

2. The manner of humiliation is, by due <sup>s</sup> fasting, and confession, and prayer, to humble the soul penitently for sin, and beg the mercy which we want : and the manner of thanksgiving, to <sup>b</sup> rejoice soberly and spiritually, with moderate feasting, when that is convenient, and give God thanks for his mercy, and beg the grace to improve it, and renew our devotion and resolutions of obedience.

3. The outward parts (fasting and feasting) must not be made a form or ceremony of, nor judged to be pleasing to God merely in and for themselves : but must be chosen only as means which help us to their proper ends, humiliation and thanksgiving ; and may be varied as men's cases and bodies differ. The weak may be humbled <sup>l</sup> without fasting, or with less : and the poor and the sickly may give thanks without feasting, or with little. And all must take heed of offering God a sacrifice of the sin of sensuality and excess.

4. <sup>k</sup> True repentance in humiliation, and increased love to God in thanksgiving, and true reformation of life by both, is the great end to be aimed at ; and all that attaineth not, or truly intendeth not that end, is vain. But so much for this present conference.

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## THE EIGHTH DAY'S CONFERENCE.

### *Directions for a safe and comfortable Death.*

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Speakers.—Paul, a teacher ; and Saul, a learner.

SAUL. Sir, I have been, since I saw you, with divers of my neighbours at their death ; and I see that weakness and pain of body, and the terrors of death, and the stir of friends and physicians, are so great impediments to men's preparation then, that I earnestly entreat you to help me to make ready while I am in health. For I am loth to leave so great work to so weak a state, and to so sad, and short, and uncertain a time.

PAUL. It is God's great mercy to make you so wise. There is nothing in which the folly of ungodly men doth more appear than in delaying their serious preparations for death. Is there

<sup>s</sup> Est. iv. 16 ; Joel i. 14—16 ; Ezr. viii. 21, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Est. ix. 17, 18 ; Psalm lxxxi. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Matt. ix. 13, and xii. 7.

<sup>k</sup> Rom. xiv. 17 ; 1 Cor. viii. 8 ; Isa. lviii. 2, &c. ; Psalm i. 14, 15, 23, and xvi. ; 1 Cor. v. 8.

any man so brutish as not to know that he must die? And he is scarce a man, much less a Christian, who believeth not that death will pass him into another state of life. There is no man can doubt but this change is sure, and very near; and no man knoweth how near, or when; and O how great a change will it be! The body, which was spruced up and pampered, which must now be honoured, and pleased, and preferred, must then become a loathsome corpse: the pleasant cups, the delicious food, the adorned rooms, the gay attire, the soft beds, the delightful gardens, walks, and fields, the honour and precedency, power and command, are all at an end, and turned into a dark and silent grave. The flesh that must be daily pleased, and nothing is too good for it, must be an ugly, black, and stinking carcass, many years rotting out of sight and smell, lest it should annoy the living, and mar their mirth, before it can come to be dry and less abominable dust, and equal with the common earth. <sup>1</sup>House and lands, wealth and honour, greatness and vain-glory, sports and worldly pleasures, are wholly at an end, and will follow them no further, but be to them as if they had never been. And the soul must appear in another society, among the spirits that have finished their course on earth, and are gone before to receive their doom: there it must see what before we heard of; either the hellish misery of undone souls, which have cast away all their hopes for ever, and the wicked devils which deceived them; or the perfected spirits of the just, the glorious angels, our glorified Redeemer, and the most glorious God. There they will soon see the truth of that word and that world which they doubted of; and quickly feel what they must trust to for evermore. O what a change is it suddenly to pass from our company, our dwellings, our business, our pleasures, and from all this world, and to see a world which we never saw before, and to enter presently upon the joys or sorrows which must never, never end or change! O what a stone is a hardened heart! What a senseless thing is an ungodly man! that can either forget such a day, and such a change as this, or can think of it without awakened resolutions, presently, and with their utmost diligence, to prepare! If they believe not God's word, and the life to come, why do they not come and debate the case with us, and hear what we can say, till they are resolved, upon the best inquiry, whether it be so indeed or not? Do they think that we can give them no bet-

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvi.

ter proof of it, than what their unstudied brains lay hold on; or no better than the devil giveth them against it? But if they do believe it, O what self-condemning wretches are they! What! believe such a change as sure and near, and not prepare for it? Believe that they must be in heaven or hell for ever, and yet live as if they cared not which of them it be?

S. I confess it is an evident truth and duty which you urge, and an undeniable madness in men to forget so great, and sure, and near a change; for death is a thing past all dispute. It is no controversy whether we must die. And a man that loveth himself should think, then, whither we must go next.

P. If we tell men, in preaching, of things which they never knew before, they understand us not; and, instead of learning, they cavil and question whether they are true; and when we tell them of such things as they know already, and all the world knoweth, they despise it, and say, 'Who knoweth not this?' But, by this, you may see that we have need to preach nothing more than that which all men's tongues confess. It is a shame, either for the preachers or hearers, that so many sermons are preached of death. If there be no need of it, the shame is ours; but if there be, the shame is theirs. O man! what a dark, and dead, and sottish thing art thou become, that hast need to be told that thou must die; and need to be told it at every funeral; yea, every day; and all too little: as if the place which we meet in did not tell it us, where we tread on the dust of so many generations, and, within a yard or two of our feet, some carcasses lie in black and loathsome rottenness, and the skulls and bones of others forget what once they were pleased with on earth. Our diseases and pains of body forewarn us; our weariness in our labours tells us that we have a body that must break at last; our grey hairs will tell us, as the golden leaves on the trees in autumn, that our fall is at hand; our children tell us that others are rising up in our steads, while we are going off the stage. Every bit that we eat, and cup that we drink, doth tell us what bodies we have, that can be no longer upheld than new reparations are daily made of their decays; our every night's sleep warneth us to prepare for that sleep from which the resurrection only will awake us; all the poor beasts, and birds, and fishes, whose lives must go to keep up ours, do tell us that our own will not be long, and that we must die as well as they, and that a life maintained by so many lives, at so dear a rate, should be well spent for his service that giveth us these, and all. When we

plough up and dig the earth for our seed, and cast it in, where it must corrupt before it spring up again, we do but represent the digging of our graves, and the burial of this body till the rising day. Every time that the sun setteth at night and riseth again the next morning, it warneth us how our lives must set and rise again; and so doth every fall and spring. Every bell that tolleth or ringeth for the dead, is our call to prepare to follow them; yea, every bell that calleth to the church doth tell us that the same bells must shortly be tolled for our burial. Every clock that striketh, every watch that moveth, every hour-glass that runneth, hath a voice to call senseless sinners. See and hear, O man or woman, how thy time passeth away; how quickly will thy last<sup>m</sup> hour come; yea, every breath that we fetch ourselves, and every stroke that our pulse both beat, doth call to sinners, 'Your days are numbered; it is determined how many more breaths you must breathe, and how many times more your pulse must beat; your last pulse and your last breath is near at hand!' O what abundance of preachers have we to tell us that we must die! and yet men live as if they did not believe it, or never had been warned to prepare.

S. But sure, sir, it is a thing that men know so well, that they need not be told that they must die; but only be told better how to prepare for it.

P. I tell you, to the shame of corrupted nature, that men have need to be told, and told again, a thousand times, with the loudest voice, that they must die. It was not a vain lesson which the philosopher told the great emperor, 'Remember that thou art mortal.' O had I a voice that could be heard all over the land, to cry to all men, 'Remember that you must die;' and could I speak it to their hearts, it would awaken the secure, it would unfool the dreaming world, who are playing away their lives for nothing. I tell you, the preacher that doth but thunder this in the ears of a sleepy, worldly congregation, 'O sinners, you must die, you must die, as sure as you are alive you must die,' doth not preach an unprofitable sermon. If you believe me not, answer me these few questions:

Quest. 1. Why else are men so surprised with the fears of death when it is just coming? They knew, all their lives before, that it would come, and yet they live merrily and carelessly till it is just upon them; and then when the physician tells them there is no hope, O what heart-sinking terror are they in, as if

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxiv. 44, and xxv. 10; Luke xii. 40.

they had never known that they must die till now. Sure there is a way to make death less terrible ; and why is not this way used in time ?

Quest. 2. And what maketh such a difference between their healthy and their dying thoughts ? Now nothing doth relish with them but the world and the flesh ; and then they cry out, the world is vanity. Now nothing is so unwelcome to them as the motions of a holy life ; but then they cry out, with Balaam, "O that I might die the death of the righteous, and my last end might be as his." (Num. xxiii. 10.) Now praying wearie them ; but then they cry for mercy, mercy, and learn to pray without book, and without a teacher. Now they cannot bear him that telleth them of their sins ; but then they can cry out, as Judas, "I have sinned." Now they must not be stopped nor troubled in their sins ; but then they trouble themselves more, and cry out, 'O that I had the time again which I have lost ! O that God would try me once again ! I would be a new man ; I would lead a new life ; I would never do as I have done.' Then they can be serious in thinking of their change, and the dread of it amazeth them ; and O that they could make sure of heaven ! But now they regard it as little almost as if it did not much concern them, while they have time, and helps, and warning to make sure. Either this change is wise, or not. If not, why will they do it then ? if it be, why not now ? That which is the best then is best now. Death should be the comfortable ending of a well-spent life ; and they make it either the terrible or the senseless conclusion of a loser's game, or a doleful tragedy ; and all because they be not awakened to learn to die in the time of health.

