

many
 To the ~~following~~ testimonies of the happiness of a life spent in the service of GOD, may be added that of a faithful servant of CHRIST from amongst ourselves, to wit, DAVID BRAINARD, who spent the flower of his age in a faithful labour, for the conversion of a number of Indians of this and the neighbouring province. In the course of this labour, it pleased GOD to visit him with sickness, it is thought, brought on thro' the hardship he endured in that service. His disorder proved a consumption, which put a period to his life in the year 1747, being the 30th of his age. The following extracts of some letters he wrote to his friends, mostly during his sickness, will fully evince the truly christian disposition of mind of this sincere follower of CHRIST. May they be blessed to the well disposed reader.

My dear BROTHER,

THERE is but one thing, that deserves our highest care, and most ardent desires; and that is, that we may answer the great end for which we were made, viz. to glorify that God, who has given us our be-
 A ings,

ings, and all our comforts, and to do all the good, we possibly can, to our fellow men, while we live in the world: And verily life is not worth the having, if it be not improved for this noble end and purpose. Yet, alas, how little is this thought of among mankind; most men seem to live to themselves, without much regard to the glory of God, or the good of their fellow creatures; they earnestly desire, and eagerly pursue after the riches, the honours, and the pleasures of life, as if they really supposed that wealth, or greatness, or merriment, could make their immortal souls happy. But, alas, what false and delusive dreams are these, and how miserable will those ere long be, who are not awaked out of them, to see, that all their happiness consists in living to God, and becoming holy, as he is holy! Oh, may you never fall into the tempers and vanities, the sensuality and folly of the present world. You are, by divine providence, left as it were alone in a wide world, to act for yourself: Be sure then to remember, it is a world of temptation. You have no earthly parents to be the means of forming your youth to piety and virtue, by their pious examples, and seasonable counsels; let this then excite you, with greater diligence and fervency, to look up to the father of mercies, for grace and assistance against
all

all the vanities of the world. And if you would glorify God, answer his just expectations from you, and make your own soul happy in this and the coming world, observe these few directions; tho' not from a father, yet from a brother, who is touched with a tender concern for your present and future happiness.

Daily endeavour to practise a life of seriousness and strict sobriety. The wise man will tell you the great advantage of such a life, *Eccles.* vii. 3. Think of the life of Christ; and when you can find that he was pleased with jesting and vain merriment, then you may indulge it in yourselves.

Again: Be careful to make a good improvement of precious time. When you cease from labour, fill up your time in reading, meditation, and prayer. And while your hands are labouring, let your heart be employed, as much as possible, in divine thoughts.

Further: take heed that you faithfully perform the business you have to do in the world, from a regard to the commands of God; and not from an ambitious desire of being esteemed better than others. We should always look upon ourselves as God's servants, placed in God's world, to do his work; and accordingly labour faithfully for him; not with a design to grow rich and great, but to glorify God, and do all the good we possibly can.

Again:

Again : Never expect any satisfaction or happiness from the world. If you hope for happiness in the world, hope for it from God, and not from the world. Don't think you shall be more happy, if you live to such or such a state of life, if you live to be for yourself, to be settled in the world, or if you should gain an estate in it ; but look upon it that you shall then be happy, when you can be constantly employed for God, and not for yourself ; and desire to live in this world, only to do and suffer what God alots you. When you can be of the spirit and temper of angels, who are willing to come down into this lower world, to perform what God commands them, tho' their desires are heavenly, and not in the least set on earthly things, then you will be of that temper that you ought to have, *Col. iii. 2.*

Once more : Never think you can live to God, by your own power or strength ; but always look to, and rely on him for assistance, yea, for all strength and grace. There is no greater truth than this, *that we cannot do any thing of ourselves.* Yet nothing but our own experience can effectually teach it to us. Indeed, we are a long time in learning, that all our strength and salvation is in God. This is a life, that I think no unconverted man can possibly live ; and yet it is a life, that every godly soul is pressing after in some
good

good measure. Let it then be your great concern, thus to devote yourself, and your all to God.

I long to see you, that I may say much more to you than I now can, for your benefit and welfare ; but I desire to commit you to, and leave you with, the father of mercies and God of all graces ; praying that you may be directed safely thro' an evil world, to God's heavenly kingdom, and am your affectionate brother,

DAVID BRAINARD.

To a SPECIAL FRIEND.

CERTAINLY the greatest, the noblest pleasures of intelligent creatures, must result from their acquaintance with the blessed God, and with their own rational and immortal souls. And Oh, how divinely sweet and entertaining is it, to look into our own souls, when we can find all our powers and passions united and engaged in pursuit after God, our whole souls longing, and passionately breathing for a conformity to him, and the full enjoyment of him. Verily, there are no hours pass away with so much divine pleasure, as those that are spent in communing with God and our own hearts. Oh, how sweet is a spirit of devotion; a spirit of seriousness and divine solemnity, a spirit of
gospel

gospel simplicity, love and tendernefs ! Oh, how defirable, and how profitable to the christian life, is a fpirit of holy watchfulnefs and godly jealousy over ourfelves ; when our fouls are afraid of nothing fo much as that we fhall grieve and offend the bleffed God, whom at fuch time we apprehend, or at leaft hope, to be a father and friend ; whom we then love, and long to pleafe, rather than to be happy ourfelves, or at leaft we delight to derive our happinefs from pleafing and glorifying him ! Surely this is a pious temper, worthy of the higheft ambition, and clofeft purfuit of intelligent creatures, and holy chriftians. Oh, how vastly fuperior is the pleafure, peace and fatisfaction derived from thefe divine frames, to that which we (alas) fometimes purfue in things impertinent and trifling ! Our own bitter experience teaches us, that in the midft of fuch laughter the heart is forrowful, and there is no true fatisfaction but in God. But, alas ! How fhall we obtain and retain this fweet fpirit of religion and devotion. Let us follow the apoftle's direction. *Phil. ii. 12.* and labour upon the encouragement he there mentions, *Verfe. 13.* For it is God only can afford us this favour ; and he will be fought to, and it is fit we fhould wait upon him for fo rich a mercy. Oh, may the God of all graces afford us the grace and influences of
his

his divine spirit ; and help us, that we may from our hearts esteem it our greatest liberty and happiness, that whether we live, we may live to the Lord, or whether we die, we may die to the Lord ; that in life and death, we may be his, &c. &c.

To his B R O T H E R.

Dear B R O T H E R,

I HAD determined to make you and my other friends in *New-England* a visit this fall; partly from an earnest desire I had to see you and them, and partly with a view to the recovery of my health; which has, for more than three months past, been much impaired. My disorder has been attended with several symptoms of a Consumption; I have been at times apprehensive, that my great change was at hand: Yet blessed be God, I have never been affrighted; but on the contrary, at some times much delighted with a view of its approach. Oh, the blessedness of being delivered from the clogs of flesh and sense, from a body of sin, and spiritual death! Oh, the unspeakable sweetness of being translated into a state of compleat purity and perfection: Believe me, my brother, a lively view and hope of these things, will make the king of terrors himself appear agreeable.—Dear brother, let me intreat you
to

to keep eternity in your view, and behave yourself, as becomes one that must shortly give an account of all things done in the body. That God may be your God, and prepare you for his service here, and his kingdom of glory hereafter, is the desire, and daily prayer of your affectionate loving Brother.

To a FRIEND.

HOW amazing is it that the living, who know they must die, should, notwithstanding, put far away the evil day, in a season of health and prosperity; and live at such an awful distance from a familiarity with the grave, and the great concerns beyond it. And especially, it may justly fill us with surprize, that any whose minds have been divinely enlightened to behold the important things of eternity as they are, I say, that such should live in this manner. And yet, how rare are the instances of those, who live and act from day to day, as on the verge of eternity, striving to fill up all their remaining moments in the service, and to the honour of their great master. We insensibly trifle away time, while we seem to have enough of it, and are so strangely amused, as in a great measure to lose a sense of the holiness and blessed qualifications necessary to prepare us to be inhabitants of the heavenly

venly paradise. But oh, dear sir, a dying bed, if we enjoy our reason clearly, will give another view of things, &c. &c. &c.

To his BROTHER at College; written in the Time of his extreme Illness in Boston, a few Months before his Death.

My Dear BROTHER,

IT is from the sides of eternity I now address you. I am heartily sorry, that I have so little strength to write what I long so much to communicate to you. But let me tell you, my brother, eternity is another Thing than we ordinarily take it to be in a healthful State. Oh, how vast and boundless! Oh, how fix'd and unalterable. Oh, of what infinite importance is it, that we be prepared for eternity! I have been just a dying now for more than a week; and all around me have thought me so: But in this time I have had clear views of eternity; have seen the blessedness of the godly, in some measure, and have longed to share their happy state; as well as been comfortably satisfied, that tho' grace I shall do so! But oh, what anguish is raised in my mind, to think of an eternity for those who are Christless, for those who are mistaken, and who

B

bring

bring their false hopes to the grave with them : the sight was so dreadful, I could by no means bear it. My thoughts recoiled, and I said (but under a more affecting sense than ever before) who can dwell with everlasting burnings ! Oh, methought, that I could now see my friends, that I might warn them to see to it, that they lay their foundation for eternity sure. And you, my dear brother, I have been particularly concerned for ; and have wondered, I so much neglected conversing with you about your spiritual State at our last meeting. Oh, my brother, let me then beseech you now to examine, whether you are indeed a new creature ? Whether you have ever acted above self ? Whether the glory of God has ever been the sweetest, highest concern with you ? Whether you have been reconciled to all the perfections of God ? In a word, whether God has been your portion, and a holy conformity to him, your chief delight ? If you can't answer positively, consider seriously the frequent breathings of your soul : But don't, however, put yourself off with a slight answer. If you have reason to think you are graceless, oh, give yourself and the throne of grace no rest, till God arise and save. But if the case should be otherwise, bless God for his Grace, and press after holiness.

The following experience of some men of note for their station and learning, expressed near the conclusion of their days, may be a farther matter of instruction to the thoughtful reader.

COUNT OXCISTERN, Chancellor of Sweedland, a person of the first quality, station and ability in his own country, and whose share and success not only in the chief ministry of affairs in that kingdom, but in the greatest negotiations of Europe, during his time, made him no less considerable abroad. After all his knowledge and honour, being visited in his retreat from public business, by Commissioner Whitlock, ambassador from England to Queen Christiana, in the conclusion of their discourse, he said to the ambassador, I have seen much, and enjoyed much of this world, but I never knew how to live till now. I thank my good God that has given me time to know him, and to know myself. All the comfort I have, and all the comfort I take, and which is more than the whole world can give, is feeling the good spirit of God in my heart, and reading in his good book (holding up the Bible) that came from it. And further
addressed

addressed himself thus to the ambassador; you are now in the prime of your age and vigour, and in great favour and business; but this will all leave you, and you will one day, better understand and relish what I say to you; and then you will find that there is more wisdom, truth, comfort and pleasure in retiring and turning your heart from the world to the good spirit of God, and in reading the Bible, than in all the courts and favours of princes.

BULSTROD WHITLOCK himself, a scholar, a lawyer, a statesman, who is said to have been one of the most accomplished men of his age, when retired from the world, amongst many other serious things, thus expressed himself, I ever have thought (said he) there has been one true religion in the world and that is, *the work of the spirit of God in the heart and souls of men*. There has been indeed divers forms and shapes of things, through the many dispensations of God to men answerable to his own wise ends, in reference to the low and uncertain state of man in the world; but the old world had the spirit of God for to strive with them, and the new world has had the spirit of God, both Jew and Gentile, and it strives with all; *and they that have been led by it, have been the good people in every dispensation of God to the world*. And I myself must say, I have felt it

it from a child to convince me of my evil and vanity, and it has often given me a true measure of this poor world, and some taste of divine things, and it is my grief I did not more early apply my soul to it. For I can say, since my retirement from the greatness and hurries of the world, I have felt something of the work and comfort of it, and that it is both ready and able to instruct and lead, and preserve those that will humbly and sincerely hearken to it. So that my religion is, *the good spirit of God in my heart*; I mean, what that has wrought in me and for me.

Dr. DUNN, a great poet, taking his farewell of his friends on his dying-bed, left this saying behind him, for them to measure their fancies and their actions by;—I repent of all my life but that part of it I spent in communion with God, and doing good.

HUGH GROTIUS, a great statesman, and a man of the most universal knowledge that these latter ages have produced, winds up his life and choice in this remarkable saying, which should abate the edge of other men's inordinate desire after what they falsely call learning, namely, “ I would give all
 “ my learning and honour for the plain integrity of John Urick, who was a religious poor man, that spent eight hours of
 his

“ his time in prayer, eight in labour, and
 “ but eight in meals, sleep, and other
 “ necessaries.” And to one that admired
 his great industry, he returned this by way
 of complaint: *Ah! I have consumed my life*
in laboriously doing nothing. And to another,
 that enquired of his wisdom and learning,
 what course to take, he solemnly answered,
Be serious. Such was the sense he had how
 much a serious life excelled, and was of force
 towards a dying hour.

To whom may be joined SALMASIUS,
 a famous French scholar, who lived about
 the same time, after his many volumes of
 learning, by which he had acquired great
 veneration among men of books, confessed
 so far to have mistaken true learning, and
 that in which solid happiness consists that he
 exclaimed thus against himself; Oh! I have
 lost a world of time; time, the most precious
 thing in the world! whereof, had I but one
 year more, it should be spent in David's
 Psalms and Paul's epistles. Oh, Sirs! (said
 he to those about him) mind the world less,
 and God more. *The fear of the Lord, that is*
wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is under-
standing.

Extract

Extract of a letter wrote by the Earl of Effex, to his particular friend the Earl of Southampton, sometime before his death.

66 **W**ITH respect to your natural gifts or abilities, remember, *First*, That you have nothing that you have not received. *Secondly*, That you possess them, not as a lord over them, but as an accomptant for them. *Thirdly*, If you employ them to serve this world, or your own worldly delight, which the prince of this world will seek to entertain you with, it is ingratitude, it is injustice, yea, it is perfidious treachery: For what would you think of such a servant of yours, who should convert your goods, committed to his charge, to the advantage or service of your greatest enemy; and what do you less than this with God, since you have all from him, and know that the world, and the princes thereof, are at a continual enmity with him. And therefore, if ever the admonition of your truest friend shall be heard by you, or if your country, which you may serve in so great and many things, be dear unto you; if your God, whom you must (if you deal truly with yourself) acknowledge to be powerful over all, and just in all, be feared by you; yea, if you be dear unto yourself, and prefer an everlasting happiness before a pleasant dream,

dream, which you must shortly awake out of, and then repent in the bitterness of your soul; if any of these things be regarded by you, then, I say, call yourself to account for what is past; cancel all the leagues you have made without the warrant of a religious conscience; make a regular covenant with your God, to serve him with all your natural and spiritual, inward and outward gifts and abilities, and then he who is faithful and cannot lie, hath promised to honour those who honour him; he will give you that inward peace of soul, and true joy of heart, which, till you have, you will never rest; and which when you have, you shall never be shaken; and which you can never attain to any other way."

A letter wrote by (the renowned) John Locke to Anthony Collins, to be delivered to him after his decease.

"**I** KNOW you loved me living, and will preserve my memory when I am dead. All the use to be made of it, is, that this life is a scene of vanity which soon passes away, and affords no solid satisfaction but in the consciousness of doing well, and in the hopes of another life. This is what I can say upon experience, and what you will find to be true when you come to make up the account. Adieu, I leave my best wishes with you.

JOHN LOCKE."

