

daily, and live as those that are going to give up their account:’ and then conscience will force you to ask, whether you have been faithful stewards, and to lay up a treasure in heaven, and to make you friends of the mammon that others use to unrighteousness, and to lay up a good foundation for the time to come, and to be glad that God hath given you that, the improvement of which may further the good of others, and your salvation. Living and dying, let it be your care and business to do good.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Directions for the Aged (and Weak).

HAVING before opened the duties of children to God, and to their parents, I shall give no other particular Directions to the young, but shall next open the special duties of the aged.

Direct. 1. ‘The old and weak have a louder call from God, than others, to be accurate in examining the state of their souls, and making their calling and election sure*.’ Whether they are yet regenerate and sanctified or not, is a most important question for every man to get resolved; but especially for them that are nearest to their end. Ask counsel, therefore, of some able, faithful minister or friend, and set yourselves diligently to try your title to eternal life, and to cast up your accounts, and see how all things stand between God and you: and if you should find yourselves in an unrenewed state, as you love your souls, delay no longer, but presently be humbled for your so long and sottish neglect, of so necessary and great a work. Go, open your case to some able minister, and lament your sin, and fly to Christ, and set your hearts on God, as your felicity, and change your company and course, and rest not any longer in so dangerous and miserable a case: the more full Directions

* In Augustine’s speech to the people of Hippo, for Eradius’s succession, he saith, ‘In infantia speratur pueritia, et in pueritia speratur adolescentia, in adolescentia speratur juvenus, in juvenute speratur gravitas, et in gravitate speratur senectus: utrum contingat incertum est; est tamen quod speretur. Senectus autem aliam ætatem quam speret, non habet.’ Vid. Papir. Massor. in vita Cælesti. fol. 58.

for your conversion I have given before, in the beginning of the book, and in divers others ; and therefore shall say no more to such, it being others that I am here especially to direct.

Direct. II. 'Cast back your eyes upon the sins of all your life, that you may perceive how humble those souls should be, that have sinned so long as you have done ; and may feel what need you have of Christ, to pardon so long a life of sin.' Though you have repented and been justified long ago, yet you have daily sinned since you were justified ; and though all be forgiven that is repented of, yet must it be still before your eyes, both to keep you humble, and continue the exercise of that repentance, and drive you to Christ, and make you thankful. Yea, your forgiveness and justification, are yet short of perfection, (whatever some may tell you to the contrary) as well as your sanctification. For, 1. Your justification is yet given you, but conditionally as to its continuance, even upon condition of your perseverance. 2. And the temporal chastisement, and the pains of death, and the long absence of the body from heaven, and the present wants of grace, and comfort, and communion with God, are punishments which are not yet forgiven executively. 3. And the final sentence of justification at the day of judgment, (which is the most perfect sort) is yet to come : and therefore you have still reason enough to review, and repent of all that is past, and still pray for the pardon of all the sins that ever you committed, which were forgiven you before. So many years sinning should have a very serious repentance, and lay you low before the Lord.

Direct. III. 'Cleave closer now to Christ than ever.' Remembering that you have a life of sin, for him to answer for, and save you from. And that the time is near, when you shall have more sensible need of him, than ever you have had. You must shortly be cast upon him as your Saviour, Advocate, and Judge, to determine the question, what shall become of you unto all eternity, and to perfect all that ever he hath done for you, and accomplish all that you have sought and hoped for. And now your natural life decayeth, it is time to retire to him that is your root, and to look to the "life that is hid with Christ in God ^b:" and to

^b Col. iii. 4.

him that is preparing you a mansion with himself; and whose office it is to receive the departing souls of true believers. Live therefore in the daily thoughts of Christ, and comfort your souls in the belief of that full supply and safety which you have in him.

Direct. iv. 'Let the ancient mercies and experiences of God's love through all your lives, be still before you, and fresh upon your minds, that they may kindle your love and thankfulness to God, and may feed your own delight and comfort, and help you the easier to submit to future weaknesses and death.' Eaten bread must not be forgotten: a thankful remembrance preserveth all your former mercies still fresh and green; the sweetness and benefit may remain, though the thing itself be past and gone. This is the great privilege of an aged Christian; that he hath many years' mercy more to think on, than others have. Every one of those mercies was sweet to you by itself, at the time of your receiving it (except afflictions, and misunderstood and unobserved mercies): and then how sweet should altogether be? If unthankfulness have buried any of them, let thankfulness give them now a resurrection. What delightful work is it for your thoughts, to look back to your childhood, and remember how mercy brought you up, and conducted you to every place that you have lived in; and provided for you, and preserved you, and heard your prayers, and disposed of all things for your good: how it brought you under the means of grace, and blessed them to you; and how the Spirit of God began and carried on the work of grace upon your hearts? I hope you have recorded the wonders of mercy ever upon your hearts, with which God hath filled up all your lives. And is it not a pleasant work in old age to ruminate upon them? If a traveller delight to talk of his travels, and a soldier or seaman, upon his adventures, how sweet should it be to a Christian to peruse all the conduct of mercy through his life, and all the operations of the Spirit upon his heart. Thankfulness taught men heretofore, to make their mercies, as it were, attributes of their God. As "the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt," was the name of the God of Israel. And Gen. xviii. 15. Jacob delighteth himself in his old age, in such reviews of mercy: "The God which fed me all my

life long unto this day. The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Yea, such thankful reviews of ancient mercies, will force an ingenuous soul to a quieter submission to infirmities, sufferings, and death; and make us say as Job, "Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and not evil?" and as old Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." It is a powerful rebuke of all discontents, and maketh death itself more welcome, to think how large a share of mercy, we have had already in the world.

Direct. v. 'Draw forth the treasure of wisdom and experience, which you have been so long in laying up, to instruct the ignorant, and warn the inexperienced and ungodly that are about you.' "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom^c." "The aged women must teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands and children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed^d." It is supposed that time and experience hath taught you more than is known to raw and ignorant youth. Tell them what you have suffered by the deceits of sin: tell them the method and danger of temptations: tell them what you lost by delaying your repentance; and how God recovered you: and how the Spirit wrought upon your souls: tell them what comforts you have found in God; what safety and sweetness in a holy life; how sweet the holy Scriptures have been to you; how prayers have prevailed; how the promises of God have been fulfilled; and what mercies and great deliverances you have had. Tell them how good you have found God; and how bad you have found sin; and how vain you have found the world. Warn them to resist their fleshly lusts, and to take heed of the ensnaring flatteries of sin: acquaint them truly with the history of public sins, and judgments, and mercies in the times which you have lived in. God hath made this the duty of the aged, that the "Fathers should tell the wonders of his works and mercies to their children, that the ages to come may praise the Lord^e."

Direct. vi. 'The aged must be examples of wisdom, gravity, and holiness unto the younger.' Where should

^c Job xxxii. 7.

^d Tit. ii. 3—5.

^e Deut. iv. 10.

Psal. lxxviii. 4—6.

they find any virtues in eminence, if not in you, that have so much time, and helps, and experiences? It may well be expected that nothing but savoury, wise, and holy, come from your mouths; and nothing unbecoming wisdom and godliness, be seen in your lives. Such as you would have your children after you to be, such shew yourselves to them in all your conversation.

Direct. VII. 'Especially it belongeth to you, to repress the heats, and dividing, contentious, and censorious disposition of the younger sorts of professors of godliness.' They are in the heat of their blood, and want the knowledge and experience of the aged to guide their zeal: they have not their senses yet exercised in discerning good and evil^e: they are not able to try the spirits: they are yet but as children, apt to be tossed to and fro, and "carried up and down with every wind of doctrine, after the craft and subtlety of deceivers^f." The novices are apt to be puffed up with pride, and "fall into the condemnation of the devil^g." They never saw the issue of errors, and sects, and parties, and what divisions and contentions tend to, as you have done. And therefore it belongeth to your gravity and experience to call them unto unity, charity, and peace, and to keep them from proving firebrands in the church, and rashly over-running their understandings and the truth.

Direct. VIII. 'Of all men you must live in the greatest contempt of earthly things, and least entangle yourselves in the love or needless troubles of the world: you are like to need it and use it but a little while: a little may serve one that is so near his journey's end: you have had the greatest experience of its vanity: you are so near the great things of another world, that methinks you should have no leisure to remember this, or room for any unnecessary thoughts or speeches of it. As your bodies are less able for worldly employment than others, so accordingly you are allowed to retire from it more than others, for your more serious thoughts of the life to come. It is a sign of the bewitching power of the world, and of the folly and unreasonableness of sin, to see the aged usually as covetous as the young; and men that are going out of the world, to love it as fondly, and scrape for it as eagerly, as if they never looked to leave

^e Heb. v. 12.^f Eph. iv. 14.^g 1 Tim. iii. 6.

it. You should rather give warning to the younger sort, to take heed of covetousness, and of being ensnared by the world, and while they labour in it faithfully with their hands, to keep their hearts entirely for God.

Direct. ix. ‘ You should highly esteem every minute of your time, and lose none in idleness or unnecessary things ; but be always doing or getting some good ; and do what you do with all your might.’ For you are sure now that your time will not be long : how little have you left to make all the rest of your preparation in for eternity ! The young may die quickly, but the old know that their time will be but short. Though nature decay, yet grace can grow in life and strength ; and when “ your outward man perisheth, the inner man may be renewed day by day.” Time is a most precious commodity to all ; but especially to them that have but a little more to determine the question in, ‘ Whether they must live in heaven or hell for ever.’ Though you cannot do your worldly businesses as heretofore, yet you have variety of holy exercises to be employed in ; bodily ease may beseem you, but idleness is worse in you than in any.

Direct. x. ‘ When the decay of your strength, or memory, or parts, doth make you unable to read, or pray, or meditate by yourselves, so much or so well as heretofore, make the more use of the more lively gifts and help of others.’ Be the more in hearing others, and in joining with them in prayer ; that their memory, and zeal, and utterance may help to lift you up and carry you on.

Direct. xi. ‘ Take not a decay of nature, and of those gifts and works which depend thereon, for a decay of grace.’ Though your memory, and utterance, and fervour of affection, abate as your natural heat abateth, yet be not discouraged ; but remember, that you may for all this grow in grace. If you do but grow in holy wisdom and judgment, and a higher esteem of God and holiness, and a greater disesteem of all the vanities of the world, and a firmer resolution to cleave to God and trust on Christ, and never to turn to the world and sin ; this is your growth in grace.

Direct. xii. ‘ Be patient under all the infirmities and inconveniencies of old age.’ Be not discontented at them, repine not, nor grow peevish and froward to those about you.

This is a common temptation which the aged should carefully resist. You knew at first that you had a body that must decay: if you would not have had it till a decaying age, why were you so unwilling to die? If you would, why do you repine? Bless God for the days of youth, and strength, and health, and ease which you have had already! and grudge not that corruptible flesh decayeth:

Direct. XIII. 'Understand well that passive obedience is that which God calleth you to in your age and weakness, and in which you must serve and honour him in the conclusion of your labour.' When you are unfit for any great or public works, and active obedience hath not opportunity to exercise itself as heretofore, it is then as acceptable to God that you honour him, by patient suffering. And therefore it is a great error of them that wish for the death of all that are impotent, decrepit, and bedrid, as if they were utterly unserviceable to God. I tell you, it is no small service that they may do, not only by their prayers, and their secret love to God, but by being examples of faith, and patience, and heavenly-mindedness, and confidence and joy in God, to all about them. Grudge not then if God will thus employ you.

Direct. XIV. 'Let your thoughts of death, and preparations for it, be as serious as if death were just at hand.' Though all your life be little enough to prepare for death, and it be a work that should be done as soon as you have the use of reason, yet age and weakness call louder to you, presently to prepare without delay. Do therefore all that you would fain find done, when your last sickness cometh; that unreadiness to die may not make death terrible, nor your age uncomfortable.

Direct. xv. 'Live in the joyful expectation of your change, as becometh one that is so near to heaven, and looketh to live with Christ for ever.' Let all the high and glorious things, which faith apprehendeth, now shew their power in the love, and joy, and longings of your soul. There is nothing in which the weak and aged can more honour Christ and do good to others, than in joyful expectation of their change, and an earnest desire to be with Christ. This will do much to convince unbelievers, that the promises are true, and that heaven is real, and that a holy life is indeed the best, which hath so happy an end. When they see you highest in your joys, at the time when others are deepest in dis-

tress ; and when you rejoice as one that is entering upon his happiness, when all the happiness of the ungodly is at an end ; this will do more than many sermons, to persuade a sinner to a holy life. I know that this is not easily attained ; but a thing so sweet and profitable to yourselves, and so useful to the good of others, and so much tending to the honour of God, should be laboured after with all your diligence : and then you may expect God's blessing on your labours. Read to this use the fourth part of my "Saints' Rest."

CHAPTER XXX.

Directions for the Sick.

THOUGH the chief part of our preparation for death be in the time of health, and it is a work for which the longest life is not too long ; yet because the folly of unconverted sinners is so great, as to forget what they were born for till they see death at hand, and because there is a special preparation necessary for the best, I shall here lay down some Directions for the Sick. And I shall reduce them to these four heads. 1. What must be done to make death safe to us, that it may be our passage to heaven and not to hell. 2. What must be done to make sickness profitable to us ? 3. What must be done to make death comfortable to us, that we may die in peace and joy. 4. What must be done to make our sickness profitable to others about us.

Tit. 1. Directions for a Safe Death, to secure our Salvation.

The Directions of this sort are especially necessary to the unconverted, impenitent sinner ; yet needful also to the godly themselves ; and therefore I shall distinctly speak to both.

I. Directions for an Unconverted Sinner in his Sickness.

It is a very dreadful case to be found by sickness in an unconverted state. There is so great a work to be done, and so little time to do it in, and soul and body so unfit and undisposed for it, and the misery so great (even everlasting torment) that will follow so certainly and so quickly if it be undone, that one would think it should overwhelm the

understanding and heart of any man with astonishment and horror, to foresee such a condition in the time of his health; much more to find himself in it in his sickness. And though one would think that the near approach of death, and the nearness of another world, should be irresistibly powerful to convert a sinner, so that few or none should die unconverted, however they lived; yet Scripture and sad experience declare the contrary, that most men die as well as live, in an unsanctified and miserable state. For 1. A life of sin doth usually settle a man in ignorance or unbelief, or both: so that sickness findeth him in such a dungeon of darkness, that he is but lost and confounded in his fears, and knoweth not whither he is going, nor what he hath to do. 2. And also sin woefully hardeneth the heart, and the long-resisted Spirit of God forsaketh them, and giveth them over to themselves in sickness, who would not be ruled and sanctified by him in their health: and such remain like blocks or beasts even to the last. 3. And the nature of sickness and approaching death doth tend more to affright than to renew the soul; and rather to breed fear and trouble than love. And though grief and fear be good preparatives and helps, yet it is the love of God and holiness in which the soul's regeneration and renovation doth consist; and there is no more holiness than there is love and willingness. And many a one that is affrighted into strong repentings, and cries, and prayers, and promises, and seem to themselves and others to be converted, do yet either die in their sins and misery, or return to their unholy lives when they recover, being utter strangers to that true repentance which reneweth the heart, as sad experience doth too often testify. 4. And many poor sinners finding that they have so short a time, do end it in mere amazement and terror, not knowing how to compose their thoughts, to examine their hearts and lives, nor to exercise faith in Christ, nor to follow any Directions that are given them; but lie in trembling and astonishment, wholly taken up with the fears of death, much worse than a beast that is going to be butchered. 5. And the very pains of the body do so divert or hinder the thoughts of many, that they can scarce mind any spiritual things, with such a composedness as is necessary to so great a work. 6. And the greatest number being partly confounded in ignorance, and partly withheld by backwardness and undis-

posedness, and partly disheartened by thinking it impossible to become new creatures, and get a regenerate, heavenly heart on such a sudden, do force themselves to hope that they shall be saved without it, and that though they are sinners, yet that kind of repentance which they have, will serve the turn and be accepted, and God will be more merciful than to damn them. And this false hope they think they are necessitated to take up. For there is but two other ways to be taken: the one is, utterly to despair; and both Scripture, and reason, and nature itself are against that: the other way is to be truly converted and won to the love of God and heaven by a lively faith in Jesus Christ: and they have no such faith: and to this they are strange and undisposed, and think it impossible to be done. And if they must have no hopes but upon such terms as these, they think they shall have none at all. Or else if they hear that there is no other hope, and that none but the holy can be saved, they will force themselves to hope that they have all this, and that they are truly converted, and become new creatures, and do love God and holiness above all: not because indeed it is so, but because they would have it so, for fear of being damned. And instead of finding that they are void of faith, and love, and holiness, and labouring to get a renewed soul, they think it a nearer way to make themselves believe that it is so already: and thus in their presumption, self-deceiving, and false hopes, they linger out that little time that is left them to be converted in, till death open their eyes, and hell do undeceive them. 7. And the same devil, and wicked men his instruments, that kept them in health from true repentance, will be as diligent to keep them from it in their sickness; and will be loath to lose all at the last cast, which they had been winning all the time before. And if the devil can but keep them in his power, till sickness come and take them up with pain and fear, he will hope to keep them a few days longer, till he have finished that which he had begun and carried on so far. And if there be here and there one, that will be held no longer by false hopes and presumption, he will at last think to take them off by desperation, and make them believe that there is no remedy.

And, indeed, it is a thing so difficult and unlikely, to convert a sinner in all his pain and weakness at the last,

that even the godly friends of such, do many times even let them alone, as thinking that there is little or no hope. But this is a very sinful course: as long as there is life, there is some hope. And as long as there is hope, we must use the means. A physician will try the best remedies he hath, in the most dangerous disease, which is not desperate: for when it is certain that there is no hope without them, if they do no good, they do no harm. So must we try the saving of a poor soul, while there is life and any hope: for if once death end their time and hopes, it will be then too late; and they will be out of our reach and help for ever. To those that sickness findeth in so sad a case, I shall give here but a few brief Directions, because I have done it more at large in the first Part and first Chapter, whither I refer them.

Direct. 1. 'Set speedily and seriously the judging of your selves, as those that are going to be judged of God.' And do it in the manner following. 1. Do it willingly and resolvedly, as knowing that it is now no time to remain uncertain of your everlasting state, if you can possibly get acquainted with it. Is it not time for a man to know himself, whether he be a sanctified believer or not, when he is just going to appear before his Maker, and there be judged as he is found? 2. Do it impartially; as one that is not willing to find himself deceived, as soon as death hath acquainted him with the truth. O take heed, as you love your souls, of being foolishly tender of yourselves, and resolving for fear of being troubled at your misery, to believe that you are safe, whether it be true or false. This is the way that thousands are undone by. Thinking that you are sanctified, will neither prove you so, nor make you so: no more than thinking you are well, will prove or make you well. And what good will it do you to think you are pardoned and shall be saved, for a few days longer, and then to find too late in hell that you were mistaken? Is the ease of so short a deceit worth all the pain and loss that it will cost you? Alas, poor soul! God knoweth it is not needlessly to affright thee, that we desire to convince thee of thy misery! We do not cruelly insult over thee or desire to torment thee. But we pity thee in so sad a case. To see an unsanctified person ready to pass into another world, and to be doomed unto endless misery, and will not know it till he is there!

