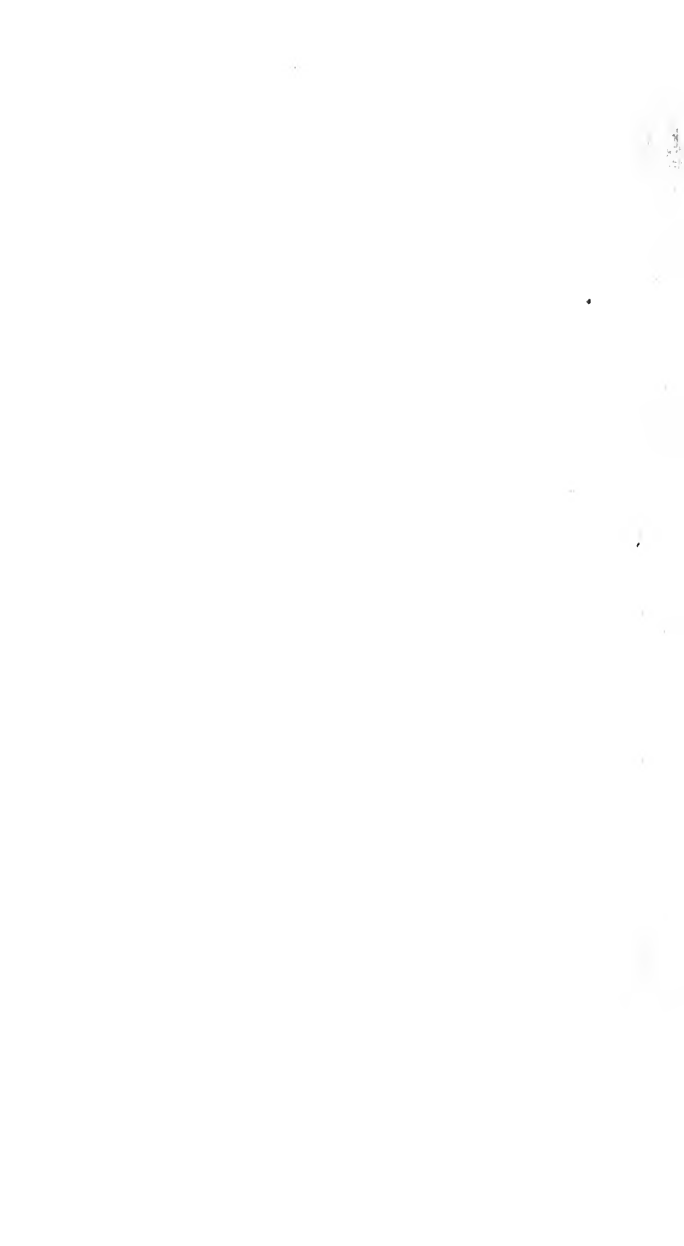


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Dr Hodgens
SELECT REMAINS

OF THE

REV. JOHN MASON, A. M.

OF

LONDON.

CONTAINING A VARIETY OF

DEVOUT AND USEFUL SAYINGS,

ON DIVERS SUBJECTS,

DIJESTED UNDER PROPER HEADS.



SALEM, N. Y.

PRINTED BY DODD & RUMSEY, FOR THE FE-
MALE SOCIETY.

1806.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
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NEW YORK, N. Y.

SELECT REMAINS, &c.

Chapter I.

*Containing a variety of devout and useful sayings
on divers subjects, digested under proper heads.*

MORAL OBSERVATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS.

THOUGH few there be that care to be virtuous, yet fewer there are that would not be counted so.

Nothing but what is God's dishonor should be our shame.

We must not walk by example, but by rule.

They that drive away time, spur a free horse.

As often as a man lays out for God, he lays up for himself.

We have nothing that we can properly call our own, but what we have reason to be ashamed of.

We are never well informed of the truth, till we are conformed to the truth.

A conceit of knowledge is the greatest enemy to knowledge, and the greatest argument of ignorance.

We remember many things we should forget (as injuries, disappointments, &c.) but forget what we should remember (viz. God and our souls.)

They that presume most in prosperity are soonest subject to despair in adversity.

Man may commend thee, but God may condemn thee.

When God punishes another, he threatens thee; when he wounds another, he warns thee.

It is as great a mercy to be preserved in *health*, as to be delivered from *sickness*.

If you mind nothing but the body, you lose body and soul too. If you mind nothing but earth, you lose earth and heaven too.

As they, who for every slight infirmity take physick to repair their health, do rather impair it; so they, who for every trifle are eager to vindicate their character, do rather weaken it.

Honesty is the best policy, and innocence the best wisdom.

Improve the wit you have bought at a dear rate, and the wisdom you have gained by sad experience.

Learn of Christ, who was sensible of injuries, yet patient under them.

Be lively but not light; solid but not sad.

Keep the body under, but the spirit up.

Keep such company as God keeps.

What can you get by bad company? If you are truly good they will either taunt you or despise you.

Take heed of being infected with the breath of a profane heart.

Let the body wait upon the Soul, and both wait upon God.

Speak not well of yourself, nor ill of others.

Speak of peoples' virtues, conceal their infirmities: If you can say no good, say no ill of them.

To render good for evil is God like; to render good for good is man like; to render evil for evil is beast like; to render evil for good is devil like.

Carry yourself submissively towards your superiors ; friendly towards your equals ; condescendingly towards your inferiors ; generously towards your enemies ; and lovingly towards all.

OF RELIGION IN GENERAL.

It signifies nothing to say we will not change our *religion*, if our religion change not *us*.

If a man lives and dies a meer professor, it had been better for him if he had lived and died a meer heathen.

The duty of religion flows from a principle of religion.

It is not talking, but walking with God, that gives a man the denomination of a christian.

Darkness may as well put on the name of light, as a wicked man the name of a christian.

It is our main business in this world to secure an interest in the next.

A desire of happiness is natural, a desire of holiness is supernatural.

If God hath done that good *for us* which he hath denied *to the world*, we ought to do that *for him* which is denied him *by the world*.

If we are willing, God will help us ; if sincere, God will accept us.

A serious remembrance of God is the fountain of obedience to God.

If you forget God when you are young, God may forget you when you are old.

When a christian considers the goodness of God's ways, he wonders that all the world doth not walk in them. But when he considers the blindness, and depravity, and prejudice of the

heart by nature, he wonders that any should enter upon them.

Make your calling sure, and your election is sure.

Uneven walking, with a neglect of Watching, makes a disconsolate soul.

Four things a christian should especially labor after, *viz.* to be *humble* and *thankful*, *watchful* and *cheerful*.

If we would not fall into things unlawful, we must sometimes deny ourselves in those that are lawful.

Salvation then draws near to man when it is his main care.

The ordinances of God are the means of salvation; but the God of ordinances is the author of salvation.

Religion must be our business, then it will be our delight.

It will cost something to be religious, it will cost more not to be so.

A christian's life is nothing else but a short trial of his graces.

Lukewarmness is the best natural, but the worst spiritual temper a man can be in.

There are few but are sometimes in a serious fit; but how few are in a serious frame, who have an abiding sense of God upon their hearts?

It is a voluntary *cannot* that keeps the soul from God.

The gate which leads to life is a strait gate, therefore we should fear; it is an open gate, therefore we should hope.

Do the Lord's work in the Lord's time; pray whilst God hears; hear whilst God speaks; be-

lieve whilst God promises ; obey whilst God commands.

That man hath no sense of mercy that wants a sense of duty.

Two duties must run through a christian's life, like the warp thro' the woof, *bleffing* and *trusting*.

Religion is much talked of, but little understood, till the conscience be awakened ; then a man knows the worth of a soul and the want of a Saviour.

Then doth Religion flourish in the soul, when it knows how to naturalize spiritual things, and to spiritualize natural things.

We may judge of our eternal state by our spiritual state ; and of our spiritual state by the delightful and customary actions of our lives.

If we expect to live with Christ in heaven, we must live to him on earth.

We may expect God's *protection* so long as we keep within God's *bounds*.

Our opportunities are (like our souls) very precious ; but if they are lost they are irrecoverably lost.

That preaching that is plain, pure, powerful, and practical, men are apt to dislike.

Religion begins with a knowledge of a man's self, and is perfected with the knowledge of God.

This is a threefold mystery ; a gospel published in the midst of an ungodly world ; a little church preserved in the midst of devils ; and, a little grace kept alive in the midst of corruptions.

The service of God is the soul's work ; and the favor of God is its reward.

A man may be imperfect in his obedience, and yet impartial.

God never fails them that wait for him, nor forsakes them that work for him.

It is a sign of advanced grace when opinion is swallowed up of religion.

OF GOD.

That there is a God, may be proved by considering the manner of propagation of mankind by generation. Thus,

1. There must have been *one first man*. 2. This first man must have had *some maker*. 3. This maker of him must himself be *unmade*. Therefore, 4. There must have been eternally *some unmade being*; and that is God.

We may *truly* conceive of God, though we cannot *fully* conceive of him. We may have right apprehensions of him, though not an exact comprehension of him.

Then our conceptions of God's attributes are carnal, when our high thoughts of one give us low thoughts of another.

His goodness makes his majesty amiable, and his majesty makes his goodness wonderful. His love is not abated by his greatness, nor his greatness by his love. His holiness hinders him not from dwelling with the *poor in spirit*.

Nothing is great enough for him to admire, who is infinite majesty; nothing is mean enough for him to despise, who is infinite mercy.

God deals with his servants, not as a passionate master, but as a compassionate father.

What pleaseth God should please us, because it pleaseth God.

A sight of God begins a saint on earth, and perfects him in heaven.

God takes notice of every particular man as if there were none else; and yet takes notice of all as if there were but one man.

God repented that he *made* man, but never repented that he *redeemed* man.

We cannot live *naturally* without God, how then can we live *happily* without him?

We may know what God intends *for* us, by what he hath wrought *in* us.

They that have God for their God have angels for their guard.

Many have lost *for* God, but none ever lost *by* God. If they have lost in temporals, they have been eternal gainers, *Matt. xix. 29.*

This is a sure rule; *God never takes any thing from his people, but he gives them something better in the stead of it.*

God is a great God, and therefore we should wait upon him; he is a good God, and therefore it is not in vain to wait upon him.

A man may be a worshipper of the true God, and yet not be a true worshipper of God.

The *lowest* reverence is due to the *highest* majesty.

Fear God for his *power*, *trust* him for his *wisdom*, *love* him for his *goodness*, *praise* him for his *greatness*, *believe* him for his *faithfulness*, and *adore* him for his *holiness*.

All creatures are as nothing compared with God, and *absolutely* nothing without God.

OF THE FEAR OF GOD.

They that fear God least have the greatest reason to fear him.

A fear of departing from God is a good means

to keep us from departing from him.

The more we fear God, the less we shall fear men.

They that will not fear God in prosperity, will be afraid of him in adversity.

OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

If God's earthly presence is so good, what is his heavenly presence?

If God's being with us is so sweet, what is it to be with God?

There is joy in God's *gracious* presence, but in his *glorious* presence there is *fulness* of joy.

There are pleasures in approaching to God here, but at his right hand there are *pleasures forevermore*.

The nearer we are to Christ, the nearer is God to us.

The presence of God's glory is in heaven; the presence of his power on earth, the presence of his justice in hell, and the presence of his grace with his people.—If he deny us his powerful presence we fall into nothing; if he deny us his gracious presence we fall into sin; if he deny us his merciful presence we fall into hell.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

If the love of God set us on work, the God of love will pay us our wages.

God loveth his people to the end, therefore they shall endure to the end.

He loveth them *in* his son, and *as* his son, and as long as he loveth his son.

We hated God without a cause, and he loved us without a cause.

Love begets love. 'Tis a flame that communicates itself. They that have much *forgiveness* them, much *done* for them, much laid *out* for them, and much laid *up* for them, will love much.

Our love to God is the reflection of his love to us; 1 *John* iv. 19. *We love him because he first loved us.*

OF CHRIST.

Christ made himself like to us, that he might make us like to himself.

Christ must needs have died, how else could sin be expiated, the law satisfied, the devil conquered, and man be saved?

They that deny themselves *for* Christ shall enjoy themselves *in* Christ.

Men had rather hear of Christ crucified for them, than be crucified for Christ.

If Christ denied innocent nature out of love to *us*, shall not we deny corrupt nature out of love to *him*?

Christ by his death appeared to be the *son of man*, by his resurrection he appeared to be the *son of God*.

Christ was the great promise of the Old Testament, the spirit is the great promise of the New.

Christ's strength is the christian's strength.

If we would stand, Christ must be our foundation; if we would be safe, Christ must be our sanctuary.

In regard of natural life, we live in God; in regard of spiritual life, Christ lives in us.

He that thinks he hath no need of Christ hath too high thoughts of himself; he that thinks

Christ cannot help him hath too low thoughts of Christ.

Presumption abuses Christ, despair refuses him.

Christ satisfied God to the uttermost, and therefore can save sinners to the uttermost.

The blood of Christ, which satisfied the justice of God, may satisfy the conscience of an awakened sinner.

If sin was better known, Christ would be better thought of.

If sin doth not taste bitter, Christ cannot taste sweet.

When sin is hell, Christ is heaven.

There is no passage from sin to holiness till we are passed from sin to Christ.

Christ may have an interest in us, though we may not be able to see our interest in him.

Christ hath entreated God to be reconciled to us, and now he entreats us to be reconciled to God.

God will give us nothing for *our* sakes; but he will deny us nothing for *Christ's* sake.

None are so low as Christ was, none so lowly, none so loving.

We may know what Christ hath done *for* us, by what he hath done *in* us.

Creatures die that our bodies may live, Christ died that our souls may live.

Our judge, instead of condemning us, slept from the bench and died for us.

Christ is to be a believer's judge, and if he was to chuse his judge he could not chuse a better friend.

As God glorifies Christ in heaven, so the spi-

rit glorifies him on earth, in the hearts of believers.

A believer's comfort in living is to live to Christ; and in dying it is that he shall go to Christ.

The blood of Christ upon the heart is the greatest blessing; upon the head is the greatest curse.

It matters not who are our accusers if Christ be our advocate.

Christ's blood	} is the soul's	{	Ransom,
Christ's spirit			Comforter,
Christ's word			Food,
Christ's supper			Feast,
The Lord's day			Market day.

A christian may triumph in the death of Christ; *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? O hell! where is thy terror? O world! where is thy malice? O sin! where is thy strength? O my soul! where are thine accusers?*

There is no honor like a relation to Christ; no riches like the graces of Christ; no learning like the knowledge of Christ; and no persons like the servants of Christ.

Christ executes the office of a prophet in our effectual calling; of a priest in our justification; and of a king in our sanctification.—Let us then hear him as our prophet; rely on him as our priest; and obey him as our king.—Think not the worse of him for his manger or his cross. As he ceaseth not to be man in his highest estate, so he was God in his lowest. His words were oracles, and his works miracles. His life was a pattern; his death a sacrifice; his resurrection glorious; his ascension triumphant; his inter-

cession prevalent, and his coming again will be magnificent. All the angels in heaven adore him ; all the devils in hell fear him ; and all the sons and daughters of Adam must stand before him.

Own Christ's person, love his name, embrace his doctrine, obey his commands, and submit to his cross. His person is lovely, his name is sweet, his doctrines are comfortable, his commands are rational, and his cross honorable.—The very angels admire him, and shall not we ?—

A depraved understanding will not yield that the creature is so bad, and that Christ is so good !—

O ! did we but know ourselves, and our favour ! we are poor, but he is rich ; we are dead but he is life ; we are sin but he is righteousness ; we are guiltiness, but he is grace ; we are misery, but he is mercy ; we are lost, but he is salvation ;—if we are willing, he never was otherwise.—He ever lives, ever loves, ever pities, ever pleads. He loves to the end, and saves to the uttermost, all that come unto him.

A PATHETICAL INVITATION TO SINNERS TO
COME TO CHRIST.

Have you sins, or have you none ?—If you have, whither should you go, but to *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world ?* Have you souls, or have you none ?—If you have, whither should you go but to *the saviour of souls ?* Is there a life to come, or is there not ?—If there is, whither should you go but to him, who only *hath the words of eternal life ?* Is there a wrath to come, or is there not ?—If there is, whither should you go but to him, who only

your sin and sorrows, tears and fears, fled and gone, gone for ever ; and you meet with an unspeakable reward.

OF SINNERS.

Are not they miserable, who, if they had their wish, could not be happy ?

They that will not hear Christ say *come to me*, in a day of grace, shall hear him say *depart from me*, in a day of judgment.

If we are graceless here, we shall be speechless hereafter.

Sinners are first driven, then drawn to God.

The conversion of a sinner is a greater wonder than the creation of the world.

If a sinner's thoughts be not changed by grace, they will be changed hereafter by experience.

They that are least serious, have the greatest reason to be so ; their *condition* is awful, and therefore their *disposition* ought to be so.

Hatred is due to sin, compassion to the sinner.

Sinners, if you will not hear God call to-day, you will harden your hearts to-day : and, if you harden them to-day, God may harden them to-morrow. If you will not set about repentance to-day, God may justly deny you his assistance to-morrow.

If you will not do that which God hath enabled you to do, how can you look that he should do that for you which, of yourselves, you cannot do ?

Do not think to begin to live, when thou art ready to die.

If you would not go to hell, you must know that you have deserved it.

Let not your hearts flatter you, nor the world comfort you, when God threatens you.

God tells you, if you repent, you shall find mercy; and will you not believe him? Because thou hast been a sinner, wilt thou make God a liar?

Sinners, you must be changed; if your hearts be not changed for the better, your condition will be changed for the worse.

The worst of the ways of God are better than the best of the ways of sin.

OF SIN.

He that pleads for sin, is an advocate for his accuser.

God allows us any thing but sin.

If sin be in the fashion, we must be out of it.

Then a man shews himself to be a Christian, when he chuses rather to suffer than sin.

Sin digs graves for bodies, and kindles hell for souls.

That is a sufficient cause for trouble, that is the cause of all the trouble in the world.

Should not we groan for that which makes the whole creation groan?

If the heart be under the power of sin, the conscience is under the guilt of sin. If thou art not purified, thou art not pardoned.

A man can never leave sin thoroughly, till he loathes it heartily.

We must be *sick* of sin, before we can be *dead* to sin.

There is no sin a man can be tempted to, but he will find greater comfort in resisting than in indulging.

How can we say that we love Christ, if we love sin, which was an enemy to his life and soul when he was on earth ; and is an enemy to his glory now he is in heaven ?

Our sins cried as loud to heaven, as the *Jews* did to earth, that *Christ might be crucified*.

Go to *Golgotha*, and see what sin did there.

Christ did not die *for* sin, that we might live *to* sin.

Christ died that our sins might die, and our souls live.

Sin received its sentence in the death of Christ ; but it doth not receive its execution till the death of a christian.

All our sins shall not separate between God and our souls, if unbelief doth not separate between Christ and our souls.

There is no sin but what may be traced up to unbelief.

* He that glories in his sin, glories in his shame.

We should be ashamed of sin, but not ashamed to take shame for sin.

Get this principle into your hearts ; *there is nothing got by sin, nor lost by holiness*.

By suffering we may avoid sinning ; but by sinning we cannot avoid suffering.

One that truly fears God, is afraid of sin ; he sees more evil in it than in all the evil in the world.

If we be not humble for sin, we derogate from the majesty of God ; if we despair under it, we derogate from his mercy.

One that is sincere hates sin in himself, and laments it in others.

Our hatred of sin must be irreconcilable, and our endeavors against it perpetual.

The sins of the wicked anger Christ, the sins of his people grieve him.

Want of sorrow for sin, more argues want of love to Christ, than the sin itself.

Sin is a believer's burden and wound, but Christ is his cure and comfort.

Sin is the sickness of the soul, and Christ the only physician, that can cure it of the *leprosy* of profaneness, the *fever* of concupiscence, the *drop-sy* of covetousness, the *tympany* of pride, the *lethargy* of lukewarmness, the *phrenzy* of passion, and the *palsy* of unbelief.

Hatred is heart-murder ; lust is heart-adultery ; and covetousness heart-stealing.

How tender is our flesh ? How hard our hearts ? *i. e.* How much more sensible are we of suffering than sin ?

We should fear to *think* that before God which we are afraid to *do* before man ; for God knows our *hearts* better than any man knows our *faces*.

Vain thoughts are sin's advocates, and Christ's adversaries.

God is so *holy*, that he would not suffer such an evil as sin ; but that he is so *wise*, that he can bring good out of it.

OF REPENTANCE.

Repentance begins in the humiliation of the heart, and ends in the reformation of the life.

Though we want *power* to repent ; yet we do not want *means* to repent, nor power to use these *means*.

He that repents of sin, as sin, doth implicitly repent of all sin.

Let not sinful pleasures prevent godly sorrows. An humble confession of sin brings shame to ourselves, but glory to God.

You cannot repent too soon. There is no day like to-day. Yesterday is gone, to-morrow is God's, not your own. And, think how sad it will be to have your evidences to seek, when your cause is to be tried; to have your oil to buy, when you should have it to burn!

