DEVOUT MEDITATIONS;

OR, A

SELECT COLLECTION

OF

OBSERVATIONS,

Divine and *Moral*.

Abstracted from the *Writings* of the most APPROVED AUTHORS.

By a GENTLEMAN.

LONDON:

Printed for *J. Jackson* in *St. James's-street*; and *R. Baldwin* in *Pater-noster-row*. 1761.

THE

PREFACE.

MANY will not take the Pains to read much; and many do not thoroughly consider, nor well digest, what they read, which renders their Notions confused, and themselves uncertain what to conclude.

I have here endeavoured to make such a small Collection of Meditations and Maxims, from the most eminent Authors, to be observed in the Conduct of our Lives, as may be read without Tediousness, and understood without Difficulty.

Such as it is, it is submitted to the Candor of the Reader.

The 27th *July*,
1761.

DEVOUT

MEDITATIONS,

&c.

1. FROM ſeveral Texts it is plain, that God commands us to believe, that there is an Union, and there is a Diſtinction; but what that Union or what that Diſtinction is, all Mankind are equally ignorant, and muſt continue ſo, at leaſt till the Day of Judgment, without ſome new Revelation. I ſhall repeat the Doctrine of the Trinity, as it is poſitively affirmed in Scripture: That God is there expreſſed in three different Names, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghoſt; that each of theſe is God, and that there is but one God. But this Union and Diſtinction are a Myſtery utterly unknown to Mankind. This is enough for any good Chriſtian to believe on this great Article without ever en-

quiring any farther, ſince God himſelf hath pronounced the Fact, but wholly concealed the Manner.

2. I own freely the Weakneſs of my Underſtanding, though it be unqueſtionable that there is Omnipotence and Omniſcience in God our Maker, and I cannot have a clearer Perception of any thing, than that I am free, yet I cannot make Freedom in Man conſiſtent with Omnipotence and Omniſcience in God; though I am as fully perſuaded of both, as of any Truths I moſt firmly aſſent to, and therefore I have long ſince given off the Conſideration of that Queſtion, reſolving all into this ſhort Concluſion, that if it be poſſible for God to make a free Agent, then Man is free, though I ſee not the way of it.

3. The Foundation of Prayer is laid in the Attributes of God; and every Perfection of his Nature, affords a diſtinct Ground or Reaſon for our applying ourſelves in this Manner to him. His Omnipreſence teaches us that he is ever near; His Omniſcience, that he always knows our Petitions; His Omnipotence, that

that he is able to grant them ; His Goodneſs, that he is willing to give us whatever is for our real Benefit and Advantage ; His Truth, that he will not fail to perform all his gracious Promiſes ; and His Mercy, that he will not reject even Sinners when truly penitent ; but will hear and forgive them upon their ſincere Humiliation and Amendment. Thus all the Attributes of God, afford ſo many ſeveral Reaſons and diſtinct Motives to encourage us, at all times, and in all things, to acknowledge our Dependance upon him, and to apply to him continually as the Author of whatever Good we enjoy or hope for.

2. None ſhould omit private Prayer Morning and Evening, nor frequent Ejaculations ; if it took up no more than a Minute or two, it would be a Recollection that we are in the divine Preſence, and contribute to our being in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long.

5. Family Prayer ; concerning which may be underſtood that Character of *Abraham*, *Geneſis* xviii. 19. I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Houſhold

after him, and they ſhall keep the Way of the Lord.

6. Publick Prayer in the Aſſemblies of the Church; for the Acknowledgment of God's Power and Glory among Men; which is upon Earth the primary and the greateſt part of divine Worſhip; as Thankſgiving is the chief and larger part of the ſame Worſhip in Heaven.

7. If we frequently receive the bleſſed Sacrament, and that with a becoming Devotion, it will greatly contribute to ſtrengthen and confirm us in our Chriſtian Courſe.

The Preparation for it will be a Means to preſerve us from Sin, and to ſpur us on to our Duty. And beſides theſe there are other Benefits, which God has, in his great Mercy, annexed to the faithful Diſcharge of it.

Firſt, The Pardon of our Sins.

Secondly, Grace and Strength to perform our Duty.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Conſequence of both, which is Peace of Mind in this Life, and well grounded Hopes of everlaſting Happineſs in the next.

8. The ſame Conſiderations which prompt us to make our Prayers to God in all our Wants, do ſufficiently demonſtrate that we ought to return Thanks unto him for all the Bleſſings which we have received: the only Demonſtration of a truly thankful Heart to God, is the making a pious and honeſt Uſe, to his Glory, of all thoſe Bleſſings which we daily receive from him: Nor can there be any thing more abſurd, than for a Man to pretend to give God Thanks with his Lips, who does not alſo do it more to the Purpoſe in his Life.

9. When worldly Thoughts break in upon us, (as too often they will) we muſt reject them, and calmly return to God; nor ſhould we diſquiet ourſelves upon Account of ſuch Frailties, for to reject other Thoughts that we may perſevere in our Application to God, is no inconſiderable Part of Devotion: It is a Fruit of our Deſire to adhere to him, and as ſuch, cannot but be acceptable in his Sight.

10. We worſhip God beſt, when we reſemble him moſt.

11. We ought not to name God, without a Senſe of him upon our Minds.

12. The Creator of the World can be under no Confinement to any Place in it.

13. We have abundant Reaſon to be aſſured that God is intimately and immediately preſent every where; and that he takes effectual Care of us, at all Times, and in all Places, every where, and upon all Occaſions, both in our natal and our dying Hour, as well when we go out of this World, as when we come into it.

14. Do not chiefly regard the Inſtruments of your Troubles, which will be apt to provoke Impatience; but rather the ſupreme Diſpoſer of them.

15. The Scripture very inſtructively deſcribes the whole of Religion by that comprehenſive

prehenſive Expreſſion, Walking before God, which ſignifies, a conſtant ſerious Senſe of the divine Preſence upon our Minds, producing a circumſpect Care to pleaſe him in all Things.

16. Lay this down as a ſure Principle, that God *is in* every thing we ſee, in every thing we enjoy, and in every thing we ſuffer.

17. I know no Duty in Religion more generally agreed on, nor more juſtly required by God Almighty, than a perfect Submiſſion to his Will in all Things; nor do I think any Diſpoſition of Mind can either pleaſe him more, or become us better, than that of being ſatisfyed with all he gives, and contented with all he takes away: None, I am ſure, can be of more Honour to God, nor of more Eaſe to ourſelves.

18. If we take our Rule of Living from the Scriptures, and endeavour all we can to conform ourſelves to the Chriſtian Morality, our bleſſed Saviour, through whom we may expect to have all our Tranſgreſſions of that Rule pardoned, will render our Sincerity and

Repentance

Repentance as acceptable to God as perfect Obedience.

19. It is the continual Assistance of God's Holy Spirit residing and dwelling in us, which secures all the other Blessings and Benefits of the Gospel to us, and conducts us safely through all the Temptations of this World, and the Difficulties of a Christian Course, to the End of our Faith, the eternal Salvation of our Souls. For which Reason the Spirit of God dwelling in good Men, and evidencing itself by its genuine Fruits and Effects, the Graces and Virtues of a good Life is said to be the Pledge and Earnest of our future Inheritance, and of a blessed Resurrection to eternal Life, and to seal us up to the Day of Redemption.

20. The holy Angels are Spirits sent from Heaven above into this Earth; chiefly to minister to, or to do all good Offices, both corporal and spiritual, for all truly faithful Persons. That the Providence of God in the Government of this lower World, and therein more especially of the Children of Men,

and

and moſt eſpecially of thoſe who love and fear him, is in great part adminiſtered by the holy Angels, is plainly aſſerted in very many Places of Scripture, *Pſalm* xxxiv. 7. and *Pſalm* xci. 9, 10, 11, 12.