Quest. 3. Why is it that their teachers never hear them once seriously inquire, 'How shall I make ready ; and how shall I know where I must dwell for ever ?' If we can afford them no help herein at all, why do they desire us to counsel them on their death-bed ? if we can, why do we not hear this sooner from them ? Do you understand Christ's parable of the unjust steward ? (Luke xvi. 4, 5.) His wit is commended, that when he was to be turned away, he seriously bethought him whither to go next, and provided himself of another habitation. Nature taught him to make some provision for his change. But we cannot get men that know, past doubt, that shortly they must leave this world for ever, to bethink them carefully, whither they must go next ; and how their poor souls may find a comfortable entertainment with God.

S. I pray you name some of the benefits that would come to men, by the serious warnings and thoughts of death ; otherwise we shall think that it is but troubling us before the time, with the fears of that which cannot be prevented, and so the increasing of our sorrows.

P. O friend ! I tell you death is a powerful preacher ; it teacheth many men that to the quick which we have preached twenty years in vain. We preach them asleep ; but the sentence of death doth awaken them to purpose. I will begin with myself, and the rest of my profession :

1. The serious thoughts of death do teach ministers how to preach, and the people how to hear. I am sure, through God's mercy, it hath been the expectation of death these thirty-four years which hath been a great means to help me to that little, too little, seriousness in preaching which I have had. Who is so dull that, if he thought that this were the last day that he should preach and live, would not importunately beg of his hearers to receive the Gospel, and repent of sin, and turn to God, and save their souls ? But when men think that they have forty years more to live yet, and preferments to get, and prosperity to enjoy, they make the public assembly a stage, to set out themselves, and act the part of a servant of Christ, to win the prize and reward of a worldling ; they play with Scripture, and talk of heaven and hell in jest, and jingle out a few canting words, contrived by hypocrites to beget hypocrisy, and, from a senseless heart, to make men more senseless, and teach them to take Christianity for a stage play, and the service of God for a common thing. For all things would generate their like ; the spirit of slumber as well as the Spirit of sanctification.

But death awakeneth the preacher to awaken the hearers. We are dying while we are speaking, and you while you are hearing. The breath which we speak by, is measuring out our time. We have but so many breaths to breathe, and we have done. We shall all be shortly silenced in the grave. It is your mercy and our mercy that yet we have tongues to speak, and you have ears to hear. But we preach and you hear as men in a boat, which is all the while swiftly carried down the stream, and will be quickly in the ocean of eternity. No wonder if Paul adjure Timothy to most constant and importunate preaching ; (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2 ; ) and if Christ so often call out to sinners, " He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." All that we have to say must be quickly said, and all that you will learn

must be quickly learned; even now, or never. O how many a hundred times have I risen off my knees with shame and consternation, to think that a dying man, in so great necessity, could pray no harder at the door of eternity! and how many a time have I come down from the pulpit with shame and grief, to think that I could speak with no more affection to men that are so near another world; that my heart did not melt over miserable sinners, and that I did not, with tears and importunity, entreat them; that I could so easily and quietly go away without a grant of that which I came for, when I knew not that ever I should speak to them more. Methinks death should make us all better preachers, and you better hearers, were it well foreseen. It stirred up Peter to stir up his flock, knowing that speedily he must put off his tabernacle. (2 Pet. i. 13, 14.) It stirred up Paul to rouse up Timothy, to think that the time of his departure was at hand. (2. Tim. iv. 1, 2, 6.) It moved him, and melted his hearers, when he told them that they must see his face no more. (Act. xx. 38.)

S. What other benefit doth foreseen death bring?

P. 2. It teacheth us the wisest estimate of all the wealth, and honour, and greatness of this world; for it showeth them all to us in their final state, and what they will prove to us in our greatest needs. If all the congregation were sure that they were to die to-morrow, or the next week or month, how easily could we preach them into a contempt of the world. Though it changed not their love to it, (for they would still keep it if they could,) it would make them confess that all is vanity. Then, what is riches worth? what are lands and sumptuous houses worth? what are honours and places of command worth? Now, are these, think you, better than a Christ; or worthy the purchasing with the loss of heaven? Would not assurance of salvation now be better? Suppose the preacher that cometh to comfort a dying man, should come to him only with worldly comforts; suppose he say, 'Sir, be of good comfort; you have had many a merry cup, many a sumptuous feast, many a gallant entertainment; you have lived in honour, and wealth, and ease:' would he not say, 'O but it is all past and gone, and I must never more enjoy it!' If the priest shall say, 'You have fair houses, and a great estate, to comfort you,' will he not say, 'O that is my sorrow, for I must leave them all for ever!' If it be told him, 'Your children shall enjoy it all when you are gone,' will he not say, 'But they must leave it as I do; and whither shall my soul

go; and what comfort will their pleasure be to me; when the "rich worldling in hell would have had one to warn his brethren on earth, lest they should follow him to the place of torment?" The church-yard is that market-place where the things of this world are duly rated. If they will purchase you a pardon from God, or open heaven to you, or make your bones and dust more happy, value them, and spare not; seek them, and keep them, and use them as far as furthereth the service of God and your salvation, and will give true comfort to a dying man. But if all your plenty prepare but for this farewell,<sup>o</sup> "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, and then whose shall all these things be which thou hast provided?" such a parting is not worth so dear a price. (Read Psalm xlix. 6, 7, 13, 14.)

S. What other benefit can you get by the thoughts of death?

P. Death is the great disgracer of pride. It will tell you whether it be seemly for him to look big, and boast, and domineer to day, who must shortly be buried in the society of bones and dust, in darkness. Oh! can that man be proud that is going to answer for all his sins before that God that hateth pride, and must leave his beloved body in the earth, swelling with haughtiness to-day, and in the grave, and perhaps in hell, to-morrow? Is it congruous to dress that body with needless cost and curiosity, and spend precious time in adorning that flesh which must so quickly rot and stink? The grave is the looking-glass which will teach proud gallants how to dress them. If they saw but what is now within them, they would think that such dung and guts did scarce well suit with such curious coverings. If you did but now see and smell one of your neighbour's carcasses, which was buried a year or two ago, would you think it suitable for him to be proud that must come to this? That skull and those bones retain no signs of the proud man's glory. O, foolish mortals! if you know not, and remember not, that you must come, and quickly come, to this.

S. What else learn you by the foresight of death?

P. 4. It teacheth men how to value their mirth and sensual delight. All the pleasure of meat, drink, plays, of lust, and all your fleshly accommodations, are now past and gone, and never shall return. There you may see the skull and hole where the meat and drink did once go in, but the delight is ended. And must all come to this? And yet will not men seek more durable delights? Your swine and ox is fed for your own table, and there.

<sup>o</sup> Luke xvi. 26, 27.

<sup>o</sup> Luke xli. 20.



fore it is worth the cost. But is it worth the wasting of your estate, and the loss of your soul too, to feed and pamper a corpse for the worms or grave? Is it more comfortable to a dying man to hear, 'You have lived a merry life in the world,' or to know that he shall live in the heavenly joys with his Redeemer?

S. What other lesson will death teach us?

P. 5. It will teach us how to spend our time. O precious time! how basely art thou esteemed by idle, voluptuous, and ungodly men! Now they can play it away, and prate it away, and idle it away in a hundred vanities, as if God had made their lives too long, and they knew not what to do with it. But when they hear, 'You are past recovery,' 'O then for more time! O that we might live one year longer! O that we had now all that time to repent in, and make sure of heaven, which we spent in sports, and idleness, and worldliness! O that we had lived as obediently to God, and as holy lives, as the strictest saints, so we had but their safety and hopes of heaven! O time, time, how art thou past away and gone, and all the world cannot call back one day or moment! O what a hateful word is pastime! O happy men that have hearts to use it for the ends that God created and redeemed them, before it be too late, and time, and soul, and heaven be lost!' It is death that teacheth men the worth of time.

S. Have you any more to say of this?

P. 6. Death teacheth men how to behave themselves to each other. How peaceably do those bones and that dust lie together. There is no striving, no cruelty, no domineering or abusing others. On a death-bed you will say that you forgive all the world. You dare not desire revenge then, lest God be revenged on you. And will you be worse living than dead? Doth oppression, and persecution, and treading down the poor and low, beseeem them that must so soon be levelled with the lowest, and be unable to stir away a worm that feedeth on their heart or face?

7. I will add but one more; death teacheth us whether we should rather fly from sufferings or from sin. Die we must, whether we will or no, and is it not better to die for Christ, if he require it, than die without any such advantage? Will it comfort us at death to think what sufferings we escaped by sin?

S. I have oft marvelled why God would not save us from dying, seeing Christ died for us, but now you have partly satisfied my doubt.

