

BOOK III.

For the Use of the Sick.

Morning Prayer of a Sick Person.

EXHORTATION.

As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice. *Ps. 55, 16, 17.*

Although God permits a person to become sick, He does not on that account want him to cease praying; on the contrary, He wants him to pray the more eagerly. Yea, in proportion as the sickness grows more severe, prayer ought to become more fervent, as in the instance of Christ, according to the testimony of Luke, chap. 22, 44: "And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly."

Now, if God has cast any one on a sick-bed, he should (1) at the dawn of day promptly lift up his heart to God and praise Him for the protection afforded during the night. If the night was sad and restless, He should call upon God for alleviation; if the night was quiet and tolerable, he should thank God for it. Having thus directed his heart to God in the morning, he should (2) bring before Him his petition and commit himself for the day to the protection and guardian care of God, diligently think of God, and patiently suffer what God sends him.

(3) At the same time he should bear in mind that Jesus is with him also on his sick-bed, there to comfort and sustain him, yea, to teach and instruct him. Perhaps the sick person, while in health, was not diligent in attending church or devout in prayer; of this fault God wishes to remind him, in order that he may pray the more fervently now, and perceive that he lacks comfort and edification because he has not gathered a supply and goodly store of comforting passages and prayers in his days of prosperity. But if he has been a lover of God and His Word, God wishes to show him by means of his sickness how he is to reduce to practise what he has heard regarding patience, trust in God, resignation, and submission under the will of God.

PRAYER.

O holy Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, at the break of day I come before Thy most holy throne and thank Thee that once more Thou hast let me live to see this day. Thou knowest, Lord, how I have passed the night on my sick-bed. Still I cannot sufficiently praise Thy goodness for having again permitted me to see the light of the sun and made all pain and discomfort to pass away. O Thou God of love, I thank Thee for Thy protection and help. Thine eye has watched over me this night; Thy hand has covered me; Thy grace has sustained me. O my God, the sun is rising again; let Thy grace also rise anew upon me. Give me this day new strength, new grace, and new patience to bear my affliction willingly.

O Lord, my God, it has pleased Thee to cast me upon this sick-bed. So be it; I will remain on it as long as it pleases Thee. Perhaps it is Thy design to separate me from my habitual sins and my ordinary labor, in order that Thou mayest speak with me in private, and teach and instruct me how to care for my soul. Now I have time to examine my past life, and to see whether I have served Thee, honored Thee, obeyed Thee, in order that I may mourn over it, feel ashamed in Thy presence, and sincerely repent, and that I may enter into a covenant with Thee, and thus work out my salvation with fear and trembling.

Grant, O Jesus, that throughout this day I may have my heart close to Thee, pray fervently, reflect upon Thy wounds, Thy blood, and Thy death, and consider the true salvation and eternal happiness

of my soul. O my God, whisper into my heart one beautiful text after the other that can bring me comfort, assure me of Thy fatherly love, seal Thy grace to me, and certify to me Thy speedy help.

Preserve me this day from sudden accidents, new pains, hours of sadness, and all sorts of suffering. Refresh me when I am faint; strengthen me by Thy Holy Spirit in my weakness. But if it is Thy will that I should endure pain and suffering this day, then abide with me and do not part from me. Help me to close this day in a happy and blessed state of mind, and to accept whatever Thou mayest lay upon me with resignation and quiet courage. Behold, my God, here I am; do with me as it pleases Thee. Thou art my Father, I am Thy child; Thou canst preserve my life and gladden me with Thy help. At eventide I will thank Thee for Thy goodness and with all my heart praise Thy mercy for all that Thou hast done for me.

Wholly to Thy blest protection I commit my heart and mind. Mighty God, to Thy direction Wholly may I be resigned. Lord, my Shield, my Light divine, O accept and own me Thine! Lord, to me Thine angel sending, Keep me from the subtle foe; From his craft and might defending, Never let Thy wand'rer go, Till my final rest shall come, And Thine angel bear me home. Amen.

HYMN.

What can it mean? Is it aught to Him
That the nights are long and the days are dim?
Can He be touched by the griefs I bear,
Which sadden the heart and whiten the hair?
Around His throne are eternal calms,
And strong, glad music of happy psalms,
And bliss unruffled by any strife,
How can He care for my little life?

And yet I want Him to care for me
While I live in this world where the sorrows be.
When the lights die down from the path I take,
When strength is feeble and friends forsake.
When love and music that once did bless
Have left me to silence and loneliness,
And my life-song changes to sobbing prayers,
Then my heart cries out for a God who cares.

When shadows hang o'er me the whole day long
And my spirit is bowed with shame and wrong;
When I am not good, and the deeper shade
Of conscious sin makes my heart afraid,
And the busy world has too much to do
To stay in its course to help me through,
And I long for a Savior — can it be
That the God of the universe cares for me?

O wonderful story of deathless love!
Each child is dear to that heart above.
He fights for me when I cannot fight,
He comforts me in the gloom of night,
He lifts the burden, for He is strong,
He stills the sigh and awakens the song;
The sorrow that bowed me down He bears,
And loves and pardons because He cares.

Let all who are sad take heart again;
We are not alone in our hours of pain;
Our Father stoops from His throne above
To soothe and quiet us with His love;
He leaves us not when the storm is high
And we have safety, for He is nigh.
Can it be trouble which He doth share?
O rest in peace, for the Lord does care!

Evening Prayer of a Sick Person.

EXHORTATION.

I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. *Ps. 77, 1—3.*

When a person ponders the thousand different accidents with which he may meet by day as well as by night, he surely ought never to rise or retire without commending himself, body and soul, to the mighty protection of his gracious God. A sick person in particular should do this. If God has helped him on his sick-bed through the day, he should (1) thank God for His gracious aid. If God has blessed the medicine, if He has made the suffering tolerable through the day, the patient should heartily thank Him for it. At the same time he should ask forgiveness if he has sinned against God by murmuring and impatience. When night approaches, which sick persons in particular dread, he should (2) come before God again with his prayer and beseech Him graciously to ward off every calamity, every dangerous and painful accident.

Having thus commended himself, body and soul, to God, he should (3) not doubt that the Triune God will be his light and the strength of his life also during the night, will keep guard at his bedside, tend and keep him, and for the sake of Jesus' blood and death forgive him his sins and be gracious to him. Even if it be appointed unto him to die during the night, the Triune God will enfold him with His gracious presence, and cause his soul to be conducted to heaven by His holy angels. With such good thoughts the sick person should consign himself entirely to the divine wisdom, love, and grace.

PRAYER.

O merciful God, I have lived through another day. O Lord, Lord, according to Thy goodness Thou hast spared my life until this hour; my heart shall praise and thank Thee for Thy fatherly faithfulness. Especially do I praise Thy name because

Thou hast helped me bear my pain and sickness this day. O Lord, Thou layest burdens upon us, but Thou also helpest us to bear them. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death. Though the Lord cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. The Lord is gracious, good, and kind to all who call upon Him. He delivereth the needy when he crieth, and hideth not Himself from his supplication.