Our principal reason of opening your danger is because it is necessary to your escaping it. If soul diseases were like bodily diseases, which may sometimes be cured without the patient's knowing them and the danger of them, we would never trouble you at such a time as this. But it will not be so done: you must understand your danger, if you will be saved from it: therefore be impartial with yourself if you are wise, and be truly willing to know the worst. 3. In judging yourselves proceed by the same rule or law that God will judge you by; that is, by the Word of God revealed in the Gospel. For your work now is not to steal a little short-lived quiet to your consciences, but to know how God will judge your souls, and whether he will doom you to endless joy or misery: and how can you know this, but by that law or rule that God will judge you by? And certainly God will judge you, by the same law or rule by which he governed you, or which he gave you to live by in the world. It will go never the better or worse there with any man, for his good or bad conceits of himself, if they were his mistakes; but just what God hath said in his Word that he will do with any man, that will he do with him in the day of judgment. All shall be justified whom the Gospel justifieth; and all shall be condemned that it condemneth; and therefore judge yourself by it. By what signs you may know an unsanctified man, I have told you before, Part i. Chap. 1. Direct. 8. And by what signs true grace may be known, I told you before, in the Preparation for the Sacrament. 4. If you cannot satisfy yourself about your own condition, advise with some godly, able minister, or other Christian, that is best acquainted with you; that knoweth how you have lived towards God and man: or at least open all your heart and life to him that he may know it; and if he tell you that he feareth you are yet unsanctified, you have the more reason to fear the worst. But then be sure that he be not a carnal, ungodly, worldly man himself: for they that flatter and deceive themselves, are not unlike to do so by others. Such blind deceivers will daub over all, and bid you never trouble yourself; but even comfort you as they comfort themselves, and bid you believe that all is well, and it will be well; or will make you believe that some forced confession and unsound repentance, will serve in-

stead of true conversion. But a man that is going to the bar of God, should be loath to be deceived by himself or others.

Direct. II. 'If by a due examination you find yourself unsanctified, bethink you seriously of your case, both what you have done, and what a condition you are in, till you are truly humbled, and willing of any conditions that God shall offer you for your deliverance.' Consider how foolishly you have done, how rebelliously, how unthankfully, to forsake your God, and forget your souls, and lose all your time, and abuse all God's mercies, and leave undone the work that you were made, and preserved, and redeemed for! Alas, did you never know till now that you must die? and that you had all your time to make preparation for an endless life which followeth death? Were you never warned by minister or friend? Were you never told of the necessity of a holy, heavenly life; and of a regenerate, sanctified state, till now? O what could you have done more unwisely, or wickedly, than to cast away a life that eternal life so much depended on; and to refuse your Saviour, and his grace and mercies, till your last extremity? Is this the time to look after a new birth, and to begin your life, when you are at the end of it? O what have you done to delay so great a work till now! And now if you die before you are regenerate, you are lost for ever. O humble your souls before the Lord! Lament your folly; and presently condemn yourselves before him, and make out to him for mercy while there is hope.

Direct. III. 'When you are humbled for your sin and misery, and willing of mercy upon any terms, believe that yet your case is not remediless, but that Jesus Christ hath given himself to God a sacrifice for your sins, and is so sure and all-sufficient a Saviour, that yet nothing can hinder you from pardon and salvation, but your own impenitence and unbelief. Come to him therefore as the Saviour of souls, that he may teach you the will of God, and reconcile you to his Father, and pardon your sins, and renew you by his Spirit, and acquaint you with his Father's love, and save you from damnation, and make you heirs of life eternal. For all this may yet possibly be done, as short as your time is like to be: and it will yet be long of you, if it be

not done. The covenant of grace doth promise pardon and salvation to every penitent believer whenever they truly turn to God, without excepting any hour, or any person in all the world. Nothing but an unbelieving, hardened heart, resisting his grace, and unwilling to be holy, can deprive you of pardon and salvation, even at the last. It was a most foolish wickedness of you to put it off till now : but yet for all that, if you are not yet saved, it shall not be long of Christ, but you : yet he doth freely offer you his mercy ; and he will be your Lord and Saviour if you will not refuse him : yet the match shall not break on his part : see that it break not on your part and you shall be saved. Know therefore what he is, as God and man, and what a blessed work he hath undertaken, to redeem a sinful, miserable world, and what he hath already done for us, in his life and doctrine, in his death and sufferings, by his resurrection and his covenant of grace, and what he is now doing at his Father's right hand, in making intercession for penitent believers, and what an endless glory he is preparing for them, and how he will save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him. O yet let your heart even leap for joy, that you have an all-sufficient, willing, gracious Saviour ; whose grace aboundeth more than sin aboundeth. If the devils and poor damned souls in hell were but in your case, and had your offers and your hopes, how glad do you imagine they would be ? Cast yourselves therefore in faith and confidence upon this Saviour : trust your souls upon his sacrifice and merit, for the pardon of your sins, and peace with God : beg of him yet the renewing grace of his Spirit : be willing to be made holy, and a new creature, and to live a holy life if you should survive : resolve to be wholly ruled by him, and give up yourself absolutely to him as your Saviour, to be justified, and sanctified, and saved by him, and then trust in him for everlasting happiness. O happy soul, if yet you can do thus, without deceit.

Direct. iv. ' Believe now, and consider what God is and will be to your soul, and what love he hath shewed to you by Christ, and what endless joy and glory you may have with him in heaven, notwithstanding all the sins that you have done : and think what the world and the flesh have done for you, in comparison of God : think of this till

you fall in love with God, and till your hearts and hopes are set on heaven, and turned from this world and flesh, and till you feel yourself in love with holiness, and till you are firmly resolved in the strength of Christ to live a holy life, if God recover you: and then you are truly sanctified, and shall be saved if you die in this condition.' Take heed that you take not a repentance and good purposes which come from nothing but fear, to be sufficient; if you recover, all this may die again, when your fear is over; you are not sanctified, nor hath God your hearts, till your love be to him: that which you do through fear alone, you had rather not do if you might be excused; and therefore your hearts are still against it. When the feeling of God's unspeakable love in Christ, doth melt and overcome your hearts; when the infinite goodness of God himself, and his mercies to your souls and bodies, do make you take him as more lovely and desirable than all the world; when you so believe the heavenly joys above, as to desire them more than earthly pleasures; when you love God better than worldly prosperity, and when a life of such love and holiness seemeth better to you, than all the merriments of sinners, and you had rather be a saint, than the most prosperous of the ungodly, and are firmly resolved for a holy life, if God recover you, then are you indeed in a state of grace, and not till then; this must be your case, or you are undone for ever. And therefore meditate on the love of Christ, and the goodness of God, and the joys of heaven, and the happiness of saints, and the misery of worldlings and ungodly men; meditate on these till your eyes be opened, and your hearts be touched with a holy love, and heaven and holiness be the very things that you desire above all; and then you may boldly go to God, and believe that all your sins are pardoned; and it is not bare terror, but these believing thoughts of God, and heaven, and Christ, and love, that must change your hearts and do the work.

These four Directions truly practised, will yet set you on safe ground, as sad and dangerous as your condition is; but it is not the hearing of them, or the bare approbation of them that will serve the turn; to find out your sinful, miserable state, and to be truly humbled for it, and to discern the remedy which you have in Christ, and penitently and

believingly to enter into his covenant, and to see that your happiness is wholly in the love and fruition of God, and to believe the glory prepared for the saints, and to prefer it before all the prosperity of the world, and love it, and set your hearts upon it, and to resolve on a holy life if you should recover, forsaking this deceitful world and flesh; all this is a work that is not so easily done as mentioned, and requireth your more serious, fixed thoughts; and indeed had been fitter for your youthful vigour, than for a painful, weak, distempered state. But necessity is upon you; it must needs be yet done, and thoroughly and sincerely done, or you are lost for ever. And therefore do it as well as you can, and see that your hearts do not trifle and deceive you. In some respect you have greater helps than ever you had before; you cannot now keep up your hard-heartedness and security, by looking at death as a great way off. You have now fuller experience, than ever you had before; what the flesh, and all its pleasures will come to, and what good your sinful sports, and recreations, and merriments will do you; and what all the riches, and greatness, and gallantry, and honours of the world are worth, and what they will do for you in the day of your necessity. You stand so near another world, and must so quickly appear before the Lord, that methinks a dead and senseless heart, should no longer be able to make you slight your God, your Saviour, and your endless life: and one would think that the flesh, and world, should never be able to deceive you any more. O happy soul, if yet at last, you are not only frightened into an unsound repentance, but can hate all sin, and love the Lord, and trust in Christ, and give up yourself entirely to him, and set your heart upon that blessed life, where you may see and love him perfectly for ever!

Quest. 'But will so late repentance serve the turn, for one that hath been so long ungodly?'

Ans. Yes, if it be sincere: but there is all the doubt; and that is it, that your salvation now dependeth on.

Quest. 'But how may I know, whether it be sincere?'

Ans. 1. If you be not only frighted into it; but your very heart, and will, and love are changed. 2. If it extend both to the end, and the necessary means: so that you love God, and the joys of heaven, above all earthly prosperity

and pleasure; and also you had rather be perfectly holy, than live in all the delights of sin. And if you hate every known sin, and love the holy ways and servants of God, and this unfeignedly: this is a true change. 3. And if this repentance and change be such as will hold, if God should recover you, and would shew itself in a new, and holy, and self-denying life; which certainly it will do, if it come not only from fear, but from love: but if you renounce the world, and the flesh, against your wills, because you know there is no remedy; and if you bid farewell to your worldly, sinful pleasures, not because you love God better, but because you cannot keep them, though you would; and if you take not God and heaven as your best, but only for better than hell; but not as better than worldly prosperity, which yet you would choose, if you had your choice. This kind of repentance will never save you, and if you should recover, it would vanish away, and come to nothing, as soon as your fears of death are over, and you are returned to your worldly delights again. Though now in your extremity, you cry out never so confidently, O I had rather have heaven than earth, and I had rather have Christ and holiness, than all the pleasures and prosperity of sinners; yet if it be not from a renewed, sanctified heart, that had rather be such indeed, but from mere necessity and fear, and against the habit of your hearts and wills. This is but such a repentance as Judas had, that is neither sincere at present, nor if you recover, will hold you to a holy life.

II. *Directions to the Sanctified, for a safe Departure.*

When the soul is truly converted and sanctified, the principal business is dispatched, that is necessary to a safe departure: but yet I cannot say that there is no more to be done. They were godly persons that were exhorted, "to give diligence to make their calling and election sure." Which being (as the Greek importeth) not only to make it known or certain; but to make it firm, doth signify more than barely to discern it. These following duties are yet further necessary.

Direct. 1. 'Satisfy not yourselves that once you found yourselves sincere; but if your understandings be clear and

free, renew the trial; and if you are insufficient for it of yourself, make use of the help of a faithful, judicious minister or friend.' For when a man is going to the bar of God, it concerneth him to make all as sure as possibly he can.

Direct. II. 'Review your lives, and renew your universal repentance, for all the sins that ever you committed; and also let your particular repentance extend to every particular sin which you remember, but especially repent of your most aggravated, soul-wounding sins.' For if your repentance be universal and true, it will also be particular; and you will be specially humbled for your special sins: and search deep, and see that none escape you. And think not that you are not called to repent of them, or ask forgiveness, because you have repented of them long ago, and received a pardon: for this is a thing to be done even to the last.

Direct. III. 'Renew your faith in Jesus Christ, and cast your souls upon his merits and mediation.' Satisfy not yourselves that you have a habit of faith, and that formerly you did believe; but fly to your trusty rock and refuge, and continue the exercise of your faith, and again give up your souls to Christ.

Direct. IV. 'Make it your chief work to stir up in your hearts, the love of God, and a desire to live with Christ in glory.' Let those comforting and encouraging objects which are the instruments of this, be still in your thoughts: and if you can do this, it will be the surest proof of your title to the crown.

Direct. V. 'If you have wronged any by word or deed, be sure that you do your best to right them, and make them satisfaction; and if you have fallen out with any, be reconciled to them.' Leave not other men's goods to your heirs and executors: restore what you have wrongfully gotten, before you leave your legacies to any. Confess your faults where you can do no more: and ask those forgiveness, whom you have injured; and leave not men's names, or estates, or souls, under the effects of your former wrongs, so far as you are able to make them reparation.

Direct. VI. 'Be still taken up in your duty to God, even that which he now calleth you to, that you may not be found idle, or in the sins of omission; but may be most holy and

fruitful at the last.' Though sickness call you not to all the same duties, which were incumbent on you in your health; yet think not therefore, that there is no duty at all expected from the sick. Every season and state hath its peculiar duties (and its peculiar mercies) which it much concerneth us to know. I shall anon tell you more particularly what they are.

Direct. VII. 'Be specially fortified and vigilant against the most dangerous temptations of satan, by which he useth to assault the sick.' Pray now especially, that God would not lead you into temptation, but deliver you from the evil one: for in your weakness you may be less fit to wrestle with them, than at another time. O beg of God, that as he hath upheld you, and preserved you till now, he would not forsake you at last in your extremity^a. Particularly,

Tempt. 1. One of the most dangerous temptations of the enemy, is, 'To take the advantage of a Christian's bodily weakness, to shake his faith, and question his foundations, and call him to dispute over his principles again, Whether the soul be immortal? and there be a heaven, and a hell? And whether Christ be the Son of God, and the Scriptures be God's word?' &c. As if this had never been questioned, and scanned, and resolved before! It is a great deal of advantage that satan expecteth by this malicious course. If he could, he would draw you from Christ to infidelity; but Christ prayeth for you, that your faith may not fail: if he cannot do this, he would at least weaken your faith, and hereby weaken every grace: and he would hereby divert you from the more needful thoughts, which are suitable to your present state; and he would hereby distract you, and destroy your comforts, and draw you in your perplexities, to dishonour God. Away therefore with these blasphemous and unseasonable motions; cast them from you, with abhorrence and disdain: it is no time now to be questioning your foundations; you have done this more seasonably, when you were in a fitter case. A pained, languishing body, and a disturbed, discomposed mind, is unfit upon a surprise, to go back and dispute over all our principles. Tell satan, you owe him not so much service, nor will you so cast away those few hours and thoughts, for which you have

^a Hic labor extremus, longarum hæc meta viarum. Vir. Æn. iii. 714.

so much better work. You have the witness in yourselves, even the Spirit, and image, and seal of God. You have been converted and renewed by the power of that Word, which he would have you question; and you have found it to be owned by the Spirit of grace, who hath made it mighty to pull down the strongest holds of sin. Tell satan you will not gratify him so much, as to turn your holy, heavenly desires, into a wrangling with him about those truths which you have so often proved. You will not question now, the being of that God who hath maintained you so long, and witnessed his being and goodness to you by a life of mercies; nor will you now question the being or truth of him that hath redeemed you, or of the Spirit or Word that hath sanctified, guided, comforted and confirmed you. If he tell you, that you must prove all things, tell him, that this is not now to do; you have long proved the truth and goodness of your God, the mercy of your Saviour, and the power of his holy Spirit and Word. It is now your work to live upon that Word, and fetch your hopes and comforts from it, and not to question it.

Tempt. II. Another dangerous temptation of satan is, 'When he would persuade you to despair, by causing you to misunderstand the tenor of the gospel, or by thinking too narrowly and unworthily of God's mercy, or of the satisfaction of Christ.' But because this temptation doth usually tend more to discomfort the soul, than to damn it, I shall speak more to it under Tit. 3.

Tempt. III. Another dangerous temptation is, 'When satan would draw you to overlook your sins, and overvalue your graces, and be proud of your good works; and so lay too much of your comfort upon yourselves, and lose the sense of your need of Christ, or usurp any part of his office or his honour.' I shall afterward shew you how far you must look at any thing in yourselves: but certainly, that which lifteth you up in pride, or encroacheth on Christ's office, or would draw you to undervalue him, is not of God. Therefore keep humble, in the sense of your sinfulness and unworthiness, and cast away every motion which would carry you away from Christ, and make yourselves, and your works, and righteousness, as a Saviour to yourselves.

Tempt. IV. Another perilous temptation is, 'By causing

the thoughts of death and the grave, and your doubts and fears about the world to come, to overcome the love of God, and (not only the comforts, but also) the desires and willingness of your hearts, to be with Christ.' It will abate your love to God and heaven, to think on them with too much estrangedness and terror. The Directions under Tit. 3. will help you against this temptation.

Tempt. v. 'Another dangerous temptation is fetched from the remnants of your worldlymindedness; when your dignity, or honour, your house, or lands, your relations and friends, or your pleasures and contentments, are so sweet to you, that you are loath to leave them; and the thoughts of death are grievous to you, because it taketh you from that which you over-love; and God and heaven are the less desired, because you are loath to leave the world.' Watch carefully against this great temptation: observe how it seeketh the very destruction of your grace and souls; and how it fighteth against your love to God and heaven, and would undo all that Christ and his Spirit have been doing so long. Observe what a root of matter it findeth in yourselves; and therefore be the more humbled under it. Learn now what the world is, and how little the accommodations of the flesh are worth; when you perceive what the end of all must be. Would you never die? would you enjoy your worldly things for ever? Had you rather have them, than to live with Christ in the heavenly glory of the New Jerusalem? If you had, it is your grievous sin and folly; and yet you know that it is a desire that you can never hope to attain. Die you must, whether you will or not! What is it then, that you would stay for? Is it till the world be grown less pleasant to you, and your love and minds be weaned from it? When should that rather be than now? And what should more effectually do it, than this dying condition that you are in? It is time for you to spit out these unwholesome pleasures; and now to look up to the true, the holy, the unmeasurable, everlasting pleasures.

Tit. 2. Directions how to Profit by our Sickness.

Whether it shall please God to recover you or not, it is no small benefit which you may get by his visitation, if you

do your part, and faithfully improve it, according to these Directions following.

Direct. i. 'If you hear God's call to a closer trial of your hearts, concerning the sincerity of your conversion; and thereby are brought to a more exact examination, and come to a truer acquaintance with your state (be it good or bad) the benefit may be exceeding great.' For if it be good, you may be much comforted, and confirmed, and fitted to give thanks and praise to God: and if it be bad, you may be awakened speedily to look about you, and seek for a recovery.