P. Though God's great day of judgment be to come, yet he will have some justice done upon sinners in this world: and though Christ have suffered for us, there is a necessity both to our own and the common good, that even sinning Christians suffer something themselves. But God doth so moderate it, by his wisdom and mercy, that even this punishment becometh a cure to the sin that causeth it, and a great means to our good. Were it but an uncertain thing whether we should die or not; did but some die, and some not die; yea, did but men live as many hundred years as before the deluge, O what a wicked world would this be!

1. Covetousness then would have no restraint. How dearly would men love this world. O what a striving then would be for it! They that would live in sin, and sell heaven for a few years uncertain commodity here, what would they do for a thousand years' riches, or for the hopes of living here for ever? But when this is written on all the worldling's doors, on his houses, on his wealth, on his flesh, 'Thou must die. Thou must certainly and shortly die,' this is it that mars the markets of the world. A sober look on a skull and coffin, or a grave, doth blast all the beauty of this world, and telleth reason itself it is but a dream. It writeth vanity upon all. Who would say,<sup>p</sup> "Soul take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," how rich soever he were, if he looked not to possess it many years, but expected to hear, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall all these things be which thou hast provided?" Now take thy houses, and lands, and money with thee if thou canst. At least take so much as will buy thee a drop of water to cool thy tongue. If death did not preach to worldlings, no other preachers could be heard. It crieth out to them, 'What mean you, sinners, to bestow all this labour for a few days' vanity? Is it worth all this stir to make your salvation more doubtful, and more difficult, as a camel's passage through a needle's eye? To increase your load, and double your temptations, and all for the pleasures of so short a life?' If death did not preach with us, we should preach to little purpose.

2. And were it not for death, ambition would have no bounds. If Alexanders and Cæsars are such plagues to mankind while they are posting to the grave, what would they be if they had any hope of an earthly immortality? Then the great ones of

<sup>p</sup> Luke xii. 19, 20.

the world would be great indeed. How big would they look; how insolently would they lord it over the poor; and how cruelly would they oppress and persecute the innocent! No wonder, then, if their flatterers were so many and so base as to make them think they were gods, and to require a divine obedience and honour. But foreseen death doth curb this arrogance, and standeth like Haman's gallows before their own doors. As he was highest, he had the honour to be hanged highest. When Satan hath brought them to the pinnacle of the temple, they see how low they have to fall. When he hath brought them to the exceeding high mountain, and showed them the kingdoms and glory of the world, if they accept them as his gift, and on his dreadful terms, it is a wonder that without terror they are able to look down so low, as death assures them they must be cast. If you had the greatest entertainments on the battlements of the steeple, and were sure that shortly you must be cast down, it would spoil the pleasure of them all. It is a brave thing for Absalom to be a king, and for Ahithophel to be his chief counsellor, but had they both foreseen their hanging, it would have made them sooner hang down the head. Poor men and preachers may thank God that the ungodly great ones of the world must die, and that they are constrained to foreknow it; or else earth would be like hell, and oppression and persecution would be the state of mankind. For man, being in honour, would have no understanding; if now both they and their posterity go on in the folly of their way, when they abide not, but are as the beast that perish, (Psalm xlix. 12, 13, 20,) what would they do, if death were not their instructor?

3. Were it not for death, sensuality would have no restraint. Voluptuous swaggerers would scorn reproof. The fornicator would not be ashamed by the light, nor the drunkard fear what is in the bottom of the cup. Who would not be clothed with purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously and deliciously every day, that could? O but this death! this death is it that marreth all the mirth. When Belshazzar seeth the hand-writing on the wall, in all his jollity, his joints do tremble. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee. Walk in the way of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." (Eccl. xi. 9.) This is it that spoileth all the sport. Remember that thou dancest about the grave, and death must end

† Luke xvi.

the game at last. I tell you, except the promise of the life to come, there is nothing that so much marreth the devil's markets, and spits so much shame in the face of sin, as certain, foreseen, approaching death; and therefore the devil is wiser than to come with the ordinary bait to a dying man. Should he then offer him cards and dice, and tempt him to fornication or to drunkenness, yea, or offer him lands and dignities, he knows they would do nothing. What is this to a man that must die to-morrow? I conclude, therefore, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." (Eccl. vii. 2—6.)

S. It is a wonder of stupidity, that reasonable men can so much forget so great, and near, and sure a change; and that so few do bethink them whither their souls must go, and where they must dwell next.

P. Some would have no funeral sermons, and I would have almost no other. All our religion is but a continual preparation for death; to learn to die well, by learning, and practising to believe, and love, and live well. Every sermon must teach men this. Men would have a funeral sermon when they are dead, that will not hear the same doctrine while they live; as if they had more care of the souls of those that survive them than of their own. Look on their tombs, and you shall see them almost all in a praying posture, with hands lifted up, who prayed but seldom and coldly while they lived; which showeth what conscience telleth men will be best at last. On their death-beds they desire us to pray for them to God. And now God sendeth us to pray to them for themselves, and they will not hear us, and yet think God must hear us for them then. God denieth us nothing which he hath promised; but if we beg never so hard of themselves, but to care for the salvation of their own souls, we cannot prevail with them; no, not soberly to remember that they must die, and to live as men that do believe it.

S. It is terrible to them, and they are loth to be troubled.

P. 1. If you were to be turned out of your house at the quarter's end, and I should advise you to provide another, would you say, 'I would not think of going out, because it is troublesome?' We must go whether we will or not; and shall we not care whither? 2. Is it troublesome to think of living for

ever with Christ in glory? What then is pleasant? or what more comfortable thoughts will they choose? Is it better to die like a beast, and to live no more? If this miserable world seem better than heaven to them, yet, methinks, seeing they must leave it, whether they will or not, they should be glad to hear how they may be next provided for, and should never be at rest till they had made sure of the everlasting holy, heavenly rest.

S. Well, sir, I pray you lay me down those directions by which I may in health prepare for a safe and comfortable death.

P. It will be needful that I first tell you, I. Wherein your readiness doth consist. II. And how much it is your interest to be ready. III. How much it is your work and duty to make ready. And then, IV. To tell you how you must do it.

S. I like your order well; I pray you open the first.

1. There are two degrees of readiness for death: the first is for a safe death, that you may be saved when you die. The second, for a comfortable death, that you may die also in peace and joy.

P. All those, and only those, die safely and go to heaven, who are pardoned by Christ's blood, and sanctified by his Spirit. The Spirit of Christ is your preparation. If you have that Spirit you are justified, and shall be saved; for it is given you on purpose to fit you for heaven, and to be God's seal upon you, and the pledge, and the earnest, and first-fruits of your celestial happiness. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

2. But that, besides safety, you may have comfort in your death, it is also necessary, 1. That you have some certainty or knowledge that indeed you have the Spirit. 2. That you have faith, hope, and love, the graces of the Spirit, in suitable exercise. 3. And that the great impediments of your comfort be removed.

S. Wherein is this readiness to die our interest?

P. II. Nature itself may tell you much of that, and faith more. 1. He that is not ready for a safe death, is in a state of damnation. If he so die, he is lost for ever. His endless state of joy or misery dependeth on it. Where then can a man's interest be so much concerned; especially considering that our flesh is frail, and liable to many hundred diseases every hour,

<sup>r</sup> Matt. v. 8.

and no man hath assurance to live another day or night. O, what a madness is it for such a person to live one day in an unprepared state, if he can possibly get out of it (as if he will he may). It is one of the most notorious evidences how much man's nature is enslaved by the devil, that when they are sure to die ere long, and know not but each hour or day may be their last, and hear from God's word, that as they are found at death it must go with them for ever, and that without holiness none shall see the Lord. Yet they can sleep quietly, and rise carelessly, as if all were well with them, while they live in an unregenerate, unsanctified state. If such a person did indeed believe God's word, and were not dead or asleep in sin, surely his heart would meditate terrors; he would think that he even saw hell ready to receive him; he would dream of it in the night; he would find pleasure in nothing in the world till he were converted, and made holy, and prepared for heaven by the Spirit of God; he would, morning and evening, yea, night and day, cry earnestly to God in prayer for that grace which must prepare him for so great a change; he would go to ministers; or godly friends, and ask them how he must make ready for death. 2. And he that is thus unready to die is unready for all duty, for suffering, for every thing; and is but losing the time that he liveth; and till he prepare for death he is preparing for hell. No business, therefore, no other cares, should hinder or delay men; no profit, honours, or pleasure, should quiet them till they have got their souls into a safe condition, and are ready to die.

S. Of what moment is it to die comfortably?

P. 2. The knowledge of your safety is the ground of your comfort. And it must needs be a terror to a man that hath any faith and sensibility, to be utterly uncertain what shall become of his soul for ever: to believe that there is a hell for all the unholy, and not to know but it may prove to be his lot: to believe that none but the holy shall be glorified, and not to know at all whether he be such or not: to know that he must shortly be in heaven or hell, and never more have a change of the place which he first possesseth, and not to know which of these it will be! This must needs be an amazing, dreadful thought. When the body is languishing in pain, and all worldly help and comforts fail, to be then utterly doubtful of everlasting comforts, must needs be a most uncomfortable state. To think, 'I must now go to my lough home, and take my un-

changeable possession, either of heaven or hell, but I know not whether it will be,' is a sad thought to a dying man.

