me at the last, and I shall sing triumphant songs when he hath delivered me out of the hand of all my enemies.

XIV.

What a great disproportion is there, O my soul, betwixt a life in glory and in this present state, though in the kingdom of grace ! There is nothing here but sinning and suffering ; there is nothing there but singing and triumph. These sins of mine may accompany me in all my natural, civil, and spiritual actions here, and attend me to my death-bed ; but that is the furthest they shall go, they shall leave me when the soul leaves the body ; sin can no more go with me to heaven, than one spark of true grace shall be thrust down to hell. O my soul, thou canst scarce obtain a day or an hour to spend it totally without some trouble, or free from vain-distracting thoughts in communion with God ; but it shall be otherwise in the world above. Fear not, a time will come, when no ignorance shall becloud thy understanding, no perverseness shall militate against the rational acts of thy reformed will, no irregularity shall withdraw thy well-turned affections out of their right course of holy and honourable devotion. Thy weak and brittle memory, that used to forget what is good and to be tenacious of evil, shall then discharge its duty, and easily recollect what shall substantiate God's works of wonder, and prove the security of thy own felicity. My soul, thou wilt not then complain of God's withdrawals from thee, of his shutting out thy prayers, or rather praises. Thou wilt not then bemoan the loss of the light of his countenance, or the hidings of his face in anger, or withdrawing himself behind the curtain, or wrapping himself up in a thick cloud, so that thy prayers cannot pass through. No,

thy God will there say to thee once for all, that he is well pleased with thee for his Son's sake. Thou wilt have no need to fear backsliding as thou often didst here; no, he that hath brought thee through many changes, will keep thee there above and without a change; he that is himself immutable will make thee so too. Thy case will be far better than Adam's in paradise, whose white robe of innocence was soon changed to a dismal garb of depravity. God gave him a power to stand only if he would, but he will give thee both the will and the power of keeping thy firm station. He that gives thee change of raiment will never change thy raiment; he that clotheth thee with linen clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, will never divest thee of thy garments, which have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. O my soul, when thou hast been washed in the water of sanctification, that issued from the blessed side of Christ when hanging on the cross, how often, alas! hast thou returned to thy swinish wallowing in the mire, and then again the Lord hath pitied and purified thee. How often hast thou resolved against corruptions, and then broken thy bonds, and made new work for thy soul again to renew its repentance! Thus thou dost spend thy days as in a circle, sometimes in offending thy God, and then getting reconciled, sinning again and then being reconciled again; it may be so here, but shall not be so hereafter. If thou dost but once enter eternity, thou mayest there bathe thy soul in sweet delights that shall never end, and account it the perfection of thy happiness, that there will be no end of thy perfection, happiness, and glory. Thou shalt meet no more with stagnant pools of waters that might contaminate thy soul, but drink abundantly of those rivers of pleasures that are at God's right hand, and flow for evermore. These things will thy God do for thee and not forsake thee.

XV.

Methinks, I hear the sad complaint of ancient prophets revived and pathetically uttered, by the servants of God in the ministry at this day: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" This, alas! is the current language of the most sensible and conscientious ministers, though I could desire it were my case alone. I should be freely content, yea, very glad if the work were done by any, though I had no share in the praise thereof; so far am I from envying such as are successful in the good work. But alas! this is the common lot of many beside myself. Ah, sad is the case and much to be lamented! for by it God loseth his glory,

people lose their souls, and ministers their pains. God I know can get much glory to his justice by the destruction of souls; but this is not so much for preachers' consolation, nor the advancement of free grace. And must poor ministers expend their property and weary out their bodies, must they pray and preach, read and study, night and day, with many apprehensions and tears, and the result of all be nothing else but the damnation of souls? Shall we exert ourselves to the utmost in accommodating truths to our people's ears, seek to find out acceptable words, waste our lungs, injure our health, and exhaust our spirits in spreading before our people the richly furnished table of the gospel, together with a view of their forlorn state, and with seriousness in the name of Christ invite and urge them to partake freely or else they will perish; and yet for all this people be no better? This damps our courage, and sinks our spirits, to see our hopes disappointed, our ends thwarted, and our designs frustrated, so that we are almost ashamed to own our work. I have sometimes scrupled whether I could with a clear conscience receive any wages from my people, seeing I benefit them so little. It is a heavy case; if we look about us on one side, there is a set of boon companions who spend their days in mirth, and out of compliment once a month, it may be, attend on the public ordinance; these are far out of the reach of the word, except we could speak so loudly that they could hear us at their alehouse bench. Others come ordinarily, but they either sleep their time away or stare it out, and with the adder stop their ears and will not hear the charmer's melodious tune that might rouse them out of their security. Others either audaciously outface the clearest truths of God, or loathe the heavenly manna. Some smother any convictions of heart by profane practices. Others with whom we have taken much pains, of whom we have conceived good hopes, from whom we expected much fruit to God's glory; these alas! that were so forward in religion, turn out of the way and embrace novel things, dote upon vanities, and follow after lies; and if any wind of doctrine come they are quickly carried over deck into a sea of error. It is a sad thing to see our people seduced before our eyes, and we know not how to help it. It is a painful spectacle to witness our dearest, natural, civil, and as we hoped, our christian friends that professed much love to us, as the Galatians to Paul, now railing upon us with the most opprobrious and reviling nicknames, and saying, they are now set at liberty from those insulting priests and Babylonish enchanterers. All this aggravates our grief. Should not all the ministers in the nation expostulate with God, and earnestly desire him to