Direct. ii. 'If in the review of your lives, you find out those sins which before you overlooked, or perceive the greatness of those sins which you before accounted small, the benefit may be very great:' for it will help to a more deep and sound repentance, and to a stronger resolution against all sins, if you recover. And affliction is a very great help to us in this: many a man hath been ashamed and deeply humbled for that same sin, when sickness did awake him, which he could make his play-fellow before, as if there had been neither hurt nor danger in it.

Direct. iii. 'There is many a deep corruption in the heart, which affliction openeth and discovereth, which deceitfulness hid in the time of prosperity:' and the detecting of these is no small benefit to the soul. When you come to part with wealth and honour, you shall better know how much you loved them, than you could before. Mark therefore what corruptions appear in your affliction, and how the heart discloseth its deceits, that you may know what to repent of, and reform.

Direct. iv. 'When affliction calleth you to the use and exercise of your graces, you have a great help to be better acquainted with the strength or weakness of them.' When you are called so loudly to the use of faith, and love; and patience, and heavenly-mindedness, you may better know what measure of every one of these you have, than you could when you had no such help. Mark therefore what your hearts prove in the trial, and what each grace doth shew itself to be, in the exercise.

Direct. v. 'You have a very great help now to be thoroughly acquainted with the vanity of the world, and so

to mortify all affections unto the things below.' Now judge of the value of wealth, and honour, of plenty, and high places. Are they a comfort to a dying man that is parting with them? Or is it any grief to a poor man when he is dying, that he did not enjoy them? Is it not easy now to rectify your errors, if ever you thought highly of these transitory things? O settle it now in your firm resolution, that if God should restore you, you would value this world at a lower rate, and set by it, and seek it, but as it deserveth.

Direct. vi. 'Also you have now a special help to raise your estimation of the happiness of the saints in heaven, and of the necessity and excellency of a holy life, and of the wisdom of the saints on earth; and to know who maketh the wisest choice.' Now you may see that it is nothing but heaven, that is worth our seeking, and that is finally to be trusted to, and will not fail us in the hour of our distress: now you may discern between the righteous and the wicked; between those that serve God and those that serve him not^b. Now judge whether a loose and worldly life, or a holy, heavenly life be better? And resolve accordingly.

Direct. vii. 'You have also now a very great help to discern the folly of a voluptuous life, and to mortify the deeds and desires of the flesh: when God is mortifying its natural desires, it may help you in mortifying its sinful desires.' Now judge what lust, and plays, and gaming, and feasting, and drunkenness, and swaggering, are worth? You see now the end of all such pleasures. Do you think them better than the joys of heaven, and worthy the loss of a man's salvation to attain them? Or better than the pleasures of a holy life?

Direct. viii. 'Also now you have a great advantage, for the quickening of your hearts that have lost their zeal, and are cold in prayer, and dull in meditation, and regardless of holy conference.' If ever you will pray earnestly, sure it will be now; if ever you will talk seriously of the matters of salvation, sure it will be now. Now you do better understand the reason of fervent prayer, and serious religion, and circumspect walking than you did before: and you can easily now confute the scorns, or railings of the loose, un-

^b Mal. iii. 17, 18.

godly enemies of holiness; even as you confute the dotage of a fool, or the ravings of a man beside himself.

Direct. ix. 'You have a great advantage more sensibly to perceive your dependance upon God alone: and what reason you have to please him before all the world, and to regard his favour or displeasure more, than all the things or persons upon earth.' Now you see how vain a thing is man! And how little the favour of all the world, can stand you in stead in your greatest necessity: now you see that it is God, and God alone, that is to be trusted to at last; and therefore it is God that is to be obeyed and pleased, whatever become of all things in the world.

Direct. x. 'You have now a great advantage to discern the preciousness of time, and to see how carefully it should be redeemed, and to perceive the distractedness of those men, that can waste it in pastimes, and curiosity of dressings, and needless compliments and visits, and a multitude of such vanities as rob the world, of that which is more precious than gold or treasure.' Now what think you of idling and playing away your time? Now do you not think that it is wiser to spend it in a holy preparation for the life to come, than to cast it away upon childish fooleries, or any unnecessary worldly things?

Direct. xi. Also you have now a special help to be more serious than ever in your preparations for death, and in your thoughts of heaven; and so to be readier than you were before: and if sickness help you to be readier to die, and more to set your hearts above, whether you live or die, it will be a profitable sickness to you.'

Direct. xii. 'Let your friends about you be the witnesses of your open confessions and resolutions, and engage them, if God should restore you to your health, to remember you of all the promises which you have made, and to watch over you, and tell you of them whenever there is need.' By these means sickness may be improved, and be a mercy to you.

I might next have given some special Directions to them that are recovered from sickness; but because I would not be needlessly tedious, I refer such to what is here said already. 1. Let them but look over these twelve Directions, and see whether these benefits remain upon their hearts. 2. Let them call to their lively remembrance, the sense which

they had, and the frame they were in, when they made these resolutions. 3. Let them remember that sickness will come again, even a sickness which will have no cure. And 4. Let them bethink themselves, how terribly conscience will be wounded, and their souls dismayed, when the next sickness cometh, to remember that they were unthankful for their last recovery, and how falsely they dealt with God in the breaking of their promises. Foresee this, that you may prevent it.

Tit. 3. Directions for a Comfortable or Peaceable Death.

Comfort is not desirable only as it pleaseth us, but also as it strengtheneth us, and helpeth us in our greatest duties. And when is it more needful than in sickness, and the approach of death? I shall therefore add such Directions as are necessary to make our departure comfortable or peaceful at the least, as well as safe.

Direct. I. 'Because I would make this treatise no longer than I needs must; in order to overcome the fears of death, and get a cheerful willingness to die, I desire the sick to read over those twenty considerations, and the following Directions which I have laid down in my book of "Self-denial." And when the fears of death are overcome, the great impediment of their comfort is removed.

Direct. II. 'Misunderstand not sickness, as if it were a greater evil than it is; but observe how great a mercy it is, that death hath so suitable a harbinger or forerunner.' That God should do so much before he taketh us hence, to wean us from the world, and make us willing to be gone; that the unwilling flesh hath the help of pain; and that the senses and appetite languish and decay, which did draw the mind to earthly things, and that we have so loud a call, and so great a help to true repentance, and serious preparation? I know to those that have walked very close with God, and are always ready, a sudden death may be a mercy; as we have lately known divers holy ministers and others, that have died either after sacrament, or in the evening of the Lord's day, or in the midst of some holy exercise with so little pain, that none about them perceived when they died^c. But

^c Mr. Vines, Mr. Capel, Mr. Hollingworth, Mr. Ashurst, Mr. Ambrose, Mrs. Burnel, &c.

ordinarily it is a mercy to have the flesh brought down and weakened by painful sickness, to help to conquer our natural unwillingness to die.

Direct. III. 'Remember whose messenger sickness is, and who it is that calleth you to die.' It is he, that is the Lord of all the world, and gave us the lives which he taketh from us: and it is he, that must dispose of angels and men, of princes and kingdoms, of heaven and earth; and therefore there is no reason that such worms as we, should desire to be excepted. You cannot deny him to be the disposer of all things, without denying him to be God: it is he that loveth us, and never meant us harm in any thing that he hath done to us; that gave the life of his Son to redeem us; and therefore thinketh not life too good for us: our sickness and death are sent by the same love, that sent us a Saviour, and sent us the powerful preachers of his Word, and sent us his Spirit, and secretly and sweetly changed our hearts, and knit them to himself in love; which gave us a life of precious mercies for our souls and bodies, and hath promised to give us life eternal: and shall we think, that he now intendeth us any harm? Cannot he turn this also to our good, as he hath done many an affliction which we have repined at?

Direct. IV. 'Look by faith to your dying, buried, risen, ascended, glorified Lord.' Nothing will more powerfully overcome both the poison, and the fears of death, than the believing thoughts of him that hath triumphed over it. Is it terrible as it separateth the soul from the body? So it did by our Lord, who yet overcame it. Is it terrible as it layeth the body in the grave? So it did by our Saviour; though he saw not corruption, but quickly rose by the power of his Godhead. He died to teach us believingly and boldly to submit to death. He was buried, to teach us not overmuch to fear a grave. He rose again to conquer death for us, and to assure those that rise to newness of life, that they shall be raised at last by his power unto glory; and being made partakers of the first resurrection, the second death shall have no power over them. He liveth as our head, that we might live by him; and that he might assure all those that are here risen with him, and seek first the things that are above, that though in themselves

they are dead, "yet their life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory^d." What a comfortable word is that, "Because I live, ye shall live also^e." Death could not hold the Lord of life; nor can it hold us against his will, who hath the "keys of death and hell^f." He loveth every one of his sanctified ones much better, than you love an eye, or a hand, or any other member of your body, which you will not lose, if you are able to save it. When he ascended, he left us that message full of comfort for his followers. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God^g." Which, with these two following, I would have written before me on my sick bed. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be^h." And "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradiseⁱ." O what a joyful thought should it be to a believer, to think when he is a dying, that he is going to his Saviour, and that our Lord is risen and gone before us, to prepare a place for us, and take us in season to himself^k. "As you believe in God, believe thus in Christ; and then your hearts will be less troubled^l." It is not a stranger that we talk of to you; but your Head and Saviour that loveth you better than you love yourselves, whose office it is there to appear continually for you before God, and at last to receive your departing souls; and into his hand it is, that you must then commend them, as Stephen did^m.

Direct. v. 'Choose out some promises most suitable to your condition, and roll them over and over in your mind, and feed and live on them by faith.' A sick man is not (usually) fit to think of very many things; and therefore two or three comfortable promises, to be still before his eyes, may be the most profitable matter of his thoughts; such as those three which I named before. If he be most troubled with the greatness of his sin, let it be such as these. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not

^d Col. iii. 1, 2, 4, 5.^e John xiv. 19.^f Rev. i. 18.^g John xx. 17.^h John xii. 26.ⁱ Luke xxiii. 43.^k John xiv. 2-4.^l Ver. 1.^m Acts vii. 59.

perish, but have everlasting lifeⁿ." "And by him all that believe, are justified from all things; from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses^o." "For I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more^p." If it be the weakness of his grace that troubleth him, let him choose such passages as these. "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young^q." "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would^r." "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out^s." "The apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith^t." If it be the fear of death, and strangeness to the other world that troubleth you, remember the words of Christ before cited, and 2 Cor. v. 1—6. 8. "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: for we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.— We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." "For I am in a strait between to, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better^u." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them^v." "O death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory^w!" "Lord Jesus receive my spirit^x." Fix upon some such word or promise which may support you, in your extremity.

Direct. vi. 'Look up to God, who is the glory of heaven, and the light, and life, and joy of souls, and believe that you are going to see his face, and to live in the perfect, everlast-

ⁿ John iii. 16.

^q Isaiah xl. 11.

^r Luke xvii. 5.

^s 1 Cor. xv. 55.

^o Acts xiii. 39.

^p Gal. v. 17.

^q Phil. i. 23.

^r Acts vii. 59.

^p Heb. viii. 12.

^s Matt. xxvi. 41. John vi. 37.

^t Rev. xiv. 13.

ing fruition of his fullest love among the glorified.' If it be delectable here to know his works, what will it be to see the cause of all? All creatures in heaven and earth conjoined, can never afford such content and joy to holy souls, as God alone! O if we knew him whom we must there behold, how weary should we be of this dungeon of mortality? and how fervently should we long to see his face? The chicken that cometh out of the shell, or the infant that newly cometh out of the womb, into this illuminated world of human converse, receiveth not such a joyful change, as the soul that is newly loosed from the flesh, and passeth from this mortal life to God. One sight of God by a blessed soul, is worth more than all the kingdoms of the earth. It is pleasant to the eyes to behold the sun: but the sun is as darkness and useless in his glory. "And the city had no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof^a." "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads: and there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, nor light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever^b." If David in the wilderness so impatiently thirsted, to appear before God, the living God, in his sanctuary at Jerusalem^c, how earnestly should we long to see his glory in the heavenly Jerusalem? The glimpse of his back parts, was as much as Moses might behold^d; yet that much put a shining glory upon his face^e. The sight that Stephen had when men were ready to stone him, was a delectable sight^f. The glimpse of Christ in his transfiguration ravished the three apostles that beheld it^g. Paul's vision which wrapt him up into the third heavens, did advance him above the rest of mankind! But our beatifical sight of the glory of God, will very far excel all this. When our perfected bodies shall have the perfect glorious body of Christ to see, and our perfected souls shall have the God of truth, the most perfect uncreated light to know, what more is a created understanding capable of? And yet this is not the top of our

^a Rev. xxi. 23.^b Rev. xxii. 3—5.^c Psal. xliii.^d Exod. xxxiv.^e Ver. 29, 30.^f Acts vii. 55, 56.^g Matt. xvii. 2. 6.

felicity; for the understanding is but the passage to the heart or will, and truth is but subservient to goodness: and therefore though the understanding be capable of no more than the beatifical vision, yet the man is capable of more; even of receiving the fullest communications of God's love, and feeling it poured out upon the heart, and living in the returns of perfect love; and in this intercourse of love will be our highest joys, and this is the top of our heavenly felicity. O that God would make us foreknow by a lively faith, what it is to behold him in his glory, and to dwell in perfect love and joy, and then death would no more be able to dismay us, nor should we be unwilling of such a blessed change! But having spoken of this so largely in my "Saints' Rest," I must stop here, and refer you thither.

Direct. VII. 'Look up to the blessed Society of angels, and saints with Christ, and remember their blessedness and joy, and that you also belong to the same society and are going to be numbered with them. It will greatly overcome the fears of death, to see by faith the joys of them that have gone before us; and withal to think of their relation to us; as it will encourage a man that is to go beyond sea, if the far greatest part of his dearest friends be gone before him, and he heareth of their safe arrival, and of their joy and happiness. Those angels that now see the face of God are our special friends and guardians, and entirely love us, better than any of our friends on earth do! They rejoiced at our conversion, and will rejoice at our glorification; and as they are better, and love us better, so therefore our love should be greater to them, than to any upon earth, and we should more desire to be with them. Those blessed souls that are now with Christ, were once as we are here on earth; they were compassed with temptations, and clogged with flesh and burdened with sin, and persecuted by the world, and they went out of the world by sickness and death, as we must do; and yet now their tears are wiped away, their pains, and groans, and fears are turned into inexpressible blessedness and joy; and would we not be with them? Is not their company desirable? and their felicity more desirable? The glory of the New Jerusalem is not described to us in vain. God will be all in all there to us, as the only sun and glory of that world; and yet we shall have pleasure,

not only to see our glorified Redeemer, but also to converse with the heavenly society, and to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and to love and praise him in consort and harmony with all those holy, blessed spirits. And shall we be afraid to follow, where the saints of all generations have gone before us? And shall the company of our best, and most, and happiest friends, be no inducement to us? Though it must be our highest joy to think that we shall dwell with God, and next that we shall see the glory of Christ, yet is it no small part of my comfort to consider, that I shall follow all those holy persons, whom I once conversed with, that are gone before me, and that I shall dwell with such as Enoch and Elias, and Abraham and Moses, and Job and David, and Peter and John, and Paul and Timothy, and Ignatius and Polycarp, and Cyprian and Nazianzen, and Augustine and Chrysostom, and Bernard and Gerson, and Savonarola and Mirandula, and Taulerus and Kempisius, and Melancthon and Alasco, and Calvin and Bucholtzer, and Bullinger and Musculus, and Zanchy and Bucer, and Paræus and Grynæus, and Chemnitius and Gerhard, and Chamier, and Capellus, and Blondel and Rivet, and Rogers and Bradford, and Hooper and Latimer, and Hildersham and Amesius, and Langley and Nicolls, and Whitaker and Cartwright, and Hooker and Bayne, and Preston and Sibbes, and Perkins and Dod, and Parker and Ball, and Usher and Hall, and Gataker and Bradshaw, and Vines and Ash, and millions more of the family of God^b. I name these for my own delight and comfort; it being pleasant to me to remember what companions I shall have in the heavenly joys, and praises of my Lord. How few are all the saints on earth, in comparison of those that are now with Christ? And, alas, how weak, and ignorant, and corrupt, how selfish, and contentious, and froward, are God's poor infants here in flesh, when above there is nothing but holiness and perfection? If knowledge, or goodness, or any excellency do make the creatures truly amiable, all this is there in the highest degree; but here, alas, how little have we? If the love of

^b Reader, bear with this mixture: for God will own his image when peevish contenders do deny it, or blaspheme it; and will receive those whom faction and proud domination would cast out, and vilify with scorn and slanders.

God, or the love of us, do make others lovely to us, it is there and not here that these and all perfections flourish. O how much now, do I find the company of the wise and learned, the godly and sincere, to differ from the company of the ignorant, brutish, the proud and malicious, the false-hearted and ungodly rabble? How sweet is the converse of a holy, wise, experienced Christian? O then what a place is the New Jerusalem; and how pleasant will it be with saints and angels to see and love and praise the Lord.

Direct. VIII. 'That sickness and death may be comfortable to you, as your passage to eternity, take notice of the seal and earnest of God even the spirit of grace which he hath put into your hearts.' That which emboldened Paul and such others to groan after immortality; and to "be most willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord," was because God himself "had wrought or made them for it, and given them the earnest or pledge of his Spiritⁱ." For this is God's mark upon his chosen and justified ones by which they are "sealed up to the day of their redemption." "In whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise^k." "God hath anointed us, and sealed us, and given the pledge or earnest of his Spirit into our hearts^l." "This is the pledge or earnest of our inheritance^m." And what a comfort should it be to us, when we look towards heaven to find such a pledge of God within us? If you say, I fear I have not this earnest of the Spirit: whence then did your desires of holiness arise? what weaned you from the world, and made you place your hopes and happiness above? whence came your enmity to sin, and opposition to it, and your earnest desires after the glory of God, the prosperity of the Gospel, and the good of souls? The very love of holiness and holy persons, and your desires to know God and perfectly love him, do shew that heavenly nature or spirit within you, which is your surest evidence for eternal life: for that spirit was sent from heaven, to draw up your hearts, and fit you for it: and God doth not give you such natures, and desires, and preparations in vain. This also is called "The witness of the Spirit with (or to) our spirit, that we are the children of

ⁱ 2 Cor. v. 4, 5. 8.

^k Ephes. iv. 30. i. 13.

^l 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

^m Ephes. i. 14.

God; and if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christⁿ." It witnesseth our adoption, by evidencing it; as a seal or pledge doth witness our title to that which is so confirmed to us. The nature of every thing is suited to its use and end; God would not have given us a heavenly nature or desire, if he had not intended us for heaven.