All truly good Men have their Angels in Heaven to protect and defend them, although the Miniſtry of Angels be now for the moſt part inviſible, yet to the obſervant it is not algether indiſcernible, we may trace the Footſteps of this ſecret Providence over us in many Inſtances,

Firſt, How often may we have obſerved ſtrong, laſting, and irreſiſtable Impulſes upon our Minds, to do certain things we can ſcarce for the preſent tell why or wherefore, the Reaſon and good Succeſs of which we afterwards plainly ſee,

Secondly, There are oftimes ſudden and unexpected Accidents, as we call them, caſt in our way to direct us from certain Enterprizes we are juſt ready to engage in, the Illconſequence whereof we do afterwards,

but not till then, apprehend, *Acts* xii. 12, &c. *Eccles.* v. 4, &c. From these and the like Texts of Scripture, I cannot but judge it highly probable, that every faithful Person at least hath his particular good Angel, appointed by God over him, as the Guardian and Guide of his Life.

Angels suggest to the Faithful good Thoughts and Affections, and excite to good Works and Actions, and take notice of their Prayers and good Works on Earth, and report, commemorate, and represent them before God in Heaven, *Luke* xv. 10.

It is plain the Prayers and Tears of Penitents are soon reported in the Court of Heaven among the holy Angels; and by whom can we conceive the Report to be made but by one of their own blessed Society, carrying the welcome News from Earth to Heaven? *Acts* x. 4.

What a mighty Support and Comfort will this be to us, if our Consciences bear witness to our Integrity in all Dangers, Distresses, and

and Neceſſities, and in the Hour of Death; for the good Angels of God ſhall go along with us in the whole Courſe of our Lives, never leaving us; and when we breathe out our laſt, they ſhall watch over our Souls, and they ſhall ſafely convey them into *Abraham*'s Boſom.

21. The Love of God and the Love of our Neighbour, if chearfully attended to, will eaſily grow into a compleat Syſtem of Religion. The Love of God is the firſt and great Commandment. If we love God, and conſider Him as the Lord and Governor of the World, our Love will ſoon become Obedience: If we conſider Him as wiſe, good, and gracious, our Love will become Honour and Adoration: If we add to theſe our own natural Weakneſs and Infirmity, our Love will teach us Dependance, and prompt us in all our Wants to fly for Refuge to our great Protector. And thus in all other Inſtances may the particular Duties be drawn from this general Principle. Prayer and Praiſe, and other parts of divine Worſhip, which are Acts of theſe Duties, are ſo clearly connected to them,

that there is no need of ſhewing diſtinctly concerning them, how they flow from this general Commandment.

22. The Love of our Neighbour, with regard to our Superiors, becomes Honour and Reſpect, and ſhews itſelf in a chearful Obedience, and a willing Submiſſion to the Commands of Authority: Love with reſpect to our Equals is Friendſhip and Benevolence; towards Inferiors 'tis Courteſy and Condeſcention: If it regards the Happy and Proſperous 'tis Joy and Pleaſure, which Envy cannot corrupt: If it looks towards the Miſerable 'tis Pity and Compaſſion; 'tis a Tenderneſs which will diſcover itſelf in all the Acts of Mercy and Humanity.

23. Let us live the Life of the Righteous, that our laſt End may be like his, which is the only way of diſarming Death of his Terrors. How eaſy is every Condition of Life to him who is not afraid of leaving it? Is his Lot one continued Scene of Calamities, does he now go on his way weeping, and find none to pity him? He can retire within him-

ſelf

ſelf for his own Comfort, with this pleaſing Reflection, that a few rolling Years (at fartheſt, how much ſooner God only knows) will cloſe the Scene of his Life and Misfortunes together, and tranſlate him from this Seat of Sorrow, to thoſe Realms of Bliſs, where all Tears ſhall be forever wiped from his Eyes.

But on the other hand is he at eaſe in his Dwelling? Not to be afraid of Death will infinitely improve his Felicity; this will give him a Serenity of Soul, a conſtant Habit of Chearfulneſs, ſuch as the World and all its Pomps and Allurements cannot give; for he that hath ſecured an Intereſt in another World, is very little anxious about this; and turns every Accident, every Loſs, and even Death itſelf, to his Advantage. What tho' (ſays he) I am cut off in the midſt of my Days from the Land of the Living; I could indeed have lived longer to my own Satisfaction, and the Comfort of my Friends, but to die and be with Chriſt is ſtill far better. When the Buſineſs of the Day is over, he lays himſelf down in Peace, and compoſes himſelf to Reſt, in ſure and certain Confidence of the divine Fa-

vour,

vour, not at all ſolicitous about the Perils of the Night, indifferent in his Choice to ſleep or die.

24. Relieving the Poor, and giving of Alms, is a Duty more often and earneſtly preſſed perhaps than any other throughout the Holy Scripture. Every Day then, or at leaſt every Week, be ſure you fail not to lay aſide ſomething for charitable Uſes, in a ſufficient Proportion to the worldly Subſtance God hath bleſſed you with. Be careful to diſtribute it (not to every idle or vagrant Beggar) but to ſuch as you can find to be the trueſt Objects of Pity and Compaſſion.

25. Charity is a noble Emulation, and Beneficence is the cloſeſt Copy which Man is capable of making of the Divinity of God. The Dictates of Nature furniſh us with Arguments in its behalf, and the inward Pleaſure flowing from it, is not only Encouragement but Reward.

26. Acts of Charity are the beſt Deeds of Settlement; and gain the Prayers and Bleſ-

ſings

fings of thofe to whom we lend our Charity, which is no fmall thing; for God hears the Prayers of the Deftitute, and his Ear is open to their Cry.

27. To do Good to others is a happy Opportunity of doing Good to ourfelves.

28. The Sorrows we have relieved are the fureft Support in our own.

29. A Benefactor is a Reprefentative of God.

30. A Man's being injurious to me, is no good Reafon why I fhould be uneafy to myfelf.

31. To err, is human; to forgive, divine.

32. Let us cultivate in our Breafts that happy and godlike Temper of Forbearance and Candour, which will contribute fo much to our inward Peace now, and to our final Forgivenefs and Happinefs hereafter.

33. Nobody can keep Revenge in his Breaſt, and yet propoſe to himſelf to be ſaved at the ſame time.

34. Let it not be grievous to thee, to humble and ſubmit thyſelf to the capricious Humours of Men whom thou converſeſt with in this World: But ſo compoſe thy Mind as readily and meekly to comply with the Commands of thy Superiors, the Deſires of thy Equals, the Requeſts of thy Inferiors, to do for all what lawfully thou mayſt, and to endure patiently whatever they ſhall, but ought not to do to thee.

35. True Humility is the certain Mark of a bright Reaſon and elevated Soul, as being the natural Conſequence of them.

36. They live peaceable in Matters of common Life and daily Practice, who take care to make their Carriage inoffenſive, obliging, who are not ready to entertain ill Reports of Men, much leſs to diſperſe them; who whiſper about nothing to ſet Friends and

Neighbours

Neighbours at variance: who mind their own Buſineſs, without intermeddling much in the Concerns of others; who can take a ſlight Affront or Injury in Converſation without reſenting it, and even a great one without returning it.

37. The true Art of Converſation ſeems to be this, an appearing Freedom and Openneſs with a reſolute Reſervedneſs as little appearing as poſſible.

38. It requires a good Temper to endure contradicting Spirits: but they are beſt ſilenced by Silence.

39. It is moſt chriſtian, and moſt politic, and moſt prudent, as the beſt Rule for an eaſy Paſſage through the World, which at beſt is troubleſome enough, neither to provoke, nor be provoked.

40. Goodnature is ſeen in a Diſpoſition to ſay and do what one thinks will pleaſe or profit others.

41. Goodbreeding is ſeen in doing nothing one thinks will either hurt or diſpleaſe others.

42. He that is wary and cautious in his Talk, thinking ſeriouſly before he opens his Mouth, and taking care to offend neither God nor Man by what he ſpeaks, preſerves his Mind from a great deal of Trouble, and himſelf from dangerous Diſtreſſes.

43. A peeviſh Temper quarrels with the Bleſſings it diſcovers, with its Friends, itſelf, and defeats the Labours of Providence for its Satisfaction.