Yea, all a man's life must needs be uncomfortable till he be prepared for a comfortable death; for it is not the perishing trifles of this world that can suffice to comfort a wise man that still foreseeth their end. If, therefore, he cannot fetch comfort daily from heaven, he can have none that is worth the having. How can a wise man live comfortably till he can die comfortably, when he knoweth still that death is even at hand?

Yea, till we have some good preparations even for a comfortable death, we live in continual danger of very heinous sin. If we be called to martyrdom for Christ, the terrors of death may sorely tempt us to deny him. How can a man be saved that loveth his life better than Christ and life eternal? And how can a man be willing to go out of this life, that hath not some considerable hopes of a better?

But if a man be ready to die well, he is ready to live well, and ready to suffer, and ready for any thing. When he can fetch comfort from the thoughts of his being for ever with the Lord, what need such a man to fear? What is there that should much trouble him? How quietly may he sleep! how easily may he suffer! how joyfully may he live!

Nothing can be more evident than that to be in a continual readiness to die is the great interest of man; in comparison of which nothing else is worthy to be minded, or to be named.

S. III. What mean you by saying that it is also our chiefest work?

P. He that knoweth that it is his chief interest, must needs know that it is his chief work, as long as self-love is so deep a principle in nature, and interest so much acteth and ruleth all mankind. As a man, when he beginneth his life, doth begin his journey or race towards death and life everlasting, so God doth give him all his time to do this work, and his life is nothing but the time allotted him to prepare for death and a better life; and every hour that is not spent in such preparation is cast away and lost. All the time and work of a Christian's life must be holy and religious; though not all spent in acts of worship, all must be a seeking of God and glory, by the conduct of Christ, his Spirit, and word. And all religion is nothing else but a

\* Matt. x. 37—39; Luke xiv. 26, 33.

† 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18; 1 Cor. xv. 58; 2 Pet. iii. 10—12; Phil. i. 17, 21—23; 2 Cor. iv. 16—18; and v. 1—4, 6—8.

preparing ourselves and others for death. Many trouble the world, and cheer themselves with a religiousness which rather unfitteth men for death; even a religion made up of unprofitable opinions, contentions, and disputes. But when they have wearied themselves, and corrupted others, with their opinionative, wrangling zeal, they will find that one day spent in learning to die well would have tended more to solid comfort than such a dreaming kind of life. I know that sound doctrine maketh sound Christians; but it is practical doctrine that must do it. And all Christian practice is but a true preparation for death. Christ is the only way; but heaven, that is, God in the heavenly glory, is the only end. And Christ came from heaven, and is ascended to heaven, and sendeth his Spirit into our hearts from heaven, to call up our hearts, and prepare us for it. Death, therefore, which is our passage into heaven, must be in our eye in all the exercises of our religion, and all the businesses of our lives. Away with those opinions and practices, whatsoever, which no way tend to prepare you for a safe and comfortable death.

S. IV. Now tell me how this preparation must be made.

P. I. The chief part of it must be done in your health. II. And the rest in the time of your sickness.

I. In your health, it must be the main business of your life to prepare for death. Particularly bestow much care and diligence to strengthen your belief of the truth of God's word, of the immortality of the soul, and of the life to come. Nothing more perniciously strengtheneth temptations, killeth all hope, desire, and endeavour, than secret doubtings whether God's word be true, and whether there be another life indeed for man or not. Uncertainties will hardly prevail against sense, and present things; uncertainties will hardly sufficiently comfort a departing soul, when all worldly comforts must be parted with for ever. Every doubt here is as water cast upon the fire; it quencheth all our desires and joys.

Now, the strengthening of our faith about the world to come is a thing that is not done with a wish: there must be due and constant endeavours used. I desire you to read the directions I have given you in the second part of my 'Life of Faith;' and if that seem not enough, read my 'Treatise against Infidelity,' and my 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' and 'More Reasons.' Now, I only advise you,

1. Never forget the miracles, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.



2. Forget not the miracles wrought by his apostles and evangelists in all the countries where they came.

3. Forget not the spirit of miracles given to all the first-planted churches.

4. But, above all, forget not the Spirit of holiness, which, in its effects, is apparent in all that are serious Christians, in all ages and countries; especially<sup>a</sup> since the Spirit is Christ's standing Witness and Advocate in us, and a certain proof that he is the Saviour of souls. Forget not that by this Spirit, the living image of God's vital power, his wisdom and his goodness is printed on the sacred Scriptures; and the same image, by the Spirit and the Scriptures, is printed on all true believers' souls; which makes a notable difference between them and the rest of the world, and is the certain, present, common evidence that Christ is true, and that he is preparing for everlasting life.

5. Remember that God hath not given man, in vain, a soul which is capable of thinking on our Maker and another world; of desiring and seeking an endless home. The wise Creator fitteth all his creatures to their uses.

6. Look up, and think whether all those vast and glorious spaces which are above us are likely to be without inhabitants, when we see every corner of this lower world, both earth and water, are inhabited.

7. And when we find by experience that the invisible spirits are our helpers, and disdain not to regard and serve our interests, it is not like that our souls, being intellectual spirits, as well as they, shall have communion with them hereafter? Nothing is annihilated; much less such noble and spiritual beings as men's souls.

8. And mark but the common experience of the world, which telleth us that certainly there are evil spirits, by the temptations which we feel to evil, the hinderance of good, the strange power they have upon corrupted fantasies, and the common war which is maintained against Christ and Godliness by all the wicked in the world. And you may thus learn, from the devil himself, that all this malice is not against nothing.

9. And the certain histories of witches will serve to confirm this evidence.

10. And so will the certain histories of apparitions; for instance, see one in a little book, called, 'The devil of Mascon.'

<sup>a</sup> John xvi.; Rom. viii. 16, 26; 2 Tim. ii. 7; Heb. xii. 22-24.

11. And the common testimony of all men's consciences, the consent of almost all the world.

12. And that God doth actually govern the world, even among heathens and infidels, principally by the hopes and fears of a life to come: and God cannot need a lie to rule us. These and many such reasons help to confirm our faith: but it is the sacred impressions of the Spirit, first, on the Scripture, and next on your own hearts, and all the holy change which it hath made upon you, which is the near, the sure, the constant<sup>x</sup> witness in yourself and with you, that Christ is true, and that he is preparing us here for a better life.

These things must all be daily thought of, and all suggestions to the contrary first confuted, and then abhorred and cast away, till the soul grow up to such a habit of believing as will serve<sup>y</sup> instead of sight itself; and we can say that we are sure that there is an everlasting life for souls.

To all which must be added a cherishing of the Spirit, which is the author of faith, 1. By earnest prayer for his grace; 2. And by obeying and improving it.

II. Be sure that you truly repent of your known sin:<sup>z</sup> for nothing makes death so frightful to us as our guilt. Nothing else can make us reasonably fear whether God will save or damn our souls, but unpardonable sin. And the mercy of God is so great, and his promise so sure, that nothing can reasonably make us doubt of pardon, but that which maketh us doubt of the sincerity of our repentance, and faith in Christ. Spare not sin, then, but repent presently; repent deeply; confess it plainly; forsake it resolutely; and then it will not leave such fears in the soul as shall make the sentence of death to be dreadful to us as sin but half repented of will do. Sin is the sting of death; and true repentance hath the promise of forgiveness.

III. Put your souls, with all their sins, and dangers, and all their interests, into the hand of Jesus Christ your Saviour; and trust them wholly with them by a resolved faith. It is he that hath purchased them, and therefore loveth them. It is he that is the owner of them, by the right of redemption. It is now become his own interest, even for the success and honour of his redemption, to save them. Be not too thoughtful about things unknown to you, as how separated souls do act, with what manner of intellection and sense, &c., what idea to have of spiritual bodies, of heaven, &c. But implicitly trust Christ with all these

<sup>x</sup> 1 John v. 10, 11.

<sup>y</sup> Heb. xi. 1.

<sup>z</sup> Luke xiii. 3, 5.

things, remembering that he knoweth what you know not : and as he possesseth heaven for you till he bring you to possess it, so he knoweth all these things unrevealed, for you, till he bring you to see and know them. If your most faithful friend were in the Indies, and invited you thither with the promises of the greatest wealth and pleasure, you would trust him, though you see it not yourselves, nor know the particulars distinctly. It is a great comfort to us that we have a Head and Saviour in heaven, and that heaven and earth are in his power. He that saved you <sup>a</sup> from sin and Satan's power will save you from hell's and Satan's torments. If angels rejoice at our conversion, Christ and angels will joyfully entertain victorious souls into the heavenly society, and welcome them to heaven with dearest love. Read oft, and meditate on, his special promises. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be;" (John xii. 26;) and he is at the "right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) "If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there you may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.) "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) "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, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 1, &c.) "To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." (Phil. iii. 33.) "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." (Rev. xiv. 13.) "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) "To the spirits of the just made perfect." (Heb. xii. 23.) "And so shall we ever be with the Lord: wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv. 17.) "We receive a kingdom that cannot be moved." (Heb. xii. 28.) "Receiving the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls." (1 Pet. i. 9.) "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts vii. 59.) "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." (Rev. iii. 12, 21.)

But, above all, those words of our risen Lord I would have written over my sick bed, and on my heart. "Go to my bre-

<sup>a</sup> Acts xxvi. 18; Rom. viii. 34—36.

thren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." (John xx. 17.)

Boldly, then, and quietly, deliver up thy soul to the care of Christ. There is all things in him which thou needest. Are you afraid of guilt, and the law, and the wrath of God, and hell? Remember that he is the <sup>b</sup>Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, in whom the Father is well pleased: that he hath, by once offering of himself, perfected for ever them that are sanctified: that he was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.<sup>c</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.<sup>d</sup> Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.<sup>e</sup> God willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed himself by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made an High Priest for ever.<sup>f</sup> Seeing, then, we have a High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession; for we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.<sup>g</sup> O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>h</sup>who, by death, destroyeth him

<sup>b</sup> John i. 29; Heb. x. 14; 2 Cor. v. 21, and i. 21; 1 Cor. i. 30; 1 John ii. 1, 2.

<sup>c</sup> John. iii. 16.

<sup>d</sup> Heb x. 19, 20.

<sup>e</sup> Heb. vi. 17—19.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. iv. 14—16.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 56—57.

<sup>h</sup> Heb. ii. 14, 15,

that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and delivereth them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Trust boldly your soul into the hand of such a Saviour, and distract not your mind with unbelieving fears.<sup>1</sup> He wanteth neither power, nor wisdom, nor love. You may boldly and quietly trust him with his own. He hath testified his love at so dear a rate that we should not question it. (Gal. ii. 20; Rev. i. 5.) To save us is his proper office and work. (1 John iv. 14; Ephes. v. 23.) It is his covenant to save his body. (Heb. ix. 15; 1 Tim. iv. 8; Heb. x. 36; Jam. i. 12.) He is our Judge himself. (John v. 22.) He hath the keys of hell and death. (Rev. i. 17, 18.) His work in heaven is to prepare a glorious receptacle for us; and there he is interceding for us to that end. (Heb. ii. 10, and vii. 25; John xiv. 1—3. When you were received into the state of grace and reconciliation, you were entered into the outer part of <sup>k</sup> the kingdom of heaven. Here you were made <sup>l</sup> heirs, co-heirs with Christ; and here you had God's pledge and earnest, and the first-fruits: and will he not give us that which he hath already given us so much right to? Our near relation to him assureth us that he will not condemn his friends, his flesh. (John xv. 14, 15; Eph. v. 29, 30; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) Is his love, his promise, his oath, his seal as nothing to us? He would never have given us a heavenly mind and desire, nor set us on seeking it, if he would not have given it us. (Matt. vi. 20, 21, 33; John iv. 14, and vi. 27; Matt. vii. 7, 8; 1 Cor. xv. 58; Psalm lxxiii. 24. It is faith in Christ which we must live and die by, if we will live and die in a well-grounded peace.

IV. Devote yourself entirely to God, and make it your trade of life to please him, doing all the good that you can to others for soul and body; that so your conscience may bear you witness at death, that notwithstanding your infirmities, the very business for which you lived in the world, was to serve your Lord, and to do good, and not to pamper the flesh, nor to grow rich, nor to get into honour and applause with men.

Though our good works give nothing unto God, nor can men or angels merit any thing of him, in commutative justice, as to the value of the thing, but only in point of governing, paternal justice, as to the order of free donation, it being impossible

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xvi. 8, and xviii. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 10; Psalm cxix. 49.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. lii. 2; x. 7; xiii. 11, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Pet. i. 3, 4; Rom. viii. 17, 18; v. 8—11, and viii. 16; Gal. iv. 6; Eph. ii. 10; i. 13, 14, and iv. 30; John xvii. 3; 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5.

that any creature should have any thing from God, but by his gift, under what covenant soever; yet God, who is holy, is the lover of holiness, and the<sup>m</sup> rewarder of them that diligently seek him. And nothing can reasonably make a dying man question his salvation but the doubtfulness of his own sincerity in his covenant with God, and of his true repentance and sanctification. And no man can well judge his faith or repentance to be sincere, who liveth not as absolutely devoted to God. Therefore, though you must abhor all thoughts of ascribing any thing to your own faith, or repentance, or holiness and sincerity, which is proper to God the Father, or to our Saviour, or to the Holy Ghost,<sup>n</sup> yet, without holiness none shall see God; for he<sup>o</sup> hateth all the workers of iniquity. And conscience will be conscience still; and its office is not to question whether God be God, and Christ be Christ, but whether we be Christians. And he that never so fully believeth in Jesus Christ, must find himself to be indeed a believer, and to be sanctified by his<sup>p</sup> Spirit, before he can comfortably die, or have any assurance of his own salvation. If we are over the temptations to infidelity itself, the rest of our fears and troubles will be raised by the doubts of our own sincerity, and by the discerning of that they must be resolved.

And there is no such full and satisfying evidence of that as this<sup>q</sup> testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, and not in fleshly wisdom, we have had our conversation in the world. That is, that we really lived not to the flesh, but unto God, and how weakly soever, our main business in the world was to serve and please him, with all the powers and estate he gave us. And that we did not principally live to the world, and put God off with the leavings of the flesh, nor made his service our secondary business, and seek him and heaven but in the second place. O that we knew well how much a life of total resignation, devotedness, and serviceableness to God, doth tend to a quiet and comfortable death, we should live otherwise than most do!

S. But I have oft heard that we must put no confidence in any works or holiness of our own, and that it is legal, and pharisaical, and popish, to fetch any of our comfort from them.

P. 1. We must not dream that any works or holiness of ours

<sup>m</sup> Heb. xi. 6.

<sup>o</sup> Psalm v. 5.

<sup>q</sup> 2 Cor. i. 12.

<sup>n</sup> Heb. xii. 14.

<sup>p</sup> Rom. viii. 1, 8—11.

can justify us if we are judged by the law of works, or innocency, in whole or in part. Because nothing but perfect, sinless holiness will so justify. But when Christ hath fully satisfied for our violation of that law, and made us a law of grace by which we must be judged, that law of grace doth justify or condemn men, as they perform or not perform its conditions, giving free justification against the curse of the former law, through Christ alone, to all true believers.

2. I told you before that nothing must be ascribed to our own holiness or works that is proper to God the Father, or to Christ, or to the Spirit. And can you desire any more? If nothing, under Christ's person or thing, be a means of our salvation, then no person or thing must be loved or trusted, as a means. But who is it that dare say so?

3. When any thing of our own is put in competition with Christ, or opposition to him, and the question is, whether Christ or that is to be trusted, or to be our comfort, it must not only be distrusted, but rejected as dung.

4. Did Paul sin in the rejoicing before cited? (2 Cor. i. 12.)

5. Do you think that no sin of our own should trouble us? Is there no sin which is just cause of doubting of our justification? What! not unbelief, nor impenitence, nor malignity, nor a fleshly or ungodly life? Shall not all perish that continue such? And is it not part of our discomfort to see that we are free from that cause of discomfort? If there be any damning sin in the world, or any difference of the wicked from the righteous, must not our dying comfort lie much in finding that this is not our case?

V. Take heed of quenching the Spirit of grace. He is our life from Christ, our Head. Whatever good we do in health or sickness, it must be by his gracious operations. You may think of Christ, and read over the promises, and think of the joys of heaven, and all will have little power upon you, if the Spirit help you not. You will but strive and come off with discouragement, and say, 'I cannot get assurance with all my examination. I cannot believe, I cannot reach to any powerful apprehensions of God, or heaven. I cannot choose but fear and doubt, even with the most evident arguments before my eyes. There is no effectual light in any knowledge, no holy love and delight in God, no spiritual life in any of our thoughts, but what is wrought by the illuminating, sanctifying, quickening Spirit. O, therefore,

\* John iii. 16, 18—20.

tenderly cherish and preserve this heavenly guest, as ever you would have joy in health or sickness, for it must be the joy of the Holy Ghost!

S. What is the cherishing, and what the quenching, of the Spirit?

P. It is a great truth, not sufficiently considered by the wiser sort of Christians, that God, in his course of government over the souls, even of the justified, doth exercise great rewards and great punishments here; and these are much more upon the soul within, than upon the body without; even the giving of more of the operations of his Spirit, is his great reward, and the withholding, the withdrawing, or denying its operations, is his great punishment. The sin which provoketh him is unthankful neglect of convictions and holy persuasions of the Spirit, and much more wilful resistance of them. When we sin, it is not the bare sin that is all, as to the act itself, but especially the resisting of the Spirit, which in that sin we were guilty of, which we pay dearest for, when the Spirit convinceth us, reproveth us, and striveth with our hearts, and we will not yield, but overcome it. And the punishment of withdrawing the Spirit's operations is the more dangerous by how much the less perceived and lamented. Usually the signs of this judgment are, for men to lose their life and love to goodness by degrees, and to grow indifferent in the matters of God. To grow formal in meditations, exhortations, and prayer, and to keep up only an affected fervency. To grow stranger to God and the life to come, and more bold with sin, and more worldly wise, to prove duty to be no duty, and sin no sin, and to plead for every fleshly interest. Many a true Christian, that loseth not all grace, yet comes to so low a state of faith, that faith doth but live, but acteth not with the conquering and quickening vigour as it ought.

And alas! I must tell you, that one gross sin, or many wilful lesser sins, may so quench the Spirit as that many a year's time doth not recover it; nay, with some it is never recovered in the same degree to their death. O if we knew what one hour's sin may lose us this way, we would not commit it for a world!

S. Alas! but what if I have quenched the Spirit, is there no way to recover it? What must I do?

P. You must deal faithfully with yourself, by deep repentance, and free confessions. You must mark what sinful lust or affection hath got possession of your heart, instead of holy, spiritual



affections : and you must set upon the mortifying of those lusts resolvedly ; especially you must get far enough away from the temptations which have prevailed with you. You must note what declining you have made in duty, for matter or fervour, and you must set yourself to all that duty you have omitted, You must be much in meditating on the greatest quickening truths, and plead them oft and earnestly with your soul. You must use, if possible, the converse of lively spiritual Christians, and, in a word, the same means must be used again which God blessed to your quickening at first : especially earnest prayer that God would restore that measure of his Spirit's operations which you have lost : and you must mark by what ways of omission or commission you quenched the Spirit, and by the contrary must it be restored to you. And then in health and sickness you will have in you that heavenly fire which will carry up your heart to God ; and that divine nature which will make heaven and holiness connatural, and suitable, and desirable to you.

S. But how shall I know whether I have the Spirit ? or whether I have more or less of it ?

By the love of God and holiness, and by the love of man, and a desire to do good : for these are its proper works.

S. But how shall I know that I love God truly ?

P. \* When God's holy word, and the holy practice of it, and the thoughts of your perfect holiness and heaven, with Christ and his holy angels, in the perfect love, praise, and service of the most holy God, are all most pleasing to your mind ; and more desired by you than the riches, honours, and fleshly pleasures of this world ; and when you long for the holiness of the world, and the prosperity of the church, and the good of the souls and bodies of all men ; and most heartily pray for the hallowing of God's name, and the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is in heaven ; and when doing all the good you can in the world is your daily trade and pleasure ; this is the sure evidence of the love of God, and of his Spirit.

S. I have heard far different signs of it from some, as if it lay in impulses, raptures, and revelation of more than is in the Scripture : and I have heard others mock at all mention of the Spirit, as if there were no such thing, besides the effects of nature, art, industry, and imagination.

\* Rom. v. 5, and viii. 39 ; John xiv. 15, 23 ; 1 John ii. 5 ; iii. 14, 16, 17 ; v. 2, and iv. 12, 16 ; Eph. iii. 17 ; iv. 2, 15, 16 ; v. 2, and ii. 10.

**P.** Between these two malefactors the church of Christ, in all ages, hath been crucified. But do you bless God who hath given you that in<sup>t</sup> possession and experience which others that have it not can hardly know. And yet it were easy for them, were they considerate, to discern that the foresaid love of God and man is the true excellence of human nature; and that some have it as I described it, though not in perfection: and that no men are brought to it, but by the Gospel and God's special blessing on it; which is by the operation of his Spirit.

**VI.** The sixth direction to prepare for death is, that you make it your chief care to dwell continually in the sense of God's love; and be daily employed in studying the greatness of it, in the nature of God, and the mercies of the Gospel, and in all your own particular experiences; and that praise and thanksgiving be your daily work.

Distinctly note the parts of this direction:

1. If you can but keep the sensible apprehension of God's <sup>u</sup> love continually upon your heart, it must needs make heaven desirable to you: and the drawings of God's love will overcome the fears of death.

2. Think much of the infinite perfection of God. Remember that his goodness is equal to his greatness; and what that is, look up to the heavens, and think of all the world, and you may see. Therefore he is called love itself. And shall it be hard for a soul that desireth to please God, to believe that love itself doth love him, and that infinite goodness will be pleased with him in Christ?

3. The Son of God incarnate, in his whole work of redemption, is so wonderful a glass to reveal to man the love of God, that <sup>x</sup> the studying of Christ doth as aptly tend to acquaint the soul with divine love and loveliness, as the greatest beneficence of the greatest friend doth tend to convince us of his friendship.

4. The <sup>v</sup> remembering all the great mercies of your lives, to your souls and bodies, in every place, state, and company, will help to convince you that he that hath done all this for you, loveth you. And you may trust that God of love at death, who hath filled up your lives with the benefits of his love.

<sup>t</sup> 1 John v. 10, 11; Rom. viii. 1, 9, 13.

<sup>u</sup> 2 Tim. i. 7; Gal. iv. 6; Rom. v. 5, and viii. 17, 39; Psalm xix. 1, 2, and ciii. 3, 8, 11, 17; 1 John iv. 7, 8; John 16, 27.

<sup>x</sup> Eph. iii. 17—19; Tit. iii. 3—5; 1 John ii. 1, 2.

<sup>v</sup> Psalm ciii. 1—5; lxvi., and cxvi.

5. And if you make <sup>a</sup> praise and thanksgiving to be half your prayers every day, and employ your heart and tongue still in them, this exercise of love to God will keep in your soul a sweet apprehension of his love to you, and make both health and sickness easy, if not full of delight.

To live in the sense of God's love; and so in the exercise of love to God, by praise and holy desires, and good works, is the very first-fruits and foretaste of heaven and earth, and is a fruit of believing more excellent than belief itself, and comforteth the soul, and draweth it to God by the most powerful way, even by experimental taste of his love and goodness. And he will most easily believe that there is a heaven for him who hath the beginning and foretastes of it already.

VII. And a great part of your preparation lieth in this, that you daily live as in heaven while you are on earth, by faith, hope, and love, exercised in heavenly contemplation.

If you live as a stranger to heaven in health, you will be strange to it, it is like, in sickness; and the soul will rather have terror than pleasure in thinking of going to a strange place, a strange God, strange company, and strange employment. Therefore Christ calleth us to "lay up our treasure in heaven," (Matt. vi. 20,) that is, to make it the work of our lives, so to use all our present time, and means, and mercies, as may best make sure of the heavenly reward: and where our treasure is our hearts will be. (Matt. vi. 21.) If you believe that you have a far greater happiness reserved for you with God than this world affordeth, nature will teach you to desire your own happiness: and we are commanded, (Col. iii. 1—4,) as being risen with Christ, to seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God: to set our minds or affections on things above, and not on things on earth, because we are dead to the world, and our life, that is, our felicity, is hid, or out of sight, with Christ in God, in the sight and fruition of God in heaven; and when Christ, who is our life, (causally and radically,) shall appear in his glory to the sight of man, then shall we also appear with him in glory. Our happiness will be visible to all. And (Phil. iii. 20) it is said "our conversation, or burghesship, or city converse, is in heaven."

Remember, daily, that there is your Father, your Saviour, your Comforter, your home, your happiness, your glory, your

<sup>a</sup> Psalm cxlv; cix. 30; lxxi. 8, 15; lxxiii. 3—6; xxxiv. 1—3; cxlviii, and cxlix. cl.

friends, your interest, and your great business. You are already<sup>a</sup> heirs, and must quickly be possessors.<sup>b</sup> "You are come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company, or ten thousands, of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than Abel's.

Therefore, let me advise and entreat you, that you do all that you do in the world, with heaven still in your eye. Hear, and read, and pray, as if heaven were open still before you. Resist temptations; trade, and follow your business in the world, as if heaven were still in sight, as a traveller holdeth on his journey in remembrance of the end.

And especially use often to set yourself purposely at seasonable hours, as you are able, to meditate on the heavenly glory: and though we must form no image in our minds of God himself, but think of him as an infinite Spirit, infinitely powerful, wise, and good, yet we may and must think, by the help of imagination, of the glorified, human nature of Christ, and the glorious state of heaven itself. And as, intuitively, we here know our own souls in act, our vitality, understanding, and wills; so, by knowing ourselves, we may know, in part, what God, and angels, and holy souls are. And as our bodies shall be glorified, so we may have answerable apprehensions of them: and where we may not think of imagined glories, as of the light of the sun, or shining bodies, as if the glory of spirits were just the same, yet we may think of them as resemblances or similitudes:<sup>c</sup> as the new Jerusalem is described, Rev. xxi. and xxii.: and, from the sense and thoughts of all the delights of man on earth, we may aggravate the inconceivable joys of heaven.

Set, therefore, oft before your eyes, the certainty, the nearness, the greatness of that glory. Think how many millions of holy souls are there in joy, while we are here in fears and cares; think of the excellent servants of God who have passed thither through a world of trials, and were lately compassed with such infirmities as ours, and passed through death as we must do. Remember that we go not an untrodden path; but are followers of all the spirits of the just. Think how much better it is with

<sup>a</sup> Rom. viii. 16, 17, 18.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. xii. 22—24.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 11, 12; 2 Cor. iii. 18.

them than with us; how they are freed from all our sins and sufferings, and doubts and fears. O think what it is for a perfected, holy soul to see the glorified Redeemer, and all the holy company of saints and angels; yea, to see the glory of God himself, and to have the knowledge of all his glorious works; to feel his love poured out unto us, and to be wrapt up in loving and praising him for ever, in the most transcendent joy and pleasure of the soul. Think of your holy acquaintance that are gone before you, and frequently fetch, as it were, a walk in the streets of the city of God; suppose you saw their glory, and heard their concordant praises of their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Let these kind of thoughts be so oft and serious that they may be your daily work and pleasure, and the daily conversation of your minds with God above.

And because your heart will be backward, drive it on; and, as I told you about meditation, you must use to preach, as it were, to yourself. Let heaven be your subject; convince your heart with evidence, urge it with heavenly motives, solace it with heavenly comforts; and when it is dull, turn your thoughts, by petition, to God, and beg his helps. Sometimes speak to yourselves, and sometimes reverently to God; and thus keep a holy communion and familiarity above; and this will make heaven desirable to you at a dying hour.

But the fuller directions for the practice of this duty I must refer you to in the fourth part of my 'Saint's Rest.'

VIII. The next direction to prepare you for death is, that you mortify the flesh in time of health, and see that nothing in this world be too dear and pleasing to you; and let not sense and imagination rule you.

If you be in love with any thing here, you will be the lother to leave it; and if the flesh be too dear to you, its sufferings will be the more grievous, and you will be the lother to lay it to rot in the earth. And if you use to live too much by sight and sense, you will grow so familiar with things sensible, and so strange to things unseen, that you will scarce be able to see any further with the mind than you can see with your eyes; and scarce any thing will seem certain to you, or be effectual with you, which you see not.

But if you get your affections loosed from the world, and mortify the<sup>d</sup> flesh with its affections and desires, and become

<sup>d</sup> Rom. viii. 13, and xiii. 13, 14; Gal. v. 24; 2 Cor. iv. 16, 18, and v. 7; Col. iii. 5, 6.

indifferent to the things of sense, and use to overrule your sense by faith, and live most upon unseen things, there will be little to entangle and hinder the willingness of your departing souls.

IX. Next, I advise you to settle well the state of your soul, by examination and self acquaintance, in a good assurance of your own sincerity; for, as I told you, when you have overcome the doubts of the truth of God's promises and the life to come, it will be the doubts of your own sincerity then which will be your fear, and make you unwilling to die.

How you may do this I have told you oft, and fully, in a book called 'The Method for Peace of Conscience.' At the present I shall add these brief instructions.

1. But what evidence or signs to judge, I have here before oft told you,<sup>e</sup> even by faith working by love to God and man, or by your true consent to the covenant of grace, expressed in a holy, obedient life; particularly, 1. If God, to be seen and loved in the joys of the heavenly glory, be the chief end of your heart and life. 2. If Christ be taken for your only Saviour. 3. If you are desirous that, by his Spirit, he should perfectly sanctify you. 4. If you have no sin but what you had rather leave than live in. 5. If you love the word and means which should sanctify you, and love a holy life, and had rather have more holiness than have all the wealth and pleasure of the world. 6. If you are willing to use God's means hereto. 7. If the main desire of your heart, and drift of your life, be to please God. 8. If you love God's servants for their holiness, and desire the increase of holiness in the world, and labour to do good to the souls and bodies of others, in your place, as you are able: all these will prove the truth of your consent to the covenant of God, and that you have his Spirit.

2. And having these certain marks before you, examine your state impartially by them, as one that is going to the judgment of God: and what you cannot do at one time do at another; and cease not till you are able to conclude that your soul is sincerely devoted to God, and trusteth in Christ for the pardon of your sins. And if your cannot satisfy your conscience without help, advise with some able, faithful minister.

3. And when you see God's graces evident in you, give him thanks for them, and rejoice in his love, and watchfully study to keep, and exercise, and increase the grace which he hath given

<sup>e</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19; v. 8-9, and vi. 20, 33; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 16, 18-22; Gal. v. 6, 13, 22-24 Rom. xiii. 10, and viii. 1, 9, 13; 2 Cor. v. 8; 1 John iii. 14.

you ; and let not Satan make you still question all again at his pleasure.

4. Two extremes you must here carefully avoid. 1. Be not presumptuous and partial, and blinded by self-love, to think, without proof, that all is well with you, merely because you would have it so. 2. Keep not up a timorous, scrupulous disposition, like a childish servant, who, instead of doing his work as well as he can, doth nothing but cry, because he cannot do it to please his master : as if, when you sincerely desire to please God before your flesh, and do your best, or truly endeavour it, you could not believe that in Christ he will accept you ; but are still thinking of God as an enemy, or cruel, that nothing can please but the death of sinners.

When you have thus settled the state of your soul, and can say, I know that I am passed from death to life ; you are fortified then against most of your temptations to sinful fears, and unwillingness to come to God.

X. The last part is more easily done ; that is, settle your worldly estate and affairs so, as one should do that is ready to depart. Make your will, that none may contend about your estate when you are dead. If you have wronged any, make them restitution. If you are fallen out with any, be quickly reconciled, and forgive them.

To these I would have added, that you learn beforehand what temptations are like to assault you in sickness, and get particular defensatives against them. But this I have spoken to before.

S. You have told me how to prepare for death in health. I pray you tell me next how to prepare further in sickness ?

P. I must not here overwhelm you with multitudes of directions, nor set you upon long and hard tasks of meditations, for, usually, nature, through pains and weakness, is unable for much work. It is the time of health which is the working time : yet because something is then to be done, especially by them that have longer sicknesses, which destroy not their reason, I shall briefly advise such.

I. If it be one that is unconverted and unprepared before, alas ! what shall I say ? The time is short, and the body weak, and it is hard to know that their repentance is not the fruit of mere fears, rather than of a changed heart. They are many things that such a man hath to learn and think on, and a great change to be made before he can be saved. And is a little time of sickness fit for all this ? But yet there is some hope,

and while there is life and hope we must do our best. To such, therefore, I say, 'Be it never so late, these three things must be done, or you are lost for ever.'

1. You must be convinced not only that you are sinners, but that you are ungodly, unconverted sinners, and that God's<sup>f</sup> displeasure and damnation is your due, till your humbled souls do feel the need of a Saviour and Sanctifier.

2. When you feel that you are lost in misery by sin, you must believe that Christ is a sufficient Saviour, who hath died for our sins, and is risen and glorified, and is our Intercessor with the Father, and hath made a covenant, that whoever truly believeth in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,<sup>g</sup> and repenteth of his sinful life, and turneth to God by his Son and Spirit, shall be pardoned and saved: and this covenant is offered to you as well as others; and nothing but your obstinate refusal of Christ, and his sanctifying Spirit, word, and grace, can deprive you of pardon and salvation. Therefore you must presently and absolutely consent, and give up yourself, soul, and body, to God the Father, to your Saviour and Sanctifier, to justify, adopt, sanctify and save you, resolving, if you recover, to live to God in a holy life, and not to the world, the flesh, and the devil, even as if you were newly to be baptised and vowed unto God.

3. You must think next of the infinite goodness of God, the love which he hath showed us in Christ for soul and body, the mercifulness of his nature, the riches and certainty of his promises, and the unspeakable glory which you shall have in heaven with God and your Redeemer, and his holy angels and saints, if you refuse it not. O think what a blessed life it is to be for ever full of joy in the sight, and love, and praises of God, in comparison of this life of sin and misery. Think of this goodness and kingdom of God till your heart, your love itself be changed, and till you had rather have God in heaven than to have all the pleasures of this world; for, till then you are not sanctified, nor in a state of salvation. All that is done by fear alone (till the heart and love be turned from sin to God and holiness) will not save you.

And seeing these three things must needs be had, or you are utterly undone, pray hard for such a renewed heart yourselves, and get others to pray for you; and know that if your late repentance have truly converted your hearts from the love of the world and sin, to the love of God, and heaven and holiness, and

<sup>f</sup> John iii. 18, 36; Mark xvi.

<sup>g</sup> John iii. 15, 16; Acts xx. 18.



you be such as would hold out if you should recover, you shall be saved, how late soever it be. But if it be only the resolution of a frightened conscience, which would not bring forth a holy life if you did recover, it will not save you.

II. But if it be the converted that I must direct for their further preparations, their duty is as followeth.

1. Mistake not sickness and death, as if there were more harm in it than there is indeed. Believe not flesh and sense in this, which cannot see into the<sup>h</sup> love and wisdom of God, which ordereth it; nor unto that quiet fruit of righteousness, which is the end. Sickness is (though in its pains a fruit of sin, yet) now an ordinance of God, on which you may as confidently expect his blessing, as on his word and sacraments. Labour, therefore, to get the benefit of it, to find out your sin, and repent of it, and abhor it, and see more effectually the vanity and vexation of the world; and remember what a mercy it is that man, who is so loth to die, should end his days in such pain and weakness, as make him weary of himself, and make him the more willing to be dissolved. For though this alone, without faith and love, will draw no man's heart to heaven, or save him, yet such a help against the sinful love of life, and fear of death, is no small mercy. Get but the benefit of sickness, and experience will reconcile you to the providence of God, and prevent repining.

2. <sup>1</sup>Beg of God, for the sake of your Redeemer, such assistance and operations of his Spirit, as your low and weak condition needeth, and as are suitable to a dying man. He hath great help and grace for great necessities.

3. Renew your repentance and confessions of sin, and warn all about you to learn by your experience, and to set their hopes and hearts on heaven, and to make it the work of all their lives to prepare for such a change. O tell them what deceit and mischief you have found in sin; what vanity and vexation you have found in the world; what goodness you have found in God and holiness; what comfort you have found in Christ and his promises, and the hopes of endless glory; and what a miserable case you had now been in if you had had no better a portion than this world, and nothing to comfort you but the pleasures of sin, which now are all your shame and discomfort. Advise them to live as they would die, and tell them how little all the world doth signify to a dying man; call on

<sup>h</sup> Heb. xii. 8—12; 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xli. 3; 2 Kings xx. 1, &c.; Isa. xxxviii. 1, &c.

them not to be deceived by such baits, as all dying men, since Adam, have confessed to be but vanity; call on them to turn without delay, and not to pamper a body for the worms, but to set themselves presently, with all their hearts, to receive their Saviour, and to obey his Spirit and word, and to live to God, and to make much of their short, uncertain time, and to make sure of everlasting joys, whatever become of the flesh and world.

4. Renew your believing thoughts of God's love, and of all the mercies of your life, which he hath given you. Instead of sorrowing that they are at an end, rejoice with thankfulness for what you have had: O think what a mercy it is to be brought forth in a land and age of light; to have had all the teaching, and means, and warnings, and deliverances, which you have had; and to have had that effectual assistance of God's Spirit which opened your eyes, and turned you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that all your sins are pardoned through Christ, and that you are reconciled to God, and adopted through him, and led by the Spirit to the heavenly inheritance. O triumph in that love that hath thus delivered you, and brought you so near your journey's<sup>k</sup> end, and saved you from so many temptations of Satan, and from the flesh, and this deceitful world. Think of God's goodness and love, as exceeding the goodness and love of the best of creatures, infinitely more than the sun exceedeth a candle in light and heat. And shall a poor servant of his, who hath endeavoured, in sincerity, though in sinful weakness, to do his will, and hath a High Priest interceding for him in heaven, be afraid to go to such a God! What can encourage and draw up a soul, if infinite goodness cannot do it? If God were but as loving as my dearest friend: if he were but as good and amiable as the sun is light and glorious, as the heavens are spacious, as the earth is firm, as the sea is deep; should I not joyfully give up my soul into his hands; and confidently yield to his disposal; and fearlessly come to him at his call? O that we knew the goodness of God! What a full content and satisfaction would it be to us; and turn our fears into fervent love, and earnest longings for his glory.

5. Now steep your souls in the believing thoughts of the heavenly glory, to which you are going. O now remember that the time is but short, till you shall sin no more, and fear no more, and suffer no more; till you shall know God and his

<sup>k</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; 2 Cor. v. 1—8.

works, not only as much as you can now desire, but as much as then your heart can wish, and your enlarged capacity receive; till you shall love him more than now you can desire to love him; and your joy shall be greater than now you can conceive and wish: when God shall be more to your soul for ever than the sun is to your eyes, or your soul is to your body! O what an hour will it be, when you shall be newly entered into the city of God, the heavenly society, and sing your first song of joyful praise, in the blessed choir, to God and the Lamb! O what an enemy, what an unreasonable thing, is unbelief, that can make us stand trembling without the doors, and afraid to enter, while millions of our brethren are rapt up in triumphant joys within, while our Lord prepareth us our place, and, with all his holy angels, is desirous of our presence, and the heavenly host will welcome us with joy.

6. Now confidently deliver up your souls into the hand of your Father and your Redeemer, and give over distrustful caring for yourselves.

1. Will you not trust the God and Father of your spirits, who is love itself? Will you not trust your Saviour, that hath saved you so far already; and hath saved so many millions before you? Trust him with his own; believe it, he loveth you better than you love yourself. He is as loth that you should be damned as you are to be damned, and more willing to save you than you are to be saved! O, wo to you, if through all your life, he had not showed himself more willing than you! Trust him against all the accusations of the law; trust him as the Satisfier of God's legal justice, trust him as the Meriter of life eternal; as the Justifier of those that could not be justified by the law of innocency, and their righteous works. As the Mediator of the new covenant, sealed by his blood, by which free forgiveness and life is given to all true believers. Trust him as the King and Judge of all; and as the Advocate of the faithful, and our great High Priest who intercedeth for us, and hath himself possession of the glory to which he hath promised to bring us!

And, 2. Trust him implicitly and absolutely, and give over Eve's desire to know good and evil for yourself. We little consider how much that desire did let in at once of corruption and calamity upon the nature of mankind! When Adam and Eve should have only desired to know God's perfection of power, wisdom, and goodness, as the first and last, the fountain and end of all our good, and to know their own relation to him and their

duty, expecting his love, which is better than life, upon their love and obedience; they were tempted to selfishness and independency, and to leave their trust and rest in God, and to desire to be their own carvers, and as gods to themselves: like a child that, instead of trusting his father for his food and raiment, must become judge what is best for himself; or like a patient who, instead of trusting his physician, and obediently taking what he giveth him, must needs know the ingredients of his medicines, and the reasons of them all; thus foolish man fell from God to himself, and, not putting all his trust in God, would fain be his own guide, and judge, and carver, and take that care of his own affairs which belonged not to himself, but unto God. And as this misguideth all our lives, so this tormenteth us with cares and fears in life at death.

But Christ came to recover us from ourselves to God. Care, then, how to know your Creator and Redeemer; his power, wisdom, and love; care how to trust him with soul and body, and to do your duty; and then<sup>1</sup> care for no more; but leave soul and body more quietly and comfortably to his love and will, than if they were absolutely at your own will, to be, and do, and have, what you would wish. For God is fitter to choose for you, and dispose of you than you.

Take not, then, one careful thought of the corruption of your flesh, or of any of the amazing unsearchable difficulties of the nature of spirits, and the things unseen, which overwhelm and bewilder those that must know good and evil themselves. But rest your soul in the will of God through your Redeemer; in that will which is infinitely good, and which is the beginning, guide, and end of all things, and the only felicitating rest of souls.

7. Let all these holy affections be exercised in your expressions, if your disease allow you an expressing strength. Magnify God's goodness, and speak good of his name, and word, and ways; not by a dissembled affectation, but from your heart; make others to see that there is a reality in the comforts of faith and hope; and that the death of the righteous is so desirable, as maketh their lives desirable also. Your tongues are given you to praise the Lord; they have but a little while more to speak; let their last work be done to his glory, as strength will bear. Tell men what you have found him, and speak of the glory of

<sup>1</sup> Matt vi. 25—27, 31, 34; Luke xii. 22; Pet. xii. 22, and v. 7; Phil. iv. 6.

his kingdom which you expect, that the hopes and desires of others may be excited.

And turn your last words to God in prayers and praises, beginning the work which you must do in heaven. Imitate your dying Lord, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit;" (Luke xxiii. 46;) and his first martyr, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." (Acts vii. 59.)

*The Prayer of a Dying Believer.*

THY mercy brought me into the world; thy mercy chose my parentage, education, and habitation; it brought me up; it kept me from a thousand dangers; it attempered my body, and furnished my mind; it gave me teachers, books, and helps; yea, it gave me a Redeemer, and a promise of life, and the word of salvation! It gave me all the operations of thy Spirit, which touched and turned my sinful heart. All my repenting and resolving thoughts; all the forgiveness of my manifold sins; all the sweet meditations of thy love, and the experience of thy good and pleasant service; the comfortable hours which I have had in secret thoughts, in public worship, on thy holy days, at thy holy table, among thy people; all these have been the dealings of thy love. All my deliverances from temptation and sin; from enemies, death, and danger; all my preservations from the deceits of the world, and from its troubles; from errors against thy sacred truth, and from backsliding; all my recoveries from my too frequent falls, and pardon of my daily sins; the quietness thou hast given my troubled conscience; and the tranquillity of my life, notwithstanding my sins: all the use which it hath freely pleased thee to make of me, an unworthy wretch, for the good of any, for soul or body: all these are the pledges of thy wondrous love; and shall I be afraid to come to such a God? Hath mercy filled up all my life, and brought me now so near the end, and shall I not trust it after so much trial? It is heaven that thou madest me for; and heaven that Christ did purchase for me; it is heaven that thou didst promise if I would be thine; and it is heaven which I consented to take for my portion,<sup>m</sup> and for which I did covenant to forsake the world: and O that I had more entirely done it; for I now find how little reason I have to repent of my covenant. It is heaven which thy Spirit of Grace, and merciful providences have all

<sup>m</sup> Luke xviii. 22, 23; Matt. vi. 20, 21, 33; Col. iii. 2, 4.