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DEVOUT EXERCISES OF THE HEART,

IN

MEDITATION, SOLILOQUY, PRAYER, AND PRAISE.

BY THE LATE PIOUS AND INGENIOUS

MRS. ROWE.

REVIEWED AND PUBLISHED, AT HER REQUEST.

By I. WATTS, D. D.

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3534

TO

* * * * * * * * * * *,

AN INTIMATE FRIEND OF MRS. ROWE.

MADAM,

Newington, Sept. 29. 1737.

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

Beſides, Madam, you well know, that ſome copies out of theſe papers have been your own ſeveral years, by the gift of the deceaſed; and the favour you have done me lately, by your permiſſion

permiſſion to peruſe them,
the correction of theſe MANU
and would add another reaſon
this inſcription of them, if y
aſſuming too much honour
have admitted this piece of

I know, Madam, your
and indulgence to every t
ROWE has written, cannot
your judgment from ſuſpe
of her expreſſions to be
rapturous, and too near a-
language of the myſtical w
your piety and candour wi
ſuch offence as to prevent
improvement by them, in
divine and holy: And may y
hours find ſuch happy aſſi
elevations hereby, that you
mence the joys of angels, a
ed ſpirits, before-hand!

And when your valuabl
been long extended amidſt a
poral bleſſings you enjoy
Chriſtian virtues you pra
you, at the call of God, fi
diſmiſſion from mortality,

on high to meet your deceaſed friend in Paradiſe! Nor can I ſuppoſe, that any of the inhabitants of that bliſsful region, will ſooner recognize your glorified ſpirit, or will ſalute your firſt appearance there with a more tender ſenſe of mutual ſatisfaction. There may you join with you beloved *Philomela*, in paying celeſtial worſhip, in exalted and unknown forms, to her God and your God! And may the harmony of the place be aſſiſted by your united ſongs to JESUS, your common Saviour!

I am, Madam, with great ſincerity and eſteem,

Your moſt faithful,

and obedient Servant,

I. WATTS.

THE

PREFA

THE admirable Autho
devotional papers ha
high eſteem among the ing
the polite, ſince ſo many
fruits of her pen, both in
proſe, have appeared in pu
was early, honoured under t
name of *Philomela*, before
was allowed to know Mrs
Singer by the name drawn
family, or that of Mrs Rowe
acquired by marriage.

Though many of her wri
were publiſhed in her life
cover a pious and heaven
and a warm zeal for religi
tue; yet ſhe choſe to concea
tions of her heart, till ſhe w
yond the cenſure and the
mortals. It was enough
whom ſhe loved with arde
preme affection, was witne
ſecret and intenſe breathing

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

It is now almoſt thirty years ago ſince I was honoured with her acquaintance, nor could her great modeſty conceal all her ſhining graces and accompliſhments; but it is not my province to give a particular account of this excellent woman, who has bleſſed and adorned our nation and our age. I expect her temper, her conduct, and her

her virtues, will be ſet
pleaſing light among the
her life, by ſome near relati
the care of her poetical pie
familiar letters, is commi

Theſe Devout Exerciſe
ed with ſuch fire, as ſeems
language of holy paſſion,
ver them to be the dictates
and thoſe who were favou
chief intimacy, will moſt
lieve it. The ſtyle, I conf
above that of common n
ſoliloquy; but let it be r
ſhe was no common Ch
her virtues were ſublime,
nious was bright and ſpa
the vivacity of her imagin
tincture of the Muſe alm
childhood. This made it na
to expreſs the inward ſenti
ſoul in more exalted langu
paint her own ideas in m
rapture, near a-kin to the
poeſy.

The reader will here
dwelling in fleſh, elevated

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

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

Let it be obſerved, that it was much the faſhion, even among ſome Divines of eminence in former years, to expreſs the fervours of devout love to our Saviour, in the ſtyle of the Song of Solomon:

lomon: And I muſt co
of my compoſures in ver
younger life, were led by t
unwarily into this track.
be permitted to ſpeak the
ture age, I can hardly t
happieſt language in whi
ſhould generally diſcov
ſentiments of religion, ſir
and more ſpiritual revel
New Teſtament. Yet ſ
owned, there are ſome ſc
with ſuch beatifying viſi
ven, and raptured with
of divine affection; as mo
engages all animal nature
votions, and conſtrains t
their pureſt and moſt ſ
ciſes, in ſuch pathetic a
preſſions, as may be perve
by an unholy conſtructio
biaſs and propenſity towa
is yet ſtronger, where
ſions of piety have been
heart by devout writings

It ſhould be remember
is nothing to be found her

above our ideas: Here are none of thoſe abſurd and incomprehenſible phraſes, which amuſe the ear with ſounding vanity, and hold reaſon in ſovereign contempt: Here are no viſionary ſcenes of wild extravagance, no affectations of the tumid and unmeaning ſtyle, which ſpreads a glaring confuſion over the underſtanding; nothing that leads the reader into the region of thoſe myſtical ſhadows and darkneſs which abound in the Romiſh writers, under the pretence of refined light and ſublime ecſtacy. Nor is the character of this ingenious author to be blemiſhed with any other reproaches, which have been ſometimes caſt on ſuch ſort of meditations.

I know it hath been ſaid, that this language of rapture addreſſed to the Diety, is but a new tract given to the flow of the ſofter powers, after the diſappointment of ſome meaner love; or at leaſt, 'tis owing to the want of a proper object and opportunity to fix thoſe tender paſſions. But this cannot be allowed to be the caſe here; for as

Mrs

Mrs Rowe had been ſou
ſeveral lovers, ſo ſhe ſpen
of younger life in the co
with a gentleman of ſuch
ments, and ſuch circum
he was well fitted to be a
joys and cares.

I know, alſo, that this
ſionate turn of religious
has ſometimes been imput
and ill treatment in the m
whereby the ſame affectio
ed from an undeſerving
poured out, in amorous l
on an object ſupremely
divine. But neither has
any pretence in the preſen
happy pair had ſouls ſo
each other, that they perſe
common amity, and mu
tion, ſo long as Provide
him with life. It is ſufficie
then, that, in theſe medi
is no ſecret panting after
in the language of devotic

Nor yet can it be obje
was any diſplicence and pe

wards other things round about her, that taught her to expreſs herſelf with ſuch contempt of the things of mortality, and all the gay and tempting ſcenes of the preſent ſtate. She was by no means ſour and moroſe, and out of humour with the world, nor with her acquaintance that dwelt in it: She often converſed freely with the gay and great, and was in high eſteem among perſons of rank and honour. But honour and rank among mortals, with all the ſcenes of gaiety and greatneſs, were little, deſpicable, and forgotten things; while, in her devout moments, her eye and her heart were fixed on God, the Supreme Original of all excellence, and all honour.

In common life, ſhe was affable and friendly with perſons of every rank and degree; and in her latter years, as ſhe drew nearer to heaven, if ſhe avoided any thing, it was grandeur and public appearances on earth. But ſhe never ſo concealed and abſtracted herſelf from the ſociety of any of her fellow-creatures, as to deſpiſe the meaneſt of her

ſpecies. She was ever kin
paſſionate to the diſtreſſed,
liberal to the indigent. N
neglect the daily duties of l
under a vain imagination t
ved in a higher ſphere, an
phically exalted above them

In ſhort, there is nothi
papers that can juſtly ſuppo
ſort of cenſures, though me
minds may cover the Bible
ſlander and ridicule. Let a
ders ſtand aloof, nor touch
leaves, leſt they pollute th

Though there is not on
copy of verſes amongſt all
ports of her ſoul, yet ſhe
with her a reliſh of poeſy e
ſacred retirements. Som
ſprings her flight from a l
of verſe, which her memo
preſſed upon her heart:
from the midſt of her religi
ons, ſhe lights down upon
of ſome modern poet, even
well as Milton, *&c.* thoug
ſeldom ſhe cites their name

times the verſes ſeem to be the effuſion of her own rapturous thoughts, in ſudden melody and metre; or at leaſt I know not whence the lines are copied: But ſhe moſt frequently does me the honour to make uſe of ſome of my writings in verſe, in theſe holy meditations of her heart. Bleſſed be that God, who has ſo far favoured any thing my pen could produce, as to aſſiſt ſo ſublime a devotion.

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

Though ſhe was never tempted away from our common Chriſtianity, into the

the faſhionable apoſtacies
yet I am well informed,
hands, that in her later y
tered with more zeal and a
ſome of the peculiar doct
goſpel: And it is evident,
of theſe devotional pieces
evangelic turn than others,
bly moſt of thoſe were c
corrected in the latter part
The oppoſition which has
made to ſome of theſe truth
caſion to her further ſearch
and her zeal for them. I
have placed theſe papers al
them pin'd up in a wrap
though it is evident from
cumſtances, this is not th
which they were written, n
any great importance.

Though theſe writings gi
pirations of a devout ſoul
retirements, when ſhe had
preſent the public with
they did not want a great de
ment or correction, in orde
light. The numbers, and

are added by the publiſher, as well as the breaks and pauſes, which give a ſort of reſt to the reader's mind, and make the review more eaſy. Here and there, a too venturous flight is a little moderated: Sometimes, a medition or a ſentence is compleated, which ſeemed very imperfect; or a ſhort line or two inſerted, to introduce the ſenſe, where the langtiage ſeemed too abrupt, or the meaning too obſcure. Her ſoul had a large ſet of ideas in preſent view, which made every expreſſion ſhe uſed eaſy and perſpicuous to herſelf, when ſhe wrote only for her own uſe; though ſometimes her entire ſenſe might not be quite ſo obvious to every reader, without a little introduction into her tract of ſentiments. Upon the whole, I muſt acknowledge, I was very unwilling that this excellent work ſhould loſe any degrees of elegance and brightneſs, by paſſing through my hands.

When the manuſcript came firſt under my reviſal, I read it over with the eye of a critic and a friend, that I might publiſh it with honour to the

that wrote it, and with relig
tainment and advantage to
Nor was this employment
its proper ſatisfaction. Bu
I feel the true pleaſure of t
tations, till I had finiſhed
of the *Head*, and began to
over again as *Devout Exer*
Heart: Then I endeavour
more entirely into the ſpirit o
Author, and attempted to
language as my own. But
ſuperior was the ſatisfactio
received from this review,
whereſoever I had reaſon
could pronounce her words
rity of ſoul! How happily d
and entertain all my pleaſin
and give me another ſort of d
the dry critical peruſal of th
der to judge concerning thei
But I confeſs, alſo, it was
and mortifying thought, wh
how often I was conſtrain
the ſublime expreſſion fro
or forbid my tongue to uſe
my own attainments ſunk

neath thoſe ſacred elevations of ſpirit, and fell ſo far ſhort of theſe tranſcendent degrees of divine affection and zeal.

Let me perſuade all that preuſe this book, to make the ſame experiment that I have done; and when they have ſhut out the world, and are reading in their retirements, let them try how far they can ſpeak this language, and aſſume theſe ſentiments as their own: And, by aſpiring to follow them, may they find the ſame ſatisfaction and delight, or at leaſt learn the profitable leſſons of ſelf-abaſement and holy ſhame! And may a noble and glorious ambition, excite in their breaſts, a ſacred zeal to emulate ſo illuſtrious an example! Whatſoever ardours of divine love have been kindled in a ſoul united to fleſh and blood, may alſo be kindled by the ſame influences of grace, in other ſpirits labouring under the ſame clogs and impediments!

But perhaps it will be neceſſary here to give a caution to ſome humble Chriſtians, that they would not make

theſe higher elevations
holy joy, the teſt and
which to judge of the ſin
own religion. Ten th
are arrived ſafe at paradi
not been favoured, like *S*
a rapture into the third
could ever ariſe to the
tranſports and devout j
Rowe: Yet I hope all ſ
may find ſomething l
through the aids of the
may raiſe them above thei
may give a new ſpring t
gious pleaſures and th
hopes, and thereby rend
more holy and heavenly.

That the publication
book may be favoured wi
bleſſing for this happy
ſincere deſire and requeſt
liſher, as it was the real n
ingenious and pious write
them by my hand to the
This ſufficiently diſcover
following Letter.

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TO

The REV. DR WATTS,

AT NEWINGTON.

SIR,

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

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

The reflections were occaſionally written, and only for my own improvements; but I am not without hopes, that they may have the ſame effect on ſome pious minds, as the reading the experiences of others have had on my own ſoul. The experimental part of religion, has a greater influ-

ence

ence than its theory; and
ſleeping in the duſt, theſe ſo
kindle a flame of divine lo
of the loweſt and moſt deſp
be the glory given to the g
all grace and benignity.