44. A gloomy Temper ſurveys every thing in the worſt Light, and can diſcover no Bleſſings.

45. The Impatient feel as much Uneaſineſs from the ſlow Approach of Pleaſure, as others do from the Deſpair of it.

46. The more any Man governs his Paſſions, the more calm and ſedate his Spirit is; and the greater Equality he maintains in his Temper, his Apprehenſion of Things will be more clear and unprejudiced, and his Judgment more firm and ſteady.

47. Every thing becomes intolerable to the Man who is once ſubdued by Grief. He regrets what he took no Pleaſure in enjoying; and overloaded already, he ſhrinks at the Weight of a Feather.

48. Let your Fate be your Inclination, for there is nothing more reaſonable and prudential.

49. The Power of Fortune is confeſſed only by the Miſerable; for the Happy impute all their Succeſs to Prudence or Merit.

50. A wiſe Man ſtands firm in all Extremities, and bears the Lot of his Humanity with a divine Temper.

51. We ſhould manage our Fortune as our Conſtitution; enjoy it when good, have Patience when 'tis bad, and never apply violent Remedies but in Caſes of Neceſſity.

52. Let not thy Recreations be expenſive, leſt the Pain of purchaſing them, exceed the Pleaſure thou haſt in the Enjoyment.

53. Moſt Pleaſures, like Flowers when gathered, die.

54. It is equivalent to the Enjoying of Pleaſures, not to ſtand in need of any.

55. He that hath Pleaſure in himſelf, is pleaſed with every thing; and he that wants that Pleaſure is pleaſed with nothing: to think and act reaſonably will give a Man Pleaſure in himſelf; and is the ſure Way to be happy.

56. Men, who poſſeſs all the Advantages of Life, are in a State where there are many Accidents to diſorder and diſompoſe, but

few

few to pleaſe them; and a very few Years will make it juſt the ſame thing, whether we poſſeſſed more or leſs.

57. It is worth the Obſervation, to hear the poor Man ſing to his Plow, and the rich Man fret in his Palace, and torment himſelf; this ſhews it is the Mind, not the Fortune, that makes us happy.

58. To be happy is to enjoy what we deſire, and to live with thoſe whom we love.

59. The Hours of cool Reflection are the Sinners Mortification; for Vice can never be happy in the Company of Reaſon.

60. He that lives uprightly, in a conſtant and ſincere Regard to all God's Commands, is an immediate Servant and Imitator of Him, a Promoter of his Glory, and of the Eſtabliſhment of his Kingdom upon Earth.

61. He needs no Foe, who is intirely at the Mercy of his Friends.

62. Ridicule and Contempt are a certain Consequence of Deformity; and therefore what a Person cannot avoid, he should learn not to regard: he should bear it like a Man, forgive it as a Christian, and consider it as a Philosopher.

63. When we make our Exit out of this we shall enter into another World, and clearly behold the most cloudy Day, the darkest Dispensations, the sharpest Trials and Afflictions that ever we groaned (and which many times we were ready to faint and sink) under, God was working for our Good.

64. Man is born unto Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards; the Truth of this Saying we every one of us find and feel every Day we live by our sad Experience. But we should consider there is a directing Hand of Providence in every thing which befals us: He orders our Lot, and puts us into that Condition which we are in, whatever it be; and we may be sure that those Afflictions which befal us, are more for our Good, than an uninter-

rupted

rupted State of Eaſe and Pleaſure would be; and will certainly, unleſs it be thro' our own Fault, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

65. God not only removes Evils from the Faithful, but ſupplies them with all things. If they are fit for a proſperous Condition they ſhall have it, and that with God's Bleſſing; but if a meaner Condition be more convenient for them, they ſhall be made happy therein. If at any time Afflictions be needful they ſhall taſte of the Goodneſs of their heavenly Father even in them; they ſhall be ſupported under them, and made better by them, and in God's due Time delivered from them. If God tries them he will aſſiſt them in the Tryal, and crown them after it, directing them in all Difficulties, comforting them in all Sorrows and Diſtreſſes, bleſſing all earthly Enjoyments that he gives them, and ſupplying the Want of thoſe that he thinks fit to deny them with greater Bleſſings. For divine Providence will ſo order all the Occurrences of the good Man's Life in this World,

as

as ſhall beſt conduce to his eternal Happineſs in the other.

66. Hope, deceitful as it is, carries us thro' Life agreeably enough.

67. When the Hopes, even of the wiſe and prudent, are accompliſhed, how often does Experience deſtroy the Scene which Imagination had painted.

68. Know thyſelf. Nothing too much; fly Contention and Debt.

69. All Anger is fooliſh; and a ſhort Fit of Madneſs betrays us to great Indecencies; and whereas it is intended to hurt others, the Edge of it turns upon ourſelves.

70. Moderation in Diet, Sleep, and Exerciſe, are ſpecial Means to prolong and make healthful our Days.

71. Whatever Buſineſs you have at any time been doing, or Recreation you have been taking, or whatever Company you have been in,

in, as ſoon as you can recollect the ſeveral Circumſtances of what is paſt, and ſeriouſly conſider, whether or no you have miſbehaved yourſelf in any particular Inſtance; and if you have, then beg God's Pardon, and reſolve to be more careful for the future, and give God the Glory of what you have done well.

72. Watch therefore, for ye know not what Hour your Lord doth come; which is excellent Advice, in what Senſe ſoever we underſtand the Coming of our Lord; whether we apply it to the Hour of our Death, or the Day of Judgment, ſtill it concerns us to be careful in doing our Duty, and diſcharging that Truſt which is committed to us, that we may give up our Accounts with Joy.

73. Conſcience is a Ray of the Deity ſhining in our Hearts, to ſhew us the Way to Heaven, happy they who follow its Guidance: they will advance from leſſer to greater Degrees of Light, till at length they arrive at the Beatific Fountain.

74. Whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. This Rule is of univerſal Extent; it binds both to negative and affirmative Duties; it teaches both what we are to do, and what we are not to do: A Man who is governed by it in all his Actions, can no more be failing in the Offices of Kindneſs, than in the Offices of Juſtice: For this is all which is required of us by God; to do as we would be done unto; and not to do that to another which we would not have done unto us.

75. The Goſpel hath made full and clear Promiſes to this Purpoſe, that if we believe the Goſpel, and will forſake our Sins, and amend our wicked Lives, all that is paſt ſhall be forgiven us; and that Chriſt died for this End, to obtain for us Remiſſion of Sins in his Blood.

76. We ſhould endeavour to ſet as looſe as we can from this World, which we muſt ſo ſoon go out of; ſuch an Indifference of Mind well

well becomes us all whatever our Condition is, conſidering what a very ſhort while we have to ſtay here.

77. It is of great uſe to reflect, that the Riches, Honours, and Pleaſures, which we are apt ſo eagerly to purſue, when paſt leave no Advantage behind them; and that the Pains, Miſeries, and Troubles, which we ſo carefully avoided, when they depart from us carry all their Miſchief along with them: ſo that it is equal, when a Man comes to die, whether he ſpent all his time in Pleaſures and Delights, lying at his eaſe on Beds of Down, or whether he had lain all his life-time tormented upon a Rack; whether he lived a King or a Beggar; ſo great are the Vanities of the one Condition, ſo ſhort the Miſeries of the other.

78. Rural Amuſements and philoſophical Meditations will make your Hours glide ſmoothly on.

79. O! the ſweet Contentment, the Tranquility, and profound Reſt of Mind, that he

 enjoys,

enjoys, who is a Friend of God (and to whom God therefore is a Friend) who hath gotten loose from all meaner Purſuits, and is regardleſs of all lower Advantages, that interfere with his great Deſign of knowing and loving God, and being known and beloved by him; who lives as in his Sight always, looks up to him in every Step of his Conduct, imitates him to the beſt of his power, believes him without Doubt, and obeys him without Reſerve; deſires to do nothing but what is agreeable to his Will, and reſolves to fear nothing beyond or beſide his Diſpleaſure; who hath reſigned all his Paſſions and Appetites to him; all his Faculties and Powers; and given up his Soul to be poſſeſſed by him without a Rival. Surely ſuch an one hath within his Breaſt that divine Peace which paſſeth all Underſtanding, is inconceivable by thoſe who are Strangers to it, and inutterable even by thoſe upon whom it reſts; this Peace is to be underſtood only by being enjoyed.