O mighty God, it is turning night, the evening is at hand. Therefore I turn to Thee in prayer, saying: O my Father, abide with me and do not depart from me this night! Yea, give Thine angel charge that he come and keep guard over us, Thine own, and send us the heavenly watchmen that we may be secure from Satan. Thus we shall sleep in Thy name while the angels are with us, and shall bless Thee, the Holy Trinity, forevermore. Ward off from me this night all dangerous and sudden accidents, soothe my pains, guard me against terror, fright, and calamity. O heavenly Father, do remain with Thy sick child; for if Thou dost grant me Thy gracious presence, I am not afraid. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? O Jesus, the sun is setting and departing from us; but do not Thou depart from us, O Sun of Righteousness. O my Jesus, fold me in Thine arms this night. Let Thy left hand be under my head, and let Thy right hand cover me. Grant that I may fall asleep thinking of Thee, and sleeping delight myself in the blood which Thou didst shed for me. Let me rejoice in Thy wounds and find in

them consolation, forgiveness of sins, and refreshing for my soul. O precious Holy Ghost, all, except a few, are leaving me; but do Thou, O Comfort of the afflicted and Succor of the distressed, remain with me; strengthen me, keep me in true faith and Christian patience. O Holy Trinity, grant me Thy protection. The Lord bless me and keep me; the Lord make His face shine upon me and be gracious unto me; the Lord lift up His countenance upon me and give me peace.

Should this night prove the last for me In this dark vale of tears,
Then lead me, Lord, in heaven to Thee And my elect compeers.
And thus I live and die to Thee, Strong Lord of Hosts, indeed!
In life and death Thou helpst me From every fear and need. Amen.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

Cross of Christ, my Refuge!
Cross of Christ, my Peace!
As the nights grow longer,
As the days decrease,
Draw me closer, closer,
Till temptations cease.

Be my one Companion,
Be my only Guide,
Be my Strength in weakness
When the flesh is tried;
Shield me from the tempter,
Turn the world aside.

Let Thy tender shadow
Fall across my way,
Hiding all my footsteps,
Stumbling or astray;
On the path before me
Shed a cheering ray.

The Sick Person Prays God for Patience.

EXHORTATION.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. *Ps. 42, 11.*

“Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise,” we read Heb. 10, 36. And surely, whoever would do the will of God must not be obstinate and self-willed, but patient and resigned. To patience, however, the sick person should be moved especially (1) by the example of Christ, who in the greatest pains did not open His mouth, but was like a lamb. Accordingly, if we would be like Him in glory, we must also suffer patiently as He did.

The sick person (2) should consider that his sickness is sent him in accordance with God’s will; for without the will of God not a sparrow can fall upon the earth, not a hair can fall from our head; how much less can such a heavy burden and sickness be laid upon us without God! To patience the sick person should (3) be moved by God’s love and omnipotence. What God lays upon us He can also remove; if He speaks one word, the sick become well again. (4) The sick person should consider that by his sins he has deserved much severer afflictions and greater pains. Accordingly, instead of yielding to impatience, he should rather humble himself in true repentance and faith before God, and implore His mercy. (5) The sick person should reflect that impatience does not lighten the cross, but makes it heavier. Yea, God has promised that He will help us bear the cross which He has laid upon us. He will with the temptation also make a way to escape that we may be able to bear it.

PRAYER.

Merciful God, gracious Father, behold, a poor human being, I am lying here on my sick-bed, and cannot move from it. But I come to Thee and appear before Thy lofty throne. Alas, it has pleased Thee in Thy fatherly goodness to afflict me with this suffering and to send me this sickness in the place of health which I enjoyed hitherto. Now therefore,

my God and Father, let Thy will be done. Give me patience that I may bear all without murmuring and without rebelling. God oft gave me days of gladness, Shall I grieve If He give Seasons, too, of sadness? God is good, and tempers ever Every hurt; Me desert Wholly can He never. Since I have received good at Thy hands, since I have often been refreshed and gladdened by Thee in days of health, I will also by Thy power accept in patience these days of sickness and suffering, and will humbly recall to my mind how many happy hours of health I have enjoyed in my life, in comparison with which these few hours of suffering are to be esteemed lightly, yea, as nothing.

I know, my God, that Thou art kind and gracious; therefore Thou wilt not lay upon me more than I can bear. I cling to Thy Word, which says: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." My God, Thou also knowest full well my ability and my weakness; therefore Thou wilt adjust my suffering to my strength. Behold Thy weak and sick child, and deal with me according to Thy fatherly love. I do not refuse to suffer because I know that Thou dost not harbor thoughts of evil against me, and because suffering is to serve for my sanctification. My God, here I am; do with me as Thou wilt. Give me to understand rightly Thy holy counsel: that this sickness is to be fire that is to consume and take away the impurities which still are in my soul, and to purify me; that it is to be a bell rousing me to repentance, that I may think of my sins and feel heartily sorry

for them; that it is to be a bell calling me to prayer, that I may seek forgiveness for all my transgressions for Jesus' sake, for the sake of His blood and death; yea, that it is to be a voice summoning me: Set thy house in order; think of thy death and thy grave; prepare for eternity!

Be it so; make me ready, then, and prepared, as Thou wouldst have me to be yonder in eternity. For I know that after the sufferings of this present time there shall follow an eternal and exceeding great weight of glory. Therefore be still, my soul; why art thou cast down and disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; yea, hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God.

Whate'er God will, let that be done; His will is ever wisest; His grace will all thy hope outrun Who to that faith arisest. The gracious Lord Will help afford, He chastens with forbearing; Who God believes, And to Him cleaves, Shall not be left despairing. My God is my sure Confidence, My Hope, and my Existence; His counsel is beyond my sense, Yet I'll not make resistance, His Word declares The very hairs Upon my head are numbered; His mercy large Holds me in charge With care that never slumbered. Amen.

HYMN.

Not always can I feel the Savior's guiding,
Nor hear Him speaking words of cheer the while;
Not always does the sunlight seem abiding
As when I see His tender, loving smile.
But some bright day when I from earth shall sever,
That wondrous smile on me shall then abide;
And then from out His presence, wand'ring never —
"I shall be satisfied."

Sometimes how rough the way, dark shadows bending
Above my weary head as on I go,
Life's toilsome journeys slowly, sadly wending,
The throes of grief encompass me below,

A little while my heart with pain shall quiver,
 A little while by sterile woe be tried,
 When I awake beyond the silent river —
 "I shall be satisfied."

All doubt at rest, all mournful discord banished,
 All trivial strife and disappointment o'er;
 With those beloved, long from earth's fireside vanished,
 Safe in the Father's Home forevermore,
 Tempted no more on worldly crowns to ponder,
 And to forget Him who for me hath died.
 If I behold Him in the light up yonder —
 "I shall be satisfied."

The Sick Person Prays for God's Assistance.

EXHORTATION.

Behold, God is mine Helper; the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. *Ps. 54, 4.*

It is a great comfort in times of suffering and in misfortune to have a good friend who aids us. Now it may happen that a person in distress, or a stranger, or a needy person has no one to aid him and say to him, How are you? Still, we Christians know for a certainty that God will come to the assistance of all who are in distress. For (1) God has promised help and grace to all His children; therefore a sick person should not lose heart when he sees that all men forsake him, that no one is concerned about him, and should firmly believe that God will not forsake him, but will send him help and deliverance at the right time.