Direct. ix. 'Look also to the testimony of a holy life, since grace hath employed you in seeking after the heavenly inheritance.' It is unlawful and perilous to look after any works or righteousness of your own, so as to set it in whole or in part, instead of Christ, or to ascribe to it any honour that is proper to him; as to imagine that you are innocent, or have fulfilled the law, or have made God a compensation by your merits or sufferings, for the sin you have committed. But yet you must judge yourselves on your sick beds as near as you can, as God will judge you. And "he will judge every man according to his work;" and will recompense and reward men according to their works. "Well done good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a little, I will make thee ruler over much; come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you—for I was hungry and ye fed me, &c^o." "He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him^p." "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock^a—" "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gate into the city; for without are dogs^r," &c. "Thus must you rejoice in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," not only as he was crucified on it for you, but also as you are "crucified by it to the world, and the world to you^s." He that as a benefactor will give you that glory which you could never deserve of him, on terms of commutative justice, (for so no creature can deserve any thing of God,) will yet as a righteous governor and judge, deliver it you only on the terms of his paternal, governing, distributive justice; and all shall receive according to what they have done in the body. And therefore you may take comfort in that evangelical

ⁿ Rom. viii. 15—17.

^o Matt. xxv. 39, 40, &c.

^p Heb. v. 9.

^q Matt. vii. 24, 25.

^r Rev. xxii.

^s Gal. vi. 14.

righteousness, which consisteth in your fulfilling the conditions of the new covenant, though you have no legal righteousness, (which consisteth in innocency, or freedom from the curse of the law,) but only in the merits and sacrifice of Christ. If you are accused as being impenitent, unbelievers, or hypocrites, Christ's righteousness will not justify you from that accusation; but only your repentance, faith, and sincerity (wrought in you by the Spirit of Christ). But if you can but shew the evidence of this evangelical righteousness, Christ then will justify you against all the other accusations of guilt that can be charged on you. (Of which more anon.) Seeing therefore the Spirit hath given you these evidences, to difference you from the wretched world, and prove your title to eternal life, if you overlook these, you resist your Comforter, and can see no other ground of comfort, than every graceless hypocrite may see. Imitate holy Paul, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world—"^u "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing^x." To look back and see that in sincerity you have gone the way to heaven, is a just and necessary ground of assurance, that you shall attain it. If you say, 'But I have been a grievous sinner! I answer, so was Paul that yet rejoiced after in this evidence! Are not those sins repented of and pardoned? If you say 'But I cannot look back upon a holy life with comfort, it hath been so blotted and uneven!' I answer, hath it not been sincere, though it was imperfect? Did you not "first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness"?' If you say, 'My whole life hath been ungodly, till now at last that God hath humbled me:' I answer, It is not the length of time, but the sincerity of your hearts and service, that is your evidence. If you came in at the last hour, if now you are faithfully devoted to God you may look with comfort on this change at last, though you must look with repentance on your sinful lives.

^u 2 Cor. i. 12.^x 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.^y Matt. vi. 33.

Direct. x. 'When you see any of this evidence of your interest in Christ, appeal to him to acquit you from all the sin that can be charged on you:' for all that believe in him are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*." Whatever sin a penitent believer hath committed, he is not chargeable with it; Christ hath undertaken to answer for it, and justify him from it; and therefore look not on it with terror, but with penitent shame, and believing thankfulness, as that which shall tend to the honour of the Redeemer, and not to the condemnation of the sinner. He hath born our transgressions and we are healed by his stripes.

Direct. xi. 'Look back upon all the mercies of your lives, and think whence they came and what they signify.' Love tokens are to draw your hearts to him that sent them; these are dropt from heaven, to entice you thither! If God have been so good to you on earth, what will he be in glory? If he so blessed you in this wilderness, what will he do in the land of promise? It greatly emboldeneth my soul to go to that God, that hath so tenderly loved me, and so graciously preserved me, and so much abounded in all sorts of mercies to me, through all my life. Surely he is good that so delighteth to do good! And his presence must be sweet, when his distant mercies are so sweet! What love shall I enjoy when perfection hath fitted me for his love, who have tasted of so much in this state of sin and imperfection? The sense of mercy will banish the fears and misgivings of the heart.

Direct. xii. 'Remember' (if you have attained to a declining age) 'what a competent time you have had already in the world.' If you are grieved that you are mortal, you might on that account have grieved all your days; but if it be only that you die so soon, if you have lived well, you have lived long. When I think how many years of mercy I have had, since I was near to death, and since many younger than I are gone, and when I think what abundance of mercy I have had in all that time, ingenuity forbiddeth me to grudge at the season of my death, and maketh me al-

* Rom. viii. 1.

most ashamed to ask for longer life. How long would you stay, before you would be willing to come to God? If he desired our company no more than we do his, and desired our happiness in heaven, no more than we desire it ourselves, we should linger here as Lot in Sodom! Must we be snatched away against our wills, and carried by force to our Father's presence?

Direct. XIII. 'Remember that all mankind are mortal, and you are to go no other way than all that ever came into the world, have gone before you (except Enoch and Elias). Yea, the poor brute creatures must die at your pleasure, to satisfy your hunger or delight. Beasts, and birds, and fishes, even many to make one meal, must die for you. And why then should you shrink at the entrance of such a trodden path, which leadeth you not to hell, as it doth the wicked, nor merely to corruption, as it doth the brutes, but to live in joy with Christ and his church triumphant?

Direct. XIV. 'Remember both how vile your body is, and how great an enemy it hath proved to your soul; and then you will the more patiently bear its dissolution.' It is not your dwelling house, but your tent or prison that God is pulling down. And yet even this vile body, when it is corrupted, shall at last be changed "into the likeness of Christ's glorious body, by the working of his irresistible power*." And it is a flesh that hath so rebelled against the spirit, and made your way to heaven so difficult, and put the soul to so many conflicts, that we should the more easily submit it to the will of justice, and let it perish for a time, when we are assured that mercy will at last recover it.

Direct. xv. 'Remember what a world it is that you are to leave, and compare it with that which you are going to; and compare the life which is near at end, with that which you are next to enter upon.' Was it not Enoch's reward when he had walked with God, to be taken to him from a polluted world? 1. While you are here, you are yourselves defiled; sin is in your natures, and your graces are all imperfect; sin is in your lives, and your duties are all imperfect; you cannot be free from it one day or hour. And is it not a mercy to be delivered from it? Is it not desirable to you to sin no more? and to be perfect in holiness? to

* Phil. iii. 20, 21.

know God and love him as much and more than you can now desire? You are here every day lamenting your darkness, and unbelief, and estrangedness from God, and want of love to him. How oft have you prayed for a cure of all this! And now would you not have it, when God would give it you? Why hath God put that spark of heavenly life into you, but to fight against sin, and make you weary of it? And yet had you rather continue sinning, than have the victory and be with Christ! 2. It is a life of grief as well as sin: and a life of cares, and doubts, and fears! When you are at the worst, you are fearing worse! If it were nothing but the fears of death itself, it should make you the more willing to submit to it, that you might be past those fears. 3. You are daily afflicted with the infirmities of that flesh, which you are so loath should be dissolved. To satisfy its hunger and thirst, to cover its nakedness, to provide it a habitation, and supply all its wants, what care and labour doth it cost you! Its infirmities, sicknesses, and pains do make you often weary of yourselves: so that you "groan, being burdened," as Paul speaketh, 2 Cor. v. 3, 4. 6. And yet is it not desirable to be with Christ? 4. You are compassed with temptations, and are in continual danger through your weakness! And yet would you not be past the danger? Would you have more of those horrid and odious temptations? 5. You are purposely turned here into a wilderness, among wild beasts; you are as lambs among wolves, and through many tribulations you must enter into heaven. You must deny yourselves, and take up your cross, and forsake all that you have; and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution: in the world you must have trouble: the seed of the serpent must bruise your heel, before God bruise satan under your feet! And is such a life as this more desirable than to be with Christ? Are we afraid to land after such storms and tempests? Is a wicked world, a malicious world, a cruel world, an implacable world more pleasing to us than the joy of angels, and the sight of Christ, and God himself in the majesty of his glory? Hath God on purpose made the world so bitter to us, and permitted it to use us unjustly and cruelly, and all to make us love it less, and to drive home our hearts unto himself? and yet are we so unwilling to be gone?

Direct. xvi. 'Settle your estates betimes, that worldly matters may not distract or discompose you.' And if God have endowed you with riches, dispose of a due proportion to such pious or charitable uses, in which they may be most serviceable to him that gave them you. Though we should give what we can in the time of life and health, yet many that have but so much as will serve to their necessary maintenance, may well part with that to good uses at their death, which they could not spare in the time of their health: especially they that have no children, or such wicked children, as are like to do hurt with all that is given them above their daily bread.

Direct. xvii. 'If it may be, get some able, faithful guide and comforter to be with you in your sickness, to counsel you, and resolve your doubts, and pray with you, and discourse of heavenly things, when you are disabled by weakness for such exercises yourselves.' Let not carnal persons disturb you with their vain babblings. Though the difference between good company and bad, be very great in the time of health, yet now in sickness it will be more discernible. And though a faithful friend and spiritual pastor be always a great mercy, yet now especially in your last necessity. Therefore make use of them as far as your pain and weakness will permit.

Direct. xviii. 'Be fortified against all the temptations of satan by which he useth to assault men in their extremity:' stand it out in the last conflict, and the crown is yours. I shall instance in particulars.

Directions for resisting the Temptations of Satan, in the time of Sickness.

Tempt. 1. The most ordinary temptation against the comfort of believers, (for I have already spoken of those that are against their safety) is to doubt of their own sincerity, and consequently of their part in Christ. Saith the tempter, 'All that thou hast done, hath been but in hypocrisy; thou wast never a true believer, nor ever didst truly repent of sin, nor truly love God; and therefore thou art unjustified, and shalt speedily be condemned.'

Against this temptation a believer hath two remedies.

The first is, to confute the tempter by those evidences which will prove that he hath been sincere (such as I have often mentioned before). And by repelling those reasonings, by which the tempter would prove him to have been an hypocrite. As when it is objected, 'Thou hast repented and been humbled but slightly and by the halves;' *Answ.* Yet was it sincerely; and weak grace is not no grace. *Obj.* 'Thou hast been a lover of the world, and a neglecter of thy soul, and cold in all that thou didst for thy salvation.' *Answ.* Yet did I set more by heaven than earth, and I first sought the kingdom of God and his righteousness, as esteeming it above all the riches of the world. *Object.* 'Thou hast kept thy sins while thou wentest on in a profession of religion.' *Answ.* I had no sin but what in the habitual, ordinary temper of my soul, I hated more than I loved it, and had rather have been delivered from it, than have kept it, and none but what I unfeignedly repented of. *Object.* 'Thou didst not truly believe the promises of God, and the life to come; or else thou wouldst never have doubted as thou hast done, nor sought such a kingdom with such weak desires.' *Answ.* Though my faith was weak, it overcame the world: I so far believed the promise of another life, as that I preferred it before this life, and was resolved rather to forsake all the world, than to part with my hopes of that promised blessedness: and that faith is sincere (how weak soever) that can do this. *Object.* 'But thou hast done thy works to be seen of men, and been troubled when men have not approved thee, nor honoured thee; and what was this but mere hypocrisy?' *Answ.* Though I had some hypocrisy, yet was I not a hypocrite, because it was not in a reigning and prevalent degree; though I too much regarded the esteem of men, yet I did more regard the esteem of God. Thus if a Christian discern his evidences, the false reasonings of satan are to be refuted.

2. But ordinarily it is a readier way to take the second course, which is, at present, to believe, and repent, and so confute satan that saith you are not penitent believers. But then you must truly understand what believing and repenting are; or else you may think that you do not believe and repent when you do. Believing in Christ, is a believing that he is the Saviour of the world, and a consent of will

that he be your Saviour, to justify you by his blood, and sanctify you by his Spirit. To repent, is to be so sorry that you have sinned, that if it were to do again, you would not do it (as to gross sin and a state of sin); and the smallest infirmities, your will is so far set against, that you desire to be delivered from them. Believing to justification, is not the believing that you are already justified, and your sins forgiven you; and repenting consisteth not in such degrees of sorrow as some expect; but in the change of the mind and will, from a life of sensuality to a life of holiness. When you know this, then answer the tempter thus, 'If I should suffer thee to deprive me of the comfort of all my former uprightness, yet shalt thou not so deprive me of the comfort of my present sincerity, and of my hopes; I am now too weak and distempered to try all that is past and gone. Past actions are now known but by remembering them; and they are seldom judged of, as indeed they then were; but according to the temper and apprehension of the mind when it revieweth them: and I am now so changed and weakened myself, that I cannot tell whether I truly remember the just temper and thoughts of my heart in all that is past or not. Nor doth it most concern me now, to know what I have been, but to know what I am. Christ will not judge according to what I was; but according to what he findeth me; never did he refuse a penitent, believing soul, because he repented and believed late: I do now unfeignedly repent of all my sins, and am heartily willing to be both pardoned, and cleansed, and sanctified by Christ, and here I give up myself to him as my Saviour, and to this covenant I will stand; and this is true repenting and believing.' Thus a poor Christian in the time of sickness, may oftentimes much easier clear it up to himself, that he repenteth now, than that he repented formerly; and it is his surest way.

Tempt. II. And yet sometimes he cometh with the quite contrary temptation, and must be resisted by the contrary way. When he findeth a Christian so perplexed, and distempered with sickness, that his understanding is disabled from any composed thoughts, then he asketh him, 'Now where is thy faith and repentance? If thou hast any, or ever hadst any, let it now appear.' In this case a Christian is to take up with the remembrance of his former sincerity,

and tell the tempter, 'I am sure that once I gave up myself unfeignedly to my Lord; and those that come to him he will in no wise cast out; and if now I be disabled from a composed exercise of grace, he will not impute my sickness to me as my sin.'

Tempt. III. Another ordinary temptation is, that 'It is now too late; God will not now accept repentance; the day of grace is past and gone; or at least, a deathbed repentance is not sincere.' To this the tempted soul must reply, 1. That if faith and repentance were not accepted at any time in this life, then God's promise were not true, which saith, that "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life^b." There is a time in this life, in which some resisters of the truth are given up to their own lusts, to the love of sin, and hatred of holiness, so that they will not repent; but there was never a time in this life, in which God refused to justify a true repenting sinner, upon his belief in Christ. 2. That if a deathbed repentance do truly turn the heart from the world to God, and from sin to holiness, so that the penitent person, if he should recover, would lead a new and holy life, then that repentance hath as sure a promise of pardon and salvation, as if it had been sooner; and yet delay must be confessed to be dangerous to all, and casteth men under very great difficulties, and their loss is exceeding great, though at last they repent and are forgiven.

Tempt. IV. Sometimes the tempter saith, 'Thou art not elected to salvation; and God saveth none but his elect,' and so puzzleth the ignorant by setting them on doubting of their election. To this we must answer, that every soul that is chosen to faith, and repentance, and perseverance, is certainly chosen to salvation: and I know that God hath chosen me to faith and repentance, because he hath given them me: and I have reason enough to trust on him for that upholding grace, which will cause me to persevere.

Tempt. V. 'But, saith the tempter, Christ did not die for thee; and no one can be saved that Christ did not die for.' To this it must be answered, 'That Christ died for all men, so far as to be a sufficient sacrifice for their sins, and

^b John iii. 16. So Luke xxiv. 47. Acts v. 31. xi. 18. xx. 21.
 2 Tim. ii. 25. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

to make a promise of pardon and salvation to all that will accept him and his gift ; and he entreateth all that hear the Gospel to accept it ; and accordingly he will save all that consent unto his covenant.' I am a sinful child of Adam, and therefore am one that Christ became a sacrifice for ; and I consent unto his covenant, and therefore I am one that Christ by that covenant doth justify and will save.

Tempt. vi. Sometimes the tempter troubleth the soul with temptations to blasphemy and infidelity : and asketh him, ' How knowest thou that there is a God, or a life to come, or that souls are immortal, or that the Scripture is true ? ' Of this I spake before. To this we must then answer, ' I abhor thy suggestions : these things I have seen proved long ago ; and I will not so far gratify thee in my weakness and extremity, as to question and dispute these sealed fundamental truths, no more than I will dispute whether there be a sun or earth.

Tempt. vii. Sometimes the tempter will say, ' At best thou hast no assurance of salvation, and how canst thou choose but tremble to think of dying, when thou knowest not whether thou shalt go to heaven or hell ? ' To this, the soul that hath not assurance must answer, ' It is my own mistake or weakness that keepeth me unassured : ' and I will neither take part with my infirmities, nor increase them by their effects. My hopes are such as should draw up my desires, though I want full assurance. The child delighteth in the company of the mother, and every man of his friend ; though he is not certain that the mother or friend will not hurt him, or take away his life. Why should I trouble myself with improbabilities ? or fear that which I have no sound reason to fear ? Rather I should be glad to die, that death may perfect my assurance, and put an end to all my doubts and fears.

Tempt. viii. ' But, saith the tempter, how strange art thou to God and the life to come ? Thou never sawest it : is it not dreadful to enter upon an unchangeable life, in a world which thou art so great a stranger to ? ' *Answ.* But Christ is not a stranger to it ; he seeth it for me, and I will implicitly trust him. Where should my eyes be, but in my head ? I shall never see it till I come thither. When I have been there a while, this darkness, and fear, and strangeness

will be gone: I was as strange to this world before I came into it, and more: and all those holy souls in heaven were strange to it once, as well as I: I should therefore long to be with Christ, that I may be strange to him no more.

Tempt. ix. 'But, saith the tempter, thy fear and unwillingness is a sign that thou hast no love to God, nor heavenly mind; and how then canst thou hope to come to heaven.'

Ans. My fears come from strangeness, and weakness of faith, and a natural enmity to death. If I could come to Christ in joy and glory, and be perfected in holiness without dying, I should not be unwilling of it. God looketh not that my nature should be willing to die; but that grace make me willing to be with Christ, and patiently submit to so dark a passage. Even Christ himself prayed, "That if it were possible, that cup might pass from him."

Tempt. x. 'But what will thy wife and children do, when thou art gone?' *Ans.* God hath more interest in them than I have; he will look to his own without my care: doth all the world depend upon him, and is he not to be trusted with my wife and children?

Tempt. xi. 'But thou wilt never more be serviceable to the church: all thy work will for ever be at an end; and there are many things which thou mightest have done before thou diest, which will all be lost.' *Ans.* 1. I shall have higher, and holier, and sweeter work: whether it will any thing conduce to the good of those on earth, I know not; but I know it will more conduce to the highest, most desirable ends. 2. As my work will be done, so my trouble, and weariness, and fears, and sufferings from a malignant, unthankful world will all be done. 3. And when my work is done, my reward and everlasting rest begin. 4. And God needeth not such a worm as I! the work is his, and it is reason that he should choose his workmen.

Tempt. xii. 'But when thou hast said all, death will be death, the king of terrors.' *Ans.* And when thou hast said all, God will be God, and heaven will be heaven, and Christ will be Christ, that hath conquered death, and hath the keys or power of death and hell: and the promise will be sure: and those that trust on him shall never be ashamed or confounded. And therefore "the Spirit is willing, though the flesh be weak."