80. Every thing is the Work of God, brought about by his immediate Hand, or by the Miniſtry of inferior Agents appointed by him;

him; nothing is ſo minute as to eſcape his Obſervation; nothing ſo mean as not to engage his Care.

81. God is as ready, as he is able, to do every thing that is needful for us; and without his Permiſſion and Appointment no Snare can entrap us, no Calamity can cruſh us, no Evil can approach to hurt us.

82. Grief for things paſt that cannot be remedied; and Care for things to come that cannot be prevented; may eaſily hurt, can never benefit me, I will therefore commit myſelf to God in both, and enjoy the preſent.

83. He who by a Life of Prayer maintains a Communion with God; and by daily Meditation has his Converſation in Heaven, may meet Death with Deſire and Joy. As

it

it is only paſſing into that State of Perfection and Pleaſure, which his Soul thirſted after.

84. The greateſt Pleaſure on this ſide Heaven lies in an even and ſerene, a calm, compoſed and ſteady Mind, that is inwardly at reſt, and by Conſequence at leiſure to enjoy all outward Comforts; that hopes the beſt, and is prepared for the worſt; enjoys the preſent, and is not anxiouſly concerned for the future; ſuch a Temper of Mind is the greateſt Bleſſing God can beſtow upon a Man, becauſe it gives the Taſte and Reliſh to all other Bleſſings.

85. Men ought to have no other Buſineſs to do in Sickneſs than to die.

86. God hath punctually and exactly determined the Time of our Death; to a very Minute his all-wiſe Providence diſpoſeth of the meaneſt and ſmalleſt Concernments of

our

our Lives, and therefore much more of our Lives themſelves.

And as God hath appointed the exact Hour, ſo alſo the particular Manner of our Death; whether it ſhall be ſudden or foreſeen; by Diſeaſe, or by Caſualty; all the Circumſtances are of God's Appointment, as well as our Death itſelf.

87. There is Reaſon enough why we ſhould be well contented to die in any Age of our Life. If we are young, we have taſted the beſt of it: if in our middle Age, we have not only enjoyed all that is deſirable of Life, but almoſt all that is tolerable: If we are old we are come to the Dregs of it, and do but ſee the ſame things over and over again, and continually with leſs Pleaſure.

88. Life muſt end one time or other; and when it doth, what will it avail that we have lived long.

89. We are ſtrongly reminded of our Mortality, by daily Inſtances of thoſe who drop

drop off before us in every Stage of Life. For neither Youth nor Vigour, neither Piety nor Power, is Defence ſufficient againſt this fatal Blow, that not any, not even the greateſt, not even the beſt, can have any Pretence to think themſelves exempted from a Deſtiny, which is inflicted without Diſtinction upon Perſons of all Ages, all Conditions, and all Conſtitutions; and of this we have Experiments without Number, the fulleſt Evidence that can poſſibly be given.

Death, which to mere Nature is ſo ghaſtly and formidable, is a Bleſſing and Privilege in the Eye of Faith, and to them who die in the Lord. Their Works do not only follow them at a Diſtance, but keep them Company, go with them Hand in Hand, and render the Dead bleſſed from the very Moment of their dying in the Lord.

90. The Thread of Life is of a very fine and tender Contexture; ſevered in a Moment by the Scythe of Death; and then where is all our earthly Felicity.

91. It is very hard to part with Friends and Relations who are dear to us, but we muſt conſider we ſhall find a great many more in the Place whither we are going; and that we are rather parted from our Friends at preſent, for the Number of thoſe we leave behind is not comparable to thoſe we ſhall meet with in the other World, where there are many of our Kindred, who were before our Time, and as yet we have never ſeen. And as for thoſe whoſe Society we now enjoy, we muſt remember, that the Separation will be ſhort; for they are travelling the ſame Road, and will follow us apace.

92. Where Saint *Paul* deſired to be when he departed, there he then was, and there now is, and that not alone, but with all thoſe which ever departed in the ſame Faith with him, and that is with Chriſt, who ſitteth at the Right-Hand of God. This Happineſs, which the Saints enjoy between the Hour of their Death and the laſt Day, is the Partial, Eternal Life.

93. At the Time of the general Judgment there ſhall be an univerſal Reſurrection of the Bodies of all thoſe who have died, and a Change of thoſe who ſhall be then alive: but whether all the ſame individual Particles of each Man's Body, which have been laid down in the Earth, ſhall be raiſed and re-united again to their Souls, I look upon to be a needleſs Inquiry: What Saint *Paul* ſays upon this Argument, 1 *Cor.* xv. 35. does abundantly ſatisfy me; the Purport of whoſe Words I take to be this, *viz.* that God, who being the Author of Nature, has given ſuch a vegetative Power to a Grain of Corn, that when it is thrown into the Ground, and there macerated and diſſolved, it ſprings up again, and brings forth a Body ſuitable and proper to itſelf; that that ſame God both can and will at the laſt Day, from the dead and diſſolved Bodies of Men, raiſe up ſuch Bodies as ſhall pleaſe himſelf.

94. There is one day to be a general Judgment of all Mankind before the Tribunal of Chriſt, where every Man muſt receive his

his Sentence for eternal either Happineſs or Miſery, as the holy Scripture does aſſure us.

95. According to the Degrees of every Man's Holineſs and Virtue in this Life, will be the Degrees of his Happineſs in the next.

96. O bleſſed Time!, when we ſhall enter upon the Poſſeſſion of all that Happineſs and Glory, which God hath promiſed, and our Faith hath believed, and our Hopes have raiſed us to the Expectation of.

97. No Inhabitant of Heaven without the Flame of ſacred Love, no ſingle Spirit unlovely or unbeloved.

If ever they ſhould be ſent on any Meſſage to other Worlds, yet they never wander from the Sight of their God.

98. It ſeems very reaſonable to think they are much acquainted with the great Turns of Providence to the Saints, that bring Glory to God in eminent Mercies and Deliverances.

The Perſecutions and the Conduct of the Saints under them.

Much of the ſpecial Care God takes about them, and in the Fulfilling his Promiſes.

The Converſion of Sinners.

Their Growth and Advancement in Grace.

Their great and ſanctified Afflictions.

Their more than ordinary Petitions.

Some peculiar Bleſſings for their Sakes upon their righteous Seed which they have left behind.

It is likely they may know when we are coming home by Death, before we know it ourſelves; when the Death-Warrant is given out, and when the Guards are appointed to attend, and bring the Soul ſafe into *Abraham*'s Boſom; and no doubt but the Inhabitants of that Place do ſweetly welcome them in.

99. When we come to Heaven our Faculties ſhall not only be gratified with ſuitable and acceptable Objects, and conſequently our Capacities of Happineſs as well increaſed as filled; the Felicity we ſhall there poſſeſs ſhall be made up of the Confluence Perfection, and Perpetuity of all true Joys; for Heaven will make us happy, not (as Philoſophy pretends to do) by the Confinement, but by the Fruition of our Deſires; which ſhall neither fail in the Choice of their Objects, nor miſs of the Enjoyment of them, but be both unerringly juſt, and infallibly accompliſhed. We ſhall there reſemble the Saints we here admire; thoſe Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, as the Scripture terms them, ſhall be our conſtant and familiar Company, into whoſe bleſſed Society we ſhall not only be welcome, but encreaſe it; there we ſhall ſee (a Sight worthy dying for) that bleſſed Saviour, of whom the Scripture does ſo much, and ſo excellently entertain us, and who having done and ſuffered ſo much for us, does ſo highly deſerve of us, both upon the Score of his infinite Perfections, and upon the Account of

his

his ineſtimable Benefits. For in Heaven and in Earth, it was and will be his gracious and conſtant Employment, to ſhare our Griefs, or impart to us Joys; and either leſſen our Miſeries by his Sufferings, or encreaſe our Happineſs by his Felicity.

In Heaven we ſhall not only ſee our bleſſed Redeemer, but probably alſo our Kindred, Friends, and Relations, that living here in his Fear, died in his Favour.