(2) When a sick person has good friends and is not without means, but finds that these avail him nothing, he should still not lose courage or doubt the divine promises, but be assured that in all his gloomy hours of grief God will be near him to aid him.

(3) The sick person will become aware of the divine help either when his life is spared, or his pains become endurable, or he receives strength from God to endure even the severest suffering. Yea, God is faithful; He is often near us when we imagine Him far from us.

PRAYER.

O faithful God, Thou beholdest me now in a wretched and sad condition. My strength is failing, my body is wasting away, and the burden of my cross weighs upon me more heavily. Lord, O Lord, my God, who hearest my supplications and to whom my affliction is not unknown, I pray Thee fervently, do abide with me, and do not forsake me! I appeal to Thy promises in which Thou hast said assuringly to me: "Fear not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." And again: "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." O my God, upon this word of Thine I rely.

I need Thy aid greatly; I cannot endure my affliction unless Thou abidest with me and wilt help me bear it. Unless Thy hand sustain me, I shall soon be choked and crushed by my sickness. Remember that I was formed from the dust; how soon will this earthly mold of my body be broken; how quickly I am sinking; how fast my life is ebbing away; how soon all will be over with me, unless Thy divine power and Thy fatherly hand support me, and Thou wilt come to my aid according to Thy mercy and gracious promise! Thy succor is a great comfort to me; for if Thou art with me, O my God, I am not afraid. If it is a comfort to me when some of my good friends not only are about me during the day, but also watch with me during the night, how much more comforting is it to me if Thou, O my God, art with me! Men may pity me and sympathize with me, but if Thou art with me, I have the

best Helper, Deliverer, and Physician at my side. Thy most holy presence will refresh and sustain me, soothe my pains, and quiet my anguish.

Oh, then, do not forsake me, nor withdraw Thine hand from me, O God of my salvation. If a loving mother does not quit her sick child, neither wilt Thou, O my God, depart from me. Let me feel Thy gracious presence by an inward joy, by some comforting passage of Scripture that strengthens me, by some sweet thought. Comfort me in my suffering as one is comforted by his mother. O my God, make my faith firm, sustain my strength, help me to fight and overcome. By Thy help I become strong in weakness. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

O Lord, I love Thee from my heart; I pray Thee, ne'er from me depart, With tender mercy cheer me; I scorn the richest earthly lot, E'en heav'n and earth attract me not, If only Thou be near me. Yea, though my heart be like to break, Thou shalt my Trust that naught can shake, My Portion and my Comfort be, Who by Thy blood hast purchased me, Lord, Jesus Christ! My God and Lord, my God and Lord! Forsake me not who trusts Thy Word. Amen.

HYMN.

I look to Thee in every need, and never look in vain;
 I feel Thy strong and tender love, and all is well again.
 The thought of Thee is mightier far
 Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

Discouraged in the work of life, disheartened by its load,
 Shamed by its failures or its fears, I sink beside the road;
 But let me only think of Thee,
 And then new heart springs up in me.

Thy calmness bends serene above my restlessness to still;
 Around me flows Thy quickening life to nerve my faltering will;
 Thy presence fills my solitude,
 Thy providence turns all to good.

The Sick Person Calls to Mind that He Is Human and Mortal.

EXHORTATION.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. *Job 14, 1, 2.*

Although all men are mortal, although men die and are buried every day, still the majority of them never reflect upon their mortality, especially in their days of health and prosperity. Therefore God must remind them occasionally that they will have to die. This He does by means of sickness; for when He causes the healthy to grow weak, the beautiful roses to wilt, giants to become faint by sickness, it is then that they become aware of their transitory condition.

Accordingly, sincere Christians should (1) reflect upon their mortality every day when they undress and put on their night-clothes; they should then say in their heart: Thus I will also be undressed and wrapped in my shroud, when I have died. However, when God afflicts a person with sickness, he should again call to mind his approaching death. It is a delusion of Satan when people imagine that they will not die, if they do not think of death; for whether we think of it or not, our end comes whenever it pleases God. But he has a more blessed departure who prepares for dying in peace. A person should (2) remind himself of his mortality by thinking of his ancestors and friends who have died, and should believe that some time his turn, too, will come. Therefore, blessed is he who (3) apprehends Jesus Christ by faith while reflecting upon his mortality, and who continues until death in a Christian and godly life. He will not die when he dies, but will reach the end of his faith, namely, the salvation of his soul.

PRAYER.

My God, it has pleased Thee in accordance with Thy holy counsel and will to lay me upon this sick-bed, and thus, not only to draw me away from my business, my sins, and sinful habits, and to call me to sincere repentance, but also to remind me that I am a mortal and must die. Behold, Thou hast

made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee; verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

My God, since sickness is a forerunner of death, I am strongly reminded that I am a human being and mortal. I am dust, and must return to dust. Accordingly, I look upon my open grave as upon a mother's lap in which Thou wilt let me calmly rest and sleep. I know also that it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment. For this reason I have often prayed in my days of health: O Lord, make me to know mine end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. I know also that I must leave everything, my property and estate, my honor and fortune, and all that I possess in this world. I have here no continuing city, but I seek one to come.

If it is Thy intention now by this sickness to remind me of my end, as Thou didst remind King Hezekiah, and to call to me as to him: Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live; oh, then grant that I may reflect cheerfully upon my mortality and my end. Let me dwell on such thoughts as these: Ah, perhaps I shall not quit this bed, and this may be the last year of my life. Perhaps this sickness is to indicate to me that the days of my life, which Thou hast written in Thy book, are past, in order that I may prepare to die in peace by prayer, repentance and faith, and an honest inquiry into the life which I have spent hitherto. Yea, make me understand, O my God, that I do not have to die because I have prepared for dying in peace, but that I am to be drawn away from the world and

from sin by such preparation, and that my life, spirit, and soul become consecrated to Thee by it; yea, that for this very purpose Thou hast sent this sickness to me, that I may thus prove and examine myself, turn from sin, prepare myself, die unto the world, and live in Thee. Behold, my God, here I am; receive my soul, but first prepare me well here in time, in order that at my dying I may be found in Thy grace and die in peace.

The time has come when, at His will, My life in this world ceases; I think upon it, and am still, Let come whate'er He pleases. To Him I trust My soul, my dust, When flesh and spirit sever, The Christ we sing Has plucked the sting Away from death forever. Amen.

HYMN.

When my last hour is close at hand,
And I must hence betake me,
Lord Jesus Christ, beside me stand,
Nor let Thy help forsake me;
To Thy blest hands I now commend
My soul, at this my earthly end,
And Thou wilt safely keep it.

My sins, dear Lord, disturb me sore,
My conscience cannot slumber;
But though as sands upon the shore
My sins may be in number,
I will not quail, but think of Thee;
Thy death, Thy sorrow, borne for me,
Thy suff'rings shall uphold me.

I have been grafted in the Vine,
And hence my comfort borrow,
For Thou wilt surely keep me Thine
Through fear, and pain, and sorrow;
Yea, though I die, I die to Thee,
Who through Thy death hast won for me
The right to life eternal.

Since Thou from death didst rise again,
 In death Thou wilt not leave me;
 Lord, Thy ascension soothes my pain,
 No fear of death shall grieve me;
 For Thou wilt have me where Thou art,
 And so with joy I can depart
 To be with Thee forever.

And so I stretch mine arms to Thee,
 And gladly hence betake me;
 Peaceful and calm my sleep shall be,
 No human voice can wake me.
 But Christ is with me through the strife,
 And He will bear me into life,
 And open heav'n before me.

The Sick Person Resigns Himself to the Will of God, to Live or Die.

EXHORTATION.

And Jesus went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. *Matt. 26, 39.*

“God’s will is always the best,” we are in the habit of saying. However, when we are to submit to God’s will solely and alone and to be satisfied with what is contrary to our own will, we often feel a great repugnance to this. Accordingly, a person whom God has laid on his sick-bed should (1) reflect that it is by God’s will that he is in such a condition. Therefore he should beware of impatience; otherwise he would show that he is not satisfied with God’s will. (2) He should look at the example of Jesus Christ, who said in spite of His greatest sufferings and agony which forced from Him sweat that was like drops of blood: Father, not My will, but Thine, be done! Such resignation and submission to His will is well-pleasing to God and a mark of His children.

Yea, (3) even if a person were to resist God’s will constantly, he would not achieve anything; if God has decreed that we shall not rise from our sick-bed, we shall not prevent this by our

obstinaey, but the counsel and will of the Lord will be executed upon us nevertheless. Therefore, (4) it is best of all for a sick person to say: Behold, Lord, here I am; do unto me as it seems good to Thee. I am willing to live longer, if such is Thy pleasure; I am also glad to die, if that is Thy will.

PRAYER.

O gracious, kind, and merciful God, I come now before Thy most holy throne with my prayer and sighing, though my body is confined to my sick-bed. I see, O my God, that it is Thy will that I should lie sick and be deprived for a season of the precious gift of health. Be it so; since such is Thy will, it shall be mine also. If this pleases Thee, I, too, shall be pleased. Thy will and mine shall be but one will. I was born in accordance with Thy will; I am also willing to die whenever it pleases Thee. According to Thy will I have enjoyed good health a long time; in accordance with Thy good pleasure I am now willing to be sick as long as Thou shalt deem it profitable and good for my soul. Yea, my God, even if I could regain my health contrary to Thy will, I would not choose that, but would rather fulfil Thy gracious counsel upon my sick-bed.

In my present condition, therefore, I shall say with my Jesus: Father, not my will, but Thine, be done. If I am to live longer in this world, I shall continue praising Thee; yea, the years which Thou wilt add to my life I shall spend to Thy glory and in true godliness. But if it is Thy pleasure that I shall not rise from this bed, but shall die of this sickness, prepare me for dying in peace. I know that my earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved some time; but I know also that Thou hast prepared for those that believe in Thee a house

not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In heaven is my heritage, my fatherland, my citizenship. Shall I not be glad to enter upon my inheritance, to hasten to my fatherland, and to enjoy the glory of the children of God? Though I have reason to pray that my life may be prolonged and preserved, still I am in a sore strait by this other question, whether it would not be better to be loosed from my body and to be with Christ, to behold my Jesus, whom I loved when as yet I had not seen Him. Therefore, my God, I leave all to Thee; Thou knowest best what is salutary for me. Behold, here I am; do with me, O Lord, according to Thy good pleasure.

Lord, as Thou wilt, deal Thou with me, No other wish I cherish; In life and death I cling to Thee, O Lord, let me not perish! Let but Thy grace ne'er from me part, Else as Thou wilt; grant patient heart: Thy will the best is ever. Amen.

HYMN.

Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
 However dark it be!
 Lead me by Thine own hand,
 Choose Thou my path for me.
 I dare not choose my lot:
 I would not, if I might.
 Choose Thou for me, my God,
 So shall I walk aright.

The kingdom that I seek
 Is Thine; so let the way
 That leads to it be Thine,
 Else I must surely stray.
 Take Thou my cup, and it
 With joy or sorrow fill
 As best to Thee may seem;
 Choose Thou my good and ill.

Choose Thou for me my friends,
 My sickness or my health;
 Choose Thou my cares for me,
 My poverty or wealth.
 Not mine, not mine, the choice,
 In things or great or small;
 Be Thou my Guide, my Strength,
 My Wisdom and my All.

The Sick Person Realizes that the Cross and Affliction Come from God.

EXHORTATION.

The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. *1 Sam. 2, 6.*

God is Love; He loves men fervently. Every day believing Christians receive proofs of His love by the gracious help and the blessings which come to them from His hand. They also behold it in His great works of love, creation, redemption, and sanctification. But if God is Love, it affords a great comfort to a sick person when he says to himself: (1) My affliction does not come from an enemy who hates me, but from a God who loves me. It comes from a Father who since the days of my youth has furnished me help in many dangers and accidents.

If this fact is firmly established in the soul, then there follows from it (2) a glorious comfort: The Father never intends evil for His child; the Lover of men has retained a heart abounding in love even in the afflictions which He sends the child. In view of these facts the sick person (3) should take heart in reliance upon God; he should diligently call upon God and pray. He should lay his weary head in God's lap, look up to heaven with joy and cheerful courage, and say to himself: Though a heavy cross I'm bearing, And my heart Feels the smart, Shall I be despairing? God can help me who doth send it, He doth know All my woe, And how best to end it. Especially should he (4) not permit himself to be led astray by the severity of his sickness, his great pains, and his seeming danger; for here again this comfort-

ing reflection is well grounded: God lays upon us our crosses, but He daily bears our burdens. He that is our God is the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. Ps. 68, 20.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, who art merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; who forgivest iniquity, transgression, and sin; who dost not keep Thine anger forever, but lookest upon the afflicted and raisest up them that are bowed down: behold, I, a poor mortal, lie here before Thee and pray: Oh, look upon me from Thy exalted throne and hear me! I know and believe that my affliction and tribulation come from Thee. Thy hand wounds, but it also heals; it makes sore, but it also binds up.

But since my sickness is sent me from heaven, I, in turn, rightly look to heaven for help. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. I have received health, life, and prosperity from Thy hands; why, then, should I not accept this sickness also? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? The trees in the field, in their season, are in full bloom, gloriously adorned with foliage and fruit, basking in the sun and being warmed by its rays. But in winter they look desolate and dead; they have to endure storms and frost; and all this comes from Thee, O God. Therefore I, too, shall bear in mind that this is the time of my suffering and affliction which Thou hast decreed and appointed for me. Yea, as Thou knowest the place of every star, whether it is high or low in the heavens, just so Thou knowest also my present condition.

Thou knowest how heavy my burden is; it is known to Thee how long I have been afflicted; and it is also known to Thee how much strength I have to endure all this.

Oh, then, lay upon me, Thou kind God, as much as Thou wilt; only give me power and strength that I may be able to bear it. I know that without Thy will not a hair can fall from my head, how much less can I become sick without Thy will? If not even a sparrow falls upon the ground without Thy will, how much less can I become subject to pains, discomfort, and sickness, yea, how much less can I die without Thy counsel and will! If my affliction comes from Thee, it comes from my Father; if it comes from my Father, it comes from loving hands and a loving heart, not for my destruction, but for the welfare of my soul.