Tit. 4. Directions for doing good to others in our Sickness.

The whole life of a Christian should be a serving of his God ; and though his body in sickness seem to be unserviceable, yet it is not the least or lowest of his services, which he is then at last to do : partly by his holy example, and partly by his speeches ; which are both more observed in dying men, than in any others. For now all suppose, that if there were before any mask of hypocrisy, it is laid aside, and the soul that is going to the bar of God will deal sincerely. And now it is supposed, that we are delivered much from all the befooling delusions of prosperity, and therefore fitter to be counsellors to others. And every Christian should be very desirous to do good to the last, and be found so doing.

Direct. i. ' Shew not a distempered, impatient mind.' Though pain will be pain, and flesh will be flesh, yet shew men that you have also reason and spirit : and that it calmeth your soul, though it ease not your body. Speak good of God, as beseemeth one that indeed believeth that it is good for us when we are afflicted by him, and that all shall work together for good to us. Speak not a repining word against him. " In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly ^c." And speak not too peevishly and impatiently to those about you ; though weakness incline you to it, yet let the power of grace appear.

Direct. ii. ' Let those that are about you see, that you take the life to come for a reality, and that you verily expect to live with Christ in joys for ever. Let them see this in your holy joy and confidence, and your thankfulness to God for the grace and hopes which he hath given through Christ.' I know that a pained, languishing body, is undisposed to express the comforts of the soul : but yet as long as the soul is the commander, they may be expressed in some good measure, though not with such vivacity and alacrity as in health. Behave yourselves before all, as those that are going to dwell with Christ. If you shew them that you take heaven for a real felicity, it will do much to draw them to do so too ; shew them the difference between the

^c Job i. 22.

death of the righteous, and of the wicked; and that may so draw them to desire to die the death of the righteous, that it may draw them also to resolve to live their lives. How many souls might it win to God, if they saw in his dying servants, such confidence and joy as beseemeth men that are entering into a world of joy, and peace, and blessedness! If we went out of the body, as from a prison into liberty; and from a tedious journey, to our desired home, it would invite sinners to seek after the same felicity, and be a powerful sermon to convert the inconsiderate.

Direct. III. 'Now tell poor sinners of the vanity of the world, and of all its glory, wealth, and pleasure; and of the mischief and deceitfulness of sin.' Say to them, 'O sirs, you may see in me what the world is worth: if you had all the wealth and pleasure that you desire, thus it would turn you off, and forsake you in the end: it will ease no pain: it will bring no peace to a troubled soul: it will not lengthen your lives an hour: it will not save you from the wrath of God: it maketh your death the sadder, because you must be taken from it: your account will be the more dreadful. O love not such a vain, deceitful world! sell not your souls for so poor a price! Forsake it before you are forsaken by it! O make not light of any sin! Though the wanton flesh would have you take it for a harmless thing, you cannot imagine, when the pleasure is gone, how sharp a sting is left behind. Sin will be then no jesting matter, when your souls are going hence, into the dreadful presence of the most Holy God.'

Direct. IV. 'Now tell those about you of the excellency and necessity of the love of God, of heaven, of Christ, and of a holy life.' Though these may be made light of at a distance, yet a soul that is drawing near them, will be more awakened to understand their worth. Say to them, 'O friends, I find now more than ever I did before, that it is only God, that is the end and happiness of souls: nothing but his favour through Jesus Christ, can comfort and content a dying man; and none but Christ can reconcile us to God, and answer for our sins, and make us acceptable; and no way but that of faith and holiness will end in happiness. Opinions and customary forms in religion will not serve the turn; to be of this or that party, or church, or communion,

will not save you. It is only the soul that is justified by Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit, and brought up to the love of God and holiness, that shall be saved. Whatever opinion, or church you are of, without holiness you shall never see God to your comfort, as without faith it is impossible to please him^d. O now what a miserable case were I in, if I had all the wealth and honour in the world, and had not the favour of God, and a Christ to purchase it, and his Spirit to witness it, and prepare me for a better life. Now I see the difference between spending time in holiness, and in sin; between a godly, and a worldly, fleshly, careless life. Now I would not for a thousand worlds, that I had spent my life in sensuality and ungodliness, and continued a stranger to the life of faith. Now, if I had a world, I would give it to be more holy! O sirs, believe it, when you come to die, sin will be then sin indeed, and Christ, and grace, will be better than riches, and to die in an unregenerate, unsanctified state, will be a greater misery than any heart can now conceive.'

Direct. v. ' Endeavour also to make men know the difference between the godly and the wicked.' Tell them, ' I now see who maketh the wisest choice. O happy men, that choose the joys which have no end, and " lay up their treasure in heaven, where rust and moths do not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal, and labour for the food that never perisheth e." O foolish sinners, that for an inch of fleshly, filthy pleasure, do lose everlasting rest and joy! " What shall it profit them that win all the world, and lose their souls?" '

Direct. vi. ' Labour also to convince men of the preciousness of time, and the folly of putting off repentance, and a holy life, till the last.' Say to them, ' O friends, it is hard for you in the time of health and prosperity, to judge of time according to its worth: but when time is gone, or near an end, how precious doth it then appear! Now if I had all the time again, which ever I spent in unnecessary sleep, or sports, or curiosities, or idleness, or any needless thing, how highly should I value it, and spend it in another manner than I have done! Of all my life that is

^d Heb. xii. 14. xi. 6. Rom. viii. 6. 7. 9.

^e Matt. vi. 19, 20. John vi. 27.

past and gone, I have no comfort now in the remembrance of one hour, but what was spent in obedience to God. O take time to make sure of your salvation, before it is gone, and you are left under the tormenting feeling of your loss.'

Direct. VII. 'Labour also to make them understand the sinfulness of sloth, and of loitering in the matters of God, and their salvation; and stir them up to do it with all their might.' Say to them, 'I have often heard ungodly people, deride or blame the diligence, and zeal, and strictness of the godly: but if they saw and felt, what I see and feel, they could not do it. Can a man that is going into another world, imagine that any thing is so worthy of his greatest zeal and labour, as his God and his salvation? Or blame men for being loath to burn in hell? Or for taking more pains for their souls, than for their bodies? O friends, let fools talk what they will, in their sleep and phrenzy, as you love your souls, do not think any care, or cost, or pains too great for your salvation! If they think not their labour too good for this world, do not you think yours too good for a better world. Let them now say what they will, when they come to die, there is none of them all, that is not quite forsaken of sense and reason, but will wish that they had loved God, and sought and served him, not formally, in hypocritical compliment, but with all their heart, and soul, and might.'

Direct. VIII. 'Labour also to fortify the minds of your friends, against all fears of suffering for Christ, and all impatience in any of their afflictions.' Say to them, 'The sufferings as well as the pleasures of this life are so short, that they are not worthy once to be compared with the durable things of the life to come. If I have passed through a life of want and toil, if my body hath endured painful sickness, if I have suffered never so much from men, and been used cruelly for the sake of Christ, what the worse am I now, when all is past? Would an easy, honourable, plentiful life, have made my death either the safer or the sweeter? O no! it is the things eternal that are indeed significant and regardable. Neither pleasure nor pain, that is short, is of any great regard. Make sure of the everlasting pleasures, and you have done your work. O live by faith, and not by sense; look not at the temporal things which are seen. It is not your concernment, whether you are rich or poor, in

honour or dishonour, in health or sickness; but whether you be justified, and sanctified, and shall live with God in heaven for ever.' Such serious counsels of dying men, may make their sickness more fruitful than their health.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Directions to the Friends of the Sick, that are about them.

Direct. I. WHEN you see the sickness or death of friends, take it as God's warning to you, to prepare for the same yourselves.' Remember that thus it must be with you: thus are you like to lie in pain; and thus will all the world forsake you, and nothing of all your honour or wealth, will afford you any comfort. This will be the end of all your pleasures, of your greatness, and your houses, and lands, and attendance; and of all your delicious meats and drinks; and of all your mirth, and play and recreations. Thus must your carcasses be forsaken of your souls, and laid in a grave, and there lie rotting in the dark; and your souls appear before your Judge, to be sentenced to their endless state. This certainly will be your case: and O how quickly will it come! Then, what will Christ and grace be worth? Then, nothing but the favour of God can comfort you. Then, whether will it be better to you, to look back on a holy, well-spent life, or upon a life of fleshly ease and pleasure? Then had you rather be a saint, or a sensualist? Lay this to heart, and let the house of mourning make you better, and live as one that looks to die.

Direct. II. 'Use the best means for the recovery of the sick, which the ablest physicians shall advise you to, as far as you are able.' Take heed of being guilty of the pride and folly of many self-conceited, ignorant persons, who are ready to thrust every medicine of their own, upon their friends in sickness, when they neither know the nature of the sickness, or the cure. Many thousands are brought to their death untimely, by the folly of their nearest friends, who will needs be medicining them, and ruling them, and despising the physician; as if they were themselves much

wiser than he, when they are merely ignorant of what they do. As ignorant sectaries despise divines, and set up themselves as better preachers, so many silly women despise physicians; and when they have got a few medicines, which they know not the nature of, nor how to use, they take themselves for the better physicians, and the lives of their poor friends must pay for their pride and folly. No means must be trusted to instead of God, but the best must be used in subservience unto God. And one would think that a small measure of wit and humility might serve to make silly women understand, that they that never bestowed one year in the study of physic, are not so likely to understand it, as those that have studied and practised it a great part of their lives. It is sad to see people kill their dearest friends in kindness; even by that ignorance and proud self-conceitedness, which also maketh them the destroyers of their own souls.

Quest. 1. 'But seeing God hath appointed all men's time, what good can physic do? If God hath appointed them to live, they shall live; and if he have appointed them to die, it is not physic that can save them.'

Answ. This is the foolish reasoning of wicked people about their salvation. If God have appointed me to salvation, I shall be saved; if he have not, all my diligence will do no good. But such people know not what they talk of. God hath made your duty more open and known to you, than his own decrees: and you separate those things which he hath joined together: as God hath appointed no man to salvation simply, without respect to the means of salvation; so God hath appointed no man to live, but by the means of life. His decree is not, 'Such a man shall be saved,' or, 'Such a man shall live so long,' only; but this is his decree, 'Such a man shall be saved, in the way of faith and holiness, and in the diligent use of means,' and, 'Such a man shall live so long, by the use of those means which I have fitted for the preservation of his life.' So that as he that liveth a holy life, may be sure he is chosen to salvation, (if he persevere) and he that is ungodly, may be sure that he is in the way to hell; so he that neglecteth the means of his health and life, doth shew that it is unlike that God hath appointed him to live: and he that useth the best means is more likely

to recover, (though the best will not cure incurable diseases, nor make a man immortal.) The reasoning is the same, as if you should say, 'If God have appointed me to live so long, I shall live though I neither eat or drink : but if he have not, eating and drinking will not prolong my life.' But you must know, that God doth not only appoint you to live, that is but half his decree, but he decreeth, 'That you shall live by eating and drinking.'

Direct. III. 'Mind your friends betimes to make their wills, and prudently by good advice to settle their estates, that they may leave no occasion of contending about it, when they are dead.' This should be done in health, because of the uncertainty of life : but if it be undone till sickness, it should then be done betimes. The neglect of it, oft causeth much sinful contending about worldly things, even among those near relations, who should live in the greatest amity and peace.

Direct. IV. 'Keep away vain company from them, as far as you can conveniently' (except it be such as must needs be admitted, or such as are like to receive any good by the holy counsel of the sick). It is a great annoyance to one that is near death, to hear people talk to little purpose, about the world, or some impertinencies ; when they are going speedily to their endless state, and have need of no more impediments in their way ; but of the best assistance that their friends can afford them. Procure some able, faithful minister to be with them, to counsel them about the state of their souls : and get some holy, able Christians to be much about them, who are fit to pray with them, and instruct them.

Direct. V. 'Bear with their impatience, and grudge not at any trouble that they put you to.' Remember that weakness is froward, and as you bear with the crying of children, so must you with the peevishness of the sick ; and remember, that shortly it is like to be your own case, and you must be a trouble to others, and they must bear with you. Be not weary of your friends in sickness ; but loving, and tender, and compassionate, and patient.

Direct. VI. 'Deal faithfully and prudently with them about the state of their souls.' Your faithfulness must be shewed in these two points. 1. That you do not flatter

them with vain hopes of life, when they are more likely to die. 2. That you do not flatter them with false persuasions that their state is safe, when they are yet unsanctified, nor put them in hopes of being saved without regeneration.

Your prudence must be manifested, 1. In suiting your counsel, and speeches, and prayers to their state; and not using the same words to the ungodly, as you would to the godly. 2. In so contracting your counsel for the conversion of the ungodly, as not to overwhelm them with more than they can bear; and yet not to leave out any point of absolute necessity to salvation. Alas, how much skill doth such a work require? And how few Christians, (that I say not, pastors) are fit for it.

Quest. 1. 'But is it a duty when the sick are like to die, to make it known to them?'

Ans. Sometimes it is, and sometimes not. 1. Some sicknesses are such, as will be so increased with fear, that the patient that before was in hope of a recovery, will be put almost past hope. And some sicknesses are much different, and are not like to be so increased by it. And some are past all hope already. 2. Some are so prepared to die, that they have the less need to be acquainted with their danger: and some are unconverted, and in so dangerous a case, that the absolute necessity of their souls may require it. When the soul is in so sad a case, and yet the body may be endangered by the fear of the sentence of death, it is the safest course to tell them, 'That though God may recover them, yet their disease is so dangerous, as calleth for their speedy and serious preparation for death; which will not be lost, if God restore them.' So that they may have so much hope, as to keep their fear from killing them, and so much acquaintance with their danger, as may put them upon their duty. But in case there be already little or no hope, or in case the disease will be but little increased by the fear (which is the case of the most) the danger should not at all be hid.

Quest. 11. 'Am I always bound to tell a wicked man of his sin and misery, when it may exasperate his disease, and offend his mind?'

Ans. If it were a sickness that is void of danger, in case his mind be quiet, and be like to kill him if his mind be

disturbed, then it were the most prudent course to call him so far to repentance and faith, as you can do it without any dangerous disturbance of him ; because it is most charity to his soul to help him to a longer time of repentance, rather than to lay all the hopes of his salvation upon the present time. But this is not an ordinary case ; therefore ordinarily it is a duty to acquaint the sick person, that is yet in his sin, and unregenerate state, with the truth of his danger, and the necessity of renovation. Alas ! it is a lamentable kind of friendship, to flatter a poor soul into damnation, or to hide his danger till he is past recovery. When he is in a state of inexpressible misery, and hath but a few days or weeks time left, to do all that ever must be done for his salvation. What horrid cruelty is it then, to let him to go to hell for fear of displeasing or disquieting him !

Object. ‘ But I am afraid I shall cast him into despair, if I tell him plainly that he is in a state of damnation.’

Ans. If you let him alone a little longer, he will be in remediless despair. There is no despair remediless, but that in hell. But now you may help to save him, both from present and endless desperation. He must needs despair of ever being saved without a Christ, or without the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, or without true faith and repentance, and love to God, and holiness. But need he despair of attaining all these, while Christ is offered him so freely, and a full remedy is at hand ? He must know his sin and misery, or else he is never like to escape it : but he must also be acquainted with the true remedy ; and that is your way to keep him from despair, and not by flattering him into hell.

Quest. III. ‘ But what should one do in so short a time, and with dead-hearted sinners ? Alas ! what hope is there ? If it were nothing but their ignorance, it cannot be cured in a moment. And is there then any hope in so short a space, to bring them to knowledge, and repentance, and a changed heart, to love God and holiness ; and that when pain and weakness do disable them ?’

Ans. The case indeed is very sad ; but yet while there is life, there is some hope : and while there is any hope, we should do our best, when it is for the saving of a soul ; and the difficulty should but stir us up to use our utmost skill and diligence. But as it is the misery of such to delay con-

version till so unfit a time, so is it too frequently the sin of believers, that they delay their serious endeavours to convert men, till such a time as they almost despair of the success.

Quest. iv. ' But what shall we do in a doubtful case, when we know not whether the person be renewed and truly penitent, or not; which is the case of most that we have to deal with?'

Answ. You can tell whether the grounds of your hope, or of your fear concerning them, be the greater; and accordingly your speech must be mixed and tempered, and your counsels or comforts given with the conditions and suppositions expressed.

Quest. v. ' But what order would you have us observe in speaking to the ignorant and ungodly, when the time is so short?'

Answ. 1. Labour to awaken them to a lively sense of the change which is at hand, that they may understand the necessity of looking after the state of their souls. 2. Then shew them what are the terms of salvation, and who they are that the Gospel doth judge to salvation or damnation. 3. Next advise them to try which of these is their condition, and to deal faithfully, seeing self-flattery may undo them, but can do them no good. 4. Then help them in the trial; q. d. ' If it have been so or so with you, then you may know that this is your case.' 5. Then tell them the reasons of your fears, if you fear they are unconverted, or of your hopes, if you hope indeed that it is better with them. 6. Then exhort them conditionally (if they are yet in a carnal, un-sanctified state,) to lament it, and be humbled, and penitent for their sinful and ungodly life. 7. And then tell them the remedy, in Christ and the Holy Ghost, and the promise or covenant of grace. 8. And lastly, tell them their present duty, that this remedy may prove effectual to their salvation. And if you have so much interest or authority as maketh it fit for you, excite them by convenient questions so far to open their case, as may direct you, and as by their answers may shew whether they truly resolve for a holy life, if God restore them, and whether their hearts indeed be changed, or not.

Direct. viii. ' If you are not able to instruct them as you

should, read some good book to them, which is most suitable to their case:’ such as “ Mr. Perkins’s Right Art of Dying Well;”—“ The Practice of Piety in the Directions for the Sick;”—“ Mr. Edward Lawrence’s Treatise of Sickness;” or what else is most suitable to them. And because most are themselves unable for counselling the sick aright, and you may not have a fit book at hand, I shall here subjoin a brief form or two for such to read to the sick that can endure no long discourse. And other books will help you to forms of prayer with them, if you cannot pray without such help.

Direct. VIII. ‘ Judge not of the state of men’s souls, by those carriages in their sickness, which proceed from their diseases or bodily distemper.’ Many ignorant people judge of a man by the manner of his dying: if one die in calmness and clearness of understanding, and a few good words, they think that this is to die like a saint. Whereas in consumptions, and oft in dropsies, and other such chronical diseases, this is ordinary with good and bad: and in a fever that is violent, or a frenzy or distraction, the best man that is, may die without the use of reason: some diseases will make one blockish, and heavy, and unapt to speak: and some consist with as much freedom of speech, as in time of health. The state of men’s souls must not be judged of by such accidental, unavoidable things as these.

