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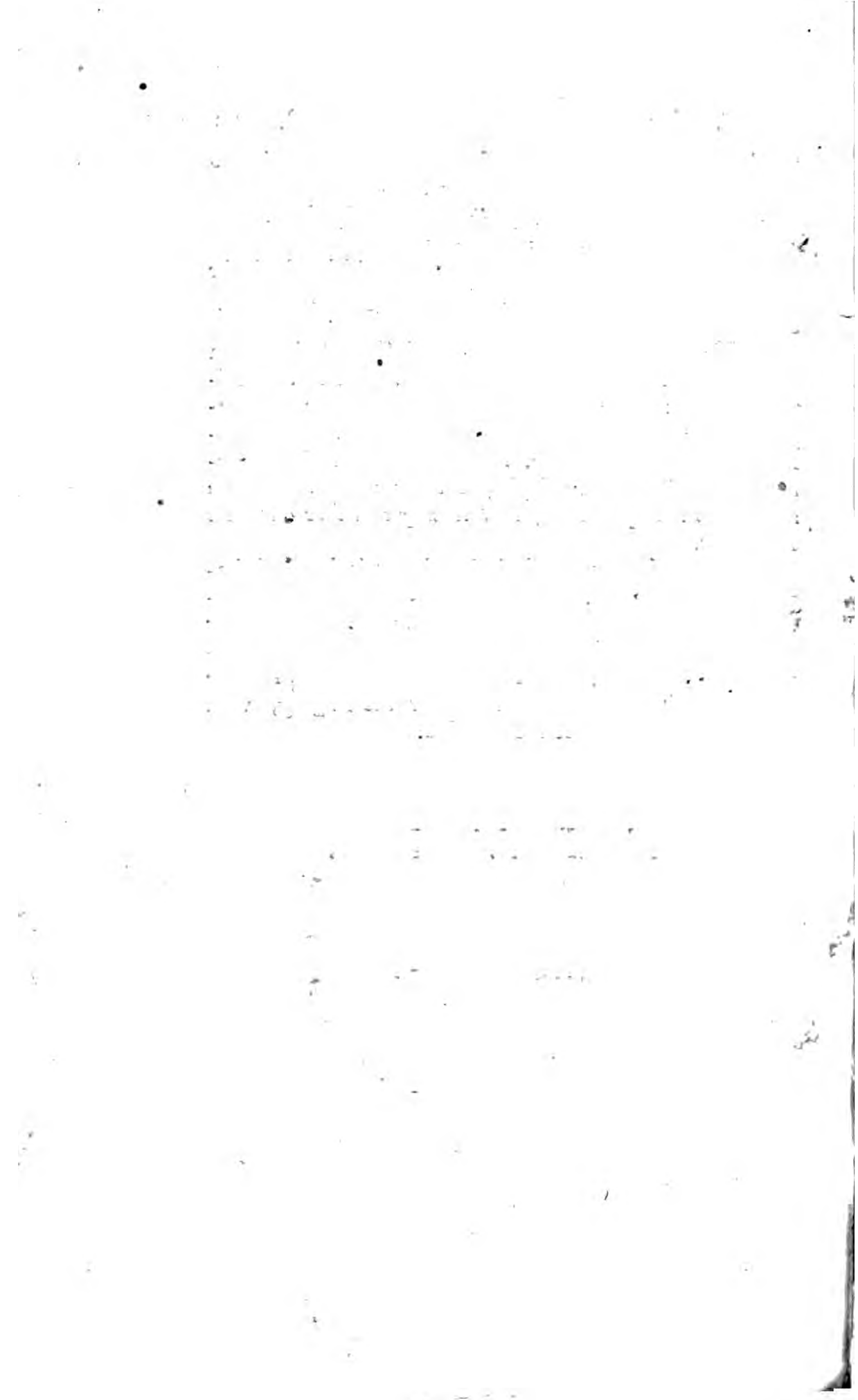
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H I N T S

F O R

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION

WITH THE

Afflicted in Mind, Body, or Estate,

AND WITH

Such others as stand in Need of Spiritual
Assistance; especially at the Times
when they are confined by Sicknes.

By the Rev^d. Mr. RICHARDS,
Curate of ALL-SAINTS in NORTHAMPTON, and
formerly of TRINITY-COLLEGE, OXFORD.

*Seeing then that all these Things shall be dissolved, what
Manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversa-
tion and Godliness. 2 Pet. iii. 11.*

I was sick, and ye visited me. Matth. xxv. 36.

L O N D O N :

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buy a Number to give away.





T H E
P R E F A C E.

THIS little Piece was principally wrote for the Use of such well-disposed Persons as frequently attend on the Sick, or visit the Afflicted in Mind, Body, or Estate, &c. and would be desirous of conversing with them religiously, if they knew in what Manner to do it. By the Assistance therefore of these Hints (most of them confirmed by a Text of Scripture) they may in some Measure be enabled to follow the Bent of their good Inclinations, and exhort, admonish, or comfort, according to the Disposition and Circumstances of the Persons they are with. The Texts of Scripture which I have subjoined to most of the Hints may be easily retained in the Memory, and therefore I hope will not be disregarded. To enter into spiritual Conversation may be deemed in a more peculiar Manner the Office of a Clergyman; —yet surely 'tis by no Means foreign to the Business of every Christian; and all worthy

A 2 Clergy.

Clergymen would be glad of a helping Hand in so good Work, it being Men's Duty to exhort one another. But above all others we ought to exhort such as are sick. "TO SET THEIR HOUSES IN ORDER," as having to all Appearance less Time to spare, and their Work must be done immediately, or left undone for ever. Repentance is a Heart-searching Work, and not to be slightly performed. Self-examination is necessary to it, that they may know what particular Sins they have been most addicted to. Where the Mind is in a religious Frame, and there is an inward Peace between GOD and the Soul, the Sleep is more composed, the Motions of the animal Spirits more regular, and the Body in a fitter State to receive Benefit from Medicines---the Success of which depends upon the Blessing of GOD, and without which vain is the Physician's Skill. The Sick and Diseased should therefore be reminded of the Duty of Prayer. King Asa is not condemned simply for applying to the Physicians, but for not seeking Help of the Lord at the same Time; and Physicians, as Christians, 'tis to be presumed, lift up their Hearts to GOD for his Blessing on their Prescriptions. What can be more helpful in the Way of Cure, or what greater Supports can there be under Pain and Sicknes than that Aid from above, which disposes the Mind to Pa-

P R E F A C E. v

Patience, Resignation, and Hope? GOD Almighty often inflicts Diseases on Account of Sin, and removes them on Repentance and Amendment. The Person therefore so distressed should be exhorted not only by the Minister, but by all that are about him, to repent and get the Cause removed, that so the Effect may cease.

If this well-intended, tho' imperfect Performance, should fall into the Hands of Persons of superior Rank or Understanding, it may not perhaps be wholly useless, as they may improve upon it, and set down in the blank Half of the Page (left for that Purpose) such other Considerations as may occur to them, and be more beneficial both to themselves, and those they converse with, than any that I have suggested; which I am sensible are very deficient.

But my chief Reason for publishing this, is in Expectation that some abler Hand will execute this PLAN, (such HINTS being so much wanted) in a more accurate manner, than my Talents (or even my Time, considering my large parochial Duty) will permit me to do. It is highly probable that some such Method, if well executed, would be more likely to benefit Mankind (especially Patients in the PUBLICK INFIRMARIES) than Works of

a

a larger Bulk, or higher Price, as it will not burden the Mind, or Memory too much, nor be too expensive for the meanest to purchase, or for the Governors of HOSPITALS to bestow upon the sick and lame Poor.

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INTRODUCTION,*

SHEWING THE

NECESSITY and EFFICACY of
PRAYER, without which no
Hints nor Conversation can avail.

“**L**ORD TEACH US TO PRAY,” †
was the Request of one of the
Disciples.— Lord teach us TO
CONVERSE, judiciously and effectually,
should be the Petition of every one who
takes up this little Piece. Great is the
Force of Prayer, as it makes its Way into
Heaven, and brings down Blessings upon
our Conversation from above: And we
ought to recommend and practise it, as it
is the best Defence, under which our own
Souls, and those we speak to, can be pro-
tected from the Temptations of our grand
Adversary. A Man will soon leave off
sinning wilfully, or praying fervently, be-

* Extracted partly from *Gerhard's Christian Support under Afflictions*, Price 3s. a Book well known, and equally well esteemed for its lively Devotion, its Variety of useful Instruction, and solid Consolation.

† See Luke xi. 1.

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cause

cause he cannot long continue to do both. *When Moses stretched out his Hands, the Amalekites fell before the Children of Israel.** Nor can the Devil have any Power over us, while in the same devout Posture we are imploring the Protection of our compassionate Redeemer. Christ himself prayed to God before he fed the Multitude, and often in Retirement, not so much for the Supply of any thing he could want, but that by his own Example, he might recommend private as well as public Prayer to us, as a Duty highly beneficial. He assures us too, that God his Father is ready to hear us, and that He himself will intercede for us. By Him we are encouraged to come unto the Throne of Grace, and call God by the tender and affectionate Name of a Parent, "*Our Father, &c.*" And Prayer ought to be our greatest Delight, as we may thereby converse with the Almighty, and keep up the most desirable Intercourse between Him and us.--- But then there should be a sensible Ardour in our Prayers: For is it reasonable to expect that God should hear and regard those Prayers which make no Impression on our own Hearts, nor are attended with any pious Affections? The inward Disposition of the Soul is what he

* Exod. xvii. 11.

chiefly

chiefly requires, and is pleased with; separate from which, the finest Set of Words are but empty, unavailing Sounds. It is also necessary that we renounce our own Worthiness, and offer them up in the Name of Christ. No Prayers are acceptable to him, but through his beloved Son, and in Consideration of what he has merited for us. GOD promised to hear the Prayers of the Children of *Israel*, particularly when they turned their Faces towards the Temple of *Jerusalem*; which we may presume was intended to instruct us, that we must turn our Hearts towards Christ, the Temple in which the Fulness of the Godhead dwells.--- The oftner we use either mental Ejaculations, or are upon our Knees, the better it will be for us. In the Morning, when GOD gives us the Brightness of his Light, how can we behold it without paying Him the Tribute of our Praise for it, and rendering him, as is due, our most grateful Thanks? How can we enjoy the Blessings of our Table, and be unmindful of that Being, who kindly furnishes us with the Necessaries for preserving our Lives? How can we lie down with any Satisfaction amidst the Darkness and Dangers of the Night, till we have by Prayer set GUARDS (as it were) about our Beds? Or how can we put our Hands to any Work,

or engage in any Undertaking, till we have asked (by ejaculatory Prayer at least) his Blessing, without which nothing can prosper. For, *except the LORD build the House, their Labour is but lost that build it.* See *Psalms* cxxvii. 1.

Let also a strong Confidence that we shall receive what we ask, attend our fervent Prayers. Let us not in the least doubt either of the Goodness or Power of GOD; but be fully persuaded that what we ask, according to his Will, he most certainly will bestow upon us according to his Promise: And do Thou, the GOD of all Grace (who hast commanded us to pray unto thee, and art more ready to give than we are to ask) grant that all our Prayers may be according to thy Will as well as our spiritual Discourse and Conversation; and may thy blessed Spirit work in us suitable Dispositions, such as may raise us above this World, and sanctify to us all our Afflictions and Calamities in Mind, Body, or Estate. May our Communion with thee be frequent and comfortable, and may we be more and more sensible of our Need of thy Assistance, especially in our spiritual Conferences. *Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but 'tis God who giveth the Increase.* We may sow the Seed, but 'tis thou alone who canst quicken it. If
we

we rely on our own Endeavours or Abilities, we are sure of Disappointment ; but if we rely on thee, we shall not only have Comfort and Success in our Conversations here, but be removed hereafter to converse with Angels themselves, in the blissful Mansions above, where neither Sorrow, Need, Sickness, nor any other Adversity shall be any more, and which have been prepared by thy Son and our Saviour for all them that love and trust in Thee.

S E C T I O N I.

On the Benefit of Afflictions † in general.

AFFLICTIONS are frequently the Effects of the Love of GOD to us, and his Desire of our Happiness and Salvation. *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth ; and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.* They are sent to wean us from too fond an Attachment to the Things of this present Life, which is not only inconsistent with our eternal Welfare, but destructive of it. They are wholesome, though bitter Me-

† See an excellent little Book, entitled, *The Mourner*, written by Dr. *Grosvenor*, (Price 1s. 6d. and sold in *Fore-street*, by *R. King*) in the Manner of Mr. *Addison's Spectators*.

dicines, administered by a wise and merciful Hand, and often productive of the most happy Effects. They don't necessarily of themselves tend to the Awakening or Converting a Sinner, but only through the Blessing of God. The Royal Psalmist speaking of him, saith, *Before I was afflicted, I went wrong; but now have I kept thy Word.* We have various Instances in Scripture of the great Usefulness of Afflictions when rightly improved. Many Persons cannot bear the continual Sunshine of Prosperity; it would be by no means useful for them. Besides, many excellent Virtues would be lost and unexercised, if we met with no Crosses nor Disappointments, no Sorrow nor Uneasiness, such as Patience and Resignation to the Will of God, Trust and Dependence upon his Faithfulness and Truth, and a comfortable Acquiescence in the Wisdom of his Providence. The heaviest Afflictions that befall us, are but light, compared with the bitter Agony and tremendous Sufferings of our blessed Redeemer, and many of the Servants of God in ancient, and even more modern Times.

Hints

Hints for Conversation on the Benefit of Afflictions in general.

1. They proceed from Fatherly Love.

2. Are Medicines absolutely necessary for the Soul.

3. Intended to wean you from a transitory World, and dispose you to set your Affections on Things above.

4. To bring you to the Faith, Knowledge, and Love of Christ.

5. Are *light*, compared with the bitter Pains of eternal Death.

6. Are *short*, compared with the endless Ages of Eternity.

7. Often read the Scriptures, and say, "In God's Word will I rejoice, in the Lord's Word will I comfort me."

Description

Description of the Afflicted in Mind.

VARIOUS are the Troubles and Calamities incident to human Life ; many of which pierce the Soul with the keenest Anguish and Distress. We are liable to Losses and Disappointments in our worldly Circumstances. Our Friends may be snatched away by a sudden, untimely Death : Our Reputation may be blasted by Calumnies and Reproaches : *Satan* may be permitted to harrass us with his fiery Temptations ; in consequence of which, our Minds may be oppressed with Grief, tormented with Fear, and overwhelmed with melancholy, desponding Apprehensions. Religious People are especially grieved and afflicted for having offended their Heavenly Father, and violated his sacred Commands in numberless Instances. It is Matter of real Concern to them, that their best Services are so mixed and imperfect, their Love to him so faint and languid, notwithstanding the numerous and most important Blessings and Favours they have received, and daily do receive from his Bounty. A deep Sense of the sad Depravity and Corruption of their Nature (tho' they are not without a comfortable Hope of being delivered from it) is also a Pain and Grief to them. They
don't

don't (like others) love Sin, and allow themselves in the Practice of it; on the contrary, it is their earnest Desire that every evil Disposition may be subdued and mortified, and their Hearts and Lives entirely devoted to the Service of their Creator and Redeemer.

Hints for Conversation with the Afflicted in Mind.

1. Pray to the Father of Mercies, and GOD of all Consolation, that this Distress of Mind may have the proper Influence on your Heart and Life, and it will then be removed from you, or you supported under it.

2. Prayer gives Ease to the Mind—revives Faith, and Hope, and Patience—promotes Holiness--fetches down Comfort, and puts the Cure into the most skilful and tender Hand. See 2 Cor. viii. 6.

3. When you think how many Things are dear to you, think at the same time that they are temporary and perishable, and be therefore preparing to bear the Loss of them. See 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Description of the Afflicted in Body.

IN this mortal State we are subject to many bodily Pains and Maladies, to various and tormenting Diseases, such as Fevers, Dropsies, the Stone, Gout, broken Bones, Wounds, &c. The Seeds of various Disorders are sown in our original Frame and Constitution, which the strictest Temperance and the utmost Vigilance cannot prevent. Many unhappy Persons bring upon themselves Disorders of the most dreadful Nature, by Riot and Excess, by Vice and Debauchery; inso-much that they may be very properly called the Devil's Martyrs, who waste their Substance, and destroy their Health in his Service.

Hints for Conversation with the Afflicted in Body.

1. The Sufferings of this Life short in their Duration.

2. Christ made perfect through Sufferings; and the more we endure with an humble, devout Submission to the Will of
GOD,

GOD, the greater will be our Reward, and the brighter our Crown in a future State. See *Rom.* v. 3.

3. Consider every Affliction as a Messenger commissioned by the Most High to alarm your Fears, or exercise and improve your Faith and Patience. See *Job* v. 6.

Description of the Afflicted in Estate.

THIS is the Lot of many of the Children of *Adam*. They have but a scanty Pittance, a slender Portion of the good Things of this present Life, and are obliged to struggle all their Days with Poverty and Want. They are so far from enjoying the Conveniencies and Pleasures which this World affords, that they have hardly the Things that are necessary for their Support. Hunger, Cold, and Nakedness are their melancholy Companions. Some are confined to a Prison, or doom'd to a long Captivity ; others impoverished by the Fraud and Oppression of wicked Men, by open Robbery, or secret Artifice. Some have had their Possessions consumed by Fire, or swallowed up by an
In-

Inundation ; or (as it happened lately at *Lisbon* and other Places) destroyed by Earthquakes. By ten thousand unforeseen Accidents, Persons may be reduced from a State of Affluence to the most deplorable Want and Indigence, so very uncertain is our Hold of earthly Blessings.

Hints for Conversation with the Afflicted in Estate.

1. Murmur not at the Hardness of your Lot, nor think the Almighty cruel or severe, 1 *Cor.* x. 10.

2. *Job* from great Wealth became poor. See *Job* i. 21.

3. *Christ* had not a Place to lay his Head. See *Luke* ix. 58.

4. Obedience far better than Sacrifice. See 1 *Sam.* xv. 22.

SECTION II.

The Description of a presumptuous Sinner.

THE presumptuous Sinner is one who hopes for Salvation upon false, unscriptural Grounds. He imagines that he shall be saved by the Mercy of GOD and the Merits of Christ, tho' he can give no solid Reason why he should be an Object of the one, or interested in the other. Pardon of Sins and Reconciliation to GOD are promised only to those Sinners who renounce their own Righteousness (as sadly defective and insufficient to justify them) and fly for Refuge to the Son of GOD. They are enabled to trust in his dying Love, and all-sufficient Sacrifice. Now, the presumptuous Sinner has no Sense or Conviction of his Sin, Misery, or Danger; but speaks, *Peace, Peace, where there is no Peace.* It is possible that he has used the Means of Grace, and attended the Ordinances of Religion; but that will avail him nothing, if he has never been thoroughly humbled under a Sense of his Guilt and Wretchedness, and seen himself lost and undone without a Redeemer.

C

Hints

Hints for Conversation with the presumptuous Sinner.

1. The self-accusing Publican justified, rather than the self-confident Pharisee. See *Luke xviii.*
14.

2. *Adam* in Paradise, *David* in his House, *Solomon* in the Temple, *Peter* in the Family of *Christ*, *Judas* among the Twelve, all fell grossly. Be not therefore high-minded, but fear. See *1 Cor. viii. 12.*

3. Pride ruined the Angels. God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble. See *James iv. 6.*

4. Not easy to distinguish between the Virtues of Nature, and those of Choice——oftentimes a Man expects the Reward of Temperance when it is against his Inclination to be drunk——and a Man may be in the *Gall of Bitterness*, when he appears with the fairest outside to the World. See *Jer. xvii. 9.*

SECTION III.

A Description of the Self-righteous.

HE is one who hopes to be saved partly, if not entirely, by the Merit of his own Works. He has such an Opinion of the Worth and Excellency of his own religious Performances, as to imagine that they are sufficient to make Atonement for his Sins, and purchase for him the Favour of God and everlasting Happiness. But alas! it is all Delusion. To build upon such a Foundation is to build upon the Sand; 'tis a mere Bubble. Since the Fall no Man ever was, or indeed can be, justified by the Works of the Law. To attain that we must have kept it perfectly, and never have been guilty of transgressing the least of its Precepts; for it declares that *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* But no mere Man ever did this. We have all sinned, and come short of the Glory of God; consequently all Hope of Salvation from that Quarter must be renounced by us. Our best Works would condemn us if weighed in the Balance of strict Justice. They are so mixed and imperfect, that they stand

in Need of the Merits of Christ and the divine Indulgence for Acceptance. Lean no longer upon such broken Reeds, such feeble Props. O be sensible of your Guilt and Unworthiness! and let your Confidence be only in the spotless, perfect Obedience of the Son of God, who made full Satisfaction for our Sins, and wrought out a complete Righteousness for guilty, self-condemned Sinners! You must be sensible of your great Need of him, and of your desperate lost State without him. What Folly and Impiety is it for you to think of gaining Heaven by any Merit of your own---(No! you must have a lively Faith in Christ which will be evidenced by good Works.) If it were possible for any Child of *Adam* to be saved by his own Merit, why did the Lord of Glory come down to this lower World, and submit to such a Load of Shame, Sorrow, and Misery, and at last suffer a most cruel tormenting Death? Nothing but his great inconceivable Love to our immortal Souls, and the extreme Danger we were in of perishing for ever, could have engaged him to drink so bitter a Cup. The Weight of our Sins, which he *bore in his own Body on the Tree*; and the Wrath of God, which he felt in his Soul, must have filled him with unknown Anguish, and the most
 amazing

amazing Terrors.----Compelling him to cry out in bitter Agony, " My God, my " God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?"

Hints for Conversation with the Self-righteous.

1. Will you reject the Efficacy of his meritorious Sufferings, and trust to be saved by the Merit of your own Works? God forbid. See *Romans* v. 2.
2. Consider ! you must have paid perfect Obedience to the holy Law of God before you can be justified thereby, as it admits of no Abatement. See *Gal.* iii. 10.
3. Such an Obedience was never performed by a mere Man (see *Rom.* iii. 10.) for all (except Christ) have sinned and come short of the Glory of God. See *Rom.* iii. 23.
4. Be thankful that he died for Sinners, and expect Mercy and Salvation as the free unmerited Gift of God, through the Attonement of his beloved Son. See *Rom.* vi. 23.

SECTION IV.

The Description of a careless, insensible Sinner.

THE careless insensible Sinner is one who is so swallowed up in the Business, or enslaved to the Pleasures of this World, as to be utterly regardless about the Welfare of his immortal Soul. If he at any Time feels a Awakenings of Conscience, he uses his utmost Endeavours, by Amusements and idle Diversions, to banish all such unwelcome Guests, and sink back into his former Indolence and Security. But how sad and melancholy is such a Situation, when viewed in the Light of Reason and Religion! If he believes that he has an immortal Spirit, capable of being extremely happy or deplorably miserable for ever, is it right in him entirely to neglect what is so infinitely important? Can he reconcile so absurd a Conduct either with the Bible, or the calm unbiaſſed Judgment of his own Mind? Was he sent into this World only to trifle and divert himself, to heap up Riches, or procure any other perishing Enjoyment? Was he not placed here for a much nobler and more excellent Purpose, *viz.* that he might

might regain the Favour and Image of the blessed GOD, forfeited by Sin. But this most important Business has been entirely neglected by him. He remains insensible of his Fall in *Adam*, a Stranger to the wretched Depravity and Corruption of his Nature, and the Necessity of an inward Change and Conversion of Soul by Faith in Jesus Christ. It is high time for such to awake out of Sleep, lest they awake in a miserable Eternity. If they die in such a State, they have nothing to look for, but Anguish and Sorrow without End. It is extremely necessary that they should be informed of their Danger, and have their drowsy Consciences alarmed, and be stirred up to seek the blessed Remedy provided in the Gospel for the Relief and Salvation of Sinners.

Hints for Conversation with the careless insensible Sinner.

1. You are asleep upon the Brink of a Precipice, or as it were on the Top of a Mast, and ready to be swallowed up in the great Gulph. See *1 Thes. v. iii.*

2. You

2. You should not think me your Enemy for telling you the Truth, as it is necessary (when your eternal Welfare is at Stake) to speak plain and home to you. See *Gal. iv. 16.*
2 *Cor. iv. 2.*

3. Do you walk under any Sense of God's Presence? Do you pray to him, or regard him as your Master and Father. See *Isaiab vi. 9 & 10.*

4. Reflect often on what the Mariners said to *Jonah* while asleep, in a much less dangerous Storm than you are in. "Awake, what meanest thee, O thou Sleeper? Arise and call upon thy God." See *Jonah i. 6.*

5. Could you have neglected any human Creature, any kind Parent, or generous Friend, as you have neglected God?

6. The dull Ox knows his Owner, and the stupid Ass his Crib, but you know not God. *Isaiab i. 3.*

SECTION V.

Description of the gross notorious Sinner.

HE is one who lives in open Defiance of the glorious Majesty of Heaven, who neither desires his Favour, or fears his Displeasure. *He drinks up Iniquity like Water, and commits all Unckeanness with Greediness. He glories in his Shame, and impiously affronts that adorable Being, in whose Hands his Breath is, and whose are all his Ways.* Perhaps, he makes use of the most horrid Oaths and Imprecations in his common Discourse, and calls loudly for Damnation on himself and others, as tho' he were in haste to go to that Place of Torment. Or it may be he is a Drunkard, and sinks himself beneath the Beasts by that abominable Vice; or a Whoremonger, Sabbath-breaker, or Liar.

Hints for Conversation with the gross Sinner.

1. Sorry am I to tell you, that you proclaim yourself a Rebel against God, a Child of the Devil, and (without Repentance) an Heir of Perdition. See *Matth. xxiii. 33.*

2. I am far from speaking this to you as an uncharitable Censure, but, mean it as a kind Warning. See *Coloss. i. 28.*

And it is founded upon the infallible Word of God, by which we must all be tried. See *John xii. 48.*

3. Be deeply humbled before God, and break off your Sins by a sincere Repentance. See *2 Tim. ii. 29.*

SECTION VI.

Description of the convinced Sinner.

HE is one who has been roused out of the Lethargy and Sleep of Sin, and made sensible of his Guilt and Danger. He has a lively Conviction wrought in him of the Corruption of his Nature, and of the manifold Provocations of his Life. This begets in him Sorrow and Fear; Sorrow, for having so grievously offended the Almighty; and Fear, on account of the sad Consequence he has Reason to apprehend for so doing. This Uneasiness is tempered more or less with a Hope of being restored to the Divine Favour, and made an Object of his special, forgiving Love. Such Persons

sons have all possible Reason to rely upon Christ for Salvation. They are *the weary and heavy-laden*, whom he invites to *come unto him, and find Rest*. They are *the Sick, who want a Physician; the Lost, whom he came to seek and save*. An unconvinced Sinner has no Apprehension of the Value and Excellency of a Redeemer, and of his great Need of him; but he who is really made sensible of his Guilt, prizes him above all Things, and is chiefly solicitous about obtaining an Interest in his great Atonement and precious Sacrifice. Sinner, is this your State? Hath God alarmed and awakened your Soul out of the Sleep of Sin? Can you, from a lively Conviction of your Guilt and Danger, cry out with the poor, self-condemned Publican, *God be merciful to me a Sinner!* Then look unto Christ. Behold him *full of Grace and Truth*. See him by Faith *set forth as evidently crucified before you, and bearing your Sins in his own Body on the Tree*.

*Hints for Conversation
with the convinced
Sinner.*

1. It is right that you should confess and bewail your manifold Sins, looking upon Christ whom you have pierced, mourning for

him

him with Sincerity and
Tenderness. See *Psalms*
xxxii. 5.

2. Vain are all your
Hopes of Pardon, if you
do not now declare an
avowed War with every
Thing displeasing to GOD,
and surrender yourself in-
to your Saviour's Hands
by a lively Faith.

3. You can't indeed be-
lieve on Christ, nor do any
Thing of yourself; but, ask
of GOD, and he will assist
you, and help your Un-
belief. See *Eph. ii. 8.*

4. He who hath wound-
ed you with a Sense
of Guilt, will certainly
heal you by his Grace, if
you call upon him. See
Job v. 18.

S E C T I O N VII.

A Description of the despairing Sinner.

THE despairing Sinner is one, who
from a Sense of enormous, uncom-
mon Guilt, or the Temptations of Satan
(that grand Enemy of Mankind) hath given
up all Hopes of obtaining the Favour of
God and eternal Happiness. The God.

of Love appears to him as a Being the most implacable, rigid, and unforgiving, and the very Reverse of what he really is. He views every Object in the most gloomy uncomfortable Light, and his melancholy Apprehensions suggest every Thing that is shocking and terrible. Those who labour under this Temptation, are great Objects of Pity, and may justly claim our tenderest Compassion. There have been sad Instances of such Persons being their own Executioners, and putting an End to their Lives. But, is there no Remedy for so grievous a Malady? Undoubtedly there is. The Gōspel assures every Sinner who comes unto Christ, of free and full Forgiveness of all his Crimes, how many or foul soever they have been. Indeed, if there had been no Redeemer provided, Despair must have been the dismal Portion of every Child of *Adam*, and the Terrors of Conscience in this World, only the first Gnawings of the Worm that never dies. Mankind must have lived here in continual Anxiety and Distress, and after Death gone down to the gloomy Caverns of absolute everlasting Despair. But, (blessed be GOD for his unbounded Mercy!) that is not the Case. Christ has answered and atoned for all our Sins, and we may in his Name come boldly to the Throne of Grace. Lift up thy Head then, thou poor despair-

D ing

ing Sinner. Let a Ray of Hope enter thy dark disconsolate Breast. I grant, that thy Sins have been very many, and very provoking; but, the Mercy of God and the Merits of Christ are far greater. Do not so depreciate and detract from the Virtue of his precious Blood, as to think that it was not a sufficient Propitiation for thy Guilt, or that it will not thoroughly cleanse thy polluted Soul. Look unto him extended upon the Cross (as the poor, dying *Israelites* did to the brazen Serpent) and thou shalt live, and be healed of the deadly Bite of the fiery Serpents.

*Hints for Conversation
with the Despairing.*

1. Listen not to the Suggestions of the infernal Deceiver, who would persuade you that your Sins are unpardonable, but to the Oracles of eternal Truth. See *Cor. ii. 11.* and *Rom. v. 20.*

2. It is a Temptation which many have been exercised with, and yet afterwards found Comfort and Relief. See *1 Cor. x. 13.*

3. All your Sins (how many or how heinous soever they may be) have

been

been attoned for, and divine Justice fully satisfied by the propitiatory Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and whosoever cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out. See 1 *John* ii. 3.

4. He is a merciful High-priest, whose Pity inclines, and whose Power enables him to relieve the Distress, and supply the Wants of all who come unto him. See *Heb.* iv. 15.

5. Go on steadily in the Way of Duty, as it is the Way of Safety.—Be humble, and be patient, and often renew a believing Application to the Blood of Christ.

S E C T I O N VIII.

Description of the formal Christian.

A Person of this Stamp has the outward Badge, but not the Life and Power of Religion. He is decent and regular in his Conversation, abstains from scandalous, notorious Sins; he uses the Means of Grace, and attends on divine Ordinances, but is nevertheless a Stranger to the Love of God, and the quickening, renewing Influences of his Spirit. He

places the whole of Religion in the Practice of a few moral Duties and a little external Worship; but, has no Conception, nor sees the Necessity of inward Purity, of an intire Change of Nature. He is equally ignorant of the Happiness as he is of the Holiness which flows from true Religion; of the Peace of God, and that Sense of his Favour which fills the Believer's Heart with the most solid Joy and unspeakable Delight. His Religion is a mere Lip-labour, a Drudgery to which he submits, that he may still the Clamours and Reproaches of Conscience, or obtain the Esteem and Praise of Men.

Hints for Conversation with the formal Christian.

1. Can you say that you truly love God, or delight in his Service? See *John* v. 42.

2. Are you not influenced by servile Motives or temporal Views? See *Galat.* iv. 13.

3. Do you see the Necessity and Beauty of Holiness, with the many important Blessings possessed by true Christians. See *Ephes.* i. 18.

4. Will

4. Will you hereafter earnestly labour after the Attainment of them, and no longer be content with the Shell and Carcass of Religion? See *Rom. ii. 28.* and 29.

SECTION IX.

A Description of the Believer, or real Christian.

HE is that *happy Man, whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered. He is passed from Death unto Life, from a State of Guilt and Condemnation, Terror and Distress, into the Joy and Comfort of Faith. He has attained to a sweet delightful Sense and Persuasion of the Love of God in Christ, received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby he can cry Abba, Father. He looks up unto him not as an angry Judge, but a merciful reconciled God, who has pardoned and blotted out his Sins. The Pain and Sorrow of Conviction are lost in the Joys of Conversion. The Bones which God had broken do now rejoice. His Soul is at Peace, and replenished with divine Consolations. Not that he is free from Trouble and Temptation: That is not to be expected on this Side Eternity (an entire Exemption from them is the peculiar Privilege of unbodied Spirits)*

rits) but he is supported under them by the Power of divine Grace, and will finally be conducted to the Kingdom of Glory. His Mind is no longer ruffled with unruly Passions, or torn with violent outrageous Affections. He possesses a Calm in his own Breast, a serene contented Frame, under all the Evils and Calamities of human Life. He does not rest in past Attainments, in any Degrees of Grace already received; but goes on to Perfection, to the Prize of his high Calling in Christ Jesus. He longs to be renewed in the Spirit of his Mind, and transformed more and more into the divine Likeness.

*Hints for Conversation
with the Believer or
real Christian.*

1. Happy are you in the Experience of that Peace and Joy which flow from the Knowledge of a reconciled pardoning God. See 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

2. Your Faith is not like that of the Generality, who have only a speculative, barren Assent to the History of the Gospel. See Acts viii. 13.

3. Your Faith (as it is genuine) hath purified

your

your Soul, and operates daily by Love to God, and hearty Goodwill to all Mankind. See Gal. v. 6.

4. May you be truly thankful for so great a Blessing, and be careful to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge and Love of God. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

S E C T I O N X.

Description of the Backslider.

HE is one who *has known the Way of Righteousness*, who has been convinced of the Excellency of Religion, and tasted in some Degree of it's Comfort and Happiness, but is departed at least for a Season *from the holy Commandment delivered unto him. He has forgotten that he was washed from his former Sins, and made Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience.* Such Persons are guilty of the most inexcusable Folly and foulest Ingratitude; of Folly; in *forsaking the Fountain of living Water, and hewing to themselves Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water:* of Ingratitude, in sinning against infinite Grace and Love. The Divine Goodness so clearly manifested in the Gospel, should lay us under the strongest Obligations to
love

love and obey our heavenly Father; but the Backslider breaks thro' all those Cords of Love, and offers the greatest Indignity to the GOD of his Life.

*Hints for Conversation
with the Backslider.*

1. You are, I hope, sensible of your Folly, and bewail your Miscarriages. See *Hosea* vi. 1.

2. You may then justly hope for a Return of the divine Favour, since *there is Hope in Israel concerning this Thing also.* See *Hosea* xiv. 4.

3. *Take with you Words and turn unto the Lord, and say, Take away Iniquity, and receive me graciously.* See *Hosea* xiv. 1, and 2.

4. Write down a List of your Sins, and the Causes of your Backsliding, and often review them by Way of Caution against a Relapse.

5. Having wandered from the Fold, return to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls. See *1 Peter* ii. 25.

SECTION XI.

Reflections on the miserable Death of the Wicked.

WORDS can't paint the extreme Distress and Anguish which will then overwhelm their guilty Souls. *They fall into the Hands of the living GOD, and will be consigned over by his Justice and inexorable Wrath to endless Sorrow and Pain. The Day of Grace being past, and the Season of Mercy at an End, they have nothing to look for but the due Reward of their Deeds.* Those wicked Spirits whom they chose to serve in this World, will then seize them as their Prey, and drag them to their doleful Prison, where they must remain in sad Expectation of the Judgment of the great Day. Their awakened Consciences (like so many Vultures) will gnaw upon and tear their Vitals, and fill them with the utmost Agony and Horror. All Hope of any Ease, or even Mitigation of their Torments, will be at an End: Everlasting Despair, and the Blackness of Darkness will be their sad Portion. They have none to flee unto for Succour and Relief. *The God who made them, will have no Mercy on them; and*
he

he who formed them, will shew them no Favour, because they hated to be reformed, and cast his Words behind them. The Redeemer who died for Sinners, and so earnestly invited them in his Gospel to accept of Mercy and Salvation, will say unto them “ *Depart from me ; I know you not, ye Workers of Iniquity.*” The holy Spirit (whom they so long and obstinately resisted) will no longer strive with them ; but take his everlasting Flight. *They must drink the Wine of the Wrath of GOD,* and be plunged in a Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where they must remain for ever and ever.

Hints for Conversation with respect to the miserable Death of the Wicked.

1. We should take Warning in Time, by the wretched Departure of the Vicious, and no longer seek Death in the Error of our Lives. See *Cor. vi. 2.*

2. GOD himself has expressly declared, that those who die in their Sins will be doomed to that Place of Torment, where they must spend a sad Eternity

in the Pangs of Horror and Despair. See *Psalms* ix. 17.

3. The Soul of the Wicked after Death finds no Objects to gratify her Appetites, would drink, but tho' immortal, dies as it were with Thirst--Pride, Malice, Rage, and Envy, preying on her---Herself being to herself a Hell.

4. Excluded for ever (Oh! who can bear everlasting Wretchedness!) from the Presence of God, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect;---and all thro' their own Neglect and Folly.

S E C T I O N XII.

Reflections on the happy Death of the Righteous.

THEY are blessed, inexpressibly blessed, who die in the Lord, and leave this World in a State of Grace and Reconciliation to God. They are then removed out of the Reach of Sin and Sorrow, into the Mansions of consummate and everlasting Joy. They rest from all
the

the Sorrows and Sufferings of this frail imperfect State, and all the Evils inseparable from it, and join the bright triumphant Assembly of Angels and glorified Spirits, whose delightful Employment it is to celebrate the Perfections of the eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thro' everlasting Ages. When they put off these earthly Tabernacles, they are translated to a better World, an infinitely nobler and happier Life, a State of perfect Purity, of unmixed and most ravishing Pleasures. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive the Things that God hath prepared for them that love him.* May it be our great Concern to secure that amazing Bliss, and get our Souls prepared for the Enjoyment of it.

Hints for Conversation on the happy Death of the Righteous.

1. Desire to attain such Dispositions of Mind as may fit and prepare you for the happy State of the Righteous; and that your last End may be like His. See *Coloss. i. 12.*

2. Consider yourself as a Stranger and Pilgrim in this World, and long for that Inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away, eternal in the Heavens. See *Heb. xi. 13.*

3. To fall short of Heaven will be the most dreadful and irreparable Loss. See *Matth. xvi. 26.* And to obtain Possession of it will be the highest Gain. See *Rev. xxii. 5.*

4. The Righteous at his Death feels the exceeding rich and precious PROMISES of the Gospel lie as a Cordial warming his Heart at that chilling Hour. PROMISES of Support in Death,— and of Glory beyond it. See *Isai. xli. 10. 2 Peter, i. 4. and Psalm xxiii. 4.*

CONCLUSION, or Hints concerning the
Means of promoting Religion in our-
selves or others.

1. Be always chearful,
as well as serious, that you
may win Men to Christi-
anity.

2. Avoid all Contro-
versies; no Good can
come from disputing on
controverted Points, not
essentially necessary to Sal-
vation.

3. Heal all Divisions
amongst Sects and Parties
to the utmost of your
Power.

4. Talk *familiarly* to
Children about Religion,
as a delightful Employ-
ment.

5. Make it a constant
Rule to pray for all who
affront or injure you.—
Christ enjoins us to pray
for all who despitefully
use us. See *Matth. v. 44.*
Disregard all opprobrious
Names. — Christ himself
(as will every one who
strives against the corrupt
Prejudices and Vices of

Mankind) was abused as a Wine bibber, and even a Blasphemer, &c.

6. Recommend and practice regular daily Prayer, and mutual Intercession both in the Family and in private.

7. Secret Ejaculations too may be used as you are walking, or riding, or in whatever Company you may happen to be— and, on *some particular* Hour, remember (as for Instance, at Morning, Noon, or Evening, when your TOWN-CLOCK strikes, which will be a loud and never-failing Memorandum) to set yourself as in the Presence of God for a few Minutes. — This Method is recommended by the late Bishop of *Durham* (Dr. *Butler*) in his Charge to the Clergy.

8. Disperse good Books occasionally, if your Circumstances will permit.

9. Whenever you reprove, let it be tenderly and privately.

10. For the Benefit of a Swearer, Liar, Sabbath-breaker, &c. you may write out some of the Hints in this Catalogue, and place them in their Way, either by putting them into such a one's Book, Pocket, or Window, provided you don't care to give them to the Person yourself.

11. Make it a Rule to have *at least one* religious Sentence in the Letters you write to your Relations or Friends, when it can be *conveniently* introduced; as such Sentence *properly* interwoven, often strikes a Person, and does more real Good perhaps than a laboured Discourse from the Pulpit, or formal Advice at home.

12. In every Conversation have some religious Hints, if it can be with Propriety.

13. But above all, write down the Reasons which at any Time make you afraid to die, and then endeavour, by Faith, by Prayer, or by Conversa-

tion

tion with experienced Christians, to remove the Causes; — and thus be properly preparing yourself for Death: And, if your Time and Capacity will admit, keep a DIARY of your Progress or Declension in Religion.

14. Frequent publick Worship every * Day in the Week, if your Business permit, if and you live in a Place where it is performed.

15. Encourage by your Influence, and Purse too (if able) Societies for promoting the Gospel, both at home and in foreign Parts; and, in order to be well acquainted with these, read the celebrated Dr. *Woodward's* Rise and Progress of the religious Societies in *London* and *Westminster*, Price 1s. published (as I am informed) by the special Command of her late Majesty Queen *Anne*.

* See Dr. BEST's truly useful Essay on the daily Service of the Church of ENGLAND considered, Price One Shilling. Printed for J. RIVINGTON.

A Catalogue of Vices, with Hints for Conversation on each Vice, proper to be transcribed and carried about with such whose Memories are weak, and yet are desirous of conversing religiously (as Opportunity may offer) with the vicious.

*Hints for Conversation
with the Adulterer,
Fornicator, &c.*

1. Contrary to the SEVENTH Commandment of the great GOD.

2. A Sin which defiles the Soul, and brings it under the Dominion of the fleshly Appetites. — No spiritual Life in you. See *Rom. viii. 6.*

3. You are a Servant of Sin, and in Bondage to the deepest Corruption.

4. A Partaker of other People's Sins. — Making them Partakers of your's. — Thus doubly guilty.

5. All Adulterers, Fornicators, and unclean Persons, declared to have no Inheritance in the King-

dom

dom of GOD. See 1 Cor. vi. 9.

6. If you sin in any of these Ways, you sin against your own Body, and pollute the Temple of the Holy Ghost.--Being joined to an Harlot, the holy Spirit dwells not there.

7. St. Paul forbids even to eat with Fornicators. See 1 Cor. v. 11.

8. Purity and Chastity required by the Gospel — Even impure and lustful Desires are *there* condemned. See *Matth.* v. 28.

9. We must glorify God both in Body and in Spirit, presenting ourselves a Living-sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. See *Rom.* xii. 1.

Hints for Conversation with a Swearer.

1. None so ignorant as not to know it is a Breach of the third Commandment.

2. He who lives in the Fear of GOD is so far from being capable of it, that it shocks him to hear others offending this Way.

3. We

3. We are taught by Christ daily to pray, "Hallowed be thy Name." Angels praise it, and Devils tremble at it.

4. Christ enjoins us to swear not at all. Let your Communication be yea, yea, nay, nay. *Matth. v. 34.* See also *James v. 12.*

Hints for Conversation with the Drunkard.

1. Odious in the Sight of God and all good Men. Absolutely unfits us for Communion with God and all christian Duties.

2. If you die drunk, you pass directly from Sin to Judgment.

3. Drunkards mentioned among those who shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. See *1 Cor. vi. 10.*

4. He who would be serious, must be sober; and the Drunkard is either mad or stupid. Be sober, be vigilant. See *1 Pet. v. 8.*

5. Who hath Woe! Who hath Sorrow! Who hath Redness of Eyes!

They

They that tarry long
at the Wine. See *Prov.*
xxiii. 29.

6. The habitual Drunk-
ard is a Self-murderer.

7. A Drunkard to be
trusted with no Secret.—A
bad Friend, a bad Huf-
band, a bad Parent, a bad
Man, and no Christian.
See *Luke* xxi. 34. *Rom.*
xiii. 13. *Gal.* v. 21.

*Hints for Conversation
with a Liar.*

1. An odious Sin even
amongst the Heathens, and
still more so amongst Chri-
stians.

2. The Devil is styled
the Father of Lies, which
ought to give us a Detef-
tation of this Sin.

3. GOD is Truth, and
therefore abhors a Liar.

4. It is impolitick, for
a Liar is sure to be found
out and despised.

5. All Liars shall have
their Portion in the Lake
that burneth with Fire and
Brimstone. *Rev.* xxi. 8.

Hints

*Hints for Conversation
with the Passionate.*

1. Causeless and immoderate Anger proceeds from a proud and haughty Temper, and is contrary to Gospel-Meekness.

2. Christ bids us learn of him, who was lowly and meek. *Matth. xi. 29.*

3. Every passionate Tongue is as it were set on Fire by Hell. See *James iii. 6.*

4. He that saith the Lord's Prayer with an unforgiving Temper curses himself.

5. No one has offended us so often as we have offended God, therefore our Anger should be against our own Sins.

6. No Passion in Heaven; therefore none in a heavenly Mind.

7. Let all Bitterness, (saith the Apostle) and Wrath, and Anger, be put away.—In Patience possess ye your Souls. *Luke xxi. 19.*

*Hints for Conversation
with Persons guilty
of Theft, Fraud,
and Injustice.*

1. Where these are, all Pretences to Religion are vain.

2. Contrary to the golden Rule of doing as we would be done by, therefore condemned by every Man's Conscience.

3. Though a present Advantage may be made by such Methods, yet their Punishment generally comes home to them in this Life.

4. What shall it profit a Man to gain the whole World and lose his own Soul! See *Matth.* xvi. 26.

5. A *Dutch* Proverb saith, "Nothing got by Thieving, or lost by Praying."

6. He who doth not make Restitution to the utmost of his Power, carries these Sins with him to the Grave.

7. He that is more ashamed to dig or beg, than to do a dishonest Thing, has no Part in the Salvation of Christ.

8. Walk honestly as in the Day.—Do Justice and love Mercy.—Let no Man defraud his Brother in any Matter. — These are the Commands of Scripture.

Hints for Conversation with Slanders and Evil-speakers.

1. To injure our Neighbour in his good Name, is often worse than injuring him in his Substance.

2. A good Name better than precious Ointment, saith Solomon. See *Eccles. vii. 1.*

3. Contrary to the golden Rule, of doing as you would be done by.

4. Every one knows more Evil of himself than he can do of his Neighbours—Therefore let him pull out the Beam that is

in his own Eye. See *Luke* vi. 41, 42.

5. He that is without Fault let him cast the first Stone. See *John* viii. 7.

6. Whodoth the Psalmist say shall dwell in God's Tabernacle; even he that useth no Deceit in his Tongue, nor speaketh Evil of his Neighbour. See *Psalms* xv. 3.

7. The Devil's Name signifies a Traducer, or an Accuser.

8. This Sin for the most Part flows from Hatred or Ill-will. — Now, whosoever hateth his Brother is a Murderer, 1 *John* iii. 15.

Hints for Conversation with a Prophaner of the Sabbath, especially those who live in the habitual Neglect of publick Worship.

1. Though every Day should be holy to the Lord, yet the *first* Day is in a more particular Manner set apart for the Perform-

ance of religious Duties,
both by the Laws of GOD
and Man.

2. A Sabbath-breaker is
commanded by GOD to
be stoned to Death. See
Numb. xv.

3. The greatest Part of
condemned Criminals lay
their Ruin to this Sin.

4. He that does not
frequent GOD's House has
no Reason to expect GOD's
Blessing; for he that would
be saved, must be saved in
GOD's Way, or not at all.

5. Not bad Cloaths, but
bad Hearts keep People
from Church.

6. Our Saviour and his
Apostles attended on pub-
lick Worship; and it is
enjoined by the *fourth*
Commandment, with the
Word "Remember" at
the Beginning.

7. How can they who
feldom or never receive
the Sacrament, be said to
remember Christ as they
ought? They who use not
the Means of Grace, shall
go without Grace.

8. A heavy Charge brought by *Ezekiel* against the *Jews*, "Ye have despised my holy Things, and profaned my Sabbaths." See *Ezek*, xxii.

8. *Mal.* iii. 7.

9. Faith cometh by Hearing; and the People should be Hearers, that they may be Doers of the Word. See *Rom.* x. 17.

THE END.

N. B. *The Author is very sensible of the Imperfection of this little Piece, and would be much obliged to any Person experienced in conversing religiously with such as stand in Need of Spiritual Assistance, who would please to send him additional HINTS or other IMPROVEMENTS on any of the Subjects here treated on, and they shall be properly noticed, with Thanks, should a SECOND EDITION be required.---Tho' no such Edition should ever appear, was he to hear of any Thing on the same PLAN more likely to benefit the Publick, a Person of any Character as a Writer, would be very welcome to make use of these Materials in such Manner as he should think proper, after a Signification of his Intentions to the Author.*