Correct me, my Father; however, with moderation, lest I be utterly consumed. Send me grief; however, make me also to rejoice in turn. When Thou hidest Thy face from me, make it to shine again. Let Thy face shine upon me, and I shall recover. I will gladly fall into the hands of my Father when I have deserved punishment; for His anger endures but for a moment, and in His favor is life. He will have compassion upon Zion, and be gracious to His child.

My Father! cheering name! O may I call Thee mine! Give me with humble hope to claim A portion so divine. What'er Thy will denies, I calmly would resign; For Thou art just, and good, and wise,— O bend my will to Thine! What'er Thy will ordains, O give me strength to bear; Still let me know a Father reigns, And trust a Father's care. Thy ways are little known To my weak, erring sight; Yet shall my soul, believing, own That all Thy ways are right. Amen.

HYMN.

God would never send you the darkness
 If He felt you could bear the light;
 But you would not cling to His guiding hand
 If the way were always bright;
 And you would not care to walk by faith,
 Could you always walk by sight.

'Tis true, He has many an anguish
 For your sorrowful heart to bear,
 And many a cruel thorn-crown
 For your tired head to wear;
 He knows how few would reach heaven at all
 If pain did not guide them there.

So He sends you the blinding darkness
 And the furnace of sevenfold heat;
 'Tis the only way, believe me,
 To keep you close to His feet;
 For 'tis always so easy to wander
 When our lives are glad and sweet.

Then nestle your hand in your Father's,
 And sing of Him as you go;
 Your song may cheer those around you
 Whose courage is sinking low;
 And, well, if your lips do quiver—
 God will love you better so.

**The Sick Person Realizes the Usefulness
 of His Sickness.**

EXHORTATION.

This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby. *John 11, 4.*

That sicknesses can be of great usefulness natural man refuses to believe; for he says: "Not only is the body made faint, enfeebled, and in peril of death, but its powers, too, are weakened, not to mention other discomforts and the expense connected with sickness." However, notwithstanding all this, sickness has its uses,

sometimes even for the body, inasmuch as not infrequently natural impurities are consumed by it, and a person's health becomes sounder than before.

However, sickness is of glorious usefulness especially to the soul; for (1) by means of it God brings many a person back from his sinful ways. How many a sinner lives unconcerned in his wantonness, regarding neither God nor His Word, and heaping sin upon sin! But by sickness, pain, and suffering God arrests many such persons, as it were, by force recalling them to their senses, so that they are recovered out of the snares of Satan. (2) Sickness, moreover, is of use to the godly; for by it they learn to know the almighty power, goodness, wisdom, love, and mercy of God, all of which they indeed knew well enough before and believed it, but are now first coming to realize.

(3) Besides, after sickness a greater love toward God, greater fervor in prayer, a greater sincerity in their Christian conduct can be observed among the godly. They learn to submit themselves to God, to reflect on death, to prepare for a departure in peace, to think much of heaven, yea, to commend their souls into God's hands. If a sick person bears these things in mind, he will be well satisfied with God even in sickness.

PRAYER.

Dear God and Father, I perceive quite plainly Thy holy counsel concerning me, namely, that this is to be my year of suffering, my week of suffering, yea, my season of suffering, when the sun of my prosperity is to be clouded for a season, my health enfeebled, and my physical strength diminished. I thank Thee, my God, that before visiting me thus Thou hast made me to understand Thy ways, namely, that the way of the cross is also a way to heaven, and that Thou art doing good to our souls in sickness. I see plainly, my God, that Thou wouldst draw me away from the world. Thou wouldst make the world bitter and heaven sweet to me, in order that I may deny ungodliness and

worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; that I may prove and examine my life and turn to Thee by sincere repentance. Indeed, when we are in prosperity and know of no tribulation, we imagine that we are in the world only to amass earthly riches, or to be merry, sin, give entertainments, keep company with the world, and conform to its customs, ways, and manners. But since that would be the ruin of our soul and lead to eternal damnation, Thou art wont, in accordance with Thy faithfulness, occasionally to take us aside from the multitude in order to speak with us alone.

O my God, it seems that Thou wouldst now speak with me alone and tell me that I must beware of the sins, temptations, wickedness, and customs of the world. Thou wouldst persuade me to repent of the sins I have committed, not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, that I may know which is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Well, then, my God, I will do this: if Thou wilt restore me to health, I will become more godly, will pray more zealously, shun evil, renounce my former evil habits, avoid the places where, and the persons with whom, I have sinned, and become a new man. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. If Thou hast seen, my God, that I have also been slothful in my Christian conduct, negligent in prayer, but willing to sin and ready to enjoy the pleasures of the world, Thou wouldst rouse me by this sickness to think of my salvation, and to rise from the sleep of sin. "Awake, thou that sleepest,"

Thou sayest to me, "and I will purify thee from thy former filth."

Ah, I see that Thou wouldst by this sickness remind me of my death, and make me to know my end, in order that upon my recovery I may learn to know and praise Thy almighty power, love, and goodness, all of which would not be done if Thou hadst not visited me thus. O Lord, perform, then, the good work which Thou hast begun in me, for Thy glory and the salvation of my soul. Restore my soul to health by means of this bitter medicine. By these sharp cuts and pains heal the wounds of sin. With this sharp lotion wash away my naughtiness, and grant that I may humble myself before Thee in genuine repentance and living faith, and seek and find help, counsel, comfort, and forgiveness of sin in the wounds of Jesus.

Let heaven to me be ever sweet, And this world bitter let me find,
That I, 'mid all its toil and heat, May keep eternity in mind.
My God, for Jesus' sake I pray Thy peace may bless my dying day. Amen.

HYMN.

O my Father, be my stay
In the dark and cloudy day,
When the sunlight fades, and chill winds
moan.

When all earthly comfort fails,
When no earthly hope avails,
Let me lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

When, oppressed by care and grief,
I am longing for relief,
Ever seeking rest, and finding none,
O my Father, then in love
Every earthly prop remove,
Let me lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

O my Father, be my stay
 In the bright and sunny day,
 When the shades of grief and care have
 flown;

Lest I then forget to bless
 Thee, Source of my happiness,
 Let me lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

By the comfort Thou dost lend,
 By Thy mercies without end,
 Teach me still with grateful heart to own
 'Tis a blessed thing for me
 Thus to feel my need of Thee,
 Thus to lean on Thee, on Thee alone.

The Sick Person Rests His Confidence on the Almighty Power of God.

EXHORTATION.

O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.
 O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; Thou hast
 kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit. *Ps. 30, 2. 3.*

In dangerous situations nothing is more cheering and comforting than to have a good friend of whom one can say: I know he can help me, and he will help me. A sick person may not be able to say this of any human being, but he can be assured that God is such a friend.

A sick person may see the almighty power of God (1) in the examples of others. When he hears, reads, or recalls that God has raised the dead, and has even restored such as were sick unto death, he can confidently conclude: The almighty God, who gave help in those instances, is living still. (2) A sick person may reflect upon the unlimited might of the great God, which is greater than the power of all the kings in the world, yea, of all men. Accordingly, what is impossible with men is possible with God; what is too difficult for us is quite easy for God. (3) A sick person should consider that God does not lack means to help him. At His command the sickness must yield; He can so bless even the paltriest

herb or medicine that it must remove the evil in our sickness and promote our recovery.

When a sick person ponders these facts, he should (4) be quite at peace in God, persevere in prayer, and abide God's hour of deliverance. None the less he should (5) use medicines and remedies which are prescribed for him by his physicians, but should be on his guard against all superstitious practises, such as conjuring and jugglery, and be assured that the Almighty can and will surely help him when His hour is come.

PRAYER.

O my Lord and my God, Thou seest me encompassed with pain and suffering, and that my misery is renewed every morning. My sickness does not yield, and I know not but that this bed shall be my last couch. I commit this to Thy holy will; I am willing to live or to die whenever it pleases Thee. Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; the number of my years are with Thee; Thou hast appointed unto me bounds that I cannot pass. Thou hast recorded in Thy book the number of my days, when as yet there were none of them. Still I do not lose courage on that account, but lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord. I know that Thou art an almighty God, that life and death are in Thy hands; but I know also that Thou canst raise the dead by Thy almighty power, restore men from the most dangerous sicknesses, and alleviate and remove the greatest misery and suffering. Indeed, the Lord's hand is not shortened; the Helper in Israel can reverse every anguish; yea, He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He can deliver all who come to Him.

Therefore, on my present sick-bed I do not look

about me for puny men, nor at myself, for I am sick and miserable; but I look overhead, unto Thee, my God and Lord. I say now with the believing centurion: Lord, speak the word only, and Thy servant shall be healed. Yea, speak the word only, and I shall live; I shall be delivered from all my suffering. I know that with the Lord nothing is impossible. Lord, Thy almighty power is without limit; where is there a God like unto Thee? My God, Thou didst restore sick Hezekiah to health; Thou didst deliver the sick woman from her afflicted condition; Thou didst heal the palsied; Thou didst raise the young man. Graciously look also upon me, Thou mighty Protector of those who believe in Thee; help me also, have compassion on me, show me a token for good. Thou art my Helper and Deliverer; my God, do not tarry. However, do all as it pleases Thee. I know Thou art able by Thy almighty power, and willing by Thy goodness, to do it, if it is good for my soul. Meanwhile I pray to Thee in faith:

In God, my faithful God, I trust when dark my road; Though many woes o'ertake me, Yet He will not forsake me; His love it is doth send them, And when 'tis best will end them. Amen.

HYMN.

Be patient: though the day be wrought
By conflict keen, thy Lord is near,
To keep thee safe, however fraught
By outward stress or inward fear.

Thy Master felt the cruel thorn,
And heavy was the cross He bore,
With trusting faith, if care be worn,
Be patient yet, though heart be sore.

Above life's troubles bends the face
Of Him who ever whispers peace,
And when our souls His will embrace,
The ills of life forever cease.

Till daylight fades, sing thou thy psalm
Within each hour's unrest and care,
And teach thy spirit of the calm,
Which reigns supreme when Christ is there.

Not long to bear the cross, for, lo!
Life's day is speeding toward its close;
Upon the hills the sunset's glow
Doth herald now a blest repose.

A Sick Person Remembers His Baptismal Covenant.

EXHORTATION.

Baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. *1 Pet. 3, 21.*

If any name by which we refer to God is comforting, it is certainly the name *Father*; and if any glory that we can discover in man is great, it is certainly this: to be a child of God. Now, just as we can be cheered by this reflection all our life, we can also derive comfort from it in sickness. A sick person should not let this comfort slip from his heart.

He should reflect: (1) God is an almighty God, with whom nothing is impossible. (2) God is a faithful God, who means well with His children. (3) God is a wise Father, who can turn the bitterest cross into a wholesome medicine for His children. (4) God is a kind and loving Father, who may afflict His children, but has compassion on them again. When the sick person ponders this, he can derive a heartfelt joy from it.

Now, a Christian patient has attained to this glory of being a child of God by Holy Baptism, in which he entered into a covenant with the Triune God. This thought, now, should raise him up and cheer him; however, he should also (1) as a child readily leave all that happens to him to the disposition of his heavenly Father's will and counsel, not murmur against the Father, but

have the confidence that God will prove Himself a faithful Father.

(2) If he has provoked the Father in heaven to anger in his days of health, and has at times lived like a child of the world, he should heartily pray God to forgive him while he is on his sick-bed, resolve upon a genuine change of life, and firmly believe that God will have compassion also on His sick child.

PRAYER.

Lord God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, behold, I, Thy child, find myself in a condition where I know of no further help in all the world. I glance here and there, and inquire for help, but no one comes to my aid. But I shall not lose heart on that account, but rather go to my heavenly Father and pour out my grief before Him. If a sheep in distress hurries to the shepherd, a child to his father, a subject to his king, O my King, O my Father, O my Shepherd, I, too, come to Thee.

O Triune God, do remember that I have been baptized, and that in Baptism I entered into a covenant with Thee. In this covenant Thou didst promise to be my Father, and to provide for me like a father, help me, and act as a Father towards me. Jesus has washed me with His holy blood, and bestowed on me the garment of His perfect righteousness. The Holy Ghost has been poured upon me abundantly, is still crying in my heart, Abba, Father! and gives witness unto my spirit that I am a child of God.

O Triune God, behold, here a poor child is coming to Thee. My father and my mother forsake me; my relatives and friends cannot help me. Therefore, O my heavenly Father, do Thou take me up. If the centurion had compassion on his servant who lay sick unto death; if he was at pains to help him,

O my Father, do Thou also have compassion on me, and help me. As the father whose daughter lay at the point of death followed Jesus and said: "Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live," I, too, my God and Father, follow Thee and say: If it is Thy will, if it is good for me, restore me to health and preserve my life. I know that Thou art an almighty Father, a wise Father, a gracious and loving Father; whither shall the child go in his trouble but to his Father? Lord God the Father in heaven, have compassion on me. Lord God the Son, the Savior of the world, have compassion on me. Lord God the Holy Ghost, have compassion on me. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; oh, have pity on me also!

If I have been a disobedient child, I am sorry for it; though I have forsaken Thee, still I come back. As the father did not deny help to his prodigal son, so do Thou receive me again into Thy grace; for I come to Thee penitent and believing and say: Have mercy, have mercy on me, O God, my Redeemer. If Thou shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

Thus trusting in Thee, my Father, I am waiting for Thy help. I have already realized that I can well be a child of God and at the same time be sick, miserable, and burdened with many a cross. Accordingly, Satan shall not easily shake me in my childlike confidence. Only let me soon behold Thy fatherly heart, and know that Thou hast not forgotten me. Let me feel the touch of Thy fatherly hand.

Be still, my soul! The longest night shall end, God's dawn
the clouds shall rend, And brighter shine, To perfect day, "Unhast-
ing, yet unresting" — Be still, my soul! Be still, my soul, Thy
God is on the throne, His saints strive not alone, Their hour draws
near, His kingdom comes, "Unhasting, yet unresting" — Be still,
my soul! Amen.

HYMN.

Lamb of God, for sinners slain,
By Thy mercy born again,
For Thy guidance still we pray,
Lest from grace we fall away.

By the mystic cleansing flood,
By the Water and the Blood
Washed and sanctified to Thee,
Holy may we ever be.

Aid us with Thy daily grace
Steadfastly to run our race:
Grant us victory in the strife
And the price of endless life.

Praise to Thee from all on earth,
God, who gavest us new birth;
Praise from all the heavenly host,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The Sick Person Takes His Stand on the Blessings of the Triune God.

EXHORTATION.

The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will
preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for-
ever and ever. Amen. *2 Tim. 4, 18.*

Godly Christians can never lack comfort in their affliction and
sickness if they but reflect who they are, and with whom they have
to deal. They are God's children; therefore they should believe
that the Triune God will not forsake them in their misery and
suffering. (1) Their Creator will not forsake them, who has guided

them in their youth, provided for them in the years that followed, and like a father preserved them hitherto. Should God forsake His creatures, the works of His hands? He may hide Himself; but He will not forsake His creature. (2) Neither will their Redeemer, Jesus Christ, forsake them; for He has suffered tortures, anguish, and death for them. Should He who shed His holy blood for them leave them without help in their sickness? O no; He loves them too fervently. (3) Nor will their Sanctifier, the precious Holy Spirit, forsake them. He will comfort, refresh, gladden them, and witness to them that they are the children of God, even though their sickness, suffering, and pains continue.

When a sick person has this threefold comfort in his heart, he will patiently bear his grievous affliction, and firmly believe that his help is not far off. However, (4) he must pray at the same time for the forgiveness of everything that he has done contrary to the Triune God while he was in health. And in such trustful confidence he must patiently and believingly wait for God's gracious help.

PRAYER.

O holy Triune God, though I am now in feeble health, I shall not on that account become weak in my faith and trust in Thee. For they that trust in Thee shall be like Mount Zion: they shall not be moved. As my sickness lingers and grows heavy upon me, my heart is indeed inclined to despondency at times; but I rouse myself again by Thy Holy Spirit, and especially by reviewing Thy past blessings.

Canst Thou forsake me, O my Creator, who hast made me out of nothing and preserved me till this hour? Is the Lord's hand shortened? O no; the hand which has led, guided, strengthened, and sustained me hitherto, will sustain me also in my sickness. Thou hast wooed me with an everlasting love, and hast guided me hitherto by Thy goodness. It is Thy love that has granted me so many days of health.

It is Thy love that has turned away from me misfortune, great sufferings, and dangerous situations. It is Thy love that till this day Thou hast shown me grace, yea, so much grace and mercy. Therefore, I commit myself to Thee also in my sickness. Canst Thou forsake me, my Redeemer, who hast purchased me with Thy holy blood from sin, death, and the devil? Since Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, Thou wilt grant help also to my poor, sick body. Since Thy love has redeemed me from the curse and death, yea, from hell, it can speedily help me also in my sickness. O Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on me in my present suffering. Canst Thou forsake me, O my Sanctifier, who hast sanctified my body and soul, hast consecrated them in Holy Baptism for a temple to Thee, and hast dwelt in them hitherto? Thou wilt surely remain my Helper, yea, my Comforter, also in my sickness, and wilt give witness now to my spirit that I am a child of God, although I am encompassed with suffering and tribulation.

Therefore, I shall be of good cheer in my pains and suffering, and shall say to my soul: The heavenly Father has embraced thee in His everlasting love; the Son of God has chosen thee for His own, His brother and coheir; the Holy Spirit has assured thee of His sweet consolation and of His gracious indwelling. Therefore all is thine: the grace of God is thine; the merit and righteousness of Christ is thine; the strong consolations of the Holy Spirit are thine; yea, thine is heaven with

all its glory. Since this is so, I will not worry about my sick body, but cast my burden upon the Lord, and trust in God who has shown me so many favors. O my Father, I trust in Thee. O Jesus, I flee to Thee. O Holy Spirit, I commit myself to Thee. Lord God Father, what Thou hast created; Lord God Son, what Thou hast redeemed; Lord God Holy Spirit, what Thou hast sanctified, I commend into Thy hands. Praise, honor, and glory be to Thy holy name now and forevermore!

With Thee, Lord, would I cast my lot; My God, my God, forsake me not, For, Lord, I am commending My soul to thee: Deliver me Now and when life is ending. All honor, praise, and majesty To Father, Son, and Spirit be, Our God, forever glorious, In whose rich grace We'll run our race Till we depart victorious. Amen.

HYMN.

Come, my soul, again inquire
 If the love of Christ constrain thee.
 To His cross again retire;
 See Him give Himself to gain thee.
 Search His faithfulness and try Him,
 Glad in Him and gladdened by Him.

See Him there, God's only Son,
 On the tree for thee suspended,
 Crowned with thorns, by grief undone,
 Crimson stains with crimson blended,
 Pierced for thee, transfixed, forsaken:—
 Deathless love by death o'ertaken.

Thou, yea, thou hadst known the rod,
 Endless pain thy sole possession;
 Thou hadst been cast off by God
 For thy multiplied transgression;
 But thy Lord thy cause defended;
 By His grace thou art befriended.

When in mighty woe He died,
 Vengeance ceased, and wrath abated;
 Sinai was satisfied;
 All things old were new-created;
 Sin and death and hell were thwarted;
 Life and health and heaven imparted.

Jesus, grace sufficient give
 That this mind be ever in me:—
 Thine I am; to Thee would live;
 Naught from Thee shall ever win me.
 Thou wilt not forsake nor leave me;
 Let me, Lord, in love receive Thee.

The Sick Person Resolves to Bear His Sufferings without Murmuring.

EXHORTATION.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it.

Ps. 39, 9.

How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? Forever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? — thus pious Christians on their sick-beds often sigh in the words of Ps. 13, 1. They often think that God's hour for helping them is delayed too long. When it does not arrive for days, weeks, and months, many do not refrain from murmuring.

A godly person, however, must never permit matters to come to such a pass with himself; he should bear in mind, (1) that God does not forget nor forsake us in our suffering, sickness, and affliction; for that would be contrary to His promise. Though He delay, wait for His help nevertheless; even His delay is for the good of your soul. (2) Even if the cross should grow heavier during the long delay of God's help, no murmuring should arise on that account, but we should remind ourselves of the almighty power, love, and mercy of God. As the medicine is measured to the patient, and the bitter drops that he is to take are numbered, so, we are to believe, all our crosses are weighed and measured to us; for God is faithful, who will not permit us to be tempted above that we are able. Accordingly, (3) if our suffering is severe and

of many kinds, if it lasts a long time, we should not on that account surrender our confidence, but wait for the hour of help with persistent sighing, prayer, faith, and trust.

PRAYER.

