

INSTRUCTION

FROM THE

Grave :

IN WHICH ARE UNFOLDED THE

BEHAVIOUR, SENTIMENTS, and PROSPECTS

Of persons of different ranks, characters, and stations, in their
DYING MOMENTS :

GIVEN IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE DEATH OF

OLIVER DEMING WELMAN,

Who died in the 21st year of his life, at BERMUDA, on the
26th August, 1802.

BY THE

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AT ALEXANDRIA.

“ Let me die the death of the righteous.”



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FROM . HR

VIEWING the poor remains of those who once were dear to us, a truth, important to be remembered, sounds in the ear, and impresses the heart—"Man that is born of a woman, is of a few days, and full of trouble.—He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down.—He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." He walks in a vain show. The Pageant moves forward, and disappears.—The son takes the place of the father, this generation of the former generation.—Where is Adam and his immediate descendants? Noah and the first settlers of the earth? The thousand thousands who were members of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman empires? They have passed. The place which once knew them, knows them no more. Their names are erased from the catalogue of the living.

I look upon the body of a departed friend :—It is a lump of cold and inanimate clay ; a substance vile and perishable ; which the worm shall devour, corruption shall waste, and time reduce and wear out. But the spirit, the inhabitant of that body :—Is it also a lump of cold and inanimate clay ; a substance vile and perishable ; which the worm shall devour, corruption shall waste, and time reduce and wear out ?—No ; It is an immaterial and immortal substance ; a fire which shall never be extinguished. Like him, whose image it originally bore, it possesses an endless existence. But where the symptom of its presence here ?—It is not here. Having escaped from the earthly prison, and burst asunder the oppressive fetter, it has returned to God, who assigns to each separate spirit his place and portion in the unseen country to which it has removed.

This world is not intended for a final abode : We are here in a sojourning state. Eighty years are the boundaries which few reach, and very few exceed. Must all die ? And may they die at any stage of life, and under any circumstances ? Can there be no exception ? May not pleas be urged to delay the stroke, or ward it entirely off ? Can youth and beauty—the affectionate heart, and amiable manners—conduct so affable, so pious, so kind, as to excite in friends, acquaintances, and even strangers, the most endearing attachment, be of no avail ? Must such be cut off, and leave a blank on earth ?—Yes—The decree is gone forth, and cannot be altered. “Dust thou art, and to the dust thou shalt return.” But why repine ? Is not infancy preferable to the preceding state ? Is not the improvement gradual until we attain a state of manhood ? And does improvement stop here ? Think not so meanly of your destination. The present state when most improved, is the beginning only of existence. At death we spring into life ; what is mortal is thrown off, and what is immortal remains. The Christian who has escaped has a great advantage over those whom he has left behind. He is in a better world ; a spirit made perfect ; associated with celestial beings.—But we are in a wilderness ; imperfect creatures ; associated with a world lying in wickedness. Take shelter from the stormy blast under the Redeemer’s shadow. Believe the Gospel—It teaches you both how to live, and how to die—It abates, for the present, the severity of trial ; and secures, for the future, approbation and triumph.

Hope and fear, forebodings of good and evil, excited in a manner we know not how, sometimes rouse the soul and leave indelible impressions. Are not these evidences of the native dignity of the soul, which anticipates a separate state with different feelings, as the views of an agreeable or gloomy nature are more or less distinct. Warning was once given during public worship :—“Some within hearing shall soon be summoned hence ; let them prepare for that summons.”—Those who preside in worship, may safely on all occasions give

such warning, and in the same language. We are always in danger. Death eyes his prey, and waits for the permission only to seize without distinction whosoever may be put within his power. The warning might have been given on general principles, without pretending to a prophetic spirit; but it struck conviction upon the mind of one who was young, healthy, and amiable.—I am the person—I shall soon sicken and die! She was not mistaken: her days indeed were numbered. Soon after she did sicken and did die. The death of this amiable youth excited in a companion feelings uncommonly strong and tender. It reached her very heart. She considered her own departure as at hand; and, after a short interval, also disappeared. This was an eventful period to the young. A sharp blast sweeping the field, withered many opening flowers. The two who were gone, had been the intimates and companions of a third, who one night in a dream beheld an enchanting place, where were a company of blooming virgins arrayed in white, happy beyond expression, among whom her late friends were recognized, who beckoned for her to come and join their company. The dream was repeated, leaving the strongest assurance of what the event verified, that she should no longer remain in the mortal state. In each of these instances there was an anticipation of an immediate removal from this to another world. How comes the mind by such anticipations? Not by reflection, for the impulse by which they are produced was sudden; not from sympathy, for it was felt in retirement; not from an over-heated imagination, for it operated in the coolest moments. I am apt to think that some friendly spirit makes these impressions, to prepare the soul for the hour of trial.

Those who are conversant with scenes of sickness and of death, must have observed the different behaviour of persons of different characters at that awful period.

Ignorance and error, especially when wilful and obstinate, divert the attention from approaching ruin. “I have

“ been a good neighbour and a good citizen,” is sometimes the language, when the fact was that they had little to boast of in these respects. “ I know no considerable failure in any of the relative duties ; I owe no man any ill-will ; I cannot doubt of being perfectly safe.” What a miserable dependence ! No account is made of their duty to God, or should they have engaged in occasional acts of worship, a spiritual and a pure mind never once was thought of.—How ignorant such are of themselves ; how ignorant of what God’s law demands ! Surely they take shelter in a refuge of lies. It is expressly declared concerning even attainments to which they can have no pretension, “ Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Persons who have broken asunder the bands of religion, and cast these cords from them ; who have suppress the admonitions of conscience, and resisted the strivings of God’s spirit ; indulging in an irreligious, dissipated, prophane course, have been known to brave it to the last ; jesting with serious things at the intervals of ease ; or, blaspheming the God of Heaven under their torments. Such cases have fallen under my own notice, and a more striking resemblance of what may be supposed to occur in the regions of despair could not be exhibited on earth. Such a wretch accused the providence of God, that being in health, he was poor, but amassing riches, sickness prevented him from enjoying that wealth on which he had set his heart. I have seen such, who spake with the utmost levity of future things, giving the fictions of the Heathen a preference to the discoveries of the Christian ; and wasting the hours in which they ought to have prepared for death, in speculations of the most wild and romantic kind. Awake ed, for a moment, to better thoughts by excruciating pain, the expressions were rash and presumptuous.—“ To what purpose is all this : were I recovered to wonted health, I should lead the same life I have hitherto led.” Hearts so unrelenting are uncommon—Instances of this kind are permitted to occur, that the inveter-

racy of a sinful course, and its fatal consequences, might be brought fully in view. It fulfils the scriptures, that sinners grown old in sin, are accursed. Being joined to their idols, they are let alone. They rush heedlessly into eternity, and will believe no danger before they awake in hell.

The evil day, and the year in which men have no pleasure, generally strikes terror to the heart. "Where," was the dying exclamation of one who had lived without God in the world. 'Where,' (amazement was visible in his countenance) 'O Where am I now going!'—Scarce had these agonizing expressions escaped, when he was no more. Some feel that by guilt the penalty of a broken law is incurred. The day of grace has been abused—the accepted time has passed over without improvement. Bitter is the complaint—"My obdurate heart " will not now relent; I have provoked God's spirit, and he " is gone; I resisted his striving with me, and he will strive " with me no more. Horrible! inexpressibly horrible!—for me " is reserved the blackness of everlasting darkness!" To witness such distress, expressed in such language, may well soften the hardest heart, and awake the most tender sympathy. But alas! When God has given up a sinner, unavailing is every effort for his relief. It is seldom that a case so desperate ever occurs, and when it does occur, it is meant to warn survivors against trifling with serious things, or putting off the moment of mercy, which, when once passed, can never be recalled.

Many who have abused the best and most improved natural powers to revile the religion of Jesus, and overwhelm its professors with contempt, have found their opposition recoiling with irresistible violence upon themselves. Julian, the apostate, was compelled, with a reluctant heart, to exclaim, in his expiring moments, "Thou hast overcome, O Galilean." His haughty spirit was overawed—the king of Zion, whom he madly opposed, now ruled him with a rod of iron, and dashed him in pieces as a potter's vessel. Voltaire, who prostituted his life to the ser-

vice of infidelity, is generally believed, when dying, to have sought ease from upbraidings of mind, which he could not bear, in the most childish and unwarranted superstitions. Among the multitudes whose irreligious, loose, and daring principles have exposed them to the most intolerable agonies, some have at the last, not only confessed their folly, but have become real converts to that religion which it had been the business of their lives to ridicule and to pervert. Of this class was the celebrated Rochester.—Light broke in upon his mind, his whole nature was changed and sanctified; over him the grace of God gained a complete and a glorious triumph.

A sudden death surprises the best, and awakes their fears and apprehensions before the mind can collect its force, and wield with efficacy the Christian armour. Their sun has been known to set in darkness, even when there was every reason to believe that it should arise unclouded in a better world. Flesh and blood are appalled at the unexpected approach of the king of terrors. It requires a mind strengthened by the power of God, and borne up by the faith and hopes of the gospel, to meet death with becoming decency and composure.

Instances might be produced of persons of the strongest minds, venerable for their years and character, their office and public services, who in the close of life have been cast into a furnace exceedingly heated; tossed with temptation; buffeted by Satan; and dreadfully harrassed. The struggle has been severe, tedious, and doubtful; but they overcame, through the blood of Jesus; and with brightened countenances and triumphant hearts have retired to that rest which remains for the people of God.

I believe it will universally be found, that distinct and impressive views of the grace of the gospel, which have been improved, and are firmly relied upon, never fail of smoothing the passage through the gloomy vale, and procuring a complete conquest over the fears of death. Many witnesses confirm

this truth. I shall single out two, as sufficient for my present purpose.

An officer of the British army, of a volatile disposition, and dissipated turn, was taught wisdom in the school of affliction. Sickness of two years continuance, was the mean used by God to bring him to a sober mind. In an interesting conversation with him a little before his death, he expressed the utmost abhorrence of his former courses, and full reliance on the mercy of God. When demanded what ground he had for such reliance, he earnestly replied—the promise of God, pledged to sinners in his word. He was in some perplexity concerning the nature of the new birth. Assured that aversion at sin; that breathings after holiness; that hope in God; were certain evidences of the change which that metaphor is intended to represent; and that the spirit of God alone could excite such aversion—such breathings—such hope. He was much relieved, possessing these evidences of a renewed nature; and continued in a calm, hopeful, devout frame, until he expired.

That promising youth, OLIVER DEMING WELMAN, of Bermuda, whose death has suggested these reflections, died in such a manner as shews that the grace of God can loosen the attachment even of the young to this life, and introduce them in triumph to the life to come.

We are all naturally in a state of enmity to God, neither subject to his law, nor until that change spoken of in scripture (as a *conversion*, a *new birth*, a *resurrection from the dead*) takes place through the energy of God's spirit, ever likely to be so. Where a corrupt bias has received no effectual restraint or that restraint has been overborne; where men have acquired habits of forgetting God, of indulging the flesh, and loving the world; and these habits have become strong and inveterate, I cannot for a moment doubt, whether such may not be able to give an exact account of the period when some

suggestion, some word of power, some awful providence stopp'd them in their mad career, and turned their feet into the path of peace : But children brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; who have listened to instruction, and put it in practice, may find the principles and tendencies of nature contrary to a life of godliness gradually removed, and opposite principles and tendencies fully established. The triumphs of grace are as evident in cases of this kind as in any other,—Such grow up as calves in the stall ; their delight in God, and trust in the Saviour ; their love of holiness, and good-will to Him, are evidences to themselves and to others, of a more unquestionable kind than what can possibly arise from the strongest bodily affection, that they are the sons of God and the heirs of Heaven. I believe this to have been precisely the case of that amiable youth of whom I speak. The blessing of God upon the religious education which he had enjoyed, and upon his improvement thereof, effected that great change in his heart and life so essential to his entering into the kingdom of Heaven. Religion, from his infancy, had taken full possession of his mind : Never was he known to neglect prayer to God morning or evening : He strictly observed the Sabbath ; and took pleasure in public worship.—His life, unstained by prevailing vices, was engaging and exemplary. No wonder that he was the darling of his parents, and in favour with all who knew him. He had for many months been in a declining state of health, which excited a peculiar concern for his eternal welfare. He was sensible that he must be renewed and sanctified before he could get to Heaven, without being able to pronounce that this was indeed the case. The Christian frame is variable. The comfort of religion, even where it has real possession of the soul, may not always be enjoyed. Was Isaiah overwhelmed at the discovery of the Divine Majesty—"Woe is me ; I am undone ; I am a man of unclean lips" ? Did David pray, "Create in me a clean heart O God ; renew a right spirit within me" ? Did Peter exclaim, in terror, "I am a sinful man" ?—And the apostle Paul use the utmost caution, diffidently referring himself to the final decision of Go'

without presuming to rest on his own—"With me" (his words are remarkable) "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; *yea I judge not mine own self*, but he that judgeth me is God"? And can we be surprised, keeping in mind the perplexities with which the most distinguished of God's children have on trying occasions been oppressed, that others whose attainments are by no means so eminent, should enter the valley and shadow of death with a trembling heart and misgiving thoughts.

Sad indeed were the last days of our dear young friend.—By the bursting of a blood vessel, attended with great difficulty in breathing, which rendered it impossible to rest by day or by night, he endured excruciating pain in body, whilst his mind was a prey to gloomy and painful apprehensions. At every interval of ease he was entirely engaged with divine things, receiving with gratitude and advantage great assistance from the conversation and the prayers of his worthy pastor. So submissive was he to the will of his Heavenly father, that the most agonizing pain produced no complaint, nor even the least murmur. The night previously to his departure he enjoyed a refreshing sleep, and began to breathe freely. He awoke in a composed praying frame, continuing in constant prayer for some hours. God did not "hide his face from him, but when he cried unto him he heard." It was the moment of triumph. No longer was he harrassed with perplexity, nor assaulted with temptation. The love of God filled his soul—Death lost all his terrors. He was even anxious to be gone, exclaiming "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly; I would not remain on earth for ten thousand worlds!"

The tears of his parents drew his attention.—He put one hand on each, and embracing them, said "Do not weep; I cannot weep, I am full of joy. I have no pain.—Is this death? Is this dying? I never felt better in all my life. In a little time I shall see you both again." He took an affectionate leave of his friends who were present, reminding them of their duty; and desired in parting with his little favourite

niece (Mary Wardlaw Muir) that she should convey his love to his absent sister, and his hope of meeting her in a better world.

After shutting his eyes for a moment, he sprung up, exclaiming "Oh I saw the man coming for me, but I have lost sight of him; he will soon return!" In prayer to God, and in his praises, he continued, until being entirely exhausted, he lay down; and, with his eyes fixed on Heaven, and his lips in motion, without the least groan or struggle he went to eternal rest.

This awful, pleasing scene, made impressions on the beholders, which cannot soon be forgotten. Their tears were tears of joy. The presence of God brightened the countenances of the friends of Jesus; controuled the violence of natural affection, and abashed the king of terrors, who fled in dismay foiled even by a stripling opposing him in the name of the Prince of Peace. Heaven appeared to have descended upon earth. All and each were ready to sing the new song—"Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us by thy blood; out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

The different facts which I have now stated, without any disguise or exaggeration, strongly establish some important truths.

Are we not so constituted, that none can get clear of apprehensions that the soul shall survive the dissolution of the body, and exist in a separate state? Of these apprehensions, the most ignorant and the best informed; persons of regular and irregular lives; by whom a separate state is desired, and by whom it is dreaded, cannot entirely divest themselves. They may for a time deride these apprehensions, and in the darkness of vain speculation loose sight of them; but the hour of danger, and the moment of death, spoil their mirth, and convince them to their terror of a truth which they

have anxiously attempted to evade, and to keep out of view. It is impossible any can ever be assured that what is so agreeable to the natural desires of the soul ; what has been universally admitted by men of all nations, and in every age, and is confirmed by the whole weight of scripture, is, or can be either false or nugatory.

Few, perhaps none, are able entirely, and at all times, to resist the dread of death. Death is clothed with terrors which discompose, stagger, and overwhelm the most bold and resolute. The law of God arms death with that sting, the poison whereof drinketh up the spirit. The innocent are free from alarm, but none of the sons of Adam are innocent. Fear is the offspring of guilt ; and guilt, in a greater or lesser degree, is attached to the best on earth. Hezekiah, at the approach of death was oppressed, and in great bitterness ; and the Disciples in jeopardy felt dreadful consternation, calling upon Jesus, "Master, Master, we perish !" Through fear of death, some are all their life-time subject to bondage. The sinfulness of our nature, and the infirmities of which God's own people are conscious, leave them often a prey to uneasy, and even agonizing feelings.—These feelings are common, with others, to persons of the strongest minds, and of the most upright conduct : They arise from the imperfection of the human character, and cannot be avoided whilst any degree of imperfection remains. In most instances the first approaches of death are terrible. It is not against flesh and blood we then wrestle, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, we need the whole armour of God that we may be able to withstand, in the evil day. Girded with truth, and defended with righteousness ; shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and sheltered under the shield of faith ; wielding the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God ; and praying always with all prayer, the enemy shall not prevail : Omnipotence on our side shall overpower any force, however might-

ty, however numerous, however artful, which can be brought against us.

There is a time to die, to which we are all appointed. We totter on the brink of the grave, and may any moment fall in. A vast proportion of the human race are cut off in infancy, great numbers in youth, many in manhood, and a few after having reached extreme old age. Numbering our days, let us apply our hearts to wisdom, prepare for the evil day, and for the year when you can expect no pleasure.

To infants no instruction can be given. It may not, however, be unreasonable, to bring in view some passages of scripture, from whence parents, mourning the loss of their infant offspring, may derive hope. What means that passage—*‘The promise is to you and to your children.’* To Christ, foretold from the beginning, and in the fulness of time accomplishing the work which he had undertaken, “*The promise*,” a term often used in the New Testament, is generally applicable. In him the promises are yea, and amen—with him the new covenant has been established; and through him, as the channel, the blessings thereof flow to our guilty race. That he should be made flesh, and dwell among us; that he should die, and rise again; that the Holy Ghost, in consequence of his death and resurrection, should descend and abide with men on earth, surprising them with his gifts, and enriching them with his grace, is “*The promise*” immediately spoken of in the passage which I have now produced. Had not Christ interposed in our behalf, the whole human race, without any exception, root and branch, infant and adult, young and old, had inevitably perished—But his death revives our hope.—Were infants incapable of receiving benefit from his death, none of them could be saved. But the thought is equally abhorrent to scripture, as it is to every tender feeling. Christ, the unspeakable gift of God, and the immediate subject of the

promises, is the saviour of the child, as well as of the parent. Children have been considered in the covenant of grace, and provision has been made for their renovation and happiness, and they are admitted to baptism, in token of this delightful truth, that the blood of Jesus has efficacy to wash away their original guilt, and his spirit to renew and sanctify their natures.

What says the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah? He says, "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord—"Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border."

Does God notice and reward the care with which parents watch over their infant charge? Is death an enemy who has led them captive to a gloomy land? But is it not here promised that they shall be rescued from the hand of the enemy, and put in possession of that immortality, the inheritance originally intended for Adam and his sons? In hopes that this promise shall be accomplished, let the afflicted parent refrain her voice from weeping, and her eyes from tears.

When Job recovered his losses, it is particularly marked that all his stock was doubled, but he continued as before to have seven sons and three daughters, of which the Jewish commentators give this account—that his children, although dead, were not lost as his other possessions were, but would in due time be restored to him again.

Assured that infants are thought of in the covenant of grace, and shall escape from the power of death, let not parents mourn

As those who have no hope, but without a murmuring word comply with the command of the gracious Redeemer—"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

It may be in pity to the human race, that such a proportion are removed in infancy, whereby they are secured against temptation, and escape the multiplied sorrows under which survivors groan. Few and evil are men's days on earth, attended with trouble, and hastening to a period. Is there no hiding-place from the wind, nor covert from the tempest; no rivers of water to refresh the dry ground, nor great rock under whose shadow we may take shelter in a weary land?—Yes; the Lord Jesus Christ is to men that hiding-place from the wind, and covert from the tempest; the rivers of water which refresh the dry ground, and the great rock under whose shadow we may take shelter in a weary land. The work of righteousness, in consequence of his spirit poured upon us from on high, is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever. His people dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.

That grace, which the scripture unfolds, illustrates, and enforces the procuring cause of peace on earth and good will towards men, alone can controul our fears, give support in the day of trial, and at last afford a complete triumph over sin and death. The statement in scripture on this subject is perfectly plain, but through the natural darkness and pride of the heart it is not discerned; nor will men receive as a favour what they would demand as a reward. The prevalence of such darkness and pride is the leading characteristic of the unregenerate; but upon the regenerate, light breaks forth, and they yield the most entire and cheerful submission to the will of God. This is the precise boundary between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Christ. **HERE** a state of nature ends—**THERE** a state of grace begins.

God entered into engagements with his own son, let the son assume human nature; in that nature let him give obedience to the law which men had transgressed; and submit to death, the penalty of transgression: The offender, through his merit and energy shall be forgiven, shall be renewed, and again put in full possession of that immortality which he had forfeited. The son complied with his engagements, and claims as his reward, that the guilty may be rescued from ruin: His claim is admitted, and all power in heaven and on earth is entrusted with him, that he may carry his kind designs into complete effect. His Gospel is addressed to all the world, inviting and commanding each of the human race to trust in him for salvation: Whenever this invitation and this command is listened unto, and complied with, men are as certain of mercy and of grace as the word and the oath of God can make them.

That a divine power is necessary to incline and to strengthen man to listen to the invitation, and to obey the command on which their safety depends, is not to be denied; but such grace is afforded to all men as improved, would issue in their complete recovery, and shall render their final rejection of the gospel altogether inexcusable.—God's spirit in this view is said to strive with the wicked; light is afforded them in different degrees; they are restrained from running all the lengths to which they would otherwise proceed in an evil course—but resisting the strivings of God's spirit; shutting their eyes against the light; and breaking through every restraint, they are given up of God, and left to wonder and to perish,

May not the circumstances of the Antediluvians, with whom God's spirit strove for many years; of Herod the King, who was inclined to hear gladly the instructions of John the baptist, and to do many things in conformity to these instructions; of those Hebrews who received not only the miraculous gifts of

the Holy Ghost, but were also so far illuminated, that for a time they took pleasure in the truths of the gospel, and felt their influence on conduct; may not these circumstances be recollected as an illustration of this subject? Notwithstanding the advantages arising from warning and forbearance; from divine influences and divine grace; from clear light and full conviction—they persevered in an evil course; grew worse and worse; and finally apostatized from the faith. Shall not the grace, which through their perversion and abuse was received in vain, leave them speechless when arraigned before the bar of God?

Meditation and prayer; reading the word, and attending the ordinances of divine appointment, attempts to do well, begun, followed up, and persevered in, mark the path of duty in which alone we can expect the divine blessing, and the communications of grace which are of an effectual and saving nature.—Proceeding in this path, it shines more and more, unto the perfect day; our own demerit and weakness become evident; leading us to ascribe every good disposition, and every good act to the spirit of God, and to place the most firm and entire dependence on the great Redeemer.

The new nature is gradually unfolded in a humble and spiritual, a loving and obedient, a patient and submissive temper; renouncing all merit on our part, and giving to the Redeemer the whole glory of rescuing and of saving an undone criminal from deserved ruin. By whatever means men are brought to rest on Christ for salvation, when this once becomes the cheerful and resolute act, it is attended with peace and with safety.

Hopes derived from our own feelings, or our own exertions; from any affection of body, or any frame of mind; from what we either have done, or can do, shall most assuredly disappoint us; our feelings are variable and our exertions feeble;

the affections of the body and the frame of the mind often depend on circumstances which have no immediate connection with religion; or which, at least, cannot evidence its seat in the heart; nothing we have done, or ever can do, either merit the favour of God, or are an equivalent for eternal life. Men deceive themselves who depend in whole or in part, on any or on all of these things, to procure acceptance: They build on a foundation of sand; and, to use the Apostle's language, are "fallen from grace." But hopes derived from Christ alone cannot make men ashamed:—His power, his faithfulness, his grace, are ever the same:—He changeth not: Great is their consolation who fly to him as their refuge:—God is reconciled to them; Sin has lost its dominion over them: Death has no sting to injure them—Nor the grave power to detain them prisoners.—It is Christ's will, that where he is, there they should be also.

Pretensions, however plausible, are much to be suspected which contract the mind and alienate the affections; exciting violent attachment to this or that separating name, whilst love waxeth cold.—Such act as men; and have no evidence to themselves, and give none to the world that they are spiritual. The faith of Christ, unmixed with human infirmity, unites all hearts in the strongest manner; whilst this is not the case, it shews that the best are sanctified in part only: But let Christians go on to perfection, as they advance, the heart will enlarge, and burn with love to all men, especially to the household of faith.

A steady reliance on Christ is what alone can support the dying, and introduce them in triumph to a better world. Men in danger catch at any thing; but they are left in perplexity and terror until they give all up, and rest on the rock of ages. This may account for the darkness and suspense in which the dying are often held: They enquire after their faith and repentance: This act of obedience, or that, to which they may attach some merit

and in which they may place some confidence : It is the last struggle with the body of sin and death ; for however necessary faith, repentance, and new obedience be, they are not our saviours ; where they do exist, they are given from God, and ought to excite our gratitude ; but must not be offered as a price to procure the reward. It is the triumph of grace to bring us off from all dependence on these, to depend on him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his blood : The moment that this is effected, the Christian shouts for joy ; he stands on firm ground ; he is equally sheltered against the accusations of his own mind, or the condemning sentence of the broken law. Great is his confidence :—" If God be for us, who can be against us ? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is written, ' For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. '— Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

F I N I S.