Direct. IX. ‘ Be neither unnaturally senseless at the death of friends, nor excessively dejected or afflicted.’ To make light of the death of relations and friends, be they good or bad, is a sign of a very vicious nature; that is so much selfish, as not much to regard the lives of others: and he that regardeth not the lives of his friends is little to be trusted in his lower concernments. I speak not this of those persons whose temper alloweth them not to weep: for there may be as deep a regard and sorrow in some that have no tears, as in others that abound with them. But I speak of a naughty, selfish nature, that is little affected with any one’s concernments but its own.

Yet your grief for the death of friends, must be very different both in degree and kind. 1. For ungodly friends you must grieve for their own sakes, because if they died such, they are lost for ever. 2. For your godly friends, you must

mourn for the sake of yourselves and others, because God hath removed such as were blessings to those about them. 3. For choice magistrates, and ministers, and other instruments of public good, your sorrow must be greater, because of the common loss, and the judgment thereby inflicted on the world. 4. For old, tried Christians, that have overcome the world, and lived so long till age and weakness make them almost unserviceable to the church, and who groan to be unburdened and to be with Christ, your sorrow should be least, and your joy and thanks for their happiness should be greatest. But especially abhor that nature that secretly is glad of the death of parents, (or little sorrowful) because that their estates are fallen to you, or you are enriched, or set at liberty by their death. God seldom leaveth this sin unrevenged, by some heavy judgments even in this life.

Direct. x. 'To overcome your inordinate grief for the death of your relations, consider these things following.'

1. That excess of sorrow is your sin: and sinning is an ill use to be made of your affliction. 2. That it tendeth to a great deal more: it unfitteth you for many duties which you are bound to, as to rejoice in God, and to be thankful for mercies, and cheerful in his love, and praise, and service: and is it a small sin to unfit yourselves for the greatest duties? If you are so troubled at God's disposal of his own, what doth your will but rise up against the will of God; as if you grudged at the exercise of his dominion and government, that is, that he is God! Who is wisest, and best, and fittest to dispose of all men's lives? Is it God or you? Would you not have God to be the Lord of all, and to dispose of heaven and earth, and of the lives and crowns of the greatest princes? If you would not, you would not have him to be God. If you would, is it not unreasonable that you or your friends only should be excepted from his disposal? 4. If your friends are in heaven, how unsuitable is it for you to be overmuch mourning for them, when they are rapt into the highest joys with Christ; and love should teach you to rejoice with them that rejoice, and not to mourn as those that have no hope. 5. You know not what mercy God shewed to your friends, in taking them away from the evil to come, you know not what suffering the land or church is falling into, or at least, might have fallen

upon themselves; nor what sins they might have been tempted to*. But you are sure that heaven is better than earth, and that it is far better for them to be with Christ. 6. You always knew that your friends must die; to grieve that they were mortal, is but to grieve that they were but men. 7. If their mortality or death be grievous to you, you should rejoice that they are arrived at the state of immortality, where they must live indeed and die no more. 8. Remember how quickly you must be with them again. The expectation of living long yourselves, is the cause of your excessive grief for the death of friends. If you looked yourselves to die to-morrow, or within a few weeks, you would less grieve that your friends are gone before you. 9. Remember that the world is not for one generation only; others must have our places when we are gone; God will be served by successive generations, and not only by one. 10. If you are Christians indeed, it is the highest of all your desires and hopes to be in heaven; and will you so grieve that your friends are gone thither, where you most desire and hope to be.

Object. 'All this is reason, if my friend were gone to heaven; but he died impenitently, and how should I be comforted for a soul that I have cause to think is damned?'

Ans. Their misery must be your grief; but not such a grief as shall deprive you of your greater joys, or disable you for your greater duties. 1. God is fitter than you to judge of the measures of his mercy and his judgments, and you must neither pretend to be more merciful than he, nor to reprehend his justice. 2. All the works of God are good; and all that is good is amiable; though the misery of the creature be bad to it, yet the works of justice declare the wisdom and holiness of God; and the more perfect we are, the more they will be amiable to us. For 3. God himself, and Christ, who is the merciful Saviour of the world, approve of the damnation of the finally ungodly. 4. And the saints and angels in heaven do know more of the misery of the souls in hell, than we do; and yet it abateth not their joys. And the more perfect any is, the more he is like-minded unto God. 5. How glad and thankful should you be to think that God hath delivered yourselves from those eternal

* Isa. lvii. 1, 2. Phil. i. 21. 23.

flames? The misery of others should excite your thankfulness. 6. And should not the joys of all the saints and angels be your joy, as well as the sufferings of the wicked be your sorrows? But above all, the thoughts of the blessedness and glory of God himself, should overtop all the concerns of the creature with you. If you will mourn more for the thieves and murderers that are hanged, than you will rejoice in the justice, prosperity, and honour of the king, and the welfare of all his faithful subjects, you behave not yourselves as faithful subjects. 7. Shortly you hope to come to heaven: mourn now for the damned, as you shall do then; or at least, let not the difference be too great, when that, and not this, is your perfect state.

A Form of Exhortation to the Ungodly in their Sickness, (or those that we fear are such.)

Dear Friend: The God that must dispose of us and all things, doth threaten by this sickness, to call away your soul, and put an end to the time of your pilgrimage; and therefore your friends that love and pity you, must not now be silent, if they can speak any thing for your preparation and salvation, because it must be now or never: when a few days are past, they must never have any such opportunity more: if now we prevail not with you, you are likely to be quickly out of hearing, and past our advice and help for ever. And because I know your weakness bids me be but short, and your memory is not to be burdened with too much, and yet your necessity must not be neglected, I shall reduce all that I have to say to you, to these four heads: 1. Of the change which you seem near to, and the world which you are going to. 2. Of the preparation that must be made by all that will be saved, and who they be that the gospel doth justify or condemn. 3. I would fain help you to understand which of these conditions you are in, and what will become of your soul, if it thus goeth hence: and 4. If your case be bad, I would direct you how you may come out of it, and what is yet to be done while there remaineth any time and hope. And I pray you set your heart to what I say; for I will speak nothing but the certain truth of God, revealed to the world by his Son and Spirit, expressed in the Scripture, and believed by all the church of Christ.

I. God knoweth, the change is great, which you are near. You are leaving this world, where you have spent the days of your preparation for eternity, and leaving this flesh to corrupt and turn to common earth, and must here converse with man no more. You are going now to see that world, which the Gospel told you of, and you have often heard of, but neither you nor we did ever see. Before your friends have laid your body in the grave, your soul must enter into its endless state, and at the resurrection your body be joined with it. Either heaven or hell must be your lot for ever. If it be heaven, you will there find a world of light, and love, and peace; a world of angels and glorified souls, who are all made perfect in knowledge and holiness, living in the perfect flames of love to their glorious Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator: and with them you will be thus perfected yourself: your soul will see the glory of God, and be rapt up in his love, and filled with his joys, and employed triumphantly in his praises, and this for ever. If hell should be your portion, you will there be thrust away as a hated thing from the face of God, and there you will find a world of devils, and unholy, damned, miserable souls; among whom you must dwell, in the flames of the wrath of God, and the horrors of your own conscience, remembering with anguish the mercy which you once rejected, and the warnings and time which once you lost: and at the resurrection your soul and body must be re-united, and live there in torment and despair for ever. I know these things are but half believed by the ungodly world, while they profess to believe them: and therefore they must feel that which they refused to believe: but God hath revealed it to us, and we will believe our Maker. You are now going to see the great difference between the end of holiness and of sin; between the godly and the ungodly; and to know by your own experience those joys and torments, which the wicked will not know by faith. And O what a preparation doth such a change require!

II. You are next to know what persons they are, and how they differ, who must abide for ever in these different states. As we are the children of Adam, we are all corrupted; our minds are carnal, and set upon this world, and savour nothing but the things of the flesh; and the further we go

in sin, the worse we are; being strangers to the life of faith, and to the love of God and the life to come, taking the prosperity and pleasure of the flesh, for the felicity which we most desire and seek. The name of this state in Scripture is, carnal, and ungodly, and unholy; because such men live in a mere fleshly nature or disposition for fleshly ends, in a fleshly manner, and are not at all devoted to God, and carried up to heavenly desires and delights; but live chiefly for this life, and not for the life to come: and though they may take up some kind of religion, in a second place and upon the by, for fear of being damned when they can keep the world no longer; yet is it this world which they principally value, love, and seek, and their religion is subject to their worldly and fleshly interest and delights. And though God hath provided and offered them a Saviour, to teach them better, and reclaim and sanctify them by his Word and Spirit, and forgive them if they will believe in him and return, yet do they sottishly neglect this mercy, or obstinately refuse it, and continue their worldly, fleshly lives, till time be past, and mercy hath done, and there is no remedy. These are the men that God will condemn, and this is the true description of them. And it will not stand with the governing justice, and holiness and truth of God to save them.

But on the other side, all those that God will save, do heartily believe in Jesus Christ, who is sent of God to be the Saviour of souls; and he maketh them know (by his Word and Spirit) their grievous sin and misery in their state of corrupted nature; and he humbleth them for it, and bringeth them to true repentance, and maketh them loathe themselves for their iniquities; and seeing how they have cast away and undone themselves, and are no better than the slaves of satan, and the heirs of hell, they joyfully accept of the remedy that is offered them in Christ: they heartily take him for their Saviour and King, and give up themselves in covenant to him, to be justified and sanctified by him; whereupon he pardoneth all their sin, and further enlighteneth and sanctifieth them by his Spirit: he sheweth them by faith, the infinite love of God, and the sure, everlasting, holy joys, which they may have in heaven with him: and how blessed a life they may there obtain (through his

purchase and gift) with all the blessed saints and angels : he maketh them deliberately to compare this offer of eternal happiness, with all the pleasures and seeming commodities of sin, and all that this deceitful world can do for them : and having considered of both, they see that there is no comparison to be made, and are ashamed that ever they were so mad as to prefer earth before heaven, and an inch of time before eternity, and a dream of pleasure before the everlasting joys, and to love the pleasures of a transitory world, above the presence, and favour, and glory of God : and for the time to come, they are firmly resolved what to do ; even to take heaven for their only happiness, and there to lay up their hopes and treasure, and to live to God, as they have done to the flesh ; and to make sure of their salvation, whatever become of their worldly interest. And thus the Spirit doth dwell and work in them, and renew their hearts, and give them a hatred to every sin, and a love to every holy thing, even to the holy Word, and worship, and ways, and servants of the Lord : and in a word, he maketh them new creatures ; and though they have still their sinful imperfections, yet the bent of their hearts and lives is holy and heavenly, and they long to be perfect, and are labouring after it, and seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and live above the world and flesh : and shortly Christ will make them perfect, and justify them in the day of their judgment, and give them the glorious end of all their faith, obedience, and patience. These are the persons, and none but these (among us, that have the use of reason) that shall live with God.

III. Now this being the infallible truth of the Gospel, and this being the true difference between the righteous and the wicked, the justified and condemned souls, O how nearly doth it now concern you, to try which of these is your own condition ! Certainly it may be known : for God will judge the world in righteousness, by the same law or covenant by which he governeth them. Know but whom the law of Christ condemneth or justifieth, and you may soon know whom the Judge will condemn and justify : for he will proceed according to this law. If you should die in an unrenewed state in your sins, your hopes of heaven would all die with you : and if you should think never so well of

yourself till death, and pretend never so confidently to trust on Christ and the mercy of God, one hour will convince you to your everlasting woe, that God's mercy and Christ's merits did never bring to heaven an unsanctified soul. Self-flattery is good for nothing, but to keep you from repenting till time be past, and to quiet you in satan's snares till there be no remedy: therefore presently, as you love your soul, examine yourself, and try which of these is the condition that you are in, and accordingly judge yourself, before God judge you. May you not know if you will, whether you have most minded earth or heaven, and which you have preferred and sought with the highest esteem and resolution, and whether your worldly or heavenly interest have borne sway; and which of them it is that gave place unto the other? Cannot a man tell if he will, what it is which his very soul hath practically taken for his chief concernment, and what it is that hath had most of his love and care? and what hath been next his heart, and which he hath preferred when they came to the parting, and one was set against the other? Cannot you tell whether you have lived principally to the flesh, for the prosperity of this world, and the pleasures of sin; or whether the Spirit of Christ by his Word, hath enlightened you, and shewed you your sin and misery, and humbled you for it, and shewed you the glory of the life to come, and the happiness of living in the love of God, and hereupon hath united your heart unto himself, and turned it from sin to holiness, from the world to God, and from earth to heaven, and made you a new creature, to live for heaven as you did for earth: surely this is not so small and indiscernible a work or change, but he that hath felt it on himself may know it. It is a good work to bring a sinner to feel his unrighteousness and misery, and to apply himself to Christ for righteousness and life: it is a great work to take off the heart from all the felicity of this world, and to set it unfeignedly upon God, and to cause him to place and seek his happiness in another world, whatever become of all the prosperity or pleasure of the flesh. It is thus with every true believer, for all the remnant of his sins and weaknesses: and may you not know whether it be thus or not with you? One of these is your case: and it is now time to know which of them it is, when God is ready to tell

you by his judgment. If indeed you are in Christ, and his Spirit be in you, and hath renewed you, and sanctified you, and turned your heart and life to God, I have then nothing more than peace and comfort to speak to you, (as in the following exhortation :) but if it be otherwise, and you are yet in a carnal state, and were never renewed by the Spirit of Christ, will you give me leave to deal faithfully with you, as is necessary with one in your condition, and to set before you at once your sin and your remedy, and to tell you what yet you must do if you will be saved.

IV. And first, will you here lay to heart your folly, and unfeignedly lament your sinful life before the Lord? Not only this or that particular sin, but principally your fleshly heart and life: that in the main, you have lived to this corruptible flesh, and loved, and sought, and served the world, before your God, and the happiness of your soul. Alas, friend, did you not know that you had an immortal soul, that must live in joy or misery for ever? Did you not know that you were made to love, and serve, and honour your Maker; and that you had the little time of this life given you, to try and prepare you for your endless life; and that as you lived here, it must go with you in heaven or hell for ever. If you did not believe these things, why did you not come, and give your reasons against them, to some judicious divine that was able to have shewed you the evidence of their truth? If you did believe them, alas, how was it possible that you could forget them? Could you believe a heaven and a hell, and not regard them, or suffer any transitory worldly vanity, to be more regarded by you? Did you know what you had to do in the world, and yet is it all undone till now? Were you never warned of this day? Did never preacher, nor Scripture, nor book, nor friend, nor conscience, tell you of your end? and tell you what would be the fruit of sin, and of your contempt and slighting of Christ and of his grace? Did you know that you must love God above the world, if ever you would be saved, and that you must to that end, be partaker of Christ, and renewed by his Spirit, and yet would you let out your heart upon the world, and follow the brutish pleasures of the flesh, and never earnestly seek after that Christ and Spirit that should thus renew and sanctify you? Do you not think now that it had

been wiser to have sought Christ and grace, and set your affections first on things above, and to have made sure work for your soul against such a day as this, than to have hardened your heart against God's grace, and despised Christ, and heaven, and your salvation, for a thing of naught? You see now what it was that you preferred before heaven; what have you now got by all your sinful love of the world? where now is all your fleshly pleasure? Will it all now serve turn to save you from death, or the wrath of God, and everlasting misery? will it now go with you to another world? Or do you think it will comfort a soul in hell, to remember the wealth which he gathered and left behind him on earth? Would it not now have been much more comfortable to you, if you could say, 'My days were spent in holiness, in the love of my dear Redeemer, and in the hearty service of my God; in praising him and praying to him, in learning and obeying his holy Word and will; my business in the world was to please God, and seek a better world; and while I followed my lawful trade or calling, my eye was chiefly on eternal life; instead of pleasing the flesh, I delighted my soul in the love, and praise, and service of my Redeemer, and in the hopes of my eternal blessedness; and now I am going to enjoy that God and happiness which I believed and sought.' Would not this be more comfortable to you now, than to look back on your time as spent in a worldly, fleshly life, which you preferred before your God and your salvation? Christ would not have forsaken you in the time of your extremity, as the world doth, if you had cleaved faithfully to him. You little know what peace and comfort you might have found, even on earth, in a holy life; how sweet would the Word of God have been to you! How sweet would prayer, and meditation, and holy conference have been! Do you think it is not more pleasant to a true believer, to read the promises of eternal life, and to think and talk of that blessed state, when they shall dwell with God in joy for ever, than it was to you to think and talk of worldly trash and vanity? If you had used the world as a traveller doth the necessaries of his journey, the thought of heaven would have afforded you solid, rational comfort all the way. O little do you know the sweetness of the love of God in Christ, and how good a Christian findeth it, when he

can but exercise and increase his knowledge, and faith, and love to God, and thankfulness for mercy, and hopes of heaven, and walk with God in a heavenly conversation. Do you not wish now that this had been your course? But that which is done cannot be undone, and time that is past can never be called back: but yet there is a sure remedy for your soul, if you have but a heart to entertain and use it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus Christ being God and man, is the Mediator between God and man; his death is a sufficient sacrifice for our sins; it is his office to save all those that come to God by him: do but unfeignedly repent of your sinful life, and yet set your heart upon the life to come, and love God and holiness, better than the world and fleshly pleasure, and trust your soul on Christ as your Redeemer, and he will certainly forgive you, and reconcile you unto God, and present you justified and spotless in his sight. Think of your sin till you abhor yourself: and think of your sin and misery till you feel that you are undone if you have not a Saviour: and then think what love God hath shewed you in Christ, in giving him to be incarnate and die for sinners, and offering you freely to pardon all that ever you have done, and to justify and save you, and bring you to endless glory with himself, if yet at last you will but give up yourself to Christ, and accept his mercy and return to God. What joyful tidings is here now for a sinful, miserable soul; yet this is the certain truth of God. This is his very covenant of grace, which is founded in the blood of Christ, and which he is now ready to make with you, and seal to you by his Spirit within, and his sacrament without, if you do but heartily and unfeignedly consent: believe in Christ, and turn to God, from the world and the flesh, and resolve upon a holy life if you should recover, and then I can assure you from the Word of God, that he will freely pardon you, and take you for his child, and save your soul in endless glory. As late as it is, he will certainly receive you, if you return to him by Christ with all your heart: and doth not your heart now rejoice in this unspeakable mercy, which is willing to save you after all the sin that you have committed, and after all the time that you have lost? Do

you not love that God that is so abundant in goodness and in love? and that Saviour who hath purchased you this pardon and salvation? Is it not better think you to love, and praise, and serve him, than to live in fleshly lusts and pleasures? and is it not better to dwell in heaven with him, in endless joys, than to live awhile in the vain delights of sinners, and thence to pass to endless misery? O beg of God now to give you a new heart to believe in Christ, and repent of sin, and love him that is most holy, good and gracious: and take heed that you slight not his grace any longer; and that you do not now take on you in a fear, to be that which you are not, or to do that which you would not hold to, if you should recover. And to make all sure, will you now sincerely enter into a covenant with Christ; I mean but the same covenant which you made in baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and which would have saved you, if you had sincerely made and kept it. Let me therefore help you both to understand it, and to do it by these Questions, which I entreat you to answer sincerely as one that is going to the presence of God.

Quest. I. 'Do you truly believe that you are a rational creature, differing from brutes, being made to love and serve your Maker, and have an immortal soul, which must live in heaven or hell for ever? and that there is indeed a heaven of joys, and a hell of punishments when this life is ended?'

Quest. II. 'Do you believe that in heaven, the souls of the justified at death, and the body also at the resurrection, shall be joined with the angels, and shall dwell with Christ, and see the glory of God, and be perfected in holiness, and filled with the sense of the love of God, and with the greatest joys that our nature can receive, and shall live in the most delightful love and praise of God for ever?'

Quest. III. 'Seeing you are certain that all the pleasures of this life are short, and will end in death, and leave the flesh which desired them, in corruption, do you not firmly believe that the joys of heaven are infinitely better, and more to be desired and sought, than all the pleasures and profits of this life? and that it is most reasonable that we should love God above all creatures, even with all our heart, and soul, and might?'

Quest. IV. 'Seeing then that the love of God is both our

duty and happiness, is it not reason that we should be kept from the love of any thing in the world, which would steal away our hearts from God, and hinder us from loving him, and desiring, and seeking him? and that we should mortify the love of worldly riches, honours, and delights; so far as they are against the love of God?’

Quest. v. ‘Seeing God is the absolute Lord and Ruler of the world, is it not reason that we obey him, whatsoever he commandeth us, though we did not see the reason why he doth command it? And yet is it not plainly reasonable, that he command us to love, and honour, and worship him; and to love one another, and to deal justly with all, and do as we would be done by, and to be careful of our souls, and temperate for our bodies; and not to neglect or dishonour our Maker, nor to neglect our own salvation, nor abuse our bodies by beastly filthiness or excess; nor to wrong our neighbours, nor deny to do them any good that is in our power. This is the sum of all God’s laws; and this is the nature of holiness and obedience. And do you not from your heart believe, that all this is very reasonable and good?’

Quest. vi. ‘When the sinful world was fallen from happiness into misery, by turning away from God and holiness to sensuality, and God sent his Son to be their Redeemer and Saviour; to be a sacrifice for sin, and a teacher and pattern of a holy and obedient life, and to make a new covenant with them, in which he giveth them the pardon of all sin, and everlasting happiness, if they will but give up themselves to him as their Saviour, and Sanctifier, and by true repentance turn to God: do you not verily believe that miserable sinners should gladly and thankfully accept of such an offer? And abundantly love that God and Saviour, that hath so tenderly loved them, and so freely redeemed them from the flames of hell, and so freely offered them everlasting life? And do you not believe that he, who after all this, shall slight all his mercy, and refuse to be renewed by sanctifying grace, and shall neglect his God, and soul, and this salvation, and rather choose to keep his sins; doth not deserve to be utterly forsaken, and to be punished more than if a Saviour and salvation had never been offered to him?’

Quest. VII. 'Hath not this been your own case? Have you not lived a fleshly, worldly life; neglecting God and your salvation; and minding more these lower things? and have you not refused the Word and Spirit of Christ, which would have brought you to repentance, and a holy life? and consequently rejected Christ as a Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as a Sanctifier; and all the mercy which he offered you on these terms?'

Quest. VIII. 'If this hath been your case, are you now unfeignedly grieved for it? Not only because it hath brought you so near to hell, but also because it hath displeased God, and deprived you of that holy and comfortable life, which you might all this while have lived, and endangered all your hopes of heaven? Do you so far repent, as that your very heart and love are changed: so that now you had rather have a holy life on earth, and the sight and enjoyment of God in the heavenly joys for ever, than to have all the pleasure and prosperity of this world? Do you hate your sins, and loathe yourself for them, and truly desire to be made holy? Are you firmly resolved, that if God do recover you to health, you will live a new and holy life? that you will forsake your fleshly, worldly life, and all your wilful sins; and will set yourself to learn the will of God, and call upon him, and live in the holy communion of saints, and make it your chief care to please God, and to be saved?'

Quest. IX. 'Are you willing to these ends, to give up yourself absolutely now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as your reconciled Father, your Saviour, and your Sanctifier, to be sanctified and justified, and saved from your sins, and from the wrath of God, and live to God in love and holiness? And are you willing to bind yourself to this, by entering into this covenant with God, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil? Either your heart is willing and sincere in this resolution and covenant, or it is not. If it be not, there is no hope that your sin should be pardoned, and your soul be saved upon any other, or easier terms! And for all that God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners, it was never his intent to save one impenitent, unsanctified soul. But if your heart unfeignedly consent to this, I have the commission of Christ himself to tell you,

that God will be your reconciled God and Father; and Christ will be your Saviour, and the Holy Spirit will be your Sanctifier and Comforter, and your sins are pardoned, and your soul shall be saved, and you shall dwell in heaven with God for ever. God did consent before you consented; he shewed his consent in purchasing, and making, and offering you this covenant. Shew your unfeigned consent now by accepting it, and giving up yourself unreservedly to him, and you have Christ's blood, and Spirit, and sacrament, to seal it to you. The flesh and the world have deceived you; but trust in Christ upon his covenant terms, and he will never deceive you.

And now, alas, what pity it is, that a soul that is in so miserable a case, and is lost for ever, if it have not help, and speedy help, should be deprived of all this grace and glory, and only for want of repenting and consenting. What pity is it that a soul, that is ready to go into another world, where mercy shall never more be offered it, should rather go stupidly on to hell, than return to God, and accept his mercy. Do but truly repent and consent to this covenant, and all the mercies of it are certainly yours. God will be your God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and pardon, and heaven, and all are yours. The Lord open and persuade your heart, that you may not be undone, and lost for ever, for want of accepting the mercy that is offered you!

And now I know it would be comfortable to you, if you could be fully assured that you are forgiven, and shall be saved. In a matter of such unspeakable moment, how joyful would a well-grounded certainty be, to any man that hath the right use of his understanding? I tell you therefore from God, that there is no cause of your doubting on his part, but only on your own. There is no doubt to be made, whether God be merciful, nor whether Christ be a sufficient Saviour, and sacrifice for your sins; nor whether the covenant be sure, and promise of pardon and salvation to all true penitent believers be true. All the doubt is, whether your faith and repentance be sincere, or not: and for that, I can but tell you how you may know it, and I shall open the truth to you, that I may neither deceive you, nor causelessly discomfot you.

If this repentance and change which you now profess,

and this covenant which you have made with God, 1. Do come only from a present fear, and not from a changed, renewed heart. 2. And if your resolutions be such as would not hold you to a holy life, if you should recover; but would die and fade away, and leave you as you were before, when the fear is past, then is it but a forced, hypocritical repentance, and will not save you, if you so die. Though a minister of Christ should absolve you of all your sins, and seal it by giving you the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; for all this you are lost for ever, if you have no more: for absolution and the sacrament, are given you but on supposition, that your faith and repentance be sincere: and if this condition fail in you, the action of the holiest minister in the world, will never save you.

But, 1. If your repentance and covenant come not only from a present fear, but from a renewed heart, which now loveth God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness, better than all the honours, and riches, and pleasures of the flesh and world, and had rather have them, even on God's terms. 2. And if this change be such, as if you should recover, would hold you to a holy life, and not die, or dwindle into hypocritical formality, when the fright is over, then I can assure you from the Word of God, that if you die in this repentance, you shall certainly be saved. And though late repentance have so many difficulties that it too seldom proveth true and sound, and it is an unspeakable madness to cast our salvation on so great a hazard; and to defer that till such a day as this, which should be the principal work of all our lives; and for which, the greatest care and diligence is not too much: yet for all that, when conversion is indeed sincere, it is always acceptable, how late soever: and a returning prodigal shall find better entertainment with God, than he could possibly expect; and never will Christ cast out one soul that cometh to him, in sincerity of heart. The Lord give you such a heart, and all is yours. Amen^a.

^a Jer. xxxi. 34. Eph. i. 7. Acts v. 31. Eph. v. 26. Rev. i. 5. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Mal. iii. 17. John i. 12. iii. 16. Eph. ii. 14. Rom. viii. 1. 17. Luke iv. 18. Rom. v. 1. 5. Luke i. 74. John x. 28. Luke xxiii. 43. 1 Cor. xv. 8. Tit. iii. 3, 4. Acts iv. 4—6. 1 Tim. i. 13—16.

A Form of Exhortation to the Godly in their Sickness.

Dear friend : Though nature-teacheth us to have compassion on your flesh, which lieth in pain ; yet faith teacheth us to see the nearness of your happiness, and to rejoice with you in hope of your endless joys, which seem to be at hand. We must rejoice with you as your friends that love you, and therefore are partakers of your welfare : and we must rejoice with you as your fellow-travellers and fellow-soldiers, that are going along with you to the same felicity ; and if we are left behind for a little while, yet hope ere long to overtake you, and never to be separated from you more. This is the day for which Christ hath been so long preparing you ; and which you have so long foreseen, and have been so long preparing for yourself. This is the day which you thought on in all your prayers, and patience, in all your labours and sufferings, your self-denial and mortification, since God did bring you to yourself and him. Now you are going to see the things which you have believed ; and to possess the things which you have sought and hoped for : to see the final difference between the righteous and the wicked ; between a holy, and a worldly life, between the vessels of mercy, and of wrath. Your time is hastening to an end, and endless blessedness must succeed it. O now, what a mercy is it to have a Christ ! That you are not to encounter an unconquered death ; nor to go to God without a Mediator : but that death is by Christ disarmed of its sting ; and that you may boldly resign your soul into the hands of your Redeemer, and commend it to him as a member of himself. Now, what a case had your soul been in, if you had no intercessor ? If you had been to answer for your sins, yourself only ; and had not a Saviour to be your advocate, and answer for you ? Now you may better perceive than ever you have done, what God did for you when he opened your eyes, and humbled, and changed, and renewed your heart : and how great a mercy it is to be a penitent believer. You may now see more fully than ever heretofore, what God intended for you when he converted you : when he forgave all your sins, and justified you by his grace, and adopted you for his child, and an heir of life, and sealed you with his

Spirit, and sanctified and separated you to himself. Now what a case were you in, if you were yet in your sins, and in the bondage of satan, and had not this evidence of your title to eternal life? If you had your heart to soften, and to humble, and to convert, and your faith and justification all to seek, and all your preparations for heaven to make; if you had all this to do, with a pained body, and a distracted mind, in so short a time, with God, and eternity, and death before you, ready with terror to overwhelm your souls? If now you were to seek for an interest in Christ, and for the pardon of all your sins, and your peace with God were yet to make? If you had all your life past to look back upon, as consumed in sin; and when time is at an end, must cry out of all that is past, as lost? this is the case that God in justice might have left you to. But what an unspeakable mercy is it, that you have already been reconciled to that God that you are going to? and that the sins which now would have been your terror, are all forgiven through the blood of Christ? That you can look back upon your time, since the day of your conversion, as spent in faithful devotedness to God, and in a believing preparation for your endless life; and in godly sincerity, notwithstanding your manifold sinful imperfections, which Christ hath undertaken to answer for himself. Though you have nothing of your own to boast of; and no works that will justify you according to the law, at the bar of God, but you need a Saviour, and a pardon, for the failings, even of the best that ever you did; yet must you with thankfulness remember that grace which hath begun eternal life within you, and prepared and sealed you to the full possession of it. For all the mercy that is in God, and for all the glory that is in heaven, and for all the merits and satisfaction of Christ, and for all the fulness and freeness of the promise; if God had not given you a believing, penitent heart, and sanctified and sealed you by the Spirit of his Son, all this could have afforded you little comfort, but would have aggravated your misery, as it did your sin. Seeing then that many of the wicked, would be glad to die the death of the righteous; and when it is too late, they would all be glad, if their latter end might be like his; how glad should you be, that God by such a life, hath prepared you for such an end? And though a humble soul

hath still an eye upon its own unworthiness, and satan is ready to aggravate our sins, in order to our discouragement and fear; yet must you remember what an honorable victory grace hath had over them; and look on them as Christ did, as the advantage of his grace; that "where sin abounded, there grace hath superabounded." You have had something to humble you, and to shew you that you were a child of Adam; and you have had something for grace to contend with, and to conquer; and for Christ to pardon; bless him through whom you have had the victory. Had you not deserved hell, Christ could not have saved you from a deserved hell; and the song of the Lamb would not have been so sweet to you, in the everlasting remembrance, and experience of his grace. You have sinned as a man, and he hath pardoned as God; you have been weak and nothing, but his grace hath been sufficient for you, and by his strength you can do all things. He hath as dear a love to you now in his exaltation, as he had upon the cross, when he was bleeding for your sins. And will he suffer a chosen soul to perish, for whom he hath paid so dear a price? A Christ in heaven that had never been on earth, would have seemed a stranger to us, and one that never was acquainted with our miseries, nor had testified his love at so dear a rate, as might have convinced, and encouraged, and won our hearts. And a Christ on earth, that had not passed for us into heaven, would have seemed to us but an insufficient conquered friend; and were unfit to provide us a mansion with the Father, and to receive our souls, when they are separated from the flesh. But "now we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, and was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;" and therefore "can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: and therefore we may come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need ^a." This is your time of need, and here is a supply for all your needs. As we may come boldly through our high priest to the throne of grace, so may we boldly pass by his conduct into the presence of God in glory. For he is purposely gone before "to prepare a place for us, that where he is, there we may be also ^b." O what a joy is it to our

^a Heb. iv. 14—16.

^b John xiv. 1—3.

departing souls, that we have our head and Saviour already in possession of the kingdom, which we are passing to ! What a support and joy is it, to receive this message from our ascending Head, "Say to my brethren, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God^c." What a joy is it to read his promise, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be^d." You have served him, and are following him, and now are going to be with him where he is.

There you shall be delivered from the darkness of this world. How dimly did we see through the lanthorn of the flesh ! How little did we know ! And how much were we ignorant of ! And what pains did our little knowledge cost us ! But there, one sight of the face of God will put an end to this longsome night ; and will shew you that, which all the reading and study of a thousand years could never satisfactorily have shewn you. There you shall understand the works of God ; the frame of the creation ; the place, and office, and reason of all things, which here you knew not. The mysteries of the Gospel, which angels pry into, will be there much more unfolded to you, than the clearest divines were able to explain them. All sciences there shall be one pansophy ; and all things knowable shall appear to you, in their wondrous perfect harmony. What welcome will those blessed angels give you, that here disdained not to minister for you, and bear you up in all your ways, and interested themselves in your concerns, rejoicing before God at your conversion ! How glad then will they be of your safe arrival at the promised harbour of felicity with themselves ! What joy will it be to you to be presently entertained, and welcomed into the acquaintance of those blessed spirits, and of all the holy souls that are delivered from this flesh and world ; and to see their order, and be numbered with their society, and to be employed in their joyful work. O how much better company is that than the best below ! There is no ignorance, and therefore no error ; no want of love, and no contention ; nor narrow, private interests to contend for, but all made happy in perfect love in him that is their universal end and happiness. There is no dissention, nor perverse disputes ; no ignorant zeal, nor blinding passions ; no proud or covetous designs, and therefore no hurtful

^c John xx. 17.^d John xii. 26.

means to prosecute them; no seeming necessity to hurt our brethren, to advance, or enrich, or save ourselves; no slanderers there condemn the souls whom Christ doth justify, nor take away the righteousness of the righteous from him; no cruel mockings; imprisonments, or banishments; no wandering destitute, afflicted or tormented; no more suffering for the sake of righteousness, but having suffered with Christ they are now reigning with him; and those, of whom the world was not worthy, are taken to God from an unworthy world. There are no troublesome mutations or confusions; no wars, nor rumours of wars, because no lusts to war in their members; but united souls in the harmony of love, do without any discord, praise the Lord. The church is not there divided into sects and factions, either through the pride or peevishness of its members; none scrupled communion with the rest; none silence others from speaking the praises of their Redeemer; nor drive away others from their brotherhood and communion. There is neither unrighteous law, nor disobedient subject, nor unpeaceable neighbour, nor unfaithful friend, nor hurtful or malicious enemy! There is no afflicted friend to mourn for; nor any disconsolate soul to grieve with; no ignorant person to instruct, nor obstinate heart to persuade or pray for; no fearful, doubting Christian to be comforted, nor weak and wavering soul to be confirmed; no imprudent, scandalous actions of the godly to be lamented; no remnants of pride, self-conceitedness, or any delusion to keep out the light; no blemishes in them for the enemies to reproach, nor any malignant enemies to reproach them; no misrepresentations of things or persons; no raising or receiving false reports; no sin of our own to grieve for, or to strive against; and no sin of others to trouble the society, or be lamented. There we shall have no suffering friend to suffer with; none labouring of want, while you have plenty; nor any groaning in pain and sickness, while you are well. As no want or pain of your own will afflict you! so no suffering of your friends will interrupt your joy. Your comforts shall not be turned into lamentations, for the madness and obstinate wickedness of a sodomitical generation about you; nor your righteous soul be vexed with their filthy and sottish conversation. You shall not dwell in a world where the most part is drowned in heathenism and infidelity, nor in a church

defiled with papal tyranny, cruelty, covetousness, or profaneness. The whole society will shine in light, and flame in love, and none through any weakness or corruption, will be a clog or hindrance to another.

You shall above all this behold the person of your glorified Redeemer! You shall see that body, in its glorious change, which once was humbled to the Virgin's womb, and to a life of poverty, and to the scorns of sinners; to be spit upon, and buffeted, and crowned with thorns, and first made a laughing-stock, and then hanged up to die upon a cross, at the will of proud, malicious persecutors. You shall there see that person whom God hath chosen to advance above the whole creation; and in whom he will be more glorified than in all the saints. The wonderful condescension of his incarnation, and the wonderful mystery of the hypostatical union, will there be better understood.

And, which is all in all, you shall see the most blessed God himself; whether in his essence, or not, yet undoubtedly in his glory, in that state or place, which he hath prepared to reveal his glory in, for the glorifying of holy spirits. You shall see him whose sight will perfect your understandings, and love him, and feel the fulness of his love, which is the highest felicity that any created being can attain. Though this will be in different measures, as souls are more or less amiable and capacious (or else the human nature of Christ would be no happier than we), yet none shall have any sinful or troublesome imperfection, and all their capacities shall be filled with God.

O dear friend, I am even confounded and ashamed to think, that I mention to you such high and glorious things, with no more sense and admiration! And that my soul is not drawn up in the flames of a more fervent love; nor lifted up in higher joys, nor yet drawn out into more longing desires, when I speak of such transcendent happiness and joy! O had you and I but a glimpse with blessed Stephen or Paul, of these unutterable pleasures, how deeply would it affect us! And how should we abhor this life of sin! And be weary of this dark and distant state; and be glad to be gone from this prison of flesh; and to be delivered from this present evil world.

This is the life that you are going to live; though a painful death must open the womb of time, and let you into

eternity, how quickly will the pain be over. And though nature make death dismal to you, and sin have made it penal, and you look at it now with backwardness and fear; yet this will all be quickly past, and your souls will be born into a world of joy, which will make you forget all your fears and sorrows. It is meet that as the birth of nature had its pains, and the birth of grace had its penitent sorrows; so the birth of glory should have the greatest difficulties, as it entereth us into the happiest state. O what a change will it be to a humbled, fearful soul, to find itself in a moment dislodged from a sinful, painful flesh, and entered into a world of light, and life, and holy love, unspeakably above all the expressions and conceptions of this present life. Alas! that our present ignorance and fear should make us draw back from such a change! That whilst all our brethren that died in faith, are triumphing in these joys with Christ, our trembling souls should be so loath to leave this flesh, and be afraid to be called to the same felicity! O what an enemy is the remnant of unbelief, to our imprisoned and imperfect souls! That it can hide such a desirable glory from our eyes, that it should no more affect us, and we should no more desire it, but are willing to stay so long from God! How wonderful is that love and mercy, that brings such backward souls to happiness! And will drive us away from this beloved world, by its afflicting miseries! And from this beloved flesh, by pain and weariness! And will draw us to our joyful blessedness, as it were, whether we will or not! And will not leave us out of heaven so long, till we are willing ourselves to come away!

You seem now to be almost at your journey's end. But how many a foul step have those yet to go, whom you leave behind you in this dirty world. You have fought a good fight, and kept the faith; and shall never be troubled with an enemy or temptation when this one concluding brunt is over. You shall never be so much as tempted to unbelief, or pride, or worldly-mindedness, or fleshly lusts, or to any defects in the service of your Lord. But how many temptations do you leave us encompassed with! And how many dangers and enemies to overcome! And alas! how many falls and wounds may we receive! You seem to be near the end of your race, when those behind you have far to run. You are entering into the harbour, and leave us tossed by

tempests on the waves. Flesh will no more entice or clog your soul. You will no more have unruly senses to command, nor an unreasonable appetite to govern, nor a straggling fantasy, or wandering thoughts, or headstrong lusts, or boisterous passions to restrain. You will no longer carry about a root of corruption, nor a principle of enmity to God: it will no more be difficult or wearisome to you to do good. Your service of God will no more be mixed and blemished with imperfections. You shall never more have a cold, or hard, or backward heart, or a careless, customary duty to lament. That primitive holiness, which consisteth in the love of God, and the exercise and delights thereof will be perfected: and those subservient duties of holiness, which consist in the use of recovering means, will cease as needless. Preaching, and studying, and books, will be necessary no more: sacraments, and church discipline, and all such means have done their work: repentance and faith have attained their end. As your bodies after the resurrection will have no need of food, or raiment, or care, or labour; so your souls will be above the use of such creatures and ordinances, as now we cannot be without: for the glass will be unnecessary, when you must see the Creator face to face. Will it not be a joyful day to you, when you shall know God as much as you desire to know him? And love him as much as you desire to love him? And be loved by him as much as you can reasonably desire to be loved? And rejoice in him as much as you desire to rejoice? Yea, more than you can now desire? I open you but a casement into the everlasting mansions; and shew you but a dark and distant prospect of the promised land, the heavenly Jerusalem. The satisfying sight is reserved for the time, when thereby we shall have that satisfying fruition.

And is there any such thing to be hoped for on earth? Will health or wealth, will the highest places, or the greatest pleasures make men happy? You know it will not! Or if it would, the happiness would be so short, as maketh it little worthy of our regard. Have you not seen an end of all perfection? Have you not observed and tried what a deluding dream and shadow of felicity the world puts off its followers with? How they act their parts as players on a stage; and they that in a dream or mask, did yesterday seem princes, lords, or conquerors, to-day are buried in a

darksome grave! And they that yesterday seemed great and rich, to-day have no more of their furniture or possessions, than a coffin and a winding-sheet, and a place to hide their loathsome flesh! And they that yesterday were merry, and jovial, and in health, and honour, to-day lie groaning in painful misery, and are leaving their dear-bought, beloved riches, never to be delightful to them any more. How little doth it concern them, that must dwell in heaven or hell for ever, whether they live in wealth or poverty, in honour or shame, in a palace or a cottage, in pain or pleasure, for so short a time as this transitory life, which is almost at an end as soon as it is begun! How many millions of dying parents have cried out of the world as Vanity and Vexation! And yet their besotted posterity admire it, and through the love of it lose their souls and everlasting hopes! They boast or rejoice in the multitude of their riches, as if their houses would continue for ever: though in their honour they abide not, but are like the beasts that perish; and death feedeth on them, when like sheep they are laid in the grave; and though this their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings, and follow them by the same sin to the same perdition^e. And is this a world for a holy soul to be in love with? Hath it merited our affections? Doth it love us so much, or use us so well, that we should be loath to leave it^f? As it loved our Lord, it will love his followers: as it used him, it will use us, if he restrain it not. Is a blinded, bedlam world, a malicious, cruel, and ungodly world, a false, perfidious, deceitful world, a place for a saint to be loath to leave? O blessed be that love, that blood, that grace, which hath provided better for us! And shall we be unwilling to go to so sweet a feast? and to partake of a happiness which cost so dear?

Come on then, dear friend, and faint not at the last; and fear not to encounter with the king of fears! It is the last enemy, and it is a conquered enemy! Conquer this and you have no more to conquer! Lift up your head, and look to your victorious, reigning Lord: gird up the loins of your mind, and let faith and patience hold out yet a little while, and play well this last part, and all is your own^g.

^e Psal. xlix. 6, 7. 10—14. 17. 19, 20.

^f John xv. 18—20.

^g Post illam pugnam triumphabimus victores cum nostro signifero in vitâ æternâ: diu in Christum credidi: desidero jam finem fidei, ut non amplius credam in eum, sed

If the tempter now assault your faith, and sinking flesh do give him any advantage, abhor his blasphemies, and cry for help to him that conquered him. Do you think yonder high and spacious mansions are uninhabited? When every part of sea and land hath its inhabitants? Why have those blessed angels been so long employed in ministering for you, but to let you know that your souls are not so distant from them, but that they are glad of familiarity with you, and you may be like them, or equal with them in felicity? Nature hath put you out of doubt, that there is a God of infinite, eternal being, power, wisdom, and goodness, who is the efficient, dirigent, and final cause of all; the Creator and Governor of the world. And the same nature hath put you out of doubt, that all that his creatures have or can do, is due to him from whom they have it; and that so far as you are capable to know, and love, and serve him, that you should employ your faculties herein: and nothing is more undeniable to you, than that it is our duty to love and serve our God, with all our heart, and soul, and might. And it is as clear to you, that neither are these powers given us in vain, nor this duty required of us in vain; nor yet that man's natural, highest duty, is made to be the way of his misery and undoing. And sure that way, which turneth the mind from sensual pleasures, and casteth a man on the malice and cruelty of the world, and engageth him in so much duty, which both the flesh and the world are utter enemies to, would be his misery and torment, if there were no rewards and punishments hereafter, and no future judgment to set all straight, that seemed crooked in the judgments of men. If all the intrinsic evidences of credibility in the sacred Word were not sufficient; if all the antecedent evidences of prophecy were too little; if the concomitant evidence of all the miracles of Christ, and his apostles, and other of his servants, with his own resurrection and ascension did seem too distant from you; yet mark what subsequent, continued evidences it hath pleased God to bring even to your very sense, to assure you of the truth of his Gospel, and of the life to come. Whence cometh that universal unrea-

videam eum in quem credidi; ut gustem quam suavis sit Dominus, palpeis manibus Dominum meum, et Deum meum. Ibi vocabor Abraham, qui lætatur videns diem Christi: expertus sum quod in hac vitâ peccatum sit omnia in omnibus: experiar etiam aliam Vitam, ubi est Dominus omnia in omnibus. Abr. Buchholtzer. referente Abr. Sculteto in Curric. vitæ suæ. p. 15.

sonable enmity, which in all generations and nations of the world, from Cain and Abel till this day, is found in the carnal against the spiritual, holy seed? Even a Seneca telleth us of it among heathens, against that remnant of virtue, and temperance, and sobriety that was found in the better sort of men. Could all mankind be thus infected, and hate a saint that never hurt them, much more than those that themselves confess to be most vicious, if the fall of Adam were not true? Have we a whole world before our eyes, that are visibly polluted with that irrational leprosy, and yet shall we doubt whether our common father was sick of that disease? And do you not see that the Gospel, wherever it is heartily entertained, doth renew the soul, and change the life, and make the man to be another man, not only amending some little things that were amiss; but making us new creatures, and turning the bent of heart and life another way? Though the carnal, nominal Christian, that never heartily received the Gospel, do differ from a heathen but in opinion and formality; yet serious Christians are other men, and so transformed, as that their holy desires and endeavours do contain the seed of life eternal, and are such a preparation for it as cannot be in vain. Would God concur thus with any word, which is not true, and holy, and good, to make it effectual for the renovation of so many millions of souls? Have you not found that his work of grace is carried on by heavenly wisdom, love, and power? and is a witness of his special providence? and containeth his own image upon the soul? And shall we then question the author of the seal, when we see that the image and superscription which it imprinteth is divine? And have you not had such experiences yourself of the fulfilling of this Word, in the answer of prayers, manifest both on men's souls and bodies, which are enough to confute the tempter, that would shake your faith, when he seeth you in your weakness, unfit to call up all those evidences, which at another time you have discerned? For my own part, I must bear this witness to the truth, that I have known, and felt, and seen, and heard such wonders wrought upon fervent prayer, as have many a time convinced me of the truth of the promises, and the special providence of God to his poor petitioners. I have oft known the acute and chronical diseases of afflicted ones relieved by prayer without any natural means. Some of the most violent cured

in an hour; and some by more slow degrees. Besides the effects upon men's souls, and estates, and public affairs, which plainly demonstrated the means and cause. And shall a promise thus sealed to us, be ever questioned again? Nay, have you not the witness in yourself^h? Even the Spirit of Christ, which is the pledge and earnest of your inheritance, and the seal and mark of God upon you? In a word, it is an unquestionable truth, that the rational world neither is, nor ever was, nor can be governed agreeably to its nature, without an end to move and rule them, which is beyond this life; and without the hopes and fears of a reward and punishment hereafter. Were this but taken out of the world, man would no longer live like man, but as the most odious, noxious creature upon earth. And it is as sure that it agreeth not with the omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness of God, to govern so noble a creature by a lie, and to make a nature that must be so governed. And it is as certain that all other revelation is defective, and that life and immortality, the end and the way, were never so brought to light, as they are in the Gospel, by Christ, and by his Spirit.

Say then to the malicious tempter, "The Lord rebuke thee, O satan! even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee!" "O full of all subtlety and mischief! thou enemy of God and righteousness! wilt thou not cease to be a lying spirit, and to pervert the truth and right ways of the Lord^k?" Lift up your soul to God, and say, I believe, Lord help mine unbelief! Though satan stand to resist me at my right hand, am I not a brand plucked out of the fire? Am I not thine? and have I not resigned this soul to thee? and didst thou not accept it in thy holy covenant? O then defend it as thy own! Plead thou my cause, and confirm thy work, and justify both thy truth and me, against the malicious enemy of both. O let the intercession of my Saviour prevail, that my faith fail not. And take away the filthy garments from me, and cause mine iniquities to pass away. And though my soul be troubled, what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But then what passage shall I have into thy presence? I was born a mortal wight, and go but the way as all generations have gone before me; and follow my Lord and all his saints: Father, receive and glo-

^h 1 John v. 10—12.ⁱ Zech. iii. 2.^k Acts xiii. 10.

rify thy servant, that thy servant may glorify thy name for ever! Receive, O Father, the soul which thou hast made! Receive, O Saviour, the soul which thou hast so dearly bought, and loved to the death, and washed in thy blood! Receive the soul which thou hast regenerated by thy Spirit, and in some measure quickened by the immortal seed! Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand breadth: my age before thee is as nothing: and every man at his best estate is vanity. When thy rebukes correct us for iniquity, thou makest our beauty to consume as a moth. And now O Lord, what wait I for? is not my hope alone in thee? Deliver me from my transgressions, and impute not to me the sins which I have done. Remember not against me the sins of my youth; and forgive the iniquities of my riper years. Charge not upon me my grieving of thy Spirit, and neglects and resistances of thy grace. Forgive my sins of ignorance and of knowledge, my sins of slothfulness, rashness, and presumption, especially those which I have wilfully committed, against thy warnings and the warnings of my conscience. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret sins. O pardon my unprofitableness, and abuse of thy mercies, and my sluggish loss of precious time! that I have served thee no better, and loved thee no more, and improved no better the day of grace! Though folly and sin have darkened my light, and blemished my most holy services, and my transgressions have been multiplied in thy sight, yet is the sacrifice sufficient which thou hast accepted from our great High Priest, who made his soul an offering for sin. In him thou art well pleased: he is our peace: in him I trust: he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: he did no iniquity: he fulfilled all righteousness: and by once offering of himself, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified: he is able to save to the utmost them that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Accept me, O Father, in him thy well beloved: let my sinful soul be healed by his stripes, who bare our sins in his body on the cross. Let me be found in him, not having any legal righteousness of my own, but that which is through the faith of Christ; that being made conformable unto his death, I may attain to the resurrection of the dead, and may by him be presented without spot or blemish. My God, thou

hast encouraged my fearful soul, by the multitude of thy mercies, as well as by thy promises, to trust thee, and yield itself to thee. Thou hast filled up all my days with mercy : every place that I have lived in, and every relation, and all that I have had to do with in the world, are the witnesses of thy love and mercy to me. Thy eyes beheld my substance being yet imperfect, and all my members were written in thy book. My parents were instructed by thee to educate me, and all things commanded by thee to serve for my preservation, comfort, and salvation. Thou hast brought me forth in a land and age of mercies, and caused me to hear and see the things which others have not seen or heard. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places : my life hath not been spent in a howling wilderness, nor in banishment from thy sanctuary, or the communion of thy saints ; nor hath it been wholly consumed in darkness, and sorrow, and unserviceable barrenness. But often have I heard the joyful sound, and I have gone with the multitude to the house of God, and there have seen the light of thy countenance, and drank of the rivers of thy pleasure, even of the waters of life, and have been solaced with the voice of joy and praise. How oft have I cried unto thee in my trouble, and thou hast delivered me out of my distresses ? When for my folly and transgression I was afflicted, thou broughtest me out of darkness and the shadow of death. Thou renewedst my age as Hezekiah's, and causedst the shadow of my dial to go back ! and hast set me at liberty to praise thee for thy goodness, and declare thy works to the children of men. In the day of trouble I called upon thee, and thou didst deliver me that I might glorify thee. Thou causedst me to receive the sentence of death, that I might trust in God that raiseth the dead. My Shepherd hath led me in his pleasant pastures, by the silent streams : he restored my soul, and conducted me in the paths of righteousness. How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God ! how great is the sum of them ! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand ! And will that mercy now forsake me, which hath abounded to me, and supported me so long ? Thou hast said, I will never fail thee nor forsake thee ? Having loved thy own, that are in the world, thou wilt love them to the end ; for thy mercy is great and reacheth to the heavens, and it endureth for ever. O therefore when I awake, let me

be with thee ! And as thy loving-kindness is better than life ; and to depart and be with Christ, is far better than the best condition upon earth ; so let thy servant depart in peace, his eye of faith beholding thy salvation : and when my earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, let me have that building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Let my present burden of sin and suffering make me more earnestly to groan, not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life ; that being absent from the body, I may be present with the Lord. And seeing this cup may not pass from me, and I must not look for the chariot of Elias, to carry me unto heaven ; let thy will be done, and let me rest therein, and let death be the gain and advantage of my soul : and while this outward man is perishing, let the inner man be renewed from day to day : for what am I better than my fathers, and all thy saints, and the generations of mankind, that I should think of any other passage, than this of death to the world of immortality ? O let this fainting heart be glad, and let my glory rejoice, and in love and joy, in thankfulness and praise, let me pass into the world of love and joy, where thanksgiving and praise shall be my work for ever. And though my flesh and heart will fail, be thou the strength of my heart, O God, and my portion for ever. Though I must walk through the valley of the shadow of death, let me fear no evil ; but be thou still with me, and let me be comforted by thy rod and staff : let the goodness and mercy which have followed me thus far all my days, receive me at the last, that I may dwell with thee for ever. For it is the will of my Redeemer, that those which thou hast given him, be with him where he is, to behold the glory which thou hast given him. And that his servants should follow him, that where he is, there also may his servants be. Amen, Lord Jesus ! good is thy will and the word which thou hast spoken ! Into thy hands I commend my spirit which thou hast redeemed : receive it, and let me be with thee in paradise. O thou that hast called us thy brethren, when thou didst ascend to thy Father and our Father, and to thy God and our God, take up this poor unworthy soul, to the mansions which thou hast prepared for us, that I may be with thee where thou art. And though this flesh must perish, let it rest in hope, and be but sowed as a grain of wheat ;

till thy powerful call shall raise it from the dust, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and this natural body shall be raised a spiritual body, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. For though I be dead, my life is hid with Christ in God : and when thou appearest who art my life, then let me appear with thee in glory. O hasten that appearance, and come with thy holy, glorious angels, to be glorified in thy saints, and admired in and by believers ! When thou wilt change our vile bodies, and make them like to thy glorious body, by the mighty working, by which thou canst subdue even all things to thyself. Hast thou not said, “ Behold I come quickly ? ” Even so come Lord ! and let the great marriage day of the Lamb make haste, when thy spouse shall be presented spotless, unblamable, and glorious ; and the glory of God in the New Jerusalem, shall be revealed to all his holy ones, to delight and glorify them for ever. In the meantime, remember Lord thy promise, “ Because I live, therefore shall ye live also : ” and let the dead that die in thee be blessed : and thou that art made a quickening Spirit, and art the Lord and Prince of life, and hast said that not a hair of our heads shall perish ; gather our departing souls unto thyself, into the heavenly Jerusalem and Mount Sion, the city of the living God, and to the myriads of holy angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the perfected spirits of the just ; where thou wilt make us kings and priests to God, whom we shall see, and love, and praise for ever. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things ; and for his pleasure they are, and were created. And O thou the blessed God of love, the Father of spirits and King of saints, receive this unworthy member of thy Son, into the heavenly choir which sing thy praise ! who rest not saying, night and day, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come ! For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

END OF THE SECOND PART, AND OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

R. EDWARDS, CRANE COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON.