

Monergism

A PREPARATION FOR
SUFFERING
IN AN EVIL DAY

EDWARD POLHILL

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by Edward Polhill

Table of Contents

[To the Reader](#)

[CHAPTER I: Persecution will come on good men](#)

[CHAPTER II: It is useful to christians to discern the signs of the times](#)

[CHAPTER III: Preparation for sufferings considered more generally.](#)

[CHAPTER IV: Preparation for suffering; the first direction is, Try thy heart](#)

[CHAPTER V: The second direction for suffering, mortification of sin](#)

[CHAPTER VI: The third direction for suffering in the knowledge of God](#)

[CHAPTER VII: The fourth direction for suffering is precious faith](#)

[CHAPTER VIII: The fifth direction for suffering, is love to God and Christ](#)

[CHAPTER IX: The sixth direction for suffering, is a lively hope of eternal life](#)

CHAPTER X: The seventh direction for suffering is holy fear

CHAPTER XI: The eighth direction for suffering is humility

CHAPTER XII: The ninth direction for suffering is active obedience to the will of God

CHAPTER XIII: The tenth direction for suffering, is patience under God's will

CHAPTER XIV: Some inducements to suffer anything, rather than part with the pure religion

To the Reader

IT is the saying of a grave divine, that in the school of Satan, the first A B C of Atheism is this; "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" but ill the school of Jesus, the first A B C of religion is this; "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Opposition is evangelical genius, the church has the cross for its inheritance: it is the ordinance of God, that through tribulation we must enter into his kingdom. This has been the way of the saints in all ages; the cloud of witnesses have walked in it to heaven; Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation, was made perfect through sufferings; and therefore, christians who are to follow him whithersoever he goeth, must provide for the cross, especially at such a time as this. Now, not only the common lot of Christianity, but the dark aspect of the times bid us prepare for sufferings: charity is cold, differences are hot, moderation vanishes, enmity everywhere appears, popery lifts up itself in the world, Protestants help on the design, by destroying each other, sin is gone up with a great cry to heaven, black clouds of wrath

hang over our heads for it, the decays of holy love threaten a removal of our candlestick, lukewarmness in religion shows, that we are fit to be spued out of God's mouth: every one that hath eyes in his head, may see the tendency of such things as these; and therefore, christians have more than an ordinary obligation on them to provide for the cross, and nothing less than a stock of holy graces can put them into a posture for it. It is true, Diogenes, when he was asked, what he gained by his philosophy, answered, that he gained this by it, that he was *ad omnem fortunam paratus*, ready for everything that should fall out. Philosophy may pretend to this, but nothing but true christianity can effect it; it is an easy matter to speak finely, and say, as one did, "*Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinae;*" if the broken world fall about our ears, the ruins of it shall not starle us: but nothing less than gracious and divine principles can enable a man piously to suffer for the cause of God and conscience; he that parts with all outward things here, had need have an interest in Him, who is better than all: he that stands fast in a storm of persecution without, had need of a pure, serene conscience within; he that will adhere to persecuted truth, had need to be well settled in it, and carry the sweet savour of it upon his heart: he that will stand out against the threatenings of men, had need be well-fixed in the promises of God, and from thence draw out comfort in an evil day. How can a christian part with the present world, if he hath not another, a better, to go to; or lay down a temporal life, if he hath not a lively hope of an eternal one in heaven? How can he lift up himself above the dregs of a corrupt world, if he be not extasied and rapt up in love to God: or bear the terrors and cruelties of men, if the fear of God do not prevail and over-rule his heart? Humility must make him a worm, a nothing in his own eyes, that he may be willing to be trampled on by men. Obedience must work him to a compliance with God's commanding will, that patience may fit him to subject to his disposing one. Believe it, it is a great, an heroical thing, to suffer for religion; it must be grace, true grace, (such as carries a man up above himself and the world, and joins him to the fountain of comfort and happiness) that will make him fit to suffer and lose all for righteousness sake.

READER. The ensuing discourse hath no other design, but only to show, how christians are to bear sufferings, and what graces are requisite thereunto: if any glory may come to God, or profit to men by it, it is as much as is desired by him, who is

A LOVER OF TRUTH,

EDWARD POLHILL.

CHAPTER I

Persecution will come on good men

This world is mixed of comforts and sorrows—The old enmity will persecute—Corruption in saints will show itself inwardly and outwardly—The church is heir to the cross—God orders sufferings for good—Things abroad and at home admonish us.

ONE apostle tells us, That all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. Another acquaints us, That this is no strange thing; a third, wishes us not; to marvel at the world's hatred. It is true, the sufferings of good men have been an old stumbling-block. Pompey complained, that providence was very dark: the poet was ready to think that there were no gods: nay, the holy Psalmist cried out, I have cleansed my heart in vain, as if religion were to no purpose: yet, if we consider all, those sufferings are not to be wondered at.

This world, standing between heaven and hell, must partake of both. Heaven is all comfort; hell is all misery: the middle world must have a mixture; here evil men may meet with comforts, and good men may meet with afflictions.

The old enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, will stir up persecution to the world's end. "He that is born after the flesh, will persecute him that is born after the Spirit:" it is his nature and property to do so; a thing no more to be wondered at than the stinging of a serpent, or the tearing of a briar. Many pretences were made to palliate the persecution of the primitive christians. Under Trajan it was said, that the christians were too numerous; under Antoninus Pius it was given out, that all kinds of penal evils came for their sakes; under Severus it was alleged, that they were guilty of all kind of villanies; under Dioclesian it was fairly pretended, that there must be but one religion in the empire; but in truth, all these were but so many colours, the venom of the serpent was at the root; the devilish enmity, which is in carnal men against the saints, was the very proper cause of all those persecutions. Wickedness will proceed from the wicked; the old enmity will break out, and that not only in men grossly wicked, but in fair moralists, too. A Trajan or Antoninus can persecute, as well as a Nero: the same root of bitterness is in all carnal men.

The inherent corruption in the saints will shew itself inwardly and outwardly: inwardly it will raise up a prosecution in their own bosom; the flesh lusteth against the spirit. No sooner is the new creature born, but the indwelling sin doth hunt it as a partridge upon the mountains, and seeks the life of its infant graces, as Herod did the life of Christ in the cradle. And how can the saints wonder at a persecution without, when they have one within in their souls? Or how can they expect less than briars in the world, when they feel a thorn in their own flesh? Outwardly it will, even in saints, when let out, be injurious to others. A David, when his corruption breaks forth, can be inhuman towards the Ammonites; an Asa can imprison the Seer, and oppress the people. And if corruption may do so in a saint, in whom it is in part mortified, what may it not do in a son of Belial, in whom it is the total ruling principle? In the one, the regenerate part holds back; but in the other, the whole soul is carried out to wickedness. It is no wonder that such an one should persecute; his, principles are entirely for it.

The church is heir to the cross. Its suffering began from the blood of Abel, and hath continued ever since. Israel, God's peculiar people, was first oppressed in Egypt, under cruel bondage; then vexed in Canaan by the neighbour nations round about them; afterwards carried captive into Babylon, and at last trod under foot by Antiochus Epiphanes. The christian church was first persecuted by the pagan emperors; then torn in pieces by Arians and other heretics; afterwards overrun with Goths and Vandals, and at last trod down by Mahomet and Antichrist. All along it hath been in a suffering condition, and it is no wonder, if it suffer on till it come to rest in heaven.

God orders the sufferings of the church for his own glory, and his people's good. He orders them for his own glory; providence is admirable in preserving a suffering church. The ark floats upon the waters, and drowns not: the bush burns, and is not consumed the lily is among thorns, and withers not; the saints are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. Strength comes forth out of weakness; light arises out of darkness; the bones, though sometimes dry and hopeless, live; the witnesses are slain, and revive again; pressures multiply the church, and sufferings propagate it; and what a sight is this? Who may think much at those sufferings, in which so much of God appears? Again, he orders them for his people's good; the fan will purge away their vanity; the furnace will melt out their dross; every name of persecution will lift them up nearer to heaven; their sufferings will make them white; their graces will come forth as gold out of the fire in their pure lustre; the rod will blossom, and bring forth peaceable fruit of righteousness; the Holy Spirit will come down upon them in larger effusions of grace and comfort: and what things are these? Who can imagine those sufferings needless, which have so excellent an issue?

To conclude; Things abroad and at home admonish us: abroad, the Protestant religion runs very low; idolatry grows in the world, and where that goes before, cruelty follows after. The fiery furnace waits

upon the idol: the scarlet whore, full of fornications, will drink the blood of saints; the false worshippers will persecute the true; the sighs and groans of the poor souls in France do alarm all that have any sense of piety or humanity: who can but mourn at such mourning providences? At home our sins are grown up to heaven; oaths, blasphemies, perjuries, hellish plots, uncleannesses, excesses, atheism, contempt of ordinances, deadness and formality in religion, unthankfulness and unfaithfulness to God, are found among us. The cloud of guilt, which hangs over our heads, is very black, and ready to come down in storms of wrath upon us. Sword, and plague, and fire, have already consumed us; and because we sin on with a stiff neck, hard heart, and impudent face, more judgments may be expected. Eliphaz, seeing the wicked taking root, suddenly cursed his habitation, (Job 5:3). He that sees our aggravated sins, may easily foretell our sudden destruction.

CHAPTER II

It is useful to christians to discern the signs of the times, and to be ready for all the will of God

Providence bids us prepare for sufferings; we have need to do so—Suffering is hard to sense, and the excellency of a christian—The prepared christian is a happy man, and the unprepared miserable.

TWO things are of great use to Christians; the one is, to discern the signs of the time. He that looks without and sees the state of things there, and then turns to Scripture, and there sees the issues that wait upon such states, may discern the signs of the time. The luxury of the old world was a sign of the deluge; the persecution of the prophets was a sign of Jerusalem's desolation. When Ephesus declined, and left its first love, the candlestick was removing: when Laodicea was lukewarm, God was ready to spue them out of his mouth. And so it is in other things; such and such a state of things will have such and such an issue. The discerning of this will make Christians time their

duties, and do everything in the true season of it, which is no less profitable than beautiful. The other thing is, to be ready for all the will of God; to have graces aptly answering to providence. Such holy joy as may tune the heart to prosperity, and such humble submission as may frame the heart to adversity: this is that blessed temper that bids everything welcome that comes in the will of God.

If we observe the signs of our times, we may easily discern judgments a coming; and therefore nothing can be more necessary than to prepare for sufferings. God hath a controversy with us, and seems to speak to us by his providence, as he did to Israel by his prophet, "Prepare to meet thy God." Sit down then, O christians, and consider how to do it, and think with yourselves, with what penitential tears, wrestling, supplications, real reformations, and holy resignations you will meet with him. Jesus Christ, the captain of your salvation, seems now to ask you by his providence, as the Roman general did his soldiers, "Are you ready?" Reflect upon yourselves, and consider, are you ready to keep the word of Christ's patience, to take up his cross and follow him? Though the cross be not yet upon your backs, yet you must carry it in your hearts; your minds must be ready at his call to suffer anything, rather than to part with the gospel.

Preparation is necessary to every good work. The pagan priests had preparatory washings before the sacrifice; the people had a hoc age cried to them to awaken their attention. The Jews were to wash their clothes at the giving of the law; they had their preparations to sabbaths and ordinances. Christians are to prepare for the word and for the holy table; but above all, preparation is necessary to sufferings. The greater the thing is, the more requisite is the preparation. Suffering is a great thing, hard to sense, harsh to flesh and blood. It may be it takes away the worldly goods, which are dear to men; it may be it comes nearer, and touches the bone and the flesh, which is dearer than outward things; it may be it goes further, and treads down the precious life, which is highly valuable. Nature, in the best, shrinks and flies away from such things as these; and supernatural graces and assistances lift up men above themselves,

they will never bear them. In such a case as this we have need to put on all our spiritual armour; not this or that piece only, but all of it; and not only to put it on, but to gird it on too: all will be little enough to make us stand in the evil day. Again, the more excellent a thing is, the more requisite is the preparation. Suffering for Christ is the excellency of a christian, the top and complement of all his graces: faith cannot rise higher; love cannot show itself better than in this. No profession of Christianity is so high, nor imitation of Christ so full, as that which is made in blood. Here is the christian's consummatum est, his work is done, and heaven opens to receive him into glory. And how should we prepare our souls, and gird up the loins of our minds, that we may be capable of that which is the highest stature of a christian in this world, and the nearest capacity to a better.

This preparation is of very great moment to christians; upon their having or not having it, depends their happiness or misery.

He that is prepared for sufferings, come what will come, is a happy man; if sufferings do not come, he is yet a martyr in mind and purpose. God sees the suffering frame that is in him; his willing mind is accepted as much as if his blood were actually shed; and being ready to die for Christ, he is ready to live with him in heaven; if sufferings come he is provided for them. St. Paul was ready to be bound and die for the name of Jesus. Polycarp, when threatened with various deaths, made this reply, Quid tardas? "Why dost thou delay? Inflict what thou wilt." The prepared christian is ready for all the will of God, which is a happiness that no suffering can interrupt. He is in a posture to overcome all the world, and he will do it. The very pagan emperors did observe the primitive martyrs to be victors in death. It is said of the martyr Vicentius, that according to his name, he overcame in words, and overcame in punishments; overcame in confession, and overcame in tribulation; overcame in fire, and overcame in water; overcame living, and overcame dying. The prepared christian is a Vincent, a conqueror of the world; his love is above the smiles of it, his fear above the terrors of it. Nay, he is more

than a conqueror, he overcomes by suffering, and lives by death; nay, being dead, he yet speaks forth the truth he suffered for, and propagates it to all posterity. Neither need we wonder at this conquest, he is not alone but hath God with him. And, as the emperor Antoninus Verus said of the primitive christians, "He carries God about with him in conscience;" and where God is, there must be happiness in the most afflicted condition; the whole sacred Trinity are present with him; the everlasting Father will strengthen him: the Son will walk with him in the fiery furnace; the Holy Spirit will come to him with all his cordials. Stephen was never so full of it as when he was stoned. The martyr Felicitas professed to her persecutor, that she had the Holy Spirit in her. The prepared christian hath a spirit of power in infirmities, a spirit of glory in reproaches, a spirit of comfort in distresses. There are no such rich anointings as those that wait upon the cross of Christ. At other times a christian hath some measures of the Spirit; but then he hath such large effusions of it, that no sufferings can make him miserable. The clouds without cannot break the serenity in his conscience; the noise of a troublesome world cannot interrupt that divine peace which keeps his heart; no malice of man can hinder the sheddings of God's love into him; no wants or exigencies can deprive him of the hidden manna promised to the overcomer; he is happy even in a vale of tears; and what will he be in heaven? There his reward will be great, nay, greater than that of others.

On the other hand; he that is not prepared for sufferings, is a miserable man: he hath a name of religion, and that is all; a notion of the gospel, but without a root; he hath a false Christ, that is, a Christ without a cross, but the right Christ he knows not; a pretence to heaven he hath, but he is not in a posture for it, neither will he go thither in a hard way: if sufferings come, he is snared, as fishes in an evil net; the surprise will rob him of that which he seems to have; he will not have so much as the name or notion of religion left: Christ will be an offence, or stumbling-block to him: heaven itself will not be worth suffering for. Thus those of the stony ground received the word with joy; but because their hearts were not ready for it, as soon

as persecution arose they were offended. Thus it was observed among the primitive christians, that the unready and unprepared did faint and fall in time of persecution. The cup of sufferings is bitter, nature starts at it: the unprepared christian rather than drink it, will in all likelihood turn apostate in the day of trial; prosperous error will be embraced by him before persecuted truth; idolatry with the world will go down better than the pure worship without it; Christ coming in poverty and tribulation, will be forsaken; antichrist, appearing in the pomp and outward greatness of the world, will be followed: mere vanity will outweigh all the great offers of the gospel; a soul and a God will be laid at stake for a little outward prosperity; and what a forlorn condition is this! and, without repentance, how dismal must the end be! The good God, whom he hath forsaken, will depart from him; Jesus Christ the Saviour will cast him out; a curse and a blast will be upon his prosperity; a sting and a wound in conscience will make him weary of himself; in a word, he will become loathsome to God, men, and himself. It is storied, that in the third century the tokens of God's wrath came in an extraordinary way upon those christians that fell off in time of persecution; some of them were struck dumb, some vexed with devils, some tormented in their bowels unto death; and, though not in these ways, yet in other will his wrath come down upon all apostates; if they are not dumb before men, they will be speechless before God; if devils vex not their bodies, they will yet possess their souls; if there be no torments in their bowels, yet there are in their consciences. The miseries which apostates incur, are much greater than those which they avoid by their apostacies. It is, therefore, highly reasonable, that we should prepare for sufferings, lest by apostacy we make ourselves more miserable, than any outward suffering can make us.

CHAPTER III

Preparation for sufferings considered more generally

A christian that wilt be prepared for sufferings must secure to himself three things; that is, a good cause, a good heart, and a good God.

HAVING seen the necessity of persecution, and the necessity of preparation, I come now to the main thing intended; to consider how a Christian may be prepared for sufferings: and here I shall first speak in general, and then more particularly. In general, a Christian, that would be prepared for sufferings, must secure to himself three things; a good cause, a good heart, and a good God: the first will make suffering honourable; the second will make us meet for it; the third will give assistance and comfort in it.

1. The Christian must secure to himself a good cause; he must take care not to suffer as an evil doer; this is not grateful to God, nor honourable among men; in it Christ is not imitated, but Christianity is shamed: such sufferers are the devil's martyrs; it cannot be reasonably expected that they should have the gracious presence of God, or any comfort in conscience; their own hearts cry out, guilty, and plainly tell them, that their suffering is but the just wages of their iniquity. A Christian must be sure, that there be no guilt in that which he suffers for. Holy Daniel saith, that innocency was found in him, (Dan. 6:22). He speaks not of the innocency of his person, as if he were without sin; but of the innocency of his cause, for which he suffered: his praying against a law did not merit a den of lions; he broke the human command only to keep the divine. It highly concerns the Christian to have an innocent cause; it is the cause, not the mere suffering, that makes the martyr. Again, the Christian must take care that he suffer not as a busy-body in other men's matter; he must not leave his own station, nor forfeit God's protection, he must abide with God in his calling, and do his own business. God took care of the bird sitting over her young in her nest, (Deut. 22:6); but not of the wandering one. The learned Johannes Fancius, a minister of the gospel in his prince's court, turned minister of state to his prince, and was at last, for some evil counsel, condemned to die; and before

he suffered, he much lamented the leaving of his calling, and left this distich.

"Disce meo exemplo mandato munere fungi,

Et fuge ceu pestem τῆν πολυπραγμοσύνην.

Learn this of me, thine own office to bear,

In others meddle not, the plague is there."

It is very uncomfortable to a Christian, when he runs into sufferings by going out of his own sphere. Moreover, the christian must take care, that he suffer not for his own rashness. He that defaced the emperor's edict against Christians, and suffered for it, was not accounted a martyr. Bishop Audas demolished the Persian temple, dedicated to the fire, as their numen, and suffered for it; but it was reckoned as a piece of rash and unreasonable zeal. We must not cast ourselves into dangers; God will keep us in our ways, not in our precipices. We must take up the cross that God makes for us, but not make one of ourselves by our own rashness: if we must suffer, let it be for that good conscience which is a continual feast: for that righteousness, which is in conjunction with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: let it be for that Jesus, who suffered for us; for that God, who crowns momentary sufferings with eternal glory. This was the case of the primitive christians; they suffered, but it was in a good cause. Justin Martyr and Athenagorus in their apologies for them, show that there was nothing amiss found in them; no atheism, no Thyestean suppers, no unclean copulations, no unjust actions, the only crime was Christianity. And afterwards Tertullian shows, That the name in christians was condemned, but no crime was found in them towards God or man. This is the first thing we are to do, we must secure a good cause.

2. We must secure good hearts. It is said of the children of Ephraim, "That being armed, and carrying bows, they turned back in the day of battle," (Ps. 78:9); and the reason of this we have in the precedent

verse, They set not their hearts aright. Unless the heart be good, as well as the cause, men will turn back from God, and the pure religion: corrupt hearts will fall in with the world, and ever be on the sunny side: in Dioclesian's time they can be pagans; in Constantine's, christians; in Constantius's, Arians; in Julian's, pagans again. It is the good heart only that is fit for sufferings. Now, two things are requisite to make a good heart; it must be purged from sin; and again, it must be furnished with principles of grace. 1. It must be purged from sin, from the guilt and power of it: it must be purged from the guilt of sin. A man that hath inward wounds is unfit to bear outward ones. Guilt upon conscience, like a boil upon the back, makes one incapable to bear the burden of a cross. They that are partakers of Christ's sufferings in martyrdom, had need first partake of them for remission: they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, by suffering for him, had need first wash their consciences in it to take away their guiltiness. It is not imaginable that a man can piously embrace a temporal death, when immediately after it he shall fall into an eternal one; or that he can patiently bear the wrath of man, when the wrath of God is to ensue upon it. It was a very forlorn case with the Egyptians, when they were drowning in the sea, and God looked through the cloud upon them: and so it will be with christians, if the world be as a troubled sea to them, and withal, God look with an angry face upon them: therefore it much concerns them to get a pardon sealed in the blood of Jesus Christ, that, when they come to suffer, they may have nothing to bear but the single cross, without any pressure of guilt upon conscience to aggravate it. Again; it must be purged from the power of sin. Every lust is a Delilah, an exhauster, as the Hebrew word signifies; it takes away the heart, drains and debases the man, makes him vile and impotent, and by consequence altogether incapable of so heroical a thing as suffering for God is: he that hath sin reigning in his heart, will comply with it reigning in the world; he that carrieth an idol within, will fall down to an outward one: such an one will do anything rather than suffer; the power of sin must be broken, that a man maybe ready to take up the cross. Further; the heart, that it may be good, must not only be purged from sin, but furnished with principles of grace. The old heart

will not hear, or pray, or give alms, or do anything for God in a right manner, much less will it suffer for him. A man must have gracious principles, such as holy knowledge, faith, fear, love, zeal, hope, humility, obedience, and patience, are, that he may be ready for suffering. There is a double preparation for it, habitual and actual; habitual stands in the having those principles, and actual in the using of them. He that hath them hath a divine temper disposing him for every piece of the divine will; he is in the frame of his heart above creatures, and hath no centre but in his Creator; he is higher than time and this lower world, and lies upon the borders of heaven and eternity. His great concerns are not in the smiles and frowns of men, but in the will and favour of God. His fear is of greater evil than the world can inflict, and his expectation is of greater good than the world can bestow. His principles make him habitually ready for suffering, and when occasion comes, the use of them will make him actually so. Such an one may say at the fiery trial, as the famous Jerome of Prague did when the wood was laid to him, *Salve festa dies*, "Welcome thou joyful day of suffering for Christ." This is the second thing, we must secure—good hearts.

3. We must secure a good God to be with us in our sufferings. A good cause will not bear us up without a good heart, nor will a good heart stand without a good God to support it. The prayer of David is very remarkable, "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee," (Psalm 25:21). Integrity is a preservative, but we must wait on God to have our very integrity preserved, and pray, as the holy Psalmist doth in the precedent verse, "O keep my soul;" the most upright soul needs it. Graces keep the heart, but those very graces must be kept by the Keeper of Israel. The God of grace is as necessary to the new creature as the God of nature is to the old. If he withdraw, faith will fail, love will cool, hope will wither, zeal will be extinct, and all graces will vanish as the beams do upon the absence of the sun. The gracious presence of God is necessary to us at all times, especially in times of suffering. Joseph's prison would have been very dismal, if God had not been there. When all men forsook Paul, he had been very forlorn if God had forsook him too. How hard is it to

be in wants, if the All-sufficient one be gone! How intolerable are distresses, if the God of all comfort be absent! How shall we bear the cruelties of men, if the Father of mercies do not assist us? Or how shall we stand under our own creature-weakness, if the never-fainting Creator do not strengthen us! What shall we do in doubts, if the only wise One do not guide us? Or what shall we do in the valley of the shadow of death, if the living God be not with us? "The presence of God," saith a worthy divine, "will turn a prison into a palace, a fiery furnace into a gallery of pleasure, and the stocks into a music school." (Acts 16:25). I may add, it is instead of all things to us. With it no suffering can be too heavy; without it none can be tolerable. Let us therefore labour to secure this presence with us, and for that end, let us secure our being in Christ, and our walking in him. First, let us secure our being in Christ. God manifest in the flesh, is the foundation of God's inhabiting in the spirits of men. If Christ had not come and mediated for us, God would never have come to dwell and to walk in us. If we are in Christ, God, who is personally present with his human nature, will be graciously present with us as members of him. We shall be preserved in Christ, as pieces of him, by that special presence which accompanies those that are in him. Our blessed Saviour prays, that those that were given him might be kept through the Father's name, (John 17:11), that is, through that divine power, wisdom, mercy, and grace, which is with them. Again, let us secure our walking in Christ: let us walk after his command and pattern; that is, in meekness of wisdom, in zeal for God's glory, in readiness of obedience, in sweetness of charity, in an universal compliance with the divine will. Let there be somewhat of Christ in every step; this is the way to have the divine presence with us. Thus our Saviour left us, "If any man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," (John 14:23). Such as keep his words, shall have the Shechinah, the divine presence, in a peculiar manner with them. This will be to them joy in sorrow, security in fears, strength in weakness, life in death, and all things in the want of all.

CHAPTER IV

Preparation for suffering: the first direction is, Try thy heart, see the deceit of it; what relies of sin are there; how it steals out of duties; how false it is in promises; how it extenuates sin

Search and see what uprightness is there

Doth thy heart set God before thee; doth it respect all commands; doth it eye God's glory, and did it make a right contract with Christ?

HAVING spoken somewhat in general touching preparation for suffering, I now come to speak of it more particularly. And here I shall lay down several directions, and show how a christian may be in a fit posture for suffering.

1. If we would be in a fit posture for suffering, let us diligently try our own hearts. Suffering is a searching thing; it tries a man, as fire doth metals; sifts and winnows him as corn is shaken in a sieve; and discovers his thoughts, and the bottom of his heart. Many a man seems to be fully for God, yet when the test comes, proves to be for the world. Therefore, it is very proper for us to search ourselves beforehand; to try our hearts inwardly before the outward trial come; to sift and winnow ourselves, before Providence do it; to discover our hearts to ourselves, before God discover them to others. This is God's own direction to his people: "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;" or, as the words of the original may be rendered, "Search, lift yourselves; yea, search, lift yourselves, O nation not desired, before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you," (Zeph. 2:1, 2). Approaching judgments alarm us to self-examination. Sit down, O christian, and consider what the state of thy heart is; what of corruption is there and what of grace; how much is there for the world, and how much for God; what concupiscential strings are there

that tie thee to the present world, and what anchors cast in heaven are there to bear thee up in a storm; what chaff or vanity is there that will go away with every wind, and what massy grace that will abide the trial. Never is it more necessary to descend into ourselves, than in a time of suffering.

Search out the corruption and deceitfulness in thy heart. If thou wilt believe him that knows the heart better than it knows itself, "The heart is deceitful above all things," (Jer. 17:9); full of windings and turnings; deceitful beyond its own power of reflection; which, when acted, knows the deceit in part, but cannot dive into the bottom of it. Commune with thine own heart, O christian; ask it seriously, is there not much corruption within? are there not relics of unbelief, earthiness, sensualness, pride, hypocrisy, apostacy found in thee? Consider what these are; these fight under the same colours, and aim at the same end with the persecuting world; these would root grace out of thy heart, as wicked men would root good out of the world. As it was with Israel, there went up with them out of Egypt a mixed multitude, which was ready to return again thither; so it is with good men; there are corrupt mixtures in them which would turn back to Egypt again. Be not deceived; thy whole entire self is not for suffering; the unregenerate part will hang back, and say to thee, as Satan in Peter did to our Saviour, Master, spare thyself. When dangers approach, the flesh will cry out, Oh, spare thy estate, spare thy relations, spare thy life. Why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Take notice therefore, that there is a traitor in thine own bosom, which, unless thou watch, will, like the idolater's deceived heart, turn thee aside from God. Again, ask thy heart, Doth it not steal out of holy duties? When thou art a hearing the holy word, will not thy heart go out to worldly objects? When thou art joining with others in prayer, do not thy thoughts rove up and down about carnal things? If thy heart be a little elevated towards heaven, doth it not immediately fall down again? If it be a little inflamed towards God, doth it not instantly cool again? Think with thyself; that heart, that steals away from duties in which there is nothing grievous to the body, will be ready to steal away from sufferings, which grate upon the flesh and

sense. Thou hadst need to get thy heart fixed on God in duties, that when thou comest to suffering, thou mayest not start away from him. Further yet, ask thy heart; Hath it not been false in vows and promises of better obedience, and those made at sacraments or upon sick beds? Is not thy goodness as a morning cloud, and thy life a vain circle of commissions of sin and confessions? And canst thou trust such a heart as this? Assure thyself, that a heart, which is false in promises, will not be true in sufferings; that goodness that passes away like the early dew at other times, will utterly vanish when a scorching persecution comes. Learn, therefore, to be true in promises, that thou mayest be true in suffering; get such a real goodness as may abide the trial in an evil day. Moreover, ask thyself one question more: Cannot thy heart colour over evil things? Is it not apt to extenuate sin and say, It is but a little one; to make nothing of idle words or petty oaths? And what may not such a heart do to avoid sufferings? May it not put a fair gloss upon popery itself, and say, the papists have the substance of religion, and why should we scruple human rights and ceremonies? They have the sacred scriptures, and why should we stumble at superfluous traditions? Their images are not the terminative object of worship, but the motive only; and why may we not use human inventions to move us to devotion? Transubstantiation itself is but a kind of nicety; they say, the body of Christ is in the Eucharist after the manner of spirits; we say, that it is there spiritually. And how little doth the difference seem to be? Praying to saints and angels is but a vanity, a void thing. Human merit is a harmless thing, if it be grafted upon Christ and the promise. The pope himself is a bishop, and what need we think him antichrist? The false heart can paint the whore in every part, and make her look as if she were not mystery, Babylon, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth. Labour, then, to know more and more of the deceitfulness of thy heart, that it may not cheat thee in times of persecution. He that trusts in his heart is a fool, nay, a secret idolater; let us carry a holy jealousy over our hearts. The carnal heart will presume, but knows not its own weakness; it will promise much, but perform little or nothing. Peter was in a very high strain, "Though all men be offended, yet will not I," (Matth. 26:33).

And again, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee," (ver. 35). But alas, he was herein, as Forus observes, but a figure of those that lean upon their own free-will; he knew too little of himself, presumed too much upon his own power, and fell miserably in the denial of his Lord. This great pillar fell before the breath of a poor damsel; his confidence and presumption proved but a mere vanity. Do not, O christian, think thyself better than this great apostle; study thine own heart, and see the corruption there, that thou mayest not fall by presumption; but stand in the power of his grace, who is able to confirm thee to the end.

2. Search thy heart, and see what uprightness is there. Thou hast a name, a notion of religion, a form of godliness; but hast thou the thing, the truth of grace, the power of religion in thy heart? It is grace, true grace, that must establish the heart, (Heb. 13:9). It is gold tried in the fire, (Rev. 3:18), that is, pure grace, that must endure the fiery trial. Consider thyself, O Christian, Is there any true integrity in thee? Where are the marks and characters of it appearing in thee? Put interrogatories to thine own heart. Dost thou indeed set the Lord always before thee? Dost thou do everything as in his presence, and under his eye. This is very comfortable; he that truly walks with God in other things, will, through grace, walk with him in sufferings too. He that hath a holy respect to God's presence and eye at other time, will have so in a time of trial also. The constancy of God's people, set forth in Psalm 44 is very observable; they were given as sheep for meat, sold for nought, made a reproach, and a scorn, a bye-word, and a shaking of the head among the people; yet their heart was not turned back, neither did their steps decline from God's ways, (ver. 18). They were broken in the place of dragons, covered in the shadow of death; yet they did not forget the name of their God, nor stretch out their hands to a strange god, (ver. 20). And whence was this close adherence unto God? The reason is rendered in the 21st ver.; if they should forsake God, he would search them out, for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. We see how they were affected with the presence and all-seeing eye of God, and how doth it affect us? If it make us depart from other sins, it will much more make us depart from so

great a sin as apostacy is. Again, art thou true in thy active obedience to God? Hast thou an universal respect to all the commands, even to those that call for right hands and right eyes? This is very well; he that is true in active obedience, will be so in passive; he that is for all the commands of God, will be for the command of taking up the cross, and suffering for Christ. The commands are copulative, one of them is linked to another; the stamp of divine authority is upon all; the glory of God is concerned in all; they are all united in the root of charity. Those principles of grace which prompt to the obedience of one, will prompt to the obedience of all: he that is sincere in doing, will be sincere in suffering. Further, hast thou a single eye, a pure intention at the great end? Is it thy real aim that God in all things may be glorified? This is a good sign; he that hath a single eye in one thing, will have it in another; he that glorifies God in other things, will glorify him in sufferings too. A man is as his end is; what the form is in naturals, that the end is in morals. He, that hath God for his centre and ultimate end, will embrace all the mediums that tend thither, and suffering as the highest medium of all; therein is the highest love demonstrated, and God is practically lifted up above all; his glory is upon the throne; and estates, relations, lives, all earthly concerns are at the footstool. Let us set our hearts upon the great end, that, whether we be doing God's commanding will, or suffering under his disposing one, the great design of God's glory may be still carried on by us. Moreover, ask thyself what was thy original contract with Jesus Christ? How, and upon what terms didst thou espouse him? Didst thou take him entirely as he is offered in the gospel? Didst thou take him, cross and all? Didst thou sit down and count what Christianity might cost thee? It may be thou mayest be called to part with all—to hate father, mother, wife, children, life itself, for Christ: didst thou deliberately consider these things, and yet piously resolve that thou wouldst have Christ, whatever he cost thee? This is very excellent—thou art now a martyr in purpose, and virtually hast swallowed down all the persecutions that go along with the gospel; when the cross comes, thou wilt take it up upon thy back; the flesh possibly may murmur, but thou wilt say, this was my original contract with Christ; these were the terms of my espousals; I

accept the cross, and will follow my suffering Saviour; he is worthy for whom I suffer, and the sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come: let us therefore be sure that we have made a right contract with Christ and accepted him, cross and all, that when sufferings come, we may not fall off from him.

CHAPTER V

The second direction for suffering, mortification of sin; an unmortified man is not in a capacity to suffer

We must mortify all sin, particularly the unbelief of the heart, the love of the world in the three, great lusts of it; the hypocrisy in the heart, and the vain superstition that is there.

HAVING dispatched the first direction, I come to a second: if we would be in a posture for suffering, let us seriously set ourselves to mortify sin. There is in christians a double conformity to Christ's death; the one stands in the mortification of sin; our old man is crucified with him, (Rom. 6:6), dying away by a secret virtue from his cross; the other stands in bearing the cross, thereby we fill up the afflictions of Christ, (Col. 1:24). The sufferings of Christ in his natural body were full, but the sufferings of Christ in his mystical body are daily to be filled up: the first conformity makes way for the second. The mortifying of inward lusts is an excellent preparative to the enduring of outward sufferings. An unmortified man, that is, under the power of his lusts, is in no fit capacity to suffer for Christ. He is a part of that world that lieth in wickedness; the world will love him as a part of itself, and he will comply with the world as a part doth with the whole: a little particle of water will, if it be possible, fall into a round drop, that it may answer to the figure of the great ocean whereof it is a part; and an unmortified man will be alomode, and of the same figure (be it pagan or popish idolatry) with the corrupt world whereof he is a part; his compliance will be such that he will have no occasion for sufferings, neither is imaginable for what he will

suffer from the world. Will he suffer, as good men do, to avoid that greatest of evils, sin? That is it which he allows and indulges in himself, that is the darling of his soul, the joy of his way, the current of his life, the only element in which he converses, and may he suffer to avoid such a thing as that is? Or will he suffer to avoid the greatest of punishments, hell and death? No, surely, in willing his lusts he virtually wills hell and the torments of it: in acting his sin, his feet go down to death, and all the wrath that is to come. Or will he suffer for God, out of love to him, and respect to his glory? It is not imaginable, that he should suffer for God whom he serves not, or love him with the idol in his heart, or respect his glory against whom he is in arms, and whose laws and honour he treads down under his feet. Or will he suffer for Christ his Saviour, who died to wash away his sins in his own blood? It is not credible that he should suffer for a Christ whom he never yet received, or take up the yoke of the cross when he casts off the yoke of the command; he cannot be saved in his sins, no, not by Christ himself: the atoning blood will not wash him that wallows in those corruptions that are the price of it. Or will he suffer for the gospel? He turns a deaf ear to the calls, violates the sacred commands, casts away the precious offers of it, and it is not to be thought that he will suffer for that gospel which he so despises. Indeed, it would be a very strange thing for him to suffer; in so doing he must part with all this world, in which his portion and total sum of happiness lies; he must suffer the spoiling of his goods, when he hath no enduring substance in heaven; be a reproach among men, when he hath no honour with God; and cast away a temporal life, when he hath no title to an eternal one. We see by these things that an unmortified man is not in case to suffer for Christ. Awake, therefore, O christian, set upon the work of mortification; resist inward corruptions, that thou mayest stand against outward temptations; lay holy restraints upon sin, that thou mayest bear a guison for Christ; die unto sin, that thou mayest be able to die for the gospel; set thy heart against every thing of concupiscence that breathes in thee, that there may be nothing to turn thee aside from the sure religion; cast out every secret idol out of thine heart, that thou mayest not fall down and worship the outward idols in the

world. Do this work impartially, do not mortify one or two sins, but all. Every indulged lust is a traitor in thy bosom, a false bias upon thy heart: Spare it not. But to give some particular instances, labour to mortify the sins following.

1. Mortify the unbelief in thy heart. This is the foundation of apostacy, the greatest of sins, because the greatest separation from God, it departs from the living God, (Heb. 3:12); it gives the lie to the true God, (1 John 5:10); it blasts the precious gospel, as if it were not worthy to be obeyed in its precepts, or credited in its mysteries or promises. If it totally prevail in the heart, there can be no such thing as suffering for religion. To such an unbeliever Christ is but a fancy, and the gospel but a golden dream, for which suffering is plainly ridiculous; and if it be in thy heart but in some degree, it will in the same degree weaken thee and make thee ready to stagger at the cross. Watch, therefore, over the unbelief in thy bosom; assure thyself of this, that which inwardly departs from God will be ready to depart from him outwardly too; that which secretly gives him the lie, will be ready to deny him openly when suffering comes. Look narrowly to thy heart, if there arise there scruples touching the mysteries or promises of the gospel, bid them begone, drive them out of thy heart in the power of the word; these come to undermine thy Christianity and make thee fall in the day of trial. If distrusts and diffidential fears disquiet thee, chide thy base heart, charge it to trust in that God that never leaves those that are his. When thou art ready to sink in the deep waters, call to thy fearful heart, ask it why it doubts, the Lord will be with thee to bear thee up in his arms. When thou startest at the fiery furnace, tell thyself, that the Lord will be there, in those inward comforts which will make outward torments tolerable; set thy heart to hate and extirpate this cursed root of apostacy; expostulate with thy soul, and say, hath God let down a gospel of grace and salvation from heaven to us, and shall it not be believed? Hath he given us the two immutable things, his word and his oath, and wilt thou yet be such a wretch as not to believe him? Hath thy Saviour, Christ, sealed up the evangelical truth with his own blood, and wilt thou be so vile as not to seal it up by faith? Arm

and strengthen thy heart against unbelief, that when the trial comes, thou mayest be ready to speak to thy soul, as Hilarion did, "Egrederere, anima mea, egredere, quid times? quid dubitas?" Go out, my soul, go out; why dost thou fear or doubt? Heaven is ready for thee, and great is thy reward there,

2. Mortify the love of the world, the three great lusts mentioned, 1 John 2:16,— "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" that is, the inordinate love of sensual pleasures, earthly riches, and worldly honour. These three make the world in the heart, and join us to the outward world, to become one with it. Unless these concupiscential chains be broken, we can never be in a posture for suffering; if thou wilt not part with a little sensual pleasure for Christ, thou wilt never suffer for him; if lust blind thee and turn thee into a brute, thou wilt be too low and base to be capable of it. He that is melted in the fire of lust, will not endure the flames of martyrdom; he that makes his belly his god, will never suffer to avoid idolatry. It is very observable in the prophet, that first he tells them, that Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart, (Hos. 4:11), and then adds, "My people ask counsel at their stocks," that is, their idols, (v. 12). A sensual man, that is unhearted by his lusts, is much fitter to fall down to an idol, than to suffer for religion. Separate thyself, therefore, from the sensuality of the world, that thou mayest never fall into the idolatry of it. Put away the cup of pleasures, that thou mayest be in a capacity to drink of the cup of sufferings; the sensual cup leads to stings and torments; but the suffering one tends to the pure pleasures that are above. Again, if thou wilt not part with one earthly estate for Christ, thou wilt never suffer for him. When our Saviour bid the young man sell all, "he went away sorrowful," (Matt. 19:22). St. Cyprian, speaking of some in his time that fell off in persecution, saith, that "Their estates were as chains and fetters to them;" that they could not go and suffer for Christ. The covetous man, who is a mental idolator, will, if occasion require, he an outward one too, and fall down to a stock or stone rather than lose his land. If thou wouldst be able to suffer for Christ, thou must break off the earthly chains from thy soul, that when the temptation comes,

and thou art offered, as the blessed martyr Julitta was, to have thy estate upon the denial of Christ, thou mayest then be able to give the same answer as she did;—"Valeat vita, valeant meæ facultates;" Farewell life, farewell estate. Take heed that thy poor soul do not hang about houses and lands, when thou art called forth to suffer for Christ and the pure religion. Further, if thou wilt not part with thy worldly honour for Christ, thou wilt never suffer for him. An ambitious man will do anything for advancement; he will bow to an idol, that himself may be honoured; he lives upon a blast, a little popular air, and is too vain and light to suffer for religion; cast away, therefore, the love of mundane glory, that thou mayest bear the reproach of Christ; humble thyself before God, that thou mayest be able to suffer for his truth: count it an honour to suffer shame for Christ; be willing to be reproached for him who can give thee the Spirit of glory.

3. Mortify the hypocrisy that is in thy bosom. This sin is the art of seeming goodness, or vice in a visor. It is by this that men personate more grace than they have, and enlarge their forms of godliness beyond the power, and make a profession much greater than is ever filled up. It is from the remnants of this in good men, that they sometimes take false steps, and squint at bye-ends, and start aside from God like a deceitful bow: it is from hence that the saints now and then faint in their faith, cool in their love, and halt and make stops in their obedience. Watch, therefore, O christian, against this close evil; consider the vileness of it, think with thyself how grievous a thing it is to be false to that God, who makes all other things true to thee; the sun to give thee true light, and the creatures true nourishment; the blood to run right in thy veins, and the breath in thy nostrils. Loathe and abhor this abominable thing; cry to heaven for more truth in thy inward parts; labour to have the very power of religion, that thou mayest fill up thy profession; mourn over thy falls and withering graces, check thy starting heart and charge it to maintain a firm and close adherence to God, set thyself all manner of ways to root out and extirpate the remnants of hypocrisy out of thy heart, that, when thou comest to suffer for religion, thy heart may

not deceive thee: truth in the heart is necessary in hearing, praying, repenting, believing, obeying, but above all, it is so in suffering for Christ; hypocrisy can personate all other graces, but usually it stumbles and discovers itself in a day of trial; therefore, mortify the secret guile that is in thy heart, that thou mayest stand fast under the cross.

4. Mortify the vain superstition that is in the heart. It is natural to us to desire the same thing as the children of Israel did, to have gods to go before us, to have visible images or pictures of the Deity, a pompous and stately worship, a gaudy religion made up of human additions and inventions, and such a way of serving God as is accommodated to sense and framed after the commandments of men; every one is ready to think in his false heart, what Ticonius said with his lips, *Quod volumus sanctum est*, that which we will is holy; that which in the worship of God is fine and decent, in our eyes, is so in God's too. But consider with thyself; he that places his religion in such things as these, may chance to fall in love with that fine whore which is decked with gold and precious stones, (Rev. 17:4). He that will have a religion suitable to sense, will hardly stand to that religion which hath a cross annexed to it: if the command of man be the reason of thy worship, thou wilt turn to every point as that command doth vary: if thou canst nod in superstition, thou hadst need watch lest thou fall into flat idolatry. Remember, God is a Spirit; the true worshippers worship in spirit and truth; and the true worshippers will prove the true sufferers. Stand to the pure worship, thou mayest not fall into a corrupt one: worship God in Spirit, that thou mayest never fall down to an idol.

CHAPTER VI

The third direction for suffering in the knowledge of God

An ignorant man is not capable of suffering; neither will every knowledge serve the turn—The knowledge that prepares for

sufferings, must be a well-rooted, a right estimating, a tasting or savouring, a practical or operative knowledge.

THE third direction for suffering is this; If we would be in a fit posture for suffering, we must labour after the knowledge of God and the things of God. An ignorant man, who is a man in shape, but a beast in heart, is not a person capable of pious suffering; he knows not the principles of religion, and for what should he suffer? He hath no principles of grace in him, and how should he suffer? He is in darkness, and to him truth or error, one God or more, pure worship or idolatry, are all one; he is alienated from the life of God, (Eph. 4:18); and, therefore, it is not imaginable that he should die for God or his truth: for him to suffer for an unknown God or Christ, is to suffer for he knows not what. As the Samaritans worshipped they knew not what; so the ignorant man, if he suffer, suffers for he knows not what. The Athenians had an altar to the unknown God (Acts 17:23); and possibly they offered up other creatures to him: but for a man to offer up himself as a sacrifice to an unknown God, and to part with all this world when he knows nothing of a better, is a very strange unaccountable thing. Let us, therefore, cry after wisdom, and lift up our voice for understanding. "Let us seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures," as the wise-man exhorts, (Prov. 2, 3, 4). Let our prayers ascend up to heaven, to bring her down from thence; and our endeavours dig in the mines of scripture to fetch her up from thence, that so understanding may keep us, as it is, (v. 11). Knowledge is a perservative to him that hath it; "The people that know their God shall he strong," (Dan. 11:32). "The young men, who have the word of God abiding in them, are strong," (1 John 2:14). "Understanding is a well-spring of life to him that hath it, (Prov. 16:22). It streams out in living graces, and strengthens the inner-man, and prepares it for a day of trial: only it is to be remembered, that every knowledge will not do this, but it must be a well-rooted, a right-estimating, a tasting or savouring, a practical or operative knowledge that doth it.

1. It must be a well-rooted knowledge that will prepare us for suffering. Job tells his friends, That the root of the matter, or, as the original will bear, the root of the wood was in him, (Job 19:28.) He was sorely afflicted by God and men, yet he held fast his integrity, because he was not a man of mere leaves, but had a root of knowledge and grace in him. It is with christians as it is with trees, the more the tree is rooted in the ground, the faster it stands in a storm; the more a christian is rooted in evangelical truths, the firmer he stands in a time of persecution. Those of the stony ground received the word with joy, but fell off in time of persecution, because they had no root in themselves, (Matt. 13:21.) The heavenly truth did but lie upon the face of their hearts, and never sunk into them to become a virtual principle in them. The truth that we would suffer for, had not need be a loose notion, but truth in the hidden parts, fastened there as a nail in a sure place, sealed up to the heart by the Holy Spirit, engrafted and innaturalized in the mind that we may not let it go: we had need be grounded and settled in the faith, as the apostle speaks, (Col. 1:23). Grounded, as a house upon a sure foundation; and settled, as a man sitting fast in a chair: we had need have a good scripture bottom, and be firmly seated in the truth, that we may be capable of suffering for religion. The scripture tells us that there is but one God, one only to be worshipped and served, that his glory may not be given to another, nor his praise to graven images; that idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands; that they have mouths, and speak not; eyes, and see not; ears, and hear not; noses, and smell not; hands, and handle not; feet, and walk not: that the makers and worshippers of them are like unto them, as stupid as the senseless images are; that an idol is nothing, a thing of no moment or power at all, a mere nothing to be itself made a God, or so much as to represent one. If such truths as these, of which St. Cyprian hath given a great catalogue in his exhortation to martyrdom, be intimately radicated in the heart, they will strengthen it against idolatry. The glorious martyr, Eulalia, seemed to be full of them, when in her great sufferings she sung, That Isis, Apollo, Venus, were nothing, and Maximianus, the worshipper of them, was himself nothing. O let us adhere to the holy truths in the word; these came

down from heaven, and, like their original, are nothing but pure truth, without any mixture of error in them; these appear to us in the light of the first Truth, and lead to the bliss-making vision of him in heaven; and as we desire to be there, let us firmly adhere to them, especially to the word of Christ's patience; the truth that must be suffered for at such a time as this, to that we must cleave closest, because in that will be the greatest stress and trial. It is good to be established in all truth, but now it is in a special manner necessary to be well fixed in the truth that concerns the pure religion, which runs very low in the christian world, while in the meanwhile the idolatrous one is like to be triumphant.

2. It must be a right estimating knowledge that will prepare us for suffering, every notion of the things of God will not do it; he that hath a high notion of them, but a low estimation, hath but a knowledge, falsely so called; he knows them not as he ought to know them, because he knows them only to know them, but not to value them: we must so know them as to rate them above a world; this is of great moment in order to suffering: a man is capable to suffer, or not, according as his estimate of spiritual things is higher or lower. When the martyr Polycarp was urged by the proconsul to deny Christ, his answer was, "A potioribus non esse transeundum ad pejora;" we must not pass from better things to worse. He esteemed Christ better than the world, and therefore he suffered for him: but if he had esteemed the world better than Christ, he had never been a martyr: as the estimation is, so is the man. We know the evangelical truth, but if we do not rate it higher than all the world, we shall never be able to suffer for it; it is indeed in itself a glorious beam let down from heaven, a pure discovery of the great salvation that is in Jesus Christ, and in that respect incomparably more worth than all the world; but if we do not so account it, we shall fall from it to embrace the world, as being better in our eyes. It is very remarkable, that when the emperor's prefect allured the great Basil to the Arian doctrine, as being but a small thing, the holy man answered, That he would not part with one syllable of scripture, no, not to save his life. Such an esteem of truth is of excellent use to make a man adhere to it

in an evil day. We know the pure worship, but if we do not prize it above all earthly things, we shall never be able to suffer for it: it is in itself a thing exceeding precious: it is the choicest part of life that is spent in it; the honour of God is more immediately concerned in it than in other things. That noble convert, Galeacius Caracciolus, who left all for Christ, prized one day's communion with Christ more than all the gold or silver in the world; and if we can rate it so, we shall never turn aside from it to the idolatrous world, nor be carried into sin by the stream of the time: or say, as one going to mass did, *Eamus ad communem errorem*; let us go to the common error. We know the glory of Christ is to be promoted, but if we do not value it above our own reputation, we shall never suffer reproach for him. Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, (Heb. 11:26). Reproach in its-self is a vile thing, no way estimable, but the reproach of Christ hath an honour in it, and outshines all the glories of the world. Marsacus, a French soldier, being adjudged, with others, to the fire, and for his military service, not having, as others had, a withe put about his neck, demands the reason why he might not be permitted to wear such a chain as his fellows did, and to be made of the same illustrious order as they were of? If we have such a divine spirit as this is in us, we shall count in a high honour to suffer reproach for Christ. A right estimation of things, is an excellent help to bear sufferings for religion.

3. It must be a tasting or savouring knowledge that will prepare us for suffering. "It is the taste of God's word," saith Dr. Jackson, "that sweetens sufferings to us, and makes us courageous to adventure upon all difficulties that are objected to deter us from entering into the land of promise." Such speculative conceits of the food of life as we may find in the schoolmen, are of as little force to inflame our hearts with longing after that heavenly kingdom, as poetical descriptions of far countries are to make us undertake their conquest; we must have knowledge and sense, (Phil. 1:9), theory and experience too, to make us stand in the evil day; we must taste and see that the Lord is gracious, that we may be able to suffer for him. A

spiritual relish of the sweet streams of grace that flow from him, is a choice preparative to make us take and drink of the bitter cup. Gotteschalculus suffered a close imprisonment for twenty years together, merely for preaching up the doctrine of grace: and it is without question, that he had not a mere notion, but an experimental taste of it in his sufferings. Many have the knowledge of Christ in a way of speculation, but we must have the savour of his sweet ointments upon our heart that we may follow him into suffering. We had need feel the sweetness of his blood in the calms of conscience, that we may shed our own blood for him. Let us not content ourselves to have Christ only in our bibles, but endeavour to have a proof of him in our hearts; a proof of his sweet-smelling sacrifice in our inward peace; a proof of his rich anointings in our supplies of grace. The experience of Christ in us, is a strong encouragement to suffer for him. He that hath a Christ only in notion, will fall off from him, but he that hath a tried Christ will hardly leave him.

4. It must be a knowledge practical and operative in the life, that will prepare us for suffering. A mere notional knowledge of Christ is not a right one; he that saith, "I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him," (1 John 2:4); such an one contradicts himself; his conversation gives the lie to his profession; the truth is not in him in a practical way; his knowledge is but a flash, a vanishing vapour, that gives no vital influence to his life; he will not do other commands, much less will he take up the cross, which is a command more grievous to sense than others are. He that would be prepared for sufferings, must labour for such a knowledge as gives a proof of itself in holy obedience. Doing is a good preparative for suffering; he that sincerely doth other commands will take up his cross too, that being a command as well as others. He that indeed is subject to God's commanding will, will be subject to his disposing one too, which orders the coining of the cross to us; it is the active christian that will, if occasion serve, be passive. Our Saviour Christ doth notably set forth what kind of christians will stand in time of persecution, and what will fall. "He that heareth his sayings and doth them, builds upon the rock, and when the storm

comes, he stands fast, because he is founded upon the rock," (Matt. 7:24, 25), that is, he is founded upon Christ by faith and obedience; and in the storm he continues upon him by patience; the rock bears him up as a part of itself; "but he that heareth Christ's sayings, and doth them not, builds upon the sand, and when the storm comes, he falls," (ver. 26, 27), because he is upon the sand; he hath no true foundation for his religion, he never did dig deep enough to come to self-denial, and therefore in the storm, his fall is very great, he and his religion utterly perish; as when a house is broke up from the very foundation, or a tree is blown up by the roots. Therefore, if we would stand firm and unmovable in a storm, let us labour to have such a lively and operative knowledge of Christ, as may diffuse itself into an universal obedience to his precepts. He that enures himself to do the will of God, will be ready, when the cross comes, to take it up, and say, This is the will of God too and must be done.

To conclude, that we may have this excellent knowledge, we must not only read the holy scriptures, but with Zuinglius, look up to heaven for that Holy Spirit that is able to lead us into all truth, and to seal it upon our hearts for ever.

CHAPTER VII

The fourth direction for suffering is precious faith

This hath a triple respect; a respect to God, his providence, power, and grace—A respect to Christ, as a propitiation, a pattern, a head, and helper—A respect to the promises; the promises of God's presence, the promises of confirmation, the promises of a good issue.

THE fourth direction is this, if we would be in a fit posture for suffering, we must labour after a precious faith; a dogmatical faith will not do it; the devil himself, who is the chief agent in persecution,

hath such a faith; neither will a temporary faith do it, this is but a mere blossom, that falls off in a storm of persecution; it must be a precious faith, a furnace faith, that will endure the fiery trial. This is the apostle's *θυρεὸς*, shield like a door, broad enough to cover the soul and all its graces, (Eph. 6:16); this is to be taken above all other pieces of spiritual armour; it is eminent among the graces as the sun is among the planets; it is the great conquering grace; all other graces act in conjunction with it. In the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, styled by some the little book of martyrs, the saints are brought in doing and suffering great things, but all is ascribed to faith, as the captain-grace of all the rest, the first mover to other graces; it works by love, and not only so, but by meekness, obedience, patience, running like blood and spirits in every part of the new creature. Faith hath a triple respect, to God, to Christ, to the promises, and in each of these it is of singular use in order to sufferings.

1. Faith hath a respect to God; it makes its approaches to him, nay, it fixes the soul in him as in its centre. Hence it is that the "righteous fears no evil tidings, because his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord," (Psalm 112:7). The world rolls about, but he by faith stands fast in the unmoveable God. Hence it is that the church becomes unmoveable too. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved," (Psalm 46:5). There are three things in God which faith fixes upon in order to pious suffering.

1. Faith fixes upon his providence. The Stoic could say, that there was no living in a world empty of God and providence. Much more may the christian that is tossed up and down in a persecuting world say so. But his faith tells him that persecution comes not by chance, man rages, but God reigns. The world is as a tempestuous sea, but God sits at the stern and governs all. He limits the fury of persecutors; the wrath of man shall praise him; the remainder of wrath, (or, as it is in the original,) the remainder of wraths he will restrain. (Psalm 76:10.) He lets out wrath in the singular number, and restrains wraths in the plural; nothing of it comes forth but what is permitted: nothing of it is permitted but the minor part only. He it is that orders the

sufferings of the saints: Sense indeed sees only the outward confusion, but faith knows that there is a line, a divine order in it: sense looks at the wicked hands that are red with the blood of innocents, but faith looks at the holy hand that is in it: this is one thing that bears up good men, that their Father in heaven disposes of all. When Attila called himself flagellum Dei, the scourge of God, Lupus bid him come and do as he pleased. When Christians by faith look on persecutors as the rod and staff in God's hand, they are ready to subject themselves to the cross. "It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil doing." (1 Pet. 3:17.) That interposed phrase (if the will of God be so) is very remarkable to believers: were there nothing in their sufferings but the will of bloody men, they would bear them more hardly and unwillingly; but because the will of the good God is there, they endure them more easily and freely than otherwise they would do: they know very well that God will turn all to good; his ends are far other than those of Satan and his instruments. Our Saviour tells the church of Smyrna, that the devil should cast some of them into prison, that they might be tried. (Rev. 2:10.) In which words, it is to be observed, that God's end is joined unto Satan's act: Satan would have them in chains, but God would try them that their graces might come forth as gold out of the fire. The Assyrian monarch meant to cut off nations not a few, (Isa. 10:7); but God meant to chastise his people, and then to burn the rod. (Ver. 12 and 17.) He, that by faith can see the holy land and ends of God in persecution, will be ready to suffer under it.

2. Faith fixes upon his power. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were threatened with a fiery furnace for not worshipping the golden image, their answer was, "Our God is able to deliver us." (Dan. 3:17.) Persecutors may be strong, but faith assures the soul that God is much stronger, and can deliver his people; nay, and will do it also; not, as those three worthies were, in a visible manner, yet in an invisible one: suffering saints have ever found by experience that the power of God hath bore them up in their sufferings. When Cœlocerius, in the persecution under the Emperor Adrian, saw the supports and patience that Faustina and Jobita had in their

sufferings for Christ, he cried out, Vere magnus Deus christianorum; the God of the christians is truly great. When Justin Martyr saw the martyrs cheerfully dying for their religion, he thereupon fell off from Plato's school to Christ: St. Paul, the great experienced sufferer, exhorts Timothy to be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God, (2 Tim. 1:8,) that is, he should suffer not in his own power, but in God's. Think thus with thyself, O christian, God can and will give such internal supports and comforts as shall more than counterpoise all thy sufferings for him: fix thy faith upon his power, and thou canst not fail in the trial.

3. Faith fixes upon his grace and mercy; men are cruel, but God is gracious and merciful to his people at all times, but especially in a time of trial. He chooses them in the furnace of affliction, (Isai. 48:10). When men reprobate them as the off-scouring of all things, then God doth as it were choose them afresh; I mean, his electing love, which was in his heart towards them, as early as eternity itself, doth then break out in fresh acts of grace towards them. St. Paul tells the Philippians, That it was freely given to them in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake, (Phil. 1:29). Faith, which is the first gift, and suffering, which is the last in this life, do both issue out from the fountain of grace. Cast thyself, O christian, upon the grace and mercy of thy good God; that grace, which calls, justifies, sanctifies thee, will also give thee the gift of suffering; that mercy, which spares thee in thy ordinary duties, will, in a time of suffering, be indulgent over thee in a more than ordinary manner. The mercy of God will be upon us according as we trust in him: the sweetest strains of mercy are reserved for the highest acts of faith, which are seen more in sufferings than in other things. If we carry faith with us into prisons and fiery furnaces, goodness and mercy will follow us thither in an eminent way. Faith hath a respect to Christ, it comes to him as to a centre of rest, receives him as a precious gift, leans on him as a sure foundation; nay, ἰδιοποιέομαι, it individuates and appropriates him to the soul. There are three things in Christ which faith looks to in order to suffering.

1. Faith looks to him as a propitiation: it hides in his wounds, as in the clefts of the rock; it washes the soul in that atoning blood that cleanses from all sin; hereby the christian is so strengthened in the inner man, that he can glory in tribulations, (Rom. 5:3). The world persecutes, but he hath peace with God; man hates, but he hath the love of God in his heart; sufferings may come, but they fall only upon the outward man; there is no sting within, nor guilt pressing upon conscience. When Luther was in fear of an apoplexy, he cried out, *Feri, Domine, feri, paratus sum, quia à peccatis absolutus*; strike, Lord, strike, I am ready, because absolved from sin. A christian, that is washed from sin in the blood of Jesus, may bear the persecuting stroke; he hath *refrigerium Christi*, a sweet refreshment from Christ's atonement, in that inward peace which is made by it in conscience.

2. Faith looks to Christ as a pattern. He is not only a propitiation to be trusted in, but a pattern to be imitated by us. "He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps," (1 Pet. 2:21). Whom should we follow, but our Lord and Saviour? How can we spare our own blood, if we be washed in his? He drank up the bitter cup to the bottom, and shall we not take some drops of it? He bore the wrath of God for us, and shall we not bear the wrath of man for him? He learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and how much more should we poor creatures do so? He entered by suffering into glory; and why should we dream of another way thither? If we would be ready to suffer, let us look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame: let us consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds, (Heb. 12:2, 3). The noble Alzearius, being asked how he could so patiently bear injuries, answered thus: *Converto me ad injurias Christi*, I turn me to the injuries done to my Saviour. We must look to Christ's cross, that we may bear our own, it being now, no longer mere suffering, but sanctified by the sufferings of our Saviour.

3. Faith looks to Christ as a head and helper. He is not a mere pattern, but a head and helper too. Were there no other supporting grace for the saints but that little in their own bosom, they might expect to fail in the trial; but there is an inexhaustible fountain of grace in their head in heaven, and that will bear them up in all their sufferings. This made St. Paul glory in persecutions, because the power of Christ would rest upon him; and when he was weak in himself, he was strong in that, (2 Cor. 12:9, 10). St. Cyprian, speaking of Christ in the martyrs, saith, Qui pro nobis mortem semel vicit, semper vincit in nobis; he that once overcame death for us, always overcomes it in us. This the martyr Blandina, though weak in body, found by experience; being bore up in the midst of torments by the power of Christ, and finding a fresh refreshment, as often as she said, Christiana sum, I am a christian. The same was seen in the Martyr Sanctus, who bore various torments above all human strength, because he was bedewed and confirmed out of the celestial fountain of living water flowing down from Christ. Whatever thou doest, O christian, be sure to apply thyself by faith unto the never-failing fountain of grace in him, that thou mayest have such supplies of grace, as may bear thee up in an evil day.

3. Faith hath a respect to the promises; these are the breasts of consolation, the channels in which the grace in God's heart flows down to the sons of men: here the christian may provide himself with cordials against the time of suffering. I shall here only mention three kinds of promises, for faith to live upon in a day of trial.

1. Faith must live upon the promises of God's gracious presence: God tells his people, "That he will be with them in the fire and in the water," (Isai. 43:2); that is, in all danger and calamities whatsoever; neither shall this presence be for a little time only, but constant and perpetual. "He will never leave them, nor forsake them," (Heb. 13:5). This is a choice comfort to good men, that in tribulations they are not left alone, but God is with them. St. Paul had experience of this: "All men forsook him, but God stood with him and strengthened him," (2 Tim. 4:16, 17). The presence of God was to him more than a world,

and able to support him against all his adversaries. St. Cyprian, speaking of the martyrs in his time, saith, That God was not a mere spectator in their sufferings, but ipse luctatur in nobis, ipse congregitur, ipse in certamine coronat, pariter et coronatur; he strives in us, he encounters our adversaries, he crowns us in the battle, and is himself crowned therein. Let us, therefore, by faith rest upon the promise of God's presence, and assure our hearts that he will be with us in our suffering. All the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ; and his being Immanuel, God with us, in the human nature, is a pledge to the saints, that God will be with them in their sufferings for him.

2. Faith must live upon the promises of confirmation. The apostle tells the Corinthians, "That God shall confirm them unto the end;" and adds this as a reason, "God is faithful, by whom ye are called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," (1 Cor. 1:29). God doth, as it were, pawn his faithfulness upon it, that they being once brought into union with Christ, shall never fall off, but be confirmed unto the end: "The gates of hell shall never prevail against them; they shall be kept through faith unto salvation;" nay, and their faith shall be kept too. Christ did not only pray for Peter, that his faith fail not, but he prays so for all the faithful. Oh! how comfortable are such promises to the saints! Let us by faith lay up these rich cordials in our hearts to keep up from fainting in persecution.

3. Faith must live upon the promises of a good issue: "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to his people," (Ps. 23:6). "All things shall work together for their good," (Rom. 8:28); persecutions and all. God alters the property of his people's afflictions, and by an almighty alchemy turns dross into gold; he makes persecution turn to the refining of the saints, graces, and to the glorifying of his own great name. O! what great good things doth he bring out of evil! How much of his love and faithfulness may be seen in the cross! Let us, therefore, fix our hearts upon such promises, that, passing through the fiery trial, we may see the good end the Lord makes of it.

CHAPTER VIII

The fifth direction for suffering, is love to God and Christ. Love to God; such as value him, desire him, delight in him, and will and endeavour to serve and honour him

Love to Christ, such as value him, desire him, delight in him, and will and endeavour to serve and honour him.

THE fifth direction is this; If we would be in a fit posture for suffering, we must get a sincere love to God and Christ. St. Austin saith, "That two loves made two cities; the love of self made the earthly city, the love of God makes the heavenly one; the persecutor dwells in the one, and the martyr in the other." There is an assimilating efficacy in love whereby it casts the mind into the mould of the thing beloved; If thou love earth, thou art earthy; if thou love God, thou art partaker of the divine nature, and dost resemble God himself. The greatest impediment to pious suffering is the love of the world and self; and the greatest preparative to it is the love of God and Christ. I shall first speak of love to God, as a preparative thereunto; and then of love to Christ as such.

1. Love to God is a preparative to suffering: if we love him above all things, no outward object will draw us from him; if we love him with all the heart, no inward lust will make us fall from him. Love to him stands in four things; each of which will dispose us to suffer for him.

1. Love to him stands in a high valuation of him; it esteems him to be such an one as he is set forth in scripture: to be the only wise God, the only Potentate, the only One that is good; to be all these essentially, fontally, super eminently. He that hath such an estimate of him will be ready to suffer for him: to such an one it is folly to leave the only wise, weakness to leave the only potentate, misery to leave the only good; and how can he leave so excellent an object? To such an one it is prudence to adhere to the only wise, strength to adhere to the only potentate, happiness to adhere to the only good;

and how can he choose but adhere to him? It was the saying of an ancient, "Tum dignè Deum æstimamus cum inæstimabilem dicimus;" then we rightly esteem God, when we account him inestimable. Estates, bodies, lives may be valued, but he is infinitely beyond all estimation: all creatures are but as shadows and little drops of being, in comparison of him; it is a just debt we owe to him to rate him incomparably above all things; and in so doing, the soul itself is ennobled and made fit to suffer for him, as a man, by valuing the world above itself becomes base and brutish, and like the beasts that perish; so a man, by estimating God above all things, becomes heroical and divine, and like the angels, that live altogether upon him: such an one is able to part with life in the channel, to have it in the fountain; to let go all other things, to have all in the one all-sufficient God.

2. Love to God stands in holy desires after him; it makes the soul pant after him, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, and go out of itself in holy anhelations after union with him: such is the heavenly property of it, that it aspires to be one spirit with him, to have idem velle, and idem nolle, to will as he wills, and nill as he nills; and when once our wills are melted into his, everything that comes from him will be welcome to us. Though flesh and blood may cry out of suffering as a very hard thing, yet love will say that nothing can be wiser or better than that which our Father orders and lays out for us. If desire after God as the supreme good once put our souls into motion, we shall follow him not into ordinances only, but into sufferings also: his gracious presence is in both; in ordinances it is in a good measure, but in sufferings, which are the highest services on earth, it is in a more eminent manner. God doth not barely say to his afflicted people, "I am with thee!" but, "I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness," (Isa. 41:10); many words are heaped up together to import the excellency of his presence with them. O let our hearts burn within us with ardent desires after him, that we may be able to bear the fiery trial at its coming.

3. Love to God stands in a holy complacence in him; it makes the soul rest upon him as Noah's dove did upon the ark, and centre in him as in the supreme good. Holy desires end in inward satisfaction; David, thirsting after God, comes to have his soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness, (Ps. 63:5). And christians that breathe after him come to have sweet spiritual joys and delights, tastes of heaven, and drops from the pure rivers of pleasures that are above: these are able to sweeten the bitterest sufferings. It is said of the Thessalonians, that "They received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost," (1 Thess. 1:6). The gospel doth not go alone, but affliction accompanies it; neither will affliction go down alone, but the joy of the Holy Ghost sweetens it: the blessed martyrs have experimentally found these divine joys in their hearts. It is said of Alexander the martyr, famous for his love to God, that ne ingemuit, he did not so much as fetch a groan in the midst of his torments; and doubtless he had strong consolations within, to bear him up in his sufferings. The martyr Algerius being in prison, wrote thus: In the dark dungeon I find a paradise of pleasure; in a place of sorrow dwells tranquillity; in an infernal cave I have joy of soul: O, how good is the Lord! How easy and sweet his yoke! Such heavenly cordials will bear up christians in the greatest trials. O let us labour to delight our souls in God, that we may be able to suffer for him.

4. Love to God stands in a holy benevolence towards him; it delivers and surrenders up the whole man to him; it wills and endeavours, so far as a poor creature can to an infinite Creator, to bring all service and glory to him. Thus the twenty-four elders fell down before him and cast down their crowns, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power," (Rev. 4:10, 11); renouncing themselves, they refer all that they have and are, to him alone: this is an excellent preparative to suffering. If we would indeed serve him, we must be willing to suffer for him; for that is the highest service that can be done to him on earth; if we would indeed glorify him, we must be ready to suffer for him; for that is the greatest glory that we can possibly give unto him; therein we do practically declare to all the world, that God is our all, riches, honours, relations, life itself,

are as nothing to him. Oh, let us labour to surrender up ourselves to him in other things, that we may not fail to make the greatest surrender of all in suffering.

2. Love to Christ is a preparative to suffering: Ignatius, (whose motto was, *amor meus crucifixus*, my love was crucified) would suffer any thing for Christ. The martyr Felicitas was so in love with Christ, that she would not only suffer herself, but have her seven sons suffer for him also. Love to Christ stands in four things, each of which will dispose us to suffer for him.

1. Love to Christ stands in a high valuation of him; it esteems him altogether precious: precious in his person, being Immanuel, God and man in one; precious in his atoning sufferings, which (being by his deity elevated into a kind of infinity) were enough to pay for the sin of a world; precious in his holy words; his mysteries being heights, his commands rectitude, his promises grace: precious in the rich treasures of grace, which are in him, and ever flowing out towards believers: he that thus esteems of him will be ready to suffer for him. To leave his atoning sufferings is to run into hell; to leave his words is to run into all error; to leave his treasures of grace is to run into spiritual poverty: and how can we leave him? To adhere to his atonement, is peace and comfort; to adhere to his words, is to keep the way of life; to adhere to his treasures of grace, is to have continual influences of grace from him: and how can we choose but adhere to him? St. Paul counted all things dross and dung for him, (Phil. 3:8); St. Cyprian, in his exhortation to martyrdom, gives this as one rule, that we should, *nihil Christo præponere*, prefer nothing before Christ. To esteem any thing better than him, is the way to turn apostate; but to esteem him better than all, is the way to stand in a day of trial.

2. Love to Christ stands in holy desires after him, it causes a man to long and faint for him, and, as one in extremity, to cry out, Give me Christ, or else I die: without the laver of his blood, I die in my sins; without the supplies of his grace, I die in my wants: Oh! that I may

have him! The spouse in the Canticles was sick of love, languishing and ready to fall into a spiritual swoon with her passionate desires after him and his gracious presence; nothing in all the world could cure or satisfy her, but his all-desirable self. That soul that truly desireth Christ, doth not desire, aliud præter illum, aliud tanquam illum, aliud post illum; any thing besides him, any thing equally to him, any thing after him. Such an ardour and holy flame of love, as this is, is an extatical thing; it makes a man go out of himself to seek after him; it will sell all for him, and, like those virgin souls, (Rev. 14:4), follow him whithersoever he goeth; not only into the banqueting-house of ordinances, but into sufferings and afflictions for him. The martyr Gordius had such an ardent love to Christ, that he was ready to suffer, mille mortes, a thousand deaths for the name of Jesus Christ. Oh, let us labour to have our hearts kindled and inflamed with holy desires after him, that we may be able to stand and endure the fiery trial.

3. Love to Christ stands in an holy complacence in him, it makes the soul enjoy a kind of heaven in his presence, and delight itself in his satisfying sweetness. The spouse in the Canticles was ravished, and, as it were, swallowed up in him; the savour of his sweet ointments lay upon her heart; his love was better to her than all the wine of the world; she sat under the broad shadow of his merits with great delight, pardons and graces dropping down from the tree of life upon her; he is in her eyes. tota desideria, all loves or desires; every thing in him hath a divine sweetness in it. This spiritual joy and delight in Christ our Saviour, is an excellent preparative in order to suffering: the church will have him lie all night "between her breasts," (Cant. 1:13); all night, that is in times of fear and temptation, that his presence may sweeten the bitterest condition to her. The cross of Jesus, if we taste the sweetness of it, will turn a marah into joy and comfort: "Tua præsentia, Domine, laurentio ipsam craticulam dulcem fecit;" thy presence, O Lord, made the tormenting gridiron sweet to St. Lawrence, saith an ancient. Philip, Lantgrave of Hesse, being a long time prisoner under Charles the Fifth, felt the divine consolations of martyrs supporting him. O let us labour to taste more

of the sweetness of Christ, to find his blood in every pardon, his Spirit in every grace, his wine cellar in every ordinance, that the divine comforts, that we experimentally feel in him, may sweeten the cross to us.

4. Love to Christ stands in a holy benevolence towards him; it surrenders up the whole man to him; it endeavours to serve and honour him to the utmost. Thus those many thousands cry out, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, (Rev. 5:11, 12); they give all to Christ. This is an excellent preparative for suffering. If we would serve him in other things, we must serve him in suffering for him; if we would honour him in obedience to other commands, we must honour him in taking up the cross too. St. Paul desired that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether it were by life or by death, (Phil 1:20). If he lived he would magnify Christ by active obedience; and if he died, he would do it by passive: either way he would have Christ glorified in him. The martyr, Romanus, having a multitude of wounds in his body, thanked the persecutor for opening so many mouths to glorify Christ. In nothing is Christ so much glorified as in his suffering saints; therein they demonstrate the highest love, seal up the evangelical truths with their own blood; practically prefer Christ before all the world, and offer up themselves for him who gave himself a sacrifice for them. O let us labour to make a total resignation of ourselves to him, that if sufferings come, we may be able to bear them for his sake.

CHAPTER IX

The sixth direction for suffering, is a lively hope of eternal life

Hope assures us, that there is another world, that the good things of it exceed those of this, that we have an interest in them—Hope disposes us for them—Hope waits for them unto the end.

THE sixth direction is this: if we would be in a fit posture for suffering, we must get a lively hope of eternal life. As our life is a sea, hope is compared to an anchor, which makes us stand steady in a storm; as our life is a warfare, hope is compared to a helmet, which covers the soul in times of danger; as the body liveth spirando, by breathing, so the soul lives sperando, by hoping. A man cannot drown so long as his head is above water; hope lifts up the head, and looks up to the redemption and salvation that is to come in another world in its fulness and perfection. Hope doth three things; it assures good things to come; it disposes us for them; it waits for them unto the end: each of which will, be of singular use to fit us for pious sufferings.

1. Hope assures good things to come: it is called the hope of salvation, (Thes. 5:8); the hope of glory, (Rom. 5:2); the hope of eternal life, (Tit. 1:2), because it assures these things. To this I shall speak in three particulars.

1. Hope assures us that there is another world, called in scripture, The world to come: without this there can be no foundation for pious suffering; no man can freely part with this world unless he be assured of another. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," (1 Cor. 15:19). Miserable indeed, to be persecuted out of one world, and to have never another to go to. If christians were in as dark a case, as the emperor Adrian was, when dying he cried out, "O my poor soul, whither art thou going?" they could be in no rational capacity of suffering; but hope assures them, that there is another world, where things are administered in a different manner than they are here in this. Here good men bear the cross—there they wear the crown; here they are black with reproaches—there they shine as the sun; here they are tossed at sea—there they enter into rest; here they drink of the bitter cup—there of the rivers of pleasure above; here they are in the bloody hands of men—there in the arms of a gracious God. Hope is sure, that these things are so: God's promises secure them; and, that we might have strong consolation, God's oath is superadded also: our Saviour hath

sealed up the truth of them with his own blood, and we may venture our dearest lives upon them. Hence it is, that hope is said to be the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil, (Heb. 6:19). Other anchors may break, but this will never fail; other anchors are fastened in this world, but this enters into that within the veil, and fixes itself in the unmoveable heaven; and in respect thereof, christians become in some measure unmoveable in the midst of all the storms here below. St. Cyprian saith of the Christians in his time, that their faith and hope did stand unmoveable and unshaken, inter ipsas seculi ruinas, among the ruins of the world. When the excelled Melancthon was threatened by his enemies, that they would not leave him a footstep in Germany, he replied, That he should have one in heaven: in like manner, when a poor persecuted Christian is ready to be cast out of this world, he may comfort himself with this, that he hath another to go to, where he shall have better usage, and a reward for his sufferings.

2. Hope assures us, that the good things of the world to come do incomparably exceed the things of this world. If the things of this world were the better, no man would leave better for worse: nay, if they were but equal, no man would part with that in possession for that in expectation: but hope assures us that the good things of the world to come do far transcend those that are in this world. The mansions in glory are better than the houses of clay; the incorruptible inheritance exceeds a fading one; eternal life is much more precious than temporal; the crowns of immortality above outshine all the titles of honor here below; the pure rivers of pleasure in heaven are far sweeter than the delights on earth; the fruition of God (who is the supreme good, centre of souls, Sabbath of rest, and fountain of blessedness,) cannot but be infinitely beyond the enjoyment of creatures. A good assurance, that these things are so, will dispose us to part with the lesser concerns here below, that we may enjoy the greater that are above. We read of some worthies that took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, because they had in heaven a better and enduring substance. (Heb. 10:34.) And again, of some, that would not accept deliverance, because they would obtain a

better resurrection. (Heb. 11:35.) Shadows and trifles were to be parted with, rather than massy and durable felicity; the bubble or vapour of a transitory life was to be let go, rather than an everlasting one. When in the persecution under Dioclesian, the martyrs were asked, What made them bear such torments; and what they expected after all their sufferings? They made this answer: That they did hope for those good things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, which God hath prepared for them that love him. We see what bore up their spirits in their sufferings; let us labour to have a high sense of the excellencies of the world to come, that, if need be, we may part with all for it.

3. Hope assures our interest in the good things of the world to come: and here two things are to be noted; the one is this, hope, in its initial existence assures our interest in them fundamentally; he that hath a true lively hope of them hath a real interest in them; every right grace touches upon heaven, and gives a right to it; but hope doth it in a kind of peculiar way; it enters in within the veil, and in a sort takes possession of the other world. As the ship is at land in its anchor, so the soul is in heaven in its hope; and he that hath a true interest there will not part with it in a time of suffering: the anchor being in heaven, and fastened in the unmoveable felicity there, will hold out in a storm. Such an one will reckon, as St. Paul did, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. 8:18.) Or, if a comparison be made, the sufferings in respect of the glory, will be but as a drop of wormwood, to a vast sea of infinite sweetness. The other thing is this: hope in its full stature assures our interest in the good things to come sensibly; he that hath a plerophory of hope, certainly knows that he hath an interest in them. "We know that we have passed from death to life," saith St. John. (1 John 3:14.) As if the apostle had said, we are in the borders of heaven, and we know it, as it were, sensibly, as we do our passage from one place to another. Holy Job saith, "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and, maugre all the worms, in my flesh I shall see God." (Job 19:25, 26.) He was sure of the bliss-making vision, and could look through the dust to

immortality. Such a full hope ushers in a kind of paradise into the soul, and admirably fits it to bear sufferings; the internal suavity is able to sweeten any outward condition. The learned Rivet, at his dying hour, broke forth into these words: Expecto, credo, persevero, dimoveri nequeo, Dei spiritus meo spiritui testatur, me esse ex filiis suis, rem ineffabilem! I expect, believe, persevere, cannot be moved; God's spirit witnesses to mine, that I am one of his children; O ineffable love! Let us labour to have, not only a lively hope, that we may have a title to heaven, but a full hope that we may know our title to it. This will be a high cordial in an evil day, and make us able, whatever the sufferings be, to go on triumphantly and with full sails to heaven.

2. Hope doth not only assure the good things to come, but disposes us for them. Hope is not an idle dream or notion, but it is an active and lively thing; it doth not merely look to the glory above, but puts the soul into a posture for it; every one, that hath in him the nope of so great a thing as the seeing the blessed God is, purifieth himself, even as he is pure, (1 John 3:3). He knows darkness cannot have communion with light; unclean eyes cannot be opened in so pure a place as heaven is; the earthly heart is too gross to be in the region of holy spirits; he that drowns himself in sensual pleasures is not meet to drink of the pure rivers that are above. Malicious spirits cannot be capable of dwelling there, where infinite love opens itself in all its sweetness. The false-hearted hypocrite can never be admitted to see truth in the original, nor the evil man to drink goodness at the fountain-head. He, therefore, that hath a right hope of being with God in heaven, will purify himself for such a high estate; he will labour to have more of the light of faith to fit him for that of vision; to have more purity of heart, to make him meet to see the Holy One; to have more of heaven in his affections, to prepare him for that blessed region; to have more spiritual delight here, that he may be capable of entering into the joy of his Lord hereafter; to have his heart more filled with holy love, that he may be in an apt posture for the rich effusions of love in heaven; to have more truth and goodness in his heart, that he may be the more ready to enjoy the fountain and

fullness of both, I mean, the blessed God, who is all in all. Thus this lively hope makes a man meet for heaven, and in so doing, it makes him meet for those sufferings that lie in his way thither. That purity, which disposes him to enjoy God in heaven, doth also dispose him to suffer for him on earth; and the greater disposition is to heaven, the centre of blessedness, the stronger will the motion be to break through all difficulties that are in the passage thereunto. Let us therefore get a purifying hope, that we may be fit for the cross.

3. Hope doth not only dispose us for the good things to come, but it waits for them unto the end. Hope is a waiting grace, it makes a christian's life to be a perpetual waiting: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come," saith Job, (chap. 14:14). Job had many changes, but he waited for that great one, which should bring him into a state of unchangeable happiness. Whatever holy men are a doing, still they are in a waiting posture. When Jacob was blessing his sons, he did not forget this, but broke out in a sudden sweet ejaculation, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" (Gen. 49:18). Hope makes christians to wait for the good things to come at all times, but in a special manner in time of sufferings: St. Paul, speaking first of the suffering saints, and then of the groaning world, expresseth himself thus; "We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body, for we are saved by hope," (Rom. 8:23, 24). Here we may observe the true state and posture of the saints; afflictions make them groan, but the divine hope, the first-fruits of the Spirit, make them wait for a better world, in which adoption and redemption shall have their complete perfection: a christian in afflictions being tormented in this world, will wait for a better. The martyr Agatha, having her breasts cruelly cut off for religion, told the persecutor, That yet she had two breasts remaining, such as he could not touch; the one of faith, the other of hope; which afforded her great comforts in her torments. Faith adheres to the promise, hope waits for the good things promised; both strengthen in a day of trial. It is the very nature of divine hope to wait for the good things to come: when the sun of prosperity

shines, it waits in a way of obedience; "Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and do thy commandments," saith David, (Ps. 119:166). He waited in a way of obedience to God's commands. And when the storm of persecution comes, it waits in a way of patience. Hence the apostle speaks of the patience of hope, (1 Thess. 1:3). That hope, which in prosperity waited in a way of obedience, will in adversity wait in a way of patience: hope would have the christian to be always waiting for the upper world; but when the cross comes, it presseth upon him more vehemently, and will speak after this manner to him; What, hast thou waited for the great reward in heaven in duties and ordinances, and wilt thou not wait for it in sufferings, too? Heaven is the same still, and sufferings are not worthy to be compared with it: do but suffer a little, and thou shalt be there. When the martyr Ananias, in the Persian persecution, seemed to tremble at the approaching cross, Pusices spake thus to him; "Paulisper, O senex, oculos claude, nam statim lumen Dei videbis;" shut thine eyes a little, O old man, and immediately thou shalt see the light of God. Excellent is that of the apostle; "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," (2 Cor. 4:17, 18). Here it is observable, affliction is light and momentary, but glory is a weight and eternal, there is no proportion between them: if by hope we look at the invisible and eternal things, his will support our hearts, that it is but a little short suffering, and we shall be in heavenly bliss for ever: let us therefore labour after a waiting hope, that we may patiently bear the cross.

CHAPTER X

The seventh direction for suffering is holy fear; not the fear of man, but of God; not a diffidential fear, but a fiducial one; not a servile fear, but a filial one

Holy fear looks at sin more than at suffering; at sufferings in hell more than at those on earth; at spiritual and eternal losses more than at carnal and temporal.

THE seventh direction is this, if we would be in a fit posture for suffering, we must get an holy fear in our hearts. The wise Solomon begins his Proverbs with this; "The fear of the Lord is the beginning (or head) of knowledge," (Prov. 1:7); and ends his Ecclesiastes with this, "That to fear God, and keep his commandments, is the whole duty of man," (Eccl. 12:13). Other things appertain to the beast, or the devil; but holy fear is the all of man, it makes him a perfect man, not only to do God's will, but to suffer under it. In speaking to this, I shall first consider what that fear is which prepares us for suffering, and then how it prepares us thereunto.

1. I shall consider what that fear is which prepares us for suffering; and this I shall dispatch in three things.

It is not the fear of man but of God, that doth it. It is not the fear of man that can do it. God gives us a charge against this, "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die?" (Isa. 51:12). There is no cause to fear a weak piece of clay, a very breath, a fading leaf; he must die, and there is an end of him and all his thoughts perish with him. The wise man tells us, "That the fear of man bringeth a snare," (Prov. 29:25). It made Abraham dissemble as if he had no wife; David changed his behaviour, as if he had no reason; Peter curse and swear as if he knew not his master: this fear disposes to apostacy, and must be cured by that fear of God, which disposes to suffering: when we are ready to drown in worldly sorrow, it is of singular use to spring another, a godly sorrow in our hearts; and when the fear of man puts us into trembling fits, it is an excellent remedy to raise up the fear of God in our souls above the other. Thus God directs his people not to fear the confederate enemies, but to "sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and to let him be their fear and their dread," (Isa. 8:12, 13). He is Lord of Hosts, God over all, and the fear of him should be above all other fears; this is the way to have

him to be a sanctuary to us, as it follows. If we fear him, he will be an inviolable place of retreat, where we may repose ourselves in a day of trouble.

2. It is not a diffidential fear, but a fiducial one that doth it: a diffidential fear makes the mind, as meteors in the air, to hang in suspense, and, in case affliction come, to fail under the burden. St. Peter walked upon the water to go to Jesus; but when he saw the wind boistrous, he was afraid, and began to sink, (Matth. 14:29, 30.) By faith he walked, and by diffidence he began to sink. Our condition is the very same; in the waves of a troublesome world we stand by faith, but fall by diffidence; that fear, which prepares us for suffering, must be a fiducial one. "Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord, he is their help and their shield," (Psa. 115:11). Holy fear is and must be in conjunction with faith. Fear flies from the evils of sin and hell; faith closes in with the promises of grace and glory; both concur to make a man fit for suffering; and such a sufferer shall have God for his help and shield.

3. It is not a servile fear, but a filial one that doth it: he that hath a mere servile fear of the wrath to come, may forbear an act of sin, but he hath the love of it in his heart; "*adhuc vivit in eo peccandi voluntas*" the love of sin lives in him still, as an ancient hath it. Such an one is not in a fit case to suffer for the truth; he hath not a love to God to move him to it, nor a capacity to have heaven after it; and how can he suffer? It is very hard for a man to suffer for a God that he loves not; or part with the good things of this world, when he hath no hope of those in a better. That fear, which prepares for suffering, is not servile, but filial; it stands not in conjunction with the love of sin, but with the love of God; the nature of it is such, that he that hath it will displease man rather than offend God; part with a world, rather then let go the truth and a pure worship; nay, and lay down his life rather then forfeit the divine presence and favour which are better than life. Thus much touching the nature of that fear, which prepares us for suffering.

2. I come to consider how holy fear doth prepare us for sufferings; and this I shall open in three things.

1. Holy fear looks upon sin as an evil much greater than any suffering: suffering is opposite to the creature, but sin is opposite to the infinite God; it is a rebellion to his sovereignty, a contradiction to his holiness, a provocation to his justice; an abuse to his grace; a stain cast, as much as in us lies, upon his glory; nay, as the schools speak, it is a kind of deicidium, it strikes in a sort at the very life and being of God; it wishes that there were none at all; and, if it could effect it, there should be none. Suffering doth not make a man worse then he was before, but sin doth it. Those saints that were destitute, afflicted, tormented, wandering in deserts, and mountains, and dens, and caves of the earth, were yet such excellent ones, "That the world was not worthy of them," (Heb. 11:37, 38). On the other hand, Antiochus Epiphanes, (who was, as his name imports, illustrious and glorious in the world) was yet but a vile person, and was made such by his wickedness. Suffering strikes at the estate or body of man, but sin stikes at his soul, a thing more precious than a world; nay, and at the divine image there, which is more worth than the soul itself: it doth, where it can prevail, turn men into beasts in its sensual lusts, or into devils in its spiritual wickednesses: suffering may have good, nay great good in it, but sin is evil, only evil; it is called by St. James, *περισσεία κακίας*, the superfluity or excrement of all evil, (James 1:21). It contains all evils in it; and if all evils (saith a worthy divine) were to have a scum or excrement, sin is it, as being the abstracted quintessence of all evil, and having nothing at all of good in it. Sin, saith Bradwardine, is a thing not to be done, "*pro quantiscunque bonis lucrandis, aut pro quantiscunque malis præcavendis,*" for the gaining never so great a good, or for the avoiding never so great an evil. He that hath this holy fear in his heart, will choose suffering as the lesser evil, rather than sin, which is much the greater. When Antiochus Epiphanes brought forth wheels, rods, hooks, rakes, racks, cauldrons, cages, gridirons, gauntlets, awls, bellows, brazen pots, and frying-pans before Salamona and her seven sons to terrify them, they could not be induced by all his tormenting engines to trespass so far

as to eat of a little sacrificed swine's flesh, to save themselves from a cruel death. It was the saying of Anselm, That if sin were set before him on one hand, and hell on the other, he would rather choose hell than sin. Henry Flander, being a prisoner for the protestant religion, would not say that his wife was his whore, no, not to save his life, offered to him on those terms. Holy fear will tell us, that sin must not be done to avoid suffering; that we were better bear all reproaches than dishonour God; lose our estates than leave our religion; nay, and lay down our lives than be separated from the Divine love. O let us look upon sin as the maximum formidable; as that which hath in it the most proper cause of fear and flight, that no external miseries and dangers may be able to drive us into it.

2. Holy fear looks at the sufferings which God inflicts in hell, as incomparably greater than those which man doth or can inflict upon earth. Our Saviour directing our fear to its right object, takes notice of the vast difference between them, "Fear not them, which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28.) Man's killing is one thing, but God's destroying another: man may kill the body, and it may be in a tormenting manner; but there is no death like the second; no torments on earth are comparable to those in hell; no finite arm can strike so hard as the infinite one; no culinary or elementary fire can burn so hot as the infernal doth. God bid Moses take and sprinkle the ashes of the furnace, and they should become boils and Mains. (Exod. 9:8, 9.) A great doctor of ours glosses on the words thus: The sufferings here on earth are but the ashes of the furnace, small things in comparison of the furnace itself; a hell of unquenchable fire. Man may kill the body, but he is not always a killing of it; he may torment, but he cannot bear up the patient in long suffering; the torments in a little time will cease, and the martyr sleep in Jesus; but God kills the damned, and is still a killing them, power supports them, and justice punishes them; the fire of hell, kindled by eternal breath, never goes out, and the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever: after thousands, and ten thousands of years, still there will be wrath to come, such as no time

can measure. Man may kill the body, but after that he can do no more, his engines of cruelty cannot reach the soul, or touch the inward man, which is a sanctuary for God; but God kills the soul, his wrath is in a peculiar manner poured out there where the chief seat of sin was; the never-dying worm is ever growing upon conscience. The spirit of the damned furiously reflects upon itself over the eternal misery that it lies under. All the horrors of a Spira or a Judas are far short of that desperate rage and anguish which tortures the lost souls in hell. He that hath this holy fear in him will choose any sufferings on earth rather than those in hell. One of the sons of Solomona told the tyrant Antiochus, that his fire was cold, and indeed it was so, comparatively, to the fire of hell. St. Austin putting the question whom we should obey, God commanding one thing, or the emperor commanding another, makes his answer: "Da veniam, Imperator, tu carcerem minaris, ille gehennam," Give place, O emperor, thou threatenest a prison, he a hell. When Polycarp was threatened with fire, his answer was, That the persecutor threatened only a momentary fire, but knew not the eternal one. He that ever heard that true thunder, which is the voice of God, would hardly be afraid of such artificial cracks as the emperor Caius Caligula used to make to shew himself a God. And he that carries upon his heart an awe of those sufferings which God inflicts in hell, will hardly fear those which men inflict on earth.

3. Holy fear looks upon spiritual and eternal losses, as incomparably greater than carnal and temporal ones. The loss of the world may be made up in the saving of the soul; but for the loss of a soul, nothing can make a recompense. That little sparkle of divinity mightily outweighs the great globe of the world. What are bodies to spirits; "Nemo (saith Austin) bene se inspexit, qui non omni corpori qualem libet animam præponendam esse fateatur;" he that looks well into himself must confess, that any soul is to be preferred before all bodies. The loss of man's favour may be richly made up by the presence of God's. Moses endured the king's wrath, as seeing the invisible one; the presence of God was so with him, that he feared no human frowns. But if the divine favour be wanting, nothing can

supply the defect of it. It is true, a man without it may have all outward blessings flowing round about him; but he eats, and drinks, and sleeps, under the wrath of God, which hangs over his head, as the sword did over the head of Damocles at the tyrant's table; and, as soon as the thread of life breaks, it comes down upon him in an utter ruin. The loss of creatures may be made up by an interest in God; a real christian, having nothing, may possess all things in him: but if a man forsake God, what will the world give in exchange for him? Its riches are but poor moth-eaten things, which in a little time vanish away; its pleasures are but the titillations of sense, and perish in the using; its honours are but a blast, a little popular air which soon go away, and come to nothing. When once God, who is the fountain and spring of all good, departs, it is in vain to hope for any thing from the little rivulets and cisterns of the creature. He that hath this holy fear in him, will choose to suffer loss in carnal and temporal things, rather than in spiritual and eternal. It is the saying of St. Ambrose, "Ea est vera pietas, quæ præponit divina humanis, perpetua temporalibus;" that is, true piety, which prefers divine things to human, and perpetual things to temporal. St. Austin sets out servile and filial fear by an adulterous and a chaste wife: "Timet mulier adultera, ne vir ejus veniat; timet et casta ne vir ejus abscedat:" The adulterous woman fears, lest her husband may come; the chaste woman fears lest her husband depart. In like manner servile fear makes us afraid that God will punish, and filial fear makes us afraid that God will depart. The loss of him is more than the loss of all things. When the Martyr Menas, under the persecution of Dioclesian, was brought forth to suffer, he gave this reason for it: "Nihil est, quod meâ sententiâ conferri possit cum regno cœlorum; neque enim totus mundus potest, æquâ lance expensus uni comparari animæ;" There is nothing, in my judgment, like the kingdom of heaven; neither may the whole world, if weighed in an equal balance, be compared with one soul. He had rather lose anything in the world than a heaven and a soul. O let us labour to know where the great loss lies, that we may never for sake spiritual and eternal things for carnal and temporal.

CHAPTER XI

The eighth direction for suffering is humility

A high fabric must have a low foundation—Humility hath such rays from God, as makes us very low in our own eyes; it is a capacity for larger effusions of grace, it subjects a man to all the pleasures of God; it causes him to depend upon God for support and comfort.

THE eighth direction is this, if we would be in a fit posture for suffering, we must labour after humility of mind. It is the direction of our Saviour to christians, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," (Matt. 11:29). St. Austin, upon those words, gives an excellent rule; "Cogitas magnam fabricam construere celsitudinis, de fundamento prius cogita humilitatis:" thou thinkest to build a great high fabric, but first think to make a low foundation: the higher the building is, the lower must be the foundation. If we would build our Christianity as high as suffering for religion, we had need lay a deep foundation in humility for it. Our Saviour Christ was not only a pattern of suffering, but of humility too: St. Peter tells us, that, "he suffered, leaving us an example," (2 Peter 2:21). St. Paul tells us, how he came to suffer; he emptied himself, or made himself of no reputation, "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, the death of the cross," (Phil. 2:7, 8). He laid by his robes of majesty, and became, as it were, nothing, that he might suffer for us. If we would follow Christ in suffering, we must put off our ornaments, and lay by our proud plumes; we must empty ourselves of all our self-excellencies, and become vile; yea, nothing in our own eyes, that we may endure the trial. St. Paul was a great sufferer for Christ, but withal he was one of the humblest that ever lived: indeed, before his conversion he was a Saul, a proud persecutor; but after it he was a Paul, persecuted, and little in his own eyes. Athanasius, who suffered so much under the Arians, had this character given him by Nazianzen, that he was high in worth, and humble in heart. There are

four things to be noted in humility; each of which tend to prepare us for suffering.

1. Humility dwells in an enlightened mind, and hath such rays from God, as make the heart, where it is, take up very low thoughts of itself. Of old the appearances of God in outward symbols of glory, made men lie very low before him. When Job heard the voice of the Lord out of the whirlwind, "he abhorred himself in dust and ashes," (Job 42:6). When the prophet saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, he cried out, "Woe is me, I am undone," (Isa. 6:5). When Daniel saw the vision of the bright shining man, "his comeliness was turned into corruption," (Dan. 10:8). The noble man now hath not such outward appearances, but he hath an inward light of faith, and when he looks up to God, and reflects upon himself, it makes him go in fundum, into the centre of the earth, and there to see his own nothingness. I shall give a triple instance of this: when the humble man looks up to the glory and greatness of God, he reflects and communes with his heart after this manner; Oh! how high is God! his glory is above the heavens, his majesty is infinitely brighter than a thousand suns, the rays of it bid me go down and hide myself in the dust of my own vileness and nothingness; how great is he, that spans the heavens, weighs the mountains, and measures the seas in the hollow of his hand? To him all nations are but as a drop of the bucket, a dust of the balance; nay, less than nothing itself: and I, what am I? the drop of a drop, a piece of a dust, and much less than that which is less than nothing itself. Such thoughts as these do so abase and annihilate a man in his sense, that the great and glorious God may do anything with him; his own littleness will keep him from murmuring under any cross or affliction that comes from the Most High. Again, when the humble man looks to the holiness of God, he speaks to his heart: God is very holy, he is perfect purity, without any spot, infinite light without any darkness at all; the glance of his pure eyes bids me go down into my spotted self, and there cover myself with the shame of that corruption, that is worse than nothing: the stars are not pure in his sight, and how can I be so? The glorious angels cover their faces, and

cry to him, Holy, holy, holy; and what should worms do! What reason have I to cry out over myself, as the leper was to do, Unclean, unclean. The sense of this is so deeply humbling, that it disposes him that hath it to be willing to go into any furnace, which God orders for the melting out of his dross. The excellent martyr, Mr. Hooper, carried his humility with him to the fiery trial: there he prayed thus; "Lord, I am hell, but thou art heaven; I am a sink of sin, but thou art a gracious Redeemer:" the sense of his own imperfections made him lie very low. Moreover, when the humble man looks to the grace of God, he adores that pure self-moving fountain of all good; and withal, abases himself under his great unworthiness of the least drop of it: The evil that is in me, saith he, is my own; but all the good that is in me is entirely from grace. This taste of grace to a man's unworthy self, admirably disposes him to bear the cross: such an one will argue with himself, Shall God give me grace and glory, and shall I not suffer for him? The suffering is not the hell I deserve, but that which is much less; and shall I not suffer? There is a glorious heaven to come after it, and why should I hang back? The words of Dr. Sclater are very remarkable; "God," saith he, "rewards ultra condignum, afflicts citra condignum;" that persuasion who so carries, and is acquainted with his foul sins, willingly prays with Austin, "Hic ure, hic seca, ut in æternum parkas;" here burn, here cut me, that thou mayest spare for ever. Thus humility, by the rays that it hath from God, makes a man very vile in his own eyes, and so prepares him for the cross. The proud man, that thinks highly of himself, will murmur at anything; and the humble man, that thinks meanly of himself, will bear with anything.

2. Humility puts the soul into a capacity to have larger effusions of grace bestowed upon it; "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," (James 4:6). God hath two hands; with the one, he casts down the proud that lift up themselves against him; with the other, he lifts up the humble that lie at his feet for mercy. Humility is not only a grace, but a capacity to receive more of it. He that goes to a river to take up water, puts the mouth of his vessel downward to do it; he that goes to God for grace, must put his mouth in the dust, and

cry to have it, not for his worth's sake, but for his spiritual poverty. A humble heart is, as Parisiensis calls it, a spiritual vacuum; and as nature doth not suffer a vacuum in bodies, but fills up the space one way or other, so grace doth not suffer a vacuum in spirits, but fills up the humble soul with fresh supplies of grace. St. Austin sets out this by a notable similitude, "The water that falls down from heaven upon the mountains, flows away; but the water that falls upon the valleys, stays there:" in like manner the divine grace, that distils from above, doth not rest upon high proud persons, but upon humble ones: God leaves the full souls, and fills the empty; abases the exalted, and exalts the abased: all other graces grow together with humility; the more humble we are, the more we have of God with us, the more we have of grace in us; and the more we have of these, the more we have of strength in the inner man, and the more we have of preparation for a day of trial. If we build so high as suffering for Christ, we must dig deep and lay the foundation low, that when the storm comes we may stand fast and unmoveable.

3. Humility makes a man freely to bow and subject himself to God in all things. This is a choice and excellent preparative for suffering; the same which our Saviour commends to weary and heavy-laden souls: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart," (Matt. 11:29). Christians are to take up a double yoke, the yoke of evangelical commands, and the yoke of the cross that accompanies them; in both subjection is requisite; in the one, subjection to Christ's authority commanding; in the other, subjection to his providence ordering: and that christians may be subject to both, they must look to the great pattern, and learn meekness and humility from him. The heart of man naturally is a very proud belial thing, that will bear no yokes; it will not be under Christ, not under his righteous commands by obedience, nor under his afflicting providences by patience; it lifts up itself, and by a kind of blasphemy practically aspires to be above God himself. But when the divine grace hath melted the heart and made it humble, then it will bow down and take both yokes upon itself; it will become freely subject to God and all his holy pleasure. I say freely; a proud man may be

bowed down under the pressure of an external calamity, but an humble man bows himself down by an internal principle of grace; in the one, the subjection is merely of necessity, in the other it is free and of choice. Humility makes a man lie at God's foot, and say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" or, "What wilt thou have me to suffer?" "Let the word of God come (saith Baldasser, the German divine) and we will submit to it six hundred necks, if we had so many." Let the cross come (saith the humble man), and I will submit to it. Humility is virtually all obedience and patience, it makes a man to be as a little child, ruleable by all the will of God; whether that will come forth in precepts or providences, humility will comply and bow down under it. The lowly in heart will do or be anything for God, therefore our Saviour promises rest to such as the gracious reward of their labours and sufferings. It is good council that St. Austin gives, *Esto parvus in oculis tuis, ut sis magnus in oculis Dei*; "Be thou little in thine own eyes, that thou mayest be great in God's;" subjecting thyself to all his pleasure is the way to be exalted by him.

4. Humility causes a man to depend upon God for support and comfort in his sufferings. The proud person stands in the posture of the *σταθεὶς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν*, standing to himself, (Luke 18:11); he stands upon his own bottom, and thinks himself able by his own power to do or suffer anything as he pleases: but standing in his own presumption, it is very likely that he will fall off as soon as the trial comes. But it is otherwise with the humble man; he knows that he is weak in himself, and must be strong in God, and therefore he will not trust in his own power or will, but look up to God for support and comfort in the evil day. It is a notable passage of St. Austin, "*Multos impedit à firmitate presumptio firmitatis, nemo a Deo fit firmus, nisi qui a seipso sentit infirmum.*" A presumption of firmness hinders many from being firm; no man is made firm by God, but he that feels infirmity in himself. The story in the Marian persecution is very memorable! Mr. Sanders, the martyr, at first shewed much weakness and fear; but Dr. Pendleton said to him, "What, man, fear? I will see every drop of my grease melted before I forsake Christ and his truth!" But afterwards, Sanders triumphantly suffered, kissing the

stake, and saying, "Welcome the cross of Christ!" but proud Pendleton turned papist. Unto this instance I shall add a more ancient one; Peter, a great apostle, fell, and denied his Lord; but among the primitive christians, women and little children suffered in a brave and heroical manner. The greatest christians may fall, by presuming upon themselves; the least may stand, by depending on the power of God: the poor in spirit would not be their own keepers, but would commit themselves unto God, (Ps. 10:14), as being safer in his hands than in their own. Humble souls, not being able to bear up their own weight, lean upon the Rock of Ages; and, having no rest in themselves, they acquiesce in the centre of souls. The feeble conies have their houses in the rocks, and the weak christians dwell in the secret of the Most High. Annas Burgus, a senator of Paris, suffered for the pure religion with that constancy, that many were curious to know what religion that was, for which he so patiently endured death; and one reason of his patience was his humble dependance upon God, which he expressed in that often repeated prayer at his death, "Deus mi, ne me derelinquas, ne ego te derelinquam;" O my God, leave me not, lest I leave thee! He knew that his strength was in God only. Oh let us labour to have a humble dependance upon God, that, when sufferings come, we may look and be supported, wait and renew strength, be nothing in ourselves, and have all in God. So we shall be safe and secure from anxious fears; dabitur in horâ, support and comfort will come in the time of need.

CHAPTER XII

The ninth direction for suffering is active obedience to the will of God

it flows from a good and honest heart; it respects God's will and glory; it makes us to grow up into Christ, and to be allied to him; it increases grace and spiritual strength; it obtains the gracious presence of God, and it is the way to heaven.

THE ninth direction is this: if we would be in a fit posture for suffering, we must labour after an active obedience to the will of God: to do in a right manner as he would have us to do. It is a notable saying of the rabbins, *Marces præceptum præcepti*; one precept is the reward of another. He that rightly observes one precept, shall have in the name of a reward such grace from God, as shall enable him to do another and a more difficult command. It is an excellent thing to inure ourselves to the doing of God's will; obedience is the chain about the spouse's neck, (Cant. 4:9), one link hangs upon another; one piece of obedience draws on another. Active obedience will prepare us for passive; the doing of God's will, will dispose us for the suffering of it. The apostle prays for the Colossians first, "That, they might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work;" and then in the next verse, "That they might be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness," (Col 1:10, 11). Where we may observe, that a holy life goes before, and then suffering graces follow after. There are in obedience six things observable, each of which tends to prepare us for suffering.

1. True obedience flows from a good and an honest heart; nay, I may add, it flows from the Holy Spirit of God. It flows from a good and honest heart; many unprofitable hearers there are, but the good and honest heart brings forth fruit. It was a high character which the apostle gives to the Romans, That they had obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine, which was delivered to them, or, as it is in the original, into which they were delivered, (Rom. 6:17). The gospel was not only delivered to them, but they were delivered, and, as it were, cast into the mould of it, and that was the reason that they obeyed from the heart. Nay, further, obedience flows from the Holy Spirit; it is a choice promise in the covenant, "I will put my Spirit into you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," (Ezek. 36:27). Obedience being a mere supernatural act, comes from the Holy Spirit, as the prime cause thereof; a general concourse suffices not; there must be a peculiar motion and impulsion of the Spirit in it; which made

Gerson say, That all spiritual life was founded in miraculo influentiæ divinæ, in the miracle of a divine influence. We see what are the principles and fountains of active obedience, and the very same will produce passive too. "The good and honest heart brings forth fruit with patience," (Luke 8:15). The words, "with patience," are very remarkable; the good and honest heart may meet with persecutions in the world, yet it would blossom and bring forth fruit in the midst thereof. "The righteous flourishes as the palm-tree," (Psalm 92:12.) The palm-tree is a symbol of immortality, growing under its burden; and the righteous, who hath an immortal seed in him, flourishes under all the pressures of a persecuting world. Again, the Holy Spirit, which makes good men do God's will, will enable them to suffer it too. St. Paul took pleasure in persecutions, because, when he was weak, then he was strong, (2 Cor. 12:10); that is, the Holy Spirit did strengthen his inward man to bear the cross. The Holy Spirit in the saints is a well of water, springing up to everlasting life, (John 4:14). The persecuting world would fain stop and dam it up; but in the midst of all oppositions it springs, and never leaves springing till the saints be in heaven; and before they come thither, it is, as St. Peter speaks, "A spirit of glory resting upon them," (1 Pet. 4:14); it brings down some glimpses of heaven into their hearts, whilst they are suffering for religion.

2. True obedience hath a pure respect to God's will and glory; it hath a pure respect to God's will; it doth not do the commands of God upon a bye-account, as Jehu destroyed Ahab's house; but it doth them intuitu voluntatis, because it is the will of God; it is that which sways and casts the balance in a good man's heart and life. As in matters of faith he believes, because God hath said it; so in matters of practice he obeys, because God hath commanded it. Also it hath a pure respect to God's glory; mens cujusque id est quisque; the man is as his mind is, and the mind is as his end is; an obedient person will not be a centre to himself, nor make God, the most excellent being, a medium to any other thing: his great design is, that God in all things may be glorified: his holiness is but to shine as a beam from the Holy One; his mercy is but as a little drop flowing from the divine ocean;

his obedience is to tell the world that God is supreme; like his Saviour Christ, he seeks not his own glory, but his Father's. Such an obedience as this, admirably disposes a man for suffering; he that doth some things because they are commanded, will take up the cross, too, because it is in a peculiar manner commanded in the gospel: the stamp of the divine authority is not only found upon the precepts of piety and justice, but upon that of patience, too: also, he that doth sincerely glorify God in other things, will, if occasion be, glorify him in pious sufferings: some honour may be done to God in other duties, but in no other thing is there such honour given to him as in bearing the cross; therein a man doth practically declare that he values God above all the world; and therefore the martyrs have, as the schoolmen tell us, a greater reward in heaven than others: others have the essential glory in the vision of God, but for the martyrs is reserved an aureola, a peculiar coronet to be added to their crown of glory, propter victoriam de mundo, for their victory over the world.

3. True obedience makes us to grow up into Christ the head, and to be of near alliance to him. It makes us to grow up into Christ the head, (Eph. 4:15). Obedience, being the exercise of all graces, brings us into a near union with Christ, and makes us more and more like to him: the more we act our love, meekness, mercy, goodness, or any grace, the more we are united to him and incorporated with him; nay, true obedience makes us to be of near alliance to him. When our Saviour was told that his mother and brethren stood without to see him, his answer was, "My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God, and do it," (Luke 8:20, 21). St. Ambrose, upon these words, tells us, *Religiosiores copulæ mentium quam corporum*; the conjunction of minds is more sacred than that of bodies. The obedient christian is brother to Christ, being born of the same Holy Spirit in regeneration, of which he was conceived in his incarnation; nay, he is mother to Christ, bringing him forth in the exercise of holy graces; somewhat of the love, mercy, piety, meekness of Christ is still a coming forth from him. In both these respects, doth obedience dispose us to suffering; the more we grow up unto Christ, the head, the more divine power and virtue we have from him; our chief

strength lies not in ourselves, but in our head; we may do, nay, and suffer anything, through him strengthening us; and the more we are allied to him, the more we are bound to adhere to him. Our supernatural birth obliges us to live to him, nay, and if need be, to die for him; and we are to bring him forth not only in other holy virtue, but in that of patience. St. Paul bore about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, (2 Cor. 4:10); and the allies of Christ must be ready, at God's call, to suffer with him.

4. True obedience produces an increase of grace and spiritual strength. Obedience is a christian's daily walk; the more he exercises himself to godliness, the more grace he hath in his soul. That faith, which was but as a little grain of mustard-seed, becomes a tree, spreading itself forth at last as high as assurance. That love, which was as a little spark raked up in the ashes, comes to be a vehement flame, aspiring after the fruition of God in heaven. That hope, which was but a poor weak thing in the soul, comes to have more liveliness and supernatural stature. The path of the just, which is in obedience, is as the shining light, "which shines more and more unto the perfect day in heaven," (Prov. 4:18). The more a christian exercises himself in obedience, the stronger he grows in the inner man: of a plant, he comes to be a tree of righteousness; of a babe, he comes to be a man in Christ. His vital principles become more strong, his supernatural heat increased, he holds on his way of obedience, and so grows stronger and stronger, (Job 17:9). Such an obedience as this admirably disposes a man for suffering. The greater his stock of grace is, the better will he hold out in the straits of the world. The more strength he hath in the inner man, the more able he will be to bear the burden of the cross: "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small," (Prov. 24:10). Great strength will keep a man from fainting. When the children of Israel were come to be above six hundred thousand, (Num. 1:46), it was a great encouragement to make them go on gallantly against their enemies. And when christians have their graces multiplied, and among the rest patience comes to be all patience, as the expression is, (Col. 1:11), it gives them spirit and life to bear sufferings.

5. True obedience obtains the gracious presence of God to help and comfort good men in the doing his will. The rabbins say, That if two sit together conferring about the law, the shechinah is among them: I may say, if one single christian be a doing of God's will, the divine presence is with him. Thus our Saviour saith; If any man love him, and keep his words, the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with such an one, (John 14:23). Such an one hath a shechinah in his heart; God will be there helping and comforting of him. Whilst he is a doing of God's will, strength will come in, as it did to the Levites, (1 Chron. 15:26); and not only strength, but comfort too. In keeping his commands there is great reward; some of the oil of joy, which is upon Christ, the great doer of God's will, drops down upon good men in their sincere obedience; they have an inward peace, and joy unspeakable. In this respect obedience prepares the heart of christians to endure suffering. An obedient christian can argue thus with himself; I have found God's gracious presence strengthening and comforting me in the doing of his will, much more shall I have it when I come to suffer, and part with all for his sake. When all forsook St. Paul, yet the Lord stood with him, and strengthened him, (2 Tim. 4:16, 19). When Mr. Sanders was examined about his religion, he was wonderfully comforted, and received a taste of the communion of saints, a pleasant refreshing did issue from every part of his body to his heart, and from thence into all parts again. Cicely Ormes was filled with such joy and comfort, that at the kindling of the fire, she said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour." O let us firmly conclude this with ourselves, that God will not leave or forsake his people, no, not at other times, much less will he do it in the time of fiery trials. Then they shall have strength and comfort in a more than ordinary way, enough to make them to triumph over their sufferings, or at leastwise to bear them with patience.

6. True obedience is the way to heaven: those blessed ones, that do the commands of God, "have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city," (Rev. 22:14). The more obedient a man is to the divine will, the richer entrance he hath into the blessed

kingdom. After sowing to the Spirit comes the crop of eternal glory; after walking in holy obedience, comes the blessed end of life and immortality. In this respect, obedience fits us for sufferings: a man that is in the way to hell, is not capable of suffering; it is not imaginable that a man should bear reproach for Christ, who hath no hope of glory; or that he should part with his treasure here, who hath none in heaven; or that he should lay down his life temporal, who hath no right to an eternal one; or that he should let go his portion of good in this world, who hath none in another. But the obedient christian, who is in the way to heaven, is in a capacity to suffer any thing that meets him in the passage thither: reproaches may come, but he is going to shine in glory; worldly goods may be spoiled, but he hath an inheritance incorruptible that fadeth not away; temporal life may be lost, but in the very instant there begins an eternal one with the blessed God in heaven; he may by a persecution be justled out of this world, but he hath a better to go to, where there are crowns of glory, rivers of pleasures, plenitudes of joy, and all in the blessed God. Our Saviour Christ for "the joy that was set before him, endured the cross," (Heb. 12:2). St. Paul would "finish his course that he might have the crown of righteousness," (2 Tim. 4:7, 8). When the martyr Babylas suffered, he sung that of the Psalmist, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul;" his mind was upon the eternal sabbath in heaven. When Basil the great was threatened with banishment, and death, he was not at all moved at it: banishment is nothing to him that hath heaven for his country; neither is death any thing to one to whom it is the way to life: He that is in the way to heaven hath great reason to break through all difficulties to get thither.

CHAPTER XIII

The tenth direction for suffering, is patience under God's will

With respect to the christian, it makes him possess his soul, conquer the world, and have inward satisfaction: with respect to God, it

subjects the soul to his will; it waits upon God for strength and a good issue; it produces spiritual joy and praise.

THE tenth direction is this; if we would be in a fit posture for suffering, we must labour after patience under the will of God; this must be joined to our obedience, that we may be able to answer to all his will; as obedience respects God's commanding will, so patience, which is also a duty, respects his disposing one. "Ye have need of patience, that alter ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise," saith the apostle, (Heb. 10:36). We are not only to do other commands by obedience, but, when providence calls us to it, we are to do that of taking up the cross by patience. Other graces may help to bear the cross, but patience takes it up upon his back. It is its proper peculiar office ὑπομένειν, to make a man abide piously under the cross. This grace may be considered two ways; either in that which it doth with respect to the christian in whom it is, or in that which it doth with respect to God; both ways it is of singular use in order to sufferings.

1. Patience may be considered in that which it doth with respect to the christian in whom it is; and thus three things may be noted.

1. Patience makes a christian possess his soul, (Luke 21:19); there is a great difference between the worldly man's patience and the christian's. The worldly man endeavours much that he may possess the things that are without him, but the christian bears that he may possess his own soul. The christian, in a fit of impatience, loses himself, and puts himself as it were out of possession, not only of his rational faculties, but of his graces too; at that time he acts not like a man or a christian. When Jonah told God that he did well to be angry unto death, (Jonah 4:9), he was, in his furious passion, more like a beast than a man or a saint. "If thou deal thus with me," saith Moses to God, "kill me out of hand," (Numb. 11:15). The word thou here is of the feminine gender, at for atta; the perturbation of mind made Moses, the meekest man on earth, unable to fill up his words, or to speak as he meant to do. It is by patience that the christian

possesseth himself, and hath the free use of his reason and holy graces: while he is patiently bearing the cross, his faith will roll out as gold out of the fire; his hope will fix itself in the unmovable heavens; his love will burn within him towards God and his glory. All the powers in earth and hell cannot put him out of the possession of himself, or hinder his graces from coming forth into act—he will be like himself in his suffering.

2. Patience makes a christian to be a conqueror of the persecuting world. The overcomer, mentioned in the second and third chapters of the Revelation of St. John, to whom so many precious and excellent promises are there made, is not one that overcomes by martial fighting, but one that hath the victory by patient suffering. "Who shall separate us," saith St. Paul, "from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? In all these things, ὑπερνικῶμεν, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us," (Rom. 8:35, 37). More than conquerors, because they conquered by suffering; while their bodies were slain, their souls were triumphing over death itself. Thus St. Austin saith, that the pagans were overcome, non à repugnantibus, sed a morientibus christianis, not by resisting, but by dying christians: patience makes their persecutors secure them, and frame crowns of glory for them. This made the martyr Vincentius tell his tormentor, "Nunquam aliquis adeò bene servivit mihi ac tu:" no man ever served me so much as thou hast done. Patience doth so frame the heart to the will of God, that it makes a christian to be a king over his crosses; losses to him are gain; reproaches, glory; confinement, liberty; and death, life: while he suffers in anything, he is above it.

3. Patience makes a christian to have inward content and satisfaction in suffering. It is the apostle's exhortation, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," (James 1:4). He that hath not patience, is but a lame and imperfect christian; he may go a little way in religion, as far as his principles reach, but if he come to suffering, which is beyond them, he will halt, and turn aside: but if a christian hath an effectual patience, he is then

perfect and entire, wanting nothing; he hath everything that may fill up his Christianity or happiness in this life. The cross may come, but he hath principles to bear it: outward blessings may be taken away, but he hath all in God. St. Austin brings in patient Job, stripped of all, but only his God; speaking thus, *Quid mihi deerit, si Deum habuero? quid mihi alia prosunt, si Deum non habuero?* What can I want, if I have God? What can other things profit, if I have him not? Patience gives the suffering saint quiet and sweet satisfaction in God, and, not only so, but in the very suffering, as it is a pious submission to his will: there is a sweetness and a secret reward in the doing of God's will, much more in holy suffering for him. The blessed martyr Baynham, at the stake, told the bloody papists, "O ye papists, ye talk of miracles! behold here a true one; these flames are to me a bed of roses." It is true, all holy sufferers cannot say thus; but all of them find by experience, that there is a sweet satisfaction in suffering for the good God.

2. Patience may be considered in that which it doth with respect to God; and here are three things to be taken notice of.

1. Patience subjects the soul to the will of God; when the cross comes, the patient christians will, with Aaron, hold their peace; or if they speak, they will do it in some such language as that of Eli, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Patience will instruct them to lie in the lowest posture of humility, and to argue the matter with themselves in this manner: Is God the rector of the world, and shall we not subject to him? His presence is in all, his power is over all, his wisdom and righteousness orders all. Who can stay his hand, or say to him, what dost thou? or call him to give account of any of his matters? To strive with him is folly; to murmur at any piece of his government is rebellion; to think that things might have been better, is to blaspheme his wise and just providence; and is he the Father of spirits, and shall we not be under him? We give reverence to the fathers of our flesh, and now much rather should we be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? Our Saviour Christ, who suffered for us to sweeten sufferings to us, argued thus with himself: "The cup

that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). After his pattern, we should submit ourselves to suffering, remembering that, though it come through bloody hands to us, yet it is ordered by the Father of spirits; nay, and by the Father of mercies too, who assures us, That all things, (even afflictions among the rest,) shall work together for good. In those very sufferings, in which man is cruel, God will be merciful. While the world hates and persecutes us, God will embrace us in the arms of his love, and carry us through the cross to the crown of glory. Upon such accounts as these, patience doth subject the soul unto the cross. Our Saviour, the mirror of patience, being to drink up the cup of wrath, expresses himself thus: "Not my will, but thine be done," (Luke 22:42). His will was swallowed up in his Father's. St. Ambrose, in his commentary on those words, gives us this excellent note: *Disce Deo esse subjectus, ut non quod ipse vis eligas, sed quod Deo scias esse placitum*: Learn to be subject to God, that thou mayest not choose, what thou wouldest, but what thou knowest to be pleasing to God. Patience teaches us to be pleased with God's pleasure, and to will everything, not as it is in our own will, but as it is in God's.

2. Patience waits upon God for strength to bear the cross, and for a good issue out of it: we have both these promised in that of the apostle, "God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape," (1 Cor. 10:13). In the first clause we have a promise of strength proportionable to the temptation; in the last, we have a promise of a good issue out of it. First, patience waits upon God for strength to bear the cross; this is the right method of obtaining strength: "Wait on the Lord, and he shall strengthen thy heart," (Psa. 27:14). Strength comes in a way of dependance upon God. St. Austin speaks of a double patience; there is *patientia superbiorum*, the patience of the proud; and *patientia pauperum*, the patience of the poor humble soul: the one waits upon the will of man, the other upon the grace of God: true patience knows, that it is God only that can strengthen the "inner man by his Spirit," (Eph. 3:16). No other but his "glorious power can strengthen with all might unto all patience," (Col. 1:11). Notable is that of St.

Austin, "Hæc est vox martyrum, omnia tolerare, et de se nihil præsumere:" this is the voice of the martyrs, to bear every thing, and to presume of themselves nothing. Thus the noble martyr Potamena, being threatened to be cast into a vessel of burning pitch, begged, that she might not be cast in all at once, but piecemeal, that they might see, how much patience the unknown Christ had given to her. True patience waits upon God for strength; but this is not all, it also waits upon God for a good issue out of the suffering; salvation belongs unto the Lord, and he gives many good issues to his suffering people: if they have an increase of graces and comforts, that is one good issue: if they hold out and persevere to the end, that is another good issue: if by death they pass from the cross to the crown, from a temporal life to an eternal one, that is the best issue of all: for such issues as these do patient souls wait, till the Lord put an end to all their troubles.

3. Patience produces spiritual joy and praise: this is the difference between philosophical patience and christian patience; philosophical may bear adversity, but christian hath joy in the bearing of it. It was the ancient custom of the primitive christians to have often in their mouths, Deo gratias, God be thanked for this mercy, and for that mercy. The patient christian, that looks upon the good issues of suffering, may sit down and sing, Deo gratias, not to blessings only, but to afflictions also. Job being stripped of all, cried out, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord," (Job 1:21). St. Austin, speaking of Job, observes, That, when he had nothing of outward things, yet there were Gemmæ laudis Dei, the jewels of the praise of God found with him. Suffering saints have so much of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, that they have præmium ante præmium, a lesser heaven before a greater. St. Paul saith, "ὑπερπερισσεύομαι, I superabound, or overflow in joy in all our tribulations," (2 Cor. 7:4). The gracious presence of God, did not only cause joy, but the overflowing of it in his heart. St. James saith to the scattered christians, "Count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations," (Jam. 1:2); that is, when ye fall into afflictions for the gospel. All joy? how can poor afflicted souls reckon thus? In the trial

their graces appear in their pure beauty; strength is made perfect in weakness; consolations abound as much, nay, more than afflictions; the beams of divine love irradiate the heart, and fill it with a sweet serenity; hope enters heaven, and fixes upon the crown of life, and heaven comes down in a spirit of glory upon the heart. Here is joy, all joy indeed; the total sum of it in this life is made up in these things. It was the saying of the martyr, Mr. Philpot, "That to die for Christ is the greatest promotion that God can bring any unto in this vale of misery; yea, so great a honour as the greatest angel in heaven is not permitted to have." It was the prayer of Mr. Bradford, the martyr: "God forgive me my unthankfulness for this exceeding great mercy, that among so many thousands, he chooseth me to be one in whom he will suffer. It was the observation of one of the ancients, "That it was peculiar to christians to give thanks in adversity." Jews and Gentiles can praise God for benefits, but the patient christian can thank him for afflictions. O! let us labour after patience, that we may not only suffer for Christ, but do it with joy. Thus our Saviour directs his persecuted ones; "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven," (Matt. 5:12). Inward and outward joys are very proper in suffering saints, because then they are arrived at the highest pitch of Christianity, and ready to enter into the blessed heaven, there to enjoy God for ever and ever.

CHAPTER XIV

Some inducements to suffer anything, rather than part with the pure religion

Pious sufferers glorify God; they propagate the church: they give a token of wrath to come upon persecutors; they are happy here and hereafter: here in the proof of sincerity, and in the presence of God; hereafter in a freedom from all evil, and a communication of all good.

HAVING laid down directions in order to suffering, I will shut up all with a few considerations, which may serve as motives to induce us at God's call to suffer anything rather than part with the pure religion, which is a jewel incomparably more worth than all those things, which we can lose for it.

1. Pious sufferers do glorify God in a very signal eminent manner. What is said of St. Peter's death? that "It was a glorifying of God," (John 21:19). The same may be said of the death of all other martyrs; we glorify God by offering praise; much more by offering our lives for him. We glorify him by giving some of our estates in charity; much more, by giving our blood for his name. We glorify him, when we present our bodies a living sacrifice to him in active obedience, much more when we present them a dying one in passive. Much of the glory of God breaks forth in his suffering saints; free-grace shines out in the raising up witnesses to his truth in a contradicting, persecuting world; power admirably appears in bearing of them up with holy joy and pleasure, in the midst of all the torments which men and devils can invent against them. Excellent is that of the apostle: "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness," (Col. 1:11). God's power is glorious in other things, but in his suffering saints, it lets out itself in a most illustrious manner. The persecutors have all torments, all kinds of death; but the martyrs have all might, all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness. As it was with Christ, his power appeared in miracles; but above all, in that he triumphed over principalities and powers upon the cross: so it is with christians; the divine power appears in other graces, but above all in that patient suffering which overcomes the world. The truth of God is in martyrs practically proved to be exceeding precious. The fathers, in the first general councils, were so earnest for the truth, that they would not exchange a letter or syllable of it. The Arian ὁμοιοῦσιος would not pass instead of ὁμοούσιος, nor the Nestorian θεοδόχος, applied to Christ as man, instead of θεοτόχος, applied to the blessed virgin. All believers seal up the evangelical truths by faith, but the martyrs seal them up by their blood also; plainly shewing, that the least jot or

tittle of truth is more worth than life, and not to be sold for a world. It was the preciousness of truth, that made Athanasius stand it out against an Arian world, and Luther stand it out against a Popish one. Moreover, divine worship is by martyrs maintained to be a prerogative due to God alone. When all the world was given to idolatry, the primitive martyrs would die, rather than rob God of his honour. Their sufferings told the world that his glory was not to be given to another, nor his praise to graven images; no, not to save the lives of those that were the only pure worshippers of him. Their lives could not be better spent than in suffering for his pure worship; and after them, he would raise up others to worship him. When the emperor Commodus asked the senator Julius why he could not worship Jupiter and Hercules; Julius, ambitious of martyrdom, told the emperor plainly, that Jupiter and Hercules were no gods, and that the worshippers of idols must perish in eternal torments; and soon after, he sealed up his profession with his blood. Auxentius would rather suffer banishment, than set a branch of a wine-tree at the feet of Bacchus' image, because it had an appearance of idolatry. The suffering of the saints for the pure worship, proclaims it to all, that God hath a sacred jealousy over his worship, and will no more part with it, than he will with his crown. If we would indeed glorify God, here is the highest medium to do it; no praises, no alms, no services, no active obedience, do so lift up the glory of God, as pious suffering doth, in which we do practically declare that we value him above all things.

2. Pious sufferers do propagate and multiply the church. When Abel, the first martyr, was slain, there was a Seth raised up in his room. When righteous persons are slain by persecutors, more of them spring up in the church. The more the children of Israel were afflicted in Egypt, the more they multiplied and grew, (Exod. 1:11). As the ground, that is most harrowed, is most fruitful; so God's people, the more they were straitened under the burdens of men, the more they were enlarged by the blessing of God. The Roman emperors did design utterly to extirpate Christianity: Dioclesian (the greatest persecutor of all, who filled the world with the blood of martyrs)

thought he had effected it: this inscription was upon his coin. "Nomine christianorum deleto, qui rem publicam everterunt" the name of christians, who overthrew the Commonwealth, is extinct: but they were all in a mistake; in the midst of the ten bloody persecutions, there was still a new generation of christians springing up out of the blood of the martyrs. Tertullian tells the vexing torturing persecutors, "Plures efficimur, quoties metimur; semen est sanguis christianorum:" the more we are mowed and cut down, the more we grow and multiply: the blood of christians is the seed of the church. St. Austain saith of the persecuted christians, "Cœdebantur, torquebantur, urebantur, laniabantur, trucidabantur, et multiplicabantur:" they were beaten, tortured, burned, torn, killed, and yet they were multiplied. Julian the apostate, learned this from persecution under Dioclesian, and upon that account he abstained for a time from exercising torments and bloody cruelties upon christians, because he saw that the christians by patient suffering were multiplied and became more glorious in the eyes of the people. Antichrist hath shed a great deal of precious blood, and the witnesses of the pure religion have been slain under him, yet hath the evangelical truth remained, and the witnesses, which were slain, have from time to time revived and stood up in illustrious successors, who have held forth the same truth, and spoke in the same spirit and power, as those before them had done. When after the Parisian massacre there happened to be a great serenity in heaven, and a barberry-tree blossoming in a time unusual, some papists said, "That the thing was grateful to God, as if heaven and earth had rejoiced at it:" but the protestants took it as a sign, that the church should revive and flourish again, like the bush that burned, and was not consumed. The true church, which is founded in Christ's blood, is not propagated or multiplied by martial arms, but by patient sufferings: this is the true way to do good to the church, and to continue the gospel among us; if we are indeed in a posture for suffering, and ready to seal up the truth with our blood, we may comfortly hope, that, whatever sufferings come, the gospel and gracious presence of God shall not finally depart from our nation.

3. Pious sufferers do give an evident token to the persecutor, that the wrath of God will come upon him. When the emperor Commodus was worshipping Jupiter, Vincentius, Eusebius, Peregrinus, and Potentianus, went about and exhorted the people to depart from the worship of devils, and honour the one only true God, lest they perished with Commodus; and soon after they suffered martyrdom for the same thing. Though all the martyrs did not in words warn the persecutors that the wrath of God would come upon them, yet they all by their patient suffering gave them an evident token of it. St. Paul exhorts the Philippians to patient suffering upon this account; "Stand fast," saith he, "in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God," (Phil. 1:27, 28). The persecutor comes with his torments and engines of cruelty, to terrify the martyr; but the martyr, by his christian patience and courage, gives the persecutor an evident token that the wrath of God will come down upon him at last. If bloody persecutors, who look upon the suffering martyrs, had but their eyes open, they would see cause enough to reflect upon themselves, and say, Surely these men have a patience more than human, and therefore they suffer for God; and, if so, we in persecuting them fight against him, and may expect that his wrath should come down upon us, as it hath upon former persecutors. Herod Agrippa was eaten up of worms; Nero, with a trembling hand, cut his own throat; Trajan was thought to have poisoned himself; upon the persecution, in the time of Antoninus Verus, there followed wars, earthquakes, inundations, pestilences, as so many tokens of divine vengeance; Decius was slain, together with his children; Dioclesian died of fearful and miserable diseases; Julian, in the Persian war, was mortally wounded by an arrow from heaven, and threw up his blood thither with that horrible blasphemy, "Vicisti Galilæe;" Valens, in his war against the Goths, was wounded; and, flying into a cottage, was burnt with it by the enemy. The temporal judgments that have befallen former persecutors, tell the after-ones what they may look for here in this world; or, if they might escape here, eternal vengeance will surely meet them hereafter. Our Saviour

Christ will at the great day bid those that did not feed, clothe, and visit him, in his members, "Depart into everlasting fire," (Matt. 25:41); much more will he say so to those that imprison, torment, and kill him in his members. When Henry the Second of France, in his running a tilt, received a fatal wound in his eye; he looked to the prison, where the poor protestants were shut up as captives for their religion, and often uttered these words: That he was afraid that he had done the poor innocent men wrong. Conscience then told him what it was to persecute. Oh! that such things as these might stop persecutors in their bloody ways, as the thunderbolt falling near the emperor Aurelianus did him in his intended persecution of the christians. The patience of those that suffer under their cruel bands, tell them that the wrath of God will fall upon them at last. I conclude with that of St Cyprian; "Quanto major persecutio, tanto gravior pro persecutione vindicta," The greater the persecution is, the heavier will be the vengeance for it.

4. Pious sufferers are happy here and hereafter. They are happy here upon a double account.

1. They give the highest proof of their sincerity that can be given. Abraham gave a great proof of his sincerity in leaving his country, and a greater in offering up his only son, Isaac, at God's command; but I take it, the martyr gives a higher proof of it than is done in either of those, it being more to part with all the world, than to part with our country; and to offer up ourselves to God, than to offer up a son. The highest proof of grace is in suffering. That faith must be right that endures the fiery furnace; that love must be pure, that practically lifts up God above all other things; that hope must be lively that lets go a present world for a future one; that obedience must be glorious that continues unto the death. The martyr hath a fair prospect, with a comfortable sight of his own uprightness; conscience gives an euge to his graces and sufferings; nay, the Holy Spirit is as a seal and earnest of his heavenly inheritance; "It bears witness with his spirit, that he is a son and heir of God."

2. As they give the highest proof of their sincerity, so they have the gracious presence of God in the most eminent way with them. All his glorious attributes do, as it were, pitch their tents round about them, and put forth their virtues in a gracious manner for their good. His power rests upon them to bear them up, how weak soever, in the fiery trial; his wisdom directs them how to carry themselves under the cross; his mercy melts over them, while they are under man's cruelty; his love is shed abroad in their heart while they bear the world's hatred: the presence of God will be to them instead of, nay, infinitely more than all other comforts. They may say, "If God be for us, who can be against us, (Rom. 8:31). Why? Devils can, wicked men can; but Aquinas expounds the words, *Quis contra nos læsive et prevalenter?* "Who can be against us to hurt us and prevail over us?" That which is of God, cannot be overthrown; they may break out with St. Paul, in that gallant triumph, *πέπεισμαι*, "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 in Christ." (Rom. 8:38, 39). What St. Bernard saith of the church, is true of them, a noble part of it; *Nec verbositate philosophorum, nec cavillationibus hæreticorum, nec gladiis persecutorum potuit illa separari à charitate Dei, quæ est in Christo:* "They cannot be separated from the love of God in Christ, neither by the words of philosophers, nor by the cavils of heretics, nor yet by the swords of persecutors: God is in the midst of them, and they shall not be moved."

Again: They are happy hereafter, and this stands in two things:

1. They are freed from all evils. In heaven they shall have no corruption within, nor oppression without; no noise of passion in the heart, nor rout of turbulent persecutors to disquiet them; the will of the flesh shall have a total circumcision; the infirmities of the body shall have a perfect cure; the serpent cannot hiss in paradise; no temptations or miseries can fasten on a saint in glory. There is day without night, love without fear, joy without sorrow, life without

death, all happiness without the least mixture of evil. There the blessed martyrs shall be freed from all their troubles and miseries.

2. They are endowed with all good and happiness, The promises made to the overcomer in the Revelation of St. John, shall be made good to them; they shall eat of the tree of life in a blessed immortality; they shall have the white stone in a perfect absolution; they shall be clothed in robes of glory; they shall be pillars in the heavenly temple, standing there as ornaments in an immoveable felicity; they shall sit down with Christ in his throne, and judge their enemies that condemned them; they shall inherit all things; they that lost all for God shall inherit all in him who is goodness itself, and the fountain of it; they shall see him who is the original and crystal ocean of all truth; they shall enjoy Him who is the supreme good and sabbath of souls; they shall be swallowed up in the joy of infinite truth and goodness; and their happiness shall not be for a time, but run parallel with eternity itself; they shall be for ever in the Lord in the blessed region. There, as St. Austin hath it, God who is all in all, *Sine fine videbitur, sine fastidio amabitur, sine fatigatione laudnbitur*: "Shall be seen without end, loved without disdain, and praised without weariness." In the next world there will be a vast difference between persecutors and sufferers. The pride and cruelty of the one will be paid for in torments and endless misery in the prison of hell; and the patience and suffering of the other will be returned in joys and eternal felicity in the blessed heaven.

MONERGISM BOOKS

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