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DEVOUT
EXERCISES OF THE HEART,

IN MEDITATION AND SOLILOQUY,

PRAYER AND PRAISE,

By the late pious and ingenious

MRS. ELIZABETH ROWE.

REVIEWED AND PUBLISHED AT HER REQUEST,

BY I. WATTS, D. D.

JOHNSON'S EDITION.

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LIFE OF MRS. ROWE.

ELIZABETH ROWE, a character as much revered for the excellency of her mind as admired for the sublimity of her genius, was born at Ilchester, in the county of Somerset, September 11, 1674. Her parents were eminent for their piety and virtue, as well as their attachment to the cause of religion; her father, Mr. Walter Singer, having suffered imprisonment pursuant to an act passed against non-conformists, in the reign of Charles II. But though firm in the profession of his religious principles, he had those exalted ideas of the attributes of the Deity, which are incompatible with a rooted bigotry and gloomy sullenness; nor could he subscribe to the opinions of those who would limit the bounds of the divine mercy and goodness, which he was well assured were extended to the whole creation, and therefore nothing could exclude rational beings from it, but an obstinate resistance of the means appointed for their present and future happiness. "As a member of society he was esteemed for his integrity, benevolence, and simplicity of manners, and honoured with the friendship of Lord Weymouth, and Bishop Kenn, who at that time were no less respected for their virtues, than the superiority of their rank in life. But let it suffice to sum up the character of this good man in the elegant description of his daughter, in one of her familiar letters to a friend.

‘ I have ease and plenty to the extent of my wishes, and cannot form desires of any thing but

what my father's indulgence would procure ; and I ask nothing of heaven but the good old man's life. The perfect sanctity of his life, and the benevolence of his temper, make him a refuge to all in distress, to the widow and fatherless. The people load him with blessings and prayers whenever he goes abroad ; which he never does but to reconcile his neighbours, or to right the injured and oppressed ; the rest of his hours are entirely devoted to his private devotions, and to books which are his perpetual entertainment.'

As he lived in uniform obedience to the divine commands, so he died in perfect resignation to the divine will, a striking instance of the power of religion, and the exalted state of the human mind, when supported by the consciousness of the favour of the Almighty, and the animating prospect of a life of immortal bliss. The calmness and resignation which this good man evinced in his expiring moments, had such an effect upon the mind of one of the free-thinkers of the age who was present, that he was ready to say as the Roman Governor did when wrought upon by the oratory of the Apostle Paul ; ' Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian.' And the supposed confession of an infidel on a like occasion, suggested to Mrs. Rowe the following observation : ' That though he thought religion a delusion, yet it was the most agreeable delusion in the world ; and the men who flattered themselves with those gay visions, had much the advantage of those that saw nothing before them but a gloomy uncertainty, or the dreadful hope of annihilation.' The inference drawn from these premises is ; that this confession, if the in-

fidel be true to himself, must terminate in his conversion to christianity.

Mrs. Rowe had two sisters, one of whom died in her infancy, the other attained her twentieth year; the companion of her sister in the path of honour and virtue. Their minds were congenial, their inclination for reading similar, and particularly books on medicinal subjects, of which they acquired so competent a knowledge, as enabled them to dispense the benefits of the healing art to their indigent neighbours, who admired their ingenuity and extolled their liberality. Prompted by a laudable ambition, they were indefatigable in the pursuit of knowledge, and their reciprocal communication tended to their mutual improvement, and if the life of both had been spared, would have greatly enlivened their attainments. But as earthly blessings are seldom permanent or without alloy; the two lovely sisters were separated by death! one exalted spirit soared to the regions of bliss; the other was permitted to protract her abode here below, where she continued many years in the exercise of the noblest works of piety towards God and humanity towards mankind.

Mrs. Rowe in her infant years gave proofs of a strength of mind and inclination to virtue, rarely to be found in the dawn of life, and which must have afforded her pious and well-disposed parents an highly gratifying prospect of her future excellence, in all the endowments and qualifications that could adorn her sex, and render her an ornament to human nature.

It is not known at what particular age she began to entertain serious thoughts of the nature

able to think it was as early in life, as she can be supposed capable of forming distinct ideas of the reverence and duty she owed her Creator, which improved with her growing years, till her piety and virtue attained to that degree of eminence, which rendered her the admiration and delight of the whole circle of her acquaintance. This opinion is confirmed in one of her own addresses to the divine Being, in which she has these words: ' My infant hands were early lifted up to thee, and I soon learned to know and acknowledge the God of my fathers.' Her serious turn of mind was doubtless the result of a religious education improved and enforced by her natural disposition; for though she possessed an uncommon sprightliness of temper, she entertained such a reverential awe for the Divine Majesty, as fully disposed her for the performance of the most solemn act of devotion. Some persons, from passages that occur in her *Devout Exercises*, have been induced to think that the liveliness of her disposition might interrupt her devotion, as she complains of her want of due fervour; but this language must be attributed to her great humility; under a sense of the imperfection of the best religious duties of which the most shining professors, as fallen creatures, can be capable; since after they have exerted their utmost efforts in promoting the cause of their Divine Master, they are still but unprofitable servants.

As painting and poetry have ever been deemed sister arts, from the resemblance they bear to each other; originating in the power of imagination, and centering in a picturesque description of nature; it is no matter of wonder that those

LIFE OF MRS. ROWE.

who in early life discover an inclination for the one, should in the course of time have a taste for the other, and be qualified to judge of its beauties, though they have not produced any specimens of their skill in its execution.

Mrs. Rowe discovering an inclination to painting, when she had hardly strength and steadiness of hand to guide the pencil; her indulgent father observing her propensity to the art, employed a master to instruct her, and she acquired such a knowledge of it, as to render it a source of occasional entertainment during the whole course of her life. An ingenious acquaintance of this accomplished person observes, that 'probably she cultivated the art, as it afforded her opportunities of gratifying her friends with presents of her best productions; for she kept very few of them herself, and those only such as she judged unworthy the acceptance of others.'

It must appear to every one acquainted with her literary productions, that she was naturally inclined to harmony, and most delighted with music of the grave and solemn kind, as best adapted to the sublimity of her ideas, and the elevated sentiments of devotion she entertained for the greatest and best of Beings.

But though she discovered in many instances an inclination to painting and music; poetry had the ascendancy in her mind, and was the favourite and most constant object of her pursuit. In this art she acquired a degree of eminence in early life, and such was the force of her genius for poetical display, that it pervaded her prosaic compositions, which are fraught with a the beautiful images, bold figures, and flowery diction that enforce and adorn her productions in

LIFE OF MRS. ROWE.

verse, as will be evident from perusing her familiar letters, which bear the stamp of an inspiring muse. She began indeed to evince her propensity for versification as soon as she was capable of writing; and in the year 1696, when she had attained to the twenty-second of her age, published, at the desire of two literary friends, a collection of poems on various occasions, which there is ground to suppose did not comprise the whole of her productions; as the writer of the preface intimates that the author might afterwards be prevailed on to oblige the world with a second part in no respect inferior to the former.

She assumed the poetical name of *Philomela*, [the nightingale] under which her productions were ushered into the world; whether by her own choice, or at the instance of her friends, as a compliment to her merit, cannot be ascertained. From her known modesty the latter seems most probable; and that desiring her name might be concealed, the appellation of *Philomela* was substituted for it, as happily allusive to the mellifluous strains of her poetry, which bear a resemblance to the plaintive notes of the nightingale, according to the description of the great Milton.

Sweet bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy——

At the age of twenty, her poetical talents attracted the notice of the noble family of Thynne, which resided at Longleat. They were so charmed with a little copy of her verses which accidentally fell into their hands, that they had the greatest desire to see the fair author, and there-

fore sent her a most polite and pressing invitation to their villa. The invitation according to the forms of good breeding, was accepted by the young lady, and from that moment a friendship commenced that terminated but with life: a friendship that redounded not more to the honour of our female bard, in being admitted to a familiarity with persons of rank so superior in the outward distinctions of life; than to the commendation of an elegant taste, and discriminating judgment, in the noble personages, who were thus liberally disposed to afford their sanction to such promising talents. So highly did the family esteem the accomplishments of their visitant, that to add to their splendour, the honourable Mr. Thynne, son to the Lord Viscount Weymouth, voluntarily undertook to instruct her in the French and Italian languages; and so rapid was the progress of his fair scholar, that she was but a few months under his tuition, before she was able to read Tasso's Jerusalem with equal facility and propriety.

It is not to be wondered that such an union of accomplishments, mental and personal, should procure the possessor a train of humble and importunate suitors. Amongst these it is said was the much-admired bard Matthew Prior, who offered to take her as partner for life. If this circumstance is kept in view during the perusal of Prior's Poems, it will appear, that allowing the author to be under the influence of love as well as the muse, the concluding lines in his answer to the pastoral in Love and Friendship, by Miss Singer, are not without foundation in truth, and that she was the nameless lady to whom the same

author inscribes the following copy of verses.* But Mr. Thomas Rowe was the man reserved to enjoy with this accomplished woman the reciprocal pleasures of connubial bliss.

Mr. Thomas Rowe was born in London, in the year 1687; he was the eldest son of the Rev. Benoni Rowe, a divine of profound learning and sound judgment, much admired for his powers of eloquence in the pulpit, and respected for his engaging manner in social converse. The husband of our author had to boast an honourable descent; but as he rested his fame on personal merit, and disdained to shine by a borrowed light, he declined any honours he might have derived from his ancestry, as incompatible with that true dignity which centres alone in virtue. He gave proofs of extraordinary abilities and a peculiar desire after improvement at a very early period of life, being able to read as soon almost as he could speak. Disdaining those trivial amusements and tinsel gewgaws to which children in general are attached, his mind was principally intent on books, and if he was occasionally prevailed upon by the solicitations of his companions to join in their puerile diversions, he discovered rather disgust than pleasure in the pursuit of them, and was anxious to abandon them and return to the nobler employment of acquiring knowledge.

He was initiated in classical learning at Epsom, and by his assiduous application made such a proficiency in that branch of education, as gained him the peculiar favour of his master, and re-

* See Prior's Poems, in Cooke's British Poets, which form a part of his UNIFORM POCKET LIBRARY.

spect of his school-fellows ; which he considered as the most gratifying reward that could possibly result from all the efforts he had exerted to obtain it. He was afterwards sent to the Charter-house-school, and put under the tuition of Doctor Walker, a divine, eminent for his own learning, and the number of excellent classical scholars, who received their education from him in that ancient nursery of polite learning. Rowe acquired the same degree of superiority over his school-fellows at the Charter-house as he had done at Epsom, insomuch that the Doctor, after he had finished his classical studies, and was a master of the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages, persuaded his father to send him to one of the English Universities. But Mr. Rowe, whether from the influence of his own political or religious opinions, or any other prevailing motive cannot be determined, chose rather to send his son to a private academy in London, and some time before his death removed him to the university of Leyden, where he studied the Jewish Antiquities under Witsius, Civil Law under Vitrius, the Belles Lettres under Perizonius, and Experimental Philosophy under Senguerdus. From this mart of learning he returned, an accomplished scholar, with a vast accession of treasure in books he had purchased, and knowledge he had acquired, without any taint of his morals, which he had preserved as uncorrupt, as if he had been under the control of the most rigid inspection.

Mr. Rowe, from education and principle, was zealously attached to the cause of civil and religious liberty. He had imbibed the most generous sentiments from his familiar acquaintance

with history, and the renowned authors of ancient Greece and Rome. During his residence at Leyden, he had examples continually before him of the benefit resulting from freedom, as the parent of industry, the nurse of the arts and sciences, and the grand source of social bliss. Fraught with generous and exalted ideas, he could not on his return to his native country but see with concern, principles adopted and acted upon by some men in power, subversive of its liberties, its glory, and its happiness. As he detested tyranny of every kind, but particularly that which is exercised over the reason and conscience of mankind, he opposed with a laudable zeal the arbitrary strides that were made to suppress religious toleration, justly deeming the slavery of the mind as the most abject and ignominious that can possibly be entailed upon rational beings. His writings will perpetuate his patriotism and philanthropy, as they evidently shew him to have been the advocate of virtue and the friend of mankind. From his love of liberty proceeded his attachment to the illustrious house of Hanover, in which he had the satisfaction of living to see the succession to the British throne take place, and he would often congratulate his friends on that happy and memorable event.

As Mr. Rowe's desire for the acquisition of knowledge admitted of no bounds, he was indefatigable in the pursuit of it, and therefore devoted all his morning hours to study, till the time of his being seized with the distemper which proved mortal. His library consisted of a most extensive and judicious collection of books; and as he was continually making addi-

tions to it, amounted, as it is said, at his death to above five thousand volumes.

His mind was stored with knowledge of every kind, which added to a most retentive memory and an inexhaustible fund of wit, rendered him a most lively and entertaining companion; so that his society was courted and prized, throughout the whole circle of his acquaintance. He was an excellent judge of poetry, and seems himself to have possessed the requisites for a poet, such as a lively imagination, aptitude for expression, and fluency of diction; but as he did not cultivate the art, as his leading passion, he cannot be supposed to have attained to any degree of eminence in it.

His principal study was history, for which he was peculiarly qualified, by his universal reading, vast memory and exquisite judgment. He had formed a design of compiling the lives of all the illustrious persons of antiquity omitted by the famous Grecian Biographer Plutarch; and to qualify himself for that arduous undertaking, had perused with the utmost attention all the ancient Historians, both Roman and Grecian. Indeed he executed his design in part, for he wrote eight lives which were published after his decease as a supplement to the work of that much-admired Biographer, in which he discovers great knowledge of ancient history in particular, and of human nature in general. The style is easy, concise and nervous, the facts related are authenticated by indubitable testimony, and the observations and inferences founded on the most impartial and equitable principles.

Dr. Chandler, a dissenting minister of great genius, learning and probity, wrote a preface to

Rowe's Lives, in which he expresses his esteem for the author in the following words: 'He must be insensible to true merit, and to all just regards to the public good, that can look over these valuable remains, without finding in himself a true respect and esteem raised for the author; and his own heart inspired with an increasing love to the liberties and welfare of his country.' Besides these lives, he had prepared for the press the life of Thrasybulus, which was submitted to the revisal of Sir Richard Steele, but from causes not known never published.

Mr. Rowe being at Bath in 1709, was introduced by a friend to the company of Miss Singer, who lived in a recluse manner in a spot not far distant from that city. He had a predilection for her from her writings, which he had read with the greatest delight, as well as from the favourable report he had heard from several of her acquaintance; but when he had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with her, he was captivated by the union of so much beauty, wit, and virtue, and from an admirer soon became a suitor. As a proof of the high veneration in which he held the qualifications of Miss Singer, both mental and personal, we shall cite the following extract from a poetical epistle he sent to a friend and neighbour of that lady, during the courtship.

Youth's liveliest bloom, a never-fading grace,
 And more than beauty sparkles in her face:
 Yet the bright form creates no loose desires,
 At once she gives and purifies our fires,
 And passions, chaste as her own soul, inspires.
 Her soul. Heav'n's perfect workmanship, design'd
 To bless the ruin'd age, and succour lost mankind;
 To prop abandon'd Virtue's sinking cause,
 And snatch from Vice its undeserv'd applause.

The happy pair, whose minds were so congenial, were united in the bands of marriage in the year 1710, on which occasion a learned friend of Mr. Rowe wrote a Latin Epigram, of which the following is a translation.

On the Marriage of Mr. Thomas Rowe, and Miss Elizabeth Singer.

No more, proud Gallia, bid the world revere
 Thy learned pair, Le Fevre and Dacier:
 Britain may boast; this happy day unites
 Two nobler minds in Hymen's sacred rites:
 What these have sung, while all th' inspiring nine
 Exalt the beauties of the verse divine;
 Those (humble critics of th' immortal strain)
 Shall bound their fame to comment and explain.

The transcendent virtues and elegant endowments of Mrs. Rowe could not fail to maintain the generous passion they at first excited in the breast of her husband, so susceptible of every tender emotion, and alive to every delicate feeling. He knew how to estimate the merits of his amiable consort, and to repay by the tenderest and most endearing caresses, the care and solicitude she always discovered for his person and happiness. Some time after the marriage he took occasion to express his sentiments of conubial friendship and affection, in an ode addressed to her under the name of Delia; and as the following lines seem to have presaged events in a manner so agreeable to the wishes expressed in them, we presume they will not be unacceptable to our readers.

So long may thy inspiring page,
 And great example, bless the rising age!

Long in thy charming prison mayst thou stay,
 Late, very late, ascend the well-known way,
 And add new glories to the realms of day!
 At least Heav'n will not sure this pray'r deny:
 Short be my life's uncertain date,
 And earlier far than thine the destin'd hour of fate!
 Whene'er it comes mayst thou be by,
 Support my sinking frame, and teach me how to die.
 Banish desponding nature's gloom,
 Make me to hope a gentle doom,
 And fix me all in joys to come.
 With swimming eyes I'll gaze upon thy charms,
 And clasp thee, dying, in my fainting arms:
 Then gently leaning on thy breast
 Sink in soft slumbers to eternal rest,
 The ghastly form shall have a pleasing air,
 And all things smile while Heav'n and thou art
 there.

As Mr. Rowe was not of a robust habit of body, a long series of intense application to study might probably produce that decline of health, which allayed the happiness of connubial life, during the greater part of its short duration. About the close of the year 1714 he appeared to labour under a consumption, which in the course of a few months put a period to his life, on the 13th of May, 1715, when he was but just past the twenty-eighth year of his age. He was interred in the vault belonging to his family in the burial-place in Bunhill-fields, where on his tomb are only marked his name and the date of his birth and death. But ample justice was done to his memory by his amiable relict in the elegy she wrote on his death, which is justly deemed the most admirable of her poetical works. She continued, indeed, to the last moments of her life, to testify in every instance the highest veneration and affection for his memory, as is evident from

the poem she wrote on the anniversary return of the day on which he died.

The noise and bustle of a town life by no means suited the contemplative disposition of Mrs. Rowe, nor could any thing reconcile her to a residence in London, during even the winter season, but the society of her husband; so that as soon after his decease as she could arrange her affairs, she retired to enjoy that solitude with which she was so highly delighted, to Frome in Somersetshire, in the vicinity of which she possessed considerable landed property. Though upon her leaving town, she formed a resolution to revisit it no more, but pass the residue of her days in total solitude, she was sometimes induced to recede from that determination. She could not withstand the importunate solicitations of her honourable friend Mrs. Thynne, but passed some time with her in London, to console her on the death of her daughter; nor could she on the melancholy occasion of the death of Mrs. Thynne herself, refuse compliance with the request of the Countess of Hertford to reside some time with her Ladyship at Marlborough, to soften by her engaging conversation and friendly admonition, the very severe affliction she underwent for the loss of so excellent a parent. She was also on some future occasions prevailed upon by the same illustrious lady, to spend a few months with her at some of the Earl of Hertford's seats in the country. But she always quitted her retirement with much reluctance, and discovered the greatest eagerness to return to it, as soon as ever she had fulfilled her engagements with her noble friends!

In the happiest hours of her retirement, she

composed the greatest part of her works, and particularly her *Friendship in Death*, 'and the several *Letters Moral and Entertaining*.' 'The drift of the *Letters from the Dead*, is (as expressed in the preface) to impress the notion of the soul's immortality, without which all virtue and religion, with their temporal and eternal good consequences, must fall to the ground, and to make our mind familiar with the thought of our future existence, and contract as it were an habitual persuasion of it by writings built on that foundation, and addressed to the affections and imagination.

The design both of these and the *Letters moral and entertaining* evidently is, by presenting to the mind fictitious examples of the most disinterested benevolence, and inflexible virtue, to animate the reader to the practice of whatever tends to ennoble human nature, and promote the happiness of mankind: and on the other hand, by portraying images of horror, and exhibiting characters disgusting in themselves, to deter the young and unwary from such pursuits, which if persevered in must embitter the present life, and endanger the happiness of the future. The tendency of such a design must highly recommend it, as the efforts of genius have been too frequently exerted in disguising the native deformity of vice; and in palliating, if not justifying, immorality of conduct. 'But this excellent lady (as observed by an eminent writer of the last age,) possessed so much strength and firmness of mind, and such a perfect natural goodness, as could not be perverted by the largeness of her wit; and was proof against the art of poetry itself.' And it is added with great propriety by a mo-

dern writer, 'that the elegant letters which gave occasion to remark this distinction in Mrs. Rowe's character, as a polite writer, are not only chaste and innocent, but greatly subservient to the truest interests of mankind; and evidently designed by representing virtue in all its genuine beauty, to recommend it to the choice and admiration of mankind.

Our author, in the year 1736, was prevailed on by the importunity of some of her most intimate friends, to publish her *History of Joseph*, in ten books. This poem was the production of her juvenile days; and when first printed went no farther than the marriage of the hero of the piece; but at the express desire of an illustrious friend, that the narration might comprise the memorable circumstance of Joseph's discovering himself to his brethren, she added two other books, which she is said to have perfected in the course of three or four days; and this latter part, her last work was published but a few weeks before her death.

She had retired some time before this important event took place, to her favourite recess at Frome. The business of her life, strange as it may seem to gay and dissipated minds, had been to prepare for death. She was blessed with a good constitution, which a long series of years had but little impaired; but a few months before her dissolution, she was attacked by a disease, from the symptoms of which she herself as well as her friends, found cause to apprehend danger. Though she ingenuously confessed she did not find herself entirely free from that alarm, from which human nature with its most exalted attainments cannot be exempt on so trying an occa-

sion; yet when she reflected on the mercy of God through the mediation of the great Redeemer, she found from a firm reliance on the same, such a degree of satisfaction and transport, that she said with tears of joy, 'she knew not that she had ever felt the like in all her life;' and she repeated on this occasion Mr. Pope's verses, entitled 'The Dying Christian,' in so feeling a manner, as abundantly proved to her friends around her, that she was fully impressed with the elevated sentiments of devotion and resignation, which this exquisite piece of sacred poetry is calculated to inspire.

But Mrs. Rowe recovered from this alarming shock of her constitution; and from her exact temperance, as well as perfect serenity of mind, undisturbed by worldly cares or tumultuous passions, her friends were encouraged to hope for a much longer continuance of a life so useful and desirable, than it pleased the great Disposer of all events to allot. On the very day on which she was attacked by the disorder, that in a few hours proved mortal, she seemed to those about her to be in perfect health, and in the evening of it conversed with a friend, with her usual alertness before she returned to her chamber. Soon after her servant hearing an unusual noise in her mistress's room, hastened thither, and to her great consternation found her prostrate on the floor, speechless, and in the agonies of death. A physician and surgeon were immediately sent for, but all the means used were ineffectual, and she expired on Sunday morning, February 28, 1737, in the sixty-third year of her age. Her disease was supposed by the faculty to have been an apoplexy. From a religious book that was

found lying open by her, and also some loose papers on which she had written some unconnected sentences, it appeared that she passed the latest moments of her life in the exercise of devotion.

It is remarked by a pious friend, that the sudden departure of Mrs. Rowe, from this transitory state of existence, may be considered as a token of the divine favour in answer to her earnest entreaties at the throne of grace ; for as she was fearful that the violence of pain, or the languor of decaying nature, might bring on a depression of spirits, or cause such indication of alarm on the view of approaching dissolution, as might reflect dishonour on her profession as a christian, her manuscript book of devotions contains frequent petitions to heaven, deprecating such a situation ; and she often expressed to her friends a desire of a sudden departure, especially when she was particularly affected by such apprehensions. Indeed, we may adopt on this occasion the words of Mr. Graves, in a letter to a friend soon after her decease : ‘ Though her death be universally lamented, yet the manner of it is rather to be esteemed a part of her happiness. One moment to enjoy this life ; the next, or after a pause, we are not sensible of, to find ourselves got beyond, not only the fears of death, but death itself, and in possession of everlasting life, and health and pleasure ; this moment to be devoutly addressing ourselves to God, or employed in delightful meditations on his perfections ; the next in his presence, and surrounded with scenes of bliss perfectly new and unspeakably joyous ; is a way of departing out of this life to be desired, not dreaded by ourselves, and felicitated, not con-

doled by our surviving friends : when all things are in readiness for our removal out of the world, it is a privilege to be spared the sad ceremony of parting, and all the pains and struggles of feeble nature.'

Though Mrs. Rowe possessed from nature, great vivacity of temper and gaiety of disposition, and seemed peculiarly adapted to enjoy the innocent pleasures and amusements of life ; yet her mind was so impressed with a sense of the superior bliss resulting from the contemplation of a future world, that she looked down with contempt on all sublunary objects, and aspired, with an holy ardour, to a state of perfection not to be attained within the narrow confines of a limited existence. When her friends congratulated her on the appearance of health and vigour, which were visible in her countenance, and expressed the pleasing prospect they had of the continuance of her life for a series of future years ; she would reply ' that it was the same as telling a slave his fetters were like to be lasting, or complimenting him on the strength of the walls of his dungeon.' Indeed, she expressed upon every occasion, a most ardent desire of entering upon a life of immortality, and frequently flattered herself with the expectation of its near approach, and in particular a short time before her death, communicated to her religious friends her firm persuasion, that her continuance upon earth would be but of short duration, but without assigning any reason for her opinion. We do not lay any stress on such supposed presages, but only mention them on the authority of preceding biographers.