O holy and wise God, I now perceive Thy holy counsel and will with respect to me, that I am to spend these days and weeks, and as long as it pleases Thee, confined to my bed and house. Be it so; I do not oppose Thy holy will; I shall not murmur against Thee, but say: Here I am, Lord; do with me as seemeth good to Thee. The cup which my Father hath given, shall I not drink it? My Father will not pour out poison for me instead of medicine. I will bear the Lord's anger; for I have sinned against Him. Even this bitter suffering cannot but prove salutary to my soul, although my flesh and blood abhor it. Thou hast been my Father and my God from my youth; Thou wilt also remain such now that I am sick.

If I am to lie here and suffer a long time, my God, do not draw out my suffering too long, but give me an occasional hour of respite in which I am rid of my pains and my sufferings are alleviated. If I am to suffer much, give me also much strength; for Thou knowest how weak I am, and that I cannot endure much more. Do not lay hold of me too violently, lest I perish. Thou knowest well how much I can endure, and how frail my life is. I am neither of steel nor stone; the wind passes over me, and I sink and die. Do with me as a mother does with her puny child; help me bear my burden; yea, bear it with me, and take me into Thy arms and bosom. If my suffering is to grow still more severe than it is now, do not depart from me with Thy

gracious help and succor. If I am to pass still more sad nights, let me experience Thy comforting, the comforting assurance that Thou art my God, my Father, and my Friend nevertheless.

I know indeed that when Thou sendest affliction to Thy children, it is not Thy intention to destroy them, but to draw them to Thyself. Draw me therefore, my God, by this sickness away from evil habits, from the lusts of the world, to Thee, to holiness, to godliness, to heaven, and to everlasting salvation. Yes, my God, though Thou makest me to suffer thus, I shall not flee from Thee on that account. My Shepherd, though Thou leadest me a path through thorns which wound my body and soul, I follow Thee willingly. Since the Head wore a crown of thorns, the members must not tread on roses. I loved Thee when Thou gavest me health, happiness, and prosperity; therefore, I will love Thee also in sickness, suffering, and pain. I know that Thou canst help me and wilt help me.

God oft gives me days of gladness, Shall I grieve If He give Seasons, too, of sadness? God is good, and tempers ever Every hurt; Me desert Wholly can He never. Amen.

HYMN.

Thy lesson art thou learning,
 O tried and weary soul?
 His ways art thou discerning
 Who works to make thee whole?
 In the haven of submission
 Art thou satisfied and still?
 Art thou clinging to the Father,
 'Neath the shadow of His will?
 Now, while His arms enfold thee,
 Think well, He loveth best,
 Be still, and He shall mold thee
 For His heritage of rest.

Such silence is communion,
 Such stillness is a shrine;
 The fellowship of suffering
 An ordinance divine
 And the secrets of abiding
 Most fully are declared
 To those who with the Master
 Gethsemane have shared.
 Then trust Him to uphold thee,
 'Mid the shadow and the gloom;
 Be still, and He shall mold thee
 For His presence and His home.

For resurrection stillness
 There is resurrection power;
 And the prayer and praise of trusting
 May glorify each hour;
 And common days are holy
 And years an Eastertide
 For those who with the Risen One
 In risen life abide.
 Then let His true love fold thee,
 Keep silent at His word;
 Be still, and He shall mold thee —
 O rest thee in the Lord

The Sick Person Prepares Himself for Receiving the Lord's Supper.

EXHORTATION.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. *1 Cor. 11, 28.*

Justly every Christian should so live as to be able to die in peace any moment. Now, if a person in health should so conduct himself, how much more a sick person! Accordingly, a sick person (1) does well when at the first attack of the sickness he thinks of his sins and says: "I do remember my faults this day." For since sickness and suffering come on account of sin, and whoever sins

against his Creator is often punished by sickness, the sick person must be concerned about becoming reconciled with God.

(2) This reconciliation takes place when the sick person with tears and in faith beseeches God to forgive his sins, and penitently receives the Lord's Supper. (3) For we must not imagine that we have to die when we receive the Lord's Supper on our sick-bed; it is not a food unto death, but unto life and salvation. But (4) we are to be reminded that repentance and partaking of the Lord's Supper must not be delayed till we are in the throes of death and our reason and strength are gone, but we should take these steps soon and betimes, while we are still in possession of our faculties, while we are still able to pray and become reconciled with God. If a person thus turns to God with his inmost heart, he will live in Him and obtain grace for Christ's sake.

PRAYER.

Lord, Lord God, merciful, kind, and of great faithfulness, I, a poor sinner, have resolved to seek reconciliation with Thee, and to pray Thee from my heart to forgive the sins which I have committed in my lifetime. I will seek grace and pardon for my sins in the wounds of Jesus, and thus prepare for a peaceful departure from this world. It has pleased Thee, my God, to put me on this sick-bed; but since I do not know whether I shall rise from it again restored to health, or die upon it, I will above all care for my soul and commend everything else to Thee, my kind and merciful God. I will seek to be at peace with Thee while I still have my reason, and can remember when I sinned, how often I sinned, and how grievously I sinned. I will ask Thee to forgive while I am still able to pray; for my sickness may increase, and my reason and the powers of my mind leave me, in which event I should not be able to pray to Thee nor to think of Thee.

I know, indeed, that a person who prepares to die does not on that account die sooner, but he procures for himself the greatest benefit by such preparation, namely, this, that if he is restored to health, he will shun the sins of which he was reminded and which he repented of on his sick-bed; and if he dies, he will have the assurance of dying happy and well prepared. These are my thoughts, my God. In order to obtain, and be assured of, the forgiveness of my sins, I desire to partake of the Holy Supper, and then await patiently, cheerfully, and believingly how Thou wilt deal with me. Accordingly, I prostrate myself before Thee in the anguish of my heart and say: Be merciful to Thy child; do not charge against me the sins of my youth and the follies of my early years. O Lord, for Jesus', my Savior's, sake pardon my iniquity, for it is great. O my God, bless my holy purpose with Thy grace; graciously grant that I may receive the Holy Supper unto the assurance that Thou forgivest me all my sins.

With broken heart, and contrite sigh, A trembling sinner,
 Lord, I cry; Thy pard'ning grace is rich and free — O God, be
 merciful to me! I smite upon my troubled breast, With deep and
 conscious guilt oppressed; Christ and His Cross my only plea —
 O God, be merciful to me! Amen.

HYMN.

O Jesus, Bridegroom, Savior, Friend,
 With love for me that hath no end,
 Who by Thy bitter death hast paid
 All debts that to my charge were laid,—
 With downcast eyes and many a fear
 Thy call has led me to draw near,
 Wretched and weak and poor and blind,
 In Thee my last resort to find.

O Great Physician, heal this soul;
 Touch every wound; Lord, make me whole;
 Bestow Thy saving grace to-day,
 Wash every stain of sin away.

O Thou blest Master of the feast,
 Accept me as the humblest guest;
 Hungering and thirsting, lo, I come!
 O give me at Thy table room!

What soul and body need supply;
 Remove all that offends Thine eye;
 Dwell in my heart that I may be
 Now and forever close to Thee.

Adorn my conversation, Lord,
 With all the graces of Thy Word,
 And help me throughout all my days
 To keep Thy Law and sing Thy praise.

Then when, O gracious Prince of Life,
 Thou callest from these scenes of strