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SELECT REMAINS

OF THE

REV. JOHN MASON, M.A.,

**Late Rector of Water-Stratford, in the
County of Buckingham.**

RECOMMENDED BY DR. WATTS.

A NEW EDITION.

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The Rev. John Mason was Rector of Water-Stratford, in the County of Buckingham, where he died in the year 1694. Of the devout Sayings and Letters contained in this small volume, Dr. Isaac Watts highly approved, and the work was published under his recommendation.

SELECT REMAINS.

CHAP. I.

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

Moral Observations and Instructions.

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

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

We must not walk by example but by rule.

They that drive away time spur a free horse.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Man may commend thee, but God may condemn thee.

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

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

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

As they, who for every slight infirmity take physic to repair their health, do rather impair it; so they, who for every trifle are eager to

vindicate their character, do rather weaken it.

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

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

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

Be lively, but not light; solid, but not sad.

Keep the body under, but the spirit up.

Keep such company as God keeps.

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

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

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

Speak not well of yourself, nor ill of others.

Speak of people's virtues, conceal their infirmities; if you can say no good, say no ill of them.

To render good for evil, is God-like; to ren-

der good for good, is man-like; to render evil for evil, is beast-like; to render evil for good, is devil-like.

Carry yourself submissively toward your superiors; friendly toward your equals; condescending toward your inferiors; generously toward your enemies; and lovingly toward all.

Of Religion in general.

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

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

The duty of religion flows from a principle of religion.

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

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

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

A desire of happiness is natural, a desire of

holiness is supernatural.

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

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

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

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

When a Christian considers the goodness of God's ways, he wonders that all the world doth not walk in them. But when he considers the blindness, and depravity, and prejudice of the heart by nature, he wonders that any should enter upon them.

Make your calling sure, and your election is sure.

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

Four things a Christian should especially labour after, viz. to be humble and thankful,

watchful and cheerful.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are few but are sometimes in a serious fit but how few are in a serious frame, who have not an abiding sense of God upon their hearts!

It is a voluntary CANNOT that keeps the soul from God.

The gate which leads to life is a strait gate,

therefore we should fear; it is an open gate, therefore we should hope.

Do the Lord's work in the Lord's time; pray whilst God hears; hear whilst God speaks; believe whilst God promises; obey whilst God commands.

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

Two duties must run through a Christian's life, like the warp through the woof, blessing and trusting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of God.

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

- I. That there must have been one first man.
 - II. This first man must have had some maker.
 - III. This maker of him must himself be unmade.
- Therefore, IV. There must have been eternally some unmade being; and that is God.

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

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

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

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

for him to despise, who is infinite mercy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is a sure rule; 'God never takes any thing from his people, but he gives them some-

thing better in the stead of it.'

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

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

The lowest reverence is due to the highest majesty.

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

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

Of the Fear of God.

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

A fear of departing from God is a good means to keep us from departing from him.

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

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

Of the Presence of God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of the Love of God.

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

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

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

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

Of Christ.

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

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

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

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

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

love to him.

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

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

Christ's strength is the Christian's strength.

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

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

He that thinks he hath no need of Christ, hath too high thoughts of himself; he that thinks Christ cannot help him, hath too low thoughts of Christ.

Presumption abuses Christ, despair refuses him.

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

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

awakened sinner.

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

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

When sin is hell, Christ is heaven.

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

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

Christ hath intreated God to be reconciled to us, now he intreats us to be reconciled to God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As God glorifies Christ in heaven, so the spirit glorifies him on earth, in the hearts of believers.

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

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

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

Christ's blood	} is the soul's {	Ransom,
Christ's Spirit		Comforter,
Christ's Word		Food,
Christ's Supper		Feast,
The Lord's Day		Market.

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

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

Christ executes the office of a prophet in our calling; of a priest in our justification, and of a king in our sanctification.—Let us then hear him as our prophet; rely on him as our priest; and obey him as our king.—Think not the worse of him for his manger or his cross. As he ceaseth not to be man in his highest estate, so he was God in his lowest. His words are oracles, and his works miracles. His life was a pattern; his death a sacrifice; his resurrection glorious; his ascension triumphant; his intercession prevalent; and his coming again will be magnificent. All the angels in heaven adore him; all the devils in hell fear him, and all the sons and daughters of Adam must stand before him.

Own Christ's person, love his name, embrace his doctrine, obey his commands, and submit to his cross. His person is lovely, his name is sweet, his doctrines are comfortable, his com-

mands are rational, and his cross honourable.—

The very angels admire him, and shall not we?

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

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

A Pathetical Invitation to Sinners to come to Christ.

Have you sin, or have you none?—If you have, whither should you go, but to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world? Have you souls, or have you none?—If you have, whither should you go but to the Saviour of souls? Is there a life to come, or is there not?

If there is, whither should you go but to him, who only hath the words of eternal life; is there a wrath to come, or is there not.—If there is, whither should you go but to him, who only can deliver from the wrath to come?—And will he not receive you?—If he yielded himself into the hands of them that sought his life, will he hide himself from the hearts of them that seek his mercy? If he was willing to be taken by the hand of violence, is he not much more willing to be taken by the hand of faith? He that died for thy sins, will he cast thee off for thine infirmities? O come, come, come! I charge you come—I beseech you come, come, and he will give you life. Come and he will give you rest. Come, and he will receive you. Knock, and he will open to you. Look to him, and he will save you. Did ever any come to him for a cure, and go away without it? Thou wouldest find something in thyself, but thou findest nothing, but what thou hast reason to be ashamed of; but let not that hinder, but further thy coming. Come as thou art; come

poor, come needy, come naked, come empty, come wretched, only come, only believe; his heart is free, his arms are open, 'tis his joy and his crown to receive thee. If thou art willing, he never was otherwise.

Of the Love of Christ.

Nothing grieves Christ more than to have his love slighted; nothing pleaseth him more than to have it accepted.

The love of Christ is stronger than death, sweeter than life, and better than wine.

Every new sense of Christ's love, adds new degrees to ours.

The love of Christ hath a height without a top, a depth without a bottom, a length without an end, and a breadth without a limit. Eph. iii. 18, 19.

Christ's sorrows, griefs, and sufferings, can be paralleled with nothing but his love.

Of saints, or true believers.

God hath no sons that are unlike himself.

Believers are children of the same father, members of the same son, and habitations of the same spirit, fellow-citizens, fellow-servants, fellow-soldiers, fellow-travellers, and fellow-heirs.

None are so easily acquainted, so close knit together, and so much endeared to one another, as real Christians.

One true Christian differs from another without breach of charity, as friends love one another, though in different garbs.

It is not so considerable in a Christian, what his judgement is, as what his temper is.

Heart-work is better than head-work; and, it is a better temper to be fervent in charity, than in disputes.

Better be a melancholy saint, than a mad sinner.

If good men are sad, it is not because they are good, but because they are not better.

Whom God chooses, the world refuses.

God's gold is the world's dross. They of

whom the world is not worthy, are counted not worthy to live in the world.

A good man is so far acquainted with the corruption of his own heart, that, instead of condemning others, he is apt to account them better than himself.

A child of God had rather a thousand times suffer for Christ, than that Christ should suffer by him.

The imperfections of a believer's sanctification, makes him continually depend on Christ for his justification.

When a child of God thinks he can go alone, he is nearest falling.

A true Christian may be weary in serving God, but God is never weary of serving him.

He is neither afraid of dying nor living; he desires to go to heaven to see Christ, yet is willing to stay upon earth to serve Christ.

If the children of God did but know, what was best for them, they would perceive that God did that which is best for them.

A Christian shall be here as long as he hath

any work to do for Christ, or as long as Christ hath any work to accomplish in him: Christ will fit him for himself, and then take him to himself.

A true Christian lives like a saint, and begs like a sinner.

All God's children have received God's Spirit, whereby they are made humble, believing, and holy; humble in regard of their sins; believing in regard of Christ, and holy in regard of their conscience and care to keep all God's commandments.

A good deal of the trouble of God's people ariseth from a mistake and misapprehension of God: they judge of God by their sense, not by his promise; by their own frame, and not by his constant nature.

As saints have groanings unutterable, so they have joys unutterable.

A Christian is what he is between God and his own soul.

All saints have had their doubtings. David, "cast me not off in mine old age," Psal. lxxi. 9.

Asaph, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will be favourable no more?" Psal. lxxvii. 7. Peter, "Lord is it I?" Matt. xxvi. 22. And Paul, "lest I should be a cast away," 1 Cor. xi. 27.

But believers remember, there may be true grace, where there is little comfort.

Believe firmly, hope joyfully, love fervently, pray earnestly, walk humbly, work diligently, and wait quietly; and all this will be graciously considered.

Hold up, hold on, hold out, hold fast that which you have received; still watch, still pray, still believe; fight and run, that you may obtain: it is but a little while, and he that comes will come, and will not tarry; it is but a little while, and your warfare is accomplished, and your iniquities shall be everlastingly separated from you; your sin and sorrows, tears and fears, fled and gone, gone ever; and you meet with an unspeakable reward.

Of Sinners.

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

They that will not hear Christ say, "Come to me," in a day of grace, shall hear him say, "Depart from me," in a day of judgment.

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

Sinners are first driven, then drawn to God.

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

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

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

Hatred is due to sin, compassion to the sinner.

Sinners, if you will not hear God call to-day, you will harden your hearts to-day: and, if you harden them to-day, God may harden them

to-morrow. And if you will not set about repentance to-day, God may justly deny you his assistance to-morrow.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of Sin,

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

God allows any thing but sin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Get this principle in your hearts; "There is nothing got by sin, nor lost by holiness."

By suffering we may avoid sinning, but by

sinning we cannot avoid suffering.

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

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

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

Our hatred of sin must be irreconcilable; and our endeavours against it perpetual.

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

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

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

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

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

How tender is our flesh! how hard our heart! i. e. How much more sensible are we of suffering than sin!

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

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

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

Of Repentance.

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

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

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

Let not sinful pleasures prevent godly sorrows.

An humble confession of sin brings shame to ourselves, but glory to God.

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

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

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

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

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

If we study to honour God, we cannot do it better than by confessing our sins, and laying

ourselves low at the feet of Christ.

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

The Evangelical penitent loves and grieves. "Alas," saith he, "that I, who am as high as heaven in privilege, should be as deep as hell in iniquity! Instead of repenting, I have run further on score! Instead of honouring God, I have dishonoured him! Instead of pleasing him, I have provoked him! Instead of following him, I have forsaken him! O what bowels have I grieved! How can I sin against Jesus! Shall I deny and crucify my Saviour! He was crucified for me, and shall he be crucified by me! Shall I wound his heart and pierce his side again, and give him cause to say, These are the wounds I received in the house of my friends."

Of Faith.

Reliance is the essence of faith, Christ is the object, the word is the food, and obedience the

proof; so that true faith is a depending upon Christ for salvation in a way of obedience, as he is offered in the word.

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

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

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

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

A stedfast faith begets a constant peace.

The more faith, the more humility.

Keep good principles, and they will keep you.

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

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

Justifying faith is always attended with universal obedience.

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

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

There is as much difference between faith and assurance, as there is between the root and the fruit.

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

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

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

Of Humility.

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

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

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

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

They that are humble, are content and

thankful.

An humble spirit is a charitable and quiet spirit.

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

To humble ourselves, is the only way to rise.

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

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

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

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

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

Despair is a corruption of humiliation, 'tis a

counterfeit humility, a sullen pride, a covert or a hardened heart.

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

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

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

Of Contentment.

Humility is the mother of contentment.

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

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

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

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

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

If we cannot bring our condition to our mind, we must labour to bring our mind to our condition.

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

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

Of Pride.

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

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

Pride is founded on error and self-ignorance.

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

There is a sullen pride, in not acknowledging benefits.

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

There may be pride in rags, in a solemn look

and lowly carriage.

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

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

As the first step heavenward is humility, so the first step hellward is pride.

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

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

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

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

Thou canst call nothing thine own but sin and shame. Art thou proud? Dust and ashes, proud? A worm, and proud? Emptiness, and proud? Perishing, and proud?

It is unreasonable for the creature to be

proud, much more the sinner.

Of Hypocrisy.

An hypocrite is one that neither is what he seems, nor seems what he is.

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

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

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

Of Idleness.

Idleness is the mother of many wanton children.

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

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

A Christian should never say, he hath nothing to do.

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

Of the Soul.

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

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

'Tis our greatest wisdom to be tenderly watchful over the frame of our spirits; to observe what helps it, and what injures it.

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

Of the Heart and Conscience.

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

An hard heart is not so soon broken, as a

as a broken heart is bound up.

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

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

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

Of Grace.

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

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

What sin is there, which grace cannot pardon?

What heart is there, which grace cannot soften?

What soul is there, which grace cannot save?

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

The more God's justice was declared towards

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

God humbles his Son to exalt his grace.

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

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

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

God's faithfulness performed what his mercy promised.

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

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

Abusers of mercy are treasurers up of wrath.

If thou wert worthy, thou couldst have no mercy.

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

You that have found mercy, shew mercy.

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

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

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

All that are chosen are vessels of mercy; all that are regenerate, are patterns of mercy; all that are saved, are monuments of mercy; and the work of heaven is to sing the loud praises of mercy.

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

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

Grace is an immortal seed, cast into an im-

mortal soil, that brings forth immortal fruit.

Of Temptations.

Temptations are instructions.

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

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

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

Satan tempts to sin, the spirit counsels against sin.

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

Of the World.

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

We must neither leave the world nor love it. The world promises comforts, and pays

SORROWS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To have a portion in the world, is a cross to us if we belong to Christ; a curse to us if we do not.

We should endeavour to pass through this world with a cheerful indifferency.

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

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

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

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

There is no miss of the creature, when there is a full enjoyment of the Creator.

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

As you love your souls, beware of the world; it hath slain its thousands and ten thousands. What ruined Lot's wife? the world. What ruined Judas? the world. What ruined Simon Magnus? the world. What ruined Demas? the world. And, "What shall it profit a man,

if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Matt. xvi. 26.

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

Of the Word of God.

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

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

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

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

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

When God threatens, that's a time to repent; when he promises, that's a time to believe; when he commands that's a time to obey.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The promises of the gospel are sealed to us by the oath of the Father, the blood of the Son, and the witness of the Spirit.

Of the Law.

The moral law was weak through the flesh;

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

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

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

God hath written a law and a gospel; the law to humble us, and the gospel to comfort us; the law to cast us down, and the gospel to raise us up; the law to convince us of our misery, and the gospel to convince us of his mercy; the law to discover sin, and the gospel to discover grace and Christ.

Of Providence.

Providences are sometimes dark texts that need an expositor.

God's providence fulfils his promise.

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

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

Of Afflictions.

It is a worse sign to be without chastisement, than to be under chastisement.

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

Afflictions are not so much threatened, as promised, to God's children.

To be a Christian, and a suffering Christian, is a double honour.

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

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

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

Sin is the poison, affliction the physic.

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

If the servants of Christ are ever so low, yet his heart is with them, and his eye upon them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of Prayer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Where there is a willing heart, there will be

a continual crying to heaven for help.