This pious and exemplary christian, was interred at her own request under the same stone

with her father, in the year 1701, at Frome, on which occasion a funeral sermon was preached by the minister of the same to a crowded audience, who revered her character, and lamented her loss with uncommon tokens of sorrow. To the poor, her death was a particular source of affliction; as to them she was a never-failing benefactress, and her bounty was heightened by the condescending manner in which it was dispensed. The following letters to several of her friends, for whom she entertained a particular esteem and affection, were found in her cabinet, left there with her express desire that they should be delivered according to address immediately after her decease.

To the COUNTESS of HERTFORD.

MADAM,

THIS is the last letter you will ever receive from me; the last assurance I shall give you on earth, of a sincere and steadfast friendship; but when we meet again, I hope it will be in the height of immortal love and ecstasy: Mine, perhaps, may be the first glad spirit to congratulate your safe arrival on the happy shore. Heaven can witness how sincere my concern for your happiness is: thither I have sent my ardent wishes, that you may be secured from the flattering delusions of the world, and after your pious example has been long a blessing to mankind, may you calmly resign your breath and enter the confines of unmolested joy.

I am now taking my farewell of you here; but 'tis a short adieu, for I die with full persuasion

that we shall soon meet again. But oh! in what elevation of happiness! in what enlargement of mind, and perfection of every faculty; what transporting reflections shall we make in the advantages of which we shall find ourselves eternally possessed! To Him that loved us and washed us in his blood, we shall ascribe immortal glory, dominion, and praise for ever.

This is all my salvation and all my hope! that name in whom the gentiles trust, in whom all the families on the earth are blessed, is now my glorious, my unfailing confidence; in His merits alone I expect to stand justified before infinite purity and justice. How poor were my hopes, if I depended on those works, which my own vanity, or the partiality of men call good; and which examined by divine purity, would prove, perhaps, but specious sins. The best actions of my life would be found defective, if brought to the test of unblemished holiness, in whose sight the heavens are not clear. Where were my hopes, but for a Redeemer's merits and atonement! how desperate, how undone my condition! With the utmost advantages I can boast, I should start back and tremble at the thoughts of appearing before the unblemished majesty. O Jesus, what harmony dwells in thy name! Celestial joy and immortal life is in the sound! Let angels set thee to their golden harps! Let the ransomed nations for ever magnify thee.

What a dream is mortal life! What shadows are the objects of sense! All the glories of mortality, my much-loved friend, will be nothing in your view at the awful hour of death; when you must be separated from the whole creation, and enter on the borders of the immaterial world.

Something persuades me, this will be my last farewell in this world : Heaven forbid it should be an everlasting parting ! May that divine protection, whose care I implore, keep you steadfast in the faith of christianity, and guide your steps in the strictest paths of virtue. Adieu, my most dear friend, till we meet in the paradise of God.

ELIZ. ROWE.

To the EARL of ORRERY.

MY LORD,

THERE seems to be something presaging in the message you ordered me to deliver to your charming Henrietta, when I meet her gentle spirit in the blissful regions, which I believe will be very soon. I am now acting the last part of my life, and composing myself to meet the universal terror with a fortitude becoming the principles of christianity. It is alone through the great Redeemer's merits and atonement, that I hope to pass undaunted through the fatal darkness.

Before him Death, the grisly tyrant flies,
He wipes the tears for ever from our eyes.

All human greatness makes no figure to my present apprehension ; every distinction vanishes, but those of virtue and real merit. It is this which gives a peculiar regard for such a character as your's, and gives me hopes your example will not fall short of those of your illustrious ancestors. The approaches of death set the world in a true light ; its brightest advantages

appear no more than a dream, in that solemn period: the immortal mind will quit a cottage, perhaps with less regret than it would leave the splendour of a palace, and the breathless dust sleep as quietly beneath the grassy turf, as under the parade of a costly monument. These are insignificant circumstances to a spirit doomed to an endless duration of misery or bliss. It is this important concern, my lord, that has induced me to spend my time in a peaceful retirement, rather than to waste it in a train of thoughtless amusements. My thoughts are grown familiar with the solemnity of dying, and death seems to me to advance, not as an inflexible tyrant, but as the peaceful messenger of liberty and happiness. May I make my exit in that elate manner those charming lines of Mr. Pope describe.

The world recedes, it disappears;
 Heav'n opens on my eyes, my ears
 With sounds seraphic ring:
 Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
 O grave! where is thy victory?
 O death! where is thy sting?

The nearer I am approaching to immortality, the more extensive and enlarged I find the principles of amity and good will in my soul: from hence arise the most sincere wishes for your happiness, and for the charming pledges your lovely Henrietta left. Oh! my lord, if you would discharge the sacred trust, keep them under your own inspection. This will not reach you, my lord, till I am past the ceremony of subscribing

Your humble Servant,

ELIZ. ROWE.

To MR. JAMES THEOBALD.

SIR,

THE converse I have had with you has been very short, but I hope the friendship begun by it, will be transmitted to the regions of perfect amity and bliss. It would not be worth while to cherish the impressions of a virtuous friendship, if the generous engagement was to be dissolved with mortal life. Such a thought would give the grave a deeper gloom, and add new horrors to the fatal darkness.

But I confess I have brighter expectations, and am fully persuaded that these noble attachments which are founded on real merit, are of an immortal date. That benignity, that divine charity, which just warms the soul in these cold regions, will shine with new lustre and burn with an eternal ardour, in the happy seats of peace and love. My present experience confirms me in this truth; the powers of nature are drooping, the vital spark grows languid and faint; while my affection for my surviving friends was never more warm, my concern for their happiness was never more ardent and sincere. This makes me employ some of the last part of my time in writing to three or four persons, whose merit requires my esteem, in hopes this solemn farewell will leave a serious impression on their minds.

I am going to act the last and most important part of human life; in a little time I shall land on the immortal coasts, where all is new, amazing and unknown: but however gloomy the passage appears:

Sweet fields, beyond the swelling flood,
 Stand dress'd in living green :
 So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
 While Jordan roll'd between.

Dr. Watts.

Nature cannot but shiver at the fatal brinks, unwilling to try the grand experiment, while the hopes of christianity can alone support the soul in this solemn crisis. In this existence the eternal spirit whispers peace and pardon to the dying saint, through the atonement, and brightens the shadow of death, with some glimmering of immortal light. Tell Mrs. Theobald I hope to meet her in the shining realms of love and unmingled bliss—

Where crown'd with joy, and ever-blooming youth,
 The jocund hours dance in their endless round.

ELIZ. ROWE.

To MRS. SARAH ROWE.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I AM now taking my final adieu of this world, in certain hopes of meeting you in the next. I carry to my grave my affection and gratitude to your family, and leave you with the sincerest concern for your own happiness, and the welfare of your family. May my prayers be answered when I am sleeping in the dust! O may the angels of God conduct you in the paths of immortal glory and pleasure. I would collect the powers of my soul, and ask blessings for you with all the holy violence of prayer. God Al-

mighty, the God of your pious ancestors, who has been your dwelling-place for many generations, bless you!

'Tis but a short space I have to measure; the shadows are lengthening, and my sun declining. That goodness which has hitherto conducted me, will not fail me in the last concluding act of life; the name which I have made my glory and my boast, shall then be my strength and my salvation. To meet death with a becoming fortitude, is a part above the power of nature, and which I can perform by no power or holiness of my own; for oh! in my best estate, I am altogether vanity, a wretched, helpless sinner; but in the merits and perfect righteousness of God my Saviour, I hope to appear justified at the supreme tribunal, where I must shortly stand to be judged.

ELIZ. ROWE.

Mrs. Rowe was agreeable in person, she spoke gracefully; her voice was singularly sweet and harmonious, and admirably adapted to convey in all its charms, the elegant language that flowed from her lips. Her countenance indicated a softness and benevolence beyond description, and yet commanded that degree of awe and veneration, which sense and virtue so naturally inspire.

From her converse with persons in the higher circles of life, her manners were refined, and she carried an ease and politeness of behaviour into her retirement; but though elegant in her deportment, she was merely neat in her apparel, and seems to have conquered all desire of complying with the fashionable follies of the time, and the vain pomp and parade of life; so that she seemed to have soared above her sex, in re-

sisting the force of custom so prevalent in every age. The business of the toilet did not interfere with those nobler pursuits, which tend to the accomplishment of the mind, however they may detract from the ornament of the person; as she exhibited the example in herself, she recommended the practice to the whole circle of her acquaintance.

In early life she discovered that inclination to retirement, so congenial to the votaries of the muses, which she retained to the latest period of her life. Her company, prior to marriage, was courted by the great and the opulent; and if prompted by the rules of politeness to accept of occasional invitations, she quitted solitude with reluctance, and made her visits to town as short as possible.

Mrs. Rowe discovered the same inclination to solitude, after her husband's death, which she had done before, and as she advanced in life seemed more and more disposed to retire from the busy world, notwithstanding the entreaties of her friends, who used every effort to prevail upon her to alter her conduct, and indulge them with her entertaining and instructive conversation. Persons of a recluse temper, though by a rigid virtue they may be guarded against the violence of sensual passions, are frequently known to indulge supercilious austerity, a rigid censoriousness of the conduct of others, and many disgusting and unsocial propensities: but none of these disagreeable qualities could be imputed to Mrs. Rowe, who was as remarkable for every social virtue, as for a strict adherence to the positive injunctions of religion, and thought the indulgence of those inclinations, to which

men are prone from the prevalence of passions incidental to them in the present state, less criminal, than settled habits of barbarity, and the want of that philanthropy, which is the greatest ornament of human nature.

She possessed a mind unruffled by any of the common incidents of life, and a sweetness of disposition that could not be affected, either by adverse occurrences, or the infirmities of age itself; and had too much philosophy to be angry at little casualties, which she would only turn into subjects of pleasant and agreeable raillery. She was so placid in her behaviour towards her inferiors and domestics; that her servant who lived with her near twenty years, never observed in her mistress any inclination to wrath, or disposition to resentment, but against flagrant instances of impiety and immorality; in which cases it is commendable to indicate tokens of indignation.

Mrs. Rowe had a most settled aversion to the practice of scandal and calumny, and was scrupulously tender of the character of her neighbours. In a letter to a lady, with whom she had long lived in habits of intimacy; she writes in the following manner: 'I can appeal to you if ever you knew me make an envious, or an ill-natured reflection on any person on earth. The follies of mankind would afford a wide and various scene, but charity would draw a veil of darkness here, and chuse to be for ever silent, rather than expatiate on the melancholy theme.' Detraction was so odious in her opinion, as not to be justified by the liveliest sallies of wit, or palliated by the most specious pretences of being introduced for the purpose of entertainment. If such frivolous topics were introduced when

she was present, she would not hesitate on proper occasions to express her detestation of it: and surely to assert the cause of the absent, when character is unjustly traduced, or extenuate foibles or errors, if not of an injurious tendency, argues a genuine and laudable magnanimity.

Of envy her mind was too exalted to be susceptible, but always disposed to do justice to merit wherever it was found, nor could any thing give her a more sensible pleasure, than to find cause for commendation. But though she was thus liberally inclined to commend what was praise-worthy; a sense of duty and regard to the truest interests of mankind, compelled her sometimes to undertake the disagreeable task of reproof, which she had the power of softening by the means of gentle remonstrance and affecting dissuasive. Sometimes she had recourse to oblique insinuation and innocent artifice to disguise her admonitions; and it is remarked, that she has been frequently observed to commend persons of distinguished eminence for one kind of moral worth, before some of her friends, who were deficient in that particular virtue, in hopes they might be struck with the beauty of the example, which she proposed in a manner so little apt to give offence. Her conversation was singularly pleasing, as she had a fund of wit, and conveyed her ideas in elegant language, and a fluency of diction which were universally admired, and particularly so as she delivered her sentiments with unaffected ease, and openness of behaviour.

Though Mrs. Rowe's accomplishments from early life, had been the theme of much eulogium, and obtained her the commendation of such approved judges of merit, as might have justified

a degree of vanity in a female author; yet the whole tenor of her behaviour evinced a modest diffidence and amiable humility; being affable and courteous to persons of every rank and degree in life. Her mind was too exalted to be captivated by fashionable amusements; she considered play when adopted merely for diversion, but as an art for losing time and drowning reflection; but if followed from mercenary motives, as one of the greatest pests of society. She seemed naturally inclined to favour the diversions of the theatre, especially those of the tragic kind, which she conceived to have in general a moral tendency; but as entertainments of a different tendency were frequently interspersed with them, or added to them, she thought it inconsistent with the strictness of her profession to countenance them by her presence.

She disclaimed every kind of luxury as derogatory to the dignity of human beings, who are endowed with reason and designed for immortality; and was wholly unconcerned as to the provisions for her table; nor did she discover the least anxiety as to the nature of her food, or the manner in which it was dressed; and if there was any defect in either of these instances, was so far from giving way to resentment, that she made such little casual disappointments the subject of pleasant raillery. She avoided as much as possible all parties of pleasure, as well as all formal visits, as far as decency would allow. Indeed her mind seemed so enveloped in the contemplation of a future state, that she had no relish for any earthly enjoyment.

Avarice she justly deemed the most sordid and ignoble of the human passions, and often

expressed the utmost concern at its governing influence over the actions of mankind. She was so totally free from it herself, that it is said she did not know her own estates from others, till some motives of prudence obliged her to inform herself, when she apprehended she was soon to leave them; and was so far from a rigorous scrupulosity in exacting her due, that her negligence and unconcern for those matters counteracted very essentially her worldly interest: in short, her disinterestedness surpassed human conception, in proof of which we cite the following instances on the authority, and in the words of a former biographer.

‘ She let her estates beneath their intrinsic value, as appeared by the considerable rise of the rents after her decease; and was so gentle to her tenants, that she not only had no law-suit with any of them, but would not so much as suffer them to be threatened with the seizure of their goods, on neglect of payment of their rents. When one of them who owed her an hundred pounds, carried off all his stock in the night, she could not be prevailed upon to embrace an opportunity in her power of seizing it afterwards; and if he had not in this manner quitted the estate, upon receiving some just menaces without her knowledge, it is more than probable, that her excess of goodness would have always prevented her from having recourse to rigorous methods to eject him, and compel him to do her justice.’ It would be easy to add several other instances, highly prejudicial to her interest, in which she voluntarily departed from her right, when she had the highest claim of equity; she could not bear the mention of injustice without trembling,

and the tenderness and delicacy of her conscience, with regard to this sin, was so great, that she hardly thought she could keep far enough from it.

‘ I can appeal to thee (says she in an address to God), how scrupulously I have acted in matters of equity, and how willingly I have injured myself to right others.’ She spoke with much warmth of the extreme danger of any dishonest and fraudulent practice, and expressed her wonder, how persons could die with any repose of mind, under the least degree of such a kind of guilt.

Such was the modesty of our author, that to prevent any eulogium that might have been past on her literary talents, she would not permit any of her works to be published in her own name, except a few poems, the productions of her earlier years. She retained the same lowliness of mind to the latest period of her life, as appears from the orders that she left in writing to her servant; after having desired that her funeral might be by night, and attended only by a small number of friends, she adds, ‘ charge Mr. Bowden not to say one word of me in the sermon. I would lie in my father’s grave, and have no stone, nor inscription over my vile dust, which I gladly leave to oblivion and corruption, till it rise to a glorious immortality.’

Mrs. Rowe was conscientiously scrupulous in the discharge of all the relative duties of life. Her father she loved and revered, and was assiduous in her attention to all his wants, and the fulfilment of all his desires, and to express her sense of filial duty; she has been heard to say, ‘ That she would rather die than displease him.’

And she sympathized with him in the anguish of his last sickness, in so sensible a degree, that it occasioned a convulsion, from the effects of which she was never entirely free during the remainder of her life. She attended to the duties of the married state, with the same exactness, and gave proof in every instance of the highest esteem and most tender affection for her husband; endearing herself to him by the most gentle and engaging manners. She never thwarted his inclinations, though not always consonant with her own, and by interposing her tender offices alleviated the burthens, and enhanced the enjoyments of life. If Mr. Rowe, who did not possess the same degree of placidity as his amiable consort, broke out occasionally into any excesses of anger, instead of having recourse to the means of reprehension, she endeavoured by the most soothing endearments to restore him to reason and reflection; and it was her constant study by all the allurements of persuasion to lead Mr. Rowe on to the practice of those exalted virtues, for which her own example was so eminent. In his last illness, which was of long duration, she attended him with indefatigable assiduity; and performed with strictest care all the offices suited to that melancholy occasion. After he expired, she could scarce be persuaded to quit his breathless clay, and testified her sincere regard for his memory, by continuing in a state of perpetual widowhood.

In domestic life her behaviour was amiably condescending and affable, she treated her servants with the utmost kindness, caused every thing nutritive and medicinal to be administered to them when they laboured under any sickness,

and did not think it a degradation to sit by their bed-side and read to them from books of piety and devotion. As she was so excellent a mistress, she rarely had cause to dismiss her servants, who seldom left her but with a view of changing their condition by marriages. She had a due sense of fidelity in servants, and reposed an unlimited confidence in those who had given proof of their possessing that commendatory qualification.

In her friendships she was warm, generous and sincere; happy in finding merit to commend in those whom she respected; and tender and candid in reproving their errors. It afforded her peculiar satisfaction to render them services; but her grand aim and principal endeavour was to instil into their minds the love of virtue, and direct their attentions to their most important interests, which could not be essentially promoted but by a true regard to the doctrine and practice of the christian religion. In this momentous pursuit, she contributed to accelerate their progress, by her own precept and example, and thereby exhibited the most unquestionable test of real friendship.

As the most immaculate character is not free from the shafts of envy and malice. Mrs. Rowe, highly amiable as she was in her general conduct, escaped not the slander of malevolence, which branded her with the taint of enthusiasm and hypocrisy; but this she sustained through the support of conscious innocence, and so far from entertaining even an idea of resentment, considered it only as affording her an opportunity for the exercise of the godlike virtue of forgiveness.

Her charity was extensive beyond bounds ; to want was a sufficient recommendation for relief ; she could not pass by misery and indigence without sympathy, or turn a deaf ear to the cry of the widow or the orphan. She devoted indeed the greatest part of her income to acts of benevolence, and found the highest gratification in denying herself the luxuries and superfluities of life, that she might be conducive to the happiness of those who laboured under a destitution of its comforts and its necessaries.

The first time she accepted a compensation from the bookseller for any of her productions, she generously presented the whole sum to a family in distress ; and it was generally believed that she applied whatever she received in future on the same account, to benevolent and charitable purposes. It is said that upon a singular occasion, when she had not by her a sum of money large enough to supply the necessities of another family, which she much respected, she readily sold a piece of plate for that purpose, a circumstance to the probability of which we can only be reconciled by the very extraordinary character of whom it is related. Though she was not much disposed to distribute alms in the street, yet when she went abroad she would furnish herself with pieces of coin of different value for the relief of casual objects, observing ‘ that it was fit sometimes to give for the credit of religion, when other inducements were wanting, that the profession of christianity might not be charged with covetousness,’ a vice so abhorrent to her nature, that scarce any grosser kind of immorality could more effectually exclude from her friendship. ‘ I never,’ said she, ‘ grudge any money, but when it is laid

out on myself, for I consider how much it would buy for the poor.'

Besides the sums of money she gave away, and the great number of religious books she dispensed to the poor, she worked with her own hands to clothe the necessitous; it being her frequent employment to make garments of different kinds and proportions, and bestow them on those who were destitute of raiment. Her feelings for the distresses of others were so exquisite, that she was often seen to shed tears at the conditions of the unhappy. But these were the tears of generous compassion, not of feminine weakness; for she had too much christian fortitude to weep over her own sorrows. She was indeed so sensibly affected with the state of the poor when they laboured under sickness, that she not only sent her servant to know what relief and comforts they stood in need of, but visited them herself in the most wretched hovels, and even when they were afflicted with malignant and contagious distempers.

She took extreme delight in contributing to the education of the children of necessitous parents, whom she caused to be taught to read and work, and furnished with clothes, bibles and other necessary books. Nor did she confine this charitable institution to Frome where she resided, but extended it to a neighbouring village where part of her estate lay. If she met occasionally in her walks with children perfectly unknown to her, and found that the poverty of their parents prevented them from sending them to schools, she added them to the number of those who were taught at her own expence. She undertook herself the task of instructing these

children in the principles of the christian religion; and nothing could exceed the grief and concern she expressed, if any of them deviated from the paths of virtue, into which they had been conducted through her patronage; but the joy and rapture she felt when any of them discovered the happy effects of her tender care for their present and future welfare.

So extensive was her benevolence, that she subscribed to the public charity-school at Frome, though the children educated therein were instructed in the forms of religion peculiar to the church of England, from which she took the liberty to dissent. But her charity was not confined to any particular sect, as she cordially esteemed sincere christians of every denomination. Nor was her beneficence limited to those who from their extreme indigence might be literally denominated poor, for, as she often observed, it was one of the greatest benefits that could be done to mankind, to free them from the cares and anxiety that attend a narrow fortune, and in conformity to this observation, she was frequently known to make considerable presents to persons whose circumstances were far from being necessitous.

It is a matter of surprise, that Mrs. Rowe out of the produce of a moderate estate should have been able to perform so many acts of benevolence, and contribute to such a variety of charitable institutions: indeed she expressed her own surprise at this circumstance to an intimate friend. ‘I am surprised,’ said she, ‘how it is possible my estate should answer all these things, and yet I never want money.’ In this she seemed to allude to the goodness of divine Provi-

dence, which she ever acknowledged with the greatest degree of piety, as interposing in her favour and protection.

She retired for private prayer three times a day, and was most religiously strict in the observance of the Lord's day, which she passed entirely in acts of piety and devotion. She constantly attended the administration of the sacrament, for which she had the highest veneration, and caused a part of the holy Scripture to be read at stated times every day in her family; she was particularly affected by the New Testament, and those passages of the prophetic writings, which immediately relate to our blessed Saviour. A life so pious and exemplary could not fail of affording her the most pleasing reflections, and brightening her prospects of a future state, which she kept ever in view, considering that the chief end of mankind is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever.

With respect to the following work, the necessity of any comment or recommendation on our part is precluded, by the preface written by the very pious and learned Dr. Watts, who has not only obviated objections that may probably be made to some parts of it, but set forth its general tendency to inspire serious christians with an ardent love of God, and a genuine fervour for religious devotion.

A POEM,

ON THE ANNIVERSARY RETURN OF THE DAY ON
WHICH MR. ROWE DIED.

UNHAPPY day ! with what a dismal light
Dost thou appear to my afflicted sight !
In vain the cheerful spring returns with thee,
There is no future cheerful spring for me.

While my Alexis withers in the tomb,
Untimely cropt, nor sees a second bloom,
The fairest season of the changing year,
A wild and wintry aspect seems to wear ;
The flow'rs no more their former beauty boast,
Their painted hue, and fragrant scents are lost ;
The joyous birds their harmony prolong,
But oh ! I find no music in their song.

Ye mossy caves, ye groves, and silver streams,
(The muscs' lov'd retreats, and gentle themes)
Ye verdant fields, no more your landscapes please,
Nor give my soul one interval of ease ;
Tranquillity and pleasure fly your shades,
And restless care your solitude invades.
Nor the still ev'ning, nor the rosy dawn,
Nor moon-light glimm'ring o'er the dewy lawn,
Nor stars, nor sun, my gloomy fancy cheer,
But heav'n and earth a dismal prospect wear :
That hour that snatch'd Alexis from my arms,
Rent from the face of nature all its charms.

Unhappy day ! be sacred still to grief,
A grief too obstinate for all relief ;
On thee my face shall never wear a smile,
No joy on thee shall e'er my heart beguile.
Why does thy light again my eyes molest ?
Why am I not with thee, dear youth, at rest ?
When shall I, stretch'd upon my dusty bed,
Forget the toils of life, and mingle with the dead ?

TO

* * * * *

AN INTIMATE FRIEND OF MRS. ROWE.

Newington, Sept. 29, 1737.

MADAM,

IF these pious Meditations, of so sublime a Genius, should be inscribed to any name, there is none but your's must have stood in the front of them. That long and constant intimacy of friendship with which you delighted to honour her, that high esteem and veneration you are pleased to pay her memory, and the sacred likeness and sympathy between two kindred souls, absolutely determine where this respect should be paid.

Besides, Madam, you well know, that some copies out of these papers have been your own several years, by the gift of the deceased; and the favour you have done me lately, by your permission to peruse them, has assisted the correction of these Manuscripts, and would add another reason to support this inscription of them, if your fear of assuming too much honour could but have admitted this piece of justice.

I know, Madam, your tenderness and indulgence to every thing Mrs. Rowe has written, cannot withhold your judgment from suspecting some of her expressions to be a little too rapturous, and too near a-kin to the language of the mystical writers; yet your piety and candour will take no such offence as to prevent your best improvement by them, in all that is divine and holy: And may your retired hours find such happy assistances and elevations hereby, that you may commence the joys of angels, and of blessed spirits, before-hand!

And when your valuable life has been long extended amidst all the temporal blessings you enjoy, and the Christian virtues you practise, may you, at the call of God, find a gentle dismissal from mortality, and ascend on high to meet your deceased friend in Paradise! Nor can I suppose, that any of the inhabitants of that blissful region, will sooner recognize your glorified spirit, or will salute your first appearance there with a more tender sense of mutual satisfaction. There may you join with your beloved Philomela, in paying celestial worship, in exalted and unknown forms, to her God and your God! and may the harmony of the place be assisted by your united songs to Jesus, your common Saviour!

I am,

MADAM,

With great sincerity and esteem,

Your most faithful,

And obedient Servant,

I. WATTS.

THE PREFACE.

THE admirable author of these devotional papers has been in high esteem among the ingenious and polite, since so many excellent fruits of her pen, both in verse and prose, have appeared in public. She was early honoured under the feigned name of *Philomela*, before the world was allowed to know Miss Elizabeth Singer, by the name drawn from her family, or that of Mrs. Rowe, which she acquired by marriage.

Though many of her writings that were published in her lifetime discover a pious and heavenly temper, and a warm zeal for religion and virtue, yet she chose to conceal the *devotions of her heart* till she got beyond the censure and the applause of mortals. It was enough that God, whom she loved with ardent and supreme affection, was witness to all her secret and intense breathings after him.

In February last he was pleased to call her out of our world, and take her to himself. Some time after her decease, these manuscripts were transmitted to me, all inclosed in one sheet of paper, and directed to me at Newington, by her own hand. In the midst of them I found her letter, which entreated me to review them, and commit them to the press. This letter I have thought necessary to shew the world, not so much to discover my right to publish these papers, as to let the reader see something more of that holy and heavenly character which she maintained in a uniform manner, both in life and death.

It is now almost thirty years ago since I was

honoured with her acquaintance ; nor could her great modesty conceal all her shining graces and accomplishments ; but it is not my province to give a particular account of this excellent woman, who has blessed and adorned our nation and our age. I expect her temper, her conduct, and her virtues, will be set in a just and pleasing light among the memoirs of her life, by some near relations, to whom the care of her poetical pieces, and her familiar letters, is committed.

These *Devout Exercises* are animated with such fire as seems to speak the language of holy passion, and discovers them to be the dictates of her heart ; and those who were favoured with her chief intimacy will most readily believe it. The style, I confess, is raised above that of common meditation or soliloquy ; but, let it be remembered, she was no common Christian. As her virtues were sublime, so her genius was bright and sparkling, and the vivacity of her imagination had a tincture of the muse almost from her childhood. This made it natural to her to express the inward sentiments of her soul in more exalted language, and to paint her own ideas in metaphor and rapture, near a-kin to the diction of poesy.

The reader will here find a spirit dwelling in flesh, elevated into divine transports, congenial to those of angels and unbodied minds. Her intense love to her God kindles at every hint, and transcends the limits of mortality. I scarce ever met with any devotional writings which gave us an example of a soul, at special seasons, so far raised above every thing that is not immortal and divine.

Yet she is conscious of her frailties too. She

sometimes confesses her folly and her guilt in the sight of God, in the most affecting language of a deep humiliation. It is with pathetic sensibility of her weakness, and in the strongest language of self-displacement, she bewails her offences against her Creator and Redeemer; and, in her intervals of darkness, she vents her painful complaints and mournings, for the absence of her highest and best Beloved.

Let it be observed, that it was much the fashion in former years, even among some divines of eminence, to express the fervours of devout love to our Saviour in the style of the *Song of Solomon*; and I must confess that several of my compositions of verse, written in younger life, were led by those examples unwarily into this track. But if I may be permitted to speak the sense of maturer age, I can hardly think this the happiest language in which Christians should generally discover their warm sentiments of religion, since the clearer and more spiritual revelations of the New Testament. Yet still it must be owned there are some souls favoured with such beatifying visits from heaven, and raptured with such a flame of divine affection, as more powerfully engage all animal nature in their devotions, and constrains them to speak their purest and most spiritual exercises in such pathetic and tender expressions as may be perversely profaned by unholy construction. And the bias and propensity towards this style is yet stronger, where early impressions of piety have been made on the heart by devout writings of this kind.

It should be remembered also, there is nothing to be found here which rises above our ideas. Here are none of those absurd and incomprehen-

sible phrases which amuse the ear with sounding vanity, and hold reason in sovereign contempt. Here are no visionary scenes or wild extravagance, no affectations of the tumid and unmeaning style, which spreads a glaring confusion over the understanding; nothing that leads the reader into the region of those mystical shadows and darkness which abound in the Romish writers, under the pretence of refined light and sublime ecstasy. Nor is the character of this ingenious author to be blemished with any other reproaches, which have been sometimes cast on such sort of meditations.

I know it hath been said that this language of rapture, addressed to the Deity, is but a new track given to the flow of the softer powers, after the disappointment of some meaner love; or, at least, it is owing to the want of a proper object and opportunity to fix those tender passions. But this cannot be allowed to be the case here; for, as Mrs. ROWE had been sought early by several lovers, so she spent several years of younger life in the connubial state with a gentleman of such accomplishments, and such circumstances, that he was well fitted to be a partner of her joys and cares.

I know also that this soft and passionate turn of religious meditation has sometimes been imputed to injuries and ill treatment in the marriage state, whereby the same affections are weaned from an undeserving object, and poured out in amorous language upon an object supremely worthy and divine. But neither has this reproach any pretence in the present case: that happy pair had souls so near a-kin to each other, that they persevered in uncommon amity and mutual satis-

faction so long as Providence favoured him with life. It is sufficiently evident, then, that in these meditations there is no secret panting after a mortal love in the language of devotion and piety.

Nor yet can it be objected that it was any displacence and peevishness toward other things round about her that taught her to express herself with such contempt of the things of mortality, and all the gay and tempting scenes of the present state ; she was by no means sour and morose, and out of humour with the world, nor with her acquaintance that dwelt in it ; she often conversed freely with the gay and the great, and was in high esteem among persons of rank and honour. But honour and rank among mortals, with a'll the scenes of gaiety and greatness, were little, despicable, and forgotten things, while, in her devout moments, her eye and her heart were fixed on God, the supreme original of all excellence and all honour.

In common life she was affable and friendly with persons of every rank and degree ; and, in her latter years, as she drew nearer to heaven, if she avoided any thing, it was grandeur and public appearances on earth. But she never so concealed and abstracted herself from the society of any of her fellow-creatures as to despise the meanest of her species. She ever was kind and compassionate to the distressed, and largely liberal to the indigent. Nor did she neglect the daily duties of human life, under a vain imagination that she moved in a higher sphere, and was seraphically exalted above them.

In short, there is nothing in these papers that can justly support any such kind of censures,

though men of corrupt minds may cover the Bible itself with slander and ridicule. Let all such readers stand aloof, nor touch these sacred leaves, lest they pollute them.

Though there is not one complete copy of verses among all these transports of her soul, yet she ever carried with her a relish of poesy even into her sacred retirements. Sometimes she springs her flight from a line or two of verse, which her memory had impressed upon her heart; sometimes, from the midst of her religious elevations, she lights down upon a few lines of some modern poet, even Herbert, as well as Milton, &c. though it is but seldom she cites their names; at other times the verses seem to be the effusion of her own rapturous thoughts in sudden melody and metre, or at least I know not whence the lines are copied: but she most frequently does me the honour to make use of some of my writings in verse, in these holy meditations of her heart. Blessed be that God who has so far favoured any thing my pen could produce, as to assist so sublime a devotion.

From the different appearances of the paper and ink in some of these pieces, as well as from the early transcripts of several of them among her friends, it is evident they were written in her younger days; others are of a much later original, though there is but one that bears a date, and that is April 30, 1735. They seemed to have been penned at special seasons and occasions throughout the course of her life. A few of them bear the corrections or additions of her own pen, which discovers itself by a little difference of the hand writing.

Though she was never tempted away from our

common Christianity into the fashionable apostacies of the age, yet I am well informed, from many hands, that in her latter years she entered with more zeal and affection into some of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel ; and it is evident that some of these devotional pieces have a more evangelic turn than others, and probably most of those were composed or corrected in the latter part of life. The opposition which has of late been made to some of these truths, gave occasion to her farther search into them, and her zeal for them. However, I have placed these papers all as I found them pinned up in a wrapping paper, though it is evident from plain circumstances, this is not the order in which they were written, nor is that of any great importance.

Though these writings give us the aspirations of a devout soul in her holy retirements, when she had no design to present the public with them, yet they did not want a great deal of adjustment or correction in order to see the light. The numbers and the titles are added by the publisher, as well as the breaks and pauses which give a sort of rest to the reader's mind, and make the review more easy. Here and there a too venturous flight is a little moderated ; sometimes a meditation or a sentence is completed, which seemed very imperfect, or a short line or two inserted to introduce the sense, where the language seemed too abrupt, or the meaning too obscure. Her soul had a large set of ideas in present view, which made every expression she used easy and perspicuous to herself, when she wrote only for her own use, though sometimes her entire sense might not be quite so obvious to every reader,

without a little introduction into her tract of sentiments. Upon the whole, I must acknowledge I was very unwilling that this excellent work should lose any degree of elegance or brightness by passing through my hands.

When the manuscript came first under my revision, I read it over with the eye of a critic and a friend that I might publish it with honour to the hand that wrote it, and with religious entertainment and advantage to the world; nor was this employment destitute of its proper satisfaction. But never did I feel the true pleasure of these meditations till I had finished this labour of the *head*, and began to read them over again as *devout exercises of the heart*: then I endeavoured to enter more entirely into the spirit of the pious author, and attempted to assume her language as my own. But how much superior was the satisfaction which I received from this review, especially wheresoever I had reason to hope I could pronounce her words with sincerity of soul! How happily did this raise and entertain all my pleasing passions, and give me another sort of delight than the dry critical perusal of them, in order to judge concerning their propriety! But I confess also it was an abasing and mortifying thought when I found how often I was constrained to drop the sublime expression from my lips, or forbid my tongue to use it, because my own attainments sunk so far beneath those sacred elevations of spirit, and fell so far short of those transcendent degrees of divine affection and zeal.

Let me persuade all that peruse this book to make the same experiment that I have done: and when they have shut out the world, and are reading in their retirements, let them try how far

they can speak this language, and assume these sentiments, as their own : and, by aspiring to follow them, may they find the same satisfaction and delight, or at least learn the profitable lessons of self-abasement and holy shame : and may a noble and glorious ambition excite in their breasts a sacred zeal to emulate so illustrious an example ! Whatsoever ardours of divine love have been kindled in a soul united to flesh and blood, may also be kindled by the same influences of grace in other spirits labouring under the same clogs and impediments.

But, perhaps, it will be necessary here to give a caution to some humble Christians, that they should not make these higher elevations of piety and holy joy the test and standard by which to judge of the sincerity of their own religion. Ten thousand saints are arrived at Paradise, who have not been favoured, like St. Paul, with a rapture into the third heaven, nor could ever arise to the affectionate transports and devout joys of Mrs. Rowe : yet I hope all serious readers may find something here, which, through the aids of the blessed Spirit, may raise them above their usual pitch, may give a new spring to their religious pleasures and their immortal hopes, and thereby render their lives more holy and heavenly.

That the publication of this little book may be favoured with the divine blessing for this happy end, is the sincere desire and request of the publisher, as it was the real motive of the ingenious and pious writer, to commit them by my hand to the public view. This sufficiently discovers itself in the following letter.

To the Rev. Dr. Watts, at Newington.

SIR,

THE opinion I have of your piety and judgment is the reason of my giving you the trouble of looking over these papers, in order to publish them, which I desire you to do as soon as you can conveniently, only you have full liberty to suppress what you think proper.

I think there can be no vanity in this design; for I am sensible such thoughts as these will not be for the taste of the modish part of the world; and, before they appear, I shall be entirely disinterested in the censure or applause of mortals.

The reflections were occasionally written, and only for my own improvement; but I am not without hopes that they may have the same effect on some pious minds, as the reading the experiences of others hath had on my soul. The experimental part of religion has generally a greater influence than its theory; and if, when I am sleeping in the dust, these soliloquies should kindle a flame of divine love in the heart of the lowest and most despised Christian, be the glory given to the great Spring of all grace and benignity. ✱

I have now done with mortal things, and all to come is vast eternity—Eternity! how transporting is the sound! As long as God exists, my being and happiness is secure. These unbounded desires, which the wide creation cannot limit, shall be satisfied for ever. I shall drink at the fountain head of pleasure, and be refreshed with the emanations of original life and joy. I shall

yes really

hear the voice of uncreated harmony speaking peace and ineffable consolation to my soul.

I expect eternal life, not as a reward of merit, but a pure act of bounty. Detesting myself in every view I can take, I fly to the righteousness and atonement of my great Redeemer for pardon and salvation; this is my only consolation and hope. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man be justified."

Through the blood of the Lamb I hope for an entire victory over the last enemy, and that before this comes to you I shall have reached the celestial heights, and while you are reading these lines, I shall be adoring before the throne of God, where faith shall be turned into vision, and these languishing desires satisfied with the full fruition of immortal love. Adieu!

ELIZABETH ROWE.

DEVOUT
EXERCISES OF THE HEART, &c.

I. *Supreme Love to God.*

WHY, O my God ! must this mortal structure put so great a separation between my soul and thee ? I am surrounded with thy essence, yet I cannot perceive thee ; I follow thee and trace thy footsteps in heaven and earth, yet I cannot overtake thee ; thou art before me, and I cannot reach thee ; and behind me, and I perceive thee not.

O Thou, whom, unseen, I love, by what powerful influence dost thou attract my soul ? The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what thou art ; and yet I love thee beyond all that mine eye has seen, or my ear heard ; beyond all that my heart can comprehend. Thou dwellest in the heights of glory, to which no human thoughts can soar, and yet thou art more near and intimate to my soul than any of the objects of sense. These ears have never heard thy voice, and yet I am better acquainted with thee, and can rely on thee with more confidence than on the dearest friend I have on the earth.

My heart cleaves to thee, O Lord, as its only refuge, and finds in thee a secret and constant spring of consolation. I speak to thee with the utmost confidence, and think thy being my greatest happiness. The reflection on thy existence and greatness recreates my spirits and fills my heart with alacrity ; my soul overflows with

pleasure ; I rejoice, I triumph in thy independent blessedness and absolute dominion. Reign, O my God, for ever, glorious and uncontrolled!

I, the worm of the earth, would join my ascent with the infinite orders above, with all thy flaming ministers who rejoice in thy kingdom and glory.

Tho' not with them, thy happier race, allow'd
To view the bright unvail'd Divinity ;
By no audacious glance from mortal eyes
These mystic glories are to be profan'd ;
But yet I feel the same immortal flame,
And love thee, tho' unseen.

I love thee. Thus far I can speak, but all the rest is unutterable ; and I must leave the pleasing tale untold, till I can talk in the language of immortality ; and then I'll begin the transporting story, which shall never come to an end, but be still and still beginning : for thy beauties, O thou fairest of ten thousand ! will still be new, and shall kindle fresh ardour in my soul to all eternity. The sacred flame shall rise, nor find any limits till thy perfections find a period.

I love thee ; and, O thou that knowest all things, read the characters that love has drawn on my heart ! What excellence but thine, in heaven or earth, could raise such aspirations of soul, such sublime and fervent affections as those I feel ? What could fix my spirit but boundless perfection ? What is there else for whose sake I could despise all created glory ? Why am I not at rest here among sensible enjoyments ? Whence arise these importunate longings, these infinite desires ? Why does not the complete creation satisfy, or at least delude me with a dream of hap-

piness? Why do not the objects of sense awake more ardent sentiments than things distant and invisible? Why should I, *who say to corruption, Thou art my father*, aspire after an union with the immense Divinity?

Ye angels of God, who behold his face, explain to me the sacred mystery; tell me how this heavenly flame began; unriddle its wondrous generation. Who hath animated this mortal frame with celestial fire, and given a clod of earth this divine ambition? What could kindle it but the breath of God, which kindled up my soul! and to thee, its amiable original, it ascends; it breaks through all created perfection, and keeps on its restless course to the first pattern of beauty.

Ye flowery varieties of the earth, and you sparkling glories of the skies, your blandishments are vain, while I pursue an excellence that casts a reproach on all your glory. I would fain close my eyes on all the various and lovely appearances you present, and would open them on a brighter scene. I have desires which nothing visible can gratify, to which no material things are suitable. O when shall I find objects more entirely agreeable to my intellectual faculties! My soul springs forward in pursuit of a distant good, which I follow by some faint ray of light, that only glimmers by short intervals before me: O when will it disperse the clouds, and break out in full splendour on my soul!

But what will the open vision of thy beauties effect, if, while thou art but faintly imagined, I love thee with such a sacred fervour! to what blessed heights shall my admiration rise, when I shall behold thee in full perfection; when

I shall see thee as thou art, exalted in majesty, and complete in beauty ! how shall I triumph then in thy glory, and in the privileges of my own being ! what ineffable thoughts will rise, to find myself united to the all-sufficient Divinity, by ties which the sons of men have no names to express, by an engagement that the revolution of eternal years shall not dissolve ? The league of nature shall be broken, and the laws of the mingled elements be cancelled ; but my relation to the almighty God shall stand fixed and unchangeable as his own existence : *Nor life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever separate me from his love.*

Triumph, O my soul, and rejoice ! look forward beyond the period of all terrestrial things. Look beyond ten thousand ages of celestial blessedness ; look forward still, and take an immeasurable prospect ; press on, and leave unnumbered ages behind, ages of ineffable peace and pleasure ; plunge at once into the ocean of bliss, and call eternity itself thy own.

There are no limits to the prospect of my joy ; it runs parallel with the duration of the infinite Divinity ; my bliss is without bounds ; O when shall the full possession of it commence !

II. *The truth and goodness of God.*

ENGRAV'D, as in eternal brass,
 The mighty promise shines ;
 Nor can the pow'rs of darkness raze
 Those everlasting lines.
 The sacred word of grace is strong
 As that which built the skies ;
 The voice that rolls the stars along
 Speaks all the promises.

And they are all built on the immutable truth and goodness of thy nature. Thou dost not speak at random like vain men ; but whatever thou hast engaged to perform is the result of eternal counsel and design. Thou hast uttered nothing that thou canst see occasion to alter on a second review ; thou canst promise nothing to thy own damage, nor be a loser by thy utmost liberality. Thou art every way qualified to make good thy engagements by the fulness of thy riches and power.

Nor hast thou any necessity to flatter thy creatures, or to say kinder things to them than thou meanest to fulfil. Miserable man can bring no advantage to thee, nor has he any thing to claim from thee. By what benefit has he prevented thee? By what right can he demand the least of thy favours? Thy engagements are all free and unconstrained ; founded on thy own beneficence, and not on the merits of thy creature. While I consider this, my expectations rise, I set no limits to my hopes ; I look up with confidence, and call thee *my Father*, and, with an humble faith, I claim every advantage that tender name imports. My heart confides in thee with steadfastness and alacrity ; fear and distrust are inconsistent with my thoughts of the beneficence of thy nature.

Every name and attribute, by which thou hast revealed thyself to man, confirms my faith. Thy life, thy being, is engaged : I may as well question thy existence as thy faithfulness : as sure as thou art, thou art just and true. The protestations of the most faithful friend I have, cannot give me half the consolation that thy promises give me. I hear vain man with diffidence. I bid my

soul beware of trusting false mortality ; but I hear thy voice with joy and full assurance.

Thy words are not writ on sand, nor scattered by the fleeting winds, but shall stand in force when heaven and earth shall be no more. Eternal ages shall not diminish their efficacy, nor alter what the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. I believe, I believe with the most perfect assent : I know that " thou art, and that thou art a rewarder of them that diligently seek thee ;" I feel the evidence, for thou hast not left thyself without a witness in my heart.

III. *Longing after the Enjoyment of God.*

MY God, to thee my sighs ascend ; every complaint I make ends with thy name : I pause, I dwell on the sound, I speak it over again, and find that all my cares begin and end in thee. I long to behold the supreme beauty. I pant for the fair original of all that is lovely ; for beauty that is yet unknown, and for intellectual pleasures yet untasted.

My heart aspires, my wishes fly beyond the bounds of creation, and despise all that mortality can present me with. I was formed for celestial joys and find myself capable of the entertainments of angels. Why may I not begin my heaven below, and taste at least of the springs of pleasure that flow from thy right hand for ever?

Should I drink my fill, these fountains are still exhaustless ; millions of happy souls quench their infinite desires there ; millions of happy orders of beings gaze on thy beauty, and are made partakers of thy blessedness ; but thou art still undiminished : no liberality can waste the store of thy perfection ; it has flowed from eter-

nity, and runs for ever fresh ; and why must I perish for want !

My thirsty soul pines for the waters of life : Oh ! who will refresh me with the pleasurable draught ? How long shall I wander in this desert land, where every prospect is waste and barren ? I look round me in vain and sigh still unsatisfied. Oh ! who will lead me to the still waters, and make me repose in green pastures, where the weary are for ever at rest ! How tedious are the hours of expectation !

Come, Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is sick,
 While thou dost ever, ever stay ;
 Thy long deferring wounds me to the quick,
 My spirit graspeth night and day :
 O shew thyself to me,
 Or take me up to thee.

Dispatch thy commission ; give me my work, and activity to perform it ; and let me, as a hireling, fulfil my day. Lord, it is enough ; *what am I better than my fathers ?* they are dead, and I am mortal.

I'm but a stranger and a pilgrim here
 In these wild regions, wand'ring and forlorn,
 Restless and sighing for my native home,
 Longing to reach my weary space of life,
 And to fulfill my task. O haste the hour
 Of joy and sweet repose ! Transporting hope !

Lord, here I am waiting for thy commands, attending thy pleasure ; O speak, and incline my ear to hear ; give me my work, let me finish it, and gain my dismissal from this body of sin and death ; this hated clog of error and guilt, of cor-

ruption and vanity. Oh! let me drop this load, and bid these scenes of guilt a final adieu!

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord; when wilt thou let me into thy holy habitation! How long shall I pine at this distance from thee! What can I speak to shew thee my pain, to utter my anguish when I fear the loss of my God! O speak an assuring word, and confirm my hope!

Transporting moment! when wilt thou appear
To crown my hopes, and banish all my fear?

Again, O my father and my eternal friend, I breathe out my requests to thee in this land of fatigue and folly! What is this life, but a sorry, tiresome round, a circle of repeated vanities. Happiness has never been seen in it since sin and folly entered; all is empty appearance, or vain labour, or painful vexation.

Suffic'd with life, my languid spirits faint,
And fain would be at rest. O let me enter
Those sacred seats; and after all the toil
Of life, begin an everlasting sabbath!

Yet again, O Lord, I ask leave to tell thee, *I have waited for thy salvation*, and hourly languished after the habitations of my God. My heart grows sick, and I almost expire under these delays. What have I here to keep me from thee? what to relieve the tedious hours of absence? I have pronounced all below the sun vanity and vexation, all insipid and burdensome. Amidst health and plenty, friends and reputation, thou art my only joy, my highest wish, and my supreme delight. On thee my soul fixes all her hopes; there I rest in a celestial calm. O let it

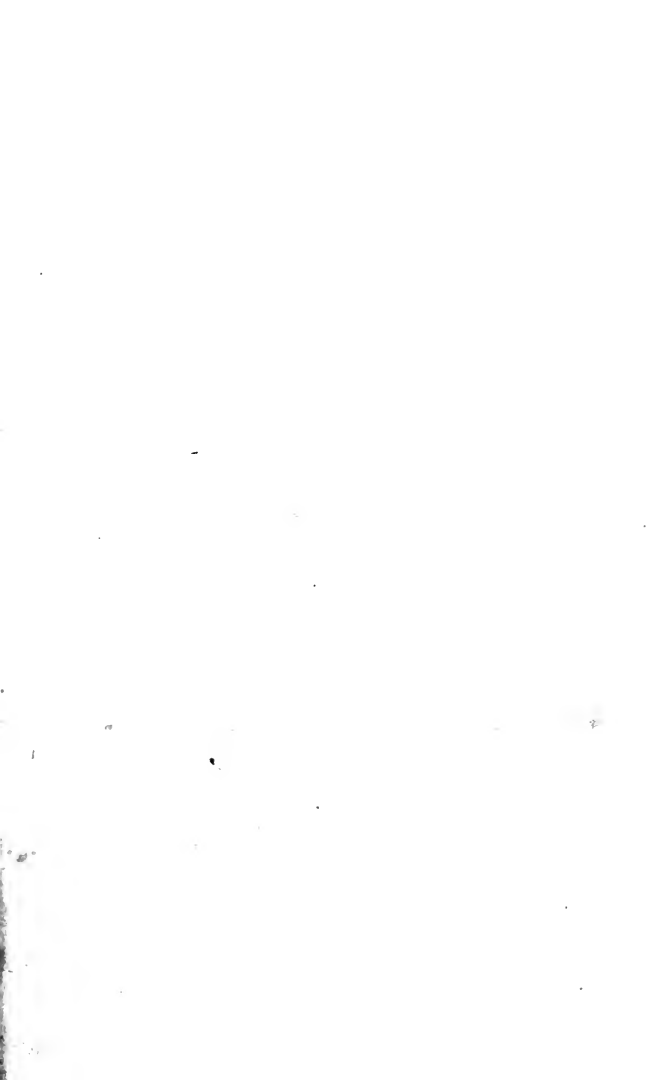
not be broken with earthly objects ; let me live unmolested with the cares or delights of sense !

————— O let me flee
From all the world, and live alone to thee.

IV. *God my Supreme my only Hope.*

WHY do I address thee, my God, with no more confidence ? Why do I indulge these remains of unbelief, and harbour these returns of infidelity and distrust ? Can I survey the earth, can I gaze on the structure of the heavens, and ask if thou art able to deliver ? Can I call in question thy ability to succour me, when I consider the general and particular instances of thy goodness and power ? One age to another, in long succession, hath conveyed the records of thy glory. *In all generations thou hast been our dwelling place : my fathers trusted in thee, and were delivered.* They have encouraged me, my own experience has encouraged me, to trust in thee for ever.

The sun may fail to rise, and men in vain expect its light ; but thy truth, thy faithfulness, cannot fail ; the course of nature may be reversed, and all be chaos again, but thou art immutable, and canst not by any change, deceive the hopes of them that trust in thee. I adore thy power, and subscribe to thy goodness and fidelity ; and what farther objection would my unbelief raise ? Is any thing too hard for God to accomplish ? Can the united force of earth and hell resist his will ?





DEVOUT EXERCISES.
Great God, how wide thy glories shine,
How broad thy kingdom how divine.

Great God ! how wide thy glories shine !
 How broad thy kingdom, how divine !
 Nature and miracle, and fate and chance, are thine. }

Therefore I apply myself immediately to thee,
 and renounce all the terror and all the confidence
 that may rise from heaven or earth besides.

Not from the dust my joys or sorrows spring :
 Let all the baleful planets shed
 Their mingled curses round my head,
 Their mingled curses I despise
 Let but the great, th' eternal King
 Look through the clouds, and bless me with his eyes.

Let him bless me, and I shall be blessed : blessed
 without reserve or limitation ; blessed in my
 going out and coming in, in my sitting down and
 rising up ; blessed in time, and blessed to all
 eternity. That blessing from thy lips will influ-
 ence the whole creation, and attend me wherever
 I am. It shall go before me as a leading light,
 and follow me as my protecting angel. When I
 lie down it will cover me. I shall rest beneath
 the shadow of the Most High, and dwell safely
 in the secrets of his tabernacle.

“ Thy kingdom ruleth over all, O Lord ! and
 thou doest according to thy will in the armies of
 heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.”
 I confess and acknowledge thy providence. The
 ways of man are not at his own disposal, but all
 his goings are ordered by thee ; all events are in
 thy hands, and thou only canst succeed or dis-
 appoint his hopes. If thou blow on his designs,
 they are for ever blasted ; if thou bless them, nei-
 ther earth nor hell can hinder their success ;
 therefore I apply myself immediately to thee,

for not all created power can assist me without thee.

Hence from my heart, ye idols flee,
 Ye sounding names of vanity !
 No more my tongue shall sacrifice
 To chance and nature, tales and lies :
 Creature, without a God, can yield meno supplies. }

Not all the power of man on earth, nor angel nor saint in heaven, can help or relieve me in the least exigence, if my God hide himself, and stand afar off from me. Second causes are all at thy direction, and cannot aid me till commissioned by thee.

Lord, when my thoughtful soul surveys
 Fire, air and earth, and stars, and seas,
 I call them all thy slaves :
 Commission'd by my Father's will,
 Poison shall cure, or balm shall kill ;
 Vernal suns, or zephyr's breath,
 May burn or blast the plants to death,
 That sharp *December* saves.
 What can winds or planets boast
 But a precarious pow'r ?
 The sun is all in darkness lost,
 Frost shall be fire, and fire be frost,
 When he appoints the hour.

At thy command nature and necessity are no more ; all things are alike easy to God. Speak but thou the word, and my desires are granted : say, *Let there be light*, and there shall be light. Thou canst look me into peace, when the tumult of thoughts raise a storm within. Bid my soul be still, and all its tempests shall obey thee.

I depend only on thee ; do thou smile, and all the world may frown : do thou succeed my af-

fairs, and I shall fear no obstacle that earth or hell can put in my way. Thou only art the object of my fear, and all my desires are directed to thee.

Human things have lost their being and their names, and vanish into nothing before thee; they are but shades and disguises to veil the active Divinity. Oh! let me break through all these separations, and see and confess the great, the governing cause. Let no appearance of created things, however specious, hide thee from my view; let me look through all to thee, nor cast a glance of love or hope below thee. With a holy contempt let me survey the ample round of the creation as lying in the hollow of thy hand, and every being in heaven and on earth as immoveable by the most potent cause in nature, till commissioned by thee to do good or hurt. O let thy hand be with me to keep me from evil, and let me abide under the shadow of the Almighty! I shall be secure in thy pavilion. To thee I fly for shelter from all the ills of mortality.

V. God a present Help, and ever near.

THOU wast found of me, O my God! when I sought thee not, and wilt thou fly me when I seek thee? Am I giving my breath to the wind, and scattering my petitions in the air? Is it a vain thing to call upon God, and is there no profit in crying to the Almighty? "Art thou a God afar off, and not near at hand?" Is there any place exempt from thy presence, any distance whence my cries cannot reach thee? Can any darkness hide me from thy eyes? or is there a

corner of the creation unvisited by thee? Dost thou not fill heaven and earth, and am I not surrounded by thy immensity?

Are my desires unknown to thee? or is there a thought in my heart concealed from thee? Dost not thou that hast formed the ear, hear? Canst thou forget the work of thine own hand? or, retired far in the heavens, full of thine own happiness, canst thou leave thy creation to misery and disorder, helpless and hopeless: Are the ways of man at his own disposal, and his paths undirected by thee? Is calling on the living God no more than worshipping a dumb idol? Canst thou, like them, disappoint and mock thy adorers?

Art thou unacquainted with the extent of thy own power, that thou shouldst promise beyond thy ability to perform? or art thou "as a man, that thou shouldst lie, or the son of man, that thou shouldst repent?" Is thy faithfulness uncertain, and thy power precarious? Are those perfections imaginary for which men adore thee, and thy gracious names insignificant titles? "Do the children of men in vain put their trust under the shadow of thy wings? Art not thou a present help in the time of trouble?" and is there no security in the secret places of the Most High? Whither then shall I look in my distress? to whom shall I direct my prayer? from whom shall I expect relief, if there is no help in God for me?

But, oh! what unrighteousness have my fathers ever found in thee? what injustice can I charge thee with? what breach of truth, or want of pity? Have the records of thy actions ever been stained with the breach of faithfulness? Art thou not my only hope, and my long experienced support? Have I ever found help from the crea-

ture, when thou hast failed me? Have I, or can I have a greater certainty than thy word to depend on? Can any other power defend or deliver like thee? Thou art “a rock, and thy work is perfect; for all thy ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity: just and right art thou.” With my last breath I will witness to thy truth and faithfulness, and declare thy goodness to the children of men.

VI. *God, an all-sufficient Good, and my only Happiness.*

Why is my heart so far from thee,
 My God, my chief delight?
 Why are my thoughts no more by day
 With thee, no more by night?

Why should my foolish passions rove?
 Where can such sweetness be
 As I have tasted in thy love,
 As I have found in thee?

WHERE can I hope to meet such joys as thy smiles have given me? where can I find pleasure so sincere and unallayed? When I have enjoyed the light of thy countenance, and the sense of thy love, has not all my soul been filled? Have I found any want or emptiness? Has there been any room left for desire, or any prospect beyond, besides the more perfect enjoyment of my God? Have not all the glories of the world been darkened, and turned into blackness and deformity? How poor, how contemptible have they appeared! or rather, have they not all disappeared and vanished as dreams and sha-

dows in the noon of day, and under the blaze of the sun-beams? I have never found satisfaction in any thing but in God; why then do I wander from him? why do I leave the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns? why do I abandon the full ocean in search of shallow streams? What account can I give for folly like this? I can promise myself nothing from the creatures; those expectations shall deceive me no more. 'Tis thou, my God, thou art the only object of my hopes and desires: it is thou only canst make me happy.

If thou frown, my being is a curse; thy indignation is hell with all its terrors. Let me never feel that, and I defy all things else to make me miserable. I seem independent on all nature, to thee only I apply myself. Hear me, thou beneficent Author of my being, thou support of my life; to thee I direct my wishes, those desires which thou wilt approve, while I ask but the happiness I was created to enjoy. Oh! fix all my expectations, on thee, and free me from this levity and inconstancy.

Look gently down, almighty Grace,
Prison me round in thy embrace;
Pity the heart that would be thine,
And let thy pow'r my love confine.

Suffer me never to start from thee; such a confinement were sweeter than liberty; "Thy yoke is easy and thy burden light." I shall bless the chain that binds me to thee. Oh! give me such a view of thy beauty as shall fix my volatile heart for ever; such a view as shall determine all its motions; and be a constant conviction how unreasonable it is to wander from thee.

Is it that I relish any thing beyond thy love? Oh! no. I appeal even to thee, who canst not be deceived, and knowest the inmost secrets of of my soul. Thou knowest where the balance of my love falls, and that my wanderings are not deliberate, that it is not by choice that I forsake thee. I grieve, I sigh for my folly: shouldst thou forgive me, I can never forgive myself, for I know it is inexcusable.

I want nothing when I am possessed of thee; without thee I want all things. Thou art the centre of all my passions; I have no hope but what is thine, no joy but what flows from thee; my greatest fears are those of losing thee; my inmost care is to secure thy favour. This is the subject of my deepest anxiety; every sigh I breathe ends in thy name; and that loved name alone allays every anguish of my soul, and calms its wildest tempests.

From thy frowns or favour all my joys or sorrows spring: thy frowns can make me infinitely miserable, thy favour can make me infinitely blessed. I can defy hell, and smile in the face of death, whilst I can call thee *mine*. My God! still let me bless the sound, and part with all things, rather than renounce my property in thee; let me hold it to my last breath, and claim it with my expiring sighs.

Secure of thee, nothing can terrify my soul; all is peaceful and serene within, eternal love and immortal pleasure: I desire no more; imagination stops here, and all my wishes are lost in eternal plenty. My God! more cannot be asked, and with less I should be infinitely miserable. The kingdoms of the skies should not buy my title to thee and thy love: the blessedness of all

creatures is complete here, for God himself is blessed in himself for ever.

What can I add? for all my words are faint,
 Celestial love no eloquence can paint;
 No more can be in mortal sounds exprest,
 But vast eternity shall tell the rest.

VII. *A Covenant with God.*

INCOMPREHENSIBLE Being! who *searchest the heart, and triest the reins of the children of men*, who knowest my sincerity, and my thoughts are all unveiled to thee! I am surrounded with thine immensity; thou art a present, though invisible, witness of the solemn affair I am now engaged in. I am now taking hold of my strength that I may make peace with thee, and entering into articles with the Almighty God. These are the happy days long since predicted, when "one shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Israel, and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord; and I will be their God, and they shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Jehovah."

With the most thankful sincerity I take hold of this covenant, as it is more fully manifested and explained in thy gospel by Jesus Christ; and, humbly accepting thy proposals, I bind myself to thee by a sacred and everlasting obligation. By a free and deliberate action, I do here ratify the articles which were made for me in my baptism, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; I religiously devote myself

to thy service, and entirely submit to thy conduct. I renounce the glories and vanities of the world, and choose thee as my happiness, my supreme felicity, and everlasting portion. I make no articles with thee for any thing besides; deny or give me what thou wilt, I will never repine, while my principal treasure is secure. This is my deliberate, my free and sincere determination; a determination which by thy grace, I will never retract.

Oh! Thou, by whose power alone I shall be able to stand, "put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee." Let not the world, with all its flatteries, nor death, nor hell, with all their terrors, force me to violate this sacred vow. Oh! let me never live to abandon thee, nor draw the impious breath that would deny thee.

And now let surrounding angels witness for me, that I solemnly devote all the powers and faculties of my soul to thy service; and when I presumptuously employ any of the advantages thou hast given me to thy dishonour, let them testify against me, and let my own words condemn me.

ELIZ. ROWE. *FR*

Thus have I subscribed to thy gracious proposals, and engaged myself to be the Lord's; and now let the malice of men, and the rage of devils, combine against me, I can defy all their stratagems; for God himself is become my friend, Jesus is my all-sufficient Saviour, and the Spirit of God, I trust, will be my Sanctifier and Comforter.

O happy day! transporting moment! the brightest period of my life! Heaven with all its

light smiles on me. What glorious mortal can now excite my envy? what scene to tempt my ambition could the whole creation display? Let glory call me with her exalted voice; let pleasure, with a softer eloquence allure me; the world, in all its splendour, appears but a trifle, while the infinite God is my portion. He is mine by as sure a title as eternal veracity can confer. The right is unquestionable; the conveyance unalterable; the mountains shall be removed, and the hills be dissolved, before the everlasting obligation shall be cancelled.

VIII. *A Thank-offering for saving Grace.*

“BLESS the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me bless his holy name: bless the Lord, and forget not all his benefits; who redeemed thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercy;” who brought thee out of the mire and clay, and set thy feet upon a rock; who broke thy fetters, and freed thee from the miserable bondage of sin. I lay a wretched slave pleased with my chains, and fond of my captivity, fatally deluded and undone, till love, almighty love, rescued me. Blessed effect of unmerited grace! I shall stand for ever an illustrious instance of boundless mercy: to that I must entirely ascribe my salvation, and thro’ all the ages of eternity I’ll rehearse the wonders of redeeming love, and tell to listening angels what it has done for my soul.

I’ll sing the endless miracles of love:
For ever that my lofty theme shall prove.

My glorious Creator! why did I employ thy thought before I had a being? why from all eternity was an immortality designed me, and my birth allotted me in a land illuminated with the rays of sacred light? I might have been invoking the powers of hell with detestable ceremonies, instead of adoring the omnipotent God. But when thousands are lost in these delusions, why am I thus graciously distinguished? Instead of being born among the shameful vices of impious parents, and an heir to their curses, why am I entitled to the blessing of religious ancestors? why, when I was incapable of choice, was I devoted to the God that “keeps covenant and mercy to a thousand generations of them that fear him?”

Why, when I knew thee not, didst thou sustain me? but Oh! why, when I knew thee, and rebelled against thee, why didst thou so long suffer my ingratitude? why did thy watchful providence perpetually surround me, crossing all the methods I took to undo myself? why was I not cursed with my own wishes, and left to the quiet possession of those vanities I delighted in; those toys which I foolishly preferred to all the treasures of thy love? why didst thou pursue me with the offers of thy favour when I fled thee with such aversion; and had fled thee for ever, if thou hadst not compelled me to return?

Why did the Spirit strive so long with an obstinate heart, which resisted all its motions, and turned thy patience into provocation and guilt? why am I not undone by those pleasing snares in which I have seen so many deluded wretches perish? Like them I despised the unsearchable riches of thy grace; with them I had been content to share the sorry portion and pleasures of

this world, if thou hadst let me alone, and I should never have inquired after thee. But why wast thou found of one that sought thee not? O why! but "because thou wilt be merciful to whom thou wilt be merciful."

Therefore again, with astonishment and delight, I look back on the methods of thy grace; and again I consider myself lost in an abyss of sin and mercy; when there was no eye to pity me, no hand but thine to assist me, thou madest it then the time of love.

Never was grace more free and surprising than thine is; never was there a more obstinate heart than mine, and never such unconquerable love as thine. How gloriously hath it triumphed over my rebellious faculties; how freely has it cancelled all my guilt!

Could I have made the least pretence to merit, or have challenged any thing from thee, the benefit had been less exalted; had there been any foundation for human pride, my corrupt heart would soon have taken the advantage, and have robbed thee of thy honour, by ascribing the glorious work to the strength of my own reason, or a natural tendency to virtue; but here my vanity is for ever silenced, I am lost in the boundless abyss. O height! O depth! O length and breadth immeasurable! "How unsearchable are thy ways, *Almighty Love*, and thy paths past finding out!"

Let me here begin my eternal song, and ascribe "salvation and honour, dominion and majesty, to Him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever," who has loved me, and ransomed me with his blood; ransomed me from a voluntary bondage, from the most vile and hopeless

captivity, a captivity from which nothing but that invaluable purchase could have redeemed me.

Infinite love ! Almighty grace !
Stand in amaze, ye rolling skies !

Bring hither your celestial harps, ye beneficent beings, who amidst the height of your happiness, express a kind regard for man : teach me the language of paradise, the strains of immortality. But, oh ! it is all too feeble ; the tongues of seraphims cannot utter what I owe my Redeemer. From what misery, my adorable Saviour, hast thou rescued me ! From error, from sin, from snares and death, from infernal chains, eternal horror, and the blackness of darkness for ever.

Nor here my glorious benefactor stayed ; but still went on to magnify the riches of his grace, and entitled me to an endless inheritance, and an immortal crown ; to the fruition of God, and the unutterable joys that flow from his presence.

Mysterious depths of boundless love
My admiration raise :
O God, thy name exalted stands
Above my highest praise.

IX. *Evidence of sincere Love to God.*

IF I love thee not, my blessed God, I know not what I love : if I am uncertain of this, I am uncertain of my existence. If I love thee not, what is the meaning of these pathetic expressions ? My GOD, my ALL ! thou spring of

my life, and fountain of my happiness! my great reward, and my exceeding joy! the eternal object of my love, and supreme felicity of my nature! Does not my heart attend my lips in all this language? How can this be, if my soul does not love thee?

O my God, if I love thee not, what is the meaning of this constant uneasiness at thy absence? from whence proceeds this painful anxiety of mind about thy love, and all these intense, these restless desires after thee? Why are all the satisfactions of life insipid without these? Without my God, what are riches, and honours, and pleasures to me? I should esteem the possession of the world but a trifle, or rather my eternal damage, if it must be purchased with the loss of thy favour. Thy benignity is better than life, and the moments in which I enjoy a sense of thy love are the only happy intervals of my life. 'Tis then I live; it is then I am truly blessed: it is then I look down with contempt on the little amusements of the world, and pity them that want a taste for these exalted pleasures.

How calm, how peaceful, in those seasons, are all the regions of my soul! I have enough, I ask no more. Can they languish for the stream who drink at the overflowing fountain? I have all the world, and more; I have heaven itself in thee; in thee I am completely and securely blessed, and can defy the malice of earth and hell to shake the foundation of my happiness, while thou dost whisper thy love to my soul. O blessed stability of heart! O sublime satisfaction! Hast thou not told me that thou art mine by inviolable engagement, when my soul devoted itself sincerely to thee? Does not thy word assure me,

“that the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but thy kindness shall not depart, nor the covenant of thy peace be broken?”

Hast thou not terminated my wishes, O Lord, in thyself, and fixed my wandering desires? Is it for riches or honour, for length of days, or pleasure that I follow thee with daily importunities? Thou knowest these are not the subject of my restless petitions: do I ever balance these toys with thy favour? Oh! no; one smile of thine obscures all their glory. When thou dost bless my retired devotions with thy presence, I can wink all created beauty into blackness. When I meet thee in my solitary contemplations, with what contempt do I look back on the lessening world!

How dazzling is thy beauty! how divine!
How dim the lustre of the world to thine!

How dull are its entertainments to the pleasures of conversing with thee! Oh! stay, in those happy moments, cries my satisfied soul:

Stay, my Beloved, with me here:
Stay till the morning star appear;
Stay till the dusky shadows fly
Before the day's illustrious eye.

Oh! stay till the gloomy night of life is past, and eternity draw on my soul. There is nothing in this barren place to entertain me when thou art gone: I can relish nothing below, after these celestial banquets.

If I love thee not, what is the meaning of this impatience to be with thee? “My soul longeth, yea fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; when

shall I come and appear before thee? O that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest!"

X. *Assurance of Salvation in Christ Jesus.*

I HAVE put my treasures, my immortal part into thy hands, O my dear Redeemer; and "shall the prey be taken from the mighty?" shall a soul consecrated to thee fall a sacrifice to hell?

Blessed God, am I not thine? and shall the temple of thy spirit be profaned, and the lips that have so often ascribed dominion, and glory, and majesty to thee, be defiled with infernal blasphemy, and the execrations of the damned? Shall the sparks of divine love be extinguished, and immortal enmity succeed? And shall I, who was once blessed with thy favour, become the object of thy wrath and indignation? Shall all the mighty things thou hast done for my soul be forgotten? Shall all my vows, and thy own secret engagements be cancelled? 'Tis all impossible; for "thou art not as man, that thou shouldst lie; nor as the son of man, that thou shouldst repent." Thou art engaged by thy own tremendous name for my security: my God, and my father's God: from generation to generation thou hast been our dwelling place. I was devoted to thee in baptism by the solemn vows of my religious parents: my infant hands were early lifted up to thee, and I soon learned to know and acknowledge the God of my fathers. I have actually subscribed with my hand to the Lord, and am thine by the most voluntary



DEVOUT EXERCISES.
O that I had the wings of a dove.

and deliberate obligations. The portion of Jacob is my joyful choice, nor need I fear losing it while thy word is established as the heavens.

The Lord, who made heav'n, earth, and sea,
And all that they contain,
Will never quit his steadfast truth,
Nor make his promise vain.

Were my dependance on myself, I were undone : the first temptation would shake my resolutions : I should sell the inestimable riches of thy love for a trifle, and fool away immortal pleasures for the joys of a moment, a specious delusion would seduce me from all my hopes of a glorious futurity. I shall fall a victim to my own folly, and must inevitably perish if thou forsake me ; but the strength of Israel is my hope, the mighty One of Jacob my defence.

Thou art the Rock of Ages ; the fixed and immutable Divinity is my high Tower and my Refuge, my Redeemer and almighty Saviour. These were the blessed, the glorious titles by which thou didst at first assure my doubtful soul : these were the transporting names I knew and called thee by, and thou hast answered them through all the changes of my life.

I was thy early care ; thou didst support my helpless infancy, and art the watchful guide of my unsteady youth. Which way soever I turn, I meet thy mercy, and trace thy providence ; and so long as I live I will record thy benefits, and depend on thy truth for those benefits which have constantly pursued me, and that truth which has never deceived me, and is engaged never to abandon me. Transporting assurance ! What further security can I ask, what security can I

wish, beyond eternal veracity? "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but thy kindness shall not depart, nor the covenant of thy peace be broken;" that covenant which has been sealed by the blood of the Son of God, and in that holy sacrament I have received the pledges of thy love. Thou didst graciously invite me into that communion, and met me there with the most unmerited favour.

Fear not, sayest thou, poor trembling soul, for I am thy Redeemer, and thy mighty Saviour, the Hope of Israel, and in my name shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: "I am gracious and merciful, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." These are the titles by which I have revealed myself to men. I came the expected Messiah, the Star of Jacob, and the Glory of the Gentiles; I came from the fulness of ineffable glory, in the form of man, to redeem the race of Adam; I am willing and able to save, "and whosoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast away." Fear not: I had kind designs towards thee from eternity; and by these visible signs of my body and blood I seal my love to thy soul: take here the pledge of heaven, the assurance of everlasting happiness.

'Tis enough, replied my transported soul; divide the world as thou wilt, let others unenvied share its glory; thy love is all I crave. I am blessed with that assurance, I am surrounded with the joys of paradise; every place is a heaven, while my Beloved is mine, and I am his.

If all the monarchs, whose command supreme
Divide the wide dominion of this ball,
Should offer each his boasted diadem,
I would not quit thy favour for them all :
These trifles with contempt I would resign ;
The world's a toy while I can call thee mine.

Let God and angels witness for me, that I renounce the world, and choose thy love as my portion; witness that I sacrifice my darling sins to thee; and from this moment solemnly devote myself to thy service.

Thus did I engage myself to be the Lord's, and thus didst thou graciously condescend to seal the privileges of the new covenant to my soul. And, O let the solemn transaction never be forgotten! let it be writ in the volumes of eternity; let it be engraven in the books of unalterable destiny; there let the sacred articles stand recorded, and be had in everlasting remembrance.

XI. *Thou art my God.*

O GOD! thou art my God; thou art thy own blessedness, the centre of thy own desires, and the boundless spring of thy own happiness. Thou art immutable and infinitely perfect, and therein consists thy blessedness and glory; but that thou art my God it is from thence flows all my consolation; this glorious privilege is my dignity and boast. "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; my father's God, and I will exalt thee. The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted. Thy benignity is better than life, therefore my lips shall praise thee."

I have all things in possessing thee ; I find no want, no emptiness within ; my wishes are answered, and all my desires appeased when I believe my title to thy favour secure. Whatever tempests arise, whatever darkness surrounds me, yet thou art my God ; I cry, and the storms are appeased, and the darkness vanishes. I find my expectations from the world disappointed, my friends false, and human dependance vain ; but still thou art my God, my unfailing confidence, my rock, my everlasting inheritance. Death and hell level their darts against me, but with a heavenly tranquillity I cry, " Thou art my God : I dwell on high ; my place of defence is the munition of rocks.

My hiding-place, my refuge, tow'r,
 And shield art thou, O Lord :
 I firmly anchor all my hopes,
 On thy unerring word.

While thou art mine what can I fear? Can Omnipotence be vanquished? Can almighty strength be opposed? When it can, then and not till then, shall I want security ; then, and not till then, shall my confidence be shaken, and my hopes confounded.

Thou art my God. Let me again repeat the glorious accents, and hear the pleasurable sounds ; let me a thousand and a thousand times repeat it ; it is rapture all, and harmony : the harps of angels and their tongues, what notes more melodious could they sing or play? What but these transporting words give the emphasis to all their joys? On this they dwell, it is their eternal theme, *Thou art my God.* Like me, every se-

raph boasts the glorious property, and owes his happiness to those important words: in them unbounded joys are comprehended. Paradise itself, all heaven is here described; all that is possible to be uttered of celestial blessedness is here contained.

My God my all-sufficient good,
 My portion and my choice;
 In thee my vast desires are fill'd,
 And all my powers rejoice.

My God, my triumph, and my glory, let others boast of what they will, and pride themselves in human securities; let them place their confidence in their wealth, their honour, and their numerous friends; I renounce all earthly dependence, and glory only in my God.

From him alone my joys shall rise,
 And run eternal rounds;
 Beyond the limits of the skies,
 And all created bounds.

When death shall remove all other supports, and force me to quit my title to the dearest names below, in *my God* I shall have an unchangeable property: that engagement shall remain firm, when I shall lose my hold of all other enjoyments; when all human things vanish with an everlasting flight, I shall bid them a joyful adieu, and breathe out my soul with this triumphant exclamation, *Thou art my God*, my inheritance, my eternal possession: nor death, nor hell, shall ever separate me from thy love.

Thou art my God. Let me survey the extent of my blessedness; let me take a prospect of my

vast possession : let me consider its dimensions : O height ! O depth ! O length and breadth immeasurable ! I have all that is worth possessing. *Thou art my God.*

But what have I uttered ? Is mortality permitted to speak these daring words ? Can the race of man make such glorious pretensions ? Thou thyself canst give no more : thou that art thy own happiness, and the spring of joy to all thy creatures ; with thee are the fountains of pleasure ; and in thy presence is fulness of joy ; immortal life and happiness flow from thee, and they are necessarily blessed who are surrounded with thy favour ; thou art their God, and *thou art my God,* to everlasting ages.

Earth flies, with all the charms it has in store ;
 Its snares and gay temptations are no more.
 Creatures no more of entity can boast,
 The streams, the hills and tow'ring groves are lost.
 The sun, the stars, and the fair fields of light
 Withdraw, and now are banish'd from my sight,
 And God is all in all.

XII. *Confession of Sin, with Hope of Pardon.*

BREAK, break, insensible heart ! let confusion cover me, and darkness, black as my own guilt, surround me. Lord, what a monster am I become ! How hateful to myself for offending thee ! how much more detestable to thee, to thee against whom I have offended ! Why have I provoked the God on whom my being every moment depends ; the God, who out of nothing advanced to me a reasonable and immortal nature, and put me in a capacity of being happy for ever ;

the God whose goodness has run parallel with my life ; who has preserved me in a thousand dangers, and kept me even from the ruin I courted, and even while I repined at the providence that saved me ?

How often has he recovered me from eternal misery, and brought me back from the very borders of hell, when there was but a dying groan, but one faint sigh between me and everlasting perdition ! When all human help failed, and my mournful friends were taking their last farewells ; when every smiling hope forsook me, and the horrors of death surrounded me, to God I cried from the depths of misery and despair ; I cried, and he was entreated, and rescued my life from destruction ; he “ brought me out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock.” A thousand instances of thy goodness could I recount, and all to my own confusion.

Could I consider thee as my enemy, I might forgive myself ; but when I consider thee as my best friend, my tender father, the sustainer of my life, and author of my happiness, good God ! what a monstrous thing do I appear, who have sinned against thee ! Could I charge thee with severity, or call thy laws rigorous and unjust, I had some excuse : but I am silenced there by the conviction of my own reason, which assents to all thy precepts as just and holy. But, to heighten my guilt, I have violated the sacred rules I approve ; I have provoked the justice I fear, and I have offended the purity I adore.

Yet still there are higher aggravations of my iniquity ; and what gives me the utmost confusion is that I have sinned against unbounded love

and goodness. Horrid ingratitude ! Here lies the emphasis of my folly and misery ; the sense of this torments me, can I not say, as much as the dread of hell, or the fears of losing heaven ? Thy love and tender compassion, the late pleasing subjects of my thoughts are on this account become my terror. The titles of an enemy and a judge scarce sound more painful to my ears, than those of a friend and a benefactor, which so shamefully enhance my guilt : those sacred names confound and terrify my soul, because they furnish my conscience with the most exquisite reproaches. The thoughts of such goodness abused, and such clemency affronted, seem to me almost as insupportable as those of thy wrath and severity. O whither shall I turn ? I dare not look upward, the sun and stars upbraid me there. If I look downward, the fields and mountains take their Creator's part, and heaven and earth conspire to aggravate my sins. Those common blessings tell me how much I am indebted to thy bounty ; but, Lord, when I recal thy particular favours, I am utterly confounded. What numerous instances could I recount ! Nor has my rebellion yet shut up the fountain of thy grace : for yet I breathe, and yet I live, and live to implore a pardon : Heaven is still open, and the throne of God is accessible. But oh ! with what confidence can' I approach it ; what motives can I urge, but such as carry my own condemnation in them ?

Shall I urge thy former pity and indulgence ? This were to plead against myself : and yet thy clemency, that clemency which I have abused, is the best argument I can bring ; thy grace and

clemency, as revealed in Jesus, the Son of thy love, the blessed Reconciler of God and man.

O whither has my folly reduced me? With what words shall I choose to address thee? "Pardon my iniquity, O Lord, for it is great." Surprising argument! yet this will magnify thy goodness, and yield me an eternal theme to praise thee: it will add an emphasis to all my grateful songs, and tune my harp to everlasting harmony. The ransomed of the Lord shall join with me, while this glorious instance of thy grace excites their wonder, and my unbounded gratitude: thus shall thy glory be exalted.

O Lord God, permit a poor worthless creature to plead a little with thee. What honour will my destruction bring thee? what profit, what triumph to the Almighty will my perdition be? Mercy is thy brightest attribute; this gives thee all thy loveliness, and completes thy beauty. By names of kindness and indulgence thou hast chosen to reveal thyself to men; by titles of the most tender import thou hast made thyself known to my soul: titles which thou dost not yet disdain, but art still compassionate, and ready to pardon.

But that thou hast or wilt forgive me, O my God! aggravates my guilt. And wilt thou, indeed, forgive me? Wilt thou remit the gloomy score, and restore the privilege I have forfeited? Wondrous love! astonishing benignity! let me never live to repeat my ingratitude; let me never live to break my penitent vows; let me die ere that unhappy moment arrive.

XIII. *The Absence of God on Earth.*

WHAT is hell, what is damnation, but an exclusion from thy presence? 'Tis the want of that which gives the regions of darkness all their horror. What is heaven, what are the satisfactions of angels, but the views of thy glory? What but thy smiles and complacence are the springs of their immortal transports?

Without the light of thy countenance, what privilege is my being? what canst thou thyself give me to countervail the infinite loss? Could the riches, the empty glories, and insipid pleasures of the world recompense me for it? Ah! no: not all the variety of the creation could satisfy me while I am deprived of thee. Let the ambitious, the licentious, and covetous, share these trifles among themselves: they are no amusement for my dejected thoughts.

There was a time (but ah! that happy time is past, those blissful minutes gone) when, with a modest assurance, I could call thee 'my Father, my almighty friend, my defence, my hope, and my exceeding great reward:' But those glorious advantages are lost, those ravishing prospects withdrawn, and to my trembling soul thou dost no more appear but as a consuming fire, an inaccessible majesty, my severe judge, and my omnipotent adversary; and who shall deliver me out of thy hands? where shall I find a shelter from thy wrath? what shades can cover me from thy all-seeing eye?

One glance from thee, one piercing ray,
Would kindle darkness into day:

The veil of night is no disguise,
 Nor screen from thy all-searching eyes :
 Through midnight shades thou find'st thy way,
 As in the blazing noon of day.

‘ But will the Lord cast off for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Has God indeed forgotten to be gracious?’ Will he shut out my prayer for ever, and must I never behold my Maker? Must I never meet those smiles that fill the heavenly inhabitants with unutterable joys; those smiles which enlighten the celestial region, and make everlasting day above? In vain then have these wretched eyes beheld the light; in vain am I endued with reasonable faculties and immortal principles: Alas! what will they prove but everlasting curses, if I must never see the face of God?

Is it a dream, or do I hear
 The voice that so delights my ear?
 Lo, he o'er hills his steps extends,
 And, bounding from the cliffs, descends:
 Now like a roe outstrips the wind,
 And leaves the panting hart behind.

‘ I have waited for thee as they that wait for the morning,’ and thy returns are more welcome than the springing day-light after the horrors of a melancholy night; more welcome than ease to the sick, than water to the thirsty, or rest to the weary traveller. How undone was I without thee? In vain, while thou wert absent, the world hath tried to entertain me: all it could offer was like jests to a dying man, or like recreations to the damned. On thy favour alone my tranquillity depends: deprived of that, I should sigh for

happiness in the midst of a paradise: 'thy loving kindness is better than life.' And if a taste of thy love be thus transporting, what ecstasies shall I know when I drink my fill of the streams of bliss that flow from thy right hand for ever! But when——

When shall this happy day of vision be?
 When shall I make a near approach to thee,
 Be lost in love, and wrapt in ecstasy?
 Oh! when shall I behold thee all serene,
 Without this envious cloudy veil between?
 'Tis true, the sacred elements* impart
 Thy virtual presence to my faithful heart;
 But to my sense still unreveal'd thou art.
 This, though a great, is an imperfect bliss,
 To see a shadow for the God I wish:
 My soul a more exalted pitch would fly,
 And view thee in the heights of majesty.

XIV. *Banishment from God for ever.*

'DEPART from me, ye cursed!' Oh! let me never hear thy voice pronounce those dreadful words. With what terror would that sentence pierce my heart, while it thunders in my ears! Oh! rather speak me into my primitive nothing, and with one potent word finish my existence. To be separated from thee, and cursed with immortality, who can sustain the intolerable doom?

O dreadful state of black despair,
 To see my God remove,
 And fix my doleful station where
 I must not taste his love—

* The Lord's Supper.

nor view the light of thy countenance for ever. Unutterable woe! there is no hell beyond it. Separation from God is the depth of misery. Blackness of darkness, and eternal night, must necessarily involve a soul excluded from thy presence. What life, what joy, what hope is to be found where thou art not? I want words to paint my thoughts of that dismal state. Oh! let me never be reserved for the dreadful experience? rather let loose thy wrath, and in a moment reduce me into nothing.

“Depart from thee!” Oh! whither should I go from thee? “Into utter darkness?” That makes no addition at all to the wretch’s misery that is banished from thy face. After that fearful doom I should, without constraint, seek out shades as dark as hell, being most agreeable to my own despair, and in the horrors of eternal night bewail the infinite loss.

The remembrance of that lost happiness would render celestial day insufferable. The light of paradise could not cheer me without thy favour; the songs of angels would but heighten my anguish, and torment me with a scene of bliss which I must never taste. The sight of thy favourites, and the glories of thy court, would but excite my envy, and fill me with madness, while I considered myself the object of thine eternal indignation: nor could all the harmony of heaven allay the horror of that reflection.

The groans of the damned, and the darkness of the infernal caverns, would better suit my grief. There to the cries of tormented ghosts, and to the sound of eternal tempests, I might join my wild complaints, and lament the loss of infinite bliss, and curse my own folly. But all the

plagues below, if I might speak my present thoughts, should not extort a blasphemous reflection on the divine attributes; for I know I deserve eternal misery, and even in hell I think I should confess thy justice. Thy long experienced clemency, I am sure, ought to silence my reproaches for ever, and to all eternity leave thee unblemished with the imputation of cruelty.

But oh! what agonies would the remembrance o. thy former favours excite? what exquisite remorse would it give me to recal those happy moments when thou didst bless my retired devotions with thy presence? After I had relished those divine entertainments, how bitter would the dregs of thy wrath be? Whither would thy frowns sink me, after I have enjoyed the light of thy countenance?

If I must lose thy favour, Oh! let me forget what that word imports, and blot for ever from my remembrance the joys that a sense of thy love has excited! let no traces of those sacred transports be left on my soul.

But must I depart from thee into everlasting fire? Double and dreadful curse! and yet unquenchable flames, and infernal chains, (if I can judge in this life of such awful futurities) would be less terrible than the sense of those lost joys. That loss would endure no reflection; the review would be for ever insufferable; the ages of eternity could not diminish the exquisite regret; still it would excite new and unutterable anguish, and rack me with infinite despair.

Blessed God, pity the soul whose extremest horror is the doom of an eternal departure from thee. Draw my spirit into the holiest and the nearest union with thyself that is possible, while it

dwells in this flesh; and let me here commence that delightful residence and converse with God, which neither death nor judgment shall ever destroy, nor shall a long eternity ever put a period to it.

XV. *The Glory of God in his Works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption.*

MY being immediately flows from thee, and should I not praise my omnipotent Maker? I received the last breath I drew from thee, thou dost sustain my life this very moment, and the next depends entirely on thy pleasure. 'Tis the dignity of my nature to know, and my happiness to praise and adore my great Original. But, oh! thou Supreme of all things, how art thou to be extolled by mortal man! "I say to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worms, Ye are my brethren. My days are as an hand's breadth, and my life is nothing before thee; and thou art the same, and thy years never fail. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God;" the incomprehensible, the immutable Divinity. The language of paradise, and the strains of celestial eloquence, fall short of thy perfections; the first born sons of light lose themselves in blissful astonishment in search of thy excellencies; even they, with silent ecstasy, adore thee, while thou art veiled with ineffable splendour.

The bright, the bless'd Divinity is known
And comprehended by himself alone.

Who can conceive the extent of that power, which out of nothing brought materials for a rising world, and from a gloomy chaos, bid the harmonious universe appear?

Confusion heard thy voice, and wild uproar
Stood rul'd; stood vast infinity confin'd.

At thy word the pillars of the sky were framed, and its beauteous arches raised; thy breath kindled the stars, adorned the moon with silver rays, and gave the sun its flaming splendour. Thou didst prepare for the waters their capacious bed, and by thy power set bounds to the raging billows: by thee the vallies were clothed in their flowery pride, and the mountains crowned with groves. In all the wonderful effects of nature we adore and confess thy power; thou utterest thy voice in thunder, and dost scatter thy lightning abroad; thou ridest on the wings of the wind, the mountains smoke, and the forests tremble at thy approach; the summer and winter, the shady night and the bright revolutions of the day, are thine.

These are thy glorious works, parent of good!
Almighty! thine this universal frame:
Thus wond'rous they! thyself how wond'rous then!

But, O what must thy essential majesty and beauty be, if thou art thus illustrious in thy works! If the discoveries of thy power and wisdom are thus delightful, how transporting are the manifestations of thy goodness? From thee every thing that lives receives its breath, and by thee are all upheld in life. Thy providence reaches the least insect; for thou art good, and thy care

extends to all thy works. Thou feedest the ravens, and dost provide the young lions their prey : thou scatterest thy blessings with a liberal hand on thy whole creation ; man, ungrateful man, largely partakes thy bounty. Thou causeth the rain to descend, and makest thy sun to shine on the evil and unthankful : “ for thou art good, and thy mercy endureth for ever.”

As the Creator and Preserver of men, thou art gloriously manifest ; but, oh ! how much more gloriously art thou revealed, as reconciling ungrateful enemies to thyself by the blood of thy eternal Son ! Here thy beneficence displays its brightest splendour ; here thou dost fully discover thy most magnificent titles, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness !* “ How unsearchable are thy ways, and thy paths past finding out !” Infinite depths of love, never to be expressed by human language ! And yet should man be silent, the stones themselves would speak, and the mute creation find a voice to upbraid his ungrateful folly.

XVI. *Longing for the coming of Christ.*

COME, Lord Jesus, come quickly : oh ! come, lest my expectations faint ; lest I grow weary, and murmur at thy long delay. I am tired with these vanities, and the world grows every day more unentertaining and insipid ; it has now lost its charms, and finds my heart insensible to all its allurements. With coldness and contempt I view these transient glories : inspired with nobler prospects, and vaster expecta-

tions, by faith I see the promised land, and every day brings me nearer the possession of my heavenly inheritance. Then shall I see God and live, and face to face behold my triumphant Redeemer :

And in his favour find immortal light.
 Ye hours and days, cut short your tedious flight ;
 Ye months and years (if such allotted be
 In this detested, barren world for me)
 With hasty resolution roll along ;
 I languish with impatience to be gone.

I have nothing here to linger for ; my hopes, my rest, my treasure, and my joys are all above ; my soul faints for the courts of the Lord, in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no refreshment.

How long “ shall I dwell in Meshech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar ! ” When will the wearisome journey of life be finished ? when shall I reach my everlasting home, and arrive at my celestial country ? My heart, my wishes are already there ! I have no engagement to delay my farewell, nothing to detain me here ; but wander an unacquainted pilgrim, a stranger, and desolate, far from my native regions.

My friends are gone before, and are now triumphing in the skies, secure of the conquest, possessed of the rewards of victory. They survey the field of battle, and look back with pleasure on the distant danger : death and hell for ever vanquished, leave them in the possession of endless tranquillity and joy ; while I, beset with a thousand snares, and tired with continual toil, unsteadily maintain the field, till active faith steps in, assures me of the conquest, and

shews me the immortal crown! 'Tis faith tells me, that "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart:" it assures me that "my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the last day on the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and not another; and these eyes shall behold, though my reins be consumed within me. Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus." This must be the language of my soul till thou dost appear, and these my impatient breathings after thee. Till I see thy salvation, my heart and my flesh will pine for the living God.

"Grant me, O Lord to fulfil, as a hireling, my days;" shorten the space, and let it be full of action. 'Tis of small importance how few there are of these little circles of days and hours, so they are but well filled up with devotion, and with all proper duty.

XVII. *Seeking after an absent God.*

OH! let not the Lord be angry, and I, who am but dust, will speak. Why dost thou withdraw thyself, and suffer me to pursue thee in vain? if I am surrounded with thy immensity, why am I thus insensible of thee? why do I not find thee, if thou art every where present? I seek thee in the temple, where thou hast often met me; there I have seen the traces of thy majesty and beauty; but those sacred visions bless my sight no more. I seek thee in my secret retirements, where I have called upon thy name, and have often heard the whispers of thy voice;

that celestial conversation hath often reached and raptured my soul; but I am solaced no more with his divine condescensions. I listen, but I hear those gentle sounds no more; I pine and languish, but thou fleest me; still I wither in thy absence, as a drooping plant for the reviving sun.

O when wilt thou scatter this melancholy darkness? when shall the shadows flee before thee? when shall the cheerful glory of thy grace dawn upon my mind at thy approach? I shall revive at thy light, my vital spirits will confess thy presence; grief and anxiety will vanish before thee, and immortal joys surround my soul.

Where thou art present, heaven and happiness ensue; hell and damnation fills the breast where thou art absent. While God withdraws, I am encompassed with darkness and despair; the sun and stars shine with an uncomfortable lustre; the faces of my friends grow tiresome; the smiles of angels would fail to cheer my languishing spirit. I grow unacquainted with tranquillity; peace and joy are empty sounds to me, and words without a meaning.

Tell me not of glory and pleasure, there are no such things without my God; while he withdraws, what delight can these trifles afford? All that amuses mankind are but dreams of happiness, shades, and fantastic appearances. What compensation can they make for an infinite good departed? All nature cannot repair my loss: heaven and earth would offer their treasures in vain; not all the kingdoms of this world, nor the thrones of archangels, could give me a recompense for an absent God.

O where can my grief find redress! whence can I draw satisfaction, when the fountain of joy seals up its streams? My sorrows are hopeless till he return; without him my night will never see a dawn, but extend to everlasting darkness; content and joy will be eternal strangers to my breast. Had I all things within the compass of creation to delight me, his frowns would blast the whole enjoyment: unreconciled to God, my soul would be for ever at variance with itself.

Even now, while I believe thy glory hid from me but with a transient eclipse, while I wait for thy return as for the dawning day, my soul suffers inexpressible agonies at the delay; the minutes seem to linger, and days are lengthened into ages: but, Lord, what keener anguish should I feel, did I think thy presence had totally forsaken me; did I imagine thy glory should no more arise on my soul! My spirits fail at the supposition: I cannot face the dreadful apprehensions of my God for ever gone. Is it not hell in its most horrid prospect, eternal darkness, and the undying worm, infinite ruin, and irreparable damage? Compared to this, what were all the plagues that earth could threaten, or hell invent? What is disgrace, and poverty, and pain? what is all that mortals fear, real or imaginary evils? they are nothing compared to the terrors which the thought of losing my God excites.

O thou, who art my boundless treasure, my infinite delight, my all, my ineffable portion, can I part with thee? I may see without light, and breathe without air, sooner than be blessed without my God. Happiness separate from thee

were a contradiction, an impossibility (if I dare speak it) to Omnipotence itself. I feel a flame which the most glorious creation could not satisfy, an emptiness which nothing but infinite love could fill. I must find thee, or weary myself in an eternal pursuit. Nothing shall divert me in the endless search, no obstacle shall fright me back, no allurements withhold me, nothing shall flatter or relieve my impatience; my bliss, my heaven, my all depends on the success. Shew me where thou art, O my God, conduct me into thy presence, and let my love confine me there forever.

XVIII. *Appeals to God concerning the Supremacy of Love to Him.*

O GOD, when I cease to love and praise thee, let me cease to breathe and live; when I forget thee, let me forget the name of my happiness, and let every pleasing idea be razed from my memory. When thou art not my supreme delight, let all things else deceive me: let me grow unacquainted with peace, and seek repose in vain: let delusions mock my gayest hopes; let my desires find no satisfaction till they are terminated all in thee. When I forget the satisfaction of thy love, O my God! let pleasure be a stranger to my soul; when I prefer not that to my chiefest joy, let me be insensible of all delight; when thy benignity is not dearer to me than life, let that life become my burden and my pain.

Search the inmost recesses of my heart, and if thou findest any competitor there, remove the darling vanity, and blot every name but thine

from my breast. Let me find nothing but emptiness in the creature, when I forsake the all-sufficient Creator; let the streams be cut off when I wander away and abandon the fountain. Let me be destitute of assistance, when I cease to rely on thee: let my lips be for ever silent, when they refuse to acknowledge thy benefits, and make not thee the subject of their higher praise. Let no joyful strain enter at my ears, when thy name is not the most delightful sound they can convey to my heart.

I have been pronouncing heavy curses on myself, if thy love be not my chief blessing; yet, O my dearest good, my portion, and my only felicity, might I not go on farther still, and even venture immortal joys on the sincerity of my love to thee? Blessed Lord, forgive these dangerous efforts of a mortal tongue, which are the mere out-breakings of a fervent affection. I could even dare to pledge all my hopes and pretensions to future happiness, (and O let not my heart deceive me!) I think I could risk them all, if thou thyself art not the object of my brightest hopes, and the light of thy countenance the height of that expected happiness.

If I desire any thing in heaven or on earth in comparison of thee, I am almost ready to say, Banish me as an eternal exile from the light of paradise: even that paradise would be melancholy darkness without thee, and the obscurest corner of the creation, blessed with thy presence would be more agreeable. Oh! where could I be happy remote from thee? what imaginable good could supply thy absence? Say, O my God, do I not love thee?

Shall I call the holy angels to witness? shall I call heaven and earth to witness? will not the most high God himself, the possessor of heaven and earth, condescend to witness the ardour and sincerity of my love?

With what pleasure do I reflect on the obligations by which I have devoted myself to thee! My soul collects itself, and with an entire assent gives up all its powers to thee. I would bind myself unto thee beyond all the ties that mortals know. Ye ministers of light, give me your flames, and teach me your celestial forms; let all be noble and pathetic, and solemn as your own immortal vows, and I will joyfully go through them all to bind myself to my God for ever. Say, now, ye heavens and earth, say, ye holy angels, and O thou all knowing God, say, do I not love thee?

XIX. *A devout Rapture; or, Love to God inexpressible.*

THOU radiant sun, thou moon, and all ye sparkling stars, how gladly would I leave your pleasant light to see the face of God! ye crystal streams, ye groves and flowery lawns, my innocent delights, how joyfully could I leave you to meet that blissful prospect! and you, delightful faces of my friends, I would this moment quit you all to see him whom my soul loves; so loves, that I can find no words to express the unutterable ardour. Not as the miser loves his wealth, nor the ambitious his grandeur; not as the libertine loves his pleasure, or the generous man his friend; these are flat similitudes to des-

cribe such an intense passion as mine. Not as a man scorched in a fever longs for a cooling draught ; not as a weary traveller wishes for soft repose ; my restless desires admit of no equal comparison from these.

I love my friend ; my vital breath and the light of heaven are dear to me ; but should I say I love my God as I love these, I should belie the sacred flame which aspires to infinity. 'Tis thee, abstractly thee, O uncreated beauty ! that I love. In thee my wishes are all terminated ; in thee, as in their blissful centre, all my desires meet, and there they must be eternally fixed : it is thou alone that must constitute my everlasting happiness. Were the harps of angels silent, there would be harmony for me in the whispers of thy love : were the fields of light darkened, thy smiles would bless me with everlasting day ; the vision of thy face will attract my eyes, nor give me leisure to waste a look on other objects to all eternity, any farther than God is to be seen in his creatures. All their beams of grace, and joy, and glory, are derived from thee, the eternal Sun, and will merit my attention no farther than they reflect thy image, or discover thy excellencies.

Even at this distance, encompassed with the shades of death, and the mists of darkness ; in these cold melancholy regions, when a ray of thy love breaks in on my soul, when through the clouds I can trace but one feeble beam, even that obscures all human glory, and gives me a contempt for whatever mortality can boast. What wonders then will the open vision of thy face effect, when I shall enjoy it in so sublime a degree, that the magnificence of the skies will

not draw my regard, nor the converse of angels divert my thoughts from thee? Thou wilt engross my everlasting attention; and I should abound in felicity, if I had nothing to entertain me but immediate communion with the infinite Divinity.

Mend thy pace, old lazy Time, and shake thy heavy sands; make shorter circles, ye rolling planets; when will your destined courses be fulfilled? Thou restless sun, how long wilt thou travel the celestial road? when will thy starry walk be finished? when will the commissioned angel arrest thee in thy progress, and, lifting up his hand, swear by the unutterable name, *that time shall be no more?* O happy period! my impatient soul springs forward to salute thee, and leaves the lagging days, and months, and years, far behind. "Haste, my beloved, and be like a roe, or a young hart on the spicy mountains."

I pine, I die for a sight of thy countenance: O, turn the veil aside, blow away the separating cloud, pull out the pins of this tabernacle, break the cords, and let fall the curtain of mortality! O let it interpose no longer between me and my perfect bliss. I feel those flames of divine love which are unextinguishable as the lights of heaven; nor death itself shall quench the sacred ardour.

Ye ministers of light, ye guardians of the just, stand and witness to my vows: and in an humble dependance on thy grace, O Jesus, may I not venture to bid these thy flaming ministers protest against me when I change my love, and stand my accusers at the last judgment! When I prove false to thee, may I not venture to say

to them all, Bring in your awful evidence, and proclaim my perjury?

For you have listen'd while the sacred name
That kindles in each heavenly breast a flame ;
You listen'd while it melted on my tongue,
Flow'd from my lips, and grac'd the midnight song,
Bless'd was the time, and sweetly fled the hours,
While holy love employ'd my noblest pow'rs ;
The heav'n's appear'd, and the propitious skies
Unveil'd their inmost glories to my eyes.
Oh, stay ! I cry'd, ye happy moments stay,
Nor in your flight snatch these delights away :
I ask no more the rising sun to view,
To mortals and their hopes I bid adieu.

These heavens and this earth have been witness to my vows : the holy angels have been witnesses, and all will join together to condemn me when I violate my faith : strengthen and confirm it, O my Saviour, and make the bonds of it immortal.

If I were only to reason upon this subject, I might say, what motive could earth, what could hell, what could heaven itself propose to tempt my soul to change its love ? what could they lay in the balance against an infinite good ? what could be thrown in as a stake against the favour of God ? Ask the happy souls who know what the light of his countenance imports, who drink in joy and immortality from his smiles ; ask them what value they set on their enjoyments ? ask them what in heaven or earth should purchase one moment's interval of their bliss ? ask some radiant seraph, amidst the fervency of his raptures, at what price he values his happiness ? and when these have named the purchase, earth and hell may try to balance mine. Let them spread the

baits that tempt deluded men to ruin ; let riches, honour, beauty, and bewitching pleasure appear in all their charms, the sensuality of the present and past ages, the Persian delicacy, and the Roman pride ; let them uncover the golden mines, and disclose the ruby sparkling in its bed ; let them open the veins of sapphire, and shew the diamond glittering in its rock, let them all be thrown into the balance ; alas ! their weight is too little, and too light. Let the pageantries of state be added, imperial titles, and the ensigns of majesty ; put in all that boundless vanity imagines or wild ambition craves, crowns and sceptres, regal vestments and golden thrones ; the scales still mount. Throw in the world entire ; 'tis unsubstantial, and light as airy vanity.

Are these thy highest boasts, O deluding world ? Ye ministers of darkness, have you nothing else to offer ? are these your utmost proposals ? are these a compensation for the favour of God ? Alas ! that boundless word has a meaning which outweighs them all : infinite delight, inconceivable joy, are expressed in it ; the light of his countenance signifies more than angels can describe, or mortality imagine : and shall I quit all that an everlasting heaven means for empty shadows ?

Go, ye baffled tempters, go offer your toys to madmen and fools ; they all vanish under my scorn, and cannot yield so much as an amusement to my aspiring thoughts. The sun, in all its spacious circuit, beholds nothing to tempt my wishes. These winding skies, in all their ample round, contain nothing equal to my desires, my ambition has far different ends, and other

prospects in view ; nothing below the joys of angels can satisfy me.

Let me explore the words of life and beauty, and find a path to the dazzling recesses of the Most High : let me drink at the fountain-head of pleasure, and derive all that I want from original and uncreated fulness and felicity.

Oh, divine love ! let me launch out into thy pleasurable depths, and be swallowed up of thee : let me plunge at once in immortal joy, and lose myself in the infinite ocean of happiness.

Till then I pine for my celestial country ; till then I murmur to the winds and streams, and tell the solitary shades my grief. The groves are conscious to my complaints, and the moon and stars listen to my sighs. By their silent lights I talk over my heavenly concerns, and give a vent to my divine affections in mortal language ; then looking upward, I grow impatient to reach that milky way, the seat of joy and immortality.

Come love, come life, and that bless'd day
For which I languish, come away ;
When this dry soul these eyes shall see,
And drink the unseal'd source of Thee.

O come, I cry, thou whom my soul loveth ! I would go on, but want expression, and vainly struggle with the unutterable thought.

Tell me, ye sons of light, who feel the force of the celestial fires, in what language you paint their violence ? Or do the tongues of seraphs falter ? Does the language of paradise want emphasis here, and immortal eloquence fail ? Surely your happiness is more perfect than all your descriptions of it : heaven echoes to your

charming notes, as far as they reach, while divine love, which is all your song, is infinite, and knows no limits of degree or duration.

Yet I would say, Some gentle spirit, come and instruct me in your art; lend me a golden harp, and guide the sacred flight; let me imitate your devout strains; let me copy out your harmony; and then,

Some of the fairest choir above
 Shall flock round my song,
 With joy to hear the name they love
 Sound from a mortal tongue.

Blessed and immortal creatures, I long to join with you in your celestial style of adoration and love. I long to learn your ecstasies of worship and joy, in a language which mortals cannot pronounce, and to speak the divine passion of my soul in words which are now unspeakable.

XX. *Self Reproof for Inactivity.*

IS it possible that I should one day be rapt almost into the third heavens, and, ere a few weeks have passed over me, I should find myself creeping among the insects of the earth, and almost as meanly busied as they? Can divine love, which exalted me lately into flaming transports, so far subside and grow cool within me? Can it leave me so inactive as I now feel myself? What shall I do to shame my conscience with reproaches, and renew the flame of religious zeal and vigour?

Alas ! how does the activity of men about the little affairs of human life condemn my negligence in matters of everlasting consequence ! Does the fond lover with such anxiety and impatience pursue the object of his wishes ; and shall not divine beauty and infinite loveliness inflame my desires to a nobler height, and excite my languishing devotion ?

Are the ambitious so restless and solicitous to make themselves great, and to purchase the veneration of fools ? do they lay such mighty projects, and compass their designs with such pain and difficulty for mere pageantry and gaudy trifles ; and shall I, who am a candidate for heaven, a probationer for celestial dignity, lose my title for want of diligence ? shall I faint in the noble strife, when God and angels are ready to assist me, and every moment's toil will be recompensed with eternal ages of rest and triumph ?

See, see, the moments fly, the labour shortens, and the immense reward draws near ; the palm of victory, the starry crown, are in view ; the happy realms and fields of light entertain me with their glorious prospect. Rouse thee, my soul, to the most active pursuit of those felicities ; waken all thy sprightly powers ; and let it never, never be thy reproach, that the vigour and intenseness of thy labours fall short of the pretensions of thy desires ; or that thy holy industry should sink so far below the fervour of those affections, which, in a devout hour, thou hast pronounced *inexpressible*.

O Lord, what a mutable thing is man ! what frailty works in this flesh and blood, and hangs heavy upon our better powers ! 'Tis grace, divine grace alone, can keep alive that immortal spark

within us, which came first from heaven, and first taught our hearts to arise and spring upward. Preserve and complete thy own work, almighty Grace.

XXI. A joyful View of approaching Death.

O DEATH, where is thy sting? where is thy boasted victory? The conquest is mine; I shall pass in triumph through thy dark dominions; and through the grace of the Son of God, my divine leader, I shall appear there, not a captive, but a conqueror.

O king of terrors, where are thy formidable looks? I can see nothing dreadful in thy aspect: thou appearest with no tokens of defiance, nor dost thou come with summons from a severe judge, but gentle invitations from my blessed Redeemer, who has passed gloriously through thy territories in his way to his throne.

Thrice welcome, thou kind messenger of my liberty and happiness! a thousand times more welcome than jubilee to the wretched slave, than pardon to a condemned malefactor. I am going from darkness and confinement to immense light and perfect liberty; from these tempestuous regions to the soft and peaceful climes above; from pain and grief to everlasting ease and tranquillity. For the toils of virtue, I shall immediately receive its vast rewards: for the reproach of fools, the honour and applause of angels. In a few minutes I shall be higher than yonder stars, and brighter far than they. I shall range the boundless æther, and breathe the balmy air of paradise. I shall presently behold my glorious

Maker, and sing hallelujahs to my exalted Saviour.

And now come, ye bright guardians of the just, conduct me through the unknown and trackless æther, for you pass and repass the celestial road continually; you have commission not to leave me till I arrive at Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God; till I come to the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

Hold out faith and patience; it is but a little while, and your work will be at an end; but a few moments, and these sighs and groans shall be converted into everlasting hallelujahs; but a few weary steps, and the journey of life will be finished. One effort more, and I shall have gained the top of the everlasting hills, and from yonder bright summit shall presently look on the dangers I have escaped in my travels through the wilderness.

Roll faster on, ye lingering minutes; the nearer my joys, the more impatient I am to seize them: after these painful agonies, how greedily shall I drink in immortal ease and pleasure! Break away, ye thick clouds; be gone, ye envious shades, and let me behold the glories ye conceal; let me see the promised land, and survey the happy regions I am immediately to possess. How long will ye interpose between me and my bright sun? between me and the unclouded face of God? Look up, my soul, see how sweetly those reviving beams break forth! how they dispel the gloom, and gild the shades of death.

O blessed eternity! with what a cheerful splendour dost thou dawn on my soul? With

thee comes liberty, and peace, and love, and endless felicity : but pain, and sorrow, and tumult, and death, and darkness, vanish before thee for ever. I am just upon the shores of those happy realms where uninterrupted day and eternal spring reside ; yonder are the delectable hills and harmonious vales which continually echo to the songs of angels. There the blissful fields extend their verdure, and there the immortal groves ascend. But how dazzling is thy prospect, O city of God, of whom such glorious things are spoke ! In thee “ there shall be no more night, nor need of the sun or moon, for the throne of God and of the Lamb is in the midst of thee ; and the nations that are saved shall walk in thy light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour unto thee : and there the glorious Lord shall be to us a place of defence, a place of streams and broad rivers ;” and the voice of joy, and the shout of triumph, shall be heard in thee for ever.

There holy souls perpetual sabbaths keep,
 And never are concern'd for food or sleep ;
 There new-come saints with wreaths of light are
 crown'd,
 While ivory harps and silver trumpets sound
 There flaming seraphs sacred hymns begin,
 And raptur'd cherubs loud responses sing.

My eyes shall there behold the King in his beauty ; and oh ! how ravishing will the aspects of his love be ! What unutterable ecstasies shall I feel, when I meet those smiles which enlighten heaven, and exhilarate all the celestial regions ; when I shall view the beatific glory, without one interposing cloud to eternity : when I shall drink

my fill at the fountains of joy, and in those rivers of pleasure that flow from his right hand for ever.

XXII. *A Devout Resignation of Self to the Divine Power and Goodness.*

MY all-sufficient friend, “ my shield, and my exceeding great reward ! ” I have enough : unbounted avarice can covet nothing beyond thee ; the soul whom thou dost not suffice deserves to be eternally poor. Thou art my supreme happiness, my voluntary choice : I took thy love for my treasure in that blessed day when I entered into covenant with thee, and became thine : I made no articles with thee for thy friendship, the honours and pleasures of the world, but solemnly renounced form all, and chose thy favour for my single inheritance, leaving the conduct of my life entirely to thee.

These were my vows, and these I have often renewed ; and shall I now retract such sacred obligations, and alter a choice so just and reasonable ? Forbid it, gracious God ! let me never be guilty of such madness. The world has often disappointed my most confident expectations, but thou hast never deceived me. In all my distress I have found thee a certain refuge, “ my shield, my fortress, my high tower, my deliverer, my rock, and he in whom I trust. ” When there was none to save me, thy powerful hand has set me free ; thou hast redressed my grievances, and dissipated my fears ; thou hast brought me light out of obscurity, and turned my darkness into day.

When the world could afford me nothing but tempest and disorder, with thee I have found repose and undisturbed tranquillity. Thou hast been my long experienced refuge, my unfailing confidence, and I stedfastly depend on thee for my future conduct. I cannot err when guided by infinite Wisdom. I must be safe in the arms of eternal love, to which I humbly resign myself. Let me have riches or poverty, honour or contempt ; whatever comes from thy hands shall be thankfully received. I would hear no voice but thine, nor make a step but where I am following thee.

If thou wouldst leave me to choose for myself, I would resign the choice again to thee. I dread nothing more than the guidance of my own blind desires : I tremble at the thoughts of such a fatal liberty ; avert, gracious God, that miserable freedom ! Thou foreseest all events, and at one single view dost look through eternal consequences ; therefore do thou determine my circumstances, not to gratify my own wild desires, but to advance thy glory.

Thou hast an unquestionable right to dispose of me ; I am thine by necessary ties and voluntary engagements, which I thankfully acknowledge, and solemnly renew : deliberately and entirely I put myself into thy hands. Whatever interest I have in this world I sacrifice to thee, and leave my dearest enjoyments to thy disposal, acknowledging it my greatest happiness to be guided by thee.

“ Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him ? ” that thou who art supremely blessed and independently happy shouldst concern thyself with human affairs, and condescend to make our

wants as much thy care as if mortal miseries could reach thee, and interrupt immortal blessedness ! thou wouldst make us sensible of thine indulgence by the most tender similitudes : a father's gentle care but faintly shadows thine, and all we can conceive of human pity falls short of thy compassion. Thou dost seem to share in all our calamities, and sympathize in all our grief. No friend flies to our assistance with all the speed that love brings thee ; nor canst thou ever want methods to relieve those that confide in thee.

Thy providence finds or makes its way through all oppositions ; the streams shall roll back to their fountains, the sun shall stand still, and the course of nature be reversed, rather than thou want means to bring thy purposes to pass. No obstacle puts a stand to thy designs, nor obstructs thy methods : it is thy will that makes nature and necessity : who can stay thy hand, or say unto thee, *What dost thou ?* Thy counsel shall stand, and thou wilt do all thy pleasure. Nothing is impossible for thee to accomplish : wherever I cast my eyes, I see instances of thy power : the extended firmament, the sun and stars, tell me what thou art able to perform ; they attest thy omnipotence, and rebuke my unbelief. The whole creation pleads for thee and condemns my infidelity.

Almighty God, forgive my diffidence, while I confess it is most inexcusable. Thy hand is not shortened, nor are the springs of thy bounty sealed ; thy ancient miracles have not exhausted thy strength, nor hath perpetual beneficence impoverished thee ; thy power remains undiminished, and thy mercy endureth for ever. That

dazzling attribute surrounds me with transporting glories : which way soever I turn, I meet the bright conviction ; I cannot recal a day of my past life on which some signature of thy goodness is not stamped.

O ! who hath tasted of thy clemency
 In greater measure, or more oft than I ?
 Which way so'er I turn my face or feet,
 I see thy mercy, and thy glory meet.

In whatever thou hast granted, or whatever thou hast denied me, thy beneficence has been mingled with every dispensation ; thou hast not taken the advantage of my follies, nor been severe to my sins, but hast remembered my frame, and treated me with the utmost indulgence. Glory be to thy name for ever.

XXIII. *Redeeming Love.*

ALMIGHTY love, the theme of every heavenly song ! infinite grace, the wonder of angels ! forgive a mortal tongue that attempts thy praise ; and yet should man be silent, the mute creation would find a voice to upbraid him.

But oh ! in what language shall I speak ? with what circumstance shall I begin ? shall I roll back the volumes of eternity, and begin with the glorious design that determined man's redemption before the birth of Time, before the confines of Creation were fixed ?

Infinite years before the day,
 Or heavens began to roll !

Shall I speak in general of all the nations of the redeemed? or, to excite my own gratitude, shall I consider myself, my worthless self, included, by the eternal decree, among the number of those who should hear of a Redeemer's name, and be marked out a partaker of that immense privilege? Before the foundations of the hills were laid, the gracious design was formed, and the blessed plan of it schemed out before the curtains of the sky were spread.

Lord, what is man? what am I? what is all the human race, to be thus regarded? O narrow thoughts, and narrower words! here confess your defects; these are heights not to be reached by you. Adorable measures of infinite clemency! unsearchable riches of grace! with what astonishment do I survey you! I am swallowed and lost in the glorious immensity. All hail, ye divine mysteries! ye glorious paths of the unsearchable Deity! let me adore, though I can never express you.

Yet should I be silent, heaven and earth, nay hell itself will reproach me: the damned themselves would call me ungrateful, should I fail to celebrate that grace whose loss they are for ever lamenting; a loss that leaves them for ever desperate and undone. 'Tis this grace which tunes the harps of heaven, and yields them an immortal subject of harmony and praise. The spirits of just men made perfect fix their contemplations here; they adore the glorious mystery, and while they sing the wonders of redeeming love, they ascribe sublime and living honours to him that sits on the throne, and to the **LAMB**, for ever. And infinitely worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive the grateful homage. Who

shall not praise and magnify thy name? who shall deny the tribute of thy glory?

But, alas! what can mortal man add to thee? what can nothingness and vanity give? We murmur from the dust, and attempt thy praise from the depths of misery? yet thou dost condescend to hear and listen to our broken accents; amidst the hallelujahs of angels our groans ascend to thee, our complaints reach thee: from the height of thy happiness, and from the exaltations of eternal glory, thou hast a regard to man, poor wretched man! thou receivest his homage with delight, his praises mingle with the harmony of angels, nor interrupt the sacred concord. Those natives of heaven, those morning stars sing together in their heavenly beatitudes, nor disdain to let the sons of earth and mortality join with them in celebrating the honours of Jesus, their Lord and ours. To him be every tongue devoted, and let every creature for ever praise him. *Amen.*

XXIV. *Pleading for Pardon and Holiness.*

IMMORTAL spring of life, the fountain of all existence, the first and last, "without beginning of days, or end of years," before the heavens were created thou wast, and shalt remain unchanged, while they wax old and decay. Thou art infinitely blessed in thyself, thy glory admits of no addition; the praises of angels cannot heighten thy happiness, nor the blasphemies of hell diminish it. Thou canst do every thing, and thy power finds no obstacle. "Thou madest heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water; thou doest according to thy will in the

armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth; thou holdest the waters in the hollow of thy hand, and measurest out the heavens with a span: thou comprehendest the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighest the mountains with scales, and the hills in a balance: thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment," and art surrounded with inaccessible splendour: "Thou art glorious in holiness, fearful in praises; the heavens are not clean in thy sight, and thou chargest thine angels with folly: what then is man that drinketh in iniquity like water? what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou dost thus visit him?" 'Tis because thou art good, and thy mercy endureth for ever; mercy is thy prevailing attribute. Thou art compassionate, and infinitely gracious, and hast fully manifested thy love and beneficence to the race of man, in the glorious methods of our redemption from everlasting bondage and death by thy Son Jesus.

Therefore with the lowest reverence, and most humble gratitude, I desire to prostrate myself before thee, acknowledging it my greatest honour and undeserved privilege to approach the Lord, and bow myself before the high God; I that am unworthy to utter thy tremendous name, or once to lift up my eyes to heaven. To my own confusion I here confess I have abused the mercy which I now implore, and injured that goodness and forbearance by my sins which I am now addressing myself to. I have forfeited the very benefits I ask, and despised those sacred privileges which I am forced to plead: I can scarce use any motive but what would carry it to my own condemnation. Shall I implore thy

mercy by the gracious terms of the new covenant, sealed by the blood of thy eternal Son? Alas! that gracious covenant I have violated, and profaned its sacred seals: I have sinned against the clearest light, and the tenderest instances of love: I have not only broken my obligations to thee as my Creator, but the stronger engagements of thy adoption, even the glorious privileges of being admitted into thy family, and numbered among the children of God.

But still those very circumstances that aggravate my guilt exalt thy mercy; here the freeness and magnificence of thy grace will display itself; here thou wilt answer the indulgent title of a father in its tenderest extent. I have no sins too great for infinite clemency to pardon. Thou art God, and not man; and as the heavens are high above the earth, so high are thy ways of compassion above all human methods.

I dare not set bounds to thy goodness, nor affirm, that *thus far, and no farther* divine patience extends. Thou hast pardoned and restored me to thy favour too often for me now to despair: my penitent sighs were never rejected, nor my humble requests unanswered. I have always found the heavens open, and the throne of God accessible through the blood of a Redeemer. By his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion, by his painful death and glorious resurrection, I implore thy pardon: he has made a full atonement, and divine Justice will demand no further satisfaction. "To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believes in his name shall receive remission of sins."

O blessed Jesus! the hope of the Gentiles, the salvation of the ends of the earth, the great Messiah, the promised Saviour, who doth answer these glorious titles in their utmost signification, to thee, my certain, my experienced refuge, I fly: O Son of God, hear me; O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on me. O eternal Spirit, the promised Comforter, come with all thy sacred consolations; come, and be as dew to the drooping flowers, as rain to the parched ground; oh! come with thy reviving light, and dispel the darkness that beclouds my soul; break in like the sun after a melancholy night. One beam of thine would melt this frozen, this obdurate heart, and kindle in my soul the spark of holy love; breathe upon my cold affections, and raise them to a sacred flame.

Searcher of hearts! from whom nothing is concealed, whose penetrating eyes find out hypocrisy in its darkest disguise; thou knowest the desires of my soul, and art my impartial witness, that I kneel not here for the riches and honours of the world; that I am not prostrated before thee for length of days or pleasure; but that it is the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, that I seek. Give me not my portion with the rich and great, but let me have my humble lot with thy children; let me bear contempt and derision, and suffer reproach with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season.

Thy favour is the end of all my wishes, the constant subject of my prayer. Oh! thou, whose ears are open to the wants of all thy creatures, who hearest the young ravens when they cry from their nest to thee, who givest the men

of the world the transitory things they choose, wilt thou deny the desires which thou thyself dost inspire and approve? O let me be filled with the righteousness which I hunger and thirst after, and be satisfied with thy likeness. Thou canst not be diminished, whatever perfection thou dost communicate to the creatures; endless liberality could not make thee poor.

I ask not privileges above the capacity of my nature, nor aspire to the perfections of angels. I only beg that I may reach those heights of holiness and divine love, which souls, invested by a mortal body like mine and incumbered with the same human passions, have attained. But in vain I strive to imitate those bright examples thou hast set before me; without thy assistance all my endeavours will prove successful. Thou knowest the frailty of my nature, and the mighty difficulties I have to encounter: I have not only the allurements of the world, but all the stratagems of hell to encounter with, and a treacherous heart within, ready on all occasions to betray me into sin and endless perdition: O let my impotence and danger awaken thy compassion.

Remember thy former benignity, O Lord, and let that engage thee to grant me new supplies of that grace by which alone I shall prove victorious. Thy bounty to any of the works of thy hands must always flow from the goodness of thy own nature; for what creature can pretend to merit any thing from thee? I would urge nothing but thy own infinite mercy, when I entreat thee not to let me perish, after the wonderful things thou hast done for my soul; after all the pledges thou hast given me of thy love, let not

my follies provoke thee to forsake me ; but remember thy covenant, and its gracious articles, and act according to thine own ineffable benignity, which has been the gracious motive of every favour I have received from thee.

XXV. *A Transport of Gratitude for saving Mercy.*

I BLESS a thousand times the happy day when first a beam of heavenly light broke in on my soul, when the day-star from on high visited me, and the celestial light began to dawn ! I welcomed its cheerful lustre, and felt the sacred influence ; the flames of holy love awoke, and holy joys were kindled.

The earth and all its pageantry disappeared like clouds before the morning sun : the scenes of paradise were opened ; seraphic pleasures, and unutterable delights. All hail, I cried, you unknown joys, you unexperienced pleasures ! compared to you, what is all I have relished till now ? what is earthly beauty and harmony ? what is all that mortals call charming and attractive ? I never lived till now ; I knew no more than the name of happiness till now : I have been in a dream during all the days of my folly and vanity ; but now I awake to the life of heaven-born spirits, and taste the joys of angels.

XXVI. *Importunate Requests for the Return of
God to the Soul.*

THOU great and glorious, thou invisible and universal Being, art thou no nearer to be approached ; or do I search thee amiss ? is there a corner of the creation unvisited by thee, or any place exempt from thy presence ? I trace thy footsteps through heaven and earth, but I cannot overtake thee.

Why do I seek thee if thou art not here ;
Or find thee not, if thou art every where ?

Tell me, O my God, and my All, tell me where thou art to be found ; for there is the place of my rest. What imaginable good can supply thy absence ? Deprived of thee, all that the world could offer would be like a jest to a dying man, and provoke my aversion and disdain. 'Tis a God that I seek.

My wishes stoop not to a lower aim ;
Thou, thou hast kindled this immortal flame,
Which nothing could allay.

Adieu, adieu to all human things ! Let me find my God, the end of all my wishes. Why dost thou keep back the face of thy throne ? why do the clouds and sacred darkness conceal thee ?

Thy voice produc'd the seas and spheres,
Bid the waves roll, and planets shine ;
But nothing like thyself appears,
Thro' all these various works of thine.

O thou fairer than all the works of thy hands ! wilt thou ever hide thyself from a creature that loves and seeks thee with so intense desire ? I appeal to thee, O Lord, are not my breathings after thee most hearty and unfeigned ? does not my soul pant after thee with a fervour which cannot be extinguished, and a sincerity which cannot be disguised ?

For thee I pine, and am for thee undone,
As drooping flow'rs that want their parent sun.

How do my spirits languish for thee ! No similitude can express the vehemence of my desires : wealth and glory, friends and pleasure, lose their names compared to thee. To follow thee I would leave them all behind : I would leave the whole creation, and bid the fields and sparkling skies adieu. Let the heavens and earth be no more, while thou endurest for ever, I can want no support ; my being itself, with all its blessedness, depends entirely on thee.

Place me far from the bounds of all creation, remote from all existence but thy own ; in that ineffable solitude let me be lost ! let me expatiate there for ever ; let me run the endless rounds of bliss—but alas ! I flatter myself in vain with scenes of unattainable happiness. I will search thee, then, where I hope thou mayest be found. I cast my eyes to the bright regions above, and almost envy the happy beings that see thy face unveiled ; I search thee in the flowery meadows, and listen for thee among the murmuring springs ; then silent, and abstracted from human things, I search thee in holy contemplation. 'Tis all in

vain : nor fields, nor floods, nor clouds, nor stars, reveal thee.

Ye happy spirits, that meet his smiles, and hear his voice, direct a mournful wanderer, while I seek him whom my soul loves, while I sigh and complain, and cast my languishing eye to yonder happy mansions. Fain would I penetrate the starry pavilions, and look thro' the separating firmament: oh! that thou wouldst divide the clouds, that thou wouldst rend the heavens, and give me one glimpse of thy glory! that thou wouldst display thy beauty, and in the midst of these earthly scenes of amusing vanity, give me one moment's interval of celestial blessedness!

One look of mercy from thy eye,
 One whisper of thy voice,
 Exceed a whole eternity
 Employ'd in carnal joys.
 Could I the spacious earth command,
 Or the more boundless sea,
 For one dear hour at thy right hand
 I'd give them both away.

If things were put into just balances, and computed aright, for the first moment of this satisfaction I am ready to say, the whole creation would be cheaply lost: how gladly would I resign all for such a bliss! Adieu to human things; let me find my God, the end of all my wishes; 'tis he whom I seek; 'tis he alone can satisfy my infinite desires. Oh! why dost thou withdraw? why thus long conceal thyself? where dost thou retire? Nor earth nor heaven reply to my repeated calls.

Let me invoke thee by every gracious title, my God, and the God of my fathers: "from

one generation to another thou hast been our dwelling-place; the claim has descended from age to age, thy covenant has been established with us, and thy faithfulness remains unblemished." O forget not thy covenant, forget not the blessings entailed on me; forget not the prayers and tears by which my pious ancestors have engaged thy mercy for me; forget not their vows and solemn dedication of me to thee. Oh! recal thy ancient favours, and renew thy former mercy to a family which has been thine in a succession of ages.

Let me invoke thee now by a nearer propriety: my covenant God, my Father, and my Friend! If by all those tender names I have ever known thee, forget me not. By those sacred engagements, O Lord, I entreat thy return. If all thy past favours were real, if all was waking bliss, and not a gay delusion. O restore my heaven again. Life of my soul, light of my eyes, return: come, and bring all thy sacred consolations: once again let me experience those holy joys that thy presence imparts, once again let me hear thy voice, once again be blessed with thy smiles.

O! hear, and to my longing eyes
 Restore thy wonted light,
 And suddenly, or I shall sleep
 In everlasting night.

Blessed Saviour, in thee we behold the face of God as a reconciled father; and dost thou withdraw thyself? O how welcome will thy return be? how like the breaking of immortal day will thy presence cheer me! how dearly shall I prize my happiness! how fearful shall I be of every

thing that would offend thee ! how joyful in the blessed discovery and possession of thy love ! I'd whisper my bliss to the listening streams and groves.

I'd carve thy passion on the bark,
 And ev'ry wounded tree
 Shall droop, and bear some mystic mark
 That Jesus dy'd for me.
 The swains shall wonder when they read,
 Inscrib'd on all the grove,
 That Heav'n itself came down and bled
 To win a mortal's love.

But why do I flatter myself with these delightful scenes ? I find thee absent still : I mourn and complain as one unpitied. What is life while thou art absent ? Oh ! return and bless me with thy presence, thou who knowest my distresses, and art acquainted with my secret cares. Thou who art the witness of my midnight sighs, and dost hear when at the dawning day I call thee ; but still thou answerest not, and seemest deaf to my prayers. I am, 'tis true, a worthless wretch ; but, vile as I am, thou hast, in thy immense compassion, brought me into covenant with thee. *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

He is my sun, though he refuse to shine ;
 Though for a moment he depart,
 I dwell for ever on his heart,
 For ever he on mine.

Nothing can break the sacred union : but for this confidence I were undone ; but for this beam of hope I were lost in eternal darkness. " Why art thou disquieted, O my soul, and why art thou

cast down within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him for the light of his countenance ;” I shall yet welcome his return, I shall yet hear his cheering voice, and meet his favourable smiles.

But why, O my God, this long suspense? why do these intervals of night and darkness abide upon me, and torment my heart so long? wilt thou deny a bliss so easily granted? I ask no more than is lawful for mortality to wish: I ask not the visions of angels here below, nor the beatitudes of perfected spirits: I ask but what thou hast bid me seek, and given me hopes to obtain ; I ask that sacred fellowship, that ineffable communion, with which thou favourest thy saints.

Oh! let me hear those heavenly whispers that give them the foretastes of immortal pleasure ; let me be sensible of those divine approaches that kindle celestial ardour in their souls ; let me meet those beams that darken all mortal beauty: let me enjoy, at this earthly distance, those smiles that are the bliss of angels in heaven. Though 'tis but darkly, and afar off, yet let me feel their influence ; it will brighten the passage of life, it will direct me through its mazes, and gild its rough and gloomy paths ; it will raise the flames of sacred love, it will awaken the divine principle within me, and set it a glowing through all my powers. I abandon, I shall forget the vanities below, and the glories of the world will be no more ; but while thou, O my God, hidest thy face, I lose my sun. I languish and die ; yet to thee I will lift up my eyes, to thee I will lift up my soul.

Come, Lord, and never from me go ;
 This world's a darksome place :
 I find no pleasure here below,
 When thou dost veil thy face.

XXVII. *Breathing after God, and weary of the World.*

'Tis no mean beauty of the ground
 That has allur'd my eyes ;
 I faint beneath a nobler wound,
 Nor love below the skies.

If words can reach the heights of love and gratitude, let me pour out the secret ardour of my soul : O let it not offend thy greatness that dust and vanity adores and loves thee. If thou hadst given me other capacities, and formed any thing more suitable to my wishes, I might have found a lower happiness, and been content with something below the infinite Deity ; but the scanty creation affords nothing to satisfy me, and I follow thee by a divine instinct and mere necessity of nature

My life is useless, and my being insignificant without thee ; my reason has no proper employment ; love, the noblest passion of my soul, has no object to answer its dignity. I am reduced to absolute poverty ; my nature is entirely ruined, I am lost, eternally lost, undone, and abandoned to despair, if I am deprived of thee. There can be no reparation made for an infinite loss ; nothing can be instead of God to my soul.

I have willingly renounced all things else for thysake : all the sentiments of tenderness and

delight that my soul ever feels for any earthly object, is mere indifference, compared to my love to thee, and it grows into hatred when that object stands as thy rival or competitor. This is the conquering, the superior flame, that draws in and swallows up all the other ardours of my nature. My engagements with all terrestrial things are broken: the names of father, of brother, or of friend, are no more; abstracted from thee, these tender titles give me neither confidence nor joy, and are mere insignificant names, but as thou dost give them an emphasis; they are nothing at all without thee; and with thee, what infinite good can be an addition?

The soul can hold no more, for God is all,
 He only equals its capacious grasp,
 He only overfills to spaces infinite.

Thou art my God, and I have enough: my soul is satisfied. I am entirely at rest. Divide the vain, the perishing creation to the miserable wretches that ask no other portion; let them, unenvied, possess the honours, and riches, and pleasures of the world; with a lavish hand divide them away: these things are but as the dust of the balance to the happy soul that knows what the light of thy countenance imports. After that, there can be no relish left for the low delights of mortality.

Lost in the high enjoyments of thy love,
 What glorious mortal could my envy move?

Ye ineffable delectations of divine love, let me have no sentiment of pleasure left but for you. My God revealing his glories and his graces in

Jesus Christ his Son, is sufficient for my eternal entertainment.

What if all former ideas of visible things were wiped from my soul? what if I had no imagination, no memory, no traces left of any thing but the joys I have found in thy presence, and the assurances of thy everlasting favour? Those are the only past moments I recal with pleasure; and, oh! let all the vast eternity before me be spent in these satisfactions.

Vanish, ye terrestrial scenes! fly away, ye vain objects of sense! I resign all those poor and limited faculties by which you are enjoyed; let me be insensible to all your impressions, if they do not lead me to my God. Let chaos come again, and the fair face of nature become an universal blank: let her glowing beauties all fade away, and those divine characters she wears be effaced, I shall be happy: the God of nature, and the original of all beauty, is my God.

What if the sun were extinguished in the skies, and all the ethereal lamps had burnt out their golden flames? I shall dwell in light and immortal day, for my God will be ever with me. When the groves shall no more renew their verdure, nor the fields and vallies boast any longer their flowery pride; when all these lower heavens, and this earth, are mingled in universal ruin, and these material images of things are no more, I shall see new regions of beauty and pleasure for ever opening themselves in the divine essence, with all their original glories.

But O how various, how boundless, how transporting will the prospect be! O when shall I bid adieu to phantoms and delusions, and converse with eternal realities? when shall I drink

at the fountain-head of essential life and blessedness?

————— And then,
 O what! but ask not of the tongues of men,
 For angels cannot tell. Let it suffice,
 Thyself, my soul, shall feel thy own full joys,
 And hold them fast for ever.

Oh! break my fetters, for I must be gone.
 Bring my soul out of prison! I am straitened;
 the whole creation is too narrow for me: I sick-
 en at this confinement, and groan and pant for
 liberty. How sweet are the thoughts of enlarge-
 ment! My soul is already on the wing, and
 practises imaginary flights: I seem to reach the
 heaven of heavens, where God himself resides.
 It is good for me to be here.

But ah, how soon the clouds of mortal sense
 Arise, and veil the charming vision.

Alas! what do I here in this waste and dread-
 ful wilderness; this dismal region, where our
 delights are vanishing, and the very glimpses of
 future felicity we enjoy, are so soon overshad-
 ed and surrounded with real horrors? Alas!
 what do I here, wasting that breath in sighs and
 endless complaints that was given me to bless
 and praise the infinite Creator? Alas! what do
 I here among strangers and enemies, in this wild
 inhospitable place, far from my home and all
 the subjects of my solid delight?

My wishes, hopes, my pleasure, and my love,
 My thoughts, and noblest passions, are above.

What do I here in the dominions of death and sin, in the precincts and range of the powers of darkness? Here they lay their toils, and set their fatal snares; but, Lord, what part have they in me? I have bid defiance to the powers of darkness, in thy strength, and renounced my share in the vanities of the world. I am a subject of another kingdom, and dare not enter into any terms of peace and amity with the irreconcilable adversaries of God and my soul, which inhabit these treacherous and sinful regions. "The friendship of this world is enmity with God." Death and destruction are in its smiles; I stand on my guard, and am every moment in danger of surprise: oh! when will deliverance come from on high!

When, my soul,
 O when shall thy release from cumb'rous flesh
 Pass the great seal of heav'n! What happy hour
 Shall give thy thoughts a loose to soar and trace
 The intellectual world!

What glorious scenes shall open when once this mortal partition falls, when these walls of clay shall totter, and sink down into dust! Ye waters of life, ye torrents of immortal pleasure, how impetuously will you then roll in upon me, and swell and fill up all the capacities of joy in my nature! Every faculty shall then be filled, and every wish shall end in unutterable fruition. "When I awake into immortal light, I will be satisfied with thy likeness." These expressless desires will die into everlasting raptures: hope and languishing expectation will be no more; but present, complete, and unbounded satisfactions will surround me: my God, my

God himself, shall be my infinite, my unutterable joy: all the avenues of pleasure shall be opened before me, the scenes of beauty and prospects of delight. "Everlasting joy shall be upon my heart, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away for ever."

There will be no more intervals of grief and sin: sin, that insupportable evil, that worst, that heaviest burden. Here the painful and deadly pressure lies; it is this that hangs as a weight on all my joys; but thanks be to my God, I can say I sincerely detest and hate this vilest of slaveries, this cursed bondage of corruption; I long for the glorious liberty of the sons of God; I groan under this load of flesh, this burden of mortality, this body of death.

But grant, O Lord! that I may with patience continue in well-doing, and at last obtain glory and immortality through my Redeemer's righteousness. "Sanctify me through thy word of truth:" remember this request of my glorious Advocate.

XXVIII. *A Prayer for speedy Sanctification.*

O LORD God, great and holy, all-sufficient, and full of grace, if thou shouldst bid me form a wish, and take whatsoever in heaven or earth I had to ask, it should not be the kingdoms of this world, nor the crowns of princes; no, nor should it be the wreaths of martyrs, nor the thrones of archangels: my request is, to be made holy; this is my highest concern. Rectify the disorders sin has made in my soul, and renew thy image there; let me be satisfied with

thy likeness. Thou hast encompassed my paths with mercy in all other respects, and I am discontented with nothing but my own heart, because it is so unlike the image of thy holiness, and so unfit for thy immediate presence.

Permit me to be importunate here, O blessed God, and grant the importunity of my wishes ; let me be favoured with a gracious and speedy answer, for I am dying while I am speaking ; the very breath with which I am calling upon thee is carrying away part of my life : this tongue, that is now invoking thee, must shortly be silent in the grave ; these knees, that are bent to pay thee homage, and these hands, that are now lifted to the most high God for mercy, must shortly be mouldering to their original dust ; these eyes will soon be closed in death, which are now looking up to thy throne for a blessing. Oh ! prevent the flying hours with thy mercy, and let thy favour outstrip the hasty moments.

Thou art unchanged, while rolling ages pass along ; but I am decaying with every breath I draw ; my whole allotted time to prepare for heaven is but a point, compared with thy infinite duration. The shortness and vanity of my present being, and the importance of my eternal concerns, join together to demand my utmost solicitude, and give wings to my warmest wishes. Before I can utter all my present desires, the hasty opportunity perhaps is gone, the golden minute vanished, and the season of mercy has taken its everlasting flight.

Oh ! God of ages, hear me speedily, and grant my request while I am yet speaking, my frail existence will admit of no delay ; answer me according to the shortness of my duration,

and the exigence of my circumstances. My business, of high importance as it is, yet is limited to the present now, the passing moment ; for all the powers on earth cannot promise me the next.

Let not my pressing importunity, therefore, offend thee : my happiness, my everlasting happiness, my whole being is concerned in my success as much as the enjoyment of God himself is worth, is at stake.

Thou knowest, O Lord what qualifications will fit me to hold thee ; thou knowest in what I am defective ; thou canst prepare my soul in an instant to enter into thy holy habitation. I breathe now, but the next morning may be death : let not that fatal moment come before I am prepared. The same creating voice that said, " Let there be light, and there was light," can in the same manner, purify and adorn my soul, and make me fit for thy own presence ; and my soul longs to be thus purified and adorned. O Lord, delay not, for every moment's interval is a loss to me, and may be a loss unspeakable and unrepairable. Thy delay cannot be the least advantage to thee ; thy power and thy clemency are as full this present instant as they will be the next, and my time as fleeting, and my wants as pressing.

Remember, O eternal God, my lost time is for ever lost, and my wasted hours will never return, my neglected opportunities can never be recalled ; to me they are gone for ever, and cannot be improved ; but thou canst change my sinful soul into holiness by a word, and set me now in the way to everlasting improvement.

O let not the spirit of God restrain itself, but bless me according to the fulness of thy own be-

ing, according to the riches of thy grace in Christ Jesus, according to thy infinite inconceivable love manifested in that glorious gift of thy beloved Son, wherein the fulness of thy Godhead was continued ; it is through his merit and mediation I humbly wait for all the unbounded blessings I want or ask for.

XXIX. *Gratitude for early and peculiar Favours.*

LET me trace back thy mercy, O my God, from the first early dawn of life, and bless thee for the privileges of my birth, that it was not in the land of darkness, where no ray of the gospel had ever darted its light ; where the name of a Saviour never had reached my ears, nor the transporting tidings of redemption from eternal misery had ever blessed my soul.

But how shall I express my gratitude for that grace which ordained my lot in this happy land, one of the islands of which it was long since prophesied, " They shall see thy glory, and trust in thy name? God has enlarged Japheth," even in the islands of the sea, " and made him to dwell in the tents of Shem," in the inheritance of Abraham. I have my descent from the Gentiles, who were once " strangers to the covenant of grace, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel;" but are now brought nigh by the blood of sprinkling. Jesus, the great peace-maker, hath brought both near to God, and to each other.

I bless thee with all my powers for the privileges of my descent from pious ancestors ; that thou hast been their dwelling-place from generation to generation, and hast not " taken thy lov-

ing-kindness from their seed, nor suffered thy faithfulness to fail."

Thou hast extended thy mercy to me the last and least of all my father's house, unworthy to wipe the feet of the meanest of the servants of my Lord; and yet by an absolute act of goodness, I am brought into thy family, and numbered with the children of God. Even so it has seemed good in thy sight, who "art gracious to whom thou wilt be gracious."

I might have been a vessel of wrath, a trophy to thy justice, instead of a monument of thy mercy: how unsearchable thy ways! how uncontrolled and free! Thou didst regard me in my low estate, in more than my original guilt and misery; for I had improved the wretched stock, and been a voluntary as well as a natural slave to sin and death.

From this ignominious slavery, thou, my great Redeemer, hast ransomed me; hath brought me into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. I was a stranger, and thou didst take me in: naked, and thou hast clothed me with the spotless robes of thy own righteousness: I was hungry, and thou didst feed me; thirsty, and thou didst give me to drink of the fountain of life.

What am I, O Lord, and what is my father's house, that thou hast dealt thus graciously with me, in entering into an everlasting covenant, signed and sealed, even sensibly sealed to my soul by the witness of thy Spirit? Lord, why me rather than many that were companions of my early vanities and folly? whence were the motives drawn but from thy sovereign pleasure? how many are passed by that could have done

thee more service, and returned a warmer acknowledgment to thy distinguishing bounty?

Ye spirits of just men made perfect, ye ransomed nations, triumphant above, instruct me in the art of celestial eloquence; tell me in what strains of sacred harmony you express your gratitude for this glorious redemption, while in exalted raptures you sing "to him that loved and washed you in his own blood, and made you kings and priests to God."

XXX. *Aspiring after the Vision of God in Heaven.*

I BESEECH thee, shew me thy glory. It was a mortal in a state of frailty and imperfection that made this bold but pious request, which I repeat on different terms: since none can see thy face and live, let me die to behold it. This is the only request I have to make, and this will I seek after, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord; not as I have seen it in thy sanctuary below, but in full perfection and splendour, as thou art seen by seraphs and cherubs, by angels and archangels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

O my God, forgive my importunity: thou hast commanded me to love thee with all my heart, my soul, my strength, and hast by thy Spirit kindled the sacred flame in my breast. From this arises my present impatience: from hence the ardour of my desires spring. Can I love thee, and be satisfied at this distance from thee? can I love thee, and not long to behold thee in perfect excellence and beauty? is it a

crime to press forward to the end for which I was created? All my wishes and my hopes of happiness terminate in thee.

Does not the thirsty traveller pine for some refreshing stream? would not the weary be at rest, or the wretched captive be free? and shall not my thirsty, weary, captive soul, long for refreshment, liberty, and rest? I am but a stranger, a pilgrim here, and have no abiding place; this is not my rest, my home; and yet if thou hast any employment for me, though the meanest office in thy family, I will not repine at my stay.

But, O Lord, thou hast no need of such worthless service as I can pay thee; thy angels are spirits, thy ministers flames of fire; thousands of thousands stand before thee, and ten thousand times ten thousand minister unto thee; they attend thy orders, and fly at thy command. O deliver me from this burden of mortality, and I will serve thee with a zeal as pure and active as theirs.

I can speak of thy loving-kindness to the children of men in a very imperfect manner: but then I will join with the celestial choir in praising thee, and rehearse to listening angels what thou hast done for my soul. Here I have a thousand interruptions from the delightful work, a thousand cold and darksome intervals; when my heart and tongue are both untuned, a thousand necessary distractions that rise from the miseries of mortality; but when these intervals of grief and sin shall cease, my soul shall dwell at ease, and be for ever glad, and rejoice in thy salvation.

XXXI. *A Surrender of the Soul to God.*

COMMAND me what thou wilt, O Lord, give me but strength to obey thee, be thy terms ever so severe. O let us never part. I resign my will, my liberty, my choice, to thee; I stand divested of the world, and ask only thy love as my inheritance. Give or deny me what thou wilt, I leave all the circumstances of my future time in thy hands: let the Lord guide me continually: here I am, do with me what seemeth good in thy sight: only do not say, Thou hast no pleasure in me.

Let me not live to dishonour thee, to bring a reproach on thy name, to profane the blood of the Son of God, and grieve the Spirit of grace. O take not thy loving kindness from me, nor suffer thy faithfulness to fail. Thou hast sworn by thy holiness, and thou wilt not lie to the seed of thy servants; thou hast sworn, that the generation of the righteous shall be blessed; vest me with this character, O my God, and fulfil this promise to a worthless creature.

XXXII. *Trust and Reliance on the Divine Promise.*

O LET not my importunity offend thee, for it is the importunity of faith; it is my steadfast belief in thy word that makes me persist; thy word and thy oath, "the two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, give me strong consolation."

'Tis this that makes me press forward to thy

throne, and with confidence lay hold on thy strength, thy wisdom, and thy faithfulness, on thy goodness and tender compassion ; those glorious attributes, for which ' the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.' 'Tis thy glory to be the confidence of the ends of the earth, and it was long since predicted, ' That in thy name the Gentiles should trust.'

Kind guardian of the world, our heavenly aid
To whom the vows of all mankind are paid,

we pay thee the highest homage, and exalt thy infinite attributes by faith and confidence in thee.

I know that thou art, and believe thee " a rewarder of them that diligently seek thee." I will never quit my hold of thy promises, there I fix my hopes ; I will not let a little go, nor part with a mite of the glorious treasure : I humbly hope I have a rightful claim ; thou art my God, and the God of my religious ancestors, the God of my mother, the God of my pious father ; dying and breathing out his soul, he gave me to thy care ; he put me into thy gracious arms, and delivered me up to thy protection. He told me thou wouldst never leave nor forsake me ; he triumphed in thy long experienced faithfulness and truth, and gave his testimony for thee with his latest breath.

And now, O Lord God of my fathers, whose mercy has descended from age to age, whose truth has remained unblemished and inviolable, and whose love remains without decay ; O Lord, the faithful God, and the true, keeping covenant and mercy to a thousand generations, let me find that protection and blessing that the prayers of

my dying father engaged for me: now, in the time of my distress, be a present help: and if thou wilt this once deliver me, thou alone shalt be my future trust, my counsellor, and hope; to thee I will immediately apply myself, and look on the whole force of created nature as insignificant. To thee I will devote all the blessings thou shalt give my time, my life, my whole of this world's goods; whatever share thou shalt graciously allot me, shall surely be the Lord's.

Oh! hearken to the vows of my distress, and for thy own honour deliver me from this perplexity which thou knowest, and reveal to me the abundance of mercy and truth.

'Twas my dependance on thy promise and fidelity that brought me into this exigence; I staggered not at thy promises through unbelief, but boldly ventured on the credit of thy word: I took it for my security: and can the strength of Israel repent? canst thou break thy covenant, and alter the thing that is gone out of thy mouth?

“O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob! this is thy name for ever, and this thy memorial to all generations;” the God before whom my fathers walked, the God that fed me all my life long till now, and the angel that redeemed me from evil, bless me. Let the God of Jacob be my help, let the Almighty bless me; let the blessings of my father “prevail above the blessings of his progenitors, to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills.”

Bless me according to thy own greatness, according to the unsearchable riches of thy grace in Christ Jesus; he is the spring of all my hope, in whom all the promises of God are *yea* and

amen; he is the true and faithful witness, and has by his death sealed the divine veracity, and is become surety for the honour and faithfulness of the most high God. To this also the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of truth, beareth witness.

Oh! great Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! the Lord God omnipotent! hear and grant my request for the glory of thy mighty name; that name which saints and angels bless and love: let thy perfections be manifested to the children of men: let them say, There is a God that judgeth in the earth: let them confess thou dost keep thy covenant with the seed of thy servants, that thy righteousness is from age to age, and thy salvation shall never be abolished: let them see and acknowledge, that in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children have a place of refuge.

Unshaken as the sacred hill,
 And firm as mountains be;
 Firm as a rock the soul shall rest
 That leans, O Lord, on thee.

MEMORANDUM.

This act of faith in God was fully answered; and I leave my testimony, that “the name of the Lord is a strong tower, and he knoweth them that put their trust in him.”

XXXIII. *Application to the Divine Truth.*

HOWEVER intricate and hopeless my present distress may be to human views,

why should I limit the Almighty ; or why should the Holy One of Israel limit himself ? Nature and necessity are thine ; thou speakest the word, and it comes to pass ; no obstacle can oppose the omnipotence of thy will, nor make thy designs ineffectual.

Is thy hand at all shortened since the glorious period when thy mighty power and thy stretched out arm formed the heavens and earth ; when these spacious skies were spread at thy command, and this heavy globe fixed on its airy pillars ?

The strong foundations of the earth
Of old by thee were laid ;
Thy hands the beauteous arch of heav'n
With wond'rous skill have made.

And “ these shall wax old as a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed : ” but shouldst thou, like these, decay, where were the hopes of them that confide in thee ? If in all generations thy perfections were not the same, what consolation could the race of men draw from the ancient records of thy wonderful works ? Why are we told, “ thou didst divide the sea, to make a path for thy people through the mighty waters ? that thou *didst rain bread from heaven*, and dissolve the flinty rock in crystal rills to give thy chosen nation drink ? ”

Thou art he that distinguished Noah in the universal deluge, and preserved the floating ark amidst winds, and rains, and tumultuous billows.

'Twas thy protecting care that led Abraham from his kindred and his native country, and brought him safely to the promised land.

Thou didst accompany Jacob in his journey to Padenaram, and gave him bread to eat, and raiment to put on, till greatly increased in substance, he returned to his father's house: he wrestled for a blessing; he wrestled with the Almighty and prevailed.

With Joseph thou wentest down into Egypt, and didst deliver him out of all his adversities, till he forgot his sorrows, and all the toil of his father's house.

Thou didst remember thy people in the Egyptian bondage, and looked with pitying eyes on their affliction; and, after four hundred and thirty years, on the very day thou hadst promised, didst release and bring them out with triumph and miracles. Thy presence went with them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and a protecting fire by night: thy conquering hand drove out great and potent nations, and gave them entire possession of the land promised to their fathers; nor didst thou fail in the least circumstance of all the good things thou hadst promised.

What a cloud of witnesses stand on record! Joshua and Gideon, Jephtha and Samson, who, through faith, obtained promises.

Thou didst command the ravens to feed thy holy prophet; and at the word of a prophet didst sustain the widow's family with a handful of meal.

Thou didst walk with the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace; thou wast present with Daniel in the lion's den to deliver him, because he trusted in thee. !!!

— In what instance has the prayer of faith been rejected? where were the righteous forsaken? who can charge God without charging him fool-

ishly? what injustice has been found in the judge of all the earth? his glorious titles have stood unblemished from generation to generation, nor can any of his perfections decay, or rolling years make a change in the ANCIENT OF DAYS.

Are not his words clear and distinct, without a double meaning, or the least deceit? are they not such as may justly secure my confidence? such as would satisfy me from the mouth of man, inconstant man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and his foundation in the dust; unstable as water, and fleeting as a shadow? And can I so slowly assent to the words of the Most High? Shall I trust impotent man, that has neither wisdom nor might to accomplish his designs; that cannot call the next breath or motion his own, nor promise himself a moment in all futurity? Can I rest on these feeble props, and yet tremble and despond when I have the veracity of the eternal God to secure and support me?

I know he will not break his covenant, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail: I dare attest it in the face of earth and hell: I dare stake my all for time and eternity on this glorious truth: a truth which hell cannot blemish, nor all its malice contradict.

Exert yourselves, ye powers of darkness, bring in your evidence, collect your instances, begin from the first generations: since the world was peopled, and men began to call on the name of the Lord, when did they call in vain? when did the Holy One of Israel fail the expectation of the humble and contrite spirit! Point out in your blackest characters the dismal period when the name of the Lord was no more a refuge to them that trusted in him! Let the annals of hell be

produced, let them mark the dreadful day, and distinguish it with eternal triumphs.

In vain you search; for neither heaven, nor earth, nor hell, have ever been witness to the least deviation from truth or justice: the Almighty shines with unblemished glory, to the confusion of hell, and the consolation of those that put their trust in him.

On thy eternal truth and honour I entirely cast myself: if I am deceived, angels and archangels are deluded too; they, like me, have no dependance beyond the divine veracity for their blessedness and immortality, they hang all their hopes on his goodness and immutability; if that fails, the celestial paradise vanishes, and all its glories are extinct; the golden palaces sink, and the seraphic thrones must totter and fall. Where are your crowns, ye spirits elect? where are your songs and your triumphs, if the truth of God can fail? A mere possibility of that would darken the fields of light, and turn the voice of melody into grief and lamentation.

What pangs would rise even through all the regions of blessedness! what diffidence and fear would shake the heart of every inhabitant! what agonies surprise them all, could the word of the most high God be cancelled! The pillars of heaven might then tremble, and the everlasting mountains bow; the celestial foundations might be removed from their place, and that noblest structure of the hands of God, be chaos and eternal emptiness.

But for ever "just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints; blessed are all they that put their trust in thee;" for thou art a certain refuge in the day of distress, and under the shadow of

thy wings I will rejoice. " My soul shall make her boast in the Lord, and triumph in his salvation : I called on him in my distress, and he has delivered me from all my fears." Hallelujah.

Here I dismiss my carnal hope,
 My fond desires recal ;
 I give my mortal interest up,
 And make my God my all.

XXXIV. *Glory to God for Salvation by Jesus and his Blood.*

LET me give glory to God before I die, and take shame and confusion to myself. I ascribe my salvation to the free and absolute goodness of God ; not by the strength of reason, or any natural inclination to virtue, but by " the grace of God I am what I am." O my Redeemer, be the victory, be the glory thine ! I expect eternal life and happiness from thee, not as a debt, but a free gift, a promised act of bounty. How poor would my expectations be, if I only look to be rewarded according to those works which my own vanity, or the partiality of others, have called good, and which, if examined by the divine purity, would prove but specious sins ! as such I renounce them : pardon them, gracious Lord, and I ask no more ; nor can I hope for that, but through the satisfaction which hath been made to divine justice for the sins of the world.

O Jesus, my Saviour, what harmony dwells in thy name ! celestial joy, immortal life is in the sound !

Sweet name ! in thy each syllable
A to-morrow bless'd Arabia dwell ;
Mountains of myrrh, and beds of spices,
And ten thousand paradises.

Let angels set this name to their golden harps ;
let the redeemed of the Lord for ever magnify it.

O my propitious Saviour ! where were my
hopes but for thee ? how desperate, how undone,
were my circumstances ? I look on myself in
every view I can take with horror and contempt.
I was born in a state of misery and sin, and in
my best estate am altogether vanity. With the
utmost advantages I can boast, I shrink back, I
tremble to appear before unblemished Majesty :
O thou in whose name the Gentiles trust, be my
refuge in that awful hour. To thee I come,
my only confidence and hope. Let the blood of
sprinkling, let the seal of the covenant be on me.
Cleanse me from my original stain, and my con-
tracted impurity, and adorn me with the robes of
thy righteousness, by which alone I expect to
stand justified before infinite justice and purity.

O enter not into judgment with me, for the
best actions of my life cannot bear thy scrutiny ;
some secret blemish has stained all my glory.
My devotion to God has been mingled with
levity and irreverence ; my charity to man with
pride and ostentation. Some latent defect has
attended my best actions, and those very things,
which, perhaps, have been highly esteemed by
men, have deserved contempt in the sight of
God.

When I survey the wond'rous cross
 On which the Prince of Glory dy'd,
 My richest gain ! count my loss,
 And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
 Save in the cross of Christ, my God ;
 All the vain things that charm me most,
 I sacrifice them to thy blood.

April 30, 1735.

XXXV. *A Review of Divine Mercy and Faithfulness.*

I AM now setting to my seal that God is true, and leaving this as my last testimony to the divine veracity. I can from numerous experiences assert his faithfulness, and witness to the certainty of his promises. "The word of the Lord has been tried, and he is a buckler to all those that put their trust in him."

"O come, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul; I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker," and leave my record for a people yet unborn, that the generation to come may rise up and praise him.

Into whatever distress his wise providence has brought me, I have called on the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears; I trusted in God, and he saved me. Oh! let my experience stand a witness to them that hope in his mercy; let it be to the Lord for a praise and a glory.

I know not where to begin the recital of thy numerous favours. Thou hast hid me in the

secret of thy pavilion, from the pride of man, and from the strife of tongues, when by a thousand follies I have merited reproach: thou hast graciously protected me, when the vanity of my friends, or the malice of my enemies, might have stained my reputation: thou hast covered me with thy feathers, and under thy wings have I trusted: thy truth has been my shield and my buckler: to thee I owe the blessing of a clear and unblemished name, and not to my own conduct, nor the partiality of my friends. Glory be to thee, O Lord.

Thou hast led me through a thousand labyrinths, and enlightened my darkness. When shades and perplexity surrounded me, my light has broke forth out of obscurity, and my darkness been turned into noon day. Thou hast been a guide and a father to me. When I knew not where to ask advice thou hast given me unerring counsel: *The secret of the Lord has been with me, and he has shewn me his covenant.*

In how many seen and unseen dangers hast thou delivered me! how narrow my gratitude! how wide thy mercy! how innumerable are thy thoughts of love! how infinite the instances of thy goodness! how high above the ways and thoughts of man!

How often hast thou supplied my wants, and by thy bounty confounded my unbelief! thy benefits have surprised and justly reproached my diffidence; my faith has often failed, but thy goodness has never failed.* The world and all its flatteries have failed, my own heart and hopes have failed, but thy mercy endures for ever; thy faithfulness has never failed.

The strength of Israel has never deceived me, nor made me ashamed of my confidence. Thou hast never been as a deceitful brook, or as waters that fail, to my soul.

In loving kindness, in truth, and in very faithfulness, thou hast afflicted me. Oh! how unwillingly hast thou seemed to grieve me! with how much indulgence has the punishment been mixed! Love has appeared through the disguise of every frown; its beams have glimmered through the darkest night, by every affliction thou hast been still drawing me nearer to thyself, and removing my carnal props, that I may lean with more assurance on the Eternal Rock.

Thy love has been my leading glory from the first intricate steps of life: the first undesigning paths I trod were marked and guarded by the vigilance of thy love: oh! whither else had my sin and folly led me.

How often have I tried and experienced thy clemency, and found an immediate answer to my prayers? Thou hast often literally fulfilled thy word: I have a fresh instance of thy faithfulness again: thou hast made me triumph in thy goodness, and given a new testimony to the veracity of thy promises.

And, after all, what ingratitude, what insensibility, reigns in my heart? Oh! cancel it by the blood of the covenant: root out this monstrous infidelity that still returns after the fullest evidence of thy truth. Thou hast graciously condescended to answer me in thy own time and way, and yet I am again doubting thy faithfulness and care. *Lord, pity me. I believe; O help my unbelief. Go on to succour, go on to pardon, and at last conquer my diffidence. Let me hope*

against hope, and in the greatest perplexity give glory to God, by believing what my own experience has so often found, "That the strength of Israel will not lie; nor is he as man, that he should repent."

While I have memory and thought, let his goodness dwell on my soul. Let me not forget the depth of my distress, the anguish and importunity of my vows: when every human help failed, and all was darkness and perplexity, then God was all my stay. Then I knew no name but his, and he alone knew my soul in adversity. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Long as I live, I'll bless thy name,
My King, and God of love;
My work and joy shall be the same
In the bright worlds above.

I have yet a thousand and ten thousand deliverances to recount, ten thousand unasked for mercies to recal! no moment of my life has been destitute of thy care; no accident has found me unguarded by thy watchful eye, or neglected by thy providence. Thou hast been often found unsought by my ungrateful heart, and thy favours have surprised me with great and unexpected advantages: thou hast compelled me to receive the blessings my foolish humour despised, and my corrupt will would fain have rejected. Thou hast stopped thy ears to the desires which would have ruined and undone me, when I might justly have been left to my own choice, for the punishment of my many sins and follies. How great my guilt! how infinite thy mercy.

Hitherto God has helped, and here I set up a memorial to that goodness which has never abandoned me to the malice and stratagems of my infernal foes, nor left me a prey to human craft or violence. The glory of his providence has often surprised me, when groping in thick darkness. With a potent voice he has said, "Let there be light, and there was light." He has made his goodness pass before me, and loudly proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious;" to him be glory for ever. *Amen.*

(my testimony to her goodness)
H. Rogers

XXXVI. *Some daily Experiences of the gracious Methods of Divine Providence, to me, the least and most unworthy of all the Servants of my Lord.*

FIRST WEEK.*

I. EVERY day's experience reproaches my unbelief, and brings me some new evidence of thy faithfulness. Thou hast dispelled my fears, and, to the confusion of my spiritual foes, thou hast heard the voice of my distress. But a few hours ago I was trembling, and doubting if thou wast indeed a God hearing my prayer; and now I have a fresh instance of thy goodness, which, with a grateful heart, I here record. May the sense of thy benefits dwell for ever on my soul.

II. Thy mercies are new every morning; again thou hast given me an instance of thy truth.

* The division of these meditations into sevens, by the pious writer, seems to tell us, that these were the devout thoughts of six weeks of her life.

“ I trusted in God, and he has delivered me : I will love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication ; therefore will I call on him as long as I live.”

III. “ As for God, his way is perfect ; the word of the Lord is tried : he is a buckler to all that put their trust in him.” He has punctually fulfilled the word on which I relied : bless the Lord, O my soul.

IV. Thy bounty follows me with an unwearied course ; language is too faint to express thy praise : no eloquence can reach the subject. My heart is warm with the pious reflection ; I look upward, and silently breathe out the unutterable gratitude that melts and rejoices my soul : I staggered at thy promise through unbelief, and yet thou hast graciously performed thy words. If we sometimes doubt or falter in our faith, yet he abideth faithful who has promised.

V. With the morning light my health and peace are renewed : the cheering influence of the sun, and the sweeter beams of the divine favour, shine on my tabernacle. Lord, why me ? why am I a ransomed, pardoned sinner ? why am I rejoicing among the instances of sovereign grace and unlimited clemency ?

VI. I boasted in thy truth, and thou hast not made me ashamed : my infernal foes are confounded, while my faith is crowned with success.

Oh ! who hath tasted of thy clemency
In greater measure, or more oft, than I ?

VII. As the week begun, so it ends with a series of mercy : language and numbers fail to

reckon thy favours, but this shall be my eternal employment.

Where nature fails, the day and night
Divide thy works no more,
My ever thankful soul, O Lord,
Thy goodness shall adore.

SECOND WEEK.

I. I HAVE seen the goings of God my King in his sanctuary: but O how transient the view! My sins turned back thy clemency, and yet I can celebrate the wonders of forgiving grace.

II. What do I owe thee, O thou great Preserver of men, for easy and peaceful sleep, for nights unmolested with pain and anxiety.

Thou round my bed a guard dost keep;
Thine eyes are open while I sleep.

Not a moment slides in which I am unguarded by thy gracious protection.

III. Thanks be to God, who has given me the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ. Thou didst deliver me from the snare of the fowler, the craft and malice of hell, and kept me back from sinning against thee; be thine the victory and praise. *Hallelujah.*

IV. "O Lord God of Israel, happy is the man that putteth his trust in thee." I left my burden at thy feet, and thou hast sustained me; my cares are dissipated, my desires are answered. "Oh! who is a God like unto thee, near unto all that call on thee?"

V. Thy strength is manifest in weakness :
 “ Not unto me, O Lord, but to thee, be all the
 glory.”

For ever thy dear charming name
 Shall dwell upon my tongue,
 And Jesus and salvation be
 The theme of every song.

This shall be my employment through an
 eternal duration : 'tis that alone can measure my
 gratitude. The Lord Jehovah is my strength
 and salvation, he also shall be my song.

VI. Every day's experience confirms my
 faith, and brings a fresh evidence of thy good-
 ness. Thou hast dispelled my fears, and, to the
 confusion of my spiritual foes, hearkened to the
 voice of my distress.

VII. I will love the Lord, who has heard my
 supplications. I made my boast in his faithful-
 ness, and he has answered all my expectations.

THIRD WEEK.

I. MY last exigence will be the closing part
 of my life. Oh! remember me then, my God. Thou
 who hast led me hitherto, forsake me not at last.
 Be my strength when nature fails, and the flame
 of life is just expiring; let thy smiles cheer my
 gloomy hour! oh! then let thy gentle voice whis-
 per peace and ineffable consolation to my soul

II. In six and seven troubles thou hast deli-
 vered me, ‘and been a covert from the tempest,
 a hiding place from the wind.’ Hitherto God
 has helped, and I have dwelt secure; and here
 I leave a memorial to thy praise, a witness against

all my future distrust of thy faithfulness and truth.

III. Every day of my life increases the sum of thy mercies: the rising and the setting sun, in its constant revolution, can witness the renewal of thy favours. Thou wast graciously present in an imminent danger; by thee my bones have been kept entire, and thou hast not suffered me to dash my feet against a stone.

IV. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who heals thy diseases, and pardons all thy sins." O thou, the great Physician of my body, as well as of my distempered soul, thou hast restored and saved me from death and hell. Blessed Jesus, thou hast "taken my infirmities, and borne my sicknesses; the chastisement of my peace was upon thee, and by thy stripes I am healed."

V. I subscribe to thy truth, O Lord; I attest it in contradiction to infernal malice, to all the hellish suggestions that would tempt my heart to diffidence and unbelief, even against repeated experience, against the fullest evidences of the divine veracity.

VI. Oh! thou who never slumberest, nor sleepest, this night thy watchful care has kept me from a threatening danger; thy eyes were open while I was sleeping, secure beneath the covert of thy wings.

VII. Another, and a greater deliverance has crowned the day; I have found thy grace sufficient in an hour of temptation, thy strength has been manifest in my weakness. Thine was the conquest, be the crown and glory thine for ever. By thee I have triumphed over the strata-

gems of hell; "not unto me, but to thy name be the praise, O Lord."

FOURTH WEEK.

I. 'TIS not one of a thousand of thy favours I can record; but eternity is before me, and that unlimited duration shall be employed to rehearse the wonders of thy grace. Then in the great assembly I will praise thee, I will declare thy faithfulness, and tell to listening angels what thou hast done for my soul, even for me, the least in the family, unworthy to wipe the feet of the meanest of the servants of the Lord.

II. How numberless are thy thoughts of love to my soul; if I should count them, they are more than the sand on the shore. Thou hast again reproved my unbelief, and given me a new conviction that my whole dependance is on thee? that second causes are nothing, but as thou dost give them efficacy; all nature obeys thee, and is governed at thy command.

III. O my God, I am again ready to distrust thee, and call in question thy faithfulness. Oh! how deep has the cursed weed of infidelity rooted itself in my nature! but thou canst root it out.

IV. Again I must begin the rehearsal of thy mercies, which will never have an end; for thou dost renew the instances of thy goodness to a poor ungrateful sinner. Thou hast punctually fulfilled the promise on which I depended; thou hast granted the request of my lips, and led me in a plain way, that I have not stumbled.

V. This day I have received an unexpected favour. I doubted the success indeed, but thou hast gently rebuked my unbelief, and convinced me that all things are possible with thee, and that the hearts of the children of men are in thy hands.

VI. Whether thou dost favour or afflict me, I rejoice in the glory of thy attributes, in whatever instance they are displayed. Be thy honour advanced, whether in mercy or in justice. I must still assert the equity of thy ways, and ascribe righteousness to my Maker. Yet let me plead with thee, O my God. Since mercy is thy darling attribute, oh! let it now be exalted: deal not with me in severity, but indulgence; for if thou shouldst mark what is amiss, who can stand before thee?

VII. Thou dost heal my diseases and renew my life; thou art the guardian of my sleeping and my waking hours. Glory to my God, whose eyes never slumber.

FIFTH WEEK.

I. THOU knowest my secret grief, where my pain lies, and what are my doubts and difficulties. In thy wonted clemency, O Lord, dispel my darkness; leave me not to any fatal delusion in an affair of everlasting moment. This is my hour of information and practice; beyond the grave no mistake can be rectified; as the tree falls, so it must for ever lie.

II. Thy goodness still pursues me, O heavenly Father, with an unwearied course, new instances of thy faithfulness reproach my unbelief.

I sent up my petition with a doubting heart, and yet thou hast graciously deigned to encourage my weak and staggering faith, which has often wavered and failed, even in the view of the brightest evidence of thy power and truth.

III. Thou dost seem resolved to leave my unbelief without excuse, by renewing the glorious conviction of thy clemency and truth. O let not the unworthiness of the object turn back thy benignity from its natural course.

IV. How many unrecorded mercies have glided along with my fleeting moments into thoughtless silence, and long oblivion! How prone is my ungrateful heart to forget thy benefits, or (oh! amazing guilt) to make an ungrateful return!

V. Oh! never let my false heart relapse into distrust and unbelief again! Thou hast rebuked my folly, and put a new song of praise into my mouth: let those infernal suggestions vanish that would once object against thy oft-experienced truth. In this I would still triumph, and insult all the malice of hell. A time will come when thou shalt be glorified in thy saints, when thy truth and faithfulness shall appear in full splendour, when the beauty of thine attributes shall be conspicuous and clear from every blemish that the impiety of men, or the malice of devils, have charged on thy most righteous providence.

VI. Let me still assert that the ways of God are perfect justice and truth: I have a fresh instance of thy goodness to boast, and yet my ungrateful heart is even now ready to distrust. The Lord increase my faith: let thy renewed favours silence my unbelief, "to shew that the Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

VII. Teach me your language, ye ministers of light, that I may express my wonder and gratitude. O thou, who canst explain the secret meaning of my soul, take the praise that human words cannot express: accept those unutterable attempts to praise thee.

SIXTH WEEK.

I. LET me go on, O most holy, to record thy faithfulness and truth; let it be engraven in the rock for ever; let it be impressed on my soul, and impossible to be effaced. What artifice of hell is it that so often tempts me to distrust thee, and joins with my native depravity to question thy truth?

II. Oh! may I never forget this remarkable preservation; thy gentle hand supported me, and underneath were the everlasting arms. "Thou hast kept all my bones, not one of them is broken;" thy mercy upheld me even when it foresaw my insensibility and ingratitude. How does my guilt heighten thy clemency! How wonderful is thy patience, O Lord, and thy rich grace, that only gently rebuked me, when thou mightest have taken severe vengeance on my sins!

III. Again I must begin the rehearsal of thy love. Thou hast eased my pain, scattered my fears, and lengthened out my days. Oh! may my being be devoted to thee; let it be for some remarkable service that I am restored to health again.

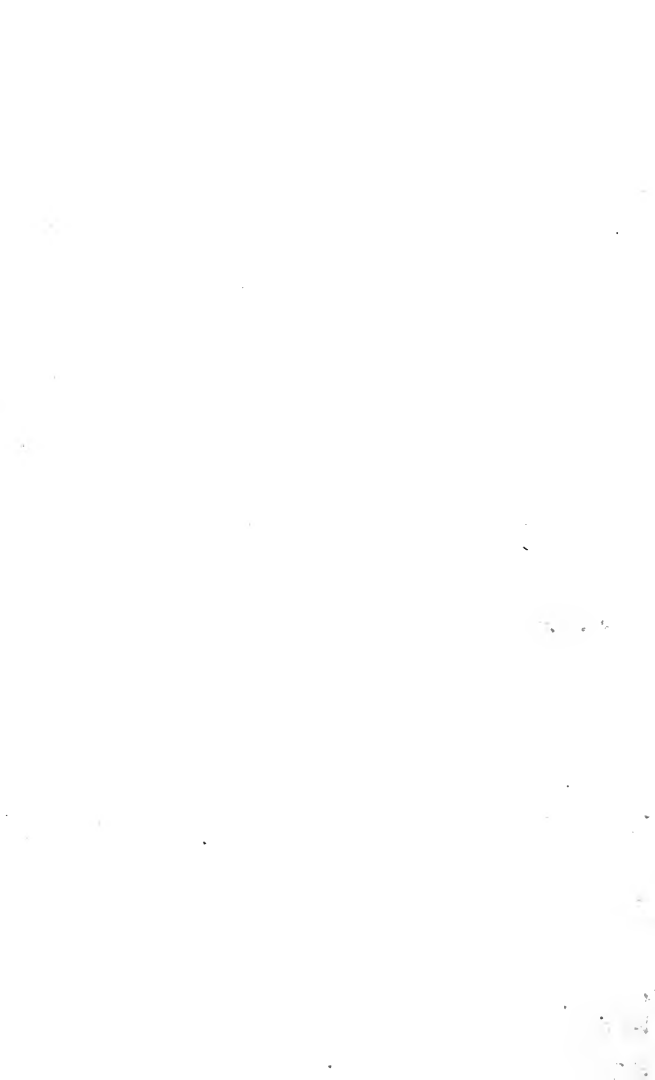
IV. I find thy mercies renewed with my fleeting days, and to rehearse them shall be my glad

employment ; I trusted thee with my little affairs, and thou hast condescended to give me success. Lord, what is man, that thou thus graciously regardest him ? Even my sins, my hourly provocations, cannot put a check to the course of thy beneficence ; it keeps on its conquering way against all the oppositions of my ingratitude and unbelief ; and hast thou not promised, O Lord, it shall run parallel with my life, and measure out my days ?

V. Jesus, my never failing trust, I called on thy name, and thou hast fully answered my hopes ; let thy praises dwell on my tongue, let me breathe thy name to the last spark of life. Thou hast scattered my fears, and been gracious beyond all my hopes ; my faint and doubting prayers have not been rejected ; but, oh ! how slow are my returns of praise, how backward my acknowledgments !

VI. Never have I trusted thee in vain ; Lord, increase my faith ; confirm it by a continued series of thy bounty ; add this favour to the rest ; for faith is the gift of God, an attainment above reason or nature. I am now waiting for the accomplishment of a promise ! O shew me thy mercy and truth ; add this one instance to the rest, and for ever silence the suggestions of hell, and my own infidelity.

VII. How rooted is this cursed principle of unbelief, that can yet distrust thee after so many recorded instances of thy love ! how long will it be ere my wavering soul shall entirely confide in thy salvation ? Oh ! my God, pity my weakness, give new vigour to my faith, and let me take up my rest in thee for ever.





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