I have now done with m
and all to come is vaſt Eter
nity,----How tranſporting
As long as God exiſts, my
pineſs is ſecure. Theſe unb
which the wide creation can
be ſatisfied for ever. I ſha
fountain-head of pleaſure
freſhed with the emanation
life and joy. I ſhall hear
uncreated harmony, ſpeaki
ineffable conſolation to my

I expect eternal life, not
(of merit) but a pure ac
Deteſting myſelf in every vi
I fly to the righteouſneſs a
of my great Redeemer, for
ſalvation; this is my only c
hope. Enter not into j
Lord! with thy ſervant
ſight ſhall no fleſh be juſti

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

ELIZ. ROWE.

DEVOUT EXERCISES OF THE HEART, &c.

I. *Supreme Love to* GOD.

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

O thou whom unſeen I love! by what powerful influence doſt thou attract my ſoul? The eye has not ſeen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what thou art; and yet I love thee beyond all that my eye has ſeen, or my ear heard, beyond all that my heart can com-

prehend. Thou dwelleſt
glory, to which no hum
can ſoar; and yet thou ar
and intimate to my ſoul,
the objects of ſenſe. Th
never heard thy voice; a
better acquainted with th
rely on thee with more con
on the deareſt friend I ha

My heart cleaves to the
as its only refuge, and fi
ſecret and conſtant ſpring
on. I ſpeak to thee with
confidence, and think th
greateſt happineſs. The
thy exiſtence and greatneſs
ſpirits, and fills my heart
ty; my ſoul overflows wi
I rejoice, I triumph, in t
dent bleſſedneſs, and abi
nion. Reign, O my Go
glorious and uncontrouled.

I, a worm of the earth,
my aſſent with the infinite c
with all thy flaming mi
rejoice in thy kingdom an

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CALIFORNIA

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

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

I love thee; and O thou that knoweſt all things! read the characters that love has drawn on my heart. What excellence but thine in heaven and earth could raiſe ſuch aſpirations of ſoul, ſuch ſublime and fervent affections as thoſe I feel? What could fix my ſpirit, but boundleſs prefection? What is there elſe

elſe for whoſe ſake I cou
created glory? Why
reſt here among ſenſible
Whence ariſe theſe impe
ings, theſe infinite deſir
not the complete creati
at leaſt delude me with a
pineſs? Why do not the c
awake a more ardent ſe
things diſtant and inv
ſhould I, who "ſay t
Thou art my Father," a
union with the immenſe

Ye angels of God, th
face, explain to me the ſa
tell me how this heave
gan; unriddle its wond
tion: Who hath animat
frame with celeſtial fire
clod of earth this divi
What could kindle it, b
of God, which kindled
And to thee, its amiabl
aſcends, it breaks throu
prefection, and keeps
courſe, to the firſt patter

Ye flowery varieties

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

But what will the open viſion of thy beauties effect, if, while thou art but faintly imagined, I love thee with ſuch a ſacred fervour? To what bleſſed heights ſhall my admiration riſe, when I ſhall behold thee in full perfection; when I ſhall ſee thee as thou art, exalted in majeſty, and complete in beau-

ty ? How ſhall I triumph
glory, and in the privilege
being ? What ineffable th
riſe, to find myſelf united
ſufficient Divinity, by tie
ſons of men have no name
by an engagement that th
of eternal years ſhall not di
league of nature ſhall be
the laws of the mingled
cancelled ; but my relatio
mighty God, ſhall ſtand fi
changeable, as his own exiſt
" life, nor death, nor an
" palities, nor powers, nor
" ſent, nor things to com
" ſeparate me from his lo

Triumph, O my ſoul !
Look forward beyond the
terreſtrial things ; look
thouſand ages of celeſtial
look forward ſtill, and tak
ſurable proſpect ; preſs on
unnumbered ages behind,
effable peace and pleaſure
once into the ocean of bl
eternity itſelf thy own.

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

II.

The Truth and Goodneſs of God

ENgrav'd as in eternal braſs,
The mighty promiſe ſhines;
Nor can the powers of darkneſs raze
Theſe everlaſting lines.

The ſacred word of grace is ſtrong,
As that which built the ſkies;
The voice that rolls the ſtars along,
Speaks all the promiſes.

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

Thou

Thou art every way qu
good thy engagements,
of thy riches and power
Nor haſt thou any ne
thy creatures, or to ſay
to them than thou me
Miſerable man can brin
to thee, nor has any thin
thee. By what benefit ha
thee? By what right c
the leaſt of thy favours
ments are all free and
founded on thy own be
not on the merits of the cr
I conſider this, my ex
I ſet no limits to my
up with confidence, an
Father; and, with a h
claim every advantage th
imports. My heart co
with ſtedfaſtneſs and alac
diſtruſt are inconſiſte
thoughts of the benefice
ture.

Every name and attri
thou haſt revealed thyſel
firms my faith. Thy lif

engaged: I may as well queſtion thy exiſtence, as thy faithfulneſs: As ſure as thou art, thou art juſt and true. The proteſtations of the moſt faithful friend I have, cannot give me half the conſolation that thy promiſes give me. I hear vain man with diffidence, I bid my ſoul beware of truſting falſe mortality; but I hear thy voice with joy and full aſſurance.

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

III.

III.

Longing after the enjoyn

MY God! to thee my every complaint I with thy name; I pauſe the ſound; I ſpeak it ov find that all my cares beg thee. I long to behold beauty, I pant for the fair that is lovely, for beauty t known, and for intellect yet untaſted.

My heart aſpires, m beyond the bounds of deſpiſe all that mortality me with. I was formed joys, and find myſelf ca entertainments of angels. I not begin my heaven taſte at leaſt of the ſpring that flow from thy rigl ever?

Should I drink my fill, th are ſtill exhauſtleſs; milli ſouls quench their infinite

millions of happy orders of beings gaze on thy beauty, and are made partakers of thy bleſſedneſs; but thou art ſtill undiminiſhed. No liberality can waſte the ſtore of thy prefection; it has flowed from eternity, and runs for ever freſh,--- and why muſt I periſh for want!

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

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

Diſpatch thy commiſſions; give me my

my work, and activity
and let me as a hireling
Lord ! it is enough : W
than my fathers ! They
am mortal.

I'm but a ſtranger, and a pilg
In theſe wild regions, wand'
Reſtleſs, and ſighing for my r
Longing to reach my weary ſ
And to fulfil my taſk. Oh
Of joy and ſweet repoſe. Tr

Lord ! here I am w
commands, attending
O ſpeak, and incline n
give me my work, l
and gain my diſmiſſion
of ſin and death : this h
ror and guilt, of corrup
Oh ! let me drop this lo
ſcenes of guilt a final a

I have waited for th
Lord ! when wilt thou
holy habitation ? Hov
pine at this diſtance fro
can I ſpeak, to ſhew t
utter my anguiſh, wh

of my God? Oh! ſpeak an aſſuring word, and confirm my hope.

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

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

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

Yet again, O Lord! I aſk leave to tell thee, I have waited for thy ſalvation, and hourly languiſhed after the habitations of my God. My heart grows ſick, and I almoſt expire under theſe delays: What have I here to keep me from thee? what to relieve the tedious hour of abſence? I have pronounced all

below the ſun vanity and
inſipid and burdenſom
health and plenty, friend
tion, thou art my only joy
wiſh, and my ſupreme
thee my ſoul fixes all
there I reſt in a celeſtial
let it not be broken
objects; let me live unn
cares or delights of ſenſe.

Oh! let me flee
From all the world, and live alc

IV.

God *my ſupreme, my*

WHY do I addreſs th
with no more confi
do I indulge theſe remain
and harbour theſe return
and diſtruſt? Can I ſurv
can I gaze on the ſtru
heavens, and aſk if thou a
ver? Can I call in queſtion
ſuccour me, when I conſi

ral and particular inſtances of thy goodneſs and power? One age to another in long ſucceſſion, hath conveyed the records of thy glory; in all generations thou haſt been our dwelling-place; my fathers truſted in thee, and were delivered. They have encouraged me; my own experience has encouraged me to truſt in thee for ever.

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

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

Therefore

Therefore I apply myſ
ly to thee, and renounc
and all the confidence
from heaven or earth be

Not from the duſt my joys or
Let all the baleful plants ſhe
Their mingled curſes round
Their mingled curſes I de
Let but the great, th' eternal k
Look thro' the clouds, and ble
his eyes.

Let him bleſs me, a
bleſſed; bleſſed withou
mitation; bleſſed in my
coming in, in my ſitting
ſing up; bleſſed in time,
all eternity. That ble
lips will influence the v
and attend me wherever
go before me as a leadi
follow me as my pro
When I lye down, it w
ſhall reſt beneath the ſhad
High, and dwell ſafely i
his tabernacle.

Thy kingdom ruleth
Lord! and thou doſt ac

will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth! I confeſs and acknowledge thy providence. The ways of man are not at his own diſpoſal, but all his goings are ordered by thee; all events are in thy hands, and thou only canſt ſucceed or diſappoint his hopes. If thou blow on his deſigns, they are for ever blaſted; if thou bleſs them, neither earth nor hell can hinder their ſucceſs: Therefore I apply myſelf immediately to thee; for not all created power can aſſiſt me, without thee.

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

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

Lord

Lord! when my thoughtful ſoul
Fire, air and earth, and ſtars an
I call them all thy ſlaves;
Commiſſion'd by my Father's wi
Poiſons ſhall cure, or balm ſhall
Vernal ſuns, or zephyrs breath,
May burn or blaſt the plants to
That ſharp December ſaves
What can winds or planets boaſ
But a precarious power?
The ſun is all in darkneſs loſt:
Froſt ſhall be fire and fire be froſ
When he appoints the hour

At thy command natu
fity are no more; all th
eaſy to God: Speak l
word, and my deſires
Say, Let there be light, a
be light. Thou canſt
peace, when the tumult
raiſe a ſtorm within. Bi
ſtill, and all its tempe
thee.

I depend only on th
ſmile, and all the world
Do thou ſucceed my affai
fear no obſtacle that eart
put in my way. Thou

object of my fear, and all my deſires are directed to thee.

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

V.

God *a preſent help*, *a*

THOU waſt found God! when I ſou
and wilt thou fly me wh
Am I giving my breath
and ſcattering my petitio
Is it a vain thing to call u
is there no profit in cryi
mighty? Art thou a Go
not near at hand? Is ther
empt from thy preſence
whence my cries canno
Can any darkneſs hide
eyes? or is there a corn
tion unviſited by thee?
fill heaven and earth, and
rounded by thy immenſi

Are my deſires unkno
is there a thought in my
ed from thee? Doſt not
formed the ear, hear?
get the work of thine ov
retired far in the heaven
own happineſs, canſt t
creation to miſery and diſ
and hopeleſs? Are the w

his own diſpoſal, and his paths undirected by thee? Is calling on the living God no more than worſhipping a dumb idol? Canſt thou, like them, diſappoint and mock thy adorers?

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

But, oh! what unrighteouſneſs have my fathers ever found in thee? What injuſtice can I charge thee with?

What

What breach of truth, or
Have the records of thy
been ſtained with the br
fulneſs? Art thou not m
and my long experienced f
I ever found help from t
when thou haſt failed me
can I have a greater certa
word to depend on? C
power defend or deliver lik
art "a rock, and thy wo
"for all thy ways are judg
"of truth, and without i
"and right art thou."
breath I will witneſs to t
faithfulneſs, and declare t
to the children of men.

VI.

GOD *an all-ſufficient God, happineſs.*

WHY is my heart ſo far for
My God, my chief del
Why are my thoughts no more by
With thee, no more by night?

Why ſhould my fooliſh paſſions r
Where can ſuch ſweetneſs be,

As I have taſted in thy love,
As I have found in thee?

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

I have never found ſatisfaction in any thing, but in God: Why then do I wander from him? Why do I leave the fountain of living waters, for broken ciſterns? Why do I abandon the full ocean in ſearch of ſhallow ſtreams? What account can I give for folly like this?

this? I can promiſe n
from the creature; thoſ
ſhall deceive me no moı
my God! thou art the on
hopes and deſires; 'tis
canſt make me happy.

If thou frown, my be
thy indignation is hell wit
Let me never feel that,
things elſe to make me
ſeem independent on all
only I apply myſelf. H
beneficent Author of m
ſupport of my life! To th
wiſhes, thoſe deſires wh
approve, while I aſk bu
I was created to enjoy.
my expectation on thee
from this levity and inc

Look gently down Almighty G
Priſon me round in thy embrac
Pity the heart that would be t
And let thy power my love co

Suffer me never to ſta
ſuch a confinement were
liberty: Thy yoke is
burden light. I ſhall

that binds me to thee. Oh! give me ſuch a view of thy beauty, as ſhall fix my volatile heart for ever! ſuch a view as ſhall determine all its motions, and be a conſtant conviction how unreaſonable is it to wander from thee.

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

I want nothing when I am poſſeſſed of thee; without thee, I want all things. Thou art the centre of all my paſſions; I have no hope but what is thine, no joy but what flows from thee; my greateſt fears are theſe of loſing thee; my inmoſt care is to ſecure thy favour. This is the ſubject of my deepeſt anxiety: Every ſigh I breathe, ends in thy name; and that lov'd name alone al-

lays every anguiſh of my ſ
its wildeſt tempeſt.

From thy frowns or fav
or ſorrows ſpring; thy fro
me infinitely miſerable, t
make me infinitely bleſſe
hell, and ſmile in the
while I can call thee mi
Still let me bleſs the ſound
all things rather than renc
perty in thee: Let me
laſt breath, and claim it
piring ſighs.

Secure of thee, nothir
my ſoul; all is peaceful an
in, eternal love and immc
I deſire no more; imag
here, and all my wiſhes a
nal plenty.------My Goc
not be aſked, and with
be infinitely miſerable. T
of the ſkies ſhould not bu
thee and thy love: The
all creatures is complete
himſelf is bleſſed in hin

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

VII.

A Covenant with God.

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

With

With the moſt thankful ſincerity I take hold on this covenant, as it is more fully manifeſted and explained in thy goſpel by Jeſus Chriſt: and humbly accepting thy propoſals, I bind myſelf to thee by a ſacred and everlaſting obligation. By a free and deliberate action, I do here ratify the articles which were made for me in my baptiſm, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I religiouſly devote myſelf to thy ſervice, and entirely ſubmit to thy conduct. I renounce the glories and vanities of the world, and chuſe thee as my happineſs, my ſupreme felicity, and everlaſting portion. I make no article with thee for any thing beſides: Deny or give me what thou wilt, I will never repine while my principal treaſure is ſecure. This is my deliberate, my free, and ſincere determination; a determination, which, by thy grace, I will never retract.

Oh! thou, by whoſe power alone I ſhall be able to ſtand! put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from

from thee: Let not the world with all its flatteries, nor death nor hell, with all their terrors, force me to violate this ſacred vow. Oh! let me never live to abandon thee, nor draw the impious breath that would deny thee.

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

ELIZABETH ROWE.

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

O happy day! tranſporting moment! the brighteſt period of my life! Heaven,

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

VIII.

A Thank-offering for ſaving grace.

BLESS the Lord, O my ſoul! and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name. Bleſs the Lord, and forget not all his benefits, who redeemed thy life from deſtruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindneſs and tender mercy; who brought thee out of the

mire

mire and clay, and ſet thy feet upon a rock; who broke thy fetters, and freed thee from the miſerable bondage of ſin. I lay, a wretched ſlave, pleaſed with my chains, and fond of my captivity, fatally deluded and undone, till love, almighty love, reſcued me. Bleſt effect of unmerited grace! I ſhall ſtand forever an illuſtrious inſtance of boundleſs mercy: To that I muſt entirely aſcribe my ſalvation; and through all the ages of eternity, I'll rehearſe the wonders of redeeming love, and tell to liſtening angels what it has done for my ſoul.

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

My glorious Creator! why did I employ thy thoughts before I had a being? Why from all eternity was an immortality deſigned me, and my birth allotted me in a land illuminated with the rays of ſacred light. I might have been invoking the powers of hell with deteſtable ceremonies, inſtead of adoring the Omnipotent God. But

when

when thouſands are loſt in theſe delu-ſions, why am I thus graciouſly diſ-tinguiſhed? Inſtead of being born among the ſhameful vices of impious parents, and an heir to their curſes, why am I intitled to the bleſſing of religious anceſtors? Why, when I was incapable of choice, was I devoted to the God that keeps covenant and mercy to a thouſand generations of them that fear him.

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

Why

Why did thy Spirit ſtrive ſo long with an obſtinate heart, which reſiſted all its motions, and turned thy patience and long-ſuffering into provocation and guilt? Why am I not undone by thoſe pleaſing ſnares in which I have ſeen ſo many deluded wretches periſh? Like them, I deſpiſed the unſearchable riches of thy grace; with them I had been content to ſhare the ſorry portion and pleaſures of this world, if thou had'ſt let me alone, and I ſhould never have enquired after thee; but why waſt thou found of one that ſought thee not? O why, but becauſe thou wilt be merciful to whom thou wilt be merciful.

Therefore, again, with aſtoniſhment and delight, I look back on the methods of thy grace; and again I conſider myſelf loſt in an abyſs of ſin and miſery; when there was no eye to pity me, no hand but thine to aſſiſt me, thou madeſt it then the time of love. Never was grace more free and ſurpriſing than thine is; never was there a more obſtinate heart than mine; and never ſuch

ſuch unconquerable love as thine. How glorioufly has it triumphed over my rebellious faculties? How freely has it cancell'd all my guilt?

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

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

and

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

" Infinite love! almighty grace!
" Stand in amaze, ye rolling ſkies."

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

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

My-

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

IX.

Evidence of ſincere love to GOD.

IF I love thee not, my bleſſed God, I know not what I love; If I am uncertain of this, I am uncertain of my exiſtence. If I love thee not, what is the meaning of theſe pathetic expreſſions, MY GOD! MY ALL! thou ſpring of my life, and fountain of my happineſs! my great reward, and my exceeding joy! the eternal object of my love, and ſupreme felicity of my nature! Does not my heart attend my lips in all this language? How can this be, if my ſoul does not love thee?

O my God! if I love thee not, what is the meaning of this conſtant uneaſineſs at thy abſence? From whence proceeds this painful anxiety of mind about thy love, and all theſe intenſe, theſe reſtleſs deſires after thee? Why

are

are all the ſatisfactions of life inſipid without thee? Without my God, what are riches, and honours, and pleaſures, to me? I ſhould eſteem the poſſeſſion of the world but a trifle, or rather my eternal damage, if it muſt be purchaſed with the loſs of thy favour. Thy benignity is better than life; and the moments in which I enjoy a ſenſe of thy love, are the only happy intervals of my life. It is then I live; it is then I am truly bleſs'd: It is then I look down with contempt on the little amuſements of the world, and pity them that want a taſte for theſe exalted pleaſures.

How calm, how peaceful in thoſe ſeaſons are all the regions of my ſoul! I have enough; I aſk no more. Can they languiſh for the ſtream, who drink at the overflowing fountain? I have all the world, and more, I have heaven itſelf in thee; in thee I am completely and ſecurely bleſſed, and can defy the malice of earth and hell to ſhake the foundation of my happineſs, while thou doſt whiſper thy love to my ſoul. O bleſſed ſtability of heart; O

ſublime ſatisfaction! Haſt thou not told me that thou art mine by an inviolable engagement, when my ſoul devoted itſelf ſincerely to thee? Does not thy word aſſure me, that the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed; but thy kindneſs ſhall not depart, nor the covenant of thy peace be broken?

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

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

How

How dull are its entertainments to the pleaſure of converſion with thee? Oh ſtay, in thoſe happy moments, cries my ſatisfied ſoul!

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

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

If I love thee not, what's the meaning of this impatience to be with thee? My ſoul longeth, yea fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; when ſhall I come and appear before thee? Oh! that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at reſt.

X.

Aſſurance of ſalvation in CHRIST JESUS.

I Have put my treaſures, my immortal part, into thy hands, Oh my dear Redeemer! And ſhall the prey be taken from the mighty? Shall a ſoul conſecrated to thee, fall a ſacrifice to hell?

Bleſſed God! am I not thine? and ſhall the temple of thy ſpirit be profaned, and the lips that have ſo often aſcribed dominion, and glory, and majeſty to thee, be defiled with infernal blaſphemy, and the execrations of the damn'd? Shall the ſparks of divine love be extinguiſhed, and immortal enmity ſucceed? And ſhall I, who was once bleſſed with thy favour, become the object of thy wrath and indignation? Shall all the mighty things thou haſt done for my ſoul, be forgotten? Shall all my vows, and thy own ſacred engagements, be cancelled? 'Tis all impoſſible; for thou art not as man, that thou ſhouldſt lie; nor as the ſon of man, that thou ſhouldſt repent.

Thou

Thou art engaged by thy own tremendous name for my ſecurity: my God, and my father's God; from generation to generation thou haſt been our dwelling-place. I was devoted to thee in baptiſm, by the ſolemn vows of my religious parents: My infant hands were early lifted up to thee, and I ſoon learned to know and acknowledge the God of my fathers. I have actually ſubſcribed with my hand to the Lord, and am thine by the moſt voluntary and deliberate obligations. The portion of Jacob is my joyful choice; nor need I fear loſing it, while thy word is eſtabliſhed as the heavens.

The Lord, who made heaven, earth and ſea,
And all that they contain,
Will never quit his ſtedfaſt truth,
Nor make his promiſe vain.

Were my dependence on myſelf, I were undone: The firſt temptation would ſhake my reſolutions; I ſhould ſell the ineſtimable riches of thy love

for a trifle, and fool away immortal pleaſures for the joys of a moment; a ſpecious deluſion would ſeduce me from all my hopes of a glorious futurity. I ſhall fall a victim to my own folly, and muſt inevitably periſh, if thou forſake me: But the ſtrength of Iſrael is my hope, the Mighty One of Jacob my defence.

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

I was thy early care; thou didſt ſupport my helpleſs infancy, and art the watchful guide of my unſteady youth. Which way ſoever I turn, I meet thy mercy, and trace thy providence; and, as long as I live, I will record thy benefits, and depend on thy truth; thoſe benefits which have

conſtantly

conſtantly purſued me, and that truth which has never deceived me, and is engaged never to abandon me. Tranſporting aſſurance! What further ſecurity can I aſk? What ſecurity can I wiſh beyond eternal veracity? The mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed: but thy kindneſs ſhall not depart, nor the covenant of thy peace be broken; that covenant which has been ſealed by the blood of the Son of God; and in that holy ſacrament I have received the pledges of thy love. Thou didſt graciouſly invite me into that communion, and met me there with the moſt unmerited favour.

Fear not, ſay'ſt thou, poor trembling ſoul! for I am thy Redeemer, and thy mighty Saviour, the hope of Iſrael, and in my name ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed. I am gracious and merciful, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth. Theſe are the titles by which I have revealed myſelf to men. I came the expected Meſſiah, the Star of Jacob, and the glory of the Gentiles. I came from

the

the fulneſs of ineffable glory, in the form of man, to redeem the race of Adam: I am willing and able to ſave; and "whoſoever comes to me, I will in no wiſe caſt away." Fear not: I had kind deſigns towards thee from eternity; and by theſe viſible ſigns of my body and blood, I ſeal my love to thy ſoul: Take here the pledges of heaven, the aſſurance of everlaſting happineſs.

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

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

Let God and angels witneſs for me, that I renounce the world, and chuſe thy love

love as my portion; witneſs that I ſacrifice my darling ſins to thee, and, from this moment, ſolemnly devote myſelf to thy ſervice.

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

XI.

Thou art my God.

O GOD! thou art my God; thou art thy own bleſſedneſs, the centre of thy own deſires, and the boundleſs ſpring of thy own happineſs. Thou art immutable and infinitely perfect, and therein conſiſts thy bleſſedneſs and glory; but that *thou art my God*, it is from thence flows all my conſolation; this glorious privilege is my dignity and boaſt.

boaſt. "Thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee; my father's God, and I will exalt thee. The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my Rock, and let the God of my ſalvation be exalted. Thy benignity is better than life, therefore my lips ſhall praiſe thee."

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

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

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

Thou art my God: Let me again repeat the glorious accents, and hear the pleaſureable ſounds. Let me a thouſand and a thouſand times repeat it; it is rapture all, and harmony: The harps of angels and their tongues, what notes more melodious could they ſing or play? What but theſe tranſporting words give the emphaſis to all their joys? On this they dwell; it is their eternal theme, *Thou art my God.* Like me, every ſeraph boaſts the glorious propriety, and owes his happineſs to thoſe important words: In them unbounded joys are comprehended; paradiſe itſelf, all heaven is here deſcribed; all

all that is poſſible to be uttered of celeſtial bleſſedneſs, is here contained.

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

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

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

When death ſhall remove all other ſupports, and force me to quit my title to the deareſt names below, in my God I ſhall have an unchangeable property: That engagement ſhall remain firm, when I ſhall loſe my hold of all other enjoyments; when all human things vaniſh with an everlaſting flight,

I ſhall bid them a joyful adieu, and breathe out my ſoul with this triumphant exclamation, *Thou art my God*, my inheritance, my eternal poſſeſſion: Nor death, nor hell, ſhall ever ſeparate me from thy love.

Thou art my God. Let me ſurvey the extent of my bleſſedneſs: Let me take a proſpect of my vaſt poſſeſſion: Let me conſider its dimenſions: O depth! O height! O length and breadth immeaſurable! I have all that is worth poſſeſſing; *Thou art my God.*

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

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

XII.

Confeſſion of Sin, with Hope of Pardon.

BREAK, break, inſenſible heart! Let confuſion cover me, and darkneſs, black as my own guilt, ſurround me. Lord! what a monſter am I become? How hateful to myſelf for offending thee? How much more deteſtable to thee, to thee againſt whom I have offended? Why have I provoked the God on whom my being every moment depends? the God, who out of nothing advanced me to a reaſonable and immortal nature, and put me in a capacity of being happy for ever: the God whoſe goodneſs has run parallel with my life; who has preſerved me in a thouſand dangers, and kept me even from

from the ruin I courted, and even while I repined at the providence that ſaved me.

How often has he recovered me from eternal miſery, and brought me back from the very borders of hell, when there was but a dying groan, but one faint ſigh between me and everlaſting perdition? When all human help failed, and my mournful friends were taking their laſt farewel; when every ſmiling hope forſook me, and the horrors of death ſurrounded me; to God I cryed from the depths of miſery and deſpair, I cried, and he was entreated, and reſcued my life from deſtruction: He brought me out of the miry clay, and ſet my feet upon a rock. A thouſand inſtances of thy goodneſs could I recount, and all to my own confuſion. Could I conſider thee as my enemy, I might forgive myſelf; but when I conſider thee as my beſt friend, my tender father, the ſuſtainer of my life, and the author of my happineſs, Good God! what a monſtrous thing do I appear, who have ſinned againſt thee? Could

Could I charge thee with ſeverity, or call thy laws rigorous and unjuſt, I had ſome excuſe; but I am ſilenced there by the conviction of my own reaſon, which aſſents to all thy precepts as juſt and holy. But to heighten my guilt, I have violated the ſacred rules I approve: I have provoked the juſtice I fear, and offended the purity I adore.

Yet ſtill there are higher aggravations of my iniquity; and what gives me the utmoſt confuſion, is, that I have ſinned againſt unbounded love and goodneſs. Horrid ingratitude! Here lies the emphaſis of my folly and miſery; the ſenſe of this torments me, can I not ſay, as much as the dread of hell, or the fears of loſing heaven? Thy love and tender compaſſion, the late pleaſing ſubjects of my thoughts, are on this account become my terror. The titles of an enemy and a judge, ſcarce ſound more painful to my ears, than thoſe of a friend and a benefactor, which ſo ſhamefully enhance my guilt: Thoſe ſacred names confound and terrify my ſoul, becauſe they furniſh my conſcience

conſcience with the moſt exquiſite reproaches: The thoughts of ſuch goodneſs abuſed, and ſuch clemency affronted, ſeem to me almoſt as unſupportable, as thoſe of thy wrath and ſeverity.

O! whither ſhall I turn? I dare not look upward; the ſun and ſtars upbraid me there: If I look downward, the fields and fountains take their Creator's part, and heaven and earth conſpire to aggravate my ſins: Thoſe common bleſſings tell me how much I am indebted to thy bounty: But, Lord! when I recall thy particular favours, I am utterly confounded; what numerous inſtances could I recount? Nor has my rebellion yet ſhut up the fountain of thy grace; for yet I breathe, and yet I live, and live to implore a pardon: Heaven is ſtill open, and the throne of God acceſſible; but, Oh! with what confidence can I approach it? what motives can I urge, but ſuch as carry my own condemnation in them?

Shall I urge thy former pity and indulgence? This were to plead againſt

myſelf: and yet thy clemency, that clemency which I have abuſed, is the beſt argument I can bring: thy grace and clemency as revealed in Jeſus, the Son of thy love, the bleſſed reconciler of God and man.

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

O Lord God! permit a poor worthleſs creature to plead a little with thee: What honour will my deſtruction bring thee? What profit, what triumph to the Almighty, will my perdition be? Mercy is thy brighteſt attribute; this gives thee all thy love-

lineſs

lineſs, and completes thy beauty. By names of kindneſs and indulgence thou haſt choſen to reveal thyſelf to men: By titles of the moſt tender import, thou haſt made thyſelf known to my ſoul; titles which thou doſt not yet diſdain, but art ſtill compaſſionate, and ready to pardon.

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

XIII.

The Abſence of God *on Earth.*

WHAT is hell! what is damnation, but an excluſion from thy preſence? It is the want of that which gives the regions of darkneſs all their horror. What is heaven? what are the ſatisfactions of angels, but the views

views of thy glory? What but thy ſmiles and complacence, are the ſprings of their immortal tranſports?

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

There was a time (but, ah! that happy time is paſt, thoſe bliſsful minutes gone) when, with a modeſt aſſurance, I could call thee my Father, my almighty Friend, my defence, my hope and my exceeding great reward: But thoſe glorious advantages are loſt; thoſe raviſhing proſpects withdrawn, and to my trembling ſoul thou doſt no more appear, but as a conſuming fire, an inacceſſible majeſty, my ſevere judge,

and

and my omnipotent adverſary; and who ſhall deliver me out of thy hands? Where ſhall I find a ſhelter from thy wrath? What ſhades can cover me from thy all-ſeeing eye?

One glance from thee, one piercing ray,
Would kindle darkneſs into day:
The veil of night is no diſguiſe,
No ſcreen from thy all-ſearching eyes:
Thro' midnight-ſhades thou findſt thy way,
As in the blazing noon of day.

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

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

I have waited for thee as they that wait for the morning, and thy returns are more welcome than the ſpringing day-light, after the horrors of a melancholy night; more welcome than caſe to the ſick, than water to the thirſty, or reſt to the weary traveller. How undone was I without thee? In vain, while thou wert abſent, the world hath tried to entertain me: All it could offer, was like jeſts to dying men, or like recreation to the damned. On thy favour alone my tranquillity depends; deprived of that, I ſhould ſigh for happineſs in the midſt of a paradiſe: Thy loving kindneſs is better than life; and if a taſte of thy love be thus tranſporting, what extaſies ſhall I know when I drink my fill of the ſtreams of bliſs, that flow from thy right hand for ever; But when——'

When

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

XIV.

Baniſhment from GOD *for ever.*

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

* *At the Lord's Supper.*

O dread-

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

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

Depart from thee! Oh, whither ſhould I go from thee? Into utter darkneſs! that makes no addition at all to the wretch's miſery that is baniſhed from thy face. After that fearful doom I ſhould without conſtraint ſeek out ſhades as dark as hell, being moſt agreeable

agreeable to my own deſpair, and in the horrors of eternal night bewail the infinite loſs.

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

The groans of the damned, and the darkneſs of the infernal caverns, would better ſuit my grief. There, to the cries of tormented ghoſts, and to the ſound of eternal tempeſts, I might join my wild complaints, and lament the loſs of infinite bliſs, and curſe my own folly: But all the plagues below, if I might ſpeak my preſent thoughts, ſhould not extort a blaſphemous re-

flection on the divine attributes; for I know I deſerve eternal miſery, and even in hell I ſhould confeſs thy juſtice. Thy long experienced clemency, I am ſure, ought to ſilence my reproaches for ever, and to all eternity leave thee unblemiſhed with the imputation of cruelty.

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

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

But muſt I depart from thee into everlaſting fire? Double and dreadful curſe! And yet unquenchable flames, and

and infernal chains (if I can judge in this life of ſuch awful futurities) would be leſs terrible than the ſenſe of thoſe loſt joys. That loſs would endure no reflection; the review would be for ever inſufferable; the ages of eternity could not diminiſh the exquiſite regret; ſtill it would excite new and unutterable anguiſh, and rack me with infinite deſpair

Bleſſed God! pity the ſoul whoſe extremeſt horror is the doom of an eternal departure from thee. Draw my ſpirit into the holieſt and the neareſt union with thyſelf that is poſſible, while it dwells in this fleſh; and let me here commence that delightful reſidence and converſe with God, which neither death nor judgment ſhall ever deſtroy, nor ſhall a long eternity ever put a period to it.

XV.

The Glory of GOD, *in His Works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption.*

MY being immediately flows from thee, and ſhould I not praiſe my Omnipotent Maker? I received the laſt breath I drew from thee; thou doſt ſuſtain my life this very moment, and the next depends entirely on thy pleaſure: It is the dignity of my nature to know, and my happineſs to praiſe and adore my great original. But, Oh! thou Supreme of all things! how art thou to be extolled by mortal man? "I "ſay to corruption, Thou art my fa-"ther; and to the worms, Ye are my "brethren; my days are as a hand's "breadth, and my life is nothing be-"fore thee; but thou art the ſame, and "thy years never fail: From everlaſt-"ing to everlaſting thou art God:" the incomprehenſible, the immutable Divinity. The language of paradiſe, and the ſtrains of celeſtial eloquence, fall ſhort of thy perfections; the firſt

born

born ſons of light loſe themſelves in bliſsful aſtoniſhment, in ſearch of thy excellencies; even they with ſilent ecſtaſy adore thee, while thou art veiled with ineffable ſplendour.

The bright, the bleſt Divinity, is known
And comprehended by himſelf alone.

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

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

At thy word the pillars of the ſky were framed, and its beauteous arches raiſed: Thy breath kindled the ſtars, adorned the moon with ſilver rays, and give the ſun its flaming ſplendour. Thou didſt prepare for the waters their capacious bed, and by thy power ſet bounds to the raging billows: By thee the valleys were clothed in their flowery pride, and the mountains crowned with groves. In all the wonderful ef-

fects of nature, we adore and confeſs; thy power; thou uttereſt thy voice in thunder, and doſt ſcatter thy lightning abroad; thou rideſt on the wings of the wind; the mountains ſmoke, and foreſts tremble, at thy approach; the ſummer and winter, the ſhady night, and the bright revolutions of the day, are thine.

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

But, O! what muſt thy eſſential majeſty and beauty be, if thou art thus illuſtrious in thy works? If the diſcoveries of thy power and wiſdom are thus delightful, how tranſporting are the manifeſtations of thy goodneſs? From thee every thing that lives receives its breath, and by thee are all upheld in life. Thy providence reaches the leaſt inſect; for thou art good, and thy care extends to all thy other works. Thou feedeſt the ravens; and doſt provide the young lions their prey; Thou ſcattereſt thy bleſſings, with a liberal

beral hand, on the whole creation; man, ungrateful man, largely partakes thy bounty. Thou cauſeſt thy rain to deſcend, and makeſt the ſun to ſhine on the evil and unthankful; for thou art good, and thy mercy endureth for ever.

As the Creator and Preſerver of men, thou art gloriouſly manifeſt; but, oh! how much more gloriouſly art thou revealed, as reconciling ungrateful enemies to thyſelf by the blood of thy eternal Son? Here thy beneficence diſplays its brighteſt ſplendour: Here thou doſt fully diſcover thy moſt magnificent titles, THE LORD, THE LORD GOD, MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, LONG-SUFFERING, AND ABUNDANT IN GOODNESS. How unſearchable are thy ways, and thy paths paſt finding out! Infinite depths of love, never to be expreſſed by human language! and yet ſhould man be ſilent, the ſtones themſelves would ſpeak, and the mute creation find a voice to upbraid his ungrateful folly.

XVI.

XVI.

Longing for the Coming of CHRIST.

COME, Lord Jesus! come quickly. Oh, come! lest my expectations faint; lest I grow weary, and murmur at thy long delay. I am tired with these vanities, and the world grows every day more unentertaining and insipid; it has now lost its charms, and finds my heart insensible to all its allurements. With coldness and contempt I view these transitory glories, inspired with nobler prospects and vaster expectations by faith. I see the promised land, and every day brings me nearer the possession of my heavenly inheritance. Then shall I see God, and live: and, face to face, behold my triumphant Redeemer;

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

I have nothing here to linger for; my

my hopes, my reſt, my treaſure, and my joys are all above: My ſoul faints for the courts of the Lord, in a dry and thirſty land where there is no refreſhment.

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

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

active

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

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

XVII.

XVII.

Seeking after an abſent God.

OH! let not the Lord be angry: and I, who am but duſt, will ſpeak. Why doſt thou withdraw thyſelf, and ſuffer me to purſue thee in vain! If I am ſurrounded with thy immenſity, why am I thus inſenſible of thee? Why do I not find thee, if thou art every-where preſent? I ſearch thee in the temple; where thou haſt often met me: there I have ſeen the traces of thy majeſty and beauty; but thoſe ſacred viſions bleſs my ſight no more. I ſearch thee in my ſecret retirements, where I have called upon thy name, and have often heard the whiſpers of thy voice; that celeſtial converſation hath often reached and raptured my ſoul, but I am ſolaced no more with thoſe divine condeſcenſions: I liſten, but I hear thoſe gentle ſounds no more; I pine and languiſh, but thou flieſt me; ſtill I wither in thy abſence, as a drooping plant for the reviving ſun.

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

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

Tell me not of glory and pleaſure, there are no ſuch things without my God; while he withdraws, what delight can theſe trifles afford? All that amuſes mankind, are but dreams of happineſs, ſhades, and fantaſtic ap-

pearances: What compenſation can they make for an infinite God departed? All nature cannot repair my loſs: Heaven and earth would offer their treaſures in vain: not all the kingdoms of this world, nor the thrones of archangels, could give me a recompence for an abſent God.

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

Even now, while I believe thy glory hid from me but with a tranſient eclipſe, while I wait for thy return as for the dawning day, my ſoul ſuffers inexpreſſible agonies at the delay; the minutes ſeem to linger, and days are lengthened into

ages: But, Lord! what keener anguiſh ſhould I feel, did I think thy preſence had totally forſaken me, did I imagine thy glory ſhould no more ariſe on my ſoul? My ſpirits fail at the ſuppoſition; I cannot face the dreadful apprehenſion of my God for ever gone. Is it not hell in its moſt horrid proſpect? eternal darkneſs, and the undying worm? infinite ruin, and irreparable damage? Compared to this, what were all the plagues that earth could threaten, or hell invent? What is diſgrace, and poverty, and pain? What is all that mortals fear, real or imaginary evils? They are nothing, compared to the terrors which the thought of loſing my God excites.

O thou who art my boundleſs treaſure, my infinite delight, my all, my ineffable portion! can I part with thee? I may ſee without light, and breathe without air, ſooner than be bleſſed without my God. Happineſs, ſeparated from thee, were a contradiction, an impoſſibility, (if I dare ſpeak it) to Omnipotence itſelf. I feel a flame which the moſt glorious creation could not

not ſatisfy, an emptineſs which nothing but infinite love could fill. I muſt find thee, or weary myſelf in an eternal purſuit. Nothing ſhall divert me in the endleſs ſearch, no obſtacle ſhall fright me back, no allurement withhold me, nothing ſhall flatter or relieve my impatience; my bliſs, my heaven, my all depends on the ſucceſs. Shew me where thou art, O my God! Conduct me into thy preſence, and let thy love confine me there for ever.

XVIII.

Appeals to GOD, *concerning the Supremacy of Love to him.*

O GOD! when I ceaſe to love and praiſe thee, let me ceaſe to breathe and live. When I forget thee, let me forget the name of happineſs, and let every pleaſing idea be razed from my memory. When thou art not my ſupreme delight, let all things elſe deceive me; let me grow unacquainted with peace, and ſeek repoſe in vain: Let deluſions mock my gayeſt

gayeſt hopes: let my deſires find no ſatisfaction, till they are terminated all in thee. When I forget the ſatisfactions of thy love, O my God! let pleaſure be a ſtranger to my ſoul; when I prefer not that to my chiefeſt joy, let me be inſenſible of all delight; when thy benignity is not dearer to me than life, let that life become my burden, and my pain.

Search the inmoſt receſſes of my heart; and if thou findeſt any competitor there, remove the darling vanity, and blot every name but thine from my breaſt. Let me find nothing but emptineſs in the creature, when I forſake the All-ſufficient Creator: Let the ſtreams be cut off, when I wander away and abandon the fountain. Let me be deſtitute of aſſiſtance, when I ceaſe to rely on thee; let my lips be for ever ſilent, when they refuſe to acknowledge thy benefits, and make not thee the ſubject of their higheſt praiſe. Let no joyful ſtrain enter at my ears, when thy name is not the moſt delightful ſound they can convey to my heart.

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

If I deſire any thing in heaven or on earth in compariſon of thee, I am almoſt ready to ſay, baniſh me as an eternal exile from the light of paradiſe: Even that paradiſe would be melancholy darkneſs without thee; and the obſcureſt corner of the creation, bleſſed with thy preſence, would be more agreeable, Oh! where could I be happy

py remote from thee? What imaginable good could ſupply thy abſence? Say, O my God! do I not love thee?

Shall I call the holy angels to witneſs? Shall I call heaven and earth to witneſs? Will not the Moſt High God himſelf, the poſſeſſor of heaven and earth, condeſcend to witneſs the ardor and ſincerity of my love?

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

XIX.

XIX.

A devout Rapture; or, Love to GOD *inexpreſſible.*

THOU radiant ſun! thou moon! and all ye ſparkling ſtars! how gladly would I leave your pleaſant light, to ſee the face of God? Ye chryſtal ſtreams, ye groves and flowery lawns, my innocent delight! how joyfully could I leave you, to meet that bliſsful proſpect? And you delightful faces of my friends! I would this moment quit you all to ſee him whom my ſoul loves: ſo loves, that I can find no words to expreſs the unutterable ardor: Not as the miſer loves his wealth, nor the ambitious his grandeur; not as the libertine loves his pleaſure, or the generous man his friend: Theſe are flat ſimilitudes, to deſcribe ſuch an intenſe paſſion as mine. Not as a man ſcorched in a fever, longs for a cooling draught; not as a weary traveller wiſhes for ſoft repoſe: My reſtleſs deſires admit of no equal compariſon from theſe.

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

Even

Even at this diſtance, encompaſſed with the ſhades of death, and the miſts of darkneſs, in theſe cold melancholy regions, when a ray of thy love breaks in on my ſoul, when through the clouds I can trace but one feeble beam, even that obſcures all human glory, and gives me a contempt for whatever mortality can boaſt. What wonders then will the open viſion of thy face effect, when I ſhall enjoy it in ſo ſublime a degree, that the magnificence of the ſkies will not draw my regard, nor the converſe of angels divert my thoughts from thee? Thou wilt engroſs my everlaſting attention? and I ſhould abound in felicity, if I had nothing to entertain me but immediate communion with the Infinite Divinity.

Mend thy pace, old lazy time! and ſhake thy heavy ſands? make ſhorter circles, ye rolling planets! when will your deſtined courſes be fulfilled? Thou reſtleſs ſun! how long wilt thou travel the celeſtial road? when will thy ſtarry walk be finiſhed? when will the commiſſioned angel arreſt thee in thy

thy progreſs, and, lifting up his hand, ſwear by the unutterable name, that time ſhall be no more? O happy period! my impatient ſoul ſprings forward to ſalute thee, and leaves the lagging days, and months, and years, far behind. "Make haſte, my beloved! " and be like a roe or a young hart " on the ſpicy mountains."

I pine, I die, for a ſight of thy countenance. Oh! turn the veil aſide, blow away the ſeparating cloud; pull out the pins of this tabernacle, break the cords, and let fall the curtain of mortality. Oh! let it interpoſe no longer between me and my perfect bliſs. I feel thoſe flames of divine love, which are unextinguiſhable as the lights of heaven; not death itſelf ſhall quench the ſacred ardor.

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

laſt judgment? When I prove falſe to thee, may I not venture to ſay to them all, Bring in your awful evidence, and proclaim my perjury.

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

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

If I were only to reaſon upon this ſubject, I might ſay, what motive could earth, what could hell, what could heaven itſelf propoſe to tempt my ſoul to change its love? What could they lay in the balance againſt an infinite good?

What

What could be thrown in as a ſtake againſt the favour of God! Aſk the happy ſouls, who know what the light of his countenance imports, who drink in joy and immortality from his ſmiles, aſk them what value they ſet on their enjoyments? Aſk them what in heaven or earth ſhould purchaſe one moment's interval of their bliſs? aſk ſome radiant ſeraph, amidſt the fervency of his raptures, at what price he values his happineſs? And when theſe have named the purchaſe, earth and hell may try to balance mine. Let them ſpread the baits that tempt deluded men to ruin; let riches, honour, beauty, and bewitching pleaſure, appear in all their charms; the ſenſuality of the preſent and paſt ages: the Perſian delicacy, and the Roman pride; let them uncover the golden mines, and diſcloſe the ruby ſparkling in its bed; let them open the veins of ſapphire, and ſhew the diamond glittering in its rock; let them all be thrown into the balance: Alas! their weight is too little, and too light.——Let the pageantries of ſtate

be added, imperial titles, and the enſigns of majeſty; put in all that boundleſs vanity imagines, or wild ambition craves, crowns and ſceptres, regal veſtments, and golden thrones——the ſcale ſtill mounts.——Throw the world entire——'tis unſubſtantial, and light as airy vanity.

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

'Go, ye baffled tempters! go, offer your toys to mad-men and fools; they all vaniſh under my ſcorn, and cannot yield ſo much as an amuſement to my aſpiring thoughts. The ſun, in all his ſpacious circuit, beholds nothing to

tempt my wiſhes; theſe winding ſkies, in all their ample round, contain nothing equal to my deſires: My ambition has far different ends, and other proſpects in view; nothing below the joys of angels can ſatisfy me.

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

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

Till then I pine for my celeſtial country; till then I murmur to the winds and ſtreams, and tell the ſolitary ſhades my grief. The groves are conſcious to my complaints, and the moon and ſtars liſten to my ſighs. By their ſilent lights I talk over my heavenly concerns, and give a vent to my divine affections in mortal language; then,

then, looking upwards, I grow impatient to reach the milky way, the ſeats of joy and immortality.

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

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

Tell me, you ſons of light, who feel the force of theſe celeſtial fires! in what language you paint their ſacred violence? Or do the tongues of ſeraphs faulter. Does the language of paradiſe want emphaſis here, and immortal eloquence fail? Surely your happineſs is more prefect than all your deſcriptions of it: Heaven echoes to your charming notes, as far as they reach; while divine love, which is all your ſong, is infinite, and knows no limits of degree or duration.

Yet I would ſay, ſome gentle ſpirit, come and inſtruct me in your art; lend

lend me a golden harp, and guide the ſacred flight: Let me imitate your devout ſtrains; let me copy out your harmony; and then,

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

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

XX.

Self-reproof for Inactivity.

IS it poſſible that I ſhould one day be rapt almoſt into the third heavens, and, ere a few weeks have paſſed over me, I ſhould find myſelf creeping among the inſects of the earth, and almoſt as meanly buſied as they? Can

divine

divine love, which exalted me lately into flaming tranſports, ſo far ſubſide and grow cool within me? Can it leave me ſo unactive as I now feel myſelf? What ſhall I do to ſhame my conſcience with reproaches, and renew the flame of religious zeal and vigour.

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

Are the ambitious ſo reſtleſs and ſolicitous to make themſelves great, and to purchaſe the veneration of fools? Do they lay ſuch mighty projects, and compaſs their deſigns with ſuch pain and difficulty, for mere pageantry and gaudy trifles? and ſhall I, who am a candidate for heaven, a probationer for celeſtial dignity, loſe my title for want of diligence? Shall I faint in the noble ſtrife,

when God and angels are ready to aſſiſt me, and every moment's toil will be recompenſed with eternal ages of reſt and triumph.

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

O Lord! what a mutable thing is man? What frailty works in this fleſh and blood, and hangs heavy upon our better powers? 'Tis grace, divine grace alone, can keep alive that immortal ſpark within us, which came firſt from heaven, and firſt taught our hearts to

ariſe

ariſe and ſpring upward. Preſerve and complete thy own work, Almighty Grace!

XXI.

A joyful View of approaching Death.

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

O king of terrors! where are thy formidable looks? I can ſee nothing dreadful in thy aſpect. Thou appeareſt with no tokens of defiance, nor doſt thou come with ſummons from a ſevere Judge; but gentle invitations from my bleſſed Redeemer, who hath paſt glorioufly through thy territories in his way to his throne.

Thrice welcome, thou kind meſſenger of my liberty and happineſs! a thouſand times more welcome than jubilee to the wretched ſlave, than par-

don

don to a condemned malefactor! I am going from darkneſs and confinement, to immenſe light and perfect liberty; from theſe tempeſtuous regions, to the ſoft and peaceable climes above; from pain and grief, to everlaſting eaſe and tranquillity. For the toils of virtue, I ſhall immediately receive its vaſt rewards; for the reproach of fools, the honour and applauſe of angels. In a few minutes, I ſhall be higher than yonder ſtars, and brighter far than they. I ſhall range the boundleſs aether, and breathe the balmy airs of paradiſe. I ſhall preſently behold my glorious Marker, and ſing Hallelujahs to my exalted Saviour.

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

Hold

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

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

pel

pel the gloom, and gild the ſhades of death!

O bleſſed eternity! with what a chearful ſplendor doſt thou dawn on my ſoul! With thee comes liberty, and peace, and love, and endleſs felicity; but pain and ſorrow, and tumult, and death, and darkneſs, vaniſh before thee for ever. I am juſt upon the ſhores of thoſe happy realms where uninterrupted day and eternal ſpring reſide: Yonder are delectable hills, and harmonious vales, which continually echo to the ſongs of angels. There the bliſsful fields extend their verdure, and there the immortal groves aſcend: But how dazzling is thy proſpect, O city of God! of whom ſuch glorious things are ſpoken. In thee there ſhall be no more night, nor need of the ſun or moon; for the throne of God, and of the Lamb, is in the midſt of thee; and the nations that are ſaved, ſhall walk in thy light, and the kings of the earth ſhall bring there glory and honour in to thee; and there the glorious Lord ſhall be to us a place of defence, a place of

ſtreams

ſtreams and broad rivers; and the voice of joy, and the ſhout of triumph, ſhall be heard in thee for ever.

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

My eyes ſhall there behold the King in his beauty; and, oh how raviſhing will the aſpects of his love be! What unutterable ecſtaſies ſhall I feel, when I meet thoſe ſmiles which enlighten heaven, and exhilerate all the celeſtial regions; when I ſhall view the beatific glory, without one interpoſing cloud, to eternity; when I ſhall drink my fill at the fountains of joy, and in thoſe rivers of pleaſure that flow from his right hand for ever!

XXII.

A devout Reſignation of Self to the Divine Power and Goodneſs.

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

Theſe were my vows, and theſe I have often renewed; and ſhall I now retract ſuch ſacred obligations, and alter a choice ſo juſt and reaſonable? Forbid it, Gracious God! let me never be

be guilty of ſuch madneſs: the world has often diſappointed my moſt confident expectations, but thou haſt never deceived me. In all my diſtreſs, I have found thee a certain refuge, my ſhield, my fortreſs, my high tower, my deliverer, my rock, and he in whom I truſt. When there was none to ſave me, thy powerful hand has ſet me free: thou haſt redreſſed my grievances, and diſſipated my fears; thou haſt brought me light out of obſcurity, and turned my darkneſs into day.

When the world could afford me nothing but tempeſt and diſorder, with thee I have found repoſe and undiſturbed tranquillity. Thou haſt been my long-experienced refuge, my unfailing confidence, and I ſtedfaſtly depend on thee for my future conduct. I cannot err when guided by infinite wiſdom; I muſt be ſafe in the arms of eternal love, to which I humbly reſign myſelf. Let me have riches or poverty, honour or contempt: whatever comes from thy hands ſhall be thankfully received. I

would hear no voice but thine, nor make a ſtep but where I am following thee.

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

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

Lord!

Lord! what is man that thou art mindful of him? that thou who art ſupremely bleſſed, and independently happy, ſhouldſt concern thyſelf with human affairs, and condeſcend to make our wants as much thy care, as if mortal miſeries could reach thee, and interrupt immortal bleſſedneſs? Thou wouldſt make us ſenſible of thine indulgence by the moſt tender ſimilitudes: A father's gentle care but faintly ſhadows thine, and all we can conceive of human pity falls ſhort of thy compaſſion. Thou doſt ſeem to ſhare in our calamities, and ſympathize in all our griefs. No friend flies to our aſſiſtance with half the ſpeed that love brings thee, nor canſt thou ever want methods to relieve thoſe that confide in thee.

Thy providence finds or makes its way through all oppoſitions: The ſtreams ſhall roll back to their fountains: the ſun ſhall ſtand ſtill, and the courſe of nature be reverſed, rather than thou want means to bring thy purpoſes to paſs. No obſtacle puts a

ſtand

ſtand to thy deſigns, nor obſtructs thy methods: 'Tis thy will that makes nature and neceſſity. Who can ſtay thy hand? or ſay unto thee, what doſt thou? Thy counſel ſhall ſtand, and thou wilt do all thy pleaſure. Nothing is impoſſible for thee to accompliſh. Wherever I caſt mine eyes, I ſee inſtances of thy power. The extended firmament, the ſun and ſtars, tell me what thou art able to perform; they atteſt thy omnipotence, and rebuke my unbelief. The whole creation pleads for thee, and condemns my infidelity.

Almighty God! forgive my diffidence, while I confeſs it is moſt inexcuſable. Thy hand is not ſhortened, nor are the ſprings of thy bounty ſealed; thy ancient miracles have not exhauſted thy ſtrength, nor hath perpetual beneficence impoveriſhed thee; thy power remains undiminiſhed, and thy mercy endureth for ever. That dazzling attribute ſurrounds me with tranſporting glories. Which way ſoever I turn, I meet the bright conviction. I cannot recal a day of my paſt life,

on

on which ſome ſignature of thy goodneſs is not ſtamped.

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

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

XXIII.

Redeeming Love.

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

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

Infinite years before the day
Or heavens began to roll?

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

Lord! what is man? what am I? what is all the human race, to be thus regarded? O narrow thoughts, and narrower words! Here confeſs your defects.

defects. These are heights not to be reached by you. Adorable measures of infinite clemency! Unsearchable riches of grace! With what astonishment do I survey you! I am swallowed and lost in the glorious immensity. All hail, ye divine mysteries, ye glorious paths of the unsearchable Deity! Let me adore, tho' I can never express you.

Yet, should I be silent, heaven and earth, nay hell itself, would reproach me: The damned themselves would call me ungrateful, should I fail to celebrate that grace whose loss they are for ever lamenting, a loss that leaves them for ever desperate and undone. 'Tis this grace which tunes the harps of heaven, and yields them an immortal subject of harmony and praise. The spirits of just men made prefect, fix their contemplations here: They adore the glorious mystery; and while they sing the wonders of redeeming love, they ascribe sublime and living honours to him that fits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. And in-

finitely

finitely worthy art thou, O Lord! to receive the grateful homage. Who ſhall not praiſe and magnify thy name? Who ſhall deny the tribute of thy glory?

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

XXIV.

XXIV.

Pleading for Pardon and Holineſs.

IMmortal ſpring of life, the fountain of all exiſtence, the firſt and laſt, without beginning of days or end of years! before the heavens were created, thou waſt, and ſhalt remain unchanged while they wax old and decay. Thou art infinitely bleſſed in thyſelf, thy glory admits of no addition; the praiſes of angels cannot heighten thy happineſs, nor the blaſphemies of hell diminiſh it: Thou canſt do every thing, and thy power finds no obſtacle: Thou madeſt heaven and earth, the ſea, and the fountains of water: Thou doſt according to thy will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: Thou holdeſt the waters in the hollow of thy hand, and meaſureſt out the heavens with a ſpan: Thou comprehendeſt the duſt of the earth in a meaſure, and weigheſt the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance:

Thou

Thou covereſt thyſelf with light as with a garment and art ſurrounded with inacceſſible ſplendor: Thou art glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes: The heavens are not clean in thy ſight, and thou chargeſt thine angels with folly. What then is man, that drinks in iniquity like water? What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the ſon of man that thou doſt thus viſit him? 'Tis becauſe thou art good, and thy mercy endureth forever. Mercy is thy prevailing attribute. Thou art compaſſionate and infinitely gracious, and haſt fully manifeſted thy love and beneficence to the race of man, in the glorious methods of our redemption from everlaſting bondage and death, by thy ſon Jeſus.

Therefore, with the loweſt reverence, and moſt humble gratitude, I deſire to proſtrate myſelf before thee, acknowledging it my greateſt honour and undeſerved privilege, to approach the Lord, and bow myſelf before the high God; I that am unworthy to utter thy tremendous name, or once to lift up

mine

mine eyes to heaven. To my own confuſion I here confeſs I have abuſed the mercy which I now implore, and injured that goodneſs and forbearance by my ſins which I am now addreſſing myſelf to. I have forfeited the very benefits I aſk, and deſpiſed thoſe ſacred privileges which I am forced to plead; I can uſe ſcarce any motive, but what would carry in it my own condemnation. Shall I implore thy mercy by the gracious terms of the new covenant, ſealed by the blood of thy eternal Son? Alas! that gracious covenant I have violated, and profaned its ſacred ſeals: I have ſinned againſt the cleareſt light, and the tendereſt inſtances of love: I have not only broken my obligations to thee as my Creator, but the ſtronger engagements of thy adoption, even the glorious privilege of being admitted into thy family, and numbered among the children of God.

But ſtill thoſe very circumſtances that aggravate my guilt, exalt thy mercy. Here the freeneſs and magnificence of thy grace will diſplay itſelf; here

here thou wilt anſwer the indulgent title of a father in its tendereſt extent; I have no ſins too great for infinite clemency to pardon. Thou art God, and not man; and as the heavens are high above the earth, ſo high are thy ways of compaſſion above all human methods.

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

O bleſſed Jeſus, the hope of the Gentiles, the ſalvation of the ends of the earth, the great Meſſiah, the promiſed Saviour, who doſt anſwer theſe glorious titles in their utmoſt ſignification! To thee, my certain, my experienced refuge, I fly! O Son of God, here me! O Lamb of God, who takeſt away the ſins of the world, have mercy on me!

O Eternal Spirit, the promiſed Comforter, come with all thy ſacred conſolations! Come, and be as dew to the drooping flowers, as rain to the parched ground! Oh! come with thy reviving light, and diſpell the darkneſs that be-clouds my ſoul: Break in like the ſun, after a melancholy night; one beam of thine would melt this frozen, this obdurate heart, and kindle in my ſoul the ſpark of holy love: Breathe upon my cold affections, and raiſe them to a ſacred flame.

Searcher of hearts, from whom nothing is concealed, whoſe penetrating eyes find out hypocriſy in its darkeſt diſguiſe! Thou knoweſt the deſires of my ſoul, and art my impartial witneſs

that I kneel not here for the riches and honours of the world; that I am not proſtrate before thee for length of days or pleaſure; but that it is the kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof, that I ſeck. Give me not my portion with the rich and great, but let me have my humble lot with thy children: let me bear contempt and deriſion, and ſuffer reproach with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon.

Thy favour is the end of all my wiſhes, the conſtant ſubject of my prayer. Oh! thou whoſe ears are open to the wants of all thy creatures, who heareſt the young ravens when they cry from their neſts to thee, who giveſt the men of the world the tranſitory things they chuſe! wilt thou deny the deſires which thou thyſelf doſt inſpire and approve? O let me be filled with that righteouſneſs which I hunger and thirſt after, and be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs! Thou canſt not be diminiſhed

by

by whatever perfection thou doſt communicate to the creature; endleſs liberality could not make thee poor.

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

Remember thy former benignity, O Lord! and let that engage thee to grant new ſupplies of that grace, by which alone I ſhall prove victorious. Thy bounty

bounty to any of the works of thy hands, muſt always flow from the goodneſs of thy own nature; for what creature can pretend to merit any thing from thee? I would urge nothing but thy own infinite mercy, when I entreat thee not to let me periſh, after the wonderful things thou haſt done for my ſoul. After all the pledges thou haſt given me of thy love, let not my follies provoke thee to forſake me; but remember thy covenant, and its gracious articles, and act according to thy own ineffable benignity, which has been the glorious motive of every favour I have received from thee.

XXV.

A Tranſport of Gratitude for ſaving mercy.

I Bleſs a thouſand times the happy day, when firſt a beam of heavenly light broke in on my ſoul: when the day-ſtar from on high viſited me, and the celeſtial light began to dawn, I welcomed its chearful luſtre, and felt the

the ſacred influence; the flames of holy love awoke, and holy joys were kindled.

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

XXVI.

Importunate Requests for the Return of God to the Soul.

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

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

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

My

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

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

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

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

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

How do my ſpirits languiſh for thee!

No

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

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

man things, I ſearch thee in holy contemplation. 'Tis all in vain. Nor fields, nor floods, nor clouds, nor ſtars, reveal thee.

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

One look of mercy from thy eye,
  One whiſper of thy voice,
Exceed a whole eternity
  Employed in carnal joys.

Could I the ſpacious earth command,
  Or the more boundleſs ſea;

For

For one dear hour at thy right-hand,
I'd give them both away.

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

Let me invoke thee by every gracious title, My God, and the God of my fathers: From one generation to another thou haſt been our dwelling place: the claim has deſcended from age to age; thy covenant has been eſtabliſhed with us, and thy faithfulneſs remains unblemiſhed. Oh! forget not thy convenant, forget not the bleſſings entailed on me? forget not the

the prayers and tears by which my pious anceſtors have engaged thy mercy for me; forget not their vows, and ſolemn dedication of me to thee: Oh! recall thy ancient favours, and renew thy former mercy to a family which has been thine in a ſucceſſion of ages.

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

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

Bleſſed

Bleſſed Saviour! in thee we behold the face of God as a reconciled father: And doſt thou withdraw thyſelf? Oh how welcome will thy returns be! How like the breakings of immortal day, will thy preſence chear me! How dearly ſhall I prize my happineſs! How fearful ſhall I be of every thing that would offend thee! How joyful in the bleſſed diſcovery, and poſſeſſion of thy love! I'd whiſper my bliſs to the liſtening ſtreams and groves:

I'd carve thy paſſion on the bark;
And every wounded tree.
Shall droop, and bear ſome myſtic mark,
That Jeſus died for me.

The ſwains ſhall wonder when they read,
Inſcrib'd on all the grove;
That heaven itſelf came down, and bled,
To win a mortal's love.

But why do I flatter myſelf with theſe delightful ſcenes? I find thee abſent ſtill: I mourn and complain as one unpitied. What is life, while thou art abſent? Oh, return and bliſs me with thy preſence, thou who knoweſt my diſtreſſes, and art acquainted with

with my ſecret cares: Thou who art the witneſs of my midnight ſighs, and doſt hear when at the dawning day I call thee; but ſtill thou anſwereſt not, and ſeemeſt deaf to my prayers. I am, it is true, a worthleſs wretch: but, vile as I am, thou haſt, in thy immenſe compaſſion, brought me into covenant with thee: My beloved is mine, and I am his.

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

Nothing can break the ſacred union. But for this confidence, I were undone; but for this beam of hope, I were loſt in eternal darkneſs. Why art thou diſquieted, O my ſoul! and why art thou caſt down within me? Hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the light of his countenance; I ſhall yet welcome his return: I ſhall yet hear his charming voice, and meet his favourable ſmiles.

But why, O my God! this long

ſuſpenſe? Why do theſe intervals of night and darkneſs abide upon me, and torment my heart ſo long? Wilt thou deny a bliſs ſo eaſily granted? I aſk not more than is lawful for mortality to wiſh: I aſk not the viſions of angels here below; nor the beatitudes of perfected ſpirits: I aſk but what thou haſt bid me ſeek, and given me hopes to obtain; I aſk that ſacred fellowſhip, that ineffable communion, with which thou favoureſt thy ſaints.

Oh! let me hear theſe heavenly whiſpers, that give them the foretaſtes of immortal pleaſures: Let me be ſenſible of thoſe divine approaches, that kindle celeſtial ardour in their ſouls. Let me meet thoſe beams, that darken all mortal beauty: Let me enjoy, at this earthly diſtance, thoſe ſmiles that are the bliſs of angels in heaven. Though it is but darkly, and afar off, yet let me feel their influence; it will brighten the paſſage of life; it will direct me through its mazes, and gild its rough and gloomy paths: It will raiſe the flames of ſacred love; it will waken

waken the divine principle within me, and ſet it a glowing through all my powers. I abandon, I ſhall forget the vanities below, and the glories of the world will be no more. But while thou, O my God! hideſt thy face, I loſe my ſun, I languiſh, and die: Yet to thee I will lift up my eyes; to thee I lift up my ſoul.

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

XXVII.

Breathing after GOD, *and weary of the world.*

'TIS no mean beauty of the ground,
That has allured mine eyes;
I faint beneath a nobler wound,
Nor love below the ſkies.

If words can reach the heights of love and gratitude, let me pour out the ſecret ardour of my ſoul. O let it not offend thy greatneſs, that duſt and vanity

vanity adore and love thee. If thou haſt given me other capacities, and formed any thing more ſuitable to my wiſhes, I might have found a lower happineſs, and been content with ſomething below the infinite deity; but the ſcanty creation affords nothing to ſatisfy me, and I follow thee by a divine inſtinct, and mere neceſſity of nature.

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

I have willingly renounced all things elſe for thy ſake: All the ſentiments of tenderneſs and delight, that my ſoul ever feels for an earthly object, is mere indifference, compared to my love

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

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

Thou art my God; and I have enough, my ſoul is ſatisfied. I am entirely at reſt. Divide the vain, the periſhing creation, to the miſerable wretches that aſk no other portion: Let them, unenvied, poſſeſs the honours, and riches, and pleaſures of the world; with a laviſh hand divide them

away: Theſe things are but as the duſt of the balance, to the happy ſoul that knows what the light of thy countenance imports. After that, there can be no reliſh left for the low delights of mortality.

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

You ineffable delectations of divine love! let me have no ſentiment of pleaſure left but for you. My God revealing his glories and his graces in Jeſus Chriſt his ſon, is ſufficient for my eternal entertainment.

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

Vaniſh, ye terreſtrial ſcenes! fly away, ye vain objects of ſenſe! I reſign

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

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

But, Oh! how various, how bound-

leſs,

leſs, how tranſporting will the proſpect be! Oh, when ſhall I bid adieu to phantoms and deluſions, and converſe with eternal realites? When ſhall I drink at the fountain-head of eſſential life and bleſſedneſs?

——————and then,
'O what!—But aſk not of the tongues of men,
'For angels cannot tell; let it ſuffice,
'Thyſelf, my ſoul, ſhalt feel thy own full joys,
'And hold them faſt for ever.'

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

But, ah! how ſoon do clouds of mortal ſenſe
Ariſe, and veil the charming viſion!—

Alas! what do I hear in this waſte

and

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

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

What do I here, in the dominions of death and ſin, in the precincts and range of the powers of darkneſs? Here they lay their tools, and ſet their fatal ſnares: but, Lord! what part have they in me? I have bid defiance to the powers of darkneſs in thy ſtrength, and renounced my ſhare in the vanities of the world. I am a ſubject of another kingdom, and dare not enter into any terms of peace and amity with

with the irreconcileable adverſaries of God and my ſoul, which inhabit theſe treacherous and ſinful regions. The friendſhip of this world is enmity with God. Death and deſtruction are in its ſmiles. I ſtand on my guard, and am every moment in danger of ſurpriſe: Oh! when will my deliverance come from on high?

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

What glorious ſcenes ſhall open, when once this mortal partition falls, when theſe walls of clay ſhall totter and ſink down into duſt!

Ye waters of life! ye torrents of immortal pleaſure! how impetuouſly will you then roll in upon me, and ſwell and fill up all the capacities of joy in my nature! Every faculty ſhall then be filled, and every wiſh ſhall end in unutterable fruition. When I awake into immortal light, I ſhall be ſatisfied with

with thy likeneſs. Theſe expreſsleſs deſires will die into everlaſting raptures. Hope and languiſhing expectation will be no more; but preſent, complete, and unbounded ſatisfaction, will ſurround me. My God, my God himſelf, ſhall be my infinite, my unutterable joy. All the avenues of pleaſure ſhall be open before me, the ſcenes of beauty, and proſpects of delight. Everlaſting joy ſhall be upon my head, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall fly away for ever

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

But grant, O Lord! I may with patience continue in well-doing, and at

laſt obtain glory and immortality through my Redeemer's righteouſneſs. Sanctify me thro' thy word of truth *; remember this requeſt of my glorious Advocate.

XXVIII.

A Prayer for ſpeedy Sanctification.

O Lord God! great and holy, all-ſufficient, and full of grace! If thou ſhouldſt bid me form a wiſh, and take whatſoever in heaven or earth I had to aſk, it ſhould not be the kingdoms of this world, nor the crowns of princes; no, nor ſhould it be the wreaths of martyrs, nor the thrones of archangels: My requeſt is to be made holy; this is my higheſt concern. Rectify the diſorders ſin has made in my ſoul; and renew thy image there; let me be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs. Thou haſt compaſſed my paths with mercy in all other reſpects; and I am diſcontented with nothing but my own heart, becauſe it is ſo unlike the image of thy holineſs

* *John* 17.

holineſs, and ſo unfit for thy immediate preſence.

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

Thou art unchanged, while rolling ages paſs along; but I am decaying with every breath I draw: My whole allotted time to prepare for heaven is but a point, compared with thy infinite duration. The ſhortneſs and

vanity of my preſent being, and the importance of my eternal concerns; join together to demand my utmoſt ſolicitude, and give wings to my warmeſt wiſhes. Before I can utter all my preſent deſires, the haſty opportunity perhaps is gone, the golden minute vaniſhed, and the ſeaſon of mercy has taken its everlaſting flight.

Oh God of ages! hear me ſpeedily, and grant my requeſt while I am yet ſpeaking: my frail exiſtence will admit of no delay. Anſwer me according to the ſhortneſs of my duration, and the exigence of my circumſtances. My buſineſs, of high importance as it is, yet is limited to the preſent now, the paſſing moment; for all the powers on earth cannot promiſe me the next.

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

Thou knoweſt, O Lord! what qualification will fit me to behold thee: Thou

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

Remember, O Eternal God! my loſt time is for ever loſt, and my waſted hours will never return: my neglected opportunities can never be recalled; to me they are gone for ever, and cannot be improved: But thou canſt change my ſinful ſoul into holi-

neſs

neſs by a word, and ſet me now in the way to everlaſting improvement.

O let not the ſpirit of God reſtrain itſelf, but bleſs me according to the fulneſs of thy own Being, according to the riches of thy grace in Chriſt Jeſus; according to thy infinite inconceivable love manifeſted in that glorious gift of thy beloved Son, wherein the fulneſs of the Godhead was contained: 'Tis through his merit and mediation, I humbly wait for all the unbounded bleſſings I want or aſk for.

XXIX.

Gratitude for early and peculiar favours.

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

of redemption from eternal miſery had ever bleſſed my ſoul.

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

I bleſs thee, with all my powers, for the privilege of my deſcent from pious anceſtors; that thou haſt been their dwelling place from generation to generation, and haſt not taken thy loving kindneſs from their ſeed, nor ſuffered thy faithfulneſs to fail.

Thou haſt extended thy mercy to me the laſt and leaſt of all my father's

houſe, unworthy to wipe the feet of the meaneſt of the ſervants of my Lord: and yet by an abſolute act of goodneſs, I am brought into thy family, and numbered with the children of God. Even ſo it has ſeemed good in thy ſight, who art gracious to whom thou wilt be gracious.

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

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

didſt give me to drink of the fountain of life.

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

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

XXX.

XXX.

Aſpiring after the Viſion of GOD *in Heaven.*

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

O my God! forgive my importunity: Thou haſt commanded me to love thee with all my heart, my ſoul, my ſtrength; and haſt, by thy Spirit, kindled the ſacred flame in my breaſt: From this riſes my preſent impatience; from hence the ardour of my deſires ſpring. Can I love thee, and be ſatisfied

tisfied at this diſtance from thee? Can I love thee, and not long to behold thee in perfect excellence and beauty? Is it a crime to preſs forward to the end for which I was created? All my wiſhes, and my hopes of happineſs, terminate in thee.

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

But, O Lord! thou haſt no need of ſuch worthleſs ſervice as I can pay thee; thy angels are ſpirits, thy miniſters flames of fire; thouſands of thouſands ſtand before thee, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand miniſter unto thee; they attend thy orders, and fly at thy command. O deliver me

from

from this burden of mortality; and I will ſerve thee with a zeal as pure and active as theirs.

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

XXXI.

A Surrender of the Soul to God.

COMMAND me what thou wilt, O Lord! give me but ſtrength to obey thee, be thy terms ever ſo ſevere.

O

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

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

XXXII.

Truſt and Reliance on the Divine Promiſes.

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

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

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

We pay thee the higheſt homage, and

and exalt thy infinite attributes by faith and confidence in thee.

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

And now, O Lord God of my fathers! whoſe mercy has deſcended from age to age, whoſe truth has remained unblemiſhed and inviolable, and whoſe love remains without decay; O Lord, the faithful God and the true, keeping covenant and mercy to a thou-

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

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

'Twas my dependence on thy promiſe and fidelity, that brought me into this exigence. I ſtaggered not at thy promiſe through unbelief, but boldly ventured on the credit of thy word: I took it for my ſecurity; and can the Strength of Iſrael repent? Canſt thou break

break thy covenant, and alter the thing that is gone out of thy mouth?

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

Bleſs me according to thy own greatneſs, according to the unſearchable riches of thy grace in Chriſt Jeſus: he is the ſpring of all my hope, in whom all the promiſes of God are yea and amen; he is the true and faithful witneſs, and has, by his death, ſealed the divine veracity, and is become ſurety for the honour and faithfulneſs of the Moſt High God. To this alſo the Holy Ghoſt, the Spirit of Truth, bears witneſs.

Oh

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

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

Memorandum.

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

XXXIII.

XXXIII.

Application to the Divine Truth.

HOWEVER intricate and hopeleſs my preſent diſtreſs may be to human views, why ſhould I limit the Almighty? or why ſhould the holy One of Iſrael limit himſelf? Nature and neceſſity are thine: thou ſpeakeſt the word, and it comes to paſs; no obſtacle can oppoſe the omnipotence of thy will, nor make thy deſigns ineffectual.

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

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

And theſe ſhall wax old as a garment; as a veſture ſhalt thou change

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

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

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

Thou didſt accompany Jacob in his journey to Padanaram, and give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on; till, greatly increaſed in ſubſtance, he returned to his father's houſe; he wreſtled

wreſtled for a bleſſing, he wreſtled with the Almighty, and prevailed.

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

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

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

Thou didſt command the ravens to feed

feed the holy prophet; and at the word of a prophet, didſt ſuſtain the widow's family with a handful of meal.

Thou didſt walk with the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace: Thou waſt preſent with Daniel in the lions den, to deliver him, becauſe he truſted in thee.

In what inſtance has the prayer of faith been rejected? Where were the righteous forſaken? Who can charge God, without charging him fooliſhly? What injuſtice has been found in the Judge of all the earth? His glorious titles have ſtood unblemiſhed from generation to generation: Nor can any of his perfections decay, or rolling years make a change on the Ancient of Days.

Are not his words clear and diſtinct, without a double meaning, or the leaſt deceit? Are they not ſuch as may juſtly ſecure my confidence? ſuch as would ſatisfy me from the mouth of man, unconſtant man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, and his foundation in the duſt, unſtable as water, and fleeting

ing as a ſhadow? And can I ſo ſlowly aſſent to the words of the Moſt High? Shall I truſt impotent man, that has neither wiſdom nor might to accompliſh his deſigns; that cannot call the next breath or motion his own, nor promiſe himſelf a moment in all futurity? Can I reſt on theſe feeble props, and yet tremble and deſpond, when I have the veracity of the eternal God, to ſecure and ſupport me?

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

Exert yourſelves, ye powers of darkneſs! bring in your evidence, collect your inſtances; begin from the firſt generations, ſince the world was peopled, and men began to call on the name of the Lord: When did they call in vain? when did the Holy One of Iſrael fail the expectation of the humble and contrite ſpirit? Point out, in your black-

eſt

eſt characters, the diſmal period, when the name of the Lord was no more a refuge to them that truſted in him: Let the annals of hell be produced, let them mark the dreadful day, and diſtinguiſh it with eternal triumphs.

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

On thy eternal truth and honour I entirely caſt myſelf: If I am deceived, I am deceived; angels and archangels are deluded too: they, like me, have no dependence, beyond the divine veracity, for their bleſſedneſs and immortality; they hang all their hopes on his goodneſs and immutability; If that fails, the celeſtial paradiſe vaniſhes, and all its glories are extinct; the golden palaces ſink, and the ſeraphic thrones, muſt totter and fall. Where are your crowns, ye ſpirits elect? where are your ſongs, and your triumphs,

triumphs, if the truth of God can fail? A mere poſſibility of that would darken the fields of light, and turn the voice of melody into grief and lamentation.

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

But, for ever juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints! Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in thee; for thou art a certain refuge in the day of diſtreſs, and under the ſhadow of thy wings I will rejoice. My ſoul ſhall make her boaſt in the Lord, and triumph in his ſalvation: I called on him

him in diſtreſs, and he has delivered me from all my fears.——Hallelujah!

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

XXXIV.

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

LET me give glory to God before I die, and take ſhame and confuſion to myſelf. I aſcribe my ſalvation to the free and abſolute goodneſs of God. Not by the ſtrength of reaſon, or any natural inclination to virtue, but by the grace of God, I am what I am. O my Redeemer! be the victory, be the glory thine. I expect eternal life and happineſs from thee, not as a debt, but a free gift, a promiſed act of bounty. How poor would my expectations be, if I only looked to be rewarded according to thoſe works, which my own vanity, or the partality of

of others, have called good, and which, if examined by the divine purity, would prove but ſpecious ſins? As ſuch, I renounce them: pardon them, gracious Lord! and I aſk no more; nor can hope for that, but through the ſatisfaction which hath been made to divine juſtice, for the ſins of the world.

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

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

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

O my propitious Saviour! where were my hopes, but for thee? How deſperate, how undone, were my circumſtances? I look on myſelf, in every view I can take, with horror and contempt. I was born in a ſtate of miſery and ſin, and, in my beſt eſtate, am altogether vanity. With the ut-

moſt advantages I can boaſt, I ſhrink back, I tremble to appear before unblemiſhed Majeſty. O thou, in whoſe name the Gentiles truſt! be my refuge in that awful hour. To thee I come, my only confidence and hope. Let the blood of ſprinkling, let the ſeal of God's covenant, be on me. Cleanſe me from my original ſtain, and my contracted impurity; and adorn me with the robes of thy righteouſneſs, by which alone I expect to ſtand juſtified before infinite juſtice and purity.

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

'When I ſurvey the wond'rous croſs,
'On which the Prince of glory died;

'My

'My richeſt gain I count my loſs,
'And pour contempt on all my pride.

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

April 30, 1735.

XXXV.

A Review of Divine Mercy and Faithfulneſs.

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

O come, all you that fear the Lord! and I will tell you what he has done for my ſoul; I will aſcribe righteouſneſs to my Maker, and leave my record for a people yet unborn, that the generation

generation to come may riſe up and praiſe him.

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

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

Thou

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

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

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

but thy mercy endures for ever, thy faithfulneſs has never failed.

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

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

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

How often have I tried and experienced

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

And, after all, what ingratitude, what inſenſibility reigns in my heart! Oh cancel it by the blood of the covenant! root out this monſtrous infidelity that ſtill returns after the fulleſt evidence of thy truth. Thou haſt graciouſly condeſcended to anſwer me in thy own time and way, and yet I am again doubting thy faithfulneſs and care. Lord, pity me! I believe, O help my unbelief! Go on to ſuccour, go on to pardon, and at laſt conquer my diffidence. Let me hope againſt hope, and, in the greateſt perplexity, give glory to God, by believing what my own experience has ſo often found,-----That the ſtrength of Iſrael will not lie; nor is he a man, that he ſhould repent.

While I have memory and thought, let his goodneſs dwell on my ſoul; let

me

me not forget the depth of my diſtreſs, the anguiſh and importunity of my vows. When every human help failed, and all was darkneſs and perplexity, then God was all my ſtay; then I knew no name but his, and he alone knew my ſoul in adverſity. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul! and forget not all his benefits.

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

I have yet a thouſand, and ten thouſand deliverances to recount, ten thouſand unaſked-for mercies to recall: No moment of my life has been deſtitute of thy care; no accident has found me unguarded by thy watchful eye, or neglected by thy providence. Thou haſt been often found, unſought by my ungrateful heart; and thy favours have ſurpriſed me with great and unexpected advantages: Thou haſt compelled me to receive the bleſſings my fooliſh humour deſpiſed, and my corrupt will

lain

fain would have rejected. Thou haſt ſtopped thy ears to the deſires which would have ruined and undone me, when I might juſtly have been left to my own choice for the puniſhment of my many ſins and follies. How great my guilt! how infinite thy mercy!

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

XXXVI.

XXXVI.

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

FIRST WEEK*.

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

2. Thy mercies are new every morning: Again thou haſt given me an inſtance of thy truth. I truſted in God,

* *The diviſion of theſe Meditations into ſevens, by the Pious Writer, ſeems to tell us, that theſe were the devout thoughts of ſix weeks of her life.*

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

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

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

5. With the morning-light my health and peace are renewed: The chearing

chearing influence of the ſun, and the ſweeter beams of the divine favour, ſhine on my tabernacle.----Lord! why me? why am I a ranſomed pardoned ſinner? why am I rejoicing among the inſtances of ſovereign grace and unlimited clemency?

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

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

7. As the week began, ſo it ends with a ſeries of mercy. Language and numbers fail to reckon thy favours; but this ſhall be my eternal employment.

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

SECOND

SECOND WEEK.

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

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

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

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

3. Thanks be to God, who has given me the victory, through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thou haſt delivered me from the ſnare of the fowler, the craft and malice of hell, and kept me back from ſinning againſt thee: Be thine the victory and praiſe, Hallelujah!

4. O Lord God of Iſrael! happy is

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

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

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

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

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

7. I will love the Lord, who has heard

heard my ſupplications. I made my boaſt in his faithfulneſs, and he has anſwered all my expectations.

THIRD WEEK.

1. MY laſt exigence will be the cloſing part of life. Oh remember me then, my God! thou who haſt led me hitherto, forſake me not at laſt. Be my ſtrength, when nature fails, and the flame of life is juſt expiring; let thy ſmiles chear that gloomy hour: Oh, then, let thy gentle voice whiſper peace and ineffable conſolation to my ſoul!

2. In ſix and in ſeven troubles thou haſt delivered me, and been a covert from the tempeſt, a hiding-place from the wind: Hitherto God has helped, and I have dwelt ſecure; and here I leave a memorial to thy praiſe, a witneſs againſt all my future diſtruſt of thy faithfulneſs and truth.

3. Every day of my life increaſes the ſum of thy mercies: The riſing and

and the ſetting ſun, in its conſtant revolution, can witneſs the renewal of thy favours. Thou waſt graciouſly preſent in an imminent danger; by thee my bones have been kept entire, and thou haſt not ſuffered me to daſh my foot againſt a ſtone.

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

5. I ſubſcribe to thy truth, O Lord! I atteſt it, in contradiction to infernal malice, to all the helliſh ſuggeſtions that would tempt my heart to diffidence and unbelief, even againſt repeated experience,

perience, againſt the fulleſt evidence of the divine veracity.

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

7. Another, and a greater deliverance has crowned the day. I have found thy grace ſufficient in an hour of temptation; thy ſtrength has been manifeſt in my weakneſs. Thine was the conqueſt; be the crown and the glory thine for ever. By thee I have triumphed over the ſtratagems of hell. Not unto me, but to thy name be the praiſe, O Lord!

FOURTH WEEK.

1. 'TIS not one of a thouſand of thy favours I can record; but eternity is before me, and that unlimited duration ſhall be employed to rehearſe the wonders of thy grace. Then, in the great aſſembly, I will praiſe

thee, I will declare thy faithfulneſs, and tell to liſtening angels what thou haſt done for my ſoul; even for me, the leaſt in thy family, unworthy to wipe the feet of the meaneſt of the ſervents of my Lord.

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

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

4. Again I muſt begin the rehearſal of thy mercies, which will never have an end, for thou doſt renew the inſtances

ſtances of thy goodneſs to a poor ungrateful ſinner: thou haſt punctually fulfilled the promiſe on which I depended; thou haſt granted the requeſt of my lips, and led me in a plain way, that I have not ſtumbled.

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

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

7.

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

FIFTH WEEK.

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

2. Thy goodneſs ſtill purſues me, O heavenly Father! with an unwearied courſe; new inſtances of thy faithfulneſs reproach my unbelief. I ſent up my petition with a doubting heart; and yet thou haſt graciouſly deigned to encourage my weak and ſtaggering faith, which has often wavered and failed,

failed, even in the view of the brighteſt evidence of thy power and truth.

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

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

5. Oh never let my falſe heart relapſe into diſtruſt and unbelief again! Thou haſt rebuked my folly, and put a new ſong of praiſe into my mouth. Let theſe infernal ſuggeſtions vaniſh, that would once object againſt the oft experienced truth. In this I would ſtill triumph, and inſult all the malice of hell. A time will come, when thou ſhalt be glorified in thy ſaints, when

when thy truth and faithfulneſs ſhall appear in full ſplendour, when the beauty of thy attributes ſhall be conſpicuous, and clear from every blemiſh, that the impiety of men, or the malice of devils, has charged on thy moſt righteous providence.

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

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

SIXTH

SIXTH WEEK.

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

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

3. I muſt again begin the rehearſal of thy love. Thou haſt eaſed my pain, ſcattered my fears, and lenghtened out my

my days. O may my being be devoted to thee! Let it be for ſome remarkable ſervice, that I am reſtored to health again!

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

5. Jeſus, my never-failing truſt! I called on thy name, and thou haſt fully anſwered my hopes: Let thy praiſes dwell on my tongue; let me breathe thy name to the laſt ſpark of life. Thou haſt ſcattered my fears, and been gracious beyond all my hopes: My faint and doubting prayers have not been

been rejected; but, oh, how ſlow are my returns of praiſe! how backward my acknowledgements!

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

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

FINIS.

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