Let the hopes of mercy encourage to the exercise of repentance.

Turn to God, and he will turn to you; and then you are happy, though all the world turn against you.

If we think amiss of Christ, we shall never believe: if we think well of sin, we shall never repent.

If we put off our repentance to another day, we have a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in.

If we study to honor God, we cannot do it better than by confessing our sins, and laying ourselves low at the feet of Christ.

Godly sorrow is the sorrow of love; the melting of the heart: love is the pain and pleasure of a mourning heart.

The *evangelical* penitent loves and grieves. "Alas (*saith he*) that I, who am as high as heaven in privilege, should be as deep as hell in iniquity! instead of repenting, I have ran farther on score! instead of honoring God, I have dishonored him! instead of pleading him, I have provoked him! instead of following him, I have forsaken him!—O what bowels have I grieved! how can I sin against my Jesus! shall I deny

and crucify my saviour! He was crucified *for* me, and shall he be crucified *by* me? Shall I wound his heart, and pierce his side again, and give him cause to say, *these are the wounds I received in the house of my friends.*"

OF FAITH.

Reliance is the essence of faith, Christ is the object, the word is the food, and obedience the proof: so that true faith is a *depending* upon *Christ* for salvation in a way of *obedience*, as he is offered in the *word*.

The true tears of repentance flow from the eye of faith.

Though faith be necessary to our justification, good works are necessary to our salvation.

We must derive our works from faith, and demonstrate our faith by our works.

God is often pleased to imbitter a life of sense, that he may endear the life of faith.

A steadfast faith begets a constant peace.

The more faith the more humility.

Keep good principles, and they will keep you.

Men would first see, and then believe; but they must first believe, and then see.

As believers live *upon* Christ by faith, so they live *to* him by obedience.

Justifying faith is always attended with universal obedience.

There is a difference between contending for the faith, and babbling for a fancy.

Affurance sets the notion of faith too high, assent too low.

There is as much difference between faith and

assurance, as there is between the root and the fruit.

There may be joy without faith, and there may be faith without joy.

Human faith is founded upon *probability*, divine faith upon *certainty*.

If the exercise of faith be the care of your souls the end of your faith will be the salvation of your souls.

OF HUMILITY.

To be low is the safest and comliest posture for sinful creatures.

It is the creature's honor to abase himself before the most high God.

God had rather see his children humble for sin, than proud of grace.

If men did but know themselves more, they would be more humble.

They that are humble, are content and thankful.

An humble spirit is a charitable and quiet spirit.

Judge thyself with a judgment of sincerity, and thou wilt judge others with a judgment of charity.

To humble ourselves, is the only way to rise.

Believers must be humble for sin pardoned, and because it is pardoned.

When *Paul* was a *pharisee*, he thought he was *blameless*; when he was a *christian*, the *chief of sinners*: before, *any thing but Christ*: now, *none but Christ*.

If Christ humbled himself to honour our nature, we should humble ourselves to honor his name.

Neither all the devils in hell, nor all the temptations of the world, can hurt that man that keeps himself humble and depending on Christ.

It is no humiliation to aggravate sin above Christ's saving power.

Despair is a corruption of humiliation, it is a counterfeit humility, a fullen pride, the covert of a hardened spirit.

That is true humiliation, which (like a har-binger) makes way for Christ, and throws the soul at his feet.

Our Saviour was a preacher and pattern of humility: he did so admire it, that he set them in the highest form, that had the lowest hearts.

None so high and glorious as Christ, yet none so meek and lowly.

OF CONTENTMENT.

Humility is the mother of contentment.

The deeper your self-abhorrence, the easier is self-resignation.

They that deserve *nothing* should be content with *any thing*.

Bless God for what you have, and trust God for what you want.

We must commit our souls to God's keeping, and submit ourselves to God's disposing.

We should obey his revealed will, and then be resigned to his providential will.

If we cannot bring our condition to our mind we must labor to bring our mind to our condition.

Neither contentment, nor discontentment, arises from the outward condition, but from the inward disposition.

If a man is not content in that state he is in, he will not be content in any state he would be in.

OF PRIDE.

To be sure a man is proud of that, which he scorns another for the want of.

That which a man envies in another, he would be proud of, if he had it himself.

Pride is founded on *error* and *self-ignorance*.

Some are proud of what they *are*, others of what they *are not*.

There is a sullen pride in not acknowledging benefits.

A man may be poor in purse, yet proud in spirit.

There may be pride in rags, in a solemn look and lowly carriage.

God had rather his people should fare poorly, than live proudly.

How canst thou be judge of another's heart, that dost not know thine own ?

As the first step heaven-ward is humility, so the first step hell-ward is pride.

Pride counts the gospel foolishness, but the gospel always shews pride to be so.

Pride is a sin that will rise out of the ashes of other sins.

Folly is the beginning of pride, and shame shall be the end of it ; either *penitent* shame, or *penal* shame ; either temporal repentance, or eternal punishment.

Shall the finner be proud that is going to hell ? Shall the saint be proud that is newly saved from it ?

Thou that canst call nothing thine own but

fin and shame, art thou proud? Dust and ashes, proud? A worm, and proud? Emptiness, and proud? Perishing, and proud?

It is unreasonable for the *creature* to be proud much more the sinner.

OF HYPOCRISY.

A hypocrite is one that neither *is* what he *seems*, nor *seems* what he *is*.

A hypocrite is the picture of a saint; but his paint shall be washed off, and he shall appear in his own colours.

God is good in earnest with us, we ought therefore to be so with him.

A hypocrite is hated of the world for seeming a christian, and hated of God for not being one.

OF IDLENESS.

Idleness is the mother of many wanton children.

They that do nothing, are in the ready way to do that which is worse than nothing.

If we hide our talent in the earth, we shall lose our treasure in heaven.

A christian should never say, *he hath nothing to do*.

It was not for nothing that we were called out of nothing.

OF THE SOUL.

It matters not what a man loses, if he saves his soul; but if he lose his soul, it matters not what he saves.

They that are least sensible of their soul's wants are most miserable.

It is our greatest wisdom to be tenderly watch-

ful over the frame of our spirits ; to observe what helps it, and what injures it.

If you lose your time, you lose your hopes ; and if you lose your hopes, you lose your souls, and when your souls are lost, they shall never be ransomed ; when your hopes are lost, they shall never be recovered ; and when your time is lost, it shall never be redeemed.

OF THE HEART AND CONSCIENCE.

The soft mercies of God will break the hard heart of man.

A hard heart is not so soon broken, as a broken heart is bound up.

It is better to have a good conscience, and be censured, than to have a bad one, and be flattered.

We must hear the warnings of conscience, or we shall feel the woundings of conscience.

A word from God, a look from Christ, a touch from the spirit will break the heart.

OF GRACE.

The *notion* of free-grace, may make persons dissolute, but a *sense* of it restrains from sin.

The goodness of God respects our *emptiness*, the *grace* of God our *sinfulness*, and the mercy of God our *unworthiness*.

What sin is there which grace cannot pardon ?
What heart is there, which grace cannot soften ?
What soul is there, which grace cannot save ?

All grace flows from Christ united to the soul ; as all life flows from the soul united to the body.

The more God's justice was declared towards

his son, the more was his mercy magnified towards the sinner.

God humbled his son to exalt his grace.

Saul was not so free in persecuting Christ, as Christ was in pardoning *Paul*.

Bless God for Christ, Christ for the spirit, and the spirit for grace.

Possibly a christian's enemies may spoil him of his common mercies; but they shall never rob him of his covenant mercies.

God's faithfulness performed what his mercy promised.

Mercy drew the covenant; faithfulness keeps it; mercy called us: faithfulness will not cast us off.

Common mercies may be sweet, but covenant mercies are sure.

Abusers of mercy are treasurers up of wrath.

If thou wert worthy, thou couldest have no mercy.

There is grace in the desire of grace, as there is sin in the desire of sin.

You that have found mercy, shew mercy.

Though God in mercy hath done great things for you, yet consider what in justice he might have done to you.

Whilst we carry a sense of grace in our conscience to comfort us, let us carry a sense of sin in our memory to humble us.

We can never bless God enough for his patience, that hath kept us so long out of hell; nor for his mercy, that so earnestly invites us to heaven.

All that are chosen are vessels of mercy; all that are regenerate, are patterns of mercy; all

that are saved are monuments of mercy ; and the work of heaven, is to sing the loud praises of mercy.

It melts the heart to think, that *God is as full of mercy, as I am of sin ; he is as free to forgive as I am to offend ; he bath daily mercies for daily sins.*

The heart of man is such a barren soil, that no good can grow therein, unless almighty grace plant it.

Grace is an immortal seed, cast into an immortal soil, that brings forth immortal fruit.

OF TEMPTATIONS.

Temptations are instructions.

He is over-wise that goes out of God's way to escape a cross.

God will either keep his saints *from* temptations by his preventing mercy, or *in* temptations by his supporting mercy, or find a way for their escape by his delivering mercy.

A christian that lives here among his enemies, should never stir abroad without his guard.

Satan tempts to sin, the *spirit* counsels against sin.

If you follow *Satan*, you will find the tempter prove a tormentor ; if you follow the *spirit*, you will find the counsellor prove a comforter.

OF THE WORLD.

If the world be our portion here, hell will be our portion hereafter.

We must neither leave the world, nor love it.

The world promises comforts, and pays sorrows.

Riches and prosperity will either kill with care or surfeit with delight.

Be not proud of riches but afraid of them, lest they be as silver bars to cross the way to heaven.

We put a price upon riches, but riches cannot put a price upon us.

We must answer for our riches, but our riches cannot answer for us.

Riches are as indifferent things ; good or bad as they are used : be then as indifferent to them as they are to you.

If there be too great an affection for any thing here, there will be an answerable affliction.

It is a sad thing when a man can have no comfort but in diversions, no joy but in forgetting himself.

Love the men of the world, but not the things of the world.

To have a portion in the world, is a mercy ; to have the world for a portion is a misery.

Whatever we make an idol of, will be a cross to us if we belong to Christ ; a curse to us if we do not.

We should endeavor to pass thro' this world with a cheerful indifferency.

Covetousness betrayed our saviour, envy accused him, and the friendship of the world condemned him.

Man is not made for the world, but the world for man.

It is our business in this world, to secure an interest in the next.

The things of the world, the more they are known, the less they are admired ; but the things

of God, the more they are known, the more they are admired.

There is no miss of the creature, where there is a full enjoyment of the creator.

If thou art not afraid of the world, I fear thou art a friend of the world, and an enemy to God.

As you love your souls, beware of the world, it hath slain its thousands, and ten thousands. What ruined *Lot's* wife? the world. What ruined *Judas*? the world. What ruined *Simon Magus*? the world. What ruined *Demas*? the world. And, *what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* Matt. xvi. 26.

To speak the truth freely; riches are dust, honors are shadows, pleasures are bubbles, and man a lump of vanity, compounded of sin and misery.

OF THE WORD OF GOD.

The word of God must be nearer to us than our friends, dearer to us than our lives, sweeter to us than our liberty, and pleasanter to us than all earthly comforts.

Take the candle of God's word, and search the corners of your heart.

We speak to God in prayer; God speaks to us in his word.

Two things are to be trembled at; the presence of God which fills all places, and the word of God which reacheth to all times.

All arguments against the word of God are fallacies; all conceits against the word are delusions; all derision against the word is folly; and all opposition against the word is madness.

When God threatens, that is a time to repent;

when he promises, that is a time to believe ; when he commands, that is a time to obey.

If a man believed the threatenings of the word of God, he would tremble, and fly to the promises for refuge.

As Christ came out of his father's bosom, so the promises came out of Christ's side.

The church cannot live without faith, and faith cannot live without the promises.

We have less power to stand than our first parents, but we have better promises.

Whatever promises faith takes hold of, it makes the good thing there promised to be our own.

God's promises are a defence against man's threatenings.

The promises of the gospel are sealed to us by the oath of the father, the blood of the son, and the witness of the spirit.

OF THE LAW.

The moral law was weak through the flesh, the ceremonial law was so in its own nature ; but Christ was the end of the moral law to fulfil it, and the end of the ceremonial law to answer its intention, by offering himself a sacrifice.

Christ was God's righteous servant to perform all the duties of the moral law ; and our devoted sacrifice to bear all the penalties of it.

By the law is the knowledge of sin, by the gospel is the knowledge of Christ.

God hath written a law, and a gospel ; the law to *humble* us, and the gospel to *comfort* us ; the law to *cast us down*, and the gospel to *raise us up* ; the law to convince us of *our misery*, and the gospel to convince us of *his mercy* ; the law to dis-

cover *sin*, and the gospel to discover *grace* and *Christ*.

OF PROVIDENCE.

Providences are sometimes dark texts that wants an expositor.

God's providence fulfils his promise.

Count every day, as well as you can, the providences of God towards you that day.

Without God's providence nothing falls out in the world ; without his commission nothing stirs ; without his blessing nothing prospers.

OF AFFLICTIONS.

'Tis a worse sign to be without chastisement, than to be under chastisement.

Two things should comfort suffering christians, *viz.* all that they suffer is not hell ; yet it is all the hell they shall suffer.

Afflictions are not so much *threatened*, as *promised*, to the children of God.

To be a christian, and a suffering christian, is a double honor.

By affliction God separates the sin which he hates, from the soul which he loves.

The more a man fears sin, the less will he fear trouble.

Afflictions are of God's sending, but of sin's deserving.

Sin is the poison, affliction the physic.

When God is humbling us, let us endeavor to humble ourselves.

May every one do what he will with his own, but God ?

If the servants of Christ are never so low ; yet his heart is with them, and his eye upon them.

God takes it unkindly when we grieve too much for any outward things ; because 'tis a sign we fetch not that comfort from him which we should.

Though the hand of God may be against you ; yet, the heart of God may be towards you.

What if the providence of God cros you, if the promise of God bless you ?

What is bearing a temporal cross, to the wearing an eternal crown.

Our enjoyments are greater than our afflictions, and our afflictions less than our sins.

Our sufferings should stir up our graces, as well as our griefs.

OF PRAYER.

Fill up the void spaces of your time with meditation and prayer.

They are the safest who are most in their closets ; who pray not to be seen of men, but to be heard of God.

Prayer doth not consist in gilded expressions, and a volubility of speech ; but in a brokenness of heart.

Imperfect broken groans, from a broken heart, God will accept.

An hard heart cannot pray ; a broken heart is made up of prayer.

It is a comfort to christians apart to think their prayers meet before a throne of grace ; and their persons shall meet before a throne of glory.

There wants nothing but a believing prayer to turn the promise into a performance.

God is a *great* God, and therefore he will be *sought* ; he is a *good* God, and therefore he will be *found*.

When God pours out his spirit upon man then will man pour out his heart before God.

He that lives without prayer, or prays without life, hath not the spirit of God.

Prayer doth not consist in the elegance of the phrase, but in the strength of the affection.

Where there is a willing heart, there will be a continual crying to heaven for help.

Pray that you may pray.

Waiting upon God continually will abate your unnecessary cares, and sweeten your necessary ones.

God counts all the steps we take to the throne of grace, and all the minutes of our waiting.

Let nothing get between heaven and prayer, but Christ.

Prayer, if it be done as a task, is no prayer.

Sin quenches prayer, affliction quickens it.

The same spirit of faith which teaches a man to cry earnestly, teaches him to wait patiently : For, as it assures him the mercy is in the Lord's hand ; so it assures him, it will be given forth in the Lord's time.

The *breath* of prayer comes from the *life* of faith.

Whatever you want go to God by faith and prayer, in the name of Christ, and never think his delays are denials.

They that spend their days in faith and prayer, shall end their days in peace and comfort.

OF ETERNITY.

Look backwards, and time was when souls were not ; look forwards, and our souls will be when time shall not.

Who would not deny himself for a time, that he may enjoy himself for ever ?

What is the world to them that are in the grave, where our bodies must shortly be ? Or to them that are in eternity, where our souls must shortly be ?

Remember you are at the door of eternity, and have other work to do than to trifle away time ; those hours which you spend in your closets, are the golden spots of all your time, and will have the sweetest influence upon your last hours.

Our life is a passage *to* eternity ; it ought to be a meditation *of* eternity, and a preparation *for* eternity.

OF DEATH.

The longest life, is a lingering death.

First infancy dies, then childhood, then youth, then manhood, then old age ; and then we make an end of dying.

Though thou mayest have been nearer death (in thine own apprehensions) than thou art now ; yet it is certain, death was never so near to thee as it is now.

Man does not die because he is made of earth, but because he is infected with sin.

Death to a christian, is a putting off rags for robes.

We need not be ashamed of that now, which we are sure we shall not repent of when we come to die.

As the king of terrors leaves us, so the day of terror will find us.

Death will be very terrible to him who dies not in his thoughts daily.

There is nothing terrible in death, but what our lives have made so.

It is death to many to think of death ; they are as unwilling to be led into a discourse of death, as children into the dark : The thoughts of it are no more welcome to them, than *Moses* was to *Pharaoh* ; to whom he said, *Get thee from me, and let me see thy face no more*, *Exod. x. 28.*

Death shuts in the light of this world, and is the day-break of eternity.

Let us familiarize death by meditation, and sweeten it by preparation.

The great comfort of a believer, on his death-bed, is faith in Christ, hope in the promise, and an interest in the covenant.

This life is a middle state ; we must soon go higher or lower, where we must spend upon the treasure we here lay up, whether of wrath or glory.

We should think of death, not as though we were thinking, but as though we were dying.

It is the greatest business of life, to think of the end of life, and to lay hold of eternal life.

Let us make a friend of death and our judge ; and then we shall die out of choice, as well as necessity.

OF HEAVEN.

If heaven doth not enter into us by way of *holiness*, we shall never enter into heaven by way of *happiness*.

If you would lay up a treasure of glory in heaven, lay up a treasure of grace in your hearts.

If your souls are rich in grace, they will be rich in glory.

The more you do for God in this world, the

more God will do for you in the world to come.

As heaven is kept for the saints by Christ, so they are kept for heaven by the spirit.

In heaven all God's servants will be abundantly satisfied with his dealings and dispensations with them ; and shall see how all conduced like so many winds to bring them to their haven ; and how, even the roughest blasts helped to bring them homeward.

In heaven God will never hide his face more, nor the devil shew his more.

How can we expect to live with God in heaven, if we love not to live with him on earth ?

If thou lovest to worship God here below, God will take thee up to worship him above.—Thou shalt change thy place, but not thine employment.

Heaven is a day without a cloud to darken it, and without a night to end it.

We would be seated in the heavenly *Canaan*, but are loath to be scratched with the briars and thorns of the *wilderness*.

In heaven there is the presence of all good, and the absence of all evil.

Grace and glory differ but as the bud and the blossom :—What is grace, but glory begun ? What is glory, but grace perfected ?

We may hope for a place in heaven, if our hearts are made suitable to the state of heaven.

If there will be any grief in heaven, sure it will be for this, that we have done no more for God on earth.

OF HELL.

They that will not fear the punishment in the threatening, shall feel the threatening in the punishment.

In heaven holiness is their everlasting temper, and happiness their everlasting portion ; in hell sin is their eternal temper, and sorrow their eternal portion.

The reason why so many fall into hell, is because so few think of it.

They fall *deepest* into hell, that fall *backward* into hell.

None are so near heaven, as they that are convinced ; none so near hell, as those who have quenched conviction.

The scorner's seat stands next hell gate.

We must fall into the arms of Christ, or into the flames of hell.

You may think it a sad thing to repent on earth, but it is a sadder thing to repent in hell.

A creature's place is a low place, but a sinner's place is a lower.

It is a weak and wretched thing, by false peace, to secure eternal sorrow.

Chapter II.

Containing some religious observations by way of simile.

AS rivers and fountains proceed from the sea, and return thither again ; so true grace in the heart, as a fountain, sends forth all its streams towards God, the ocean from whence it flowed.

Christian graces are like perfumes ; the more they are prest, the sweeter they smell ; like stars, that shine brightest in the dark ; like trees, the

more they are shaken, the deeper root they take, and the more fruit they bear.

As snow is of itself cold, yet warms and refreshes the earth; so afflictions, though in themselves grievous, yet keep the soul of the christian warm, and make it fruitful.

The casting down of our spirits in true humility, is but like throwing a ball on the ground, which makes it rebound the higher towards heaven.

As worldly joy ends in sorrow, so godly sorrow ends in joy.

As it sometimes rains when the sun shines; so there may be joy in a saint's heart when there are tears in his eyes.

Confession of sin should come like water from a spring, that runs freely; and not like water from a still, that is forced by the fire of affliction.

As the way to stop bleeding, is by opening a vein; so the way to stop unreasonable sorrow is to turn it against sin.

Sin is like a bee, with honey in its mouth, but a sting in its tail.

Many a man shifts his sins as men do their cloaths; they put off one to put on another: This is but waiting upon the devil in a new livery.

The sins of a good man are like weeds in a garden, which may hinder the growth of fruits and flowers, but (not permitted to get head) cannot kill them.

The pleasure of sin is like a draught of sweet poison.

As the fly, that plays about the candle doth often burn its wings at last; so the christian that parleys with temptations, is in danger of having

the wings of his soul so shortened by the fiery darts of the devil, that he will not be able to rise again towards heaven, till God shall give him renewed affections.

As *Noah's* dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot ; so the spirit of God can find no residence in that heart that is deluged in sin.

Our conscience is as a fire within us, our sins as the fuel ; therefore, instead of warming, it will scorch us ; unless the fuel be removed, or the heat of it allayed by penitential tears.

All true christians must be like *Noah's* ark, that was pitched within and without, *Gen. vi. 14.* They must have a holy inside, and a holy outside ; their profession and practice must agree together.

They that are professors only, and make shew of religion for sinister ends, are like *Orpah* ; in times of affliction they will kiss their mother and be gone ; they will soon take leave of the church of God. But they that are true christians are like *Ruth* ; they will cleave to her, stay by her, live and die with her, and never depart from her, *Ruth i. 14.*

As it is not putting on a gown that makes a scholar, but the inward habits of the mind ; so it is not putting on an outward cloak of profession that makes a christian, but the inward grace of the heart.

As *Noah's* dove found no footing but in the ark : so a christian finds no contentment but in Christ.

Our hearts are like instruments of music well tuned ; they will make no melody in the ear of

God, unless they be gently touched by the finger of the spirit.

Christians hearts are as iron ; if they be once made hot with the love of God, they will more easily be joined together in love to one another.

As the sun ripens and sweetens fruits by shining upon them, without which they would be sour and unsavory ; so it is the sunshine of God's love and favor that sweetens all earthly blessings, without which they would be but crosses and curses to them that possess them.

God's mercies are as cords to draw us to him ; but our sins are as sharp swords that cut those cords.

Outward comforts are like the rotten twigs of a tree ; they may be touched, but if they are trusted to, or rested upon, they will certainly deceive and fail us.

As cankers breed in the sweetest roses, so pride may arise out of the sweetest duties.

A zealous soul without meekness, is like a ship in a storm, in danger of wrecks. A meek soul without zeal, is like a ship in a calm, that moves not so fast to its harbor as it ought.

Notional knowledge is like the light of a candle, which enlightens, but does not warm ; true and saving knowledge is like the sun, which not only enlightens but enlivens.

As God commanded under the law, that the inwards of every sacrifice should be burnt, that they might be *an offering made by fire, of sweet savour, unto the Lord*, Levit. iv. 8. So he looks for no less now ; for, unless we offer up our hearts to him on the altar of Christ's merits with

the fire of zeal, our duties will never be acceptable to him.

As *Old-Testament* saints had sacrifices under the law ; so *New-Testament* saints have under the gospel : for every duty in which saints consecrate themselves, is called a *sacrafice*, Psalm iv. 5. cxvi. 17. *Heb.* xiii. 16. And we may parallel law and gospel sacrifices thus, repentance is a *trespafs-offering*, zeal a *burnt-offering*, praise a *free-will-offering*, and sincerity the *oblations of unleavened bread*.

As every shred of Gold is precious, so is every minute of time.

As it would be great folly to shoe horses (as *Nero* did) with gold ; so it would be, to spend time in trifles.

A Christian's birth is like the *Red-Sea*, that brings him into the wilderness ; his death is like *Jordan*, that brings him into *Canaan*.

As the waters that sunk the men of the old world, raised up *Noah* in the ark ; so death which sinks sinners into hell, raises saints up to heaven.

As a *basilisk*, if it sees a man first, kills him, but, if a man sees it first, it doth him no harm ; so, if we see death first, and prepare for it, we unstring it, and it can do us no hurt.

As lamps fed with sweet oil, cast a sweeter smell when they are put out ; so after death, the memory of the righteous is precious.

A wicked man is like one that hangs over a deep pit by a slender cord with one hand, and is cutting it with the other.

Chapter III.

Containing serious advice to youth.

 PART I.

1. **C**HUSE God for your portion: remember that he is the only happiness of a rational and immortal soul. The soul that was made for God can find no happiness but in God: it came from God, and can never be happy but by returning to him again, and resting in him, *Mic. ii. 10. Arise for this is not your rest. Col. iii. 1, 2, 3, If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

God is all sufficient; get him for your portion and you have all: then you have infinite wisdom to direct you, infinite knowledge to teach you, infinite mercy to pity and save you, infinite love to care for and comfort you, and infinite power to protect and keep you. If God be yours, all his attributes are yours; all his creatures, all his works of providence, shall do you good, as you have need of them. He is an eternal, full, satisfactory portion. He is an ever-living, ever-loving, ever-present friend; and without him you are a cursed creature in every condition, and all things will work against you.

2. Consider, that by nature you are dead in trespasses and sins; a child of wrath, a stranger and an enemy to God; and while such, the thoughts of God are terrible to you; you can ex-

pest nothing from him but wrath and everlasting burnings. God is ever angry with the wicked: his holiness hates all sin; his all seeing eye beholds it, and his justice will punish it.

While you are in a state of nature you can do nothing but sin, *Gen. vi. 5. Matth. vii. 18,* Every thing is a snare, and a wicked heart is apt to be taken. Labour to be sensible of this, and let the sinfulness of your nature be your greatest burden. Strive and labor against this principally. Get purity of heart and a holy life will follow upon it: but if you strive only against outward acts of sin, while your heart is let alone, your labor will be in vain, your heart will tire you out; or if it doth not, yet remember, that God's eye is in the heart, and he hath provided a hell for hypocrites. Nothing more damnable than a wicked unrenewed heart.

3. Consider, that Christ alone is your way to God. Justification, pardon, and acceptance with God, is by faith in him alone. Sanctification, and a new nature, is by the power of his spirit alone. Let Christ therefore be precious to your soul. Labour for true faith in him. Take him for your Lord and Saviour; submit to his commands in all things; and rest your soul upon him alone for reconciliation and peace with God. Open your heart to the motions of his spirit; welcome that principle of a holy and divine life, and be sure to improve his motions, follow his drawings, and by no means grieve him.

4. Be speedy in your repentance, and diligent in your endeavors after holiness. Know the

time of God's gracious visitation. While God is calling, Christ inviting, the gate of heaven set open, the ministers of the word exhorting, and the spirit drawing, make haste and delay not.

Consider your life is but short, and altogether uncertain. To defer one day may be to your everlasting undoing. When your life is once gone it will be in vain to think of repenting. You shall then have no more sermons, no more offers of Christ and grace, *Heb. ix. 27.* God will be patient no more. And if God should take away your life to morrow, you would perish inexcusably for refusing his grace to day. One offer of grace refused renders a sinner inexcusable, though God should never offer his mercy more. O, trifle not with your soul! Be not careless of eternal happiness. You have heaven and hell, life and death before you and it depends upon your own hearty choice which shall be your portion: and they are chosen by the choice of the way which leads to them. Chuse life, and chuse it speedily, and remember once again, that you have but one life to chuse in. Trifle not away this moment, upon which depends eternity. Mispend not your short time to your eternal loss.

Stand not upon a short labor, difficulty, self-denial, or suffering, for your eternal happiness. God would have you saved; Christ hath died for you to reconcile you to God; he is ascended into heaven to open a door for your soul to enter in at, and he is interceding with the Father for all grace and mercy for you, if you refuse him not. He came into the world to *seek and*

to save that which is lost, Luke xix. 10. Be sensible of your sinful, lost, damnable condition without him. O! make haste to your saviour, yield to all his demands, and take him as offered in the gospel, in all his offices.

5. Endeavor to be truly and thoroughly religious, and be not discouraged at the difficulties of it. God's grace shall be sufficient for your help; his promises shall be your sweet encouragement; peace of conscience, and communion with God, shall be your ever present cordials. The trouble and Pains of Religion shall be but short, and your reward shall be glorious and eternal. Remember that of the apostle, when religion calls you to self-denial and sufferings, *our light afflictions that are but for a moment shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *If we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with him*, 2. Tim. ii. 12. *And the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed*, Rom. viii. 18. See also, Isa. xliii. 2, 3, *When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy saviour.* Never are we more joyful than when we deny our joy for Christ's sake! And if these arguments will not prevail, then consider, that all the pains and difficulties of religion will be found in the end far more tolerable than hell.

6. Devote your young years to a good God and your loving saviour. The first fruits are to

be offered to him. The green ears of your youth are to be carried to his sanctuary. Think it not pity that the vain delights and sinful pleasures of youth should be lost: you shall but exchange them for spiritual delights, which are far more excellent, inward and lasting. The joy of the Holy Ghost, the rejoicing of a good conscience, communion with God, the sense of his love, and the hope of heaven, are far better than the pleasures of sin, and will more than recompense your loss of youthful and carnal delights. And consider this seriously, that none have usually more comfort in their souls than those, who are willing to lose their sinful comforts for God and their soul's sake.

Remember that you must give an account to God how you spend your youth, as well as for old age. Consider, as young as you are, how many years are already spent; and what account you are able to give to God of them. One day spent in sin is too much; and the sins of one hour deserve a hell. Younger than you are dead and gone. Let the thoughts of them mind you seriously of your account. Your call to God's bar may be next. Are you ready? Think often what expence of time may be best accounted for to God; and to spend your younger days, as you will wish you had spent them when you come to die and be judged.

Suppose God should call you away suddenly, what sentence could you expect from him? Are you ready, if the bridegroom should now come? *Matth. xxv. 6.* It will be no excuse at judgment if you be found in your sins, to say, *Lord, I was but young.* He that is old enough to sin is

old enough for hell. You cannot make sure of God's love, and an interest in Christ too soon. You cannot secure your soul too soon.

Consider those young ones in scripture who are commended for their early piety. *Samuel* was ministering to God in his childhood, 1 *Sam.* ii. 18. *Josiah* had a tender heart for God in his tender years, 2 *Kings* xxii. 19. *Children* sang Hosannas to Christ, *Matth.* xxi. 15. *Timothy* was a saint betimes, 2 *Tim.* iii. 15. And let these young ones be your pattern.

The young disciple was the loved disciple.— God takes great Delight in an early convert. All your life is due to God, let him therefore have all that still remains, and beg his pardon that any of it hath been deny'd.

Repentance is easiest in youth. Sin is less rooted, Satan not so fortify'd, grace not so much slighted, the spirit not so much grieved, and the conscience not so much hardened.

Be sure therefore to give God your youth.— Resolve now to be seriously religious. Now beg for the pardon of your Sins, and the spirit of holiness; and though the generality of youth take another course, yet be not swayed by the multitude, and carried down the stream towards hell; let them go, you shall have better company. The saints of God will love you, the angels of God will guard you, and the presence of God himself shall be with you.

And if you find yourself still inclined to be as the most are, and to do as the most do, consider, that you cannot have that pleasure in sin which others may. You have had a good education, and good instructions; your conscience hath

been more awakened, and will not suffer you to enjoy the pleasures of sin, as others, who are more ignorant, and worse educated, may. Conscience will mix gall with your honey; when you go to prayer, in the evening, upon your bed, when alone and retired, or in the dark, it will read sad lectures to you, and make you review your past delights with bitterness.

Labor therefore to approve yourself to God in youth; and though others may condemn you, yet God (from whose mouth only you must live or die) will acquit and justify you.

And as a conclusion of this advice, let me persuade you to consider, that a forsaking of sin, when you are most capable of pleasure or honor by it, and a turning to God when you are most capable of enjoying the world, will clearly evidence the truth of your conversion. So that a timely conversion to God in youth, as it is most easy, so it is least questionable; for it now appears that God is loved for himself, and Christ is preferred above the flesh, and grace above the sweetest delights of the world.

PART II.

1. Make the word of God the rule of all you do.

2. Whatever you do, be sure to do it in the strength of Christ. *Without me (saith Christ) ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5. *i. e.* nothing well, nothing that is acceptable to God. If you do not bear fruit as a branch in Christ, your fruit will be but bad, and unfavoury in God's account; and you cannot bear fruit, as a branch in Christ, unless all your sap and fructifying power be

drawn from him by an active faith. *Paul* could do *all things through Christ that strengthened him*, Phil. vi. 13. He could bear the devil's buffetings by *sufficient grace* from Christ, 2 Cor. xii. 9. But, of himself, he could not so much as think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5.

Nature is but a dry root of Goodness; no gracious actions spring from thence. Grace depends upon continual supplies that flow from Christ, as sap from the root, or beams from the sun. If Christ withdraws, your grace presently languishes, grows faint and unactive. Know therefore, and mind it before you go to work, from whence your strength must come, and fetch it in by faith. Without this practice you shall fall in small temptations, and with it stand in great ones. *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, and nothing shall be too hard for you. Mountains shall be plains, and vallies filled up. All things shall be possible to him that believes, and relies upon that power to which nothing is impossible.

8. As you are to act in the power of Christ, so you are to present your duties to God in the name of Christ, Col. iii. 17. Your most costly sacrifices are but unsavory in the nostrils of a holy God, if they be not perfumed by the fragrant incense of his intercession: Your fairest righteousness but as filthy rags, if his righteousness doth not cover it: Your duties must be dyed in the blood of Christ, they must be enriched with his precious merits, or they will be too mean for God to look upon, unless with indignation. *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*, Isa. xlv. 24.

4. Whatever you do, *do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. The best action is ill done, if not for a good end ; and no end is religiously good without this. That duty that does not begin and end in God, is no part of godliness. Look therefore to your end, and never satisfy yourself that you have done much, unless you have done it well.

It is the design of the gospel to take man wholly off himself, and cast him wholly upon God and Christ. All idols must be cast down, that God alone may be exalted. Self-emptiness and God's fulness, self-deficiency and Christ's sufficiency, self-unrighteousness and Christ's righteousness, are the great convictions of the gospel ; and to make self nothing, and God all in point of wisdom, strength, righteousness and glory, is the great command and duty of it.

And by these things examine all you do : By whose rule have I acted ? By whose strength have I acted ? In whose name have I acted ? And for whose glory have I acted ? What faith, what humility, what self-denial, what love of God and Christ, hath there been in all my actions ?

These are General Rules of Action.

5. Endeavor to make every day the Lord's, to spend it well, and to get nearer heaven by it.

And to this End accept kindly of this Advice.

1. As soon as ever you awake in the morning lift up your heart to God, and open it to him. As much as possibly you can, avoid all thoughts about the world until your morning devotions are over. For you will find by experience that, if the world gives your soul the first salute, and be embraced with kindness in your

morning affections, it will greatly deaden your heart in the morning duties.

2. As soon as you are up, present your desires to God, in the name of Christ, for whatever your soul feels the want of, and give God his due praises for his mercies towards you the night past. Thus *David*, Psal. v. 3. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee.* And for thanksgiving, Psal. xcii. 1, 2. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto thee, O Lord-----to shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning.*

3. Let no day go without reading some portion of the scriptures: And it is no great matter, whether you read it before you pray in the morning, or just after; your own inclination and experience will direct you; but be sure it be done. You will find it very profitable to begin the day with such a converse with God. *Prov.* vi. 22, 23. *When thou wakest it shall talk with thee.* See *John* v. 39, the command of Christ: and *Joshua* i. 8, the command of God, with a promise.

The scripture discovers sin, and the devil's devices and malice; it discovers duty, and the love of God and Christ; and it discovers your strength and encouragements: There are the promises of assisting and crowning grace. By these, the Spirit acts, the devil is conquered, and the soul is comforted. Through these, the eye of faith can see the love of Christ, the grace of God, and the glory of heaven. In these are the food, the physic, and the arms of the christian's soul. These are the word of reconciliation, grace and truth, and the power of God to salvation: Therefore,

every day look into these, praying for the spirit's teachings, and mixing faith with what you read.

4. Let all your ordinary or worldly business of the day be done with integrity of heart, and a respect to God, whose servant you ought to be in all things. *Psal.* lxxviii. 72. Do all things as to the Lord, as in his eye, and according to his will; and your whole day's work will be as it were a religious worship: This respect will make all holy.

5. Have a care every day that nothing put you into a passion: Do nothing with an over eagerness of mind; and be ever upon your guard against sudden accidents. And this can never be obtained but by committing yourself, and your affairs, into God's hand and care every day; believing that he governs all things wisely, and will ever do that which is best for you.

The power, wisdom and goodness of divine providence, must every day be believed by him that would live every day in peace and tranquility of soul.

6. Every evening to your prayers again, and to your praises for that day's mercies: The *Jews* were appointed their evening sacrifices, as well as morning, *Exod.* xxx. 7, 8. Twice a day is as little as can be allowed to those who are commanded to pray continually, *Phil.* iv. 6. *1 Thess.* v. 17. And every prayer should have its praises in it, *Psal.* xcii. 1, 2. *It is good to give thanks unto the Lord---to shew forth his faithfulness every night.* A child will ask his earthly father's blessing at morning and night; and it is better manners and to better purpose, to ask our heavenly father's blessing as often. We are ever in want, and

God is evergiving ; prayers therefore, and praises, are ever suitable and becoming.

Let no day go without observation, and review of God's carriage towards you, and of yours towards him ; of mercies and afflictions ; and of your duties, and the frame of heart in them ; of your sins or inclinations to sin ; and so likewise of any special or remarkable providence of God related to you by others, or seen or read of by yourself. And let God have the glory of what is good. In afflictions be humble, be ashamed and grieved for sins ; and consider what God's *special* providences speak to you.

Chapter IV.

Containing some occasional reflections, directions, means and signs of grace, &c.

PROPER REFLECTIONS FOR POOR SAINTS.

OUTWARD good things are no signs of God's special love. The sun of prosperity shines upon the brambles of the wilderness, as well as upon the flowers of the garden : and the snow of affliction falls upon the garden as well as upon the wilderness.

What though the streams of creature comforts runs low with thee, so thou hast the more from the spring-head ? There is more comfort in one drop that distils immediately from God, than from tenthousand rivers that flow from creature delights.

God doth sometimes on purpose shew us the

creatures emptiness, that we may go to his fullness. He makes us see the creatures to be broken cisterns, that we may know him to be the fountain: and that we may feed more largely upon spiritual dainties, he may deny us carnal ones.

What though God deny the earthly jewel, if he give thee the heavenly crown?—If thou hast no portion here thou shalt have a kingdom hereafter; and God is thy portion here, and so long thou shalt not want any good thing. Creature comforts at the best, are only delightful, not satisfying; pleasant, not gainful!

What if all thy friends forsake thee, so long as God (who is better than all) stand by thee?—Whatever enjoyment friends afford, that God does much more. Do they love thee? He died for thee. Do they pity thee in thine afflictions? In all *thy afflictions he is afflicted*, Isa. lxiii. 9.—What wouldst thou have a friend for? For converse? O taste and see how good and pleasant a thing it is to have communion with God! hear (if thou canst, and not be ravished) the sweet voice, *I am thine and thou art mine*. O! feel the pantings of his heart, and hear the founding of his bowels!—Wouldst thou have a friend to pour out thy breast into?—O! who is so fit for that as God? He will bear part of thy burden if thou art laden or he will add new strength to sustain it.—His love, his converse, his society, is life itself; and such a life is made up of nothing but sweetness and delight.

The Mystery of a Christian.

1. He lives in another, *Gal.* ii. 20. He is wife in another, *1 Cor.* i. 30. He is righteous in another, *Rom.* x. 4. He is strong in another, *Isa.* xlv. 24.

2. He is very low in humility, but very high in hope. He knows he is undeserving of the least mercy, yet expects the greatest, *Gen.* xxxii. 10, 12.

3. He is *in* the world but not *of* the world, *John* xv. 9. In the world as a *pilgrim*, but not as a *citizen*. His habitation is below, but his conversation above.

4. He is *meek*, but *vehement*; meek in his own cause, yet vehement in the cause of God. (As *Moses*, who was dead to affronts, deaf to reproaches, and blind to injuries.) He will comply with any thing that is civil, but with nothing that is sinful. He will stoop to the necessities of the meanest, but will not yield to the sinful humors of the greatest.

5. He *works out his salvation with fear and trembling*, yet believes in Christ without fear and trembling, *Phil.* ii. 12, 13. He does much for God, yet counts himself an unprofitable servant. He works as if he was to live here always, yet worships as if he was to die to-morrow.

6. When *he is weak then he is strong*, *2 Cor.* xii. 10. When he is most sensible of his own weakness, and most dependent on Christ's strength then he stands the safest.

7. When he is most vile in his own eyes he is most glorious in the eyes of God. When *Job* abhorred himself then God raised him, *Job* xlii.

6. When the centurion thought himself the most

unworthy, Christ said, *I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel*, *Matth. viii. 8, 10.*

8. He is content with his condition, yet longs and prays for a better, *2 Cor. v. 4.*

9. His losses are gains; (as *Job's*, *Job xlii. 12.*) His falls are risings; (as *Peter's* *Job. xxi. 17.*) His afflictions are promotions; (as *Jacob's*, *all those things are against me*, saith he, *Gen. xlii. 36*, yet all those things were for him.) His disappointments are preferments; (as *Moses's*; tho' he did not go to *Canaan*, as he desired; yet he went to heaven, which was better, *Deut. xxxiv. 4, 5.*)

10. He cannot sin, *1 John iii. 9.* yet he cannot *but* sin, *1 John i. 8.* He cannot sin *habitually*, and with full consent of will; yet he cannot but sin *actually* through weakness.

11. He saith, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?* *Rom. vii. 24.* Yet he saith, *O blessed man that I am, who shall condemn me?* *Rom. viii. 34.*

12. He grieves, yet rejoices under the strokes of his heavenly father's hands. He grieves that his father's hand strikes him, yet rejoices that it is the hand of a father, *Heb. xii. 6, 7.*

13. He knows there is no absolute perfection in this life, yet is continually reaching after it. *Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.*

14. The less his burden grows the more he feels it. The less sin he hath the more sensible he is of sin; not that sin grows, but light, holiness, and tenderness is increased, *1 Tim. i. 15.*

15. He is content to live, yet willing to die. He desires to serve Christ here, yet desires more to depart, and to be with him in heaven, *Phil. i. 23.*

Some doubts and fears of a tender conscience answered.

1. I fear Christ is not willing to save me.

Anfw. What is this but limiting, or setting bounds to infinite mercy?—What greater signs of his willingness would you have than those he hath already given you? He hath died, and purchased salvation for you, *Heb. ii. 9.* *1 John ii. 2.* He calls and intreats you to come and accept of it, *Matth. xi. 28.* He saith he will not cast you out, *John vi. 37.* He complains that you will not come, *John v. 40.*—And wilt thou yet say, he is not willing?—*If thou art willing, he never was otherwise.*—*Be of good comfort, he calleth thee.* *Isa. lv. 1.* *Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*—Bring only yourself, come out of need, as all do; as the prodigal did.

2. But I am so unworthy.—

Anfw. If you would have nothing but what you are worthy of, you must have nothing but hell. What was *Abraham*, or *Saul*, or any, worthy of, before the Lord called them? Say not, *I am unworthy.* Art thou willing? *Rev. xxii. 17.* *Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*

3. But my sins are very great; and I am confounded at the sight of them. Alas! how can I think of a pardon?

Anfw. Are thy sins great? the more need thou hast of a saviour. Greater sinners have been pardoned, *Manasseh* and *Saul.*—But dost thou think thou art more guilty than Christ is gracious?

read *Isa. i. 18.* *Come and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool.* 1 *John i. 7.* *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* Bless God for that word *all.*

4. But I have a proud, hard, dead heart.

Answ. Put that among your sins, and come to Christ.

5. My sins are many as well as great. I sin daily; I so sin that I must suffer.

Answ. Yea, if there were none to appear for thee. *Luke vii. 47.* *Her sins which were many are forgiven her.* 1 *John i. 7.* Christ is a daily advocate. 1 *John ii. 1, 2.* *If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.* This scripture should be as daily bread for believers to live upon.

6. I have sinned against light and conviction.

Answ. So did David and Peter, who yet were pardoned.

7. But I am a revolter and backslider.

Answ. *Jer. iii. 1.*—*Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me, saith the Lord.* *Hos. xiv. 4.* *I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely.*

8. I am afraid of departing from God again.

Answ. *Jer. xxxii. 40.*—*I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

9. I have no strength.

Answ. Isa. xlv. 24. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.

10. I am afraid to die.

Answ. Psal. xxiii. 4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Phil. i. 23. I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

When you die God shall be with you; and you shall be with God and Christ forever.

The difference between inherent and imputed righteousness.

1. Inherent righteousness sanctifies, imputed righteousness justifies.

2. Inherent righteousness makes us shine before men, imputed righteousness makes us shine before God.

3. Inherent righteousness pleases God, imputed righteousness appeases him.

4. Inherent righteousness discharges from hypocrisy, imputed righteousness from guilt.

5. Inherent righteousness makes us pray, imputed righteousness makes our prayers prevail.

6. Inherent righteousness is our sincerity, imputed righteousness our perfection.

7. Inherent righteousness respects the law, imputed righteousness answers the law.

8. Inherent righteousness is the evidence of our salvation, imputed righteousness the foundation of it.

9. Inherent righteousness is our joy, imputed righteousness our glory, *Isa. xlv. 25.*

10. Inherent righteousness is to be loved, imputed righteousness to be trusted.

11. Inherent righteousness is imperfect, imputed righteousness perfect.

12. Inherent righteousness is our qualification for heaven, imputed righteousness our title to it.
Directions for those that are under convictions of Conscience.

1. Do not presume, you are not yet come to the heavenly *Canaan*.

2. Do not despair, you are in the way to it.

3. Beware of ill company.

4. Fear falling away, *Heb. iv. 1*. Preserve a tender frame.

5. Keep up prayer. Be much in ejaculations.

6. Do not rest in convictions, nor duties, nor any thing short of Christ.

7. Be much in humiliation and confession.

8. Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.

9. Study your soul's case, and labor to get your hearts affected with it, and mortified to the world.

10. Remember the great day of accounts, *Ecccl. xii. 14*.

11. Prepare for, and think not strange of trials, *Heb. x. 32*.

12. Let not religion be your *diversion*, but your *business*.

Directions to keep from sin.

1. Run not into temptations.

2. Maintain a constant watch against, and fear of sin.

3. Beware of pride and presumption.

4. Avoid and abhor slothfulness.

5. Remember you stand by faith. Your strength is in Christ, look to him for it.

Means to gain repentance.

1, Sit with care, constancy, and conscience, under the word of truth and gospel of grace.

2, Study the nature of God.

3, Sit loose to the world.

4, Consider the shortness of life, and the limitation of the day of grace.

5, Be much in the business of self-examination
Psal. iv, 4. Stand in awe and sin not, commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.
Lam. iii, 40. Let us search and try our hearts, and turn again unto the Lord.

6, Seriously expect approaching judgment.

7, Think much of death and eternity.

8, Wash thy heart in the blood of Jesus, and take every day a turn on mount Calvary.

9, Seriously apprehend the possibility, nay, the probability: nay the absolute certainty of a pardon through Christ.

10, Sue for repentance at the hand of God: Say with *Ephraim, Turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God, Jer. xxxi, 18.*

Means to live at peace.

1, Mind your own Business, *1 Thess. iv, 11.*

2, Keep your tongue from evil, *1 Peter iii, 10.*

3, Do not contend for every trifle, whether it be matter of right or opinion.

4, If others neglect their duty to you, be sure that you perform yours to them. To render railing for railing, is to return sin for sin.

5, Make your enemy see and feel your love to him, *Rom. xii. 20.*

6, Beg of God for universal charity.

7, Be humble.

8, By faith wait for the providence of God.

Means to be content.

1, Consider you have what God allots you ; what his providence allows you. Your crosses and comforts are mixed by his hands. It is the will of God that thou shouldest be thus and thus. Labour then to have that dearer to thee than any thing in the world.

2, Consider, that if you had fewer comforts and more crosses, you ought to be thankful ; for do you know what you have deserved ? 'Tis of the Lord's mercy that you are not consumed.

3, Whatever comes, take it as from the hand of God assure yourself, that without permission and direction it could not come.

4, Prepare to receive the will of God, and look for changes and alterations in the world.

5, Faith is another means to quiet, satisfy and content the mind. *That* assures us, that that which is consistent with the love of God may well be born. Outward losses and afflictions are consistent with the love of God. *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth*, Heb. xii, 6. We are all subject to alterations ; our life, health, estate, friends, families, and all we have, are liable to changes. Let us then fix upon a God that never changes, that never fails, who is from everlasting to everlasting. Let us depend upon a God that depends upon none. And, what tho' our house be not so with God as it hath been ; yet if he hath made with us an everlasting covenant, we have great reason to be content with all his outward dealings with us, 2 *Sam.* xxiii, 5.

Means to preserve mercies.

- 1, Be thankful for them.
- 2, Receive them as mercies, not as dues.
- 3, Prepare to part with them.
- 4, Expect the continuance of mercies from God, he is the strength of our life, the staff of our bread, the breath of our nostrils, and the length of our days.

Signs of Sincerity.

1, Prayer is a sign of sincerity ; if it be secret, *Matth.* vi, 6. Frequent, *Acts* x, 2. Fervent, *Rom.* viii, 26.

2, A willingness to be searched by God, *Psal.* cxxxix, 23. By the righteous, *Psal.* cxli, 5.—By ministers, *Acts* x, 33. By conscience, *Psal.* lxxvii, 6. By the scriptures, *John* iii, 19, 20, 21. Sincere souls love sincere dealings.

3, A sense of sin ; particularly of spiritual sins, *Mark* ix, 24. *Rom.* vii, 21. And of original sin, *Rom.* vii. 24. especially when it drives to Christ, *ver.* 25.

4, When a man is most sensible of, and watchful against his own sin, his constitutional sin, *the beam in his own eye.*

5, Universal Tendernefs. When a man will not plead for any sin, *Psal.* cxix, 128. nor quarrel with any of the commandments, *Psal.* cxix, 6. *Acts* ix, 6.

6, 'Tis a sign of sincerity when a man chuses affliction rather than sin, *Dan.* iii, 17, 18.

7, When a man relies upon Christ for strength against sin.

8, When a man loves God above all, and loves others principally for what is God-like in them.

9, When a man delights in the word of God.

10, When he makes conscience to watch his heart in duty.

11, When a man's thoughts run freely on heavenly things.

12, When the glory of God is preferred above all.

13, When a man's profession is joined with meekness.

14, A well governed tongue (for an outward sign) when a man dares neither boast of himself, nor censure others, *James iii, 2. Matth. xii, 36.*

15. Constancy in the ways of God, *Job xxvii, 6, 10.*—Such a man can never be a hypocrite.
Short questions whereby to know whether the heart be truly changed.

1, Hath thine heart been turned into sorrow for sin ?

2, Hath thy sorrow turn'd into prayer ?

3, Hath thy prayer turned into faith ?

4, Hath thy faith issued in universal tenderness and obedience.

Signs of Faith.

TO THOSE THAT BELIEVE.

1, Christ is precious.

2, The word is sweet.

3, Sin is bitter.

4, Prayer is delightful.

5, Saints are dear.

6, Religion is their business.

7, The world is a broken idol.

8, Death is welcome.—Or thus,

They that believe,

Have Christ in their hearts ; heaven in their eye ; and the world under their feet. God's

spirit is their guide ; God's fear is their guard ; God's people are their companions ; God's promises are their cordials ; holiness is their way ; and heaven is their home.

Signs of love to Christ.

THEY THAT LOVE CHRIST,

- 1, Love to think of him.
- 2, They love to hear of him.
- 3, They love to read of him.
- 4, They love to speak $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{of} \\ \text{for} \\ \text{to} \end{array} \right\}$ him.
- 5, They love the presence of Christ.
- 6, They love the yoke of Christ.
- 7, They love the ministers of Christ.
- 8, They love the name of Christ.
- 9, They hate sin.
- 10, They are pleased when Christ is pleased.
- 11, They are grieved when Christ is grieved.
- 12, They long to be with Christ.

Christ's will is their will ; Christ's dishonor is their affliction ; Christ's cause is their care ; Christ's ministers are their stars ; Christ's saints are their companions ; Christ's day is their delight ; Christ's word is their oracle ; Christ's glory is their end.

Signs of the fear of God.

A MAN THEN FEARS GOD,

- 1, When he dares not sin, though solicited and tempted to it.
- 2, When sin is common and yet he fears it.
- 3, When he is afraid of an evil thought.
- 4, when he dares not sin though he should suffer if he does not.

5, When his heart is broken, and trembles at the word of God.

6, When he flies to Christ.

7, When he is studious to please God.

Signs of true grace.

1, When self-loving is turned into self-loathing; self-excusing into self-condemning; self-admiring into self-abhorring; self-seeking into self-denying.

2, It is a sign of true grace when a man seriously complains of the want of grace.

A graceless person cannot truly complain that he hath no grace. There is grace in that complaint.

3, When the heart is tender, and feels the power of an ordinance.

4, When the soul hath an appetite after the word, *1 Pet. ii, 2.*

5, When a man makes conscience of secret prayer.

6, When we are taken with their conversation, and manner of life, who are most spiritual, *Zech. viii, 23.*

7, When we are willing to be acquainted with Christ, and reconciled to God upon any terms.

8, When a man approves of all duties.

9, When he desires more grace: There is grace in the desire of grace, as there is sin in the desire of sin, *Neh. i, 11. Psal. lxxxiv, 5.*

A short Prayer for Children.

O MOST great and gracious God, thou art from everlasting to everlasting. No creature is worthy to come before thee; much less am I, poor sinful dust and ashes.

O Lord, I am conceived and born in sin. Thou hast nourished and brought me up, but I have rebelled against thee; I have known thy will, but have not done it, and therefore deserve *to be beaten with many stripes*. I have despised thy Promises, and abused thy mercies. I have been unthankful for mercies received, and unfruitful under mercies enjoyed. I have sinned against so much light, against so much love, and against so much warning, that it is of thine infinite mercy that I am not consumed. I cannot answer for what I have done: I cannot bear what I have deserved.—

O enter not into judgment with me! do not punish but pity me! Remember not what I have done, but remember what Christ hath suffered, and let his blood go for mine.—I pray thee let my sins be my grief, but not my ruin: let them be laid to my heart, but not to my charge. Thou hast found a ransom, deliver me from the pit. Since Christ was crucified, let me be released; as he was afflicted and smitten, let me *be healed by his stripes, and cured by his wounds*.

What comfort can I take in any thing here below, if sin lie at the door?—Lord I beseech thee take away my sin before thou takest away my life. Let not me nor any that are related to me, live in sin, and die in sin, and go to the grave *with a lie in the right hand*.

I humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to sprinkle my conscience with the blood of Christ, *which cleanseth from all sin*. Give me faith in that blood, and peace in the application of it to my conscience, that by these thy tokens for good I may know that I am *not appointed for wrath but*

to obtain salvation by my Lord Jesus Christ.—And for his sake grant me thy holy spirit, I beseech thee to enlighten my mind, that I may know thee ; to renew my will, that I may serve thee ; and to sanctify my affections, and all the powers of my soul and body, that I may follow thee fully all the days of my life.

O Lord defend me from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Make me good in my person, and good in my place. Let thy spirit rest in me that I may be always doing or getting good.—Help me well through this world. Use me whilst I live, and dont refuse me when I come to die. Let my life be a holy walking with thee, that my death may be a comfortable going to thee.

For Christ's sake, O Lord, bless all thy people, this nation and the family I belong to. Give all true peace and holiness. Hasten the downfall of Babylon, the conversion of the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles.

Heavenly Father, I bless, praise, and magnify thee, for my creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life ; but above all, for the Lord Jesus Christ, that unspeakable gift of thine ; for the means and seasons of grace, and for all thy mercies.—Hear me, O Lord, for Christ's sake, in whose name and words I further pray—

Our Father, which art in Heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Chapter V.

Containing some letters of the late Rev. Mr. JOHN MASON, which he sent to several of his friends; tending to promote the power of godliness, both in persons and families.

LETTER I.

To my dear sister, Mrs. HANNAH WYAT, under illness.

DEAR SISTER,

I BESEECH his most merciful majesty to send his word and heal you! that we may not have sorrow upon sorrow!—O, if it were his will to restore you for his glory, and the good of many!—And who can tell, but by this affliction he is fitting you for future service? And that the prayers of your many affectionate and faithful friends may be a means of your recovery? Which I hope, through the *thanksgiving of many will redound to the praise and glory of God.*—But, I believe, it is not recovery you wish for, any farther than as it will be a manifestation of God's pleasure, and an opportunity of serving him; it is not *that* you so much desire, as to *depart and to be with Christ, which indeed is far better.*

My dear Sister, what thanks can we render unto God who hath visited us with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, through our dear redeemer? And hath given us that communion with him here, which is a pledge of our joint communion with him in everlasting glory? Certainly you cannot but remember some *Bethels and Chebars*, where the Lord hath met you and owned you; some promises which have been made your own;

and some *times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord*. Blessed be God that you *have a witness in yourself*; and internal evidence, an inward *sight and taste that the Lord is gracious*.

The Lord hath acquainted you with that which is the very sum and substance of the gospel, *viz. That Christ came into the world to save sinners*: that a christian's thankfulness flows from faith in the promises: That self-denial must run thro' the whole course of his life, as the warp through the woof: and that Christ is a christian's life, peace, hope and security: whilst he lives, we are in safety:

*Whilst God is merciful and true,
We are both safe and happy too:*

That a christian's important and daily duty is to eye and engage his continual assistance: and that our recovery from daily infirmities must be by a daily recourse to this ever-living, ever-loving, ever-pleading advocate.

You know also, that submission to the will of God, is a yielding to those methods whereby he is conducting us to eternal happiness and glory; and that every dram of affliction is ordered us by the love of our ever-gracious and all-merciful Father—Bow then to his sovereignty, and believe his grace: you are in a happy hand; in happy circumstances; all the paths of God are mercy and truth to you—Infinite and immortal thanks are due to our ever-blessed Father, Redeemer and comforter. The Lord be with your spirit!—grace and peace be with you! *Amen*—
I remain *Your affectionate and*

most obliged brother in the Lord,
JOHN MASON.

LETTER II.

To my dear friend Mrs. MARY HOLMES.

DEAR FRIEND,

O THAT you might live in the Lord's fight! —If I knew the present state of your heart I could better tell what to write to you. However I shall set down some things for your comfort.

Do not say that you are left of God, and there is no hope for you: I tell you there is mercy enough in God, merits enough in Christ, power enough in the spirit, room enough in heaven, and scope enough in the promises for you.

Do not say that you are a reprobate, and a cast-away; it is a sin to think so; every one is bound to hope that he is elected; and, in virtue of that hope, to strive to make his *calling and election sure*. *The Lord is good to them that wait for him, and to the soul that seeketh him, Lam. iii. 25.* There will be doubts and fears, but we must not cherish them. We must not question God's ability to save; for he can do all things: nor must we question his willingness to save; for he hath sent his own son into the world to save us—Say to thyself, *he hath made me willing to be saved, and is not he willing to save me?* Alas! *my tender mercies are cruelties in respect of his infinite compassions?* We cannot be so willing to confess sin, as he is to pardon it. We cannot desire to be saved, so much as he delights to save. None ever trusted him, but they found him a good God.

Therefore, *my dear friend*, have honorable thoughts of God. Though he should hide himself from thee for a moment, yet lift up thy heart

to him, and wait for him ; in his own time he will make himself known unto you ; he will be your own God, for your own dear Saviour's sake.

Perhaps you sit in darkness ; but the Lord will be your light. It is darkest a little before the break of day : *Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart ;* and it will spring up. *Behold the husbandman waits for the precious fruits of the earth ;* Be patient then, and wait for God in the use of all his means, and the good hour will come.

Perhaps you find a coldness and deadness of heart, and complain that you cannot serve God with life and affection. This is a complaint of many of God's dear children. But we must do what we can, we must be reading, hearing, praying, waiting upon God in his own way, and he will give us his quickening spirit.

The world will reproach us ; but it reproached Christ before us. We must be willing to follow a suffering Saviour in a suffering way. Whatever men say against us, *they* must answer for it, not *we*. *Only let our conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ.* Let us give *no occasion to his enemies to blaspheme his name.* And he that suffered so much *for us*, O ! let him not suffer *by us*.

We must take our rules of living from the word and not from the world. And the Lord give us wisdom to direct us, and zeal to quicken us in his own blessed ways—And to confirm our obedience and patience, let us remember, that the Lord is coming, and his reward is with him :

He is coming to receive us to himself, that *where he is we may be also*.

And as for the things of this life, the same love that provided a favour for thee, will provide all necessary temporal blessings for thee: Thy heavenly father, who knows what is best for thee will chuse thine inheritance; therefore be not too careful about these things, but rest your care upon him who careth for you. Leave yourself with him for he is *love*, 1 John iv. 8. Commit your whole self, soul and body into the hands of his infinite love.

Now the Lord of his infinite mercy put his spirit into this dead letter for the quickening your soul; and I beseech him to make it effectual for your eternal good.—I commend you to God, and the word of his grace and rest.

Your faithful friend,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER III.

To my dear sister Mrs. MARGARET HOLMES.

DEAR SISTER,

MAY these lines find you well and happy— I joy in the thoughts that your soul is secured in the hands of Christ, and that in this life you are as happy as *content* itself can make you.—Who hath the largest share of external comforts, but he who believes this world is vanity? indeed the surest experience of the world's emptiness ariseth from a taste of Christ's fulness. Though there be nothing but disappointments in the world to them that make it their idol, yet it will be slavishly pursued and craved by them, because they know no better things; for the infatu-

ated idolator hath not the sense to say within himself, *Is there not a lie in my right hand?*

O blessed be God, who hath engaged your heart for himself; in the strength of Christ follow on to know him. How should the way of spiritual thrift be valued and improved by those who are taught of God, where their main and eternal interest lies? Where every superadded degree of favour in religion doth at once increase the stock in the heart, and the bank that is laid up in heaven. It is a provision of spikenard, and precious ointment, against our funeral.—Let us call those our golden hours that are spent with God.

I should now at large commend to you that excellent duty of self-examination, but that it hath been effectually pressed upon you by a dear saint now in heaven. Nor have I cause to doubt, but as her memory, so her counsels are inviolably preserved in the most inward rooms of your heart.—Accept the hearty respects of me and mine.—most ardently desiring for you all the blessings that were purchased by the most valuable blood of the son of God. I remain in him,

Dear Sister,

Your most affectionate brother,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER IV.

To the same.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I PRESERVE carefully my ancient respects. —though I have been long silent I am your orator before the highest throne, and do earnestly desire that you may grow in the faith of

Jesus, and in lively communion with him, which is the most comfortable thing in the world. —Alas! we are less than nothing, worse than nothing. Christ is all——May he be so to us!—Let us glorify him more by relying upon his satisfaction and merits, for all that we can do or suffer cannot atone for the least of our sins —It is the self-emptied heart, and beggar's hand, that must receive this infinite gift of God —The woman of Canaan is our pattern—“*true Lord, I am no better than a dog, but there are crumbs for dogs. I am as bad as sin can make me, and deserve to be as miserable as hell can make me; but Lord, I am not so bad as thou art good; I am not so miserable as thou art merciful.*—

O, my dear sister, I desire that you now may live by faith, and breathe by prayer; that you may finally dwell above, *where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.*—The Lord spiritualize our souls, and quicken us according to his loving kindness.—We long to see you.—Farewell in Christ. *Your affectionate brother,*

JOHN MASON.

LETTER V.

To the same.

MY DEAR SISTER,

YOU are dearly remembered by us; though we seldom converse personally, or by letters, our hearty prayers are for you at the throne of grace. I hope we shall meet together before the throne of glory.

I hope I need not suggest arguments of comfort to you, who know what it is to enjoy the presence of God on earth, and are therefore pre-

pared to enjoy the presence of Christ in heaven. Doubtless the Lord is our father ; though our earthly parents be ignorant of us. I commend you to him through Christ—Let us hope in the Lord, who is almighty and most merciful.—The Lord abound in his mercy to you ! May he be a sun to direct you, a shield to protect you, a portion to sustain you, and a God to save you !

O, that we may hear the rod ! which saith—*Sin no more ; get an interest in Christ ; prize time ; and prepare to meet your God !* That we may inwardly hear the voice of the rod, whilst we outwardly feel the smart of it !—I beseech the Lord to prosper you every way ; to watch over you ; and to rejoice over you, to do you good ; to sweeten your life with his love, and to fit you for his whole pleasure.—No more, but all hearty respects to you, and that I am

Yours, in our dearest Redeemer,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER VI.

To Mrs. ELIZABETH GLOVER.

My Dear Friend in Christ,

HOW hard a thing is it to exercise faith when we have most need of it ? And how sad a thing is it, that when we have most need of the Lord's presence and help, we should then especially grieve him with our doubts and distrusts ? However we have this to comfort us, that where the Lord seeth faith in sincerity he will pardon its infirmity.—But O ! when shall we believe against sense, and hope against hope ? When shall we give all glory to God by grounding upon

his word, when we want present experience and feeling? saying,

*The glory of my Glory still shall be,
To give all Glory and myself to thee.*

When shall we attain to that excellent frame of believing which the church was in, *Mic. vii. 8, 9.* *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness?*

But though we have not attained so far, let us bless God for any measure of Faith, one grain whereof excelleth all the riches in the world.— And let us take heed of falling into sin. To lie under the hidings of God's face is a great affliction; but to lie under a sense of his displeasure is a greater. There is no evil so great as sin.— Let us flee from error and temptation; avoid ill company, which will either taint us, or grieve us; be jealous over our own spirits; hate presumption and carelessness, and be much in humble prayer, and holy fear. I am

Your sincere Friend,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER VII.

To the same,

Loving Christian Friend,

YOU complain of that in your letter which no creature upon earth is free from. The best christian must acknowledge that pride dwelleth in him. You do well to complain of it; but

you must strive against it, and so we must all. There is so much of heaven in the soul as there is of Humility. Take a true measure of your self. Consider what you are. Beg of the Lord for a humble spirit. Remember Christ was humble.

As for your temptations, and Castings down, it is no news to hear of a tempted christian, or a dejected faint. I cannot see that any other temptation hath taken you than what is common to the people of God. *Let not Zion say, her God hath forsaken her ; her God hath forgotten her. Can a mother forget her sucking child ?—* You may be in the dark awhile, but *wait for the Lord, as they that wait for the morning.*—To his everlasting grace and mercy I commend you, and remain

Your faithful Friend,
JOHN MASON.

LETTER VIII.

To the same.

My dear Friend in our dearest Lord Jesus,
THE Lord hath said, *I will never fail you nor forsake you.* He will not turn away from doing you good : but he will put his fear into your inward parts, that you shall never depart from him. Having these promises let us stand fast, holding faith and a good conscience.—Let us allow God to be infinitely wiser than ourselves, and maintain honorable thoughts of his majesty and mercy : for as is his majesty, so is his mercy. Let us bow to his sovereignty, and believe his grace. There are crumbs for dogs ; gifts for rebels ; and compassions for sinners.—The

Lord increase our hope, encourage our faith, and inflame our love, and perfect that which concerns us!—As we have had joint Communion with our good God on earth, I trust it shall be perfected in glory.—To everlasting glory is my dear sister *Wyat* and my dear brother *Peter Holmes* lately gone. The Lord, who (I trust) had fitted them for himself, fit us also! —O! blessed be God, for good hope through grace!—Pray for me, that I may stand fast in the Lord.—With mine and my Wife's kind respect to you, and commending you to infinite and eternal mercy in Christ, I rest in him,

Your faithful and affectionate Friend,

JOHN MASON.

POSTSCRIPT.

*Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God,
&c.*

Trust in the Lord, and do good.

*Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your
faith.*

*Surely there is an end, and thine expectation
shall not be cut off.*

*It is but a little while and he that shall come
will come, and will not tarry.*

LETTER IX.

My dearly beloved in the Lord,

I HAVE had abundance of comfort whilst I have been caring for thy precious soul (the Lord is my witness!) and I hope we shall both rejoice together in the day of Christ.

I received your letter, and read it with a sad heart, finding you were troubled. The Lord guide you and settle you!

I look upon this as a sure principle——that the worship of God must agree with the word of God. I judge a form of prayer lawful, as agreeable to the word of God. The ceremonies are no part of God's worship, for then they must be matter of necessity, which we hold them not to be——but matters of decency and order, as the apostle saith, *Let all things be done decently, and in order.* Neither sin nor holiness is to be put in them; but they are of the nature of those meats *which* (the apostle saith) *if we eat we are not the better; if we eat not we are not the worse.* I do not know your particular scruples, otherwise I should be glad to offer what satisfaction I could. I only tell you some part of my thoughts. I have much christian affection for those that are otherwise minded; in case they be purely conscientious, humble, and charitable souls.——The Lord keep you through his name!——I am your faithful friend that tenderly loves your soul.

JOHN MASON.

LETTER X.

My dearly beloved Friends in Christ,

I REJOICE in God, who hath called you into the fellowship of his son, our Lord Jesus Christ; and into that grace, wherein you stand. Let us remember that we are, by nature, children of wrath, even as others. We might have been cast into hell long ago. Were we not provoking sinners? O how did the Lord call upon us, and we regarded him not?——But did the Lord stand and knock, and call till he made us answer, *Speak, Lord, for thy servants hear?* Did he give us ears to hear? Would he not let us alone, till

he had won our hearts?—O blessed be his name! We might have been blasphemers, persecutors, haters and despisers of that which is good, at this day. We might have counted the life of religion madness; praying, and professing of religion, fancy and folly. We might have been left to ourselves; all our hope might have been in this life; all our comfort in this world; all our confidence in creatures; and all our heaven upon earth: Hath the Lord caused us to know better things? O let us admire his free grace, now and for ever!

My Friends, Consider how great things the Lord hath done for you. Call to mind your former experiences, and live as those whom the Lord hath redeemed by his blood. Now you must look upon yourselves as the Lord Christ's, and not your own. Consider *from* what you are called, and *to* what you are called.

Would you live holily, observe these Rules.

1. Live in the eye of God. 2. Observe the example of Christ. 3. Consider the fruit and end of things. The fruit of sin is shame and sorrow. Sin is a viper in the end: But the fruit of righteousness is peace; holiness is eternal life, in the end. 4. Bind the commandments upon your hearts. 5. Shun the appearances, and the least beginnings of sin. 6. Be frequent and fervent in secret prayer.

My Friends, *Would you live comfortably, take these directions.*

1. Live not so much upon the comforts of God, as upon the God of comforts. Be afraid of unbelief; that is a great sin. Do not greatness your sins above God's saving power. Believe

in the word, firmly and constantly. Trust perfectly to the grace and mercy of God in Christ. *I will trust in the mercy of God (saith David) forever and ever, Pſal. lii. 8.* 2. Beware of ſin, eſpecially of wilful ſin : That will bring a cloud, and make a breach between God and your ſoul. 3. *Do not mind earthly things.* O take heed of unlawful affections ; of an unlawful carriage of the heart, about lawful things. 4. Examine the ways of your heart daily : Search yourſelves—*What ſin have I committed ? What duty have I omitted this day ?* Every night look back upon the thoughts and affections, and ſpeeches of the day paſt. Confess your failings over the head of the *ſcape-goat*. This is another neceſſary means to keep your peace with God, and to walk comfortably before him : And I pray obſerve it. 5. Examine your heart farther, and conſider the gracious actings and workings of God's bleſſed ſpirit within you ; what good thoughts, what good deſires, aims, reſolutions, God hath put into you. Conſider what out-goings of your heart, after God, there have been ; what incomes, and influences of his grace.—Daily examine your hearts for theſe things, and give God the glory of all the gracious workings of his ſpirit in your ſoul. 6. If you would walk comfortably with God, mind not what is forged, but what is written. Heed not every fancy the devil may dart into you (for then you lie at the mercy of your enemy) but keep cloſe to the written word of God. *Thus it is written,* ſaid our ſaviour to ſatan the tempter.—So much for comfortable walking.

Dear Friends, *Would you walk peaceably and charitably, take these rules.*

1. Remember God hath called you to peace.
 2. Remember when Christ was reviled, *he reviled not again.* 3. If others neglect their duty to you, yet do not you neglect your duty to God, nor to them. Let not another's sin cause you to sin : To render railing for railing, is to return sin for sin. 4. You must shew your love to God, whom you have not seen, by your love to your brother, whom you see daily. Shew your piety by your charity. 5. Consider that an unbridled tongue is a sign of an un sanctified heart. They that have not a dram of grace to tame their tongues, shall one day want a drop of water to cool their tongues. 6. Do good to others. If they do not thank you for it, yet God will bless you for it. The less reward you have on earth, the greater shall your reward be in heaven : As the less wages the servant takes up within his year, the more comes in at the year's end.

Dear friends ; *Would you be constant in good ways and purposes, take these directions.*

1. Remember you have engaged yourselves to God, and therefore you must keep yourselves from idols. You have given up your names to God, and you must give up your hearts to God. You have made a covenant with God by sacraments. If Satan or the world are suitors for your hearts, tell them, *You are already disposed of : you are pre-engaged to God ; you have chosen your God, and you must not think of changing him.* 2. Consider whither would you go from Christ ? Where do you think to find such another God as your God : such another friend

as Jesus Christ? 3. Remember, if it be good to draw near to God, it is better to draw nearer to him: still the nearer the better. One may see an end of earthly perfection; but there is no end of the perfection of Jesus Christ. 4. Be downright for God; and you shall find soul-heartning comfort in God, that shall keep you close to God. 5. Walk humbly with God: that is the way to walk closely with God. If a christian is humble, he is a christian indeed: God will not suffer such a one to be tempted above his strength. 6. Let not opinions swim in your heads; that will make you fall: but let the great things of religion sink into your hearts, and that will make you stand. Be content, yea, willing to suffer for Christ; who did so contentedly and willingly suffer for you. And if you suffer with him, you shall be glorified together.

Now, *my dear friends*, the Lord be with you all! I beseech him to strengthen, stablish, confirm and settle you: and preserve you all to his holy and everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. In whom I am

Your faithful friend,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XI.

Dear Friend in Christ,

I LONG to hear of the state of your soul. O lay hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ, by a true and lively faith. He is an able, willing, only saviour: the soul's resting place, the soul's dwelling-place, the soul's hiding-place: O that you may be *hid* in him now, that you may be *found* in him at last. Sin must drive us to him,

not from him. We need him infinitely. We are like Peter, sinking into the waters: *save, Lord; or we perish!* Christ, or hell, must be our portion forever. Christ is our only ark, to save us from perishing. Every soul will be uncased ere it be long; and then it will appear whether they ever seriously applied themselves to Christ. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* Nothing but condemnation to them that are out of him. Faith makes Christ ours. This consists in *self-denial*, and *self-renunciation*. We must see our sins, so far as to abhor ourselves; abhor ourselves, so far as to deny ourselves; deny ourselves, so far as to resign ourselves up into the saving arms of an only Saviour. They that do this, are *pardoned, sanctified, saved forever.*

Now let me intreat you to ask your own heart some questions.

1. *Hath sin been laid to my heart? Hath it been my greatest burden?*
2. *Have I confessed my particular sins, and the sinfulness of my nature, with sorrow?*
3. *Have I been forced to make my appeal to Christ, knowing that I am lost forever, unless he freely save me? Have I cried for a Christ, as a condemned man for a pardon?*
4. *Do I believe he is able and willing to save me? Do I believe that he that spread his arms on the cross to die for me, spreads his arms now in the gospel, and in heaven to save me? Have I pleaded his promises? O what a precious promise is that, John vi. 37. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out?*
5. *Have I had joy and peace in believing?*

Hath Christ, relied on, calmed and quieted my poor troubled, afflicted soul ?

6. *Do I love Christ more than riches, honors, pleasures ? Do I love all his ordinances ? Do I love all his saints ?*

7. *Do I hate sin in itself ? Do I hate sin in myself ? Do I hate every sin ? every false way ?*

8. *Do I unfeignedly, entirely yield up myself to the service of my saviour ?*

If your heart answers to these questions, happy, are you, that ever you were born.

O my Friend, I commend you to Christ. The Lord follow you with the motions of his spirit ; that you may follow him with continual supplications in the spirit ! That, of the fulness of Christ, you may receive grace for grace.— The peace of God, and the God of Peace be with you. With mine and my sister's love, desiring your prayers, I rest

Your affectionate friend in Christ,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XII.

WATER-STRAFORD.

My Dear Friend,

I HEAR the hand of the Lord is gone out against you : *O hear the rod, and who hath appointed it ! O turn to him that smiteth you !* It hath pleased the Lord to take away the earth that lay next your root : he hath been digging about you ; pray now that you may be fruitful. Now fly from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life. Now let the business of your soul be the business of your life. Open your doors to Christ : invite him to dwell among you, by

worshipping him in your family. Whilst your hand is in this world, let your heart be in heaven: O lay up for yourself a treasure there. What is the world! seek things above. If we be not sure of Christ, what are we sure of? If young ones die, how long have we to live?—O strive to enter in at the straight gate. Search and try your ways: consider in the Lord's fear, wherefore he hath thus contended with you. Repent of every sin your conscience sets before you: confess sin, and earnestly plead the blood of Christ. Now the Lord hath a controversy with you, humble yourself under his mighty hand. Cry for the blood of sprinkling: never rest till your pardon be sealed through the blood of Christ.—Our kind respects from hence to you and your wife. The Lord pity you in your great afflictions, and every way bless you.

I am your loving friend,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XIII.

My Reconciled and dear Friend,

THESE are to thank you for your pious and kind letter; and to assure you of my hearty affection to you and yours. For why? Had you been a perfect stranger to me, if I had but heard that there was such a one as loved Christ in sincerity, and earnestly desired more communion with him, a deeper sense of his love, and larger communication of his graces, I should be very *unworthy* to deny my love and respect to such a *worthy* object. But since I have had the spiritual benefit and comfort of your acquaintance for divers years together (wherein we took

sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God as good friends, where we were mutually refreshed with the *word and bread of life*, eating of the same spiritual meat, and drinking of the same spiritual drink, and receiving sweet pledges of our eternal communion with God) God forbid I should be wanting in any office of Christian love toward you and yours. Nor do I esteem your *jealousy* to be any other than the fruit of your abundant *love*, which is not utterly lost, though I confess with shame, I fall short of that necessary gospel duty of *brotherly kindness*, as I do of *all others*, which I beseech God to cover with his mercy in Christ. The Lord enable me to *run with diligence and patience the race which he hath set before me*—God be merciful to *Little Lynford*, which is left as *sheep without a shepherd*. But if they *hunger and thirst after the word of righteousness they shall be filled*. I hope when I have leisure and opportunity I shall not be wanting to them. The Lord comfort their hearts. I and my wife remember our hearty respects to you and yours. God hath been infinitely merciful to us, and hath given us a daughter (now called *Martha*.) I hope he will perfect his mercy towards us. We are full of his mercies. O that we were full of his praises!—My prayers are for you and yours: whom God bless, preserve and keep. O that *all his ways* might be *mercy and truth* towards you! *Cast not away your confidence, which hath so great recompence of reward*. The life of sense is a *troublesome, disquieting life*: for what doth sense discover but vanity and misery? But the life of faith is a *comfortable life*. For faith makes glorious discoveries

of God and Christ, saints and angels, rest and peace, and life forever. Nothing troubles you when you are above.—Keep where you are well. I remain

Your truly loving Friend,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XIV.

Dear Friend,

THOUGH providence hath separated us, yet it refresheth me to think upon you, and that I am interested in *your prayers* as you are in mine. Well, if we are met in Christ, we shall meet upon the bench in the great day of assize, and before a throne of glory in our Father's kingdom. In the mean while, our God is with us both whilst we are with him. In his presence is *fulness of joy*.—It is not so much the change of place, as the *presence of God*, which makes heaven. *There* is heaven where God shines and manifests himself. When a soul can say, *I would not go to heaven, if it were to meet God there; and if I should be cast into the flames of hell, I could not find in mine heart to blaspheme God*; the exercise of such a meditation will mightily help her against temptations.

Many a good soul doth not know how much she loves God; but when she feels that affection stirring within her.—O then, she is in a new serene, comfortable frame! Satan flies. *Perfect love casts our fear*. Love God, and praise God, and all is at peace. Nay, admit the soul hath not got full assurance of her pardon; yet if she sets down this resolution—*Let God be glorified whatever becomes of me. Let the Angels praise*

him ; let the saints praise him ; let the Jews and Gentiles be called in to praise him ; and if it may please his divine majesty, let my poor unworthy soul praise him, and be a praise to his grace forever and ever : If it can say this, it must be happy with it. That must needs be a happy soul that breathes forth the praises of God, ascribes all glory to God, and can sing

*The Glory of my Glory still shall be,
To give all Glory and myself to thee.*

The Lord put and keep your heart in a praising frame. O how well doth this angelical and evangelical disposition besit and become those who of sinners are made saints ; of enemies, children ; of slaves, heirs ; of burning brands, shining stars ! When we consider seriously what we have been, and what we *might* have been, nay, what we *must* have been, if infinite mercy had not prevented ; (as the Lord was seen in the Mount, when *Isaac* lay bound upon the altar, mercy came in between the knife and the sacrifice) instead of being scourged, how nobly pardoned and promoted ! raised from devils to angels company ; from the lowest depth to the greatest height ; this (I say) if we consider it, is matter of admiration, not of expression. If we had as many tongues as we have veins or drops of blood, they could never utter a thousandth part of the due praises of *divine grace*. *Let us now magnify the Lord, and exalt his name together.*— O the height, and breadth, and depth, and length of the Father's love ! O the infinite and unsearchable riches of free grace ! O ! the tremendous mystery, and invaluable mercy of the incarnation of the Son of God ! O the stu-

pendous humiliation and condescension of eternal glory and omnipotency ! O the unparalleled love of a dying Saviour ! O the sweet heavenly communion of the blessed comforter !——Lord, what do these things mean ?——Lord, what are we ? or what is our father's house, that thou hast brought us hitherto ? That thou shouldst make thyself glorious in our glory, who had made ourselves vile in dishonoring thy name ?——O, let us give him our whole souls, who hath redeemed them by his blood ! For it is fit he should have the utmost of so dear a purchase. Farewell, my dearest friend in the Lord, in whom I am

Your true friend,

JOHN MASON.

Stanton, Oct. 19, 1672.

LETTER XV.

My Dear Friend,

THOUGH we be parted on earth, I hope we shall meet in heaven ; tho' our work should not lie together in the Lord's vineyard, yet I hope we shall sup together with Christ ; though we do not sojourn together, yet I hope we shall dwell together to all eternity ; if we should never feast together any more upon the word and sacraments, yet I hope we shall eat that *bread and drink that wine which is for ever new in our Father's kingdom.* Be of good comfort, *sister* it is but yet a very little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.— We shall be welcome at home however it fares with us in our journey. Remember the apostle *Paul* had no certain dwelling-place ; nay, our blessed Saviour had not *where to lay his head.*—

We may be poured from vessel to vessel, and tossed to and fro upon this ocean ; it will not be long, I hope, ere we be fixed in our harbor.— My prayers are and shall be for thee, that God would dispose of thee to his own glory and thy comfort. Let not thy heart be troubled, thou believest in God, &c. I saw your mother yesterday, and she was in good health, as we all are here blessed be the Lord. I should be glad to hear of your Welfare. I rest

Your Friend in Christ.

JOHN MASON.

Stanton, Dec. 8, 1673.

LETTER XVI.

My Dear Friend in Christ,

THE providence of the Lord extends itself to every thing ; but there is a special providence over the children of God, *1 Tim. iv. 10.* The providences of God to the children of God are *purchased* providences, *sanctified* providences, *soul* providences : They are ordinances to them, instruments of good to their souls. Again, the providences of God to his children are promises fulfilled, *Psal. xxv. 10.* Again, the providences of God to his children are the fruits and answers of prayer. Again, the providences of the Lord steer the children of God heaven-wards. Again, the providences of God combine and join their forces for the good of every sincere, single-hearted believer, *Rom. viii. 28.* *My Friend,* this, I trust, is your happiness, that you are under the eye and conduct and tuition of a fatherly and special providence. Let us answer the call of providence ; which is, to watch, pray, and

believe ; and let us expect *good* things from a *good* God ; and *great* things from a *great* God, through our *faithful* and *dear* mediator, *who ever lives to make intercession for us.*—I suppose you may have heard, that our friend *Mary Tomkins* is gone to her eternal rest : She died triumphantly. O ! (said she upon her death-bed) what things have I seen ? *Ann Kemp* asked her, *Hath the Lord given you a glimpse of heaven ? I cannot tell* (said *Mary*) *whether it be heaven or not, but joys, joys, such things as never mortal eye beheld. I have fought the good fight.* And so she went on in heavenly expressions. O ! what cause have we to bless the Lord, that she who was *afflicted* and *tossed* with so many temptations in her life-time, found joy and comfort in a dying hour ! The Lord was nearest to her when she needed him most. My wife remains as formerly ; I hope (thro' the goodness of God) not worse. I desire the continuance of your prayers for us. The Lord be with your spirit. No more, but our love. In haste, I rest

Your affectionate faithful friend in Christ,
JOHN MASON.

LETTER XVII.

Dear Friend,

THOUGH I am but a weak interpreter of the scriptures, and especially of those *hard places* which are liable to so many different translations and expositions, as that is *Psal. xi. 3.*—Yet that I may not be thought to slight your request (whose profit I am bound to seek) I will tell you what seems to me to be the true sense of that text. Not that *David* here doubted of God's

word, as if it were not a sufficient foundation for him to build upon; (for in this *Pſalm* we find him very much believing, and confident in his God, from the beginning to the end :) I think rather, this was part of the ſpeech of his carnal counſellors, who had bid him *fly as a bird to his mountain*, in the firſt verſe; and they gave this reaſon for it in the ſecond verſe, *for lo*, (ſay they) *the wicked bend their bow*, &c. But he ſcorns their carnal counſel in that word, *In the Lord put I my truſt*. But they continue their ſpeech in the third verſe. *If the foundations be deſtroyed, what can the righteous do?* As if they had ſaid, The foreſts, mountains, and caves, are your ſtrongeſt holds; keep to thoſe foundations; hold you there, or you will periſh, though your cauſe be never ſo righteous. Holy *David* diſdains their carnal advice, as you may read in the next verſe. *There is a God in heaven that takes notice how things are carried in the world; that will favor the righteous* (though he try them for a while) *but he will utterly deſtroy the wicked, and ſhew them no mercy*. Which is the meaning of the fourth verſe, and of thoſe that follow, to the end of the *Pſalm*. And this is the moſt natural ſenſe, which, upon ſerious conſideration, I can fix upon this portion of ſcripture. Not but that I am willing to be informed by any one, of a better interpretation.—*My dear friend*, It pities me to read your complaints. The good Lord (if it be his heavenly will) reſtore you the joy of his ſalvation. Self-abating, and conſtant waiting upon God in his own bleſſed ways, are approved means to recover loſt comfort. My prayers are, and ſhall be for you. With mine

and my wife's hearty love to you, and all our christian friends with you, or near you, I rest

Your assured Friend,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, Aug. 10, 1675.

LETTER XVIII.

My Dear Friend,

CHRIST be your soul's comfort!—Though he hath taken away your husband, *the desire of your eyes, with a stroke*, he hath promised that *his loving-kindness he will not take away*.—The world is full of changes, but our God is unchangeable. Common mercies are sweet mercies, but covenant mercies are sure mercies.—Christ is faithful: He ever lives, and (saith he) *because I live he shall live also*.

The Lord support and comfort your heart under this heavy hand of his which he hath laid upon you. O! that it may bring your soul nearer to God, and to Jesus Christ. O! that *that providence which hath wrought death in your husband, may work life in your heart*.—Hate sin; overcome the world; love Christ; mind heaven and heavenly things, my dear christian friend.

I have great hopes that your soul is safe, however it may please the Lord in his wisdom to deal with your body and family. Submit yourself cheerfully to his will and pleasure; and say, *Lord, here I am, here is my family, do with me what shall seem good in thine eyes*.—The Lord be gracious to you. The Lord be gracious to *Haversham*. The Lord awaken the hearts of the people. O that they might repent quickly!

Because wrath is gone out from the Lord. The Lord stay his hand if it be his will. The Lord Jesus stand between the living and the dead.— The Lord bless his word and rod to yourself and others. The Lord dwell, and rule, and walk in the midst of you. O keep close to God! he will never fail you nor forsake you.

My prayers are for you. My kind respects to yourself, and all our christian friends. My wife sends her love to you. The Lord be with your spirit. I remain

Your loving Friend in the Lord,

JOHN MASON.

Stratford, September 25.

LETTER XIX.

Dear Friend,

I THANK you for your letter, and am glad to hear you are so well settled; but especially of the good frame of your mind, which God preserve for his glory. I desire you may still cherish thoughts of your own mortality. All our meditations and preparations are little enough to fit us for a dying hour. Hold fast what you have received; make much of your experiences. Doth not experience tell you, *That the worst of the ways of God, are better than the best of the ways of sin?* When you see the abundance and glory of the world, pray for the *light of God's countenance*. When the soul saith, *the Lord is my portion*, it is satisfied; whilst others, who have their *portion in this world*, remain unsatisfied.

Watch over your heart and tongue, and life. Watch against sin; watch unto duty; watch for the coming of Christ. *Seek the Lord, seek his*

strength, seek his face evermore. Be not weary of well-doing, and waiting upon God. Remember what you hear, what you read, what you pray for; and live accordingly. The God of peace be with you.

My wife and I send our hearty love to you, and your brothers, and my cousin *Betty*. We are in good health at present, blessed be the name of the Lord. I hope your brothers profit in learning. The Lord give every one of them a portion of grace. Commending you to the protection, direction, and comforts of the blessed God, I rest

Your truly loving Friend,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, Feb. 23, 1676.

LETTER XX.

My dear Christian Friend, and heartily beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT a good God have we! that remembers us in our low estate, thinks upon us when we are poor and needy, and is nearest to us when we need him most! He is a sun to comfort us, a shield to protect us; he gives us grace, he gives us glory, he gives us himself. O what a good God have we! Why hath he chosen us! We did not choose him, but he hath chosen us. He hath loved us first, and hath loved us freely. *Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!* Is not his love sweeter than wine? Is it not better than life? Does it not sweeten a sick-bed? Does it not sweeten the thoughts of death? When the love of God is shed abroad in

the heart, then the blessed soul cries, *Welcome death, welcome judgment, welcome eternity: Come sweet Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

I rejoice to hear of your recovery. And I rejoice in the thoughts of that comfortable entertainment your Saviour gave you in the time of your sickness. When the apostle *Peter* was upon the water, he said, *Lord, bid me come to thee.* And so many of Christ's friends have desired him to call them. And did you run to embrace Christ? Did you rejoice in the thoughts of his coming? And long to depart, that you might be with him, which is best of all? O! Blessed be God for the favour of his sweet ointments, which drew out your soul after him. Blessed be God for his almighty spirit, which made you so eagerly and joyfully desirous of the coming of Jesus Christ. But now you must wait for Christ, as the people by the sea-side, *Luke* viii. 40. He will certainly come. He saith, *Behold, I come quickly.* It is but yet *a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* You must wait for him, and watch for him. Trim your lamp, that when you hear the joyful sound, *Behold your bridegroom cometh,* you may be ready; and the bride-chamber door may stand open for you.—A good *Martyr* in *Scotland* going to suffer for Christ, said to his wife, *I will not bid you good night, for we shall meet at supper.* It is not long ere all God's people shall be gathered together to him, and shall be for ever with him.

Remember my kind love to all my dear friends with you, and near you, as duly as if I named them one by one. Mine and my wife's love to

you. Let us continue to pray for one another.

The Lord be with your spirit. I remain

Your assured Friend in the Lord,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, March 8, 1676.

LETTER XXI.

Honest and dear Friend,

GOD Almighty blefs you, and keep you, and make his face to shine upon you, and give you peace. The Lord lift up the *light of his countenance* upon you, and encourage you beyond all discouragements.

I rejoice to hear of your care to keep sabbaths; and your willingness rather to suffer for keeping them, than to sin in breaking them.—Undoubtedly it is better to suffer the greatest suffering, than to sin the least sin. *If we keep sabbaths holy, sabbaths will keep us holy.* Be much in prayer. Be always watching *against sin, over your heart, unto duty, and for the coming of the Lord.* Be always in your earthly calling, or in your heavenly calling, or in some way that may fit you for these callings. Be heartily content with that condition that divine providence, or your good parents, shall call you to. *Adorn every state by religion, and adorn religion in every state.* Labor in all things to please God, that through you God's name may be honored, and his ways the better thought of.

I am glad to hear of your willingness to depart out of this world. The rule is, *vitam in patientiâ, mortem in desiderio habendum est.* *We must be content to live, willing to die.* I pray God to use you whilst you live, and not to refuse you

when you come to die. I hope you will live to glorify him on earth. I beseech God to preserve your body and spirit.

It is *Saturday*, and my work is upon me, which makes me take my leave of you sooner than else I should do. I should be glad to hear from you. God be with your spirit. I rest

Yours in Christian Affection,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, March 17, 1676.

LETTER XXII.

Dear Friend,

I RECEIVED yours, and should be glad to hear where, and in what condition you now are. Want of jealousy and zeal for the great name of God, deserves to be complained of. I am glad it is your burden; nevertheless I would not have you to be discouraged. It is a sound conclusion of divines, *That a christian may be more sensibly affected with outward things, which touch the senses, than with spiritual things; and yet have a more inward, deep and hearty concern for spirituals.* He may have a more radicated love to God, than to any earthly things; he may have a more judicious hatred of sin than of any plague; he may have a more solid, profound grief for the dishonor of God, than for an injury done to his earthly relations; albeit he may be under more vehement passions, and may shed more tears for wrongs done to his friends, or for plagues inflicted upon his body, than he doth for spiritual evils. Besides, I am glad almighty God hath so far enlightened your mind, to see so much of the evil of sin as to be displeas'd with

yourself, for being no more displeas'd at it. It is some argument of softness, when the stone grates upon the flesh, and makes it bleed. To be sensible of hardness argues that hardness doth not prevail.—God go on with his work in your heart, and make all graces abound in you.—Wait continually upon your God. *Seek the Lord, seek his strength, seek his face evermore.—Above all gettings get wisdom; get understanding; forget it not.* Let me know how it is with you; and whether you have lighted into good company. With our loves, I rest

Your loving Friend,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, April 26, 1677.

LETTER XXIII.

My dear Friend,

THE Lord love you, and bless you, and keep you, and make his *face to shine upon you.* I beseech him to stablish your heart with grace, and preserve you harmless and blameless unto the coming of Christ. Cleave unto God with full purpose of heart. Be assured that the world is vanity, sin is folly, Christ is all in all. Live *upon* God by faith, live *unto* him by obedience. *Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.* Cherish good motions, quench bad. Honor God by a faithful discharge of duties, personal and relative. Be assured your *labour is not in vain in the Lord.* *Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.*

I was last week at *Mursley* to see your mother, who was ill; but removing to *Great-Brickhill*

she found herself better. I hope God will restore her to you all, for his glory and your comfort. We are all at present in good health, through God's goodness.

My wife and Mrs. W. and all your brothers send their several respects to you, and so doth

— *Your sincere Friend,*

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, May 17, 1677.

LETTER XXIV.

My dear Friend,

I AM glad to hear of your proficiency in the good ways of God. The further you walk in them the sweeter you will find them, and the better you will like them; and therefore I beseech you *for God's sake, and for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake*, not to hearken to the *world, the flesh, or the devil*, for they would take you off from the *pure and pleasant ways of God*. Blessed is he that watcheth, and happy is the man that feareth always. *Commune with your own heart; consider your latter end. Look at things eternal.* What is the world to the soul? The judge is before the door. Pray continually. Own the substantial of religion.—I told you my mind before we parted in the cellar-chamber: and my prayers are for you by name. *Heart-work is better than head-work. It is a better temper to be fervent in charity than in disputes.* Own the image of Christ wherever you see it; and beg wisdom of God, who will give it you liberally. *Judge others with a judgment of charity (as the Apostle Paul doth) but judge yourself with a judgment of verity and severity.* Spare not a corrup-

tion. Slack not a duty; be always *abounding in the work of the Lord*.

My dear Friend, I received your kind sympathizing letter, and thank you for it. I sent to you an answer, but it could not find you out; and therefore I send this by your mother, whom I saw last week, blessed be God, finely supported.—With mine, my wife's, cousin H—'s, and your brothers respects to you, I rest

Your assured Friend,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, July 20, 1677.

LETTER XXV.

Dear Friend,

I THANK you for your letter. I earnestly desire your proficiency and comfort in the *good ways of God*. A christian must be *humbled*, but never *discouraged*. The first is a duty; the second is a sin. Though the bare talking of the lips tends only to penury; yet talking of God, and of the things of God, from the heart, is part of the Christian practice, especially among those that are endued with a sense of religion. *Our words must be savoury, seasoned with salt; tending to edification; and such as may minister grace to the hearers.*

I commend to you secret duties. *A Christian is what he is between God and his own soul*. Go to God for God; go not from God without God; seek his face in Christ. Endeavor for a sense of his favor, and the supply of his spirit. You have the blessed and most worthy name of Christ to speed your requests; therefore let nothing lie upon your heart to trouble you. It is not only

a suffering but a sin, to let any thing lie upon our hearts to trouble us, when we have a God that bids us *cast all our care upon him*. God will deal familiarly with you; he will be all things to you, if you depend upon him. If your spirit flags or faints, search the cause of this untowardness and averfeness, and conclude it is not well with you till you have recovered a cheerful and obedient frame of heart, that you can say from your soul, *Lord whom have I in heaven but thee? Whom have I in earth but thee?*

Two things resolve upon by the grace of God, *viz. to judge yourself; and to judge nobody else*. God requires these two things, *to be severe towards yourself; and charitable towards others*. This will bring you comfort. Attend to the vitals and essentials of religion; they will nourish the life and power of godliness in your heart.

Three things make a christian, *viz. repentance towards God; faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and sincere and universal obedience*. Mind these three things, and the God of peace shall be with you.—Assure yourself, *there is such a thing as religion in the world, though some deride it, and others falsely pretend to it*. There is such a thing as communion with God.—Seek comfort in God through Christ, there it is to be found; rest not till you have found it, and then your soul will say, *This is that I would have; this satisfies and refreshes*. If a man hath his chest full of treasure, what cares he though he be called a poor man; he hugs himself, and saith, *populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo*. So if a man be judged a hypocrite it matters not, so long as he hath the evidence of his sincerity in his bosom; a *testimo-*

ny within that *he hath pleased God*.—In a great house there are grooms and scullions, yet we say *it is not their house*, it is such a nobleman's house he owns it ; so there is not a christian in the world but hath vile slaves lodging within him, but Christ is *Lord of the house*. Corruption rebels, but *grace reigns*. There are two houses, two parties, Christ's side and the devil's ; and a conflict between them. If it were not so ; if it were not for this inward conflict, earth would be heaven ; for outward opposition would be nothing, if it were not for this inward corruption. Well, but *Quod non placet, id non nocet*. *If sin be our grief and hatred it shall not be our ruin*. Christ's side shall prevail.

I commend you, my dear friend, to the grace of God, which is able to illuminate your mind, to govern your spirit, and to preserve you to his everlasting kingdom. I rest

Your sincere friend,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, Dec. 15, 1677.

LETTER XXVI.

My indeared Friend,

IT is the duty of every true Christian to give God the glory of his grace. *We can never bless God enough for his patience, that hath kept us so long out of hell ; nor for his mercy, that so earnestly invites us to heaven*. Is it nothing, that the Lord is continually following us with terms of peace, and tenders of mercy, and beseeching us to be reconciled ?——Say not in your heart, *I have nothing of Christ in me*, because you have not attained to such perfection and assurances as

you desire. It was the saying of a good christian, *I bless God for a good thought.* Bless God for any token of his love; any portion of his spirit.—Thou canst not say, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*; but canst thou not say, *They are confessed; they are confessed over the head of the scape-goat?* Dost thou heartily confess thy sins unto God, with all their aggravations? O! it is a great mercy.—Thou canst not say, *Thou hast an interest in Christ*; but hath not Christ an interest in thee? Hath he not won thine heart and affections? O! it is a great mercy.—Thou sayest possibly, *I am not worthy to be called a child of God.* But doth not God receive and treat thee as a *Father*? The prodigal (*Luke xv.*) acknowledged, *He was not worthy to be called a son*; but yet his father received him.—Again, it may be *thou complainest of sin*; but is it with thee as it was formerly? Shouldest thou not bless God for some amendment? If a sick man be any thing bettered in his health (tho' he still be very bad, yet) he will tell his friends, *he is somewhat better than he was*, and he blesses God for it. Besides, though sin dwells in thee, yet, perhaps, it is the grief of thy soul: Thou art its *captive*, not its *convert*. As sin is against thy soul, so is not thy soul against sin? If it be thy *grief* it shall not be thy *ruin*.

Again it may be *thine heart is troubled in an hour of temptation*; but hast thou not sometimes enjoyed sweet peace with God? Were not thine earthly delights vain? Canst thou not say now, *O quam suave est istis suavitatibus carere?* *One quarter of an hour's communion with God is worth all the delights in the world?* Canst thou not call to mind some of God's former loving-kindnesses?

Hast thou not sometimes tasted and seen how good the Lord is?—*What a mercy is that!*
 —Again, *thou art not assured of heaven, and thou wantest an assurance thereof.* But thou hast such hopes of heaven as thou wouldest not exchange for all the kingdoms of the world; and shouldest thou not bless God for that, which is more to thee than all the world?—Again, *Thou sinnest through mistake or passion.* But canst thou find in thine heart to sin against God? *He that is born of God cannot sin;* that is, he cannot find in his heart to sin, because he is born of God.
 —Again, it may be *thou complaineest of a dead heart.* But is there not some life in thee? Deadness stands in opposition to *liveliness* as well as *life.* If thou art dead, that is, *not lively,* yet bless God that thou art not quite *dead in trespasses and sins.*—Again, it may be *thou complaineest of a hard heart.* But thy heart is not so hard, but it feels its hardness. Did *Pharaoh* complain of the plague of a hard heart? He felt it not; he was all stone. But if thy heart feels its hardness, 'tis a sign there is something of flesh. Bless God for that covenant-mercy, *a heart of flesh.*
 —Again, it may be *the Lord tarricth or hideth himself from thee.* But art thou not willing to wait upon him? Dost thou wait under his table for crumbs? Dost thou wait at his gate for mercy? Well, *The Lord is good to them that wait for him,* Lam. iii. 25.—Again, it may be thou complaineest, *thou art often out of frame, or of an uneven temper; sometimes praying, sometimes sinning, &c.* But though thou art not always the same, yet God is, and Jesus Christ is; and therefore it is that *we are not consumed.*—Again, it

may be thou thinkest *thou shalt never be able to suffer for Christ, thy weak nature shrinks and trembles at the thoughts of it ; thou art afraid thou shalt rather deny thy Saviour, than thy name, thy liberty, or thy life.* It is true, if thou shouldst be left to thyself, it would be so ; but *God is faithful, and he will not suffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able to bear.* He will not send thee into a wood to fell an oak with a penknife.—When he calls thee to the work thou never didst he will give thee the strength thou never hadst.—Again, it may be, *thou fearest thou shalt fall away, and shall never hold out to the end.* But doth not this fear of thine rather *secure thee than betray thee ?* Does it not quicken thee to duty, to watch and pray, &c. It is a mercy if it be such a *fear and trembling* as thou art *working out thy salvation by.* But *wherefore dost thou doubt ?* Hath God ever failed thee at thy need ? When the disciples began to be concerned about bread ; *saith our Saviour, do ye not remember how many baskets full ye took up at such a time ? And how many at such a time ? Are your hearts still hardened ?* So say I, remember how God hath comforted you *at such a time, or such a time, and be not faithless but believing.*—The Lord inspire your heart with courage and comfort, that you may persevere in his good ways unto the end. The Lord be your keeper, your guide, your portion for ever.

I shall be glad to hear how it fares with you. I hope we are not unmindful of one another, though there had been an interruption of *epistolary converse.* I suppose you might not receive my last letter. With mine, my wife's, Mrs.

W—s, your brothers, and *Martha's* hearty loves and respects, and all good wishes, I rest

Your affectionate Friend,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, April 16, 1678.

LETTER XXVII.

My very affectionate and very dear friend,

I HOPE there is an indissoluble knot between us that neither silence nor distance can break in pieces; I mean the *unity of the spirit*: which will out-stand all carnal alliances, founded in blood or marriage; and all temporary confederacies grounded upon interest or temper. Time often breaks the *last*, and death ever dissolves the *first* of these ties and communications. But spiritual friendship grows by time, and is perfected by death; it lasts and holds forever. The time comes when there will be no friendship but spiritual friendship. When Eve awoke out of Adam's side, how was he joyed in her? *This is bone of my bone, &c.* But when they had sinned he bitterly accused her at the bar of God. Such will the end be of all that jocund friendship of all unregenerate allies; they will be divided at the bar of God, and no otherwise united, than as tares are in the same bundle, whose nearness does but help to consume one another.

But, I hope, my dear friend, we are one spirit in Christ forever; I hope we are met in him through grace; shall meet with him in the clouds and shall be ever with him in heaven. In the meantime I condemn and abhor myself, that when divine providence gave me a long wish'd for opportunity of seeing your face, I was no

more inward with you ; and that I so foolishly lost the advantage I then had of consulting and farthering your spiritual estate.

Sorry I am there was so little of heaven, so much of earthliness and carnality in my conversation with you. And this I write with grief and shame. How often have my bowels yearned towards your soul ! that I have thought, *O that you were but near me, or by me ! O that we had but an opportunity of discoursing together of things pertaining to the kingdom of God !*—I had an opportunity ; I say I had an opportunity.—But it is gone, it is gone ! and whether I shall ever have the like again, I know not. *The Lord forgive me !*—Though I have not been my brother's keeper, yet I will commit my brother to that God who is able to keep him *from this present evil world* ; and from every evil work, unto life eternal.—The Lord by his spirit, breathe into you better meditations than I could possibly have suggested. I should have spoken *to* you ; but yet I may speak *for* you, and you for me, to that God who is with us both at the same time ; and who can bless us both out of the riches of his grace and goodness in Jesus Christ. In whom I am,

Dear Sir, your affectionate Friend,

That longs for your everlasting happiness,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, Feb. 9, 1679-80.

LETTER XXVIII.

My dear Friend,

I AM sensible of your love to us. You mourn with us, and rejoice with us ; and I hope you

pray for us, and praise for us. And therefore I must needs desire your temporal, and especially your eternal welfare. I rejoice in the hopes of your steadfastness in Christ. Blessed be God who hath preserved you, and followed you with the motions of his good spirit. The Lord carry on his work in our hearts, that we may at last meet in his kingdom. Be encouraged still to depend on God. converse with him by faith, meditation, and prayer. If any despise the good ways of God, I trust you can justify them by your own experience. God's work is wages, and *in keeping his commandments there is great reward.* Go on (*my dear and faithful friend*) go on in the strength of God. Follow after *righteousness, holiness, faith, love, patience, meekness.* Labour after farther measures of grace, and more intimate acquaintance and communion with God.—*The way of the Lord is strength to the upright.* The farther a man walks in the good ways of God, the better he will find them. Let us live by faith, till we shall live by sight. Let us breathe by prayer, till we breathe out our souls into Christ's bosom.—Say, we are weak (as it is most true ;) our God will strengthen us. A christian cannot keep himself, but he *is kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.*—Therefore we must commit our souls to God's keeping, and derive supplies of strength from Jesus Christ. O that we might daily *receive of his fulness, even grace for grace!* When Satan tempts, or the world tempts, fly to Christ, and he will succour. If your heart be dead, go to Christ, and he will quicken it.

I commend you to Christ in my prayers ; I

commend Christ to you in my letters, Christ is all in all. *Because I live (saith he) ye shall live also.* Christ sweetens life, death, the grave, resurrection, judgment, heaven, eternity : Christ sweetens all.—Do you not love a man when you see (*aliquid Christi*) something of Christ in him? Do you not love a book when you read something of Christ in it? Are not the ordinances dear to you, because Christ is to be seen through these *lattices*? And do you not love christian assemblies, because Jesus Christ walks in the midst of the *golden candlesticks*?

My dear Friend, I hope you truly belong to Christ, and will one day see his face with joy.—He is our priest, he is our surety, he is our advocate at the right hand of the father. O let us prize him, and praise him to eternity.—To the Lord's almighty protection, and most gracious favor, I commit you, remaining

Your assured faithful friend,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford, Sept. 12, 1679.

LETTER XXIX.

Dear Friends,

AS sweats are good for a man's body, if a man comes well out of them; so afflictions are good for the soul, if a man come well out of them. I wish you may come out of your sickness, and that you may come well out of it. *It is good for you that you have been afflicted*, if you can say, *I bless the Lord, I see the vanity of the world, the uncertainty of the world, and the approach of judgment.* It is good for you that you have been afflicted, if you have been taught by

it, that *Christ is best, and sin is worst.* O! for the blood of the everlasting covenant, to wash away my sins, and to deliver me from the wrath to come. You come well out of your afflictions, if you are more serious, more cautious, and more circumspect; more watchful and prayerful, more spiritual and heavenly minded.

Death is a good debt, and must be paid. *The clouds return after the rain.* O prepare carefully for your latter end. What time you have to spare from your worldly occasions, spend it in your soul's concernments. Accustom yourself to prayer, to good thoughts, to reading of good books especially God's book. *Labor to be what all wish they had been when they come to die.* Consider, and think of the best things, and keep the best company—In every thing aim at God's glory, and your eternal salvation.—As we have lived under one roof together, I desire we may live in our heavenly Father's house together; and be forever with the Lord. No more but hearty love from

Your loving friend,

JOHN MASON.

Murstep, July 11, 1683.

LETTER XXX.

Dear Friend,

I DESIRE you happiness in all respects, and that that God who gives you health and strength for your earthly calling, may enable you for the duties of your heavenly calling; and that whilst your hand is in the world, your heart may be in heaven.

I hope you do conscientiously observe God's

sabbaths, and delight in his ordinances. And that you experience the sweetness of communion with God, and of his service, which is perfect freedom. I desire that you may continue in well doing, that you may be *faithful to the death*, that you may receive a *crown of life*. To keep a *conscience void of offence*, must be your daily exercise, and it shall be your daily comfort.

I hope you visit the throne of grace daily, and find prayer to be your chief delight, and the best of your fare. Confess what you find amiss in yourself. Beg pardon and sanctification. Endeavor to walk closely with God—There is nothing like close communion, and close walking with God—I should be glad to hear of your soul's prosperity. Tho' I seldom write to you, you are not out of my heart, nor out of my prayers. My service to your good brother *William*, of whose recovery I long to hear, and to your brother *Samuel*, to whom I thought to write, but at present want opportunity. The Lord Jesus be with you. In him I am

Your faithful Friend,

JOHN MASON.

December 7.

THE END.

BRIEF MEMOIRS OF THE LATE LADY HUNTINGDON.

Printed by DODD & RUMSEY, for the "*Female Society in Salem, for promoting Religious Knowledge.*"

SELINA, Countess of Huntingdon, was the daughter of Washington, Earl of Ferris: She was born August 24, 1707, and on June 3, 1728, was married to Theophilus, late of Huntingdon.

At an early period of life, having attained to her 9th year, the sight of a corpse about her own age, as it was carried to the grave, engaged her to attend the funeral; there the first impressions of deep seriousness about the eternal world laid hold on her conscience, and with many tears she cried earnestly to God that when he was pleased to call her from time, he would deliver her from these fears and give her an happy departure.— She often visited the grave afterwards, and always preserved a lively sense of the affecting scene. Though no clear discoveries of divine truth were yet obtained, she frequently retired to her closet and poured out her heart to the Lord.

A dangerous illness having soon after this bro't her to the brink of the grave, death appeared unspeakably awful to her view, and her conscience became greatly distressed: Under these affecting circumstances she felt an earnest desire to renounce all other hopes and cast herself wholly on Christ; she lifted up her soul to Jesus the Saviour by prayer, and was filled *with joy and peace in believing*. Her disorder soon took a favorable turn, and she was not only restored to

perfect health, but what was infinitely better, *to newness of life*; she determined henceforth to live for Jehovah, and therefore presented herself to God as a *living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which, she now believed, was her reasonable service.*

The change which divine grace effectually wrought upon her ladyship soon became observable to all around her, in the open profession of her faith, and by her zealous support of religion, amidst the keen reproach of an ungodly world; she nobly set her face as a flint, and was not ashamed either of Christ or his cross. During Lord Huntingdon's life she openly professed and warmly supported the cause of God, although her means of usefulness were much circumscribed, and her family concerns occupied a great share of her time and attention. When, by her husband's decease, she became more completely her own mistress, she resolved to devote herself exclusively to the service of Christ, and the edification of souls redeemed by his blood. Her zealous heart embraced cordially all whom she considered as real followers of the Lamb, but was especially attached to those ministers who professed the Calvinistic sentiments. With the design of affording them a more extensive scene of usefulness, she opened her house in Park-street for the preaching of the gospel, and gave a general invitation for her neighbors to attend. Her zeal in this respect was crowned with abundant success. On the week-days her kitchen was crowded with the poor of the flock, for whom instruction was provided; and on the Lord's day the great and noble were invited to spend the evening in her drawing-room, where various mi-

nisters of the gospel imparted the word of life, and were heard with apparently profound and serious attention.

A gentlewoman, who lived in the vicinity of Brighthelmstone, dreamed that a lady, whose dress she particularly noticed, would shortly visit that town, and be an eminent instrument of good. About three years afterwards lady Huntingdon came down, and the gentlewoman above mentioned, meeting her in the street, suddenly exclaimed, "O! madam, you are come." Lady Huntingdon startled by an address so unexpected from an utter stranger, and supposing that the woman was deranged, "What do you know of me?" said the Countess. "Madam," replied the other person, "I saw you in a dream three years ago, dressed precisely as you now appear;" and then proceeded to give her a relation of the dream. The acquaintance formed between them on this occasion, was attended with consequences the most happy to that individual and to the settlement. Lady Huntingdon was rendered the instrument of conversion to this woman, who died a year afterwards in the full triumph of faith; she erected a chapel in that town where the gospel has since been effectual to the salvation of many.

Her active spirit was still devising generous plans for the diffusion of the gospel, especially in places where "Satan had his seat;" she erected, in the year 1769, another chapel at Tunbridge Wells, a place much frequented by the gay and the great of the metropolis. She often involved herself in expences by establishing churches, which she found it difficult to discharge; but the Lord brought her honorably through all her

engagements, and provided a supply from other quarters when her own resources were exhausted. — During forty-five years of widowhood, she devoted her time, talents and worldly substance to the support of the gospel at home, and its diffusion through distant, desolate parts of the world. When advanced to the period of fourscore years, she maintained all the vigour of youth, and, amidst the outward decays of nature, her mind, animated and ennobled by every principle of christianity, was contemplating the wider spread of pure and undefiled religion. Her most distinguishing excellence was a fervent zeal to make known the gospel of the grace of God ; a zeal which no disappointment quenched, no labors relaxed, no opposition discouraged, no progress of years abated. This heavenly flame appeared to brighten as nature declined. Thousands and tens of thousands will have reason, in time and eternity, to bless her memory, as being the happy instrument of their translation from darkness to light ; and multitudes saved by her means have already met her in the region of glory, to rejoice together in the presence of God and of the Lamb.

In the month of November, 1790, Lady Huntingdon broke a blood vessel, at which time her last illness commenced. Being asked by a friend “ how she was ; ” she instantly replied, “ I am well ; all is well ; well for ever.” Wherever I turn my eyes, whether living or dying, I see nothing but victory.” As death approached, she was frequently heard to exclaim, with great emphasis, “ The coming of the Lord draws nigh ; O Lady Ann,” (a young lady that lived with her)

“ the coming of the Lord draws nigh, and the thought fills my soul with joy unspeakable.” At another time she observed, “ All the little ruffles and difficulties which surround me ; all the pains with which I am exercised in this poor body, thro’ mercy, affect not the settled peace and joy of my soul.

To a friend who visited her a few days before her decease, she said, “ I see myself a poor worm, drawing near to Jesus ; What hope could I entertain if I did not see the efficacy of his blood, and turn as a prisoner of hope to this strong hold ? How little could any thing of mine give a moment’s rest to a departing soul ? So much sin and self-mixed with the best and always so short of what we owe ? ’Tis well for us that he can pity and pardon ; and we have confidence that he will do so. I confess, my dear friend, I have no hope but what inspired the dying malefactor, at the side of my Lord, and I must be saved in the same way, as freely, as fully, or not at all.”

He replied, “ Madam, I cordially join with you, that though our lives may be devoted to the work of Jesus, it is not to such a sacrifice we should look for comfort in a dying hour.” She replied, “ No verily ;” then enlarging on that mixture of infirmity and corruption, which tarnished our best services, she added, “ that a sinner could only rest satisfactorily on one foundation, and would find nothing in the best works of his best days that he dare produce before God for its own sake ; sufficiently blessed and secure, if he could but cry, *God be merciful to me a sinner, and let me be found in the beloved and compleat in him.*”

During the whole of her illness her pains never made her impatient, but she seemed more concerned about those who attended than about herself. A few days previous to her departure, she said to an acquaintance, "I cannot tell you in what light I now see these words, *If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.* To have in this room such company and to have such an eternal prospect; I see this subject now in a light which cannot be described. I know my capacity will then be enlarged, but I am now as sensible of the presence of God as I am of the presence of those I have with me."

On the day of her dissolution she conversed about sending missionaries to Otaheite. She often mentioned that from the time God set her soul at liberty she felt such a desire for the salvation of souls that she could compare herself to a ship in full sail before the wind, and that she was impelled by an influence too powerful to be described.

That divine declaration, *Them that honor me I will honor*, was literally and eminently realised in the death of this illustrious Personage. Suitably to a life so ardently and disinterestedly devoted to the service of her Redeemer and her generation, she had *an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The following were among the last words which she was heard to utter, "My work is done; I have nothing to do but to go to my Father." She died at her own house in the Spa-fields, next door to the Chapel, June 17, 1792, in the 84th year of her age.

" Safe landed on that peaceful shore;
 Where pilgrims meet to part no more,
 She ranges now the heav'nly plains.
 And sings in sweet heart-melting strains ;
 And now her soul begins to prove
 The heights and depths of Jesus' love.
 He cheers her with eternal smile,
 She sings Hosanna all the while ,
 Or, overwhelm' with rapture sweet,
 Sinks down adoring at his feet.

A PLEASANT INSTANCE OF CONVERSION.

A MAJOR A. who was in the continental service during the American war, went with some other officers, one Sunday, on purpose to get a laugh at a negro's preaching ; but so far was he from laughing at the negro after he arrived, that he stood for some time amazed, at hearing him denouncing God's severe judgments against the impenitent, especially those who came to mock at God's word, begging of them in the most earnest manner, to think upon what they had heard, and to read their bibles as soon as they went home, &c. In short, Major A. from that very hour, began to think that surely there was a reality in religion, that there was a God who rewarded the righteous, and punished the wicked, (for until that very day, he was one of those fools mentioned by the Psalmist, Psalm liii.) He immediately forsook his former companions in iniquity, and applied himself diligently to the study of his Bible. He shewed his faith by his works ; for at the conclusion of the war, he gave all his slaves their liberty, although only eleven

out of thirty-two (which was the number that he had) would accept of it, the rest chusing rather to have their ears bored through by so good a master, than to have their freedom. He turned a preacher himself, and spared neither labor nor pains that he might be of use to souls; and, if alive, I suppose is still continuing to preach near Norfolk in Virginia, where I left him a few years ago.

A WORD TO MOTHERS ON THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF THEIR CHILDREN.

Printed by DODD & RUMSEY, for the "*Female Society in Salem, for promoting Religious Knowledge.*"

“**T**RAIN up a child in the way he should go,” is the divine command, and the promise runs, “*when he is old he will not depart from it.*” Examine, my dear reader, whether you have felt the authority of this awful injunction and diligently aimed at obeying it? You are in a certain sense the author of existence to your children; you have *travailed in birth bringing them into the natural world*; do you know what it is to *travail in birth* for their spiritual being, frequently and fervently wrestling with the redeeming Angel for his blessing upon them. Like the woman mentioned in the gospel have you often come to the compassionate Saviour, expostulating, *Lord, have mercy on my daughter for she is grievously vexed, have pity on my son, my daughter, for they are grievously vexed, they are born under the curse of a broken covenant and are heirs of wrath by nature, have mercy upon them in pardoning their sins; let thy precious blood, dear Redeemer, be sprinkled upon their consciences purging them from dead works; may they become alive to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

You have spent many painful, anxious hours in providing for their bodies, securing meat and drink and whatever was necessary for the present life: What hours have you spent about their precious souls and everlasting concerns? When

did you spend an hour in prayer with Israel's God for their conversion and salvation? The ancient patriarch earnestly supplicates, *O that Ishmael might live before thee*; have you been frequently supplicating, *O that Timothy, that John, that James, that Mary, that Martha might live before thee, that the incorruptible seed might early take root in their hearts and spring up, bearing fruit in their lives, producing love to God, love to their parents and charity to men? What hours have you spent with your children teaching them from the word of God their danger by nature, recommending Jesus as their only portion and entreating them in his name to be reconciled to God? What hours have you spent covenanting with Jehovah in their behalf, saying "Lord, here am I and the children whom thou hast given me; they are thine by creation and I now resign them wholly to thy gracious disposal both for time and eternity; I desire not great things for them in this world, but, O may their souls be saved in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; I care little what toil, or poverty, or reproach may befall them in the present life, but I cannot endure the thought that any of them should be outcasts from heaven at last or punished with everlasting destruction from thy presence. Thou hast directed, *suffer the little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of God*; at thy command I now bring them and cast them upon thy free, sovereign mercy; there I will leave them at all hazards, I cannot take them away without thy blessing?"*

But does not the conscience of some mother bear witness, while she reads these pages, that

She is an utter stranger to such exercises? She has perhaps scarcely spent a thought about their spiritual and immortal interests; she can suffer days and weeks to pass without repeating a promise to them, or without offering up a prayer for them. Is this your kindness to your offspring? Is not the great God who created the world and your children a proper judge of the value of both, and he has declared, *a man is not profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul.* What profit is it therefore to your children should you acquire for them all riches and honors if you neglect their immortal souls and suffer them to perish forever? Suppose that one of these little ones whom you tenderly regard, who often captivates your hearts with a thousand expressions of love; in whose sorrows you now sympathize, in whose health and happiness you rejoice, suppose one of these little ones should meet you at the left hand of the judge and address you in the following language, "O cruel, accursed mother, instrument of my existence, and through your neglect, instrument of my damnation. Behold my dreadful condition, doomed here to the left hand of the judge as a mark of his indignation; as unfit for the society of good angels or men; behold the dreadful prospect which now lies before me, the Judge is ready to frown me from his presence, holy angels ready to bind me hand and foot and the devouring flame ready to receive me; see on yonder right hand of the Judge a companion of my childhood and youth, one that was born in the same settlement, that was taught in the same school stands now clad with the righteousness of Jesus, shining

in all the beauties of holiness, but I must be an eternal *cast away*, the abhorrence of God, the scorn of angels, the sport of devils, and a prey to unquenchable fire; O that I had been born a brute or an idiot since my understanding was never directed to the knowledge of Jesus, and its real interests, or that I had perished in the womb and never saw the sun. True it is, you was diligent in promoting my outward welfare; you fed me when hungry, you cloathed me when naked, you sheltered me in the hour of danger, you sympathized with me in distress, but you never told me that *I was shapen in sin*, and thus a *child of wrath by nature*; you never told me that there was pardon in the blood of Jesus, nor urged me by all the value of my soul to flee from *the wrath to come*; now I must take an eternal farewell of all those little pleasures which I enjoyed on earth and be forever, and ever, and ever sinking deeper and deeper in yonder burning lake. I therefore in the presence of the assembled universe now charge, and will to all eternity charge my damnation to your indolence and neglect."

Surely no mother, who feels the bowels of compassion to her offspring, could endure such a sight or salutation. Surely if she was an heir of glory herself, it must, I had almost said, embitter heaven to think that she had brought a child into the world and then left it to perish eternally or if she was a cast away, its presence in hell must greatly aggravate her misery.

My dear female readers, do not pronounce these hard sayings; the Lord God, in whose presence I write, is my witness that I act the part of a friend to you and your children, and that I

could cheerfully part with my own temporal ease to save both of you from eternal torment. The redemption of the soul is precious; my pen, the pen of an archangel could not describe the ten thousandth, thousandth part of its value. I am fully persuaded that could I be the instrument under God of awakening you to reflect on their worth, on the vastness of eternity, on the happiness of heaven, on the miseries of hell, that their instruction would become your chief employment, and their salvation your chief concern. *What is a man profited, should he gain the whole world and lose his soul; what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

I will now conclude this short and familiar address by noticing two or three things to encourage you respecting the spiritual interests of you children and give you freedom in bringing them to Jesus the Saviour.

1. The plain and repeated promises of God, *I will be your God, and the God of your seed; I will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God. My spirit which I have given you and my word which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed from henceforth even forever.* Take these promises and present them with your children, one by one, pleading, *Lord do as thou hast said.*

2. Remember that our Lord Jesus when on earth always expressed a peculiar affection and concern for the young. When the scribes and the pharisees rebuked the little children crying Hosanna in the temple, did the saviour unite with them in damping their rising ardour; in breaking

the bruised reed or quenching the smoking flax? No, Jesus encouraged them, and said, *have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?*

3. When the saviour was on earth, little children were frequently brought to him; parents came with their offspring, masters with their servants and all that came were welcome; there is not an instance in all the history of his life that one was rejected; *he took them up in his arms and put his hands upon them and blessed them.* The Lord Jesus is as gracious now as he was in the days of his flesh; he is as able and willing to save to the very uttermost now as he ever was; and has left it for the encouragement of all following generations, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast off.*

4. Remember that the Lord God will have a seed to serve him while sun and moon endures and why not your seed? *Men shall be blessed in him and all nations shall call him blessed,* and why may not the offspring of your loins be partakers of these blessings? He has promised to *take the children instead of the fathers and make them noble princes in all the earth,* and why not your little ones be sharers of these honors? From all these considerations, in the instruction of your children, be encouraged to sow in hope of reaping; While you teach and admonish and entreat, the fire may begin to burn in their little bosoms, even love to a bleeding saviour; that spark of grace may be enkindled by the Holy Ghost which will shine brighter and brighter until it blaze unclouded in the region of glory. Then how great beyond expression would be your honour? You

would receive the heavenly plaudit, *Well done good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, and I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* You would be admitted to a seat with those who, *turning many to righteousness, shine as the stars forever and ever.* How great beyond expression would be your happiness? By being instrumental in rendering these children pious towards God, you would render them affectionate and obedient to yourselves; your crown in prosperity and consolation in adversity. When called to close your eyes in death you could leave them with their God and your God in the confidence that he is able to keep them from falling, and present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. What transports of bliss would mutually fill your bosoms when meeting together with all the ransomed at the right hand of the judge; how would they be constrained to bless Jehovah for such a mother, for one that taught them the truth in Jesus and you, in return, must raise the shout of praise to him who countenanced the word of his handmaid, and rendered it effectual to their salvation. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works unto the children of men. And let them sacrifice the sacrifice of thanksgiving and declare his works with rejoicing. Amen.*

LIFE THE ONLY ACCEPTED TIME.

“ **W**HILE life prolongs its precious light,
 Mercy is found, and peace is given ;
 But soon, ah soon ! approaching night
 Shall blot out every hope of heaven.

2. While God invites, how blest'd the day !
 How sweet the gospel's charming sound ?
 “ Come sinners, haste, oh haste away,
 While yet a pardoning God he's found.”

3. “ Soon, borne on time's most rapid wing,
 Shall death command you to the grave,
 Before his bar your spirits bring,
 And none be found to hear or save.”

4. “ In that long land of deep despair,
 No Sabbath's heavenly light shall rise ;
 No God regard your bitter prayer,
 Nor saviour call you to the skies.”

5. No wonders to the dead are shown,
 (The wonders of redeeming love ;)
 No voice his glorious truth makes known
 Nor sings the bliss of climes above.

6. Silence, and solitude, and gloom,
 In these forgetful realms appear,
 Deep sorrows fill the dismal tomb,
 And hope shall never enter there.

ANECDOTES AND HINTS.

RELATIVE TO A
PREVAILING BUT INDEFENSIBLE PRACTICE.

It chills my blood, to hear the blest Supreme
Rudely appeal'd to on each trifling theme!
Maintain your rank; vulgarly despise;
'To SWEAR, is neither brave, polite, nor wise;
You would not swear upon the bed of death;
Reflect! your Maker now could stop your breath.

THE excellent Mr. Howe being at dinner with some persons of fashion, a gentleman expatiated largely in praise of King Charles I. introducing some harsh reflections upon others. Mr. Howe, observing that the gentleman mixed many oaths with his discourse, told him that, in his humble opinion, he had omitted a singular excellence in the character of that prince. The gentleman eagerly desired him to mention it, and seemed all impatience to know what it was. 'It was this, Sir,' said Mr. Howe, 'He was never heard to swear an oath in common conversation.' The hint was as politely received as given; and the gentleman promised to break off the practice.

The same Mr. Howe, once conversing with a nobleman in St. James's Park, who swore profanely in his conversation, expressed great satisfaction in the thought that there is a God, who governs the world, who will finally make retribution to all according to their works; and 'who, My Lord,' added he, 'will make a difference between him that sweareth, and him that feareth an oath.' His Lordship immediately answered, 'I thank you, Sir, for your freedom; I take your meaning, and shall endeavour to make a good use of it.' Mr. H. replied, 'I have reason to thank your Lordship for saving me the most difficult part of a discourse, which is the *application*.'

Another time, passing two persons of quality, who were talking with great eagerness, and *damned* each other repeatedly; Mr. H. said to them, taking off his hat in a respectful manner—‘ I pray God *save* you both;’ for which handsome reproof they immediately returned him thanks.

The truly honourable Mr. Boyle, as eminent for philosophy as for morality, was so careful to avoid this profane custom, that he never mentioned the name of God in his conversation, without making an observable pause before it, that so he might both feel and diffuse among the company, the veneration due to the sacred Majesty of the universe.

The brave Colonel Gardiner took pains to prevent swearing in his regiment, at the head of which he would publicly declare his abhorrence of it, urging all his officers to avoid giving, by their example, any sanction to a crime, which it was their duty to punish. A number of military gentlemen once dined with him at his own house, when he addressed them with much respect, and begged leave to remind them, that as he was a justice of the peace in that district, he was bound by oath to put the laws against swearing into execution; and therefore intreated them to be upon their guard. Only one of the gentlemen offended on that day, who immediately paid the penalty, which was given to the poor, with the universal approbation of the company.

A moment’s calm consideration will convince any rational person of the impropriety of this custom, which is inexcusable, irrational, vulgar, and profane.

It is *inexcusable*. There is less temptation to this vice than to any other. Some vices are excused by calling them constitutional; but, as Archbishop Tillotson observes, no man is born with a *swearing* constitution. It cannot procure credit to an assertion, because it is oftener used to confirm a rash or doubtful saying, than a plain truth. The man who swears, seems to doubt his own veracity, and well may others suspect it; for how can we believe he will be true to man, who is false

to God? Besides, the custom to swearing to truths may insensibly lead a man to swear falsehoods. Persons addicted to this practice scarcely know when they swear, and some, when reprov'd of it, have sworn that they did not swear.

It is *irrational*. What greater proof of stupid ignorance can be given than to use words without meaning? You call upon God (shocking to repeat) to *damn your eyes—your blood—your souls*. But have you considered what damnation is? It is a word of dreadful meaning. It is to be pronounced accursed of God in the day of judgment. It is to hear Jesus say, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' But surely you do not mean this.

It is *vulgar*. That some *Gentlemen* swear, is too true; but it can never be deemed the mark of a gentleman; for it is a vice common to the vilest characters in the lowest ranks of society. It produces the most disgraceful equality—it puts the honourable, the learned, the polished, and the delicate, upon a level with the most ignorant and depraved.

It is *profane*. Do you believe there is a God? Have you heard that he is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, before whom angels veil their faces—whose existence and terrible Majesty even the devils believe, trembling? Go, profane sinner, hide thyself in the dust whence thou wast originally taken. Who art thou—impiously daring to set thy mouth against the heavens? You would not swear in the presence of the king of Great Britain; and will you treat the King of Kings, the God of the whole earth, with less respect? You would perhaps refrain from swearing many hours together, if it were to exempt you from some temporal loss, or to procure some temporal gain. And do you treat the commands, the promises, and the threatenings of the most High God, as if they were unworthy of your notice? The sovereign command of the Governor of the universe is, **SWEAR NOT, AT ALL**. He who said, 'Thou shalt do no murder; hath also said,

‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain’—and the awful sanction of this command is, ‘for the Lord thy God will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain:’ that is, he will punish him with signal vengeance—he will make him feel the thunder of his irresistible and destructive power.

Is the reader alarmed by the terrible sanction of the precept here cited? He has reason to be alarmed—yet let him not sink into despair. ‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,’ Isa. lv. 7. ‘Christ died for the ungodly,’ Rom. v. 6. Pray earnestly for pardoning mercy through his mediation, and thou shalt find that he, who had compassion on Peter, will have compassion on thee; but it is proper, that if thou hast polluted thy life in time past with oaths and curses, thou shouldest now, like him, weep bitterly..

Hitherto thy tongue has been thy shame, but from this time, let it become thy glory. Let it be used to the honour of him, whose word says, ‘Bless and curse not:’—and again, ‘Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth;’ but ‘that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.’

Besides those horrid oaths which shock every decent ear, there is a vicious habit indulged by many persons, otherwise moral, and among these, even ladies themselves, of a thoughtless profanation of their Maker’s name, on occasions the most trivial, such as Good God! God forbid! God bless us! O Lord, &c. &c. Such language proceeds from want of reverence to the best of Beings, and is as direct a violation of that command, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” as the most vulgar and profane oaths.

ADVICE TO PARENTS.

GOD has given you children. Did you ever consider that they have immortal souls? You find it necessary to employ much time, and care, and labour, in order to provide for their bodies, and to rear them to maturity. But their souls stand in need of still greater attention; that they may be instructed in the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners. You see with your eyes, that one generation passeth away, and another cometh: you cannot but know that God will bring you to death, and to the house appointed for all living; and you are sensible that when your children have lived three or fourscore years at most, they also shall die, and their bodies return to dust.

But their souls never die. When separated from the body, they will enter into an eternal state. The sacred Scripture informs us, that in this eternal state there are two different abodes for souls, *heaven* and *hell*. The former is a place of perfect happiness, in the presence and enjoyment of God for ever; the latter is a place of the most dreadful and eternal misery, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Into heaven shall be admitted all the disciples of Jesus Christ; that is, all who know him, and believe in his name, and as the fruit of faith, love him, and hate every sin, and live devoted to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in heart and life. Into hell all the wicked shall be cast down; that is, all persons who have not loved God with their whole soul; who have despised Jesus Christ, and the holy Scriptures; and who have spent

their days in minding this world only, and in the love of sin.

Natural affection must make you shudder at the thoughts of your children being cast into endless misery, and will doubtless lead you earnestly to wish that they may be partakers of endless felicity. But in order to this, it is absolutely necessary that they should be instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, by which alone they can attain the knowledge of the way which leads to everlasting life. It is of the greatest importance that this should be done in the days of their youth, before their hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin: "Train up a child in the way he should go," says Solomon, "and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Natural affection should stimulate you to this; and the love you have for your dear little ones should constrain you to employ every method in your power to promote their highest happiness. But if natural affection have no influence, remember there is something to oblige you, which is still more powerful; and that is the command of God, the great and glorious JEHOVAH, who made you, who preserves and does you good, whom you are bound to obey, and before whose judgment seat you must ere long appear, to give an account of the deeds done in the body, and to answer for the pains you took for the salvation of your children. In the Old Testament, God speaks thus to parents: Deut. vi. 5. 6. 7. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; and these words which I command thee shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." You will find the same thing inculcated by divine authority in the New Testament: God thus addresses fathers and mothers who profess the Christian religion: Eph. vi. 4. "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." You find it every day necessary to give them food for their bodies: in like manner, God here enjoins you to feed their souls; that is, to teach them

the infinite love of God in sending his own Son into the world to save sinners; and what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for their salvation; and how they are to be made partakers of the blessings which he has purchased by his obedience and death; and the way in which they should walk so as to please God. While you teach them these things, it is incumbent on you to set before them the example of a Christian life, to pray with them, and for them, to read the Scriptures, to sanctify the Lord's day, to carry them where the gospel is preached, and to display before their eyes, in your conversation and conduct, the holiness, humility, meekness and benevolence of a disciple of Christ.

Have you done so? and when you stand at the tribunal of the great Judge, (which may soon be the case,) can you say, "Lord thou knowest it has been our constant endeavour to deny ourselves, to take up the cross and follow Christ; and that we have been concerned for the salvation of our childrens souls, as well as for the health and welfare of their bodies. Thou hast been witness to our prayers and tears, while we were supplicating mercy for them, and earnestly intreating that they may obtain thy favour and blessing." Happy are those parents who can lay their hands on their hearts, and utter these words.

But while some can speak thus, many of you cannot: and your own consciences, unless they be seared, must accuse you of a dreadful neglect of duty. You are compelled by truth to say, "We have not attended to the salvation of our own souls: and our childrens have been likewise neglected. If we could provide for their bodies, we thought we had done all that was required. They are living in ignorance and sin; and, alas! they see nothing in us but the example of a worldly and wicked life: the reading of the sacred scriptures, and prayer, and pious conversation, they seldom or never hear from us." Your condition is unspeakably dreadful, and how will you be able to answer for your conduct at the judgment-seat of Christ? O that God may have pity on you and bring you to repentance, before the things that belong to your peace are for ever hid from your eyes!

Some may say, "Alas! we ourselves are ignorant, and how can we teach our children? We know nothing about the gospel, and the way of a sinner's salvation: and it is entirely out of our power to give them religious instruction. Will God require such a thing from poor people, that are no scholars!" My heart bleeds for your unhappy state. Your ignorance will be no excuse before God; for had you diligently sought him, and improved the opportunities of instruction which were in your power, you might have known his ways. Do not flatter yourselves; your ignorance will prove destructive to the souls both of yourselves and your children. Hear what God says in his holy word to such as you, Isa. xxvii. 11. "It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour." Hosea iv. 6. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;"—and 2 Theff. i. 8, 9. "They that know not God shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

"Woe unto us," may some of you say, "what shall become of us and our poor children, for we are all undone!" With respect to yourselves, I intreat you to attend diligently on the preaching of the gospel whenever you can find an opportunity. If the minister preach salvation by grace, through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, and the necessity of being born again, and being made a new creature, before a person can enter into the kingdom of heaven, and a holy life as only flowing from these principles, receive him as speaking the truth; for he is declaring to you the doctrine of Christ. See John iii. But if you never hear these things from his lips; and if he be not very often telling you how perishing sinners may be reconciled to God, and extolling the love of the Lord Jesus Christ in coming down from heaven to earth, and dying upon the cross, and purchasing eternal salvation for them; and speaking much and often of the grace of the Holy Spirit, in regenerating, sanctifying, directing, and comforting the souls of men, flee from him as a deceiver; he is not a minister of Christ; it is the blind leading the blind, and both

will fall into the ditch, and perish at last in their iniquities. But I do not wish you to take these things upon my word; examine the sacred scriptures, and I am confident you will find it just as I have represented. Besides, if you have any neighbours who every day read their Bible, and pray with their families, and talk much about divine things, converse with them; for you will find their discourse very instructive, and let them be your chosen companions. Search also the Bible for yourselves, and beseech the Lord to open your understandings, that you may understand the Scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto salvation. By reading them, as we would do any other book, we may indeed attain to a natural knowledge of their meaning; but it is God only who can teach us savingly to know the truth; and will he not give his Holy Spirit for this purpose, to those who ask him?

As for your children, teach them as far as you are able; and beg the favour of any pious people you know, to assist you in this very important work; and by catechisms and discourse, make them acquainted with the first principles of the oracles of God. It has pleased God to put it into the hearts of some zealous Christians to go into the villages to instruct children how to love Jesus Christ, and to serve God. The things they teach are not the peculiar tenets of any one sect or denomination, but the common principles held by all the true disciples of Jesus, which are absolutely necessary to be known in order to salvation. If there be any in your neighbourhood, beg the favour of them (for it is a great favour) to teach your children and to enlighten their darkened minds with the knowledge of divine truth: for by reason of a thorough acquaintance with the doctrines of the gospel, they are better qualified for the work than you can possibly be. Perhaps some of your neighbours may persuade you not to do it. But do not listen to them, It is Satan, who wishes your children to live in wickedness and ignorance, that they may be his slaves forever, who puts that counsel into their mouths to prejudice you against them. Whoever they are that would prevent this, although they may profess much friendship and affection, they are your and your chil-

drens worst enemies. Remember, God has commanded that your children should be taught to know and to fear him. As, from your own ignorance of religion, you cannot do it as it ought to be done, here are persons desirous to assist you, who take the trouble not from the prospect of any worldly gain, but only for the love of Christ, and of immortal souls. But if you will not allow your children to go to them, you will be inexcusable in that awful day when you and they shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ. They, even your own children, will then upbraid you with your negligence, and bring the most bitter accusations against you. "These," will they say to the Judge, "are our cruel parents, who did not teach us the knowledge of God and the Redeemer: and when others would have taught us they would not allow them."—"Ye unnatural monsters, for we may justly call you so, though ye be our fathers and mothers, ye ruined our souls, and brought us into this condemnation; and we shall have reason through eternity to curse the father who begat us and the mother who brought us forth, and the day in which we were born." How will you be able to bear such reproaches? You can urge nothing in your defence: you must be speechless and self-condemned. What horror and anguish will fill your hearts, when you hear Jesus Christ address you thus: "Ye wicked servants, how could ye be so cruel as not only to ruin your own souls, but also to murder the souls of your children, and refuse to let them receive instruction? Ye thought it not enough to lead a wicked life yourselves; but ye brought up your children to be ignorant and wicked also: Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

That you may escape this dreadful doom, flee without delay to Jesus for divine teaching and pardoning mercy, and sanctifying grace for your own souls. Convinced of the importance of religious instruction for yourselves, you will also be convinced of the necessity of instructing your children. You will immediately begin to teach them what you yourself know; and you will with thankfulness embrace the help of others who are willing to instruct them. You will also attend, to-

gether with your children, and endeavour to assist them in recollecting the truths they have heard. Remember, O parents, that the time is short, and that the fashion of this world passeth away. Soon must you be called to an eternal state, and your children must quickly follow. Neglect not, therefore, the great salvation revealed in the gospel. While you attend to the salvation of your own souls, God may probably honour you as the means of converting your children.

The importance of the foregoing advices may be confirmed by the following narrative, the truth of which may be depended on.

A husband and his wife were, a few years ago, brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. They had formerly sustained a decent character in life, and passed for very good Christians among those who conceive a regular deportment to be all that is necessary to constitute a Christian. Providence had committed to their charge a large family of children. While the parents were ignorant of Jesus Christ, they instructed their family in those things only of which they themselves were informed. As yet they knew not, that "this life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent." But when "it pleased God to reveal his Son in them," they anxiously endeavoured to communicate to their children "the words of this life." Nor was their labour in vain. They had the unspeakable comfort of gaining to the Saviour one of their children, a boy, about twelve years of age.

This boy, as might be expected, proved the comfort of his parents. Some time ago, his mother was visited with bodily distress, which confined her to her room for several months. Calling for her one day, she thus addressed the writer of this anecdote. "I cannot express, Sir, (said she) the comfort I have in my Son. He is the means, in a great measure, of alleviating my affliction. He watches over me with filial, with Christian attention.

He soothes my sorrows, by reminding me of the consolations of the gospel. He pours out his little heart in prayer with me, while the rest of the family are asleep. He weeps with me, while I weep ; and shares my joys, when I am enabled to lift up my head, in the hope that the day of my redemption draweth nigh. It would melt your heart (she continued) to observe his affectionate concern for the salvation of his brothers and sisters. Nor is his religion the transient emotion of an hour. His walk is steady, and humble, and upright. He is assiduous in attaining the knowledge of the scriptures. He is patient and meek under opposition and reproach. In short, said the happy mother of so wise a son, he is raised up to console my heart under accumulated distress and increasing infirmity."

Wouldest thou wish, O parent, to enjoy the highest felicity that can be attained in this world, seek the "knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus." Having yourselves "learned Christ," address your family, in the language of the pious Psalmist, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me ; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." God may honour you, not merely as the instrument of their natural life, but as the spiritual father of your offspring. Everlasting consolations shall even in this world possess your heart. You may have the unspeakable happiness of beholding your children walking in the truth. And when you finish your course, and appear in the presence of God, you shall then be able to say, "Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me !"

But if you remain careless and indifferent after this warning, perhaps it may be the last you shall receive. What anguish must seize your hearts, if you die in your sins ! And how will you be able to bear the upbraiding of your children, if they follow you to the place of torment !—May the Lord make you wise to salvation !