Pray that you may pray.

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

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

Let nothing get between heaven and prayer, but Christ.

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

Sin quenches prayer, affliction quickens it.

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

The breath of prayer comes from the life of faith.

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

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

Of Eternity.

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

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

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

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

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

Of Death.

The longest life is a lingering death.

First infancy dies, then childhood, then

youth, then manhood, then old age, and then we make an end of dying.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is death to many to think of death; they are as unwilling to be led into a discourse of death, as children into the dark: the thoughts of it are no more welcome to them, than Moses

was to Pharoah; to whom he said "Get thee from me, and let me see thy face no more." Exod. x. 28.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of Heaven.

If heaven doth not enter into us by way of

holiness, we shall never enter into heaven by way of happiness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If thou lovest to worship God here below,

God will take thee up to worship him above.
Thou shalt change thy place but not thine employment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of Hell.

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

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

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

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

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

The scorner's seat stands next hell's gate.

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

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

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

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

CHAP. II.

Containing some Religious Observations by way of Simile.

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

Christian graces are like perfumes: the more they are prest, the sweeter they smell; like stars that shine brightest in the dark; like trees, the more they are shaken, the deeper root they take, and the more fruit they bear.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As the fly, that plays about the candle, doth often burn its wings at last; so the Christian, that parleys with temptation, is in danger of having the wings of his soul so shortened by the fiery darts of the devil, that he will not be able to rise again towards heaven, 'till God shall give him renewed affections.

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

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

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

They that are professors only, and make a shew of religion for sinister ends, are like Orpah; in times of affliction they will kiss their mother and be gone: they will soon take leave

of the church of God. But they that are true Christians are like Ruth; they will cleave to her, stay by her, live and die with her, and never depart from her, Ruth i. 14.

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

As Noah's dove found no footing but in the ark, so a Christian finds no contentment but in Christ.

Our hearts are like instruments of music well tuned; they will make no melody in the ear of God, unless they are gently touched by the finger of the spirit.

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

As the sun ripens and sweetens fruits by shining upon them, without which they would be sour and unsavoury; so it is the sunshine of

God's love and favour that sweeten all earthly blessings, without which they would be but crosses and curses to them that possess them.

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

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

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

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

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

As God commanded under the law, that the inwards of every sacrifice should be burnt, that they might be an offering made by fire, of sweet

savour, unto the Lord, Levit. iv. 8. so he looks for no less now; for, unless we offer up our hearts to him on the altar of Christ's merits with the fire of zeal, our duties will never be acceptable to him.

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

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

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

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

As the waters that sunk the men of the old

world, raised up Noah in the ark; so death which sinks sinners into hell, raises saints up to heaven.

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

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

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

CHAP. III.

Containing serious advice to Youth.



PART I.

I. Choose God for your portion; remember that he is the only happiness of a rational and

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

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

every condition, and all things will work against you.

II. Consider that by nature you are dead in trespasses and sins: a child of wrath, a stranger, and an enemy to God; and while such, the thoughts of God are terrible to you; you can expect nothing from him but wrath and everlasting burnings. God is ever angry with the wicked: his holiness hates all sin; his all-seeing eye beholds it, and his justice will punish it.

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

more damnable than a wicked unrenewed heart.

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

IV. Be speedy in your repentance, and diligent in your endeavours after holiness. Know the time of God's gracious visitation. While God is calling, Christ inviting, the gate of heaven set open, the ministers of the word exhorting, and the Spirit drawing, make haste and delay not.

Consider your live is but short, and altogether

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

Stand not upon a short labour, difficulty, self-denial, or suffering for your eternal happiness.

God would have you saved; Christ hath died for you to reconcile you to God: he is ascended into heaven to open a door for your soul to enter in at, and he is interceding with the Father for all grace and mercy for you, if you refuse him not. He came into the world to "Seek and to save that which was lost," Luke xix. 10. Be sensible of your sinful, lost, damnable condition without him. O! make haste to your Saviour; yield to all his demands, and take him as offered in the Gospel, in all his offices.

V. Endeavour to be truly and thoroughly religious, and be not discouraged at the difficulties of it; God's grace shall be sufficient for your help; his promises shall be your sweet encouragement; peace of conscience, and communion with God, shall be your ever-present cordials. The trouble and pain of religion shall be but short, and your reward shall be glorious and eternal. Remember that of the Apostle, when religion calls you to self-denial and sufferings, "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more

exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. "If we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him," 2 Tim. ii. 12. "And the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed," Rom. viii. 18. See also, Isa. xliii. 2, 3. "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour." Never are we more joyful than when we deny our joy for Christ's sake! And if these arguments will not prevail, then consider, that all the pains and difficulties of religion will be found in the end far more tolerable than hell.

VI. Devote your young years to a good God, and your loving Saviour. The first fruits are to be offered to him. The green ears of youth are to be carried to his sanctuary. Think it not a pity that the vain delights and sinful

pleasures of youth should be lost: you shall but exchange them for spiritual delights, which are far more excellent, inward, and lasting. The joy of the Holy Ghost, the rejoicing of a good conscience, communion with God, the sense of his love, and the hope of heaven, are far better than the pleasures of sin, and will more than recompence your loss of youthful and carnal delights. And consider this seriously, that none have usually more comfort in their souls than those, who are willing to lose their sinful comforts for God and their soul's sake.

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

accounted for to God: and so spend your younger days, as you will wish you had spent them when you come to die and be judged.

Suppose God should call you away suddenly, what sentence could you expect from him? Are you ready, if the bridegroom should now come? Matt. xxv. 6. It will be no excuse at judgment, if you be found in your sins, to say, "Lord, I was but young." He that is old enough to sin, is old enough for hell. You cannot make sure of God's love, and an interest in Christ too soon. You cannot secure your soul too soon.

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

The young disciple was the loved disciple. God takes great delight in an early convert. All your life is due to God, let him therefore

have all that still remains, and beg his pardon that any of it hath been denied.

Repentance is easiest in youth. Sin is less rooted, satan not so fortified, grace not so much slighted, the Spirit not so much grieved, and the conscience not so much hardened.

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

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

who are more ignorant, and worse educated: nay, conscience will mix gall with your honey; when you go to prayer, in the evening, upon your bed, when alone and retired, or in the dark, it will read sad lectures to you, and make you review your past delights with bitterness.

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

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



PART II.

I. Make the Word of God the rule of all you do.

II. Whatever you do, be sure to do it in the strength of Christ. Without me, saith Christ, ye can do nothing, John xv. 5. i.e. nothing well, nothing that is acceptable to God. If you do not bear fruit as a branch in Christ, your fruit will be but bad, and unsavoury in God's account; and you cannot bear fruit, as a branch in Christ, unless all your sap and fructifying power be drawn from him by an active faith. Paul could do all things through Christ that strengthened him, Phil. vi. 13. He could bear the devil's buffetings by sufficient grace from Christ, 2 Cor. xii. 9. But of himself he could not so much as think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5.

Nature is but a dry root of goodness: no gracious actions spring from thence. Grace depends upon continual supplies that flow from Christ as sap from the root, or beams from the sun. If Christ withdraws, your grace presently

languishes, grows faint and inactive. Know therefore, and mind it before you go to work, from whence your strength must come, and fetch it in by faith. Without this practice you shall fall in small temptations, and with it stand in great ones. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and nothing shall be too hard for you. Mountains shall be plains, and vallies filled up. All things shall be possible to him that believes, and relies upon the power to which nothing is impossible.

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

ness and strength," Isa. xlv. 24.

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

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

And by these things examine all you do; by whose rule have I acted? By whose strength have I acted? In whose name have I acted? And for whose glory have I acted? What faith,

what humility, what self-denial, what love of God and Christ, hath there been in all my actions.

These are general Rules of Action.

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

And to this end accept kindly of this Advice.

I. As soon as ever you awake in the morning, lift up your heart to God, and open it to him. As much as you possibly can, avoid all thoughts about the world until your morning devotions are over, for you will find by experience, that if the world give your souls the first salute, and be embraced by kindness in your morning affections, it will greatly deaden your heart in the morning duties.

II. As soon as you are up, present your desires to God in the name of Christ, for whatever your soul feels the want of, and give God his due praises for his mercies towards you the night past. Thus David, Psal. v. 3, "My

voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee." And for thanksgiving, Psal. xcii. 1, 2. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto thee, O Lord—to shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning."

III. Let no day go without reading some portion of the Scriptures; and it is no great matter, whether you read it before you pray in the morning, or just after; your inclination and experience will direct you; but be sure it be done. You will find it very profitable to begin the day with such a converse with God, Prov. 22, 23. When thou walkest it shall talk with thee. See John v. 29, the command of Christ: and Joshua i. 8. the command of God, with a promise.

The Scriptures discover sin, and the devil's devices and malice; they discover duty, and the love of God and Christ; and they discover your strength and encouragement; there are the promises of assisting and crowning grace. By these, the spirit acts, the devil is conquered,

and the soul is comforted. Through these, the eye of faith can see the love of Christ, the grace of God, and the glory of heaven. In these are the food, the physic, and the arms of the Christian's soul. These are the words of reconciliation, grace, and truth, and the power of God to salvation: therefore, every day look into these, praying for the Spirit's teachings, and mixing faith with what you read.

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

V. Have a care every day that nothing put you into a passion; do nothing with an over-eagerness of mind; and be ever upon your guard against sudden accidents. And this can never be obtained but by committing yourself, and your affairs, into God's hand and care every

day; believe that he governs all things wisely, and will ever do that which is best for you.

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

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

Let no day go without observation, and re-

view of God's carriage towards you, and of yours towards him: of mercies and afflictions; and of your duties, and the frame of heart in them; of your sins or inclinations to sin; and so likewise of any special or remarkable providence of God related to you by others, or seen or heard of by yourself. And let God have the glory of what is good. In afflictions be humble, be ashamed and grieved for sin; and consider what God's special providences speak to you.

CHAP. IV.

Containing some Occasional Reflections, Directions, Means, and Signs of Grace, &c.



Proper Reflections for poor Saints.

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

affliction falls upon the garden as well as upon the wilderness.

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

God doth sometimes on purpose show us the creature's emptiness, that we may go to his fulness. He makes us see the creatures to be broken cisterns, that we may know him to be the fountain: and that we may feed more largely upon spiritual dainties, he does deny us carnal ones.

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

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

The mystery of a Christian.

1. He lives in another, Gal. ii. 20. He is wise in another, 1 Cor. i. 30. He is righteous

in another, Rom. x. 4. He is strong in another, Isa. xlv. 24.

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

3. He is in the world, but not of the world, John xv. 6. In the world as a pilgrim, but not as a citizen. His habitation is below, his conversation above.

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

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

always, yet worships as if he were to die to-morrow.

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

7. When he is most vile in his own eyes, he is most glorious in the eyes of God. When Job abhorred himself, then God raised him, Job xlii. 6. When the centurion thought himself the most unworthy, Christ said, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel, Matt. viii. 8, 10.

8. He is content with his condition, yet longs and prays for a better, 2 Cor. v. 14.

9. His losses are gains; (as Job's, Job xlii. 12.) His afflictions are promotions: (as Jacob's, All these things are against me, saith he, Gen. xlii. 36. yet all these things were for him.) His disappointments are preferments; as Moses', though he did not go to Canaan, as he desired; yet he went to heaven which was better, Duet. xxxiv. 4, 5.

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

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

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

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

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

Some doubts and fears of a tender Conscience answered.

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

Answ. What is this but limiting, or setting bounds to infinite mercy?—What greater signs of his willingness would you have than those already given you? He hath died and purchased salvation for you. Heb. ii. 9., 1 John ii. 2. He calls and entreats you to come and accept of it, Matt. xi. 28. He saith he will not cast you out, John 6. 37. He complains that you will not come, John v. 40.—And wilt thou yet say, He is not willing?—If thou art willing, he never was otherwise.—Be of good comfort, he calleth thee, lv. 1. Oh! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price—Bring only yourself, come out of need, as all do; as the prodigal did.

2. But I am so unworthy—

Answ. If you would have nothing but what you are worthy of, you must have nothing but hell. What was Abraham, or Saul, or any, worthy of, before the Lord called them? Say not, I am unworthy. Art thou willing? Rev.

xxii. 17. Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely.

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

Answ. Are thy sins great? the more need thou hast of a Saviour. Greater sinners have been pardoned, Manasseh and Saul.—But dost thou think thou art more guilty than Christ is gracious? read Isa. i. 18. “Come let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool.” 1 John i. 7. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Bless God for that word ALL.

4. But I have a proud, dead heart.

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

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

Answ. Yea, if there were none to appear for thee, Luke vii. 47. “Her sins which were

many are forgiven her," 1 John i. 7. "Christ is a daily advocate," 1 John ii. 1, 2. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." This scripture should be as daily bread for believers to live upon.

6. I have sinned against light and conviction.

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

7. But I am a revolter and backslider.

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

9. I have no strength.

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

10. I am afraid to die.

Answ. Psal. xxiii, 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." Phil. i. 23. "I am in a strait between two, having

a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”—When you die God will be with you; and Christ shall be with you; and you shall be with God and Christ for ever.

The difference between Inherent and Imputed Righteousness.

1. Inherent righteousness sanctifies, imputed righteousness justifies.
2. Inherent righteousness makes us shine before men, imputed righteousness makes us shine before God.
3. Inherent righteousness pleases God, imputed righteousness appeases him.
4. Inherent righteousness discharges from hypocrisy, imputed righteousness from guilt.
5. Inherent righteousness makes us pray, imputed righteousness makes our prayers prevail.
6. Inherent righteousness is our sincerity, imputed righteousness our perfection.
7. Inherent righteousness respects the law, imputed righteousness answers the law.
8. Inherent righteousness is the evidence of

our salvation, imputed righteousness the foundation of it.

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

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

11. Inherent righteousness is imperfect, imputed righteousness perfect.

12. Inherent righteousness is our qualification for heaven, imputed righteousness our title to it.

**Directions to those that are under Convictions
of Conscience.**

1. Don't presume, you are not yet come to the heavenly Canaan.

2. Don't despair, you are in the way of it.

3. Beware of ill company.

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

5. Keep up prayer. Be much in ejaculations.

6. Don't rest in convictions, nor duties, nor any thing short of Christ.

7. Be much in humiliation and confession.
8. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.
9. Study your soul's ease, and labour to get your hearts affected with it, and mortified to the world.
10. Remember the great day of accounts, Eccl. xii. 14.
11. Prepare for, and think not strange of trials, Heb. x. 32.
12. Let not religion be your diversion, but your business.

Directions to keep from Sin.

1. Run not into temptations.
2. Maintain a constant watch against, and fear of sin.
3. Beware of pride and presumption.
4. Avoid and abhor slothfulness.
5. Remember you stand by faith: your strength is in Christ, look to him for it.

Means to gain Repentance.

1. Sit with care, constancy, and conscience

under the word of truth, and gospel of grace.

2. Study the nature of God.

3. Sit loose to the world.

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

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

6. Seriously expect approaching judgment.

7. Think much of death and eternity.

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

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

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

Means to live at Peace,

1. Mind your own business, 1 Thess. iv. 11.
2. Keep your tongue from evil, 1 Pet. iii. 10.
3. Don't contend for every trifle, whether it be a matter of right or opinion.
4. If others neglect their duty to you, be sure that you perform yours to them. To render railing for railing, is to turn sin for sin.
5. Make your enemy see and feel your love.
6. Beg God for universal charity.
7. Be humble.
8. By faith wait for the providence of God.

Means to be Content.

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

2. Consider, that if you had fewer comforts, and more crosses, you ought to be thankful; for do you know what you have deserved? 'Tis

of the Lord's mercy that you are not consumed.

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

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

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

Means to preserve Mercies.

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

Signs of Sincerity.

1. Prayer is a sign of sincerity; if it be secret, Matt. vi. 6. frequent, Acts x. 2. fervent, Rom. viii. 26.
2. A willingness to be searched of God, Psal. cxxxix. 23. By the righteous, Psl. cxli. 5. By ministers, Acts x. 33. By conscience, Psl. lxxvii. 6. By the Scriptures, John iii. 19, 20, 21. Sincere souls love sincere dealings.
3. A sense of sin; particularly of spiritual sins, Mark ix. 24., Rom. vii. 21. And of original sin, Rom. vii. 24. especially when it drives to Christ, ver. 25.
4. When a man is most sensible of, and

watchful against his own sin, his constitutional sin, the beam in his own eye.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14. A well-governed tongue (for an outward

sign) when a man dares neither boast of himself, nor censure others, James iii. 2., Matt. xii. 36.

15. Constancy in the ways of God, Job. xxvii. 6, 10.—Such a man can never be a hypocrite.

Short Questions, whereby to know, whether the heart be truly changed.

1. Hath thine heart been turned into sorrow for sin?
2. Hath thy sorrow turned into prayer?
3. Hath thy prayer turned into faith?
4. Hath thy faith issued in universal tenderness and obedience?

Signs of Faith.

To those that believe.

1. Christ is precious.
2. The word is sweet.
3. Sin is bitter.
4. Prayer is delightful.
5. Saints are dear.
6. Religion is their business.
7. The world is a broken idol.

8. Death is welcome.—Or thus:

They that believe,

Have Christ in their hearts; heaven in their eye; and the world under their feet; God's spirit is their guide; God's fear is their guard; God's people are their companions; God's promises are their cordials; holiness is their way, and heaven their home.

*Signs of Love to Christ.***They that Love Christ,**

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

11. They are grieved when Christ is grieved.
12. They long to be with Christ.
13. Christ's will is their will; Christ's dishonour is their affliction; Christ's cause is their care; Christ's ministers are their stars; Christ's saints are their companions; Christ's day is their delight; Christ's word is their oracle; Christ's glory their end.

Signs of the Fear of God.

A Man that fears God.

1. When he dares not sin, though solicited and tempted to it.
2. When sin is common, and yet he fears it.
3. When he is afraid of an evil thought.
4. When he dares not sin, though he should suffer if he do not.
5. When his heart is broken, and trembles at the word of God.
6. When he flies to Christ.
7. When he is studious to please God.

Signs of true Grace.

1. When self-loving is turned into self-loath-

ing; self-excusing into self-condemning; self-admiring into self-abhorring; self-seeking into self-denying.

2. 'Tis a sign of true grace when a man seriously complains of the want of grace. A graceless person cannot truly complain that he hath no grace. There is grace in that complaint.

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

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

5. When a man makes a conscience of secret prayer.

6. When we are taken with their conversation, and manners of life, who are most spiritual, Zech. viii. 28.

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

8. When a man approves of all duties.

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

CHAP. V.

Containing some Letters of the late Rev. John Mason, which he sent to several of his Friends; tending to promote the power of Godliness, both in Persons and Families.



LETTER I.

To my dear Sister, Mrs. Hannah Wyat, under illness.

DEAR SISTER,

I beseech his most merciful Majesty to send his word and heal you! that we may not have sorrow upon sorrow!—O if it were his will to restore you for his glory, and the good of many!—And who can tell, but by this affliction he is fitting you for future service? And that the prayers of your many affectionate and faithful friends may be a mean of your recovery? Which I hope, through the thanksgiving of

many, will redound to the praise and glory of God.—But, I believe it is not recovery you wish for, any farther than as it will be a manifestation of God's pleasure, and an opportunity of serving him; it is not that you so much desire, as to depart and to be with Christ, which is indeed far better.

My dear sister, what thanks can we render unto God, who hath visited us with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, through our dear Redeemer? and hath given us that communion with him here, which is a pledge of our joint communion with him in everlasting glory? Certainly you cannot but remember some Bethels and Chebars, where the Lord hath met and owned you; some promises which have been made your own; and some times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Blessed be God that you have a witness in yourself? an eternal evidence, an inward sight and taste that the Lord is gracious.

The Lord hath acquainted you with that which is the very sum and substance of the

gospel, viz. That Christ came into the world to save sinners: that a Christian's thankfulness flows from faith in the promises: that self-denial must run through the whole course of this life, as the warp through the woof: and that Christ is a Christian's life, peace, hope, and security: whilst he lives we are in safety:

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

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

You know also, that submission to the will of God, is a yielding to those methods whereby he is conducting us to eternal happiness and glory; and that every dram of affliction is ordered us by the love of our ever-gracious and all-merciful Father.—Bow then to his sovereignty, and believe his grace: you are in a happy hand; in happy circumstances: all the paths of God are mercy and truth to you. Infinite and

immortal thanks are due to our ever-blessed Father, Redeemer, and Comforter. The Lord be with your spirit!—Grace and peace be with you. Amen.—I remain

Your affectionate and most obliged
 Brother in the Lord,
 John Mason.

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LETTER II.

To my dear Sister Mrs. Margaret Holmes.

DEAR SISTER,

May these lines find you well and happy —I joy in the thoughts, that your soul is secured in the hands of Christ, and that in this life you are as happy as content itself can make you. —Who hath the largest share of external comforts, but he who believes this world vanity? Indeed, the surest experience of the world's emptiness ariseth from a taste of Christ's fulness. Though there be nothing but disappointments in the world to them that make it their idol, yet it will be slavishly pursued and craved by them,

because they know no better things; for the infatuated idolater hath not the sense to say within himself, is there not a lie in my right hand.

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

I should now at large commend to you that excellent duty of self-examination, but that it hath been effectually pressed upon you by that dear saint now in heaven. Nor have I cause to doubt, but as her memory, so her councils are inviolably preserved in the most inward rooms of your heart.—Accept the hearty re-

spects of me and mine, most ardently desiring for you all the blessings that were purchased by the most valuable blood of the Son of God. I remain in him,

Dear Sister,
Your most affectionate Brother,
John Mason.



LETTER III.

To the same.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I preserve carefully my ancient respect.—Though I have been long silent I am your orator before the highest throne, and do earnestly desire, that you may grow in the faith of Jesus, and in lively communion with him, which is the most comfortable thing in the world.—Alas! we are less than nothing, worse than nothing. Christ is all—May he be so to us!—Let us glorify him more by relying upon his satisfaction and merits, for all that we can do or suffer

cannot atone for the least of our sins.—It is the self-emptied heart, and beggar's hand, that must receive this infinite gift of God—The woman of Canaan is our pattern—" True, Lord, I am no better than a dog, but there are crumbs for dogs. I am as bad as sin can make me, and deserve to be as miserable as hell can make me; but, Lord, I am not so bad as thou art good; I am not so miserable as thou art merciful."—O, my dear sister, I desire that you may now live by faith, and breathe by prayer; that you may finally dwell above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.—The Lord spiritualize our souls, and quicken us according to his loving kindness.—We long to see you: farewell in Christ,

Your affectionate brother,

John Mason.

LETTER IV.

To the same.

MY DEAR SISTER,

You are dearly remembered by us; though

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

I hope I need not suggest arguments of comfort to you, who know what it is to enjoy the presence of God on earth, and are, therefore, prepared to enjoy the presence of Christ in heaven. Doubtless the Lord is our Father; though our earthly parents be ignorant of us. I commend you to him through Christ. Let us hope in the Lord, who is Almighty, and most merciful. The Lord abound in his mercy to you! May He be a sun to direct you, a shield to protect you, a portion to sustain you, and a God to save you!

O, that we may hear the rod! which saith, Sin no more; get an interest in Christ; prize time, and prepare to meet your God! That we may inwardly hear the voice of the rod, whilst we outwardly feel the smart of it! I beseech the Lord to prosper you every way; to watch over you; and to rejoice over you, to do you

good; to sweeten your life with his love, and to fit you for his whole pleasure. No more, but all hearty respects to you, and that I am

Yours, in our dearest Redeemer,

John Mason.

LETTER V.

My dearly beloved Friends in Christ,

I rejoice in God, who hath called you into the fellowship of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; and into that grace, wherein you stand. Let us remember, that we are, by nature, children of wrath, even as others. We might have been cast into hell long ago. Were we not provoking sinners? O how did the Lord call upon us, and we regarded him not! But did the Lord stand and knock, until he made us answer, Speak, Lord, for thy servants hear? Would he not let us alone, till he had won our hearts? O blessed be his name! We might have been blasphemers, persecutors, haters, and

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

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

Would you live holily, observe these Rules:

1. Live in the eye of God.
2. Observe the example of Christ.
3. Consider the fruit and end of things. The fruit of sin is shame and sorrow. Sin is a viper in the end: but the fruit of righteousness is peace; holiness is eternal life,

in the end.

4. Bind the commandments upon your hearts.
5. Shun the appearances, and the least beginnings of sin.
6. Be frequent and fervent in secret prayer.

My friends, would you live comfortably, take these directions:

1. Live not so much upon the comforts of God, as upon the God of comforts. Be afraid of unbelief; that is a great sin. Do not greaten your sins above Christ's saving power. Believe in the word, firmly and constantly. Trust perfectly to the grace and mercy of God in Christ. I will trust in the mercy of God (saith David) for ever and ever, Psal. lii. 8.
2. Beware of sin, especially of wilful sin: that will bring a cloud and make a breach between God and your soul.
3. Do not mind earthly things. O take heed of unlawful affections; of an unlawful carriage of the heart; about lawful things.
4. Examine the ways of your heart daily: Search yourselves. What sin have I committed? What duty have I omitted this day? Every night

look back upon the thoughts and affections, and speeches of the past day. Confess your failings over the head of the scape-goat. This is another necessary means to keep your peace with God, and to walk comfortably before him: and I pray observe it. 5. Examine your heart farther, and consider the gracious actings and workings of God's blessed Spirit within you; what good thoughts, what good desires, aims, resolutions, God hath put into you. Consider what outgoings of your heart, after God, there have been, what incomes, and influences of his grace: Daily examine your hearts for these things, and give God the glory of all the gracious workings of his Spirit in your soul. 6. If you would walk comfortably with God, mind not what is forged, but what is written. Heed not every fancy the devil may dart into you (for then you lie at the mercy of your enemy) but keep close to the written word of God. Thus it is written, saith our Saviour to Satan the tempter.—So much for comfortable walking.

Dear friends, would you walk peaceably and

charitably, take these rules:

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

Dear friends, would you be constant in good ways and purposes, take these directions:

1. Remember you have engaged yourselves to God, and therefore you must keep yourselves from idols. You have given up your names to God, and you must give up your hearts to God. You have made a covenant with God by sacraments. If Satan or the world are suitors for your hearts, tell them, "Your's are already disposed of; you are pre-engaged to God; you have chosen your God, and you must not think of changing him." 2. Consider whither would you go from Cerist? Where do you think to find such another God as your God; such another friend as Jesus Christ? 3. Remember, if it be good to draw nearer to him: still the nearer the better. One may see an end of earthly perfection; but there is no end of the perfection of Jesus Christ. 4. Be downright for God; and you shall find soul-heartning comfort in God, that shall keep you close to God. 5. Walk humbly with God; that is the way to walk closely with God. If a Christian is humble, he is a Christian indeed: God will not suffer such an one to be tempted above his

strength. 6. Let not opinions swim in your heads; that will make you fall: But let the great things of religion sink into your hearts, and that will make you stand. Be content, ye willing to suffer for Christ; who did so contentedly and willingly suffer for you. And if you suffer with him, you shall be glorified together.

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

Your faithful friend,

J. M.



LETTER VI.

Dear Friend in Christ,

I long to hear of the state of your soul. O lay hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ, by a true and lively faith. He is an able, willing, and true Saviour; the soul's resting-place; the

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

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

1. Hath sin been laid to thine heart? hath it

been my greatest burden?

2. Have I confessed my particular sins, and the sinfulness of my nature, with sorrow?

3. Have I been forced to make my appeal to Christ, knowing that I am lost for ever, unless he freely save me? Have I cried for a Christ, as a condemned man for a pardon?

4. Do I believe he is able and willing to save me? Do I believe that he spread his arms on the cross to die for me, spreads his arms now in the gospel, and in heaven, to save me? Have I pleaded his promises? O what a precious promise is that, John vi 37. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out!"

5. Have I had joy and peace in believing? Hath Christ relied on, calmed, and quieted my poor troubled afflicted soul?

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

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

8. Do I unfeignedly and entirely yield up

myself to the service of my Saviour?

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

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

Your affectionate Friend, in Christ,

John Mason.



LETTER VII.

Water-Stratford.

My dear Friend,

I hear the hand of the Lord is gone out against you: "O hear the rod, and who hath appointed it! O turn to him that smiteth you!" It hath pleased the Lord to take away the earth

that lay next your root: He hath been digging about you; pray now that you may be fruitful. Now fly from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life. Now let the business of your soul be the business of your life. Open your doors to Christ: invite him to dwell among you, by worshipping him in your family. Whilst your hand is in this world, let your heart be in heaven: O, lay up for yourself a treasure there. What is the world? Seek things above. If we be not sure of Christ, what are we sure of? If young ones die, how long have we to live?—O strive to enter in at the strait gate. Search and try your ways: Consider in the Lord's fear, wherefore he hath thus contended with you. Repent of every sin your conscience sets before you: confess sin, and earnestly plead the blood of Christ. Now the Lord hath a controversy with you, humble yourself under his mighty hand. Cry for the blood of sprinkling: never rest till your pardon be sealed through the blood of Christ.—Our kind respects from hence to you and your wife. The Lord pity you in your

great afflictions, and every way bless you.

I am your loving friend,

John Mason.

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LETTER VIII.

My reconciled and dear Friend,

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

bread of life, eating of the same spiritual meat, and drinking of the same spiritual drink, and receiving sweet pledges of our eternal communion with God) God forbid I should be wanting in any office of Christian love toward you and yours. Nor do I esteem your jealousy to be any other than the fruit of your abundant love, which is not utterly lost, though I confess with shame, I fall short of that necessary gospel duty of brotherly kindness, as I do of all others, which I beseech God to cover with his mercy in Christ. The Lord enable me to run with diligence and patience the race which he hath set before me. —God be merciful to little L——, which is left as sheep without a shepherd. But if they hunger and thirst after the word of righteousness, they shall be filled. I hope when I have leisure and opportunity, I shall not be wanting to them. The Lord comfort their hearts. I and my wife remember our hearty respects to you and yours. God hath been infinitely merciful to us, and hath given us a daughter (now called Martha.) I hope he will perfect his mercy

towards us. We are full of his mercies. O that we were full of his praises!—My prayers are for you and yours; whom God bless, preserve, and keep. O that all his ways might be mercy and truth towards you! Cast not away your confidence, which hath so great recompence of reward. The life of sense is a troublesome, disquieting life; for what doth sense discover but vanity and misery? But the life of faith is a comfortable life. For faith makes glorious discoveries of God and Christ, saints and angels, rest and peace, and life for ever. Nothing troubles you when you are above. Keep where you are well. I remain

Your truly loving Friend,

John Mason.



LETTER IX.

Dear Friend,

Though Providence hath separated us, yet it refresheth me to think upon you, and

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

Many a good soul doth not know how much she loves God; but when she feels that affection stirring within her,—O then, she is in a new, serene, comfortable frame! Satan flies. Perfect love casts out fear. Love God, and praise God, and all is at peace. Nay, admit the soul hath not got so much assurance of her pardon; yet

if she sets down this resolution,—“ Let God be glorified whatever become of me. Let the angels praise him; let the saints praise him; let the Jews and Gentiles be called in to praise him; and if it may please his Divine Majesty, let my poor unworthy soul please him, and be a praise to his grace for ever and ever.” If it can say this, it must be happy with it. That must needs be a happy soul that breathes forth the praises of God, ascribes all glory to God, and can sing,

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

The Lord put and keep your heart in a praising frame. O, how well doth this angelical and evangelical disposition befit and become those, who of sinners are made saints; of enemies, children, of slaves, heirs, of burning brands, shining stars! When we consider seriously what we have been, and what we might have been, nay, what we must have been, if infinite mercy had not prevented; (as the Lord was seen in the Mount, when Isaac lay bound

upon the altar, mercy came in between the knife and the sacrifice) instead of being scourged, how nobly pardoned and promoted! raised from devils' to angels' company; from the lowest depth to the greatest height; this (I say) if we consider it, is a matter of admiration, not of expression. If we had as many tongues as we have veins or drops of blood, they could never utter a thousandth part of the due praises of Divine grace. Let us now magnify the Lord, exalt his name together. O the height, and breadth, and depth, and length of the Father's love! O the infinite and unsearchable riches of free grace! O the tremendous mystery, and invaluable mercy of the incarnation of the Son of God! O the stupendous humiliation and condescension of eternal glory and omnipotency! O the unparalleled love of a dying Saviour! O the sweet heavenly communion of the blessed Comforter! Lord, what do these things mean? —Lord, what are we? or what is our Father's house, that thou hast brought us hitherto? that thou shouldst make thyself glorious in our

glory, who had made ourselves vile in dishonouring thy name?—O, let us give him our whole souls, who hath redeemed them by his blood! for it is fit he should have the utmost of so dear a purchase. Farewell, my dearest friend in the Lord, in whom I am

Your true friend,

John Mason.

Stanton, Oct. 19, 1672.

LETTER X.

My dear Friend,

Though we be parted on earth I hope we shall meet in heaven; though our work should not lie together in the Lord's vineyard, yet I hope we shall sup together with Christ, though we do not sojourn together, yet I hope we shall dwell together to all eternity; if we should never feast together any more upon the word and sacraments, yet I hope we shall eat that bread and drink that wine which is for ever new in our Father's kingdom. Be of

good comfort, sister, it is but a very little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. We shall be welcome at home, however it fares with us in our journey. Remember the Apostle Paul had no certain dwelling place; nay, our blessed Saviour had not where to lay his head. We may be poured from vessel to vessel, and tossed to and fro upon this ocean; it will not be long, I hope, ere we be fixed in our harbour. My prayers are and shall be for thee, that God would dispose of thee to his own glory and comfort. Let not thine heart be troubled, thou believest in God, &c. I saw your mother yesterday, and she was in good health, as we all are here, blessed be the Lord, I should be glad to hear of your welfare. I rest

Your friend in Christ,

John Mason.

Stanton, Dec. 8, 1678.

LETTER XI.

My dear Friend in Christ,

The providence of the Lord extends

itself to every thing; but there is a special providence over the children of God, 1 Tim. iv. 10. The providences of God to the children of God are purchased providences: they are ordinances to them, instruments of good to their souls. Again, the providences of God to his children are promises fulfilled, Psal. xxv. 10. Again, the providences of God to his children are the fruits and answers of prayer. Again, the providences of the Lord steer the children of God heaven-wards. Again, the providences of God combine and join their forces for the good of every sincere, single-hearted believer, Rom. viii. 23. My friend, this, I trust, is your happiness, that you are under the eye and conduct and tuition of a fatherly special providence. Let us answer the call of providence; which is, to watch, pray, and believe; and let us expect good things from a good God; and great things from a great God, through our faithful and dear Mediator, who ever lives to make intercession for us.—I suppose you may have heard, that our friend Mary Tompkins is gone to her eter-

nal rest: she died triumphantly. O! said she upon her death bed, what things have I seen! Ann Kemp asked her, "Hath the Lord given you a glimpse of heaven?" "I cannot tell," said Mary, "whether it be heaven or not, but joys, joys—such things as mortal eyes never beheld—I have fought the good fight:" and so she went on in heavenly expressions. O! what what cause have we to bless the Lord, that she, who was afflicted and tossed with so many temptations in her life-time, found joy and comfort in her dying hour! The Lord was nearest to her when she needed him most. My wife remains as formerly; I hope, through the goodness of God, not worse. I desire the continuance of your prayers for us. The Lord be with your spirit. No more, but our love. In haste,
I rest

Your affectionate faithful

Friend in Christ,

John Mason.

LETTER XII.

My dear Friend,

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

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

I have great hopes that your soul is safe, however it may please the Lord in his wisdom

to deal with your body and family. Submit yourself cheerfully to his will and pleasure; and say, "Lord, here I am, here is my family, do with them as it shall seem good in thine eyes." —The Lord be gracious to you. The Lord be gracious to H——. The Lord awaken the hearts of the people. O that they might repent quickly! Because wrath is gone out from the Lord. The Lord stay his hand if it be his will. The Lord Jesus stand between the living and the dead. The Lord bless his word and rod to yourself and others. The Lord dwell, and rule, and walk in the midst of you. O keep close to God! he will never fail you nor forsake you.

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

Your loving Friend in the Lord,

John Mason.

Stratford, Sept. 25.

LETTER XIII.

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

What a good God have we! that remembers us in our low estate, thinks upon us when we are poor and needy, and is nearest to us when we need him most! He is a sun to comfort us, a shield to protect us; he gives us grace, he gives us glory, he gives us himself. O what a good God have we!—Why hath he chosen us? we did not choose him, but he hath chosen us. He hath loved us first, and hath loved us freely, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God!” Is not his love sweeter than wine? Is it not better than life? Does it not sweeten a sick-bed? Does it not sweeten the thoughts of death? When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, then the blessed soul cries, welcome death, welcome judgment, welcome eternity: come, sweet Lord Jesus, come quickly.

I rejoice to hear of your recovery. And I rejoice in the thoughts of that comfortable entertainment your Saviour gave you in the time of your sickness. When the apostle Peter was upon the water, he said, Lord, bid me come to thee. And so many of Christ's friends have desired him to call them. And did you run to embrace Christ? Did you rejoice in the thoughts of his coming? and long to depart, that you might be with him, which is the best of all? O! blessed be God for the savour of his sweet ointment, which drew out your soul after him. Blessed be God for his Almighty Spirit which made you so eagerly and joyfully desirous of the coming of Jesus Christ. But now you must wait for Christ, as the people by the sea-side, Luke viii. 40. He will certainly come. He saith, "Behold I come quickly. It is but yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." You must wait for him, and watch for him. Trim your lamp that you may hear the joyful sound, Behold your bridegroom cometh, you may be ready;

and the bride-chamber door may stand open for you—A good martyr in Scotland going to suffer for Christ, said to his wife, I will not bid you good night, for we shall meet at supper. It is not long ere all God's people shall be gathered together to him, and shall be for ever with him.

Remember my kind love to all my dear friends with you, and near you, as duly as if I named them one by one. Mine and my wife's love to you. Let us continue to pray for one another. The Lord be with your spirit. I remain

Your assured friend in the Lord,

John Mason.

Water-Stratford, Mar. 8. 1676.

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LETTER XIV.

Dear Friend,

I thank you for your letter, and am glad to hear you are so well settled; but especially of the good frame of your mind, which God

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

Watch over your heart, and tongue, and life. Watch against sin; watch unto duty; watch for the coming of Christ; seek the Lord, seek his strength, seek his face ever more. Be not weary of well doing, and waiting upon God. Remember what you hear, what you read, what you pray for; and live accordingly. The God of peace be with you.

My wife and I send our hearty love to you, and your brothers, and my cousin Betty. We

are in good health at present, blessed be the name of the Lord. I hope your brothers profit in learning. The Lord give every one of them a portion of grace. Commending you to the protection, direction and comforts of the blessed God, I rest

Your truly loving friend,

John Mason.

Water-Stratford, Feb. 23. 1676.

LETTER XV.

Dear Friend,

I received yours, and should be glad to hear where and in what condition you now are. Want of jealousy and zeal for the great name of God, deserves to be complained of. I am glad it is your burden; nevertheless I would not have you to be discouraged. It is a sound conclusion of divines, that a Christian may be more sensibly affected with outward things, which touch the senses, than with spiritual things; and yet have a more inward, deep, and

heartly concern for spirituals. He may have a more radicated love to God, than to any earthly things; he may have a more judicious hatred of sin than of any plague; he may have a more solid, profound grief, for the dishonour of God, than for an injury done to his earthly relations; albeit he may be under more vehement passions, and may shed more tears for wrongs done to his friends, or for plagues inflicted upon his body, than he doth for spiritual evils. Besides, I am glad Almighty God hath so far enlightened your mind, to see so much of the evil of sin as to be displeased with yourself for being no more displeasèd at it. It is some argument of softness, when the stone grates upon the flesh and makes it bleed. To be sensible of hardness argues that hardness doth not prevail.—God go on with his work in your heart, and make all abound in you. Wait continually upon your God. “Seek the Lord, seek his strength, seek his face evermore. Above all getting get wisdom; get understanding, forget it not.”—Let me know how it is

with you; and whether you have lighted into
good company. With our loves, I rest

Your loving Friend,

John Mason.

Water-Stratford, April 26, 1677.

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LETTER XVI.

My dear Friend,

The Lord love you, and bless you, and
keep you and make his face to shine upon you.
I beseech him to establish your heart with grace,
and preserve you harmless and blameless unto
the coming of Christ. Cleave unto God with
full purpose of heart. Be assured that the world
is vanity, sin is folly, Christ is All in All. Live
upon God by faith, live unto him by obedience.
Watch and pray, that you enter not into temp-
tation. Cherish good motions, quench bad.
Honour God by a faithful discharge of duties,
personal and relative. Be assured your "labour
is not in vain in the Lord. Cast not away your

confidence, which hath great recompence of reward."

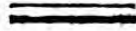
I was last week at Mursley to see your Mother, who was ill; but removing to Brickhill, she found herself better. I hope God will restore her to you all, for his glory and your comfort. We are all at present in good health, through God's goodness.

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

Your sincere Friend,

John Mason.

Water-Stratford, May 16. 1677.



LETTER XVII.

My dear Friend,

I am glad to hear of your proficiency in the good ways of God. The further you walk in them, the sweeter you will find them, and the better you will like them: and, therefore, I beseech you, "For God's sake, and for the

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

My dear Friend, I received your kind sympathizing letter, and thank you for it. I sent

to you an answer, but it could not find you out; and therefore I send this by your mother, whom I saw last week, blessed be God, finely supported.—With mine, my wife's cousin H——'s, and your brother's respects to you. I rest

Your assured Friend,

John Mason.

Water-Stratford, July 20, 1677.

LETTER XVIII.

Dear Friend,

I thank you for your letter. God hath blessed me with a son; and we are all in good health, God be praised. My brother Wyat was suddenly taken away, and my sister is left a poor sorrowful widow. See the course and fashion of the world; first the birth of a son, then the death of a brother. God never changes, never dies. Happy are they who have God for their God! they are sure of something, or rather of all. "If a man had the whole world, he were sure of nothing."—There is nothing

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like close communion with God. Watching and praying, and peace with God, makes a man comfortable in despite of all the rage and fury of earth and hell. Follow on to know God, and you shall know him more. The Lord establish your heart with grace, and give you a further experience and liking of his good ways. It would be much to my satisfaction to hear of your proficiency in a Christian way, and that your soul prospers. O that I may rejoice in the day of Christ upon your account! That I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.—I wish you a good settlement, and under a good master. God's holy and wise providence take the care, that you may be disposed of to your eternal good.—Mine and my wife's, and Mrs. W——'s love to you. Your brothers send you their due respects, I am

Your hearty assured Friend,

John Mason.

Water-Stratford, Oct. 10, 1677.

LETTER XIX.

My dear Friend,

You ask me what I “think the genuine properties of an humble man.” The question is very important; it deserves a serious consideration and a full answer. You know I have not the advantages of age and long experience, yet nevertheless I will tell my friend freely what I think are the marks and properties of one that is humble: and though I will not say but humility may discover itself in other ways, yet I will venture to affirm wherever the following properties are found in any one, he is an humble man.

He forgets not his former sinfulness, and outward meanness under the highest spiritual discoveries, or the greatest advancement in fortune and worldly circumstances.

He overlooks his own righteousness, and depends entirely upon that which is of God, by faith.

The lowest and meanest good work is not:

below him.

He is forward to submit to every truth God has revealed, even those which flesh and blood are most averse unto.

He lives neither from, nor unto himself, but unto and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

He highly prizes the least favour from God, deeming himself less than the least of all his mercies.

He never thinks himself good enough.

He smites and chides himself for small faults, as for great ones. He quietly bears burdens, and takes affronts without a noise.

He labours more to glorify God in afflictions, than to get out of them.

He seeks not after great things. He says a little will satisfy nature, less will satisfy grace.

He rejoices in the graces and success of others, as well as his own.

He will rather bear an hundred wrongs, than revenge one.

Though he may be of the very best abilities, he will not disdain to be taught by the meanest

persons.

He deems himself to have no wisdom to direct, or power to defend himself, without the light, and power of grace.

He prefers every one (that in truth he can) unto himself; thinking soberly of himself as God had dealt unto him the measure of faith.

These are some of the properties of an humble man. And my dear friend, who can forbear admiring the amiable character? Who can avoid wishing himself the happy owner of these blessed qualifications? Here give your heart full vent! Let all your soul desire this precious mother grace! May the good Lord give you an abundant measure thereof; then will your holiness and happiness also, be such as is wished, and heartily prayed for, by

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Brother,

and humble servant,

A. Z.

FINIS.