show the cause of his contending with them? It is the bitterest cup a poor minister can taste, except it be hell itself, when he must study, preach, pray, and be very conscientious in the discharge of ministerial duties, and all to sink men deeper in misery, to make them more inexcusable, and their condemnation more intolerable. Our doctrine is generally a savour of life, but may prove a savour of death through men's corruptions. God departs by degrees. The effectual power of God may be removed from his ordinances, first, in refusing a converting power to them; then he may remove some candlesticks and leave us in twilight, and at last quite vanish out of sight: or else he may extinguish all the lights and so leave the poor nation involved in darkness. This is sad; but if we discharge our duties as ministers, be diligent in watching over our people's souls, our labour will return to our own bosom to our eternal advantage; though we may be disappointed, and Israel be not gathered, yet if we be found in Christ, we shall be glorified, and that will be compensation for our sorrows.

XVI.

Return again, my soul, into thine own bosom, and search the secret conclaves of thy heart. How happy wast thou in the sweet enjoyment of thy God! How joyful wast thou when the whispers of God's comforting Spirit told thee of thy interest in Christ, the pardon of thy sins, and saving of thy soul! But how sad shouldst thou now be when all these things are hid from thine eyes! Thy fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the Spirit, did rejoice thy heart; but now, alas! my soul is like a moaning turtle-dove deprived of her mate. Once I can remember, upon good and solid grounds I could call Christ my dear and much loved friend, my elder brother, and he did take it well at my unworthy hands; but now, methinks, I dare not speak unto him, because I have spoken so much against him. He may justly speak against me in his fury, and vex me in his sore displeasure. I dare not now call him my God, lest I should miscall him, and he be angry with me for using such a title. I dare not call him to me for my help, lest instead of a friend he show himself an enemy, and tear my soul in pieces like a lion. He hath already withdrawn himself, he hides his face and writes bitter things against me, and makes me to possess the sins of my life and heart. Methinks I could well take up those sad and bitter complaints of those holy men of God in scripture, Job and David; but alas! how short am I of them in sorrow for the Lord's displeasure. Methinks I could mourn my Lord's departure in the words,

but cannot with the heart of Christ, when in the sorest agony that ever the sun perceived, he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But there is this great difference, he spoke with a confident persuasion of his relation to God the Father (being his eternal Son in whom he was even then well pleased,) but I dare not affirm my interest in the Lord. To the latter part of the sentence I have reason to subscribe, but the former I cannot fully appropriate; I have lost my evidence, yet may the Lord help me to keep near to him by a close adherence. I will not quite despond in mind, renounce my hopes, and give up my all as lost; for suppose the work never was right, and grace was never wrought, yet there is hope if I do now begin the work anew. I dare not call in question God's truth and faithfulness, nor must I deny what God hath done for my poor soul; I will not say, "Is his mercy clean gone for ever, and will he be favourable no more?" I hope I shall acknowledge the Lord's infinite mercy though he condemn me, and affirm against all atheistical thoughts and diabolical insinuations, that God is true to his part of the covenant, but I have been most false and perfidious in mine; I alone am the cause of this my sorrow. Should God not only hide his face for awhile, but make all my days in the flesh dark and dismal, and at last exclude me from his presence for ever, I could find no fault with him, I must necessarily justify the Lord; for he is "holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works" of justice as well as mercy. But, O my soul, be of good cheer, raise thy hopes and consider whom thou hast to deal with—an infinite God, and not a mortal man, and therefore one who hath the best design in bestowing his spiritual mercies. Suppose the Lord frown now, he may smile hereafter; though he be angry he may be pacified, his wrath endureth for a moment, but his loving-kindness is everlasting. This is but a storm raised by the vapours of thy sins, it will quickly be blown over, and God will return. He withdraws but for thy good, to make thee prize the means of grace more. Perhaps he doth it to convince thee of thy sloth and sensuality, to animate thee to future diligence, to deter thee from future backsliding, or to try thy truth and sincerity. Wait awhile and thou wilt see he will shine upon thy poor, forlorn, and sad condition, and restore comforts to thee notwithstanding all this mourning. In the mean time, my soul, be silent, shut thy mouth, accuse not God, repine not at his dispensations, submit to his will, and drink the bitter cup which God hath prepared for thee; perhaps he may mingle some honey with the gall. But if the Lord should draw thee all the way through fire, darkness, and death, yet if he lead thee to

peace, light, and life at last, he will be a perfect Saviour and thou an infinite gainer; heaven will make amends for all. The sharper thy way the sweeter will be thy home, and the length of the road in the wilderness will give a better relish to Canaan's milk and honey.

XVII.

Stir up thyself, O my forsaken soul, and run to God. Shame upon this indolent humour! It will slay my soul and strengthen my corruptions, it will revive my sins and crucify my graces. Go to God, my soul, the guilt of many conscience-wasting sins are upon thee, both of omission and commission; and is it not dangerous to sleep in such a state? Can it be safe to be in rebellion against the King of heaven, who can crush thee to nothing in a moment by a word or a touch? Is there not unspeakable hazard in resting without a reconciled God? How knowest thou but he may send thee out of the world before the day dawn; and is it not a matter of some moment to go into eternity especially in this thy great uncertainty? Dost thou not fear this great and mighty Jehovah, who, after he hath killed the body, can cast both body and soul to hell? If a strong man armed should stand at thy bedside vowing thy death, couldst thou sleep quietly? Yet he could not do thee a thousandth part of the evil the Lord can do: there is no greater happiness than to have God thy friend, and no greater misery than to have him thy enemy. Give him then no rest day or night until he hear, and hearing, help, and helping, bring a suitable remedy to thy restless state. Tell him, O my soul, what he himself hath said, what Christ hath suffered, and urge him with all the golden, gracious, precious promises in his sacred book. Tell God, thou hast deserved the flames of his justice for ever; but ask him if he delighteth not to show mercy? Tell him thou art not worthy to be called a son; but ask him if he will not admit thee once again into his family, to be amongst his lowest servants? Tell God all the odious circumstances of thy sins, that thou mayest be vile in thy own eyes; but ask him if he delights not in pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin? Expostulate the case thus with God, and spread thy cause before him. Let God perceive by thy groans that though thou art a sinner, yet thou art a repenting sinner; though a prodigal, yet a returning prodigal. As thy offences have been against light and strong convictions; so let thy repentance be full of light and strong resolutions.

As thou hast used means to draw thyself to sin, so now use arguments to drive thyself to God. As thou hast met temptations, and courteously shaken hands with Satan's suggestions;

so now bestir thyself to get rid thereof and bid an everlasting farewell to them. Commit thyself to God, and let nothing satisfy but the enjoyment of his presence. Use all appointed means to attain this good end. Pray, read, and meditate till thou find him whom thou lovest. But make not thy duties thy saviours, for so they will prove thy destroyers. Do what thou canst, but trust in nothing that thou dost; lay all the stress, both for acceptance and assistance, upon the grace of God in Christ. Though thou deservest to be hated notwithstanding all thy best performances, for thine own sake, yet perhaps he may save thee and delight in thee, for the sake of the Beloved of his own bosom, and satisfy thee with the discovery of his love in due time, and never leave thee comfortless again.

XVIII.

Come once again, my soul, and let me bring thee to the touchstone, lest God hereafter try thee and thou be faulty. Are thy graces become more in number and degree than formerly? Are thy corruptions weaker than before? Is thy heart softer and holier than it was the last year, month, or week? Are thy affections nearer heaven and more delighted in thy God? Is thy judgment sounder, clearer, and more raised than heretofore? Dost thou see a greater vanity in inferior objects and a greater excellency in Christ, grace, and gospel mysteries? Is thy conversation more divine, testifying thy nearer approach to heaven? What sayest thou, are these things thus in thee, and dost thou feel thyself in such a posture? Methinks thou art like poor Israel in the wilderness that was still travelling for forty years, but gained little ground, that went about this and the other hill and came again to the same place; so my soul is trudging on and gets not forward, and for one step forward sometimes goes three back. Methinks my soul is like a lazy scholar that comes awhile to school, and then is taken off, or plays the truant, and loseth all that ever he had learned; so my truant soul begins a little to follow its business, but something takes it off, and then there is a return to its former state of indolence. Sometimes I have taken much pains with this dull and heavy heart of mine to raise it heavenwards, and when I have got it to some degree of heavenly elevation, down it falls again. No sooner do I weed out of the field of my barren heart the tares of sin, than it is quickly overgrown again with sensual cogitations. For shame, my soul, dost thou not see that thy inferiors in years, who set out long after thee, have left thee far behind? Some that had not such means of growth have, by their industry, attained to more soli-

dity of comfort, stability in grace, certainty of faith, and fervency of spirit. New converts are fresh and lively, raised more in their affections, more constant in their communion with God, more steady in their holy conversation, and more filled with sweet experience of God's love to their souls. Alas! must thou be still complaining of thy revolting and backsliding heart? Must thou lament thy state and spend thy days in mournful elegies? Shouldst thou not have taken thy flight into the more noble and elevated parts of christianity, and soul-transporting enjoyments of thy God? Shouldst thou not have been delighting thyself in anticipations of eternity, and rising in holy wishes and longings for thy rest? Shouldst thou not by this time have trodden Satan under foot, bid defiance to thy desperate foe, and been rid of thy baneful strong corruptions that haunt thee? But, alas! how unstable art thou thus to retreat, advance, and then retreat again. How mournful is it to spend thy days in lamentable strains, sometimes up and sometimes down, and often at a loss, and far to seek for peace, comfort, and a sense of pardon! How long must it be thus with thee? When will it be that I shall hear thee say, as good old Simeon, "Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation?" When will my soul be settled in a firm posture, my heart as full of spiritual joy as it can hold, and nothing wanting but the breaking down of this wall of flesh, that I may be in my Father's palace rejoicing in him and with him for ever? Ah! must I never see the happy day, when I may bring God more glory, and be more useful in my place and calling? Lord, help me to mend my pace, and run my race with more delight, and press towards the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

XIX.

Ah, little did I think, my soul, thou wouldst have been so long from God and longed so little for communion with him! But now I see something of the boundless depth of my deceitful heart; who can know it? Full often has God's blessed Spirit spoken loud in thy deaf ears, saying, return, return; but thou hast stopped thy ears and strenuously resisted, quenched, and grieved the Holy Spirit. Sometimes thou hast been willing to listen to the suggestions of God's Spirit but flesh and blood and carnal reasonings have diverted thy intentions. Sometimes thou hast begun with serious sadness to weep and pray, and exercise faith in the Lord, but hast been taken off by violent distractions, and vehement wanderings of thy heart. Come now, my soul, what is it that is wont to keep

thee from this duty? Is it the guilt of many sins that drives thee from the Lord? Hast thou not the greater need on that account to approach unto him, who hath enjoined all weary and heavy laden souls to repose themselves on him? Must not thy sin be laid on Christ or on thyself? and whether dost thou think can better bear it, infinite God-man, or finite worm-man? Or doth thy long absence from God affright thee and thy strangeness to him terrify thee? The rather and sooner must thou come on that account. Is there any good to be had in distance from him? and wilt thou be more prepared another time than now? Art thou afraid that God is so displeased with thee that he will not receive thee? Consider, hath not God often said, he will heal backsliders and receive offending prodigals? Venture then, and again put God to it, thou shalt find him faithful to his promises. Was ever any rejected that repented; or canst thou find examples to testify God's unkindness? Nay, nay, my soul, recollect thy own experience, and that may keep thee from discouragement. Repair to God, for that is indispensable, and let not a supposition of thy rejection make thee run into inevitable destruction. Believing is a venture, and will not a merchant venture much on a probability? A may-be, is ground enough for faith on scripture precedents. Who knows but God may return and leave a blessing behind?

XX.

God's people are now in public and I am deprived of their society; but it is by reason of my incapacity. My heart is with them and fain would this frail body follow; but at present God hath clipped my wings and manacled my legs, bolted my chamber door, and made that my prison which was wont to be my palace. But God is just and deals most righteously with me. My heart was formerly imprisoned in his service; now my body is imprisoned from his service in public. I looked not to my feet when I trod the way to his house; now he keeps my feet from treading in it. My heart was at home sometimes when my body was exercised in public duties; now my body is at home, and my heart is, I hope, with God and his saints in the courts of his house. I have made the Lord's day too much like a week day in sinning and neglecting God's service; now he makes it like a week day in my being absent from public worship. I have not made sabbath day duties a delight; now God hath made the sabbath day wearisome through pain. My soul hath not returned from its rest in sinning: now God keepeth my body from rest in suffering. My church devotion has been too much confined to form; now my heart devotion is con-

fined to my chamber. I appeared in public what I was not in private; now I cannot appear in public any part of what I am. As I have done, so God hath done to me, though not according to my deserts, but in faithfulness hath he afflicted me, and in much tenderness too; for though he hath excluded me from public yet not from private communion. Though the promise of his presence be to two or three met in his name in public, yet he excludes not single persons from the blessing in private. He meets his hidden ones in any corner where they find him. Though he feeds his flock beside the shepherd tents, yet he can carry the lambs in his arms, give them food alone, and make them lie down in a green pasture. His Spirit moves most on the waters of the sanctuary, yet he is not straitened nor is his hand shortened; he is a well of living waters and as streams from Lebanon. God is omnipresent, therefore the true worshippers respect neither mount Zion nor the mountain of Samaria, but worship him in spirit and in truth. He respects places no more than persons, let it be church or chamber. If I may enjoy thee, O Lord, no matter where it is, thy presence makes a palace of a prison, but the want of it makes a paradise, a dungeon, a hell; where the prince's presence is, there is the court. I would rather have communion with thee here, without thy people, than have communion with thy people in thy house, without thee. Far be it from me to reject the public ordinances, or forsake the assembling of the saints, as too many do, I might then be branded with the odious name of a conceited separatist. No, no, I prefer a day in God's courts before a thousand elsewhere; but, now, when debarred from public and confined to my private devotions, I would make the best improvement thereof I can. O that God would lift up the light of his countenance upon me, and shine into my soul with the beams of his light and love! Help me, Lord, to perform those duties alone which I am accustomed to perform in public. Was I God's mouth to his people? Let me speak with his voice and words unto myself in heavenly soliloquies, holy meditations, and serious self-expostulations, examining myself about sincerity, spurring on myself to the practice of duties, reproofing myself for any iniquity, and encouraging myself with scripture promises. Was I the people's mouth to God in prayer? Let me pour out my soul in bitter complaints for sin, in serious requests for pardoning, sanctifying, assisting and accepting grace, and for a supply of all wants. As I believe the prayers of my congregation are for me, so let my prayers be knocking at heaven's gate for them, that his servant may be assisted in speaking, the people edified in hearing, and that it may be a good day to them.

Did I stir up others to the duty of praise? Let me make melody in my heart to the Lord and rejoice in him. Surely it will be no small mercy, if by, and in, and after this affliction my God prepare me faithful and fruitful improvement of such days as these, and my heart be better qualified to sanctify God's name in holy duties, when I shall again be brought to worship him in the beauty of holiness and speak to his praise in the great congregation; or else bring me to sing praises to his name in heaven, and spend an everlasting sabbath with saints and angels.

XXI.

The time of affliction, O my soul, is a special season for self-examination. We must search and try our ways when God examines us by scourging. Enter therefore into thyself, try thy state, and enquire the cause of God's contending with thee. O Lord, what was it made thee touch so sharply this flesh of mine? Didst thou make my head to ache because my head did first devise to sin, and then contrive excuses for it? Were my senses the inlets of sorrow because they were first the windows of sin? Was every member of my body a patient in suffering, because every one was an agent in sinning? Didst thou strike my flesh with trembling because I trembled not at thy word, nor stood in awe of thy majesty? Didst thou bring sometimes an ague because I was cold in devotion, and sometimes a fever because I was zealous in transgression, and sometimes both because I was lukewarm in my profession? Didst thou strike my bones and joints with torturing pains from head to foot, because they have been instruments of unrighteousness, so nimble for iniquity, and so inflexible to goodness? Didst thou make my heart sick and faint? Was it not for the many fleshly lusts that have been hatched there? Was not my stomach weak because I had no appetite for gospel food, but did nauseate the saving dictates of thy truth? Was my brain oppressed with cloudy fears, or grown light for want of sleep? It was because my soul was too much burdened with the world, set on vanities, and not employed about eternity. Was my whole body made a cage of foul diseases? Surely the cause is clear, my soul was too fruitful a mother and nurse of the plague of the heart. Since then, my soul, the cause of this sickness is so evident that he that runs may read, freely accept of this punishment of thy sin, lay thy hand upon thy mouth, strike upon thy breast and say, what have I done? Thy conscience will quickly answer, thou hast done that which might have undone thee for ever. Never complain of thy punishment, since thou art alive and out of hell.

XXII.

Reflect upon thyself, O my soul, and view thy behaviour under God's afflicting hand. It was difficult to see a father's love in all the displeasure manifested, to discover a smiling face through all these frowns; yet, through grace, I had a glimpse by the eye of faith, beyond nature and reason, so that he helped me to bear my burden in some measure with patience and submission. Various thoughts assaulted my troubled breast; sometimes I took my farewell of the earth and welcomed immortality with a hopeful embrace. Amidst these thoughts I was involved in the apostle's dilemma, not knowing which to choose, life or death. Sometimes I thought it was my own unprofitableness that deprived me of a capacity for doing God's service in gathering in his people, and that my sin would make my sun to set in the morning of my days and infancy of my ministry. Therefore I begged of God a few more days to spend them better; but then immediately I thought this was flesh. Hath not God a sufficient number to do his work far better than I can? Is it not best to be in my Father's house? Who would plead himself out of home and rest? Then I looked through another glass and earnestly desired a change, and wished for death, like a kind porter, to let me into my Father's palace; for what is here, thought I, but an evil world without and a wicked heart within! And what is there in heaven but holiness and happiness, enough to keep the souls of the blessed in an ecstasy to all eternity? Thus was the desire of life swallowed up in the joys of which death would give me possession. Yet I could not rest here, I was afraid lest that desire was too mean and slavish, making the ground of my wish to be freedom from my trials. In this perplexing state, because I felt how unfit I was to dispose of myself, I put myself into the hands of my gracious God desirous of submitting to his will. One night after tedious tossings from pain until three o'clock, I was assaulted with a violent temptation of Satan, persuading me that these pains were the foretastes infernal torments, in which they would shortly end. I answered him with such passages as God furnished me out of his word, and sometimes I prayed God to aid me in resisting the devil, or to turn aside the fiery darts: this he abundantly answered. Blessed be God.

XXIII.

Time was, O my soul, when thou didst fear, with Abraham, the heavy doom of being written childless; but now, through grace, the scene is altered and thou mayest say with Jacob, here be the children God hath graciously given thee. I may

say so of the fruit of my body, but more so of the travail of my soul; the first is a precious mercy, but the latter is of more value. The conversion of one sinner saves a soul from death, covers a multitude of sins, and restores fallen man to circumstances superior to the state of Adam. This, this, brings glory to God, joy to the angels, benefit to the saints, and enlargement to the church; it is the fruit of the Saviour's travail with which he is satisfied. The glory of a prince is the multitude of his subjects, and thus Christ is glorified when sinners are converted. It is a glorious work in the hand of the worthiest instrument, but the wonder increases if the means be considered. Hadst thou been some profound scholar, or learned interpreter, one of a thousand, some acute Apollos, an eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures, it would have appeared more probable by a proportion of the means to the end. Or hadst thou been some thundering Boanerges, some zealous awakening Paul, less of God and more of man would have appeared in the work. But the Lord did single thee out to be an example of his wonderful and glorious work; he chooseth weak things, yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence; and therefore often doth great things by very unlikely means. The work indeed would become angelic spirits, what then is a babe, a worm, an earthen vessel? thou art not worthy to be reckoned one of the honourable regiment of the clergy, being inferior to most in abilities, yet few have had thy success. How many dost thou hear make sad complaints how little good they do! Many famous, skilful, and laborious servants of God, whose books thou art not worthy to carry after them, have spent much precious time and poured out many prayers and tears on behalf of men's souls, but have won very few if any to Christ. What troubled spirits have many revered ministers carried with grey hairs to the grave! Surely the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong; no, no, free grace makes choice of the word and person to work by, and lays aside others that we conceive more adapted. The reason why the Lord should work by one and not by another, is the same as why he loveth one person and not another: "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." It was not because thou wast inclined to, and designed for, this work from a child, nor because thy aim was upright in making choice of this high function; nor because when in sickness thou didst solemnly vow to God, that if he would restore thee thou wouldst serve him at the altar all the days of thy life; nor was it because thy dear relations did wrestle hard with God for thee and thy people, that the Lord would crown thy

endeavours with abundant fruitfulness: though I do believe this great mercy is a wonderful return of prayer, yet none of these nor all of them together could have effected such a design, nor moved the Lord to work, had not free grace prepared our hearts to seek and bowed his ear to hear. Thus the Alpha and Omega were from him, who is the author and finisher of faith, and we may cry, grace, grace, to the fountain of all grace. My soul, make thy boast in the Lord, that the humble may hear thereof and be glad; from him cometh all my salvation. Do thou, my soul, cast down thy crown before the throne and give glory and honour to him that sitteth thereon, for he is worthy to receive glory and praise for ever. All I fear is, lest I should not be thankful for, sensible of, and faithful under this invaluable mercy; lest I should not improve it; or lest I should arrogate too much to myself. O my soul, beware of the ticklings of pride and self-conceit! Thou hast had woful experience of a deceitful heart in a like case. When the Lord helps thee with life and power in any exercise thou art nearest to a snare and fall; the devil and thy depraved heart are very busy, and when he cannot overturn by one extreme he drives into another. O, beware of these things, and remember, thou hast nothing which thou hast not received. Beware of thoughts aspiring above my reverend brethren, and think not better of thyself than those to whom God gives little success. They may be more gracious, laborious, and higher in God's favour, and may be very useful in training up converted souls, satisfying the scrupulous, and comforting the dejected. God gives diversity of gifts and different success to those gifts: he is wise, gracious, and faithful in his dispensations; admire God in all and despise none. Wait, my soul, on the Lord, plead with holy jealousy that poor converts may not look back, and that thou, after having wrought on others, mayst not be a cast away.

XXIV.

Hardly, O my soul, canst thou bear the sunshine of a gratifying mercy without dark obscuring clouds of trouble and affliction. The Lord thy God hath often honoured thee before all the people, and now he hath left thee to endure some disgrace before them. He lately withdrew himself from thee on his own day, less sensibly, but very discernible to thyself and some judicious Christians. Thou didst not make that use thereof which God required, and therefore yesterday he left thee to struggle in thy own strength, to do just nothing. Surely it is a thing much to be observed, and thy frame of spirit much to be lamented. O humble thyself before the Lord,

and see what thou canst make of this dispensation ! Were it tending only to thy personal shame and open discredit, it were less matter, though a due estimation of thy person may make way for the reception of thy message ; but the leprosy of thy personal failings may spread itself exceedingly far and bring forth bitter fruit. I could willingly be taken out of the way, be banished into some howling wilderness, rot in the grave, or beg my bread, rather than injure God's cause, or open wicked men's mouths. From whence came it to pass that I lost myself ? 'Tis true, the slackness of the people's coming in, occasioned me to change my purpose. Possibly there might have been some sin in my people to provoke the Lord thus to deal with his poor creature : they expected too much from the instrument, and eyed God too little ; they have been unthankful for, and unfruitful under my enlargement ; or were unprepared by coming immediately from civil employments to divine ordinances. These and such like things some of them have bewailed ; but, O my soul, the cause is in thee more than in any one else ; I am the Jonah that troubled the ship. What is it that God corrects in thee ? Lay thy hand upon thy heart and search out the cause. How often hast thou enjoyed the wonderful presence of God ; but how little hast thou prized it ! How often hast thou pleased thyself with applauding thoughts, as having done well and deserved praise ! Has it not pleased thee more to have thy talents commended than the truth of God received ? O base prostitution of divine favours, to gratify the vain expectations of ambition ! How much hast thou been at thy book and how little on thy knees ! Luther says : "Prayer, meditation, and temptation make a preacher." How little hast thou been acting faith on Jesus Christ for assistance, using means as if there were no God to help ! Thou hast acted as if the studying of precious truths, and the bare committing of them to memory were enough to render thee fit for public services ; whereas, that seldom reaches the heart which does not come from it, and has not been wrought into it. How seldom after preaching dost thou get alone, water the seed of the word with tears, and pursue the Lord with importunity for success ! O my God, all these are but too true, and thou art very just ! I may rather wonder that I have been so often helped, than repine that I have now been left. I have a thousand times less frequently than I deserve ! The glory of God is dear to him and he will not give his glory to another. If too much be attributed to the instrument, no wonder that he stain the glory of man and lay his honour in the dust, that God may be all in all.

XXV.

Prepare thyself, my soul, for the enjoyment of the important ordinance of the Lord's supper which thou hopest to enjoy the following day. Trim up thy lamp and go to God for new supplies of grace. Look to thy habitual and actual preparation. Get anointed from above with fresh and refreshing oil. Go and buy, or rather beg additional divine influences. Old grace will not serve thee for new duties. Whet the sword anew to slay thy lusts; furbish thy shield of faith to repel Satan's fiery darts; sharpen the anchor of hope to cast behind the veil; kindle the fire of love that it may grow more fervent, and glow in flames of ardent affection to God and all the saints. Read the story of thy dear Redeemer's life and death, that thou mayest be furnished with abundant matter for remembrance of his death and passion. Look at the wormwood and the gall to cause thy heart to bleed in genuine repentance for thy disobedience. Examine thyself thoroughly and impartially, and trifle not with God in a matter of such importance. Search thy heart and life, review thy sins and graces, look to thy principles, and motives in these approaches to God. Thou art to renew thy covenant with the Lord; be not found a covenant breaker. Thou art to draw nigh to God in a special manner, wash thy hands in innocency before God's altar be approached by thee. Above all, awake my faith towards a crucified Saviour. Consider, O my soul, who he is that suffered, and for whom he endured so many evils: it was the innocent for the guilty; the just for the unjust; the Mighty God for weak man. He became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; the Son of God assumed the nature of man to pay the price of our redemption, and be a propitiation for our sins. O my soul, bring all thy sins and lay them on this scape-goat; bring all thy wounds to this physician; bring all thy doubts to this counsellor. Come, and derive sap from this blessed vine, light from this glorious sun, and protection from this rock. What dost thou want or desire, that is not to be had in abundance here? The streams are sweet, but what is the spring? The means are good, but what is the end? In this and all ordinances strive to get near Christ and have communion with him.

XXVI.

Surely the benefit of an ordinance is not ended when the outward dispensation is concluded; for sometimes the recollection is more profitable than the administration. Consider, O my soul, how thy heart was affected in reading the blessed institution! A sweet overpowering virtue descended from above:

my beloved spoke good and heart-melting words to me. I thought the shadow of Christ was delightful. The elements were desirable not for themselves, but the marrow and mystery represented by them. Did Christ give his flesh for the life of the world, and dost thou not find, O my soul, vivifying virtue therein? Did Christ shed his blood for justification, and canst thou doubt of the remission of thy sins? Hast thou experienced the great design of the ordinance in thy heart? Didst thou find it the means of effectual conveyance of rich communications, and comfortable evidence of thy regeneration affording thee assurance of salvation? Didst thou find it as bread to nourish and wine to refresh thy soul? Though I had not such a transporting vision of a resplendent Mediator as the three privileged ones on the mount; yet my soul did enjoy some discoveries of a transfigured Saviour in the sacramental elements. O that they may abide on my heart for many days and weeks! O my soul, be not faithless but believing; send all thy unbelieving doubts to this Captain of thy salvation. Be ashamed, O thou hard, impenitent heart, and blush to think that thy dear Saviour should suffer thus for thy sins, and yet thou be so little broken and affected therewith. Cast thy eye upon the bleeding Jesus, and see what relenting sorrows it produces. Look on him whom thou hast pierced, and weep bitterly as for an only child. If thou shouldst ever begin to faint in thy spiritual race or warfare, a crumb of this delicious bread of life may revive thee and make thee run with alacrity. If thou shouldst fall into a spiritual lethargy, one drop of this *aqua vitæ*, this soul-cheering and cleansing cordial, may bring thee to life again and make thee as the chariots of Amminadib.

XXVII.

Yesterday I went prepared to preach a lecture at my own place, and had provided an assistant, who came and brought with him another dear friend of mine; so they were both employed and my pains spared. I cannot but take notice of this as a special providence, considering the circumstances attending the business. I had a subject which I much desired to preach at that lecture: Psal. cxii. 7, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings." My mind had run very much on this text, and I had taken extraordinary pains with it; had read the sermon twice over, which I seldom have the mind or the leisure to do. I had pleased myself with the thought how likely it was to be acceptable and profitable to the auditory, which was composed of most Christians in the neighbourhood. After all this, I was disappointed in the delivery, and upon the review, am persuaded it

was a mercy to me. O my soul, hadst thou a right end in view in making choice of the subject? Was it not to display thy own spirit rather than the truth of God? Lay thy hand upon thy heart and make a strict enquiry. Didst thou not study to make it fine with history, and rhetorical flourishes? Consider, souls are precious and the work is weighty, requiring thy best and utmost provision for every sermon. Seek not credit from men, but study to deliver the wholesome truths of God, in homely, plain, though well becoming language. Seek not to set off the glorious gospel with any device of thy own. How often hast thou found by sad experience that when thou hast most sought thyself thou hast most lost thyself? Thou art bound to search out for acceptable words, and avoid a barbarous phraseology; yet take heed thou dost not please Satan by gratifying thy own and others' luxuriant fancies, in the things of God. Learn of Paul to preach not with enticing words, but in demonstration of the Spirit. Get thy proud thoughts humbled before thou goest to preach, and tremble to think of preaching thyself when thou shouldst preach Christ; pray more over thy heart and labours. Particularly examine this discourse, and mourn over what might have been offensive to others or dangerous to thyself.

XXVIII.

After twenty-two years and upwards, whercin I have been studying, preaching, praying, and waiting on God, since I first began to write my soul-soliloquies, I am now pressed in spirit again to return to my own soul and enquire, what progress I have made in sanctification, communion with God, and preparation for heaven? Come then, O my soul, how are things with thee? Deal faithfully with God and thyself; do not dissemble; dodge not about spiritual matters, for the heart-searching God knows how things are; self-flattery would be thy soul's ruin. True it is my soul hath contracted a heavy burden of guilt during this time. I have had many temptations, corruptions, fears, doubts, and discouragements, which have put my soul on perplexing exercises. But yet, for all that, to the praise of the glory of God's grace, I hope I can say, I have made some progress in the ways of God. I will not conceal but reckon up what testimonies I can find thereof, partly to raise my spirits in praise to God, and partly to evidence my sincerity. I hope I do not lie therein but say the truth in Christ, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost. 1. My soul hath been drawn out more frequently to renew my covenant with the Lord my God than formerly, and that too in a more solemn manner, writing it down and subscribing it as in the presence of God. Such days have

been days of heart-breaking and heart-quickenings; blessed be my God. 2. God hath helped me more constantly to maintain the duty of secret prayer, and he doth more melt my heart by his blessed Spirit. There are but few days, when I am at home, but God and my soul meet in secret. 3. The Lord helps me to spend my time better than formerly. Through grace I cannot say that I am idle any one day, but can give some tolerable account of the expenditure of time for earth or heaven, in my general or particular calling. 4. As my employment has been increased, so I feel a renewing of strength in my heart. In my studies I have fresh and more profitable matter suggested to my thoughts; so that, comparing my notes now and formerly, I find that the Lord doth assist me. 5. I find my heart more zealously carried out for the good of souls, both in preaching and praying, in public, private, and secret; I could lay myself under the feet of sinners to do them good. The yearnings of my bowels for sinners my God knoweth. 6. My heart is more endeared to saints as saints, without a factious respect to parties, so that I can take delight in the poorest, and most cross-natured and conceited child of God, wherein I can see any thing of Christ and goodness. 7. I find more power in regulating my passions, though I feel them oft working; yet upon pleading with God in prayer they are calmed; through grace I can say, anger rests not in my bosom. 8. I find, by the grace of God, I can put up with injuries and affronts better than formerly, and not study revenge; yea, my heart is more enabled not only to forgive, but to pray to God for the repentance and forgiveness of those who have done me the greatest wrongs; they cost me many a tear. 9. My heart is grieved if God be dishonoured, his Spirit offended, and his gospel reproached by the sins of the wicked, or professors, or myself; and my heart is carried out many times in renewing my repentance on more pure and evangelical principles. 10. If I know I have offended any person, especially believers, it is a burden to my spirit, and I cannot be satisfied till I have humbled myself before them, with self-abasing testimonies of sincere grief, and solicited forgiveness from them. 11. When I have seen professors at a distance from each other it hath been the grief of my soul, and I have often interposed to make up breaches. Sometimes God hath granted me the desired success, and when it hath been otherwise God hath continued my pity and prayers for them. 12. The great concerns of the church and nation have been more upon my heart than formerly. O what pleadings hath God helped me to urge for kings, nobles, ministers, and the interests of Christ. 13. I can rejoice more

in the gifts, graces, and success of God's servants that are more useful than I am; and can say, through grace, that if God will make use of others more than of me, I am not only satisfied but thankful. 14. God hath helped my soul to obtain the victory over the corruptions of my heart. Some lusts, that God knows have cost me many groans, tears, and conflicts, he hath either mortified or removed the occasions from me, so that sin hath not broken out so much as formerly. 15. My heart hath been more helped to undervalue the world and the things thereof, and to account its profits, pleasures, and honours poor and pitiable things of vanity; so that I can say, through grace, the world dwindles and shrinks in comparison with divine things, and is more under my feet than it hath been. 16. My soul is more mercifully assisted in the heavenly life of faith to commit all my concerns to the Lord, and to trust him for provision. Though my occasions of expence have increased, especially in training up my two sons, hitherto God hath given supplies, though I could not tell whence they would proceed. 17. My affections are sometimes more weaned from, yet endeared to, my relations by being more spiritualized; so that I can now say, through grace, I love God in them, and them for God's sake, and enjoy more of God in conversing with them. 18. My soul, I hope, enjoys more fellowship with God, since my heart more closely adheres to him in duties and worship than formerly, and I find larger seasonable supplies, and more meltings of heart in public, private and secret, God giving me more frequent visits, and dealing more familiarly with my soul: blessed be his name. 19. My heart is more taken up with God's mercies, and more exalted in his praises, so that my soul is more melted and expanded in the duties of thanksgiving, both in ordinary duties and on special occasions. Methinks, it is a little emblem of heaven to be employed in God's praises. 20. The Lord hath graciously sealed my soul unto the day of redemption, by giving me assurance of his love in Christ, and in vouchsafing to seal the remission of my sins, so that sometimes I call God my Father, rejoice in him as my portion, and delight my soul in the Lord, and in believing anticipations of the beatific vision.

To these things I hope my heart echoes; and though I dare not boast that I love Christ more than others, yet I can, through grace, appeal to my God that my soul doth love him in sincerity. I know not how soon my God may possibly leave me to temptation, darkness, deadness, or the commission of some scandalous and conscience-wasting sin; for when I am highest in my own conceit, I am nearest a fall. I have found by experience that God loves to shake my carnal confidence, yet for

this I will not deny nor underrate the grace of God, nor obstruct his praises ; for by the grace of God I am what I am. Though I am vile yet my dear Lord hath been an indulgent God to me, and hath made good his covenant and promises to my soul ; and if the Lord should henceforth leave me to myself, and at last cast me into hell, I will justify him. O my soul, who, what art thou, that ever free grace should display itself before thee ! What hast thou but what thou hast received ? Grace was at the foundation, grace has been in the progress, and grace will be celebrated when the top-stone is brought forth. All this goodness that God hath manifested, O my soul, makes thy sins the more aggravated. Thou art still the greatest of sinners and the least of saints. Give God all the glory, and take thou all the shame to thyself. As God hath dealt bountifully with thee, be more dutiful to him ; the more he hath given to thee, the more let thy expenditure be for him, and be prepared for his laying on thee a heavier hand than ever.

EPISTLE

TO THE READER OF

“ADVICE TO AN ONLY CHILD.”



CHRISTIAN READER,

THIS precious pearl of seasonable advice* providentially put first into my hand, and now into thine, is of great worth, and the rate thereof is enhanced not only by the worthiness of the Author, but by the importance of the subject matter, the manner of handling it, and its great end and design. The Author was a master in Israel, a star of the first magnitude, first placed in

* This Address was prefixed to a posthumous publication, entitled, “Advice to an only Child,” composed by the Rev. James Creswick, a Nonconformist minister ejected from FRESHWATER, in Hampshire. Mr. C. was a native of Sheffield and, we are told, a man of great abilities, well skilled in the learned languages, and an accurate preacher. He was distinguished for his piety and exemplary patience under a tormenting affliction. He used frequently to say : “Lord, I am thine, and thou canst do me no wrong ; I would rather have health of soul in a body full of pain, than health and ease of body in a dis-tempered soul.” He died Feb. 1692, aged 75, at *Beal*, in Yorkshire. The Treatise above mentioned was published by Mr. Heywood.—*Noncon. Mem. vol. ii. p. 266.*