The Knowledge of particular Actions, and conſequently Perſons, ſeems requiſite to the Attainment of that great End of God, in the Day of Judgment. We may therefore ſafely conclude it probable, that we ſhall know each other in a Place, where ſince nothing requiſite to Happineſs can be wanting, we may well ſuppoſe (at leaſt if we can imagine here what we ſhall think there) that we ſhall not want ſo great a Satisfaction, as that of being knowingly happy, in our other ſelves, our Friends, who ſhall welcome us thither, and rejoyce to ſee us come home to God; nor is it unlikely, that our tranſported Souls ſhall

mutually

mutually congratulate each other, upon their having arrived at that peaceful Haven, where Innocence and Delight are inſeparable Companions of each other, and each bleſſed Reſident.

The ſeeing of our Friends in Heaven, will aſſure us, that we ſhall forever live with them there.

Nor ſhall we only converſe with Saints and Angels, but with that infinitely more glorious Deity, that made them what they are, in Heaven we ſhall enjoy (its Maker) God, and ſee Him, as He is.

In Heaven our inexhauſted Joys will be ſo numberleſs, and ſo immenſe, that we ſhall need, as well as have, Eternity itſelf to taſte them fully.

It is reſerved among the Prerogatives of being in Heaven, to know how happy we ſhall be when there.

The

The everlasting Happiness of the Righteous consists in their being placed in a most glorious and perfect State, free from all Sin, and from all Suffering; where they shall enjoy all the Pleasure and Satisfaction that their Natures, then vastly enlarged, shall be capable of; and pass their time in the greatest Love of God, and of one another, that can be imagined. They shall have nothing left to wish or desire of God, whom they shall both love and serve, and praise, with such Rapture and Satisfaction, with such Joy to themselves, as well as such Fervour towards God, as no Thoughts can conceive, nor is it possible for us, by any Words to express the Greatness of it.

How they maintain Communion with us we cannot tell. Probable it is that they do in general pray for us, as it is certain they wish well to us. But for ourselves who are yet on Earth; we must bless God for the Grace he was pleased to bestow upon them; and by which they were delivered from the Sins and Temptations of the evil World, and enabled

enabled faithfully to ſerve him unto the End: We muſt ſet before us their Examples, and imitate their Virtues: We muſt account of them as living Members of Chriſt's Body; and be not only ready, but deſirous, to go to them whenever it ſhall pleaſe God to call for us. We muſt take care decently to diſpoſe of their Bodies; and faithfully to fulfil, as much as in us lies, what they have left in Truſt with us, to be done for them after their Departure.

100. The eternal Puniſhments of wicked Men in another World, is plainly threatened in Scripture in theſe following Texts, *Matthew* xviii. 8. It is better for thee to enter into Life halt and maimed, than having two Hands, or two Feet, to be caſt into everlaſting Fire. And *Matthew* xxv. 46. The wicked ſhall go into everlaſting Puniſhment. And *Mark* ix. it is there three ſeveral times with great Vehemency repeated by our Saviour, Where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched. And 2 *Theſſ.* i. 9. ſpeaking of them that know not God, and obey not the Goſpel of his Son, It

ſaid of them, who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction.

101. Obſtinacy is Advantage to our Enemies, Trouble to our Friends, and the aſſured Overthrow of ourſelves.

102. Let every Creature have your Love. Love with its Fruits of Meekneſs, Patience, and Humility, is all that we can wiſh for to ourſelves, and our Fellow Creatures; for this is to live in God, united to Him, both for Time and Eternity.

103. Although the greateſt part of the numerous Offſpring, which hath hitherto proceeded from *Adam*, be departed out of this Life, and are ſeen no more among us; yet we muſt not therefore think, that they are ceaſed to be, or to live, for their Souls are as much alive in the other World, as we are now in this.

104. What is perfected hereafter, muſt be begun here.

105. Heaven doth require a good Temper of Mind, to qualify us for the Enjoyment of it; and there muſt be the Salvation of Grace, antecedent to the Salvation of Glory. To look for the latter without the former, is to think of coming to the End, without Uſe of the Means.

106. The prophane Swearer ſins for nothing; upon no Temptation; for no Credit; unleſs it be a Credit, not to be believed.

107. Sincere Intention is evangelical Perfection.

108. There is more ſolid Satisfaction in good Self-Government, than in all the forced Jollities and Pleaſures of the World.

109. All Expectation hath ſomething of Torment.

110. If we let our Thoughts go up to the more elevated Stations in Life, are they more ſecurely fenced about from Evils by Provi-

dence; or more defended from Uncertainty and Unhappineſs than others? Is the Sleep of thoſe who poſſeſs them ſweeter, or leſs interrupted by anxious Cares and Fears than that of their Inferiors? or are Diſeaſes and Death kept farther and longer from them than the meaneſt? Far otherwiſe: the Outſide indeed is all dazzling and pompous; but within, are the Cares, and Perplexities, and Unhappineſs naturally attending ſuch Stations; nay, were Riches the Inſtruments of Good, untainted by any Marks of Miſery; were Grandeur as gay within, as it is gaudy without; yet have the Poſſeſſors no Security from Evils of another ſort, and no continuing City here. The Diſeaſes and common Calamities of Life are ſufficient often to make the whole Scene of all theſe united inſipid; and whether they do or not, the laſt Enemy muſt come; and to his Force, by the Appointment of God, the beſt built Fabrick of human Happineſs muſt yield.

III. Good Actions are a Treaſure which we carry hence with us; if we are ſecure of theſe, it is no matter if the World be negli-

gent

gent of us, and Poſterity know not that ever we had a Being. Our Virtues are immortal, and true Honour will be their Recompence, an Honour which we ſhall receive from God, from holy Angels, and from juſt Men made perfect, and which ſhall continue to all Eternity.

112. Death is a Step from a Life of Miſery to a Life of Peace and Pleaſure, attended with no Fears but what are ſwallowed up in the bleſſed Expectation of Eternity.

113. Thouſands there are who poſſeſs all the World can give, and yet have nothing to enjoy. Others, though they have nothing to diſquiet them at preſent, and have all they wiſh for, have yet an Art to torment themſelves, by raiſing ſad Proſpects at a diſtance, and bringing within their view all the Calamities, which a warm Imagination can repreſent.

114. It is ſome Comfort to the afflicted Sufferers upon Earth, to the Poor, the Sick, the Needy, and Oppreſſed; that Time will

at

at length put a period to all their Woes; and that Place receive them, where the wicked ceaſe from Troubling, and where the Weary be at reſt.

115. Worldly Cares and Anxieties muſt be torn away from our Hearts; we muſt caſt all our Care upon God: We muſt remember his univerſal and particular Providence, that all things, the moſt minute, are under the Direction of infinite Wiſdom: and learn from a Knowledge hereof, to be careful for nothing uneaſily, anxiouſly, diſtruſtfully careful, but in all things by Prayer and Supplication make our Requeſt known unto God; and whatever may be our Condition in Life, whatever the Event of our Labours, we muſt reſign to his Omnipotent Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and be content in every State, chearfully ſubmitting to his good Pleaſure, all whoſe Ways are righteous, holy, and true; and who, by means that we cannot fathom, cauſeth all things to work together for Good to them that fear him.

116.

116. As the great and diſtinguiſhing Bleſſing of the Chriſtian Religion is the free and full Remiſſion of all our Debts and Treſpaſſes, ſo the great and peculiar Doctrine of it, is the free and full Forgiveneſs of all Injuries on our Parts.

117. In Heaven there will be no Murmuring, no Diſcontent; all with one Voice will declare, Juſt and Righteous, Holy and True, are all thy Ways, O King of Saints.

118. The Day is coming when all will be ſet clear; then the Poor will ſee why God thought fit to place them in that State, rather than a more exalted one: and why it was beſt for their Souls eternal Good: then the Afflicted will ſee, why God thought fit continually to chaſtiſe and correct them; and why it was better for them to ſuffer with Chriſt, than to enjoy uninterrupted Proſperity.

119. There is no one Duty in Chriſtianity, the Practice of which our Savious preſſes upon

us

us more frequently than the Duty of Prayer; and there is no one Duty, to which he hath added ſo many and ſo great Promiſes, the better to incite us to a diligent Performance of it. Call upon me in the Day of Trouble, ſaith God, and I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.

120. To pray is by the Aſſiſtance and Help of the Holy Ghoſt, in the Name and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, with Faith and Fervency, to make an humble Repreſentation of our Deſires unto God, for thoſe things that are according to his Will, with Submiſſion to his Pleaſure, and with Reference to his Honour.

121. We ſhould remember that we are dependent Beings, and ignorant of the Time of our Departure hence; which very Uncertainty ſhould be a conſiderable Motive to uſe this World as not abuſing it, and ſhould take off the Edge of our Affections for its Enjoyments.

122. Is Pain, Sickneſs, and Loſs, ſo contrary to us; and Health, Wealth, and Pleaſure ſo amiable to our Nature? here on Earth we cannot have one Sort without the other. O! my God, make me therefore wiſe unto Salvation: that I may always have Pleaſure and never Pain, Health without Danger of Sickneſs, an Abyſs of Wealth without Fear of Loſs.

123. Wiſe and happy is that Man that will not be drawn to commit either an indecent or diſhoneſt Act, for Love, Hatred, or Gain.

124. Hopes from our Innocence we have none, but are forced to have recourſe to the Mercy of God, which the Goſpel offers us, and aſſures us, that true Repentance ſhall never be in vain; ſhall not only protect us from Puniſhment, but ſhall ſet open to us the Doors of Life and Immortality, that we may dwell in the Preſence of God, as long as Time itſelf ſhall laſt.

125. Fear not, good Man, when Death comes, for the good Angels are ready to receive thy Soul, and convey it ſafe into *Abraham*'s Boſom, a Place of the beſt Society and Company, where thou ſhalt be gathered to the Spirits of juſt Men, and familiarly converſe with thoſe Saints and excellent Perſons, whom thou haſt heard of and admired, and whoſe Examples thou haſt endeavoured to imitate.

126. Let us come to the Throne of Grace with Hearts full of holy Zeal, and humble Modeſty, and unſhaken Perſeverance; in Publick, and in Private, in the Congregation, in our Families, in our Cloſets, in our Beds, for no Time, no Place, can be unſeaſonable.

127. In Peace have many died, and therefore 'tis certain all may. The whole Secret for obtaining that Peace is an abſolute Reſignation to the moſt High.

128. The Review of youthful Pleaſures declined for Virtue or Religion's Sake, will afford a dying Man far higher Joys than their Fruition would ever have afforded him.

129. Whatever Portion is allotted us, we ſhould accept from God's Hand with all patient Submiſſion, with perfect Contentedneſs, never repining at it, never complaining of it, but proceeding on in the Performance of all our Duty with undaunted Courage, with undiſturbed Tranquility, and Satisfaction of Mind.

130. When Temperance in ourſelves, Charity to Men, and Duty to God, ſhall have traced out a Way to Heaven; and at the Even of our Days we review our Actions, and ſee that all is good; then on our Death-Beds we ſhall have Reſt and Joy unſpeakable, and not only a pleaſing View of the paſt Time, but a glorious Proſpect of an happy Eternity to come.

131. Whoſoever believes in Chriſt ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins; the whole World is under this conditional Promiſe, not one Soul of Man excepted: Be thy Sins more than the Sands, greater than Mountains, yet thou haſt no Reaſon, O Sinner, to exclude thyſelf from Pardon, for God hath not; only believe and repent.

132. If we would imitate the Examples of the holy Saints, we ſhall ever find that they governed themſelves by Saint *James*'s Maxim, that with them true Religion and undefiled was ever thought to be this; In the Faith and Fear of God, and in Obedience to his Laws, to viſit the Fatherleſs and the Widows in their Afflictions; to relieve, as far as in them lay, the Misfortunes, and to promote the Happineſs of Mankind; and to keep themſelves unſpotted from the Vices and Corruptions of the World.

133. If we can reflect, that we were meek and humble, ſober, temperate, and chaſte in the greateſt Vigour of Youth, and juſt and upright

upright in all our Dealings; that in the foreſt Trials of Affronts and Injuries from others we have bore it all with Patience, and an humble Reſignation to the divine Will, without any Returns of Revenge: that we did all Acts of Charity and Mercy when Opportunity offered: O theſe are the things that will give ſolid Joy and Comfort to a dying Man; it is this will make his Conſcience ſpeak Peace to him, though it were in the midſt of Racks and Torments, and fill his Soul with ſo much Sweetneſs and Complacence, with ſuch Joys and Tranſports, that no Expreſſion can reach them; they have ſo much of Heaven in them, that it cannot enter into the Thoughts of any, but thoſe bleſſed departing Souls who enjoy it; and from that Peace of Conſcience which they here enjoy, they will be tranſlated to that Place, where they ſhall reign in the full and juſt Perfection of the Sons of God.

134. Heaven is the Receptacle or Place of Abode for the Souls of departed Saints, immediately upon their Separation from the Body; if when abſent from the Body, we ſhall

ſhall be preſent with God, the Souls of departing Saints muſt be received into that Heaven where he is.

135. It will be better, even for thoſe of us who are the moſt proſperous, when we ſhall leave this World, in what way ſoever we ſhall be taken, than it can be while we continue here.

136. He whoſe Soul repoſes on his firm Truſt in God, like the Halcyon that builds on the Waves, if Storms ariſe may be toſſed, but not endangered; or grant the worſt, thoſe tumultuous Billows that devour others, rock him to Reſt eternal.

137. The juſt and righteous, the good and merciful God requires no more of us, in order to our eternal Happineſs, than what he gives us Time and Power, Opportunity and Ability to perform here.

138. Why ſhould we lament the End of that Life, which we are aſſured is the Beginning of Immortality.

139. A Reſtleſſneſs in Men's Minds to be ſomething they are not, and have ſomething they have not, is the Root of all Immorality.

140. The ſhorteſt way to be rich, is not by enlarging our Eſtates, but by contracting our Deſires.

141. In all the Changes and Chances of this World, let thy Will be entirely reſigned to God. Every Creature is and ought to be entirely at his Diſpoſal.

142. The Contempt of Riches is the greateſt of Treaſures, devout Prayer the moſt delicious Entertainment, Alms the moſt prevailing Advocate at the Throne of Grace, Self-Denial the moſt exalted Pleaſure, and the Conqueſt of ill Habits the moſt glorious Triumph.

143. He ſhall never truly enjoy his preſent Hour, who never thinks on his laſt.

144. To contain Anger from Mischief you must have special Caution :

First, of extreme Bitterness of Words.

Secondly, that in Anger you reveal no Secrets.

145. Riches and Power invite the Smoothness of Flattery, but check the Freedom of true Friendship.

146. It is the Glory of Philosophy to raise Men above the Misfortunes of Life, to teach them to look with Indifference upon the Pleasures of the World, and to submit with manly Courage and a steady Mind to those Calamities, which no Care can prevent, and which no Concern can cure.

147. If God ordains Sickness for thy Portion, never dare to imagine that uninterrupted Health would be more advantageous : He orders all the Particularities, all the Changes of thy Life, with a Vigilance that nothing can elude,

elude, with a Goodneſs that endureth for ever; reſt ſatisfied that whatever is by the Appointment of Heaven is right and beſt.

148. When it is become your Will to obey God no Diſpenſation of Providence will immoderately diſquiet you: Relief in Afflictions comes not always when it is moſt deſired, but when it is moſt fit; and when that is, he that hath at once all preſent, paſt, and future Things in his Proſpect, is fitteſt to determine.

149. Whatever ſeems to provide for our Neceſſities, let us acknowledge all this comes from the Providence of God, who commands his Angels to be miniſtring Spirits, Guards, and Centinels about us; what God gives is for our Comfort, what he denies or takes away is for our Trial. Whatſoever comes to paſs we may look up to God, and if it be good acknowledge it with Praiſe, if evil bear it with Patience.

150. Since we are under the Care of one, who is wiſer than we, let us leave it to him

to choofe both his own Times, and his own Proportions, and be very confident that when we have done our part, he will not fail to give not only the thing that is beft, but in the Seafon that is beft for us.

