



DEATH

Disarm'd of its

STING.

JAMES i. 4.

*But let Patience have her perfect Work,
that ye may be perfect, and entire,
wanting nothing.*



IF we consider the State and Condition of those *Jews*, to whom the Apostle directs this Epistle, we shall find, that as they were a dispersed, so they were an afflicted, and persecuted People. There was always a most implacable Hatred, in other Nations, against the *Jews*; ac-
B counting

Death disarm'd.

counting them the most base, perverse, and infamous People under Heaven. And, doubtless, though the whole Body of them, which lived in *Judea*, were well enough secured from their Affronts and Injuries; yet, such Parcels of them as were scattered into other Countries, sadly felt the Effects of this natural Aver-sation and Antipathy. Yea, so low and despicable was their Condition, that their own Brethren, in Scorn and Contempt, call them *the dispersed among the Gen-tiles*, John vii. 35. Their ancient Reli-gion, which they had received from *Mo-ses*, was so odious to the *Heathen*, among whom they lived, that they accounted it the most ridiculous and sordid Supersti-tion that ever was invented. And, be-cause they firmly adhered to a Way of Worship, which was so contradictory to that gross Idolatry which had generally obtained in the World, they both de-rided them as credulous, and, hated them as stubborn and inflexible. There is no Hatred so bitter and irreconcilable, as that which ariseth from different Re-ligions. For, Religion being avowedly the highest Concern of Mankind; those who differ in this, cannot but mutually accuse one another of Folly and Mad-ness: And this begets mutual Contempt,

and

and ends in Malice and Violence; whilst each seeks to take the Part of his God, and to vindicate his own Wisdom in choosing him, against those who must needs be concluded to despise, because they do not worship him. And, therefore, as these scattered *Jews* were hated and persecuted upon the account of their own native Religion, so much more, when divers of them were converted to the Faith of CHRIST, because they then took up, and professed a Religion, more contrary to the *Gentile* Impiety, than *Judaism* itself was. Yea, they were not only hated by the *Gentiles*, but by their own Countrymen, the unbelieving *Jews*; who took all Occasions to stir up the People against them, and to expose them, as the Maintainers of a pestilent Sect, to the Fury of the enraged Multitude. And we read frequently, in the *Acts*, what Tumults, and Uproars, and Persecutions, were raised against them by this Means. Now, to these dispersed and distressed *Christians*, the Apostle directs this his Epistle, and exhorts them, *ver. 2. My Brethren, count it all Joy when ye fall into divers Temptations*; that is, when ye fall into divers Tribulations. For, by *Temptations* here, he means not the inward Assaults of the Devil, but the out-

ward Assaults of his Instruments. A strange Command, one would think, to bid them rejoice at such a Time, and in such Circumstances, as these! What! to rejoice when they were buffeted, reviled, spoiled, and murdered! appointed as Sheep to the Slaughter! enjoying their Lives only at the Courtesy of their Enemy's Malice! expecting hourly to be haled out, to suffer Torments, and Death! Is this a proper Occasion for Joy? or rather, for Sorrow, and Dejection? No, saith the Apostle; Although your Tryals be great and manifold, yet account it Joy, yea, *account it all Joy, when ye fall into these divers Temptations*, ver. 2.

WELL; but certainly, so strange an Exhortation as this, which seems so quite contrary to the Inclinations of Nature, had need be back'd by some strong Motive to enforce it. And that the Apostle gives them, in the third Verse; *Knowing this, that the Tryal of your Faith worketh Patience*: And, therefore, *account it all Joy, when ye fall into divers Temptations*. Now, in this are included Two Things, which should mightily further their Joy.

First, That all their Sufferings and Afflictions are for the Tryal of their Faith. GOD, by these, tries, whether your Faith
be

Death disarm'd.

5

be well grounded, and saving; or, whether it be only temporary, and flitting. He tries, whether it be weak, or strong; whether it be able to stay, and support itself, only upon a Promise; or wants the Crutches of Sense, and visible Enjoyments, to bear it up; Whether it be a Faith that is wrought in you, only by Conviction; or, a Faith that hath wrought in you a thorough Conversion: Whether it be a Faith wrought in you, only by Evidence of the Truth; or, a Faith that is accompany'd with a sincere Love of the Truth? And, therefore, rejoice in your Sufferings and Afflictions; for these will help you to determine this great and important Question. If your Faith be such, as can overcome the World; if it can persuade you to esteem the Reproach of CHRIST, greater Riches than the Treasures of the World; if it respects more the Promises of GOD, than the Threatnings of Men; and future Rewards, than present Advantages; if it can bear both the Anvil and the Furnace: This is a Faith that is true and genuine; and when it is thus tryed, it shall be *found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the Appearing of JESUS CHRIST*, as the Apostle speaks, *1 Pet. i. 7.* Such a Faith as this, that can endure the

B 3

Fire,

Death disarm'd.

Fire, and lose nothing of its Weight and Substance, is truly precious, more precious than Gold that perisheth. Such a Faith, that can bring you to die for CHRIST, will certainly bring you to live with CHRIST. And, have you not great Cause, then, to rejoice in Afflictions, which afford you a Means to know, whether your Graces be genuine, or spurious? whether they be such as will bear his Judgment and Tryal hereafter, by bearing Afflictions and Chastisements here? Certainly, that Christian hath great Reason to suspect himself, that cannot rejoice he is going to Heaven, tho' GOD sends a fiery Chariot to fetch him. And,

Secondly, This Tryal of their Faith worketh Patience. The more a Christian bears, the more he is enabled to bear. His Nerves and his Sinews knit and grow strong under his Burdens. And, therefore also, *account it all Joy, when you fall into divers Temptations.* For Patience is, of itself, such a Christian Excellency and Perfection, that all Tryals and Afflictions that tend to increase this, are to be reckon'd, by us, as Gain and Advantage. If thy Sorrows and Troubles add any degree of Fortitude to thy Patience, thou hast far more
reason

reason to rejoice, than to repine. For, nothing in this present Life is to be accounted Good or Evil, but only as it respects the Advantage or Disadvantage which our Graces receive by it. Now, if God confirm and augment thy Patience under Sufferings; Sufferings are Mercies; Afflictions are Favours; He blest thee by Chastisements, and crowns thee with Glory, even while He seems to crown thee with Thorns. And wilt thou not triumph at this, O Christian! especially, considering the End of thy Patience, which is *Hope, Peace, and Eternal Life*? See that excellent Place to this purpose, *Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. We glory, saith the Apostle, in Tribulations; knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope, and Hope maketh not ashamed.* Here is true Cause of Glory indeed, when our Patience shall cause us to ascend through these Degrees, to the Top and Perfection of all Christian Attainments.

AND from this, we may observe by the way, That it is far better to have Patience under Afflictions, than to be freed from them: It is more Cause of Joy, to suffer the Hand and Will of God patiently, than not to suffer at all.

BUT now, having spoken such great things concerning Patience, the Apostle comes, in the Text, to caution us about it, and tells us what Qualifications it must have, to make even our Afflictions the Matter of our Joy and Comfort. Let Patience have her perfect Work, and then you shall have Cause to rejoice. Let her go on to finish and accomplish what is begun and undertaken; and then shall *ye be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing*, It is not enough, O Christians! that ye can bear some Afflictions, and that only for some time; but if you will be perfect, as you must *do* the whole Will of G O D, and that with Constancy and Perseverance unto the End; so you must *suffer* the whole Will of G O D, and put no earlier Period to your Patience, than to your Obedience; and to neither, till G O D shall be pleased to put a full Period to your Lives. Patience ought not to prescribe, either to the Kind, Measure, or Degree of our Sufferings. Say not, therefore, I could easily bear such or such an Affliction; But this which I now lie under, is altogether intolerable: Or, I could chearfully bear it, if I could see any Issue out of it; But this is endless, and remedyless. Believe it; this is but an imperfect Patience, and will never perfect

perfect you in Grace and Glory. A perfect Patience stoops to the heaviest Burdens, carries them as long as God shall please, without murmuring or repining; And if it be to the Grave, it knows that what is now a Load, shall then be found to be a Treasure: He doth but carry his own Wealth, his Crown, and his Scepter; which, tho' here they be burdensome, shall hereafter be eternally glorious.

FROM the Words, we may observe these Two Propositions:

First, That a Christian's Patience ought to finish and accomplish all the Work that is proper for it, while he lies under Troubles and Afflictions. *Let Patience have her perfect Work,*

Secondly, That the Perfection of Patience is the Perfection of a Christian. *That ye may be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing.*

It is the first of these that I shall at present speak of: And herein I shall propound and prosecute this Method.

I. Shew what Patience is.

II. What is the proper Work of Patience.

III. When it is that Patience hath its perfect Work.

IV. And lastly, I shall close up all with Application.

I. WHAT

I. **WHAT** is this Patience which a Christian ought to exercise, and to accomplish, when he is under Sufferings? You may take this Description of it.

It is a Grace of G O D's Spirit wrought in the Heart of a true Christian, whereby he is sweetly inclin'd, quietly and willingly to submit to whatsoever the L O R D shall think fit to lay upon him; calming all the Passions that are apt to rise up in him against G O D's Dispensations, with the Consideration and Acknowledgment of his infinite Sovereignty, Wisdom, Justice, and Mercy, in those Afflictions and Chastisements which he is pleas'd to bring upon him. This, in the general, is this excellent Grace of Patience, which so much tends to the Perfection and Completing of a Christian.

Now, a little more to explain this, I shall lay down some Particulars both negative and positive, in which may be more fully seen what this Grace of Patience is.

I. **FIRST**, therefore, Patience is not a Stoical Apathy, or a senseless Stupidity, under the H A N D of G O D. It is no narcotick Virtue to stupify us, and take away the Sense and Feeling of Afflictions: If it had any such Opiate Quality in it, it were not commendable, nor praise-worthy; for, that is
no

no Suffering, which is not felt ; and if Patience were only to deprive a Man of the Feeling of his Sorrows and Sufferings, it would only destroy its own Object, and so cease to be any longer Patience. And, therefore, those who are stupify'd and insensible under the Hand of GOD ; who take no Notice of His Judgments, when His Hand is stretched out against them ; are no more to be accounted Patient, than a Block is, when it is hewen and cut ; or, than the Drunkard, the Wise-Man speaks of ; who, when he was stricken, was not sick ; when he was beaten, felt it not. Nay, Patience is so far from taking away the Sense of Sufferings, that it rather quickens it. There is no Man that more feels an Affliction, than a Christian doth : For, he refers his Chastisements to his Deserts ; he looks inwardly, and sees his own Guilt and Sin, as that which provokes GOD to afflict him ; and this adds a great deal of Gall and Wormwood to the bitter Cup, and makes every Affliction to touch his Soul and his Conscience, as well as his outward Man. He cannot but with Grief of Heart consider, that ever he should incense his Heavenly Father to use such severe Discipline towards him. But now, a wicked Man looks only upon what he suffers ;
he

he makes no Reflexions upon his Demerits, and troubles himself no farther, than GOD is pleased to force Trouble upon him; and so he bears it, cursing his ill Fate; but never complaining of his Sins, that provoked the just GOD so to punish him.

2. * PATIENCE doth not stifle all modest Complaints, and moderate Sorrow. A patient Christian may be well allowed this Vent for his Grief to work out at. Grace never destroys, but only regulates and corrects Nature. It will permit thee to shed Tears, so long as they run clear, and the Course of them doth not stir up the Mind of thy sinful Passions and violent Affections. It will permit thee to complain of what thou sufferest, so long as it keeps thee from complaining of that GOD from whom thou sufferest. Thou may'st lawfully, without any Wrong done to Patience, express thy Grief in all the outward and natural Signs of it; only beware, lest this Agitation make it exceed its due Bounds and Measures. We find, that Holy Job, who is com-

* Οὐ τιμῶ ἀθυμίαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐπίτασιν τῆς ἀθυμίας ἀναιρῶ. Τὸ μὴ γὰρ ἀθυμεῖν, τὸ οὐσίως· τὸ δὲ περὶ τοῦ μέτρου τῶτο ποιεῖν, μανίας καὶ παρορσώσεως, καὶ γυναικῶδες ψυχῆς. Chrysost. Tom. 5. λογ. ξα. περὶ κεκοιμ.

mended to us as the Mirror and great Example of Patience, when he had receiv'd the sad Messages of the Loss of his Estate, and of his Children, *rent his Mantle, and lay groveling upon the Ground,* Job i. 20. And, that we might not think this a Piece of his Impatience, it is added, v. 22. *In all this, Job sinned not, nor charged G O D foolishly.* The primitive Disciples are said to make great Lamentation over *Stephen*; tho' by his Death and Martyrdom he highly glorify'd G O D, *Acts*, viii. 2. Patience chiefly consists in in a due Tranquillity and Composure of the Mind; and those may be very impatient Persons, and fret and estuate within, who yet may express but little Emotion in their outward Demeanour. Like those latent and lurking Fevers that prey upon the Spirits, when there appears but little intemperate Heat in the outward Limbs. And again, a patient Christian may make use of all the doleful Signs of Sorrow which G O D hath allowed, and Nature exacts; and yet this Spirit not be moved beyond its due Temper and Consistency; like a Tree, whose Boughs are agitated by every Gust and Storm of Wind, when yet the Root remains fix'd, and unmov'd, in the Earth.

3. PATIENCE doth not oblige us to continue under Afflictions, when we may lawfully and warrantably free and release ourselves from them. It doth not require us to court, nor to sollicite, Troubles. It is a Sign of a viciated and corrupted Palate, if our Physick taste not somewhat nauseous and unpleasing to us; and of an obstinate and incorrigible Mind, if we be not careful to shun the Discipline of the Rod. When GOD lays fore and heavy Afflictions upon us, we are bound, upon Principles of Self-Preservation, to endeavour, what we may, to free ourselves from them; otherwise, we sin against Nature, and the GOD of Nature. Therefore, if GOD reduce thee to Poverty, by some Stroke depriving thee of thy Estate, it is not Patience, but a lax and retchless Carelessness, to sit still with thy Hand in thy Bosom, neglecting all honest Industry to procure a comfortable Subsistence; pretending that thou art willing to submit to the Will and Dispensations of God. If God brings fore, and, perhaps, mortal Diseases upon thee, it is not Patience, but Presumption and Impiety, to refuse the Means that are proper for thy Recovery, under pretence that thou art willing to bear whatsoever it pleaseth GOD to lay upon thee. And
generally,

generally, whatsoever Calamity thou lyest under, it is not Patience, but Obstinacy and Contempt, to refuse Deliverance when thou mayst obtain it, without violating thy Duty, or God's Honour. Much less,

4. BOTH Patience oblige us to invite Sufferings. It is Fortitude enough, if we manifestly stand their Shock, when they assault us; but it is Temerity, to provoke and challenge them. This is but like the Frenzy of the *Circumcellions*, a Sect of mad Christians in *Africa*, about *S. Austin's* time, who were so fond of Martyrdom, that they would, with Extremities, compel others to kill them; or, for want of Executioners, dispatch themselves; that they might have the Renown of Resolution and Patience. Neither is it Patience to bear those invented Severities, which blind Devotionists inflict upon themselves. They may soon enough lash themselves into Pain, but never into Patience: This is a Vertue that Thongs and Whip-Cord can never teach them. Nor, is it at all Thank-worthy, to bear that Pain which they themselves inflict. Or, if the Smart vex them, they have their Revenge in their own Hands, and were best whip themselves again for their Folly.

AND

AND thus I have shew'd you what Patience is not. Now positively. In Patience there must be,

1. A QUIET willing Submission to the Hand of GOD; which the Scripture expresseth to us, by *Taking up our Cross*, S. Matth. xvi. 24. *Receiving Evil at the Hands of GOD*, Job ii. 10. *Accepting of the Punishment of our Iniquities*, Lev. xxvi. 41. Which all signify the ready and willing Submission of the Soul, under whatever GOD shall see fit to lay upon it.

2. THERE must be a Quieting of our unruly Passions, a Calming of all those impetuous Storms and Tempests, which are apt to arise in a Man's Heart, when he is under any sore and heavy Sufferings. Indeed, it is impossible but that the Affections will be stirring; but Patience takes off the Eagerness and Bitterness of them; it ought to keep them from Excess, and to dulcorate and sweeten them, that the Soul may not be ruffled into a Tempest with them, but only gently purld with the Breathings of a soft Wind upon them: But for all those Turbulencies and Uproars of the Passions, all those violent and wild Emotions, which distract Reason, and rend the Soul to pieces, make Men unfit for the Service of
GOD,

God, and the Employments of their Lives; These Patience ought to quell, and to suppress. And he that doth not this, wants the principal Part of Patience, howsoever he may possibly command his outward Expressions, and rule his Actions better than he can his Passions; and his Body, than his Soul.

3. ALL this must be done upon right Grounds. Indeed, there is a natural Patience; a Patience, that may be found in natural Men, devoid of true Grace; which is only a moral Vertue, and proceeds only upon natural and moral Principles.

* As, That it is Folly, to strive against Fate; and, That it is equally Folly, to torment ourselves about what we can help, and what we cannot help; and the like. But that Patience which I am now speaking of, is a Christian Grace, and proceeds not only upon such Arguments and Principles: No, it looks far higher, and eyes the Sovereignty of God, to which it is our Duty to submit; And it eyes also His Wisdom and His Goodness, to which it is our Interest to submit. It looks off from the absolute Nature of the Affliction, consider'd as it is in itself, to the relative Nature of it; as it is dispens'd to us by God; and so concludes, that tho' the Cup in itself be bitter, yet, in

**Feras, non culpas, quod vitari non potest.*

Pub. ap. Gell. noct. At. l. 17. 14.

our Father's Hand, it is Salutory; knows it shall work for our Gain and Advantage, and make us Partakers of God's Holiness here, and of His Glory hereafter. And thus we see what this Grace of Patience is.

II. THE next thing is, to shew, what is the proper Work of Patience. And that I shall endeavour to do in these following Particulars.

First, The first Work of Patience is (as I have told you) the Quieting and Composing the Spirit of the Afflicted. He is calm and sedate within, tho' his outward State and Condition be full of Storms and Tempests; and saith, with *S. Paul*, when he had spoken of the Bonds and Afflictions that awaited him, *Acts xx. 24.* *None of these Things move me.* But now, an impatient Man flies out against Heaven and Earth, blasphemes God, and curseth Men, rageth at his Sufferings, and gnaws the very Chains that tie him up; and, instead of humbling himself under God's mighty Hand, is exasperated by his Punishment, and, with that impious King, cries out in all his Extremity and Anguish, *This Evil is of the LORD; why should I wait upon the LORD any longer?*

Secondly, Another Work of Patience is, to put a Stop to all immoderate Complaints. It puts a Man to Silence, and lays a Check upon all the intemperate Eruptions of our Grief and Passions. *I was dumb*, saith David, *I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it*, Psal. xxxix. 9. It dares not so much as whimper against God, nor sawcily expostulate with his infinite Sovereignty, why he should bring such Afflictions upon them. It is God that hath done it; and what! shall we, vile Dust and Ashes, controul His Proceedings, or take upon us to censure any of His Dispensations? See a most notable Instance of this Patience in *Aaron*: When his Two Sons, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, were destroy'd by a most unparallel'd Judgment, and *Moses* brings him the sad Tidings; Tidings, which, one would expect, should have caused him to break forth into some passionate Complaint; it is said, That *Aaron held his Peace*, Lev. x. 3. He had not a Word to say; it was the LORD's Doing, and as it was wonderful, so it was just and righteous in his Eyes.

Thirdly, Another Work of Patience under Sufferings, is Self-Resignation to the Sovereign Will and Disposal of Almighty God. It takes a Man off from his own

Bottom; makes him renounce his own Interests and Concerns, and lay down his All; all his Designs, all his Hopes, all his Possessions and Enjoyments, at the Feet of GOD; * desiring His Wisdom to choose for him, and to carve him out that Portion which He knows to be most fitting and convenient. This is the chiefest and most principal Work of Patience; and there be Two notable Ingredients that go to the Composition of it, *Self-Denyal*, and *Submission*.

I. PATIENCE works the Soul to a self-denying Frame and Temper. Fretfulness and Impatience do always proceed from Self-Love. When we are deeply engaged in an eager Pursuit of that which we think advantageous to us, we are presently apt to storm and tumultuate, if any cross Providence interpose, to entangle our Designs, and defeat our Expectations. For, whilst we set up ourselves as our highest and utmost End, and seek only our own temporal Profit and Commodity, we

* Τόλμησον ἀναβλέψας πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν εἰπεῖν, ὅτι χρῶμαι λοιπὸν εἰς ὃ ἂν θέλῃς, ὁμογενικοῦ σοι, ἴσος εἰμι· ὃ δὲν παραιτῶμαι ἢ σοὶ δοκῶντων· ὅτε θέλῃς ἄγε, ὡς θέλῃς ἐδῆτα πείθεσ, ἄρχειν με θέλῃς, ἰδιωτῶν, μῆνιν, φάλαγιν, πένεσθαι, πλετεῖν; Ἐγὼ σοὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων τούτων πρὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀπολογήσομαι. *Aggiani Epictet. l. 2. c. 16.*

must needs take it immoderately, if any thing succeed contrary to our Hopes and Desires. A Cross lies very heavy, and is an insupportable Load upon a selfish Man. And he that makes this World his All, must needs look upon himself as utterly ruin'd and undone, if God take from him that wherein he placeth his highest Felicity. And, therefore, no Wonder, if he break out into passionate and intemperate Exclamations. As *Micah* justify'd his Outcries after the Children of *Dan*; *Ye have taken away my Gods, and what have I more? and what is it that ye say unto me, what aileth thee?* So, exhort a selfish Man to Patience under any Affliction, or Loss, or Calamity, that God hath brought upon him; alas! his earthly Comforts are his Gods, they are his All, and he cannot but account it a strange Unreasonableness, that you should blame him for his Passion, when his Idols, his Gods, and that wherein he placed his only Content and Confidence, is taken from him. But now, a truly patient Soul puts a lower Rate and Estimate upon these Things: He values them, indeed, as Comforts; otherwise, there could be no Tryal, and so no Patience in the Loss of them: But he values them not as his chiefest, nor his only Good;

otherwise, he could have no Patience in sustaining the Loss of them. Let GOD sequester his Estate, and reduce him to extreme Poverty, scourge his Body, and lay upon him all the most racking Pains and languishing Diseases that Life can subsist under; snatch away his Friends, and mow down all his nearest and dearest Relations round about him; cut off all his Props and worldly Dependencies; yet still, he looks not upon himself as undone, still he hath his GOD, and his CHRIST, and his Grace left; his Treasure is secure, and all the Loss he sustains, is but in his accessory good things, which he never otherwise receiv'd, but with Condition, and under the Burden, to part with them freely and quietly, whensoever it should please the Great Proprietor of all things to call for them. Patience works a Man to a great Indifference as to these worldly Enjoyments. If GOD be pleased to spare them, he accepts it with Thankfulness; or, if He see good to deprive him of them, he quarrels not at his Father's Providence; for still GOD leaves him more than He takes, as long as he leaves him Himself. They are but his smaller Concernments that GOD toucheth him in; And, what matter of Importance is it, if GOD prune off his

his Excrescencies, whereas this tends only to make him more Beautiful, and more Fruitful? G O D doth but deny him that, wherein he hath learnt to deny himself. And,

2. As Patience works the Soul to a self-denying, so it does likewise to a submissive Frame and Temper. When it hath brought a Man to renounce his own Will, it then resolves him into the Will of G O D. It takes him out of his own Hand, and puts him into G O D's. Here Patience finds its Footing in the deepest Waters of Affliction: Upon this ground it stands, and upon this it fixeth; *It is the Will and good Pleasure of my Father, that thus and thus it should be with me; and therefore, so be it.* Indeed, all Religion lies in conforming our Wills to the Will of G O D; that there should be but one Will between G O D and us; and that this should be His most wise and righteous Will. The Will of His Precept He hath made known unto us by His Word; and to that we ought to submit our Wills, by a chearful Performance of what He hath commanded. The Will of His Purpose He makes known unto us by His Providence; and to that we ought to submit, by a quiet Bearing of whatio-

ever He shall see good to inflict. Art thou poor, or despised, or diseased, afflicted by G O D, or persecuted by Men? Set Patience on work, and this will lighten thy Burden, and ease thee of thy Sorrows; by reflecting, That it is the Will of G O D to have it so; yea, and thy Will shall run into, and mingle with, His; so that thou shalt suffer willingly whatsoever He shall please to bring upon thee. Indeed, we ought not so to will and affect Sufferings, as causlessly to involve ourselves in them. We may abhor them, as they are in themselves considered; and, by all lawful Means, seek to secure, or free ourselves from them. But yet, a patient Christian wills them, though not absolutely, yet conditionally. He wills, that the Will of G O D should take place, and have its Accomplishment. And, indeed, there is great Reason he should so do; for he knows, that the Issue will be to his exceeding great Gain and Advantage. And, therefore, if the L O R D will, he dare not gainsay; but, with a holy Meekness, gives in his Vote, and surrenders up his Will, as no longer his, but melted and resolved into the Will of his Father. It was a most divine and heavenly Speech of the *Heathen* Philosopher *Epictetus*;

* I will say unto God, Did I ever
 find fault, or accuse Thy Government
 of Affairs? I was sick, because Thou
 wouldest: Others also have been sick,
 but I willingly. I was poor, because
 Thou wouldest; but therefore joyful in
 my Poverty, since it was Thy Pleasure.
 I never was in Authority, because
 Thou wouldest not; and Thou know-
 est, that therefore I never desired Autho-
 rity. Did I ever appear before Thee
 with a sad and dejected Countenance,
 as one that had suffered a Repulse,
 or been defeated of his Hopes? Behold,
 I am ready to obey whatever Thou shalt
 enjoin; if it be to quit the Stage, I go.
 But before I leave the World, I render unto
 Thee my most humble Thanks, that Thou
 hast been pleased to admit me into
 the Theater, to be a Spectator and

* Θέλω εἰπὴν τῷ Θεῷ, μὴ τι σοὶ πῶς ἐπεκάλεσα;
 μὴ τι ἐμεμφάμην σὺ τῇ διοίκησιν; ἐνόησα, ὅτι ἠθέ-
 λησας· καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ ἐκὼν. Πένης ἐχθρόμην,
 σὺ δέλοντο, ἀλλὰ χαίρων. Οὐκ ἤρξα, ὅτι σὺ ἐκ
 ἠθέλησας· οὐδέ ποτ' ἐπεθύμησα ἀρχῆς. Μὴ τί με
 τέτρενε καὶ δυσχρότερον εἶδες; μὴ ὃ προσήλθόν σοι ποτὲ
 φαιδρῶ τῷ προσώπῳ, ἔτοιμόμην εἰ τι ἐπιτάξεις, εἰ τι
 σημαίνεις; γυνὴ με θέλεις ἀπελθεῖν ἐκ τῆ πανηγύρεως;
 ἀπεμὶ· χάειν σοὶ ἔχω πᾶσι, ὅτι ἡξιώσας με συμπά-
 νησθαι σοὶ, καὶ εἶδέν ἐργα τὰ σά, καὶ τῇ διοίκησιν
 ἐκ συμφορᾶς ἀπολαύσασθαι σοι. Epictetus Arriani, lib. 3.
 cap. 5.

Admirer

Death disarm'd.

„ Admirer of Thy Works. „ This was the Profession of a Heathen. See the Practice of this excellent Patience, in some Scripture-Examples. When Samuel had delivered to Eli the sad Doom GOD had pronounced against his House, *It is the LORD*, saith that good old Man, *let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. It is the LORD, whose Sovereignty, whose Wisdom and Goodness are infinite: And, therefore, though His present Ways seem dark and obscure to me, I resign up myself wholly unto Him, *let him do whatsoever seemeth him good*. And so, likewise, David delivers himself up unto GOD, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. *If I shall find Favour in the Eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me the Ark, and Place of his Habitation: But if he say, I have no Delight in thee; behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him*. And thus, likewise, a far greater than both these, even our Lord JESUS CHRIST, yields up himself wholly to his Father's Will and Pleasure, *Luke xxii. 42. Father, if thou be willing, remove this Cup from me; nevertheless, not my Will, but thine be done*. CHRIST is willing not to have his own Will. And so every patient Christian brings his Will to this Submission; that

it

it is his Will, that not his, but G O D's Will should be fulfill'd. That is, therefore, a third Work of Patience, Self-Resignation to the Will and Disposal of G O D.

Fourthly, Another Work of Patience is a holy Endearing of our Afflictions to us, when it brings us to account them precious, and to reckon them as choice Mercies and Favours bestow'd upon us. Patience will make the Soul thankful for Corrections, esteeming it a Token of G O D's special Regard and Condescension towards them, that He will vouchsafe to afflict them. We are all prone to think, that G O D never minds us, but when He is continually heaping new Mercies and Enjoyments upon us: And, if any Cross or Calamity befall us, we presently fear, that G O D hath forgotten us. But now, Patience teacheth a Christian to believe, That in every Affliction, whatsoever it be, G O D doth most particularly regard our Concerns; That He is as mindful of us when he chastiseth, as when he favours us. And, therefore, we should account Afflictions as dear a Pledge of G O D's Love, as Prosperity and Indulgence. Nay, indeed, we have as much need of the one, as of the other. For, as we are apt to be too much dejected, if we

we

Death disarm'd.

we see none but black and louring Days; so we are, on the other side, apt to be puffed up with a continual uninterrupted Course of Prosperity, to grow wanton and secure, to forget ourselves, and the G o d of all our Mercies. And, as Weeds grow fastest in a fat and rank Soil, so our Corruptions grow and thrive, and are ready to over-run our Souls, when our outward State and Condition is most prosperous and successful. And, therefore, G o d's Love and Care of us constraineth Him sometimes to use severe Discipline, to nip those Luxuriancies, and to cut us short in our Temporal Enjoyments, which else, He sees, we would only turn into Provision for our Lusts. And, did we but seriously consider the great Improvements we might make of Afflictions, and the great Advantages we might gain, how they serve for the Exercise of our Graces, the Confirming of our Hope, the Evidence of our Inheritance, the Seed of future Joys; Patience would not only account them tolerable, but comfortable, and advance from being Patience, to be Rejoicing and Triumph. Therefore, the Apostle, speaking of persecuted Saints, saith, *They took joyfully the Spoiling of their Goods, knowing in themselves, that they had in Heaven a better,*

ter, and an enduring Substance, Heb. x. 34.
 And thus David (as once his Jonathan)
 + tastes Honey from the top of the Rod, + *1st Samuel*
14 ch. 27 v.
 Psal. xxiii. 4. *Thy Rod and thy Staff*
they comfort me. Not only God's Staff
 to support him, but even His Rod to cha-
 stise and correct him, were sweet and
 comfortable to him. That's a Fourth
 Work of Patience, to endear and sweeten
 Afflictions to us.

Fifthly, Another Work of Patience is,
 the Reconciling of a Man to the Instru-
 ments of his Sufferings; to make him
 willing to forgive them himself; and to
 pray to God for their Pardon and For-
 giveness, who is far more offended by
 them than we can be. Thus our Lord
 JESUS CHRIST, who is set forth to
 us in Scripture, as the great Example of
 all Grace, but especially of this of Pa-
 tience, pours out His Prayers for those
 who were pouring out His Blood, S. Luke
 xxii. 34. *Father, forgive them, for they*
know not what they do. And, His holy
 Martyr, S. Stephen, when his Murderers
 weré pelting him with Stones, pelts not
 them with Curses and Imprecations, as
 an impatient Man would do, but, with
 Christian Meekness, kneels upon that
 Ground to which they were beating him,
 and

and prays, that God would not lay *that Sin to their Charge*, Acts vii. ult. And, by this one Effect of Patience, we may easily perceive, that it is a Grace very rare to be found in our Days. We look upon it as too flegmatick a Piece of Christianity, to pass by an Injury unrevenged. We are grown testy and chole-
rick; and, when we apprehend ourselves in the least wrong'd, if we draw not our Swords, yet we draw our Tongues, which are full as sharp and trenchant; and shoot out our Arrows, even bitter Words; and nourish an implacable En-
mity in our Hearts, against all whom we apprehend to have been the Causes or Occasions of those Wrongs and Suffer-
ings which we undergo. What doth this argue, but that we look not at God in our Sufferings? We eye not His Hand, nor His Providence, in bringing them upon us. We consider not, that their Ma-
lice is over-ruled by His Wisdom: He makes use of it, to accomplish His own Purposes and Designs. And so, while, like Dogs, we bite and snarl at the Stones that are thrown at us, we do but inter-
pretatively fly at Him that casts them, and would even rend Him in pieces, were He within our Reach and Power.

Where-

Whereas, * a truly patient Spirit looks above and beyond the Wickedness and Malice of Men, to the Justice and Wisdom of God; and this suppresseth the Ebullitions of his Passions, and all Attempts of Revenge, which else his Wrath and corrupt Nature would prompt him to take. See a notable Instance of this in David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. when Shimei came out, like a Man distracted with Rage and Passion, and flung Dust and Curses confusedly into the Air together; *Let him curse, (saith David) because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David.* He represseth his own, and his Captain's Revenge upon that Wretch, and maintaineth the Peace and Tranquillity of his Patience, because he look'd beyond the Instrument, unto God, who righteously makes use of the Wickedness of Men for His own Ends. That's a Fifth Work of Patience.

Sixthly and Lastly, Another Work of Patience is, to obstruct all dishonourable or unlawful Ways of Deliverance from those Sufferings we lie under. Patience will not suffer a Man to accept of

* Εἰ δὲ χαλεπαίνειν ἐν τοῖς λυπηροῖς, ἐαυτῷ μᾶλλον οἴησε, χαλεπαίνειν δεῖν, ἢ τῷ κωλύοντι τὴν πορησίαν Θεῷ διὰ τῶν ὀργάνων τῆς δίκης. Hierocles, pag. 122.

Deliverance, if he cannot free the Honour of G O D, and the Purity of his own Conscience, from Stain, as well as his outward Man from Trouble. He will not make such an unworthy Commutation, as to leave his G O D, or his Conscience, to suffer in his stead. No; rather let Bonds, Reproach, Afflictions, and Death, do their worst upon him, than that he should hazard his Soul, to save his Skin. If he cannot break through a sad and entangling Providence, but by breaking of a Command, let the worst come that can come, he keeps his Station, and will not move one Foot without the Compass of the Word, though he might thereby escape all his Sorrows, and Sufferings. He is resolved, the Devil shall never bail him; nor will he, by any unlawful Arts and Methods, wrest himself out of G O D's Hands, to put himself into *Satan's*. This Patience it was, that made the holy Martyrs, spoken of *Heb. xi.* generously scorn to accept of Deliverance, when it was tendered to them upon unworthy and unwarrantable Terms. They were not so stupid, nor so profuse and lavish of their Lives, as to cast them away, could they have saved both them and their Religion too. But, when the Condition of their Temporal

Safety

Safety was their eternal Destruction ; when they could no longer live here, unless they consented to die for ever ; Welcome, then, Death, and Torments, the Rack, and the Fire ; Welcome the Prison, or the Stake ; to which the Laws of GOD fastned them more streightly, than even their Fetters and their Chains. But now, Impatience puts a Man upon any base and wicked Means, to free himself from his present Sufferings. Thus, *Saul's* Impatience in waiting for *Samuel*, forceth him first to offer Sacrifice, whereby he forfeited his Kingdom ; and afterwards, his Impatience to know the Success of his Affairs, drives him to consult with a Witch, whereby he lost his Life. And, How many forlorn Wretches are there, who, through Impatience under the temporal Evils they suffer, desperately cut off their own Lives, and thereby plunge themselves into eternal Torments ! And thus, in these six Particulars, you see what is the proper Work of Patience : It is, To quiet and compose the Spirits of the Afflicted ; To put a stop to all immoderate and murmuring Complaints ; To make Men willingly resign up themselves unto the Sovereign Will and Disposall of GOD ; To sweeten and endear Afflictions to them ; To render

D

them

them placable and reconcilable to the Instruments of their Sufferings; and, lastly, To obstruct all dishonourable and unlawful Ways of Deliverance. And that is the second General propounded.

III. THE third General is, to shew, when it is that Patience hath its perfect Work. To this I answer:

First, Patience hath then its perfect Work, when it is proportionable to the Sufferings and Afflictions under which we lie; and that both in Duration, and Fortitude. And, therefore,

I. IF thy Afflictions and Sorrows be of long Continuance, thy Patience, that it may be perfect, must be prolonged. It must be lengthned out according to the Affliction; nor must we faint, till it shall please God to put a Period to His Chastisements, and our Sufferings. If thy Patience wear off one Day before thy Trouble doth, it hath not its perfect Work. Sometimes God doth bring such Afflictions and Tryals upon His People, as shall hold them work all their Days, and scarce afford them any Intermision and Breathing-time: And if it prove so with thee, know, that thy Patience ought to run parallel with thy Trouble. If God will not take thy Burden off, but
make

make thee travel with it till the Evening, till thou liest down to take thy Rest in the Grave, thy Patience must hold out till then, if thou wouldst have it perfect. And, though the Apostle speaks of our light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, yet remember, that as they are light only in comparison with the intolerable Torments of Hell; so, likewise, they are many times short only in comparison with Eternity: They are short, only because they are not endless; but yet, this short Moment may hold out as long as thy whole Life. Now then, O Christian! look upon thyself as a Traveller, and make account, that whatsoever Burden GOD is pleased to lay upon thee, He may perhaps not take it off till thou comest to thy Inn, to take up thy Lodging in the Grave. If He discharge thee of it sooner, acknowledge His Mercy; but be sure thou discharge not thy Patience, before GOD discharge thy Burden.

2. SOMETIMES our Sorrows and Sufferings are very deep, our Burdens very heavy and pressing; and GOD brings upon us not only long, but sharp and severe Sufferings; such as He threatned, *Deut. xxviii. 59. Great Plagues, and of long Continuance; and sore Sickneses, and*

of long Continuance. He may give thee a deep Draught of the bitter Cup, and squeeze into it the very Spirits and Quintessence of Gall and Wormwood. Now, in this case, that thy Patience may be perfect, it must be strong, as well as lasting; it must have Nerves and Sinews in it, to bear weighty Burdens. When thou canst take up the heaviest Load, and go away roundly with it; when thou canst endure the sharpest Methods of Cauters and Incisions with a manly Spirit, then is thy Patience perfect. But, *if thou faint in the Day of Adversity, thy Strength is but small,* Prov. xxiv. 10.

Secondly, That our Patience may be perfect, it must be proportionable also to the Need of the Sufferer. For then hath Patience its perfect Work, when a Man bears whatsoever is necessary for him. We suffer, as a sick Man takes Physick. Though the Potion be bitter, yet he must take such a Quantity as is prescribed for the Cure of his Disease. Truly, our Afflictions are but Medicines for our Souls. It may be, a small Quantity, or a few Doses, is not sufficient to work out the Malignity of our Distemper: And, therefore, we must continue and submit, until our Great Physician hath perfected His Cure upon us; and then is our Patience perfect.

perfect. Possibly, G O D sees thee proud and arrogant in thy Prosperity ; and, therefore, He brings some sharp Affliction upon thee, that may lance the swelling Tumor of thy Mind, and let out thy Corruption. Perhaps, He sees thy Disease is Covetousness, and too much Love of this World ; and, therefore, to cure this Dropsy in thee, He deals with thee as Physicians do with hydropick Patients ; takes from thee that, which, tho' it please thy Appetite, yet miserably increaseth thy Distemper. Perhaps, He sees thou art falling asleep in carnal Security ; and, therefore, to awaken and rouse thee out of this Lethargy, He makes use of Incisions and Cauters. Now, both the Cure and thy Patience are then perfect, when, of a proud and high-minded Person, He hath brought thee to a humble and meek Spirit ; when, of a worldly and self-seeking Person, He hath made thee a publick-spirited and self-denying Christian ; when, of a drowsy and secure, He hath made thee a vigilant, zealous, and active Christian.

Thirdly, That thy Patience may be perfect, it must be a joyful Patience. Thou must not suffer and repine, (this is only Patience extorted, and by Force) but suffer and rejoice, and bless and thank
Μεγάλη
ἐστὶν ἀβλῆ-
τὴ δὲ
ἐραδὶ καὶ
νικᾷν.
Ignat.
Ep. ad
Polycarp.

Death disarm'd.

that GOD taking from thee, whom thou didst bless, giving to thee. And, as we have the greatest Cause of Joy, so we should then, especially, shew it, if at any time we may suffer for the Testimony of JESUS, and the sake of a good Conscience. It is said, *Act. v. 41.* the Apostles rejoiced, *that they were counted worthy to suffer for his Name.* And thus I have, in brief, shew'd, when it is that Patience hath her perfect Work.

THAT which remains, is only to enforce upon us this Exhortation of the Apostle, That all who name the Name of CHRIST, the great Example of Patience, would strive to get, and having got, to exercise, and by Exercise to strengthen and perfect this most excellent Grace. And in prosecuting this, I shall observe the following Method.

First, Give several Motives and Inducements unto Patience.

Secondly, Shew the several Distempers of a Man's Spirit, which are great Hindrances of Patience.

Thirdly, Give the Cure of these, and lay down some Means that may be helpful to advance and strengthen Patience in us.

First,

First, For the Motives to Patience: They are many and powerful. And such, indeed, they had need be, to persuade our fretful and froppish Natures to the Exercise of so hard a Grace. There are none of us who at all reflect upon the Working of our own Spirits, but find it a difficult Matter to keep down the Estuasions of our unruly Passions. When a cross Providence intervenes, either to frustrate our Expectations, or deprive us of our present Enjoyments, they will mutiny and rebel: So that it is almost as easy an Undertaking, to persuade the Sea into a Calm, when Winds and Storms beat boisterously upon it, as it is to compose the Minds of Men into a smooth and equal Temper, when they are assaulted with any tempestuous Providences. Yet, Grace can work those Wonders which Nature cannot; and that God to whom all things are possible, can make our Hearts calm, when our outward Condition is tempestuous; and, tho' He lets forth His Winds upon us, can keep us from being discompos'd and ruffled by them; and lay the same Command upon our Passions, as CHRIST did upon the Waves; *Peace, Be still.* And, there be several Considerations, that will tend mightily to hush all the Disturban-

ces of our Spirits under all our Sorrows and Sufferings. As,

I. THAT there is nothing more necessary for a Christian, in the whole Conduct of his Life, than the Work and Exercise of Patience. What saith the Apostle? *Hebr. x. 36. Ye have Need of Patience, that after ye have done the Will of GOD, ye might receive the Promise.* It is a most necessary Grace for a Christian, not only as all other Graces are necessary to make him such; for so we have Need of them all, at least, in the Root and Habit, and in the proper Seasons for the Exercise of them; but the Apostle speaks it *signanter*, and by way of special Remark, *Ye have Need of Patience*; Need of the continual Exercise, Strength, and Perfection of this Grace.

AND this especial Necessity of Patience will appear, if we consider,

I. THAT our whole Life is but a Scene of Sorrow and Trouble. They spring up thick about us, and surround us in every Condition. Put thyself in what Posture and State of Life thou wilt, still thou shalt find something to molest and disquiet thee; For, our Rest is not here. Who can recount the Personal, Domestical, or more Publick Sorrows, which he undergoes, as if Breath were only given
unto

unto us, to spend it in Sighs and Groans? The Truth is, we pass through the World, as Men that run the Gantlet, and must receive a Lash and Stripe every Step we take. *Man is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards*, Job v. 7. He is born to it; it is his Inheritance and Portion, that descends to him from his Father *Adam*; entail'd upon him by the Curse of the Law annex'd to our first Transgression: And born unto it, *as the Sparks fly upward*; that is, our Troubles come upon us naturally and spontaneously, as is the ascending Motion of Sparks; and they are as thick and fiery, as those Sons of the burning Coal, as the Original Expression hath it. Now, if Sorrow and Sufferings do thus make up the greatest Part of our Lives, is it not absolutely necessary to fortify our Hearts with Patience, quietly and meekly to bear whatsoever it shall seem good to the All-wise Providence of GOD to inflict upon us? Afflictions are necessary for us. *If Need be*, (saith the Apostle) *you are in Heaviness through manifold Temptations*, 1 Pet. i. 6. More necessary and more advantageous than Prosperity, to nip our Luxuriancys, to rouse our Sloth, and awaken our Security, to make us remember GOD and ourselves; and, shall Afflictions

trials be thus necessary for us, and not Patience to undergo them? While thou livest in this World, thou sailest upon a rough Sea; the Waves and the Billows work high; and wilt thou expose thyself to these Storms, like a forlorn Vessel without Helm, or Tackling, or Ballast, to be toss'd up and down upon the Back of every Wave, ready to be swallow'd up every Moment, or dash'd against every Rock in thy way? Patience is the Ballast of the Soul, that will keep it from rolling and tumbling in the greatest Storms; And he that will venture out without this, to make him sail even and steady, will certainly make Shipwreck, and drown himself, first, in the Cares and Sorrows of this World, and then, in Perdition.

2. CONSIDER, that Patience is necessary to alleviate and lighten the Afflictions we suffer. The same Burden shall not, by this means, have the same Weight in it. There is a certain Skill in Taking up our Load upon us, to make it sit hand-some and easy: Whereas, others that take it up untowardly, find it most cumbersome and oppressive. Let the very same Affliction befall two Persons; the one, a patient, meek, and self-resigning Soul; the other, a proud, fretful Wretch, that repines and murmurs at every Cross, and every

every Disappointment; and, with how much more Ease shall the one bear it, than the other! The Burden is the very same, but only the one is sound and whole, and it doth not wring nor pinch him; but the other's Impatience hath gall'd him, and every Burden is more grievous and intolerable to him, because it lies upon a raw and sore Spirit. And, therefore, since Afflictions and Sufferings are unavoidable in this Life, which is a Vale of Misery and Tears, if thou wouldst make thy Sufferings easy and supportable, fret not thyself at any Dispensation of the Divine Providence: Keep thy Spirit sound; and whatsoever Burden it shall please God to lay upon thee, add not to it by thy Impatience. Be not ingenious to torment thyself by thy own troublesome Thoughts and Reflexions; nor to find out Circumstances to aggravate thy Sufferings. Swallow down the bitter Draught that God puts into thy Hand, without straining it through thy Teeth; for so the Trouble will be sooner over, and less distasteful. It is not so much the Wearing, as the Striving with our Yoke, that wrings and galls us. And, as it is with Beasts caught in a Snare, so is it with impatient Men; the more they struggle, the closer and faster they

they draw the Knot, and make their Sufferings more uneasy, and their Escape more impossible. But now, Patience gives the Soul some kind of Scope, and Liberty under Afflictions. They may furround him, but at some Distance; he may be troubled on every side, but yet he is not distress'd; he may be GOD's Prisoner, but yet he is not cast into Gyves and Fetters. And, though the Affliction come very close to his outward Man and his temporal Estate, yet as long as *Patience hath her perfect Work*, it can never corrode or eat into his Spirit: In this Sense, the Iron enters not into his Soul. That's, therefore, the first Motive to Patience; it is a most necessary Grace, because it is necessary in this Life that we should suffer; and nothing doth more alleviate and mitigate our Sufferings, than a patient Bearing of them.

II. ANOTHER Motive to Patience may be, to consider, who is the Author and Inflicter of all the Sufferings thou undergoest. Possibly, when thou eyeest only the Instruments of thy Sufferings, their disingenious, unworthy, and spiteful way of Proceeding, thy Impatience may take Advantage to fret and torment thee; but if thou wouldst look up to the principal Cause, thou wouldst find abun-

dant

dant Reason meekly to submit; for it is the Hand and Dispensation of GOD. There are many Things in this Reflexion that should quiet and stablish our Minds under all the Afflictions and Tryals which we are are exercis'd with. As,

I. CONSIDER, That GOD is the absolute and uncontroulable Sovereign of all the World: He doth whatsoever pleaseth Him, in Heaven, and in Earth, and with all Things; and none can stay His Hand, or say unto Him, *What dost thou?* Dan. iv. 35. *It is in vain to strive with him, for he giveth no Account of any of his Matters,* Job xxxiii. 13. Consider, you are in GOD's Hands, but as so much Clay in the Hands of the Potter; and wilt thou, O arrogant Man, dispute with Him, why He hath so form'd thee? or, why He thus breaks thee? Satisfy thyself, that it is fit and reasonable it should be with thee as it is; for so is the Sovereign Will of GOD, and His Will being the first and supreme Cause, must needs be the highest Reason in the World. Canst thou contend with the Almighty? or wrest either His Scepter or His Rod out of His Hand? If not, What Folly and Madness is it, to vex and fret thyself at the Accomplishment of that Will upon thee, which never was, never can be

be frustrated? We may impotently (in both Senses of the Word) wish and desire this or that to come to pass: But, alas! Where is our Power? Where is our Authority to effect it? Shall thy Designs give Laws to His Purposes? or, Will the Course of Second Causes stoop to thy Appointment, or run according to thy Arbitration? It will only be our Torture to struggle, when it is not in our Power to dispose: And know, that thou dost insolently invade the Prerogative of the Almighty, when thou repinest at any of His Dispensations: For, it shews a rebellious Will in thee, to rescind His Degrees, and disturb the Method and Order of His Administration of Affairs.

2. CONSIDER, That GOD is not only our Sovereign, but He is our Proprietor. All our Comforts and Enjoyments, yea, our very selves are infinitely more GOD's, than they are ours. He hath but lent them to us, for our present Use and Service; but the Title and Propriety are still His own. And, What hath busy and pragmatical Man to do, to intermeddle with that wherein he is least of all concerned? Thy Children, thy Estate, thy Liberty, yea, thy Life itself, whatsoever is dearest to thee, and most prized by thee,

thee, is not so much thine, as it is God's. And, what Presumption, then, is it, to prescribe unto Him, or to murmur against Him, for disposing as He pleaseth, what so entirely appertains unto Him? May He not do what He will with His own? Certainly, this Consideration alone, were it well wrought into our Hearts, would be sufficient to allay all our Impatience, and silence all our repining Thoughts; That since all is God's, we ought rather to bless Him, and gratefully to acknowledge His Goodness, that he hath spared us any Comforts thus long, than to complain of His Rigour and Severity, that He is pleased again to call for them from us, and to require again, what he only lent, but never alienated.

3. CONSIDER the Relation wherein God stands unto thee. He is not only thy Sovereign and Proprietor, which are Titles of Awe and Majesty, but He is thy Father, which is the most sweet and endearing Title of Love and Mercy. A Father, whose Bowels yern and roll towards thee, while He is correcting thee, *Jer. xxxi. 20.* *Is Ephraim my dear Son? Is he a pleasant Child? For, since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: Therefore, my Bowels are troubled for*

Death disarm'd.

for him; I will surely have Mercy upon him, saith the LORD. He undertakes this Work of Correction unwillingly, and, as it were, by Constraint: For, he doth not willingly grieve, nor afflict the Children of Men, Lament. iii. 33. Were it not that He sees this Discipline of the Rod is necessary for thee, thou shouldst never have other from Him, but Smiles and Favours. Nay, GOD hath given us the highest Expression of His Tenderness, that ever could proceed from the Heart of the most affectionate and compassionate Father, *Isa. lxiii. 9. In all their Afflictions, he was afflicted.* As a tender-hearted Father chastiseth his Children, with as much Grief and Regret as they themselves feel it; so doth GOD. And, should not this, then, be a prevailing Motive unto Patience, to consider, That it is our Father who chastiseth us; a Father who is infinitely gracious, and merciful; and, whose Mercy and Pity alone puts Him upon this His strange and unwelcome Work? Shall I murmur and fret, because His Goodness takes this necessary Way of expressing itself towards me? because He is not so cruel, as to destroy me, by sparing me? and, eternally to damn me, rather than, if Need be, for a short time to cross and grieve me?

me? Certainly, if there be any child-like Ingenuity in us, we ought rather to kiss the Rod, and the Hand that lays it on; to bless and praise God, that He expresseth so much of a Father as to correct us. The Apostle strongly enforceth this Argument, *Heb. xii. 9, 10. Our earthly Fathers correct us, and we give them Reverence*. How much more shall we be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, since He never chastiseth us out of Passion and Humour, as earthly Parents often do, *but for our Profit*? When we can thus look off from the absolute, to the relative Nature of our Afflictions; from them as they are Evil in themselves, to them as they are in the Hand and Dispose of our heavenly Father, we shall find more Cause of Joy and Comfort, than of Sorrow and Repining. Thus, our Blessed Saviour supports himself, *John xviii. 11. The Cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink thereof*? Though we loath the Cup of Afflictions, in itself considered, as it hath many bitter Ingredients in it; yet, when we look upon it, as it is held out to us in the Hand of God, this will sweeten that bitter Potion, and make us look upon every Dispensation as a Mercy.

4. CONSIDER again, That it is an infinitely wise GOD that afflicts thee; and, therefore, thou mayst well acquiesce in his Providences. Indeed, if Afflictions did only befall us by blind Chance; if they sprung up only out of the Dust, as Occurrences meerly casual and contingent, without any intelligent Nature to over-rule and guide them; we might possibly give Vent to our Impatience, by exclaiming against Ill-hap, and bad Fortune; and be, if not more reasonable, yet, at least, less impious. But, when all Events are eternally scann'd, and pre-meditated; when infinite Wisdom hath sat in Council, and maturely deliberated every minute Circumstance of our Lives; when there is not the least Dust that falls into our Eye, not the least Trip or Wrench of thy Foot, but Infinite Wisdom foresaw, and consulted about it, whether it should so fall out or no, infinite Ages before the Foundations of the World were laid; it is very foolish, as well as very wicked, for us, blind Men, to find fault with the Resolutions and Conduct of Divine Wisdom and Fore-Knowledge. GOD's Providence is described, by the Prophet Ezekiel, chap. 1. to be a *great Wheel, full of Eyes*: Now, though He bring this Wheel over thee, and

and crush thee by it, yet know, O Christian! that it sees its Way. All thy Sorrows and Sufferings are chosen out for thee, by that God who doth inflict them.

1. He knows the just Proportion of what thou art to undergo. He is the wise Physician, that knows what Ingredients, and what Quantity of each is fittest for thee to take, and will so temper them both for Measure and Time, as shall be most proper and healthful for thee. And, if He prescribe thee a large and a bitter Draught, appease thyself, and quiet the Tumults of thy Passions, with this Consideration, That it was His infinite Skill and Art that directed Him so to do.

2. He knows and considers the Events and the Consequences of Things, which are hid in a profound Obscurity from us short-sighted Creatures. Possibly, He intends thee the greatest Mercy, when He brings the sorest Trials upon thee; and, by pruning and lopping thee, designs only, that thou shalt grow the more stately and beautiful. His Wisdom often so manageth our Affairs, as to bring Good out of Evil, Light out of Darkness, and Life itself out of Death. And that which at present we

cannot conceive otherwise, but that it tends to our Ruin, proves afterwards the only Means of our Safety and Preservation. And, therefore, since we ourselves are so infinitely foolish, and G O D so infinitely wise, we may well, with Patience and Thankfulness, give up the Dispose and Government of ourselves unto Him. For, believe it; undoubtedly, if G O D should model His Providences according to our Methods and Contrivances, He need take no other Way to curse and ruin us. Again,

5. CONSIDER, G O D is a faithful G O D: And this should be another Encouragement, patiently to bear whatsoever He shall lay upon us. Thus the Apostle urgeth it, 1 Pet. iv. 19. *Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the Will of G O D, commit the Keeping of their Souls unto Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* He is faithful to His Word and Promise, which He will certainly fulfil, in His due and appointed Season. Now, as there is no Condition that needs more, so there is no Condition that hath more Promises made to it, than an afflicted and suffering Condition.

1. HE hath promised a Moderation of all our Afflictions, 1 Corinth. x. 13. G O D

is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will, with the Temptation, also make a Way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. He will proportion our Burden to our Strength, and not lay heavy Loads upon weak Shoulders.

2. HE hath promised his Presence with, and His Comforts and Assistance to, the Afflicted, *Isa. xliii. 2. When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee; and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee.* And, certainly, the Presence and the Consolations of God, are such as can sweeten the most bitter Condition, and make the Waters of *Marah* pleasant and refreshing.

3. HE hath promised to rescue thee out of all thy Dangers, and to deliver thee out of all thy Sorrows and Troubles, *Job v. 19. He shall deliver thee in six Troubles, yea, in seven, and there shall no Evil touch thee.* However,

4. HE hath made thee that universal Promise, which shines among all the rest, as the Sun in the Firmament, and were enough, if there were no other besides, to give Light and Comfort to a

Believing Soul, under the saddest Circumstances ; that all our Sorrows and Sufferings shall, in the end, evaporate, to our Gain and Advantage, *Rom. viii. 28.*

All things shall work together for good, unto them which love GOD. He can make the Top of the Rod yield us Honey, and the Eater Meat ; for He is Almighty, and He will do it ; for He is faithful, who hath promised. And, what Folly, then, is it, to murmur and complain of our Afflictions, whenas our very Afflictions are our great Advantages ? and, could we, with a Wish, transform our Condition, and make it such as we fancy and desire, yet it would be far worse with us than now it is.

WELL then, O Christian ! though thou mayst be troubled when thou lookest to Second Causes, and to the Instruments and Occasions of thy Afflictions ; yet, look unto GOD, the great Guide and Governour of all things ; consider His Sovereignty, His Propriety, His Wisdom, His Fatherly Mercy, and His Faithfulness ; and, if Impatience hath not tainted thy very Reason, and fretted thee out of all Use of serious Thoughts and Reflections, thou wilt find abundant Cause to bear all thy Burdens, not only with Submission, but with Thankfulness.

6. To this let me add one Consideration more concerning GOD; and that is, That He is the GOD of Patience. So He is styled, *Rom. xv. 5. The GOD of Patience.* And that, not only as He is the GOD that requires Patience from us; not only as He is the GOD that gives Patience to us; not only as He is the GOD that doth own and crown Patience in us; but as He is the GOD that doth himself exercise infinite Patience towards us. He bears more from us, than we can possibly bear from Him. He bears our Sins, whereas we only bear His Chastisements: And Sin is infinitely more contrary to GOD's Nature, than Suffering can be unto ours. And, what strange Disingenuity is it, when we daily offer many horrid Affronts and Indignities against His Divine Majesty, and yet expect, that He should put them up, and pass them by with Patience? yet, that we should murmur and fret, and cannot quietly bear the least Correction from the Hand of GOD? Certainly, we allow ourselves strange Privilege and Advantage, that we can be content, the Great GOD of Heaven and Earth should daily suffer by our Sins; and yet, cannot be

content, when we suffer a little by His Chastisement. Thus, did we but well consider the Author and Inflicter of all our Sufferings, it would much help us patiently to undergo them. That's a second Motive.

III CONSIDER what thou hast deserved; and this will be a most unanswerable Argument to Patience under what thou feelest. If GOD should extract the very Spirits and Quintessence out of all the most bitter Things in the World, and put this Potion in thy Cup, and make thee drink of it all thy days; yet, all this is nothing to what thou hast deserv'd. When thou liest under any Pain or Sickness, or whatsoever Misery and Affliction it be, think with thyself, that this is nothing to one Gripe of Hell-Torments, much less to an Eternity of them. Think with thyself, tho' this be grievous which I now suffer; yet, how happy is it for me, that I am not now in Hell! If I now feel so much Pain, when I am but a little touch'd with his Finger; Oh! what intolerable Anguish should I have felt, had I now lain under the furious Strokes of his almighty Arm! And shall I howl and fret, and be impatient, when I have infinitely more Reason to bless GOD, that it is no worse with me, than to complain,
that

that it is thus? Thus, I say, compare your Sorrows and Sufferings with your Deserts; and this will be a most effectual Means to excite you to a patient Bearing of them.

IV. A FOURTH Motive to Patience may be the Consideration of the great Benefits and Advantages that accrue to us by Afflictions. It is true, that Afflictions, in themselves consider'd, can have no great Encomiums made of them. For so they are rather pernicious and destructive, than any way conducive unto the Welfare of those that suffer them. That Man must have worn off all Impressions of Natural Good and Evil, whoever shall think, that Pains and Sorrows are but Delights and Recreations. After all the grave Dictates of Philosophy, Pains will be Pains, and Diseases, Diseases, still. And, if Reason should presume to teach Sense to judge what is pleasant, and what is grievous, it would exceed its due Bounds, and grow very profoundly ridiculous. It is Work enough for Patience to bear them as they are; it is not requir'd, that we should account them Pleasures and Diversifements; and those who are of such a cynical Humour, deserve enough of such Blessings. But tho' Afflictions be in themselves evil, yet are they capable of
such

such excellent Improvements, that the Good which shall spring from them, will more than compensate the Pain and Grief of our present Sufferings. To this accords that of the Apostle, *Hebr. xii. 11. No Chastisement, for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but rather grievous; nevertheless, afterwards, it yieldeth the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.* As the Ploughing up of a Field seems utterly to spoil the Beauty of it, when its Smoothness and Verdure is turned into rough and unsightly Furrows, and all its Herbs and Flowers bury'd under deform'd Clods of Earth; but yet, afterwards, in the Days of Harvest, when the Fields laugh and sing for Joy, when the Furrows stand thick with Corn, and look like a boundless Sea and Inundation of Plenty, they yield an incomparable Delight to the Eyes of the Beholders, and welcome Sheaves into the Bosom of the Reapers: So, when GOD ploughs up any of His Children, and makes long Furrows upon their Backs, it may possibly seem somewhat a strange Method of His Husbandry, thus to deform the Flourishing of their present Condition; but yet, afterwards, when the Seed which He casts into these Furrows, is sprung up; when it shall overspread their Souls, and
shake

shake like *Lebanon*; both the Wisdom and Goodness of Divine Providence will be made apparent, in thus converting a barren Prosperity into a more fruitful Adversity; and, tho' they go forth weeping, yet they shall, doubtless, come again rejoicing, bringing their Sheaves with them, as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal. cxxvi. 6.* And, therefore, since Afflictions may be thus improv'd to so great an Advantage, Impatience and Fretfulness under them may be justly censur'd, not only as Impiety, but Folly.

Now, there are four Sorts of Improvements and Advantages that we may make of our Afflictions.

1. As they are the Exercise of our Graces, so they keep them lively and active. Exercise, you know, though it weary and tire the Body for the present, yet it conduceth to its Health and Soundness. Now, Afflictions are the Soul's Exercise, by which God keeps our Graces in Breath, which else would languish and be choak'd up. And, tho' this Exercise may sometimes be very violent, so as to make the Soul pant and run down with Sweat; yet this tends to better its Constitution, and to remove that sluggish Flegm, which otherwise would obstruct and oppress it. And, therefore,

O Chri-

O Christian ! whatsoever thy present Troubles and Afflictions be, know, that God brings them upon thee, only to breathe thy Graces, and make them the more healthful and vigorous. Possibly, He takes from thee all thy outward Props and Dependencies, to try thy Faith, whether it can lean firmly upon a Promise, and be confident enough to take His Word without a Pawn. Possibly, He lets loose all His Winds and His Waves upon thee; the whole Face of Heaven may be muffled with Clouds, and, for many days, thou mayst see neither Sun nor Star, no other Light but those Flashes which are more terrible and dismal than Darkness itself: And all this, only to try the Temper of thy Hope; whether that Anchor be strong enough to hold out in a Storm. And, if ever Providence should call thee to lay down thy secular Enjoyments, or thy Life itself, for the Profession of the Name of CHRIST, this is only to try the Ardency of thy Love and Zeal, how much thou canst forego and undergo for His Sake; whether thou canst espouse a naked Truth, a destitute and forsaken CHRIST, when Reproaches, Revilings, Persecutions, and Martyrdom, are the only Dowry thou canst here expect. Thus, I say, God oft

ten

ten brings Afflictions upon His People, that their Graces may be exercised, and, upon Tryal, be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, when their Faith shall appear victorious, their Hope tenacious, and their Love sincere, in the midst of Troubles, Dangers, Distresses, yea, and Death itself. As Spices send forth their most fragrant Scents, when they are most bruised; so are the Graces of God's People more sweet and redolent, when they are crush'd and bruised under the Pressure of heavy Afflictions. Now, as the Tryal and Exercise of our Strength is a natural Means to increase it; so, this Exercise of Grace by Afflictions is a proper Means to get great Strength and Perfection of Grace. All Habits are confirm'd in us by frequent Acts. And, therefore, O Christian! if thy Afflictions put thee upon the Acting of Faith, and Hope, and a generous unbyass'd Love of God, and Self-Denyal, and Humility; know, that thou art a great Gainer by thy very Losses, and happy in thy greatest Troubles. Nay, if by Suffering thou only learnest how to suffer, and growest more expert in Patience, this alone is a sufficient Recompence for all thy Sorrows. It will be Motive enough to any one who knows the Excellency of this Divine Grace, to
suffer

suffer patiently, that he may be patient. See that remarkable Place of the Apostle, *Rom. v. 3, 4. We glory in Tribulations; We esteem them our Privilege and Advantage. Why so? Because Tribulation worketh Patience. We rejoyce to have our Patience try'd, so long as the Product of it is still Patience. And Patience worketh Experience.* We hereby grow to be experienced Christians, and, by long Custom, find, that those Troubles are not so dreadful, nor insupportable, when we come to grapple with them, as we thought, when we stood at a distance. Indeed, Experience and Custom facilitate all things, and make that very easy, which before we accounted difficult, if not impossible. All Birds, when they are first caught, and put into their Cage, fly wildly up and down, and beat themselves against their little Prison; but, within two or three days, sit quietly upon their Perch, and sing their usual Notes, with their usual Melody: So it fares with us; when God first brings us into Streights, we wildly flutter up and down, and beat and tire ourselves, with striving to get free; But at length, Custom and Experience will make our narrow Confinement spacious enough for us; and, tho' our Feet should be in the Stocks, yet shall

shall we, with the Apostles, be able, even there, to sing Praises to our G O D. And Experience, saith the Apostle, *worketh Hope*; inasmuch as having formerly undergone the like Afflictions, we may, with the more Confidence, expect either the like Support, or the like Deliverance. And, lastly, *Hope maketh not ashamed*; for the Expectation of the Righteous shall not be disappointed, but G O D will certainly deliver them, either from, or by, all their Sufferings and Miseries. Now, what a prevalent Argument should this be unto Patience under Afflictions, since a true Christian makes such great Improvements of his Afflictions, that he would be an infinite Loser, should he part with his Advantages to be rid of his Afflictions? That is the first Benefit we gain by Afflictions; they exercise and strengthen our Graces.

2. ANOTHER Advantage of Afflictions is this, That they are Physick to the Soul, to expel and purge out its Corruptions: And, therefore, though the Potion be bitter, yet, when it is administered to such an End, this should reconcile our Antipathy, correct our Nauseating, and make us swallow it down without repining or murmuring. See that notable Place, *Isa. xxvii. 9.* By this, there-

therefore, shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all his Fruit, to take away his Sin. And this Afflictions do, sometimes by cutting off those Provisions, which a more prosperous Condition laid in, for the fulfilling of the Lusts of the Flesh: When we cannot have such large Supplies for those Vanities and Follies, which before too much alienated our Hearts from G O D. Sometimes they work more kindly and ingenuously in a moral Way, as they put Men upon serious Reflexions, and cause them to consider their Ways and Doings. Those who were never pensive, nor thoughtful before, will be so, when the Hand of G O D lies heavy upon them. Then they begin to examine and ransack their Consciences: And, as Mariners, in a Storm, throw over-board their Freight, to lighten the Vessel; so these, when they are in a tempestuous Condition, cast out this and that Sin, to lighten their Souls, that the Tempest may the sooner cease, or they the better out-ride it. And this is the very Reason, why there is no Place so holy as a Sick-Bed. Have you never been conversant with those, who have been cast thereon, when their Vessel hath sprung a Plank, and Death hath been leaking in on every side? Have you never observed,
how

how they have then wholly applied themselves to Prayer, and Confession, and heavenly Discourses? They are deadned to all the Joys and Vanities of the World, and detest their own Folly for ever loving and prizing them. And so is it proportionably in all other Afflictions that G O D brings upon us; They all tend to make us sober and considerative. For, it is a natural Impression upon the Minds of Men, that all our Sufferings are for Sin: And this cannot but engage us against those Sins, the Smart of which we so sensibly feel; and, having had such Experience of the bitter Effects of it, are, afterwards, made more capable of the Counsel of our Saviour, *to sin no more, lest a worse thing befall us.* Now, O Christian! if this be the Fruit of thy Afflictions, to purge thee from thy Sins, wilt thou complain, that G O D deals too severely with thee, when He intends thee so great a Blessing? Canst thou patiently suffer Incisions, Causticks, Searings, Amputations, and Cutting off of whole Limbs, and all the merciful Torture that the Art of the Physician puts thee to, for the Recovery of thy bodily Health? and yet, wilt thou murmur against the Great Physician, when He takes those Methods, which, though they are grievous, yet

Death disarm'd.

are safest for the Cure of thy spiritual Diseases, which are infinitely more dangerous and destructive than any corporal Maladies can be? Certainly, thou either distrustest His Skill, or foolishly preferrest thy present Ease, before thy eternal Safety; and hadst rather go down to Hell, having two Eyes, and two Hands, than enter into Heaven halt and maimed. Possibly, GOD sees, that thou hast taken a dangerous Surfeit of worldly Comforts; and, wilt thou vex and fret, that He gives thee a Medicine to cast up what thou canst not digest, and to rid thee of what was a Load and Oppression to thy Soul and Conscience? Perhaps, He sees thy Mind is lifted up, and swells with the Tumor of Pride and Vain-glory, in a continued Course of Prosperity; and, therefore, the Method of His Goodness constrains Him to launce thee: And, wilt thou complain, that He wounds thee, when it is only to let out that Puerulency and Corruption, which else might fester and gangrene, and prove thy utter Bane and Ruin? Could we but bring our untoward Hearts to believe, that all our Afflictions are but the Prescriptions of our Great Physician; That He designs Good to us by them; That, as much of our earthly Enjoyments as He takes

takes from us, as much Blood as He lets, so much of our Corruption and peccant Humours run out together with it; common Reason would easily persuade us, to bear that with Patience, which will so vastly redound to our Benefit and Advantage.

3. A patient Bearing of Afflictions is a clear Evidence of our Adoption. Indeed, our Sufferings only prove us to be the Sons of *Adam*, on whom the Curse is entailed through his Primitive Transgression. But, our Patience under Sufferings, is a strong Proof and Evidence, that we are the Sons of *GOD*. All Metals may be melted in the Furnace; but it is the Property of Gold only, to endure the Fire, and lose nothing of its Weight, nor Worth. The Apostle makes this the Tryal of our Legitimation, *Heb. xii. 7. If ye endure Chastning, GOD dealeth with you as with Sons. And, ver. 10. If you be without Chastisement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Bastards, and not Sons. And again, ver. 6. Whom the LORD loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.* It is true, we cannot argue, That we are the Children of *GOD*, meerly because he scourgeth us: For, *GOD* dispenseth Afflictions, both as He is a Judge, and as He is a Father.

F 2

ther. As He is a Judge, so He deals with wicked and ungodly Men, often scourging them with Rods, even in this Life and afterwards, eternally scourgeth them with Scorpions in Hell. But, then may we comfortably conclude, that He chasteneth us as a Father, when He gives us Patience to bear His Rebukes, and works in us a holy Submission unto His Divine Will and Pleasure. By this, He doth but set His Mark upon thee; and though it doth burn thee, yet this will be thy perpetual Comfort, That by this He will own thee, and thou mayst know thyself to be His. So the Apostle tells us, *Gal. vi. 17.* that he *bare in his Body the Marks of the Lord JESUS*: That is, all the Persecutions and Tribulations He underwent, as they did conform Him to a Resemblance with the Lord JESUS, so likewise they were as so many Characters imprinted upon him, declaring to whom he did belong. And now, O Christian! is there any Affliction so grievous, as such an Evidence is comfortable? Will not this abundantly recompense the Pain and Smart of all thy Sufferings, when thy Patience, in bearing them, shall give thee in a Testimony, that thou art a Child of GOD, and fill thy inward Sense as full of Joy, as thy outward

outward can be of Trouble and Sorrow; yea, a Joy unspeakable and glorious, that shall swallow up all the Afflictions thou feelest, and make them inconsiderable Nothings? As *S. Stephen* was so wholly wrapt up with his heavenly Vision, that, though the *Jews* gnash'd upon him with their Teeth, and dragg'd him forth to stone him, yet he was so wholly fixt and intent upon the Glory of that unexampled Sight, that he regards not their Threats, nor the Stones they threw at him, which, he knew, would but pitch his Way to Heaven: So, truly, when it pleaseth *GOD* to open Heaven in a Man's Soul, and to ravish his Heart with the dear Sense of His eternal Love, all outward Sorrows and Troubles are not of Force sufficient to disturb his Thoughts; but he is wholly possess'd with the Consolations of *GOD*; he retreats inward, and enjoys himself in Peace, and unspeakable Comfort, in that Retirement where Afflictions and Tribulations cannot reach him: And they can no more embitter his Joys, than one Drop of Gall can embitter the whole Sea, when it is let fall into it. Now, *GOD* never affords such large and overflowing Measures of His Consolations, as in an afflicted Condition. He gives His strongest Cordials,

Death disarm'd.

when the Spirits are most apt to fail and sink. And, therefore, thou, who hast laboured and prayed long for Assurance, and wouldst esteem it a Felicity, next possessing Heaven, to know thy undoubted Right unto it, set Patience on work in all thy Tryals and Afflictions, bear them quietly and submissively, and see whether thou canst not read Evidences enough for Heaven, in the very Print of the Rod. See, whether G O D will not this way give thee in so much Comfort, as shall turn thy Patience into Joy and Triumph.

4. CONSIDER, that a patient Suffering of Afflictions will make rich Additions to the Weight and Splendor of thy Crown of Glory. And, wilt thou then, O Christian! murmur and repine at the Weight of thy Burden, when, at last, it will be all found to be Gems and Diadems, and all to be thine own? See what the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. iv. 17. *Our light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* Methinks, this Consideration alone should be so effectual to teach us Patience, that we should scarce have Patience to hear any more. Shall our Glory superabound, as our Sorrows have abounded? Shall our eter-
nal

nal Refreshings be measured out unto us, by the Cup of Afflictions which we have here drank of? Doth GOD beat and hammer us, only that He may make us Vessels of Honour? Shall all Sighing and Sorrow fly away, and everlasting and unmeasurable Joy be upon our Heads? Wherefore then, O Christian! these impatient Complaints, these fretful Vexations? Dost thou do well to be angry? to fume and estuate, because GOD takes the course to make thee too glorious? Art thou likely to be happier than thou wouldst be? or, Doth GOD do thee an Injury, to fit thee for a higher Place in Heaven, than, perhaps, thou carest to possess? Believe it, thou art the greatest Enemy to thyself: And, if thou wouldst have thy Good Things here, thou dischargest GOD from His Obligation. Thy Impatience can free thee from no other Weight but one; and that is, the exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. Thus, therefore, if we consider the great Benefits and Advantages, that will accrue to us by a patient Bearing of Afflictions; that it is Exercise to our Graces, Physick for our Souls, an Evidence of our Adoption, and an Addition to our future Glory; we should soon be convinced, that it is much more

our Interest to be patient, than it is, not to be afflicted. That's, therefore, the Fourth Motive.

V. ANOTHER Motive may be this, That a patient Bearing of Afflictions is a very great Honour both to ourselves, and to GOD.

I. To ourselves. Consult 1 Pet. iv. 14. *If ye be reproached for the Name of CHRIST, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory, and of GOD, resteth upon you.* It is for the Honour of your Faith, and Hope, and all the rest of your Graces, 1 Pet. i. 7. that the Tryal of your Faith, which is more precious than of Gold, though it be tryed with Fire, might be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory. There is nothing more honourable than Fortitude and Magnanimity. Now, it is the heroick Gallantry of a Christian Spirit, not to be out-baffled by Afflictions; but, when his Body or Estate are broken by them, yet, to keep his Soul sound and entire; and, in the greatest Agonies of Sorrows from GOD, with an undaunted Meekness, to say, *Strike, Lord, for thy Servant beareth*; And, in the greatest Rage of Persecutions from Men, to scorn their weak Attempts, and shew a Courage able to endure far more than they are able to inflict. Thus the Primitive Christians tormented

tormented their Tormentors, and by their conquering Patience, turn'd their Despight against themselves, to gnaw and fret their own Bowels.

2. It brings in a great Revenue of Glory unto GOD. For, what can reflect a greater Honour upon GOD, than that tho' we suffer from Him or for Him, yet we can bear it patiently, because it is His Hand that inflicts it. *Cassian* relates a Story to this purpose, *That a Christian being injur'd and tormented by the Heathens, and afterwards cast into Prison, being ask'd by one, what Miracles CHRIST had ever wrought, answer'd him, The same that you now see, viz. That tho' I have been thus ill-handled by you, yet I am not mov'd with it.* When the Devil had obtain'd of GOD to afflict *Job*, (who would be sure to do it with all the Spight and Malice of Hell) and yet could not alter the Resolution of his Patience and Constancy; see, how GOD upbraids the Devil, and glories in his Servant's Fortitude, *Job ii. 3.* *Hast thou consider'd my Servant Job, that there is none like him in all the Earth, a Perfect and an Upright Man, one that feareth GOD, and escheweth Evil? and still he holdeth fast his Integrity, though thou mov'dst me against him, to destroy him, without Cause. GOD, as it*
were,

were, pawns and engageth His Honour, upon the Patience of His Servants; He calls forth His Champions to the Combat, sets Men and Devils against them; if they flinch, His Honour suffers for it; but if they keep their Ground, and whatsoever Troubles and Tryals befall them, maintain the Temper and Constancy of an even sedate Soul; this erects a lasting Trophy to the Glory of GOD; when they see so much Excellency in GOD, and in His Ways, that they can prefer Piety, with all the Afflictions and Tribulations that attend it, before the Pomp and Allurements of this present World; and esteem the very Reproach of CHRIST, greater Riches than all the Treasures of Egypt. And, therefore, O Christians! if you would glorify GOD, maintain your Spirits in Patience under all Adversities; for this shews your most high Esteem and Veneration of Him, when you can cleave to Him as your chiefest Good, though He bring Evil upon you; and resolve to trust in Him, though He slay you. This will shame and defeat the Devil, when he sees himself so hated and rejected, though he bring all the Baits of Pleasure and Advantage to recommend his Temptations; and GOD and Godliness so esteem'd and lov'd, tho' they expose their Followers

to much Distress and Misery. And, indeed, this way of glorifying G O D, by patient Suffering, is a Privilege and Advantage that we have above the Angels: The Good Angels glorify G O D by doing His Will, but they cannot suffer: And the Evil Angels indeed suffer, but they cannot suffer patiently. Herein we outstrip them, since, by Nature, we are made passive, and, by Grace, patient.

VI. CONSIDER, That Patience under Afflictions is the best way to be freed from Afflictions. And that, whether they be immediately from Men, or from G O D,

1. If they be immediately from Men; Patience is of such a sweet winning Nature, that unless they have quite devested Humanity, they cannot long persevere in a causeless Wronging of those who quietly bear and pass by their former Injuries.

* *Veterem ferendo injuriam, vites novam,* * *Publius*
was the old Saying. By putting up old *apud Gellium*
Wrongs, you will not so much invite, as *noct.*
avoid, new ones. *Where no Wood is, the* *Artic. 1. 17.*
Fire goeth out, saith Solomon. Patience sub- *C. 14.*
tracts and withdraws Fuel from Wrath, It finds no new Occasion to stir up Strife by Opposition, Whereas, if there happen a Controversy and Difference between two impatient Men, it is but like clapping

ping the burning Ends of two Firebrands together; they mutually help to inflame one another, till, it may be, both are consum'd. And, while the one doth the Wrong, and the other retaliates it, they both think they have just Cause to keep up an immortal Feud. Certainly, nothing sooner damps an Injury, than yielding; As a Wool-sack will sooner damp and deaden a Bullet, than a Stone-Wall. Resistance gives, if not a Right, yet a Pretence and Colour to farther Injuries; for those who did the first, will think themselves as much affronted by our Revenge, as we did by the first Wrong; and so both are mutually exasperated, and there can be no End of Violence and Outrage. Whereas, a patient, meek-spirited Man, that passeth by many Provocations that are given him, presently cuts off the long Genealogy and Succession of Wrongs, and finds it much easier to endure some without Revenge, than to draw upon himself a great many by revenging them. This sweet Temper of Spirit, which the Gospel so highly recommends, must needs, at length, win upon our Adversaries to forbear their unjust Prosecutions, and so cease harming us, when they see us innocent, and Followers of that which is good. This Effect

fect it will have upon them; if they be not altogether fierce and brutish; or, if they be, it will prevail with GOD to restrain their Malice, and to take us, as His Clients, under His own Protection.

2. If our Sufferings be immediately from GOD, a patient Bearing of them will the sooner put a Period to them, because usually one great End why GOD doth afflict us, is to teach us Patience. And, therefore, the sooner we learn this hard Lesson, the sooner we make the Affliction needless; and GOD will not chastise any, unless Need be. His Design is not to break, but only to bow and humble thee; and when He hath effected this, He will soon withdraw His Chastisements, and cast away His Rod, it being a Work altogether as displeasing and irksome to Him, as it can be unto thee. *Rev. iii. 10. Because thou hast kept the Word of my Patience, i. e. because thou hast been patient according to my Word, I will also keep thee from the Hour of Temptation which shall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth.* Now, when you are under Afflictions, what is it that you most passionately desire? Is it not, that GOD would take off His Hand; that He would spare a little, and give some Respite; that He would free you
from

from your Sorrows and Sufferings? Believe it, the most infallible and compendious Method to obtain this, is, to bear the Indignation of the LORD with a submissive Patience; for then commonly the Affliction is no longer useful, as having obtain'd its End: But while thou frettest and ragest against GOD's Dispensations; know, that it is not for His Honour to let thee go out of His Hands; for such a Temper will never be brought to acknowledge Him in the Deliverance, which will not submit to Him in the Affliction.

VII. CONSIDER, That all thy Sufferings in this Life are, in themselves, tolerable. They are but the Infirmities of a Man, which the Spirit of a Man may bear. For,

1. THEY are only partial. Thou art afflicted only in some few of thy Concerns; never was any in all; and yet all are alike subject to the same GOD, and to the same Providence: And what! wilt thou murmur and repine, when thou sufferest only in one or two Interests, when all the rest escape? Whereas, thou mightst have suffer'd universally in every Faculty of thy Soul, and every Member of thy Body, and every thing that belongs unto thee?

2. ALL thy Afflictions and Sufferings have a great Mixture of Mercy in them. There is none of us, but, if Impatience did not blind us, might see much more Cause of Thankfulness in every Estate, than of Fretting and Repining. The Truth is, when we are under any Affliction, we are generally troubled with a malicious kind of Melancholy. We only dwell and pore upon the sad and dark Occurrences of Providence, but never take notice of the more benign and bright ones. Our Way, in this World, is like a Walk under a Row of Trees, chequer'd with Light and Shade. And, because we cannot all along walk in the Sunshine, we therefore perversely fix only upon the darker Passages, and so lose all the Comfort of our Comforts. We are like froward Children, who, if you take but one of their Play-things from them, throw away all the rest in spite. Now, O Christian! recollect thyself. Consider how many Mercies thou enjoyst with thy Afflictions: Yea, consider how much Mercy is in thy Afflictions, in that they are not so extreme and rigorous, as thy Sins deserved, and could have prepared. They are such, as might easily enough be born, didst not thou thyself greaten and aggravate them, by thy

thy Impatience. The Truth is, Men dress up their Afflictions in a black hideous Shape, and then are frighted at what they themselves have made so formidable. For shame, then, never whine nor complain at God's Dealings with thee; lest God, to punish thee for thy Impatience and Murmuring, under more gentle and easy Afflictions, prepare such for thee, whose little Finger shall be heavier than their Loins; and whereas, before, he chastised thee with Rods, henceforth he chastise thee with Scorpions.

VIII. IN the Eighth place, Consider how many Thousands, in the World, are in a far worse Condition than yourselves, and would account themselves happy, were they in your Circumstances. And, how unreasonable, then, is it, to complain of God's Dispensations? Do we think, that God is more indebted unto us, than He is to them? or, that He wrongs us, if He doth not bestow more upon us, than upon all the World beside? Thou art, possibly, impatient at the Loss of a Child, or of some near Relation: But, how many are there in the World, to whom these are given, as the greatest Crosses and Burdens of their Lives? Thou liest, perhaps, under racking and tormenting Pains, or languishest under lingering

gring and consuming Diseases; and frettest thyself with Impatience; though, possibly, thou mayst have all Accommodations of Means and Attendance to ease and solace thee. But, canst thou find none that suffer the same Pains, the same Diseases, and, it may be, in a far more sharp and severe measure, and yet are destitute of all the other Comforts thou enjoyst; and have no where to breathe out their Sighs, and their Sorrows, but in the open Air, or at the Threshold of thy Door? Certainly, were all the Evils and Miseries that Mankind endures, amass'd together, and brought into one common Stock, and Store, and then distributed by equal Shares among all Men, thy Lot, and thy Portion of them, would, perhaps, be much greater than now it is. And, therefore, it is very unjust and unreasonable for thee to complain, since God hath been more kind, and more favourable to thee, than to thousands of others. But, the Misery is, that Pride and Self-Love makes us always take our Measures from those that are above us: And, if we see any more prosperous than ourselves, we presently murmur and quarrel at God's Proceedings, and are apt to think, that He deals rigidly with us, because He

G

deals

deals more favourably with some. Whereas, were we humble enough to look below ourselves, we should, every-where, find miserable Objects, and see abundant Cause to bless and praise God, that it is not with us, as with them. Art thou poor? yet, even among that Rank of Men, are there none reduced to a more pinching and tyrannous Necessity, than thyself? Look about thee in the World, and, I believe, there are few, or none, that will read this, but may find some whom they can relieve, and are fit Objects of their Pity and Charity. Art thou diseased, or tormented with Pains? Well; but canst thou find never a *Lazarus*, never a *Job*, in the World, in comparison with whom, thy Diseases themselves are Health, and thy Pains Pleasure? Thou art not yet brought into that Extremity, that a Potsherd, or a Dog's Tongue, should be thy only Ease and Comfort. Hast thou sustained Losses in thy Estate, or in thy Relations? But canst thou find none, who can make thee such doleful Complaints, and tell thee such sad Stories of these things, as to make thee forget thine own Sorrows, and mingle thy Tears, not of Impatience, but Compassion, with theirs? Certainly, we have all of us abundant Cause to be

be thankful to God, that we are not the most forlorn and wretched Creatures in the World. For that very Sovereignty and Dominion of His, which hath made others so, might have allotted us the same Portion. And yet, these miserable Creatures themselves have no Reason for Impatience, upon many Accounts and Considerations before-mentioned; and, how much less hast thou, whom, perhaps, they envy as happy and prosperous, whilst thou art still complaining, that thy Condition is wretched and deplorable.

IX. As another Motive to Patience, consider of how short Duration and Continuance all the Troubles and Afflictions of this Life are. Though your Way be thorny and m'ry, yet it is but short. A few Sighs more may bring you to Heaven, where all Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away, and everlasting Joy succeed these temporal Miseries. Long Afflictions are not beyond our Sufferance. They must of necessity be light Burdens, that a Man carries far. Sore and heavy Troubles usually give in Bail to their own Arrest. They spend together with the Subject that beareth them; and must, like Fire, go out at last, for want of Fuel. So that whatsoever

G 2

your

your Afflictions are, yet still, in the very Nature of them, you may find ground enough for Patience. If they be light and ordinary; it is but Effeminacy, and a Weakness of Spirit, to complain of what you may well support. If they be grievous and intolerable; a little Time will serve to deliver you from the Sense of them. And, as * *Antoninus* said well, *Ἀπορνητὴν ἐξάγει, χερνίζον φορητὴν*. *That which is intolerable, is not durable; That which is lingring, is not intolerable.* Thou mayst easily bear the one; and the other will soon wear out thee. And what! Cannot thy Patience stand out one hard Brunt, and endure a short Shock, though it be fierce and violent? It is but a Storm that will quickly blow over; and thou mayst live to see serene and bright Days again, if not in this World, yet then, when thou shalt be got above these Clouds, and this Region of Tempests, into that Mansion of Bliss and Joy, where never Sorrows, nor Sufferings, durst appear. Indeed, Impatience is a great Prolonger of Torment. It is not our Pain, but our Impatience, that makes the Time seem long and tedious to us. Both Sense and Reason tell us, That the Sun riseth over a Sick Man's Bed, as over the Healthy and Vigorous; and

* *Antonin.*
de seipso.
1.7. §. 23.

and the Hours roll away as fast over the Miserable, as the Prosperous. Yet, how swift are our Days spent in Ease and Pleasure! The Hours seem to overtake, and to crowd one into another. And yet, certainly, thy sad, and thy chearful Days, have both one and the same Measure. The Shadow creeps as fast about the Dial of a miserable Man, as of the happy. The Odds lies only within thyself. Impatience, Fretfulness, Repining, a raw and eager Spirit, fond Hopes, and impotent Desires, make short Afflictions seem long, and long ones endless. But were these cured, thou wouldst find it altogether unreasonable, to complain of the Length of thy Afflictions, when yet they are whirl'd away, and pass with the same Fleetness that makes others complain; their Pleasures, and their Lives, are too short. However, here consider,

I. **LET** thy Afflictions be as grievous as thy Passion can describe them, yet, doth God afford thee no lucid Intervals? Hast thou no Intermision from thy Sorrows? no Breathing-Space afforded thee? Why, this is Mercy; and this Time of thy Ease and Refreshment ought not to be reckoned into the Suffering, as commonly it is. Indeed, Men have

got an Art of making their Sorrows longer than they are. Ask one that labours under a chronical Distemper, how long he hath been troubled with it; streight he will tell you, for so many Months, or for so many Years: When yet, perhaps, the greater Part of that Time he enjoyed Ease and Freedom, between the Returning Periods of his Disease. Certainly, the Affliction can be no longer than it lies upon thee; and that, usually, is but a very inconsiderable time, compared to that, wherein G O D relieves and comforts thee. *Job* complains, That G O D brought his Sorrows so thick and fast upon him, that *he would not suffer him to take his Breath*, *Job ix. 18.* He was like a Man shipwreck'd in a Tempest, where the Surges and Billows broke so fast upon him, that he had not time so much as to lift his Head above Water to take Breath. But, hath G O D dealt so with thee? Hast thou not had a Morning, as well as an Evening, to make up thy Day? Though the Clouds return again after the Rain, and the same Pain or Disease, or whatsoever Affliction it be, recurs; yet, it is Mercy, that G O D hath interrupted the Course of it; that He hath given thee an *Interstitium* of Ease; and then, thou canst no more, with

Truth,

Truth, say, That thou hast so long had thy Disease, than that thou hast had thy Health. And,

2. If thou hast been long under Afflictions, yet, perhaps, they have been vary'd. Even this is Mercy, that he will not strike long upon one Place, nor scourge thee where thou art sore already. But suppose,

3. THE Affliction that GOD brings upon thee were to continue as long as thy Life itself continues, without either Change or Intermission; yet consider, that it is most unreasonable to complain of thy Sorrows, as long, when thou art still complaining of thy Life, as short. If thou art not reliev'd sooner, yet it cannot be long e're Death will put an End to thy temporal Miseries; and the last Sigh and Groan thou shalt give, will be that which shall discharge thy Soul from thy Body, and thee from all thy present Sorrows and Sufferings. And, therefore, though the Days of thy Pilgrimage be evil, yet, since they are but few, this may recompense for the other, and persuade thee to bear patiently, what thou art not to bear long. Think with thyself, that it is but a few days or a few Years more, that I shall be in a suffering, in an afflicted Condition. I am travelling thro' a Vale

of Miseries, but my Grave is within View: There I shall throw down all this Load of Care and Trouble, and sweetly take a profound Rest, where none of the Vexations of this Life shall ever disturb me; *There the Weary be at Rest*; And what! shall I faint under my Burdens, when I am to bear them but so short a time? Take Courage, O Soul! that happy Hour is hastening on, as fast as the Wings of Time can speed it, which shall give Ease to thy Pain, and Rest to thy Weariness. Death will shortly come in to thy Relief, take off thy Load, and lay thee to sleep in thy Grave. But,

4. ALL our Troubles and Afflictions are infinitely short, and nothing, in comparison with Eternity. If at any time, the Greatness, and Soreness, and long Continuance of them, tempt thee to Impatience, cast but thine Eye upon Eternity, and they will all so shrink and vanish under that Comparison, that they will scarce deserve the Name of Afflictions. This great Ball of Earth on which we live, if we consider it in its own Dimensions, how huge a Mass and Globe is it? but yet, if compar'd to the vast Expansion of the Heavens, it is but a small indivisible Point, and bears no more Proportion to it, than one poor Drop of Water

ter to the whole Ocean. And so, take all the long Flux of Time, from the Creation of the World to this present Moment, and we reckon it by Hundreds and Thousands of Years; it seems to us a mighty while: But then, lay all this Time, which is stretch'd out thus long; lay it to Eternity; and it presently shrinks up to nothing; it is lost and swallow'd up in that bottomless Gulph: Yea, the smallest Drop of Water is infinitely more considerable to the great Ocean, than Thousands of Years, tho' they should be multiply'd again by Thousands of Thousands, are to an eternal Duration. Now, thou who complainest of thy long and endless Troubles, consider,

1. THAT these take up but a very small and inconsiderable Part of thy Life. Most of thy Days have been crown'd with Mercy, and GOD's Candle hath shone upon thy Tabernacle almost as often as the Sun.

2. CONSIDER, That thy Life takes up but a very small and inconsiderable Part of Time. It is but like a little Pattern cut thee off from the great Piece. And,

3. CONSIDER also, That Time itself, tho' it should be stretch'd out to as many Ages, as there have been Minutes in it, yet bears no Proportion to Eternity. And art thou not ashamed, then, to complain
of

of the Length and Continuance of thy Afflictions, since they are as nothing, in Comparison with the rest of thy Life; and thy Life itself nothing, in Comparison with the rest of Time; and Time itself nothing, in Comparison with Eternity? And, certainly, could our Meditations dwell more upon that eternal State that awaits us, either of Joy unspeakable, or of unsufferable Wo and Torments, the Consideration of this would enable us to bear our present short Afflictions with an heroick and generous Patience; and we should scorn to think them either long or grievous. For,

I. WHAT is it for us to suffer a few short Days, when we consider the bitter, and the eternal Torments, that thousands of wretched Creatures suffer in Hell? Look but into that great Shop of Wo; Observe all the Instruments and Engines of Torture that are there prepar'd, which God will use against them with His greatest Skill, and His Almighty Power: *Their Worm never dies, and their Fire never goeth out*: They have no Rest Day nor Night, but the Smoke of their Furnace ascends up for ever and ever. And when they have felt more exquisite and racking Tortures, than you can now fancy, for Millions of Millions of Years, yet still it is

is but the Beginning of their Sorrows ; still it is as far to the Bottom of Eternity, as it was the very first Moment. These, indeed, are Sufferings that might well make a Man impatient ; but for you to vex, and fret, and be impatient, whose Sufferings are but for a few Days or Hours, who have so many Mercys and Comforts mingl'd with all your Afflictions, it shews a weak, sordid, low Spirit. For you to be impatient under those little Crosses that God lays upon you here ; whereas, He might righteously have plung'd you into Hell, and there have given you Cause, indeed, to roar, and howl, and to be in eternal Flames, and never-ceasing Woes, it argues a base, disingenuous, and ungrateful Spirit. And,

2. WHAT is it for us to suffer a few short days, when we consider that everlasting Bliss and Joy, that is prepar'd for us in Heaven ? The Happiness of Heaven may well comfort us, in respect of all our Miseries here upon Earth. What saith the Apostle ? *Rom. viii. 18. I reckon, that the Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us.* Christians, think but seriously with yourselves, that though your Way be rugged and tiresome, yet it is a Way that leads unto your Father's House ;

House; and tho' you come there all wet and weary, wet with your Tears, and wearied with your Burdens; yet there you shall be surely welcome, and enjoy an Eternity of Rest. There you shall sit down, and, with everlasting Joy, recount to your Brethren, a whole Ring of surrounding Saints, all the wonderful Methods of divine Providence, which brought you thither; and, with infinite Satisfaction, see the Necessity and Mercy of those Afflictions which you have here endur'd. There your Garments of Heaviness shall be chang'd into Garments of Praise, and your Crown of Thorns into a Crown of Glory. There you shall for ever rest your tir'd Souls in the Bosom of JESUS CHRIST, and for ever enjoy so great a Felicity, that it were infinitely worth suffering all the Miseries and Afflictions which this Life can bear, to have but one momentary Taste and Relish of them. Didst thou know what the Glory of Heaven is, thou wouldst be content to lie upon the Rack, to endure the sharpest Paroxysms of the most torturing and cruel Pains all thy Life long, and account them easy and short, if these could purchase for thee one Hour's Enjoyment of the ineffable Glory and Happiness of Heaven. And, wilt thou, then, be fretful
and

and impatient under thy present Sufferings, when these are prepared to be the Inlet into thy eternal Reward; when thou shalt be for ever confirmed in the Possession of all Good; when thou shalt never more be in a Possibility of Suffering, nor know, what a sad Thought, or a sad Moment, means? And, canst thou think any Affliction long, when thou thus reflectest upon the everlasting Recompence that shall be made thee? Certainly, did we more dwell upon the Thoughts and Meditations of Eternity, we should not be so irrational, as to judge that long, which takes up but a very little Part of that Time, which, of itself, is nothing, compared to an eternal Duration.

5. CONSIDER again, what brief Measures the Scripture gives us, of our temporal Afflictions. It is called a *Season*, 1 Pet. i. 6. *Now, for a Season, (if need be) ye are in Heaviness.* And Seasons, you know, are of no long Continuance, but have their Periods and Revolutions. Yea, to cut it shorter yet, the Scripture calls it a *Day of Adversity*, Prov. xxiv. 10. *If thou faint in the Day of Adversity, thy Strength is small.* Small indeed, if it cannot weather out one bad Day. And so, likewise, a *Night of Weeping*, Psal.

xxx. 5. *Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning.* Nay, if this yet seem too long to our impatient and fretful Spirits, the Scripture still shortens it, and calls it but the *Hour of Temptation*, Rev. iii. 10. *I will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation.* And, shall not our Patience be able to endure an Hour's Affliction? or, would you desire it shorter yet? See it then contracted into a Moment, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *Our light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment.* And, what is a Moment, but an indivisible Point of Time, that hath no Parts, nor Succession in it; a meer Twinkle of Time: Innumerable of them are gone, while we are speaking the Word, *Moment.* And yet, all these Afflictions, which thou so grievously complainest of, they are light for their Burden, and momentary for their Duration, if that can be called a Duration. These *light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment.* As one of the Martyrs said, *It is but winking, and I shall be in Heaven:* So, truly, these short Afflictions are past and gone in the Cast, in the Twinkling of an Eye. Well then, let us be persuaded to bear them with Patience. It is much below the Spirit of a Man, to murmur and complain of that, which a little Time

will

will ease him of ; and much more, of a Christian. If thou canst not bear a Season, a Day, or Night, of Affliction, an Hour, a Moment, of Affliction ; wherefore art thou a Christian ? Hast thou Hope only in this Life ? If so, reckon thyself among the Number of those, whose Portion is only in this Life. But, if thou wilt own the Name of a Christian, thou oughtst to enlarge thyself infinitely beyond this present Time. Thou oughtst to take Eternity into thy Life, and not to account that thy Life, which thou leadest here upon Earth ; but that which thou livest by Faith, and expectest with a chearful Hope, the everlasting Life of Glory and Happiness in Heaven. And, what is it to this Life of thine, what thou sufferest here ? Do Poverty, Disgrace, Pains, and Diseases, Losses, and Crosses ; do these reach into Eternity ? or, do they at all taint that better Life, which thou livest ? This here is not thy Life. As we reckon not the Age of Children, from the time they have been conceived in the Womb, but from the time of their Birth : So, truly, this present Life is but the Conception of a Christian ; in this World we are but in the Womb. Then we begin to live, when we are brought forth in-

to

to the clear Light of Heaven, and breathe the Air of Eternity: And, therefore, the Days on which Martyrs suffered, were called their *Natalitia*. And, if any Sorrows and Afflictions could reach thither, thou hadst some Reason to be impatient: But none at all, for these transitory Troubles, which quickly pass away with our Days; and for which, thou wilt in Heaven be no more concerned, than now thou art, for the Pains and Inconveniences thou feltest in the Womb, before thou wert born. That's a Ninth Motive to Patience, the Consideration of the short Continuance of all the Afflictions of this Life.

X. THE Tenth, and last Motive to Patience, which ought to be very effectual with all true Christians, shall be taken from the Example of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. The Apostle commands us, *Heb. xii. 3, 4. to look unto JESUS, and to consider him, who endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest we be wearied, and faint in our Minds.* And again, *1 Pet. ii. 21. we are told, That CHRIST suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow the Steps of his Patience and Submission.* And, certainly, He is so great an Example of Patience, that, when

When we consider the Indignities He endured, and the infinite Meekness with which He bare them, it may well shame us out of our Fretfulness and Impatience.

— AND there be Two Considerations, which do mightily enhaunce this, and tend to make it a most prevalent and effectual Motive to arm us with Meekness and Patience.

I. CONSIDER, That His Sufferings were infinitely greater, than any that we can possibly undergo. From His ~~Crib~~ to His Cross, we find His Way strewed all along with Miseries. Born of a poor, and suspected Mother; acquainted with all the Hardships of a mean and laborious Life: His Doctrine reproached to be Blasphemy; and His Miracles to be Sorcery: Having no Shelter, no Sustenance, not so much as the little Conveniencies of Birds and Foxes. He conflicts with His Father's Wrath, till it strain'd His Soul into an Agony; and the Apprehensions of that bitter Cup, presented to Him, squeez'd Drops of clotted Blood from Him. We see Him exposed to the insulting Scoffs of barbarous Ruffians; crown'd with Thorns, scourged, buffeted, and spit upon; and, by the Drops of His Blood, we may trace Him

to His Cross; see Him hanging there, a
ruthful Spectacle both to Men and An-
gels; the greatest Scene of Dolours and
Miseries, that ever was represented to the
World. He was oppressed, and He was
afflicted; yet opened not He His Mouth:
He is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter,
and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb,
so opened not he his Mouth. And,

2. CONSIDER, That all His un-
known Sufferings were not for His own,
but for our Offences. It is some Motive
to Patience, when we suffer the Effects
of our own Deserts. So thought the
penitent Thief, when he check'd the
blasphemous Reproaches of his Fellow-
Offender, *Luke xxiii. 40.* *Dost not thou*
fear G O D, seeing thou art in the same
Condemnation? And we, indeed, justly;
for we receive the due Retward of our
Deeds; but this Man hath done nothing
amiss. There was no Iniquity in Him,
neither was Guile found in His Mouth.
Yet, notwithstanding His infinite Purity,
and Innocence; notwithstanding that all
His Actions were pleasing to G O D, and
beneficial to Man; yet, He suffers all the
Wrath that the one, and Indignities that
the other, could load Him with. And
what! Do we find His Passions estuate?
Doth He murmur against G O D, or me-
ditate

dictate Revenge against Men? No; we find Him meekly resigning up His Will to His Father's; *Not mine, but thy Will be done*: And, under all the Rage and Affronts of Men, pours out His Prayer, together with His Blood, for them; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. Now, O Christians! imitate this Pattern of your Blessed Saviour; Let it powerfully persuade you to Patience, and Submission, under all your Sufferings. Ours are all but the least Desert of our own Sins; His were only the Desert of ours. Ours are only some Sprinklings of that Cup, the very Bottom and Dregs of which He drank off. And, shall we be any longer impatient against God, or revengeful against Men? Shall we fret and fume, and be exasperated, and fly out into all the Extremities of Passion and Violence, when our Lord CHRIST Himself, the infinitely holy and glorious God, calmly endured such Pains, such Shame, such Wrath, that the very utmost we can suffer in this Life, is scarce a fit Shadow and Resemblance of them?

AND thus we see this Exhortation of the Apostle press'd upon us, by these Ten Motives; which if we would bring under the View of our serious Consideration, we shall find enough in them, to

Death disarm'd.

incline the most peevish and fretful Nature to a meek and quiet Submission to the Hand and Will of G O D. For, it is a most necessary Grace for a Christian, in the whole Conduct of his Life, which is full of Troubles and Afflictions ; and nothing can so alleviate them, as Patience. The Author, and Inflicter of all thy Sufferings, is G O D, who is absolute in His Sovereignty ; our Proprietor, as our Lord ; infinitely gracious and merciful, as our Father ; infinitely faithful to His Word, whereby He hath promised ; and infinitely wise and skilful, whereby He is able to work all things for our Good and Benefit. Again, if we consider what we have deserved, this will prevail with us patiently to bear what we feel. And, if we consider the great Benefits and Advantages, that accrue to us by Afflictions, as they are Exercise to our Graces, Physick to our Souls, Evidences of our Adoption, and Additions to our future Glory ; Consider again, the patient Bearing of Afflictions is a very great Honour, both to ourselves, and to G O D. It is, likewise, the best and readiest way to be freed from Afflictions ; That there is no Affliction befalls us, but what is tolerable, and common to Men. How many in the World are in a far worse Condition than

than ourselves? That all our Afflictions are but short, and momentary. And, lastly, Consider the Pattern and Example of CHRIST's Patience, which will powerfully sway us to Patience under those Sorrows we suffer, which are both less in themselves, and more deserved by us.

THUS I have given the Motives to Patience. The next thing, in Order, is, to shew those Distempers of Spirit which are great Hindrances of Patience, and give a very great Advantage to every Cross and Trouble, to ruffle and discompose it. And, with these, I shall also annex and prescribe the Cures. And they are such as these.

First, An effeminate Softness and Delicacy of Spirit, when the Mind is lax and fluid, and hath not its due Consistency. We may observe some Persons to be of such a nice Complexion, that every Alteration injures them. Let them but change their Diet, or Air, or set and accustomed Hours, and they suffer grand Inconvenience by it. Whereas, others, that are more robust and vigorous, undergo these, and greater Changes, without Change. And, the like Difference there is in the Constitution of Mens Souls, as in their Bodies. Some are of

H 3

such

such feeble and languishing Spirits; that they are utterly disorder'd by those Accidents, which scarce move those that are of a more hardy Temper. And these are, usually, Men of very prone Passions and Affections, easily excited and set on work by every thing that occurs: That it is a wonder to see, how they are agitated by every small and trivial Object that presents itself; like Chaff, or Straw, that the least Breath of Wind whirls about. Sometimes they immoderately rejoice, sometimes they tenderly commiserate; sometimes they vex, and rage, and fly out into all Extremities of Choler, at those petty Circumstances that would not stir another, of a solid and masculine Spirit. But these are Men of too soft and tender a Constitution. And, as a light Stroke makes a deep Wound upon a soft Subject, so every light Affliction enters deep, and cuts these Mens Souls to the very Quick. Now, to these let me recommend that admirable Exhortation of the Wise-Man, *Prov. iii. 11. and urged by the Apostle, Heb. xii. 5. My Son, despise not thou the Chastning of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.* Here we have a most excellent Temper set forth to us, as a Mean between Stupidity, and desponding Impatience. We ought

ought to be affected with the Hand of G O D, and not to demean ourselves under Afflictions, as though we felt no Smart, neither valued what G O D doth against us, but rather defy'd Him to do his Worst. It is a sign of desperate In-corrigibleness, when we are grown to a Dedolency, and are so far past Feeling, as to despise the Smart and Correction of the Rod. Moderate Passions are allowed us ; and G O D, when He afflicts us, would have us shew ourselves to be Men, not such brutish *Leviathans*, as to laugh at the Shaking of His Spear, and to account His Darts and Arrows no more formidable than Stubble.* But then again, on the other hand, beware, that as thou dost not despise, so thou dost not despond under the Corrections of thy heavenly Father. Fortify thy Spirit, and arm it with all the Arguments that are proper to encourage thee, in a suffering Condition. Do not permit it to grow too tender, and, instead of being sensible, to be sore and fretful. Consider,

1. THE Indecency and Unbecomingness of Impatience : It sits ill upon a

* *Non sentire mala sua, non est hominis : & non ferre, non est viri.* Seneca, Consol. ad Polyb. cap. 36.

It is inhumane not to feel our Sufferings, and unmanly not to bear them.

Man, and renders him contemptible and ridiculous. We do never so much unman ourselves, as by Peevishness, and fretful Humours. We degrade ourselves in the Esteem of others, as a Company of weak things, who must, like Children, be humoured, to keep them quiet. Impatience always proceeds from Weakness : And, while we toss, and tumultuate, and express the Eagerness of an ulcerated Mind, in all the intemperate Language and Actions, that Passion suggests, we are but a Grief to some, a Sport to others, and fall under the Scorn and Contempt of all. Let us think with ourselves, how unseemly is the wild and extravagant Fury of a distracted Person ! Why, an impatient Man is distracted ; and, like such, he flings abroad, at random, Firebrands, Arrows, and Death. And, therefore, our Saviour CHRIST exhorts us, *Luke xxi. 19. In your Patience, possess ye your Souls* ; intimating to us, that an impatient Person hath lost the Possession of himself. He is a Man bereft of his Reason, and, as we use to say, besides himself.

2. CONSIDER the Vanity and Folly of Impatience. To what purpose is it, that thou vexest and torturest thyself ? Couldst thou ease or relieve thyself by

it, this might be some Plea, and reasonable Pretence. But, was it ever heard, that the Body was cured of a Fever, by putting the Soul into one? Was it ever heard, that the Disorder of the Mind compos'd a Man's Estate? or, that raising a Tempest within, should lay a Tempest without? Nay rather, Impatience adds a mighty Weight to our Burdens, while we must bear both them and it too.

3. CONSIDER, That Impatience is not only unseemly, and foolish, but it is unchristian too. There is nothing more directly contrary to the true Spirit and Genius of Christianity, than Murmuring, and Repining. For, what is Religion, what is Christianity, but only a due Resignation of our Wills unto the Sovereign and Holy Will of GOD? Now, for us to vex and fret at the Accomplishment of His Will and Purposes upon us; what is this else, but so far to renounce Christianity, to rebel against GOD, and to withdraw ourselves from under His Dominion and Jurisdiction? And, therefore, I beseech you, O Christians! as you would approve yourselves to be such, that you would earnestly strive against that fond Niceness and Delicacy of Spirit, which will, else, be a great Snare unto

Death disarm'd.

unto you, and tempt you to usurp upon GOD's Prerogative, and wickedly to invade His Government. For, whosoever is not content with what GOD allots him, would willingly ravish from Him His Power, and Sovereignty, and set himself in the Throne. He doth but tacitly upbraid GOD, that He wants either Wisdom, or Goodness, or both. And, therefore, confirm and harden your Minds against all Adversities that may befall you. Fix your Resolutions, that thus it ought to be, and that thus it is best for you. And whatsoever Portion GOD carves out to you, receive it with Thankfulness: If it be prosperous, as your Food; if adverse, as your Physick.

Secondly, Another great Hindrance of Patience, is a fond Love and Admiration of these Creature-Enjoyments. Indeed, were these things certain, and durable, they would only be perpetual Comforts to us. But we see, by every Day's Experience, that they are transitory, and mutable, and of no Continuance. And, therefore, when we eagerly set our Hearts and Affections upon them, to be sure, we shall either, in the Loss of our Enjoyments, or, the Disappointment of our Hopes, find Cause enough for Grief, and Temptations e-
 nough

nough to Impatience. Let the Comforts we prize thus immoderately, be what they will, we shall find it a very difficult Labour to keep ourselves from murmuring against G O D, when He is pleased to cross us in them, For, all the Passions of the Soul take their Measures from Love. That is the Master and Leading Affection. And, therefore, according to the Intensity of your Love, such will be your Sorrow, and your Anger, and the Fretfulness of a discontented Soul, when G O D takes away the Object of your fond Love from you. So it is said of *Jonah*, chap. iv. 6. that he was *exceeding glad of the Gourd*; he mightily pleased himself in the Shade, and the Shelter, that it afforded him. And, therefore, when G O D had prepared a Worm, to smite, and wither it, you presently see what a violent and exorbitant Passion he falls into: And, when G O D graciously condescended to expostulate with him, *Dost thou well to be angry for the Gourd?* Is this fit for thy Reason, or Religion, or Profession, to be so transported for the Fading of so small a thing, as this Gourd, the mean Offspring of the Earth? we see, that Discontent and Passion so blinded him, that he flies in the very Face of G O D Himself, and gives the Almighty
the

Death disarm'd.

the most sawcy peremptory Answer, that certainly ever proceeded out of the Mouth of a good Man; v. 9. He said, *I do well to be angry, even unto Death.* Alas, peevish Man! that so little a Matter, as the Withering of a poor Shrub or Weed, should put him into so violent a Passion! But so it is, when we immoderately prize the Enjoyment of any Comfort on Earth, we shall likewise immoderately bear the Loss of it; when God comes to touch us there, all within us is presently in an Uproar; we estuate, and fume, and exclaim against Men, and quarrel at Providence; accuse one, and revenge ourselves upon another; and, in the Turbulency of our Passion, can scarce abstain from God Himself.

Now, to cure and remove this Cause of Impatience, let me beseech you to sit loose from the Things of this World: Let them not congregate with your Hearts; For, believe it, if once the Soul and Affections be glu'd to these earthly Concernments, whenever God shall take them from you, it will be a violent Tearing and Rending of your very Hearts, to part with them. Bring yourselves into a holy Indifferency of all Things here below; and then, whatsoever happens, nothing can fall out much amiss. If you
have

have no vehement Affections for the Enjoyment of these Things, you will have no violent Passions stirring in you for their Loss. If thou didst truly estimate what this World is, how vain, how empty and insignificant, how vexatious and cumbersome ; thou wouldst find abundant Reason to conclude, That it is not much material, whether thou be high or low, rich or poor, persecuted or favour'd, despis'd or honour'd ; for, all these Things are but Dreams, and, as Dreams, they vanish and pass away. Our true Interest lies not here, but in Peace of Conscience, Serenity of Mind, staid and sedate Affections, a generous Vertue, and a pious Life ; and if these were thy Care, Crosses and Afflictions would be less thy Troubles. Think with thyself, how momentary thy Life is ; thou wert but of yesterday, and mayst not be to-morrow. When it is stretch'd out to the uttermost, it is but a Span long ; And what needst thou, then, trouble and perplex thyself about so many Concernments, and such a Multitude of Affairs, and engage all the Strength and Vigour of thy Affections about such vain Things, that continue not, nor canst thou continue to use them ! What need so much Provision for so short a Journey ! Let us take the Apostle's Direction, 1 *Cor.*

Death disarm'd.

vii. 29, 30, 31. *The Time is short: It remaineth, therefore, that they who have Wives, be as though they had none; And those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those that bury, as those that purchased not; And they that use this World, as not abusing it; for the Fashion of this World passeth away. And, certainly, could we but bring ourselves to this excellent Indifferency, we should not be much molested, nor grow fretful and impatient, for any Losses or Disappointments in Things which we look upon as of no great Concernment.*

Thirdly, Another great Hindrance to Patience, is Pride and Self-Love. For, while we are fond of ourselves, we shall be shrewdly tempted to murmur at whatsoever crosseth and thwarts our Appetites, or our Interests. Those that are great Admirers of themselves, think that all Things are due to them; and if any thing fall out contrary to their Expectations and over-weening Conceits, they presently judge themselves wrong'd, and storm and rage, as if their bitterest Passions were but just Resentments of the Injury done them. Never was there a proud Person in the World, but he was also impatient; for it is the very Nature of

of Pride, not to endure to be cross'd; and those who are inordinate Lovers and Admirers of themselves, must needs take it for a mighty Injury, if all Things go not according to their Mind and Will.

AND there is a twofold Pride, which is the Cause and Root of all our Impatience: A Natural, and a Spiritual Pride.

1. A NATURAL Pride, when we think ourselves eminent for some natural Gifts and Endowments, and, thereupon, expect, that all others should say as we say, and do as we would have them; and if any presume to do otherwise, we look upon ourselves as affronted, and cannot bear such a Contumely, but presently burn in Choler, and seek to wreak our Revenge and Spleen upon them. A proud Man is his own Idol, and his own Idolater. And, as *Nebuchadnezzar* grew wroth and furious, hot as his fiery Furnace seven times heated, when the three Heroes refus'd to fall down and worship the Image which he had set up; so these proud Persons grow presently enraged, if all do not bow and fall down before them. If they meet with any so stubborn, as to thwart and oppose them, presently their *Diana* is despis'd, and all their Passions are in an Uproar and a Tumult, to vindicate

Death disarm'd.

tate their Honour. *Only from Pride*, saith the Wise-Man, *cometh Contention*, Prov. xiii. 10. and where-ever Contention is found, Impatience is first the Mother of it.

2. THERE is a Spiritual Pride, which is the Root of Impatience. And this Spiritual Pride may be, where yet there is a great deal of natural Modesty and Weakness. Now, this Pride consists in having an unbroken and unhumbl'd Heart for Sin; when we have never been deeply affected with our Guilt and Vileness, and that most wretched and deplorable Condition in which we all are. And, therefore, whensoever GOD afflicts such a proud Person as this, he is apt to think himself punish'd beyond his Desert, and to question and quarrel at the Equity and Justice of GOD, in bringing such heavy and sore Sufferings upon him, who thinks himself a very innocent and righteous Person: And this Spiritual Haughtiness and Pride makes him fret against GOD's Dispensations, and makes him think that GOD Himself turns Persecutor, when He afflicts him. Thus you see, That all our Impatience is from Pride; whether our Sufferings be immediately from Man, or from GOD Himself; for, proud Flesh is very tender, and cannot endure the least Touch.

Touch. Now, the only Cure for this Distemper of Soul, is Self-Denyal and Humility. That Man is most secure from Impatience, who entertains but mean and low Thoughts of himself: For, what strong Temptation can there be to any great Excess of Impatience, as long as we suffer only in that which we do not highly value? Why should I vex or fret myself, that such a Man speaks ill of me? Why alas! he speaks not worse of me, than I speak and think of myself? Shall I be discompos'd, because he hath done me such an Injury? Why, I shall but gratify him by that means, and, perhaps, he did it with that very Design; And besides, ~~he hath~~ far more injur'd himself than me, as long as I can keep my Patience entire. Or, shall I murmur and repine, because God hath brought upon me such a Calamity? Alas! this is a Favour and Mercy, in respect of what I have deserv'd at His Hands. When I consider, what I have done against Him, all that He hath done against me is nothing. My Sins merit no less than eternal Death, and eternal Damnation; and, certainly, I have no Reason to complain, so long as I am out of Hell. God were infinitely gracious and merciful to me, tho' He should redouble His Strokes, multiply my Sor-

J.

rows,

rows, and increase my Sufferings; and, I were the most ungrateful Wretch alive, if I should repine at bearing so little, when I have deserved so much. Thus, I say, Humility, a contrite and broken Frame of Spirit, will preserve us from being fretful and impatient, whether we lie under Injuries from Men, or Afflictions from G O D.

Fourthly, Reflecting too much upon the Instruments of our Sufferings, is oftentimes a mighty Hindrance to the Composure and Patience of our Spirits. For, this frequently puts a Sting and Aggravation into them, to think, that we suffer from such, or such. And many will be ready to say, This Cross I could bear well enough; The Affliction, though it be in itself heavy, yet is it supportable. But, when I consider the Occasion of my Sufferings, the Unworthiness and base Disingenuity of those that have had a hand in it, this makes it intolerable; and, it wounds me to the very Heart, that ever such and such a Person should deal thus with me.

AND there are usually these Three Considerations that grate upon our Spirits, and make us impatient under Sufferings.

1. THE Meanness and contemptible Vileness of the Instrument. What! to be affronted and abused by the Lees and Dregs of the People? If a Lion had rent me, there had been some Solace in the Honour of my Sufferings! But, to be eaten up with Vermine, the Ignominy of it is far worse than the Pains. Thus, I say, Impatience takes occasion to exasperate itself from the Baseness of the Instrument. And, truly, the most Patient have much ado to keep their Passions from sowing upon this Reflexion. Thus, *Job* at large aggravates his Miseries from this Consideration; *Job xxx.* at the Beginning: *They that are younger than I, have me in Derision; whose Fathers I would have disdained to set with the Dogs of my Flock. They were Children of Fools; yea, Children of base Men; they were viler than the Earth: And now I am their Song, and their By-word.* And,

2. It heightens Impatience, when we reflect upon the Nearness of those who are the Occasions and Instruments of our Sufferings. What! to have a Part of ourselves, a Parcel of our own Bowels, rebel against us, and contrive our Hurt and Ruin! Those who have their Beings from us, to conspire our Destruction! Or, those whom we have made

Intimate and familiar with us, and could never have had the Advantage of doing us Mischief, had not our Friendship and Kindness put them into the Capacity. And thus, *David* aggravates his Sufferings, *Psaln* lv. 12. *It was not an Enemy that reproached me, then could I have burn it; neither was it he that hated me, that magnified himself against me: But it was thou, a Man, mine Equal, my Guide, and my Companion.*

3. It many times heightens Impatience, to reflect upon the base Ingratitude and foul Disingenuity of those from whom we suffer: Persons, perhaps, whom we have obliged, by the greatest Respects imaginable; such, who, we thought, had as much Reason to love us, as themselves; and would have been as far from doing us an Injury, as ~~our~~ own Natures. Yet, for such as these, ~~we~~ violate all Bonds of Friendship, and all Laws of Gratitude; for such frozen Snakes to fly at us, and sting us, whom we have warmed and cherished in our own Bosoms, and who, without our Support, could not have had the Power to mischief us: This, saith Impatience, makes the Injury altogether insufferable; and the highest Revenge I can take upon them, can scarce expiate it.

WELL, but now, to cure this fretful Distemper of thy Spirit, be sure that thou look off from the Instruments of thy Sufferings, unto GOD, who is the principal Inflicter of them. And then, if thou wilt but consider the three foregoing Reflexions, thou wilt find, that thine own Cannon will be turn'd against thee; and those, which were Provocations to Impatience, when thou lookest to Men, will prove strong and most forcible Arguments for Patience, if thou lookest to GOD.

I. THOU growest impatient, when thou lookest upon the Meanness and Baseness of those that injure thee: And, wilt thou not be patient, O Man! when thou considerest thine own Vileness and Baseness, who yet hast infinitely wronged and injured thy GOD? Who? or, what art thou? but Breathing Dust, a Lump of animated Mire, the very Sediment and Dregs of Nature? And yet, how often hast thou daringly provoked and affronted the great and glorious GOD of Heaven and Earth? Every the least Sin thou hast committed, the least vain and unworthy Thought, the least idle and impertinent Word, is a far greater Injury done to GOD, than the most unjust and violent Outrage can be against thee. It

is thy Fellow-Creature that wrongs thee ; one, whose Nature and Being is altogether as considerable as thine ; and, in this respect, differs no more from thee, than Two Units, in a Number, from one another. But thou sinnest against the Infinite Majesty of thy Almighty Creator ; in comparison with whom, thou, and all Nations of the Earth, are less than Nothing, and Vanity ; more Nothing, than Nothing itself is. And, wilt not thou be patient under the petulant Affronts of thy Inferiors, whenas thou, who art infinitely inferior unto God, yet livest, and art yet out of Hell, only through His Patience towards thee ?

2. THOU art impatient, when thou considerest the Nearness of the Relation, wherein those that wrong thee stand unto thee. But, wilt not thou rather be patient, when thou considerest, in what a near Relation thou standest unto God ? and yet cease not daily to affront and injure Him ? Thou art His Creature ; and that is so near, as it challengeth from thee all possible Respect and Duty. Nay, more ; thou art His Son, or at least hopest and pretendest so, and yet rebellest against thy heavenly Father. And, is it much, that thine rebel against thee, since

Since thou thyself rebellest against thine ?
And,

3. THOU art impatient, when thou considerest the Ingratitude of those from whom thou sufferest. But alas, O Man! dost thou never consider thine own towards GOD? Is not thy whole Dependence upon Him? Doth not He maintain thee, at His own Cost and Charges? Hath He not educated, and brought thee up, as one of His Family, and Household? Doth He not daily provide for thee? Doth He not heap His Blessings upon thee, and load thee every day with His Benefits? And yet, O ungrateful Man! thou art daily and hourly wronging and provoking Him. And, therefore, if He doth at last chastise and afflict thee, thou hast no Reason to murmur and complain: For, it seems, it is but thine own Law; it is no otherwise, than thou wouldst thyself deal with thy Fellow-Creature, over whom thou hast no such Right; and from whom thou hast not suffered, by infinite Proportions, so much as thy GOD hath done from thee. Thus, I say, by turning off our Eyes from the Instruments, to the principal Cause of our Sufferings, we may cure and remove that Impatience, which is apt to grate upon, and exasperate, our Spirits.

Death disarm'd.

Fifthly, Reflecting upon a former more prosperous Condition, is oftentimes a great Provocation unto Impatience under our present Sufferings. Nothing puts a sharper Edge upon our Afflictions, than to compare present Miseries with past Felicities. But in this, we may see very much of the Perverseness of our Nature, in turning that which ought to be an Engagement to our Thankfulness, into an Occasion of Murmuring. For, either thy former Prosperity was a Mercy, or not. If not ; thou hast no Cause to complain for the Change. If it were ; certainly, thou hast a Reason rather to bless God, than to repine that He hath bless'd thee.

AND thus I have finish'd the Consideration of those Generals, which I propounded. I hope, I need not press any thing more, than what hath already been offered: And, if the serious Review of what Arguments and Motives have been mentioned, will not suffice to compose the Mind, it is much to be doubted, whether such Mens Spirits be not ulcerous beyond all Cure. Only, let me add this for our Encouragement, that this hard and difficult Duty will be but for a little while incumbent upon us. Whatsoever is irksome in Religion, will shortly

ly

ly be over. And, when we are pass'd through this Vale of Tears and Misery, as our Faith shall be turned into Vision, our Hope into Fruition, so our Patience shall be turned into Joy and Triumph.

THIS was the Consideration which *S. Paul* himself us'd, under all his Sufferings; and shall be the Subject of my next Discourse.