151. A quiet and contented Mind is the fupreme Good, the utmoft Felicity Man is capable of in this World; and the maintaining fuch an uninterrupted Tranquility of Spirit, is the very Crown and Glory of Wifdom.

152. Providence is pleafed to fee great and noble Souls ftruggling with Difficulties, and often defers their Reward, that it may be greater by Delay.

153. Virtue is a celeftial Shield againft every Evil of human Life.

154. In the degree wherein we amend our Tempers and our Ways, are ceafing to do evil, and learning do well, increafing in Virtue, and abounding in the Fruits of Righteoufnefs, in the fame degree we are promoting our true Happinefs.

155. Many a Care attends Greatneſs; no Crown is without Thorns.

156. The Troubles of holy Minds end ever in Comfort.

157. God doth as well ſet bounds to our Eſtates, as to our Statures; and of ourſelves we can as little add one Penny to that, as one Cubit to this.

158. If we had no Faults ourſelves, we ſhould not take ſuch pleaſure in obſerving thoſe of others.

159. There are three Ways for a Man to revenge himſelf of a cenſorious World; to deſpiſe it; to return the like; or to endeavour to live ſo as to avoid it: the firſt of theſe is uſually pretended; the laſt is almoſt impoſſible; the univerſal Practice is for the ſecond.

160. The Effect of Happineſs beſt diſcovered by Good-Humour and Satisfaction within.

161. Coolneſs of Temper and Blood, and conſequently of Deſires, the great Principle of all Virtue.

162. Induſtry to get, and Frugality to keep, are the infallible worldly means to raiſe great Fortunes.

163. Let our Thoughts and Actions towards God be pious, to our Neighbour charitable, towards ourſelves ſober, and our preſent Life will be peaceable, our Memory praiſed, and our Happineſs eternal.

164. We ought not to ſtretch either our Legs, or our Hopes, to a Point they cannot reach.

165. Is it not a deplorable Caſe, and to a Chriſtian Country a great Reproach, that great Care ſhould be taken to puniſh Wickedneſs, and little or none to prevent it.

166. It is worth our while to contemplate ourſelves, and others, and all the things of this

this World, before we leave them, thro' the Medium of pure, and, if I may ſay ſo, of undefiled Reaſon.

167. Our natural and real Wants are confined to narrow Bounds, whilſt thoſe which Fancy and Cuſtom create are confined to none.

168. There is not any Benefit ever ſo great or glorious in itſelf, but it may be exceedingly ſweetened and improved by the Manner of conferring it.

169. It is in Life as in Wine, he that has it good, muſt not draw it to the laſt Dreg.

170. The Goſpel, though it makes favourable Allowances to human Infirmities, and accepts of humble Repentance and honeſt Endeavours, yet holds no Fellowſhip, makes no Compoſition or Truce with the worldly and ſelfiſh Affections; it requires of all thoſe who would hope and expect a Reward hereafter, to ſet their Affections, not on Things below, but on Things above, that the Heart

and

and the Treaſure may be in the ſame Place.

171. To mortify all our inordinate Appetites and Deſires, to deny ourſelves the ſinful Vanities and Pleaſures of this Life, for the Promiſes of an unknown Happineſs in the next World, is our myſtical Dying to this World, leaving our native Country, and following God into a ſtrange and unknown Land.

172. Happy is the Man who can bear up againſt Afflictions, and with an undiſturbed Mind ſubmit to thoſe Evils, which no Sorrow can eaſe or prevent.

173. We are born to Miſery, and we muſt die to be hapyy.

174. As we are obliged to pray unto God for all that we want, and to hope for eternal Salvation from him; ſo the holy Scripture directs us, to ground all our Hopes of Happineſs upon the Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, and to offer up all our Prayers in his Name,

as

as hoping only for his ſake to be accepted, who is our only Mediator and Interceſſor with God.

175. Since the End to which God deſigns all Men is eternal Happineſs in another Life, to a Capacity for which we are again, after our Fall, reſtored by Jeſus Chriſt, it follows, that we ought not to do any thing whereby we may miſs of this End, but that the whole Courſe of our Actions and Endeavours ſhould ever be bent on the Purſuit of *it*.

176. No Man will ever be diligent in the Purſuit of any thing of which he ſeldom thinks, and rarely conſiders the Benefit of obtaining, and the Evil of miſſing it: If therefore we are obliged to be diligent in our Endeavours after eternal Happineſs; we ought to make the Joys of Heaven and the Torments of Hell the Subject of our frequent Thoughts and Meditations.

177. What a mighty Privilege is Man born to, ſince 'tis in his power not to do any thing but what God Almighty approves, and to be

be ſatisfied with all the Diſtributions of Providence.

178. The beſt Proviſion for a happy Life, is to practiſe Honeſty in good earneſt, and to ſpeak Truth from the very Soul of you; and when you have done this, live eaſy and chearful, and crowd one good Action ſo cloſe to another, that there may not be the leaſt empty or inſignificant Space between them.

179. How unacquainted is that Man with the World, and how ridiculous does he appear, that makes a Wonder of any thing he meets with here.

180. People generally deſpiſe where they flatter, and cringe to thoſe they would gladly overtop; ſo that Truth and Ceremony are two things.

181. Conſider the Satisfactions of Life ſingly, and examine them as they come up; and then aſk yourſelf, if Death is ſuch a terrible thing in taking you from them.

182. That's beſt for every Man which God ſends him; and the Time of his ſending too is always a Circumſtance of Advantage.

183. Don't diſturb yourſelf about the Irregularities of other People, but let every bodies Fault lie at their own doors.

184. Omiſſions, no leſs than Commiſſions, are oftentimes Branches of Injuſtice.

185. Men are born to be ſerviceable to one another; therefore either reform the World, or bear with it.

186. As to good Fortune, take it without Pride, and reſign it without Reluctance.

187. Death is conſidered as a moſt ſovereign Evil, as the greateſt of Misfortunes, by one in flouriſhing Circumſtances, and in the Bloom of Years, and in Vigour of Conſtitution. A State of Affluence is ſo engaging, and has ſo many Charms and Endearments,

that it ſteals Men's Affections, and binds thoſe Chains more ſtrongly, which faſten them to the Earth and their mortal Priſons; and when Death approaches to break and diſſolve them, the ungrateful Proſpect gives Horror and Uneaſineſs; and the faſter the earthly Knot was tied, the greater will be the Pain and Unwillingneſs at the Separation.

On the contrary, to one in Poverty, ſunk with Misfortunes, and overwhelmed with Grief, or to the Perſon ſtooping under the Burden of Old Age, Death is eſteemed as the End of all Pain and Miſery, and as a ſeaſonable Relief and Good. As nothing ties him to the Earth, he looks upon Death, eſpecially the good Man that is departing, with a compoſed Countenance, and his Approach to it is attended with Hope and Pleaſure; he conſiders it as the Haven of his ſhattered Bark, as the final Period of all his Vexations; and the agreeable Paſſage to a better and more welcome Life; as it really is to thoſe that die in the Lord.

The

The Conclusion we should draw, and the Use we should make of the Remembrance of Death, which will unavoidably intrude itself into all Breasts, is not to shrink from it abjectly, but to reconcile ourselves to it, to familiarize the Thoughts of it by Meditation and Reflection, and to prepare for it by dying daily to the World.

In what Time or Manner soever the Righteous depart, their Death ought not to be considered as a personal Misfortune, since God fixes them in a Place of Rest and Repose, free from the Temptations as well as Troubles and Inquietudes of Life, waiting with a holy Impatience for farther Degrees of Happiness. The Prophet *Isaiah* hath the same Reflection, that righteous and merciful Men are taken away from the Evil to come, and shall enter into Peace, lvii. 1.

By the Righteous being prevented with Death, we are not to understand his being surprized by Death when he least thought of it; for the good Man can never properly

ſpeaking be ſurprized; he is always on the watch, prepared and ready to leave the World, and appear before God; his Death may be indeed ſudden or haſty, but not careleſs or unguarded.

188. There is nothing in Nature more amiable than the Character of a truly good Man; a Man whoſe principal Buſineſs and Pleaſure is to make all Men eaſy, with whom he has any Concern, in the preſent Life; and to promote, as far as in him lies, their Happineſs in that which is to come.

Of all Characters that of Goodneſs is the moſt lovely, and approaches neareſt to the Similitude of a divine Perfection. God is the Fountain of Goodneſs, from which flows all the Happineſs in the whole Creation; and there is no one Perfection in the Divine Nature, which it is ſo much our Duty and our Glory to imitate. He who moſt excels in this particular Character, has the moſt of the Divine Likeneſs, that Man in this mortal State can poſſibly arrive at. What this Goodneſs conſiſts in is deſcribed by the Prophet *Micah*,

vi.

vi. 8. He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what the Lord requires of thee, to do juſtly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

189. The bleſſed Station of Saints and Angels, thoſe Regions of Light and Joy; where they die no more, but live immortally to God and to all the glorified Company. Heaven without Communion and Society would loſe half its Reliſh; they compoſe a celeſtial Choir, perpetually celebrating the Praiſes of God in Hallelujahs of Gladneſs and Devotion. Each Soul has its living Spring, an Ebullition of its own Joy, inceſſantly receiving from and adding to the general Happineſs. As all receive without meaſure from the ſame Fountain of Light; ſo one happy Soul reflects to another reciprocal Rays of Pleaſure and Amity.

190. As we are obliged to do whatſoever God commands, and patiently to ſuffer whatſoever he, in his Providence, ſhall think fit to lay or inflict upon us; ſo, for the ſame Reaſons, are we certainly bound to continue in this, both doing and patiently ſuffering, until ſuch time

as

as he ſhall be pleaſed of his own Will, to free and diſmiſs us from it. From whence it follows, that no Man ought, upon any account, to lay violent Hands upon himſelf, or voluntarily contribute to the Shortening of his own Life.

191. God has in him all Right; a primary Right, to demand the Obedience of his Creatures; a ſecondary Right, to puniſh the Diſobedient, in order to the Reclaiming of him; and the Right of Pardon, becauſe Puniſhment is God's Reſerve, and for farther Security of his Creatures Obedience.

192. A religious Confidence in God will produce in the Minds of good Men an inward Tranquility and Peace, free from thoſe diſquieting Paſſions and tormenting Sorrows that work Death, and thoſe diſpiriting Fears and Diſcouragements, which are the moſt unhappy as well as undutiful State we can be in. And therefore not only with reſpect to the other World, but even with regard to this Life, they may be pronounced truly bleſſed who put their Truſt in God; having a well grounded

grounded Perſuaſion of the perfect Felicity reſerved for the Righteous hereafter, which they themſelves hope for from the Teſtimony of their own Conſcience concerning their Sincerity; and acquieſcing with Pleaſure in that Diſpoſition of Things, which the wiſe and good Governor of the World has appointed (however uneaſy ſome Events may be at preſent) they enjoy Equanimity in all the Viciſſitudes of Time, and poſſeſs their Souls in Patience without Diſcontent.

193. Since God is the moſt excellent and perfect, and conſequently the moſt worthy of all Beings that are or can be; from hence it will follow, that we ought to honour him with the greateſt Honour that may be. Now to honour any Perſon is, in other Words, inwardly to eſteem, and outwardly to ſhew our Reſpect to him. Our inward Eſteem of God conſiſts in a due Acknowledgement of his Being and Attributes; and our outward Reſpect to him is to be ſhewn, as well by abſtaining from all Actions, which may ſavour of any Neglect or Irreverence towards him, as by performing all ſuch as may appear to be

ſuitable,

ſuitable, both to his own Excellency, and our Dependance upon him.

194. Since every Sin is an Offence both againſt a gracious and a powerful God, and of very dangerous Conſequence to the Perſon who commits it; and ſince nothing can poſſibly be concealed from God, it follows, that we ought to be deeply concerned, and truly ſorrowful for every Sin which we commit; and by no means to palliate or frame Excuſes for them, but freely to own and confeſs them to him. But the Truth of this Sorrow is not to be meaſured by the Paſſionateneſs of it, or the Tears which it produces (which tho' ſometimes good Signs, yet too often produce but little Effect) but by the hearty Reformation of Life that follows: and he only can be ſaid, to any purpoſe, either to be ſorry for his Sins, or to confeſs them to God, who is careful for the time to come to forſake them.

195. In order to our Being as like God, as 'tis poſſible we ſhould be, in his moral Goodneſs, it is neceſſary that our Obedience to the Commandments of God ſhould be impartial

partial and univerſal; that we ſhould not content ourſelves (as People generally are apt to do) with doing ſome things well, but ſhould be careful to the utmoſt of our power, to do every thing ſo; that as he who hath called us is holy, ſo ſhould we alſo be holy in all manner of Converſation; which, if we ſincerely endeavour to be, we may then be ſatisfied, that we do all that is required of us; and that our Services, tho' not ſo perfect as they ought to be, ſhall yet be graciouſly accepted by God, according to thoſe Words of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſalm* cxix. 6. Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy Commandments.

196. How bleſſed a State is it to enjoy a Calm, whilſt the World around us is ſailing in a Storm? To ſet free from the Torments of Anger and Revenge; while others burn with Reſentment and Indignation? To have the Mind at Liberty to look into itſelf, and to look up with Pleaſure to its great Creator, whilſt others ſacrifice both their Reaſon and their Religion to the Tranſports of Paſſion? It is this happy Temper alone, that can bring

us to expect our great Change with any Satisfaction. How happy a Condition will it be to be found at peace with ourſelves and the World, when our great Maſter ſummons us to appear? and who would not dread to be called from Quarrels, Contentions, and Strifes, to ſtand before the Judgment-Seat of God?

197. We are ſoon to go off the Stage to a Region of Peace and Love, where Malice and Envy cannot follow us: He to whom our Integrity is known will pardon all our Frailties, and will deal with us according to our ſincere Endeavours; from whoſe Hand we may expect to receive the more entire Reward, the leſs of it we receive from Men.

198. Since God is preſent in all Places, and knows all, even the moſt ſecret Things; and therefore cannot poſſibly be deceived or impoſed on; we ſhould on this Conſideration be very watchful and careful, upon all Occaſions, how we behave ourſelves in his Preſence: And methinks it is a moſt ſhameful and deplorable thing, that Men commonly

ſcruple

ſcruple not to do thoſe things in the Sight of God, which they would be afraid or aſhamed ſhould be known, or even ſuſpected of them, by Men like themſelves.

199. The things which God requires to be performed on our part, in order to Life everlaſting, are apparent, and can be no more but to believe thoſe Truths which he has made known, which is called Faith; and to obſerve thoſe Precepts which he has commanded, which is called Obedience: and theſe things are required of no Man beyond the Meaſure of Poſſibility. And the holy Scripture does moſt fully aſſure us, that God will in them make a very ſufficient Allowance for the Ignorance and Frailty, and even for the Perverſeneſs of our Nature, and will not only be merciful unto our Weakneſſes and ordinary Failings, but will pardon and forgive even our greateſt and moſt wilful Sins, upon our true and hearty Repentance, which is Part of our Obedience.

200. He that conſtantly and devoutly prays to God, beſt apprehends the Nature of Prayer, and

and perceives the Uſe and Comfort of it, more than thoſe who make or hear long Diſcourſes on it; the Meaning of the Lord's Prayer is better underſtood by ſaying it devoutly, reverently, and attentively, with Dependance on the divine Goodneſs, in reference to the daily Occurrences of Life; than it can be by the critical Conſideration of the beſt Commentators alone. And he that thus addreſſes himſelf to his Father which is in Heaven, with a dutiful Reſignation, and filial Truſt, has greater ſatisfactory Aſſurance and inward Peace, than the Children of this World can imagine, or he himſelf expreſs.

CONCLUSION.

The Event of all will be this; after having done, or endeavoured to do, to the utmoſt of our power, the Will of God; and having paſſed thro' our preſent State of Tryal, we ſhall be removed into a better World, and there ſhall perfect in Glory, that which we begun in Weakneſs.

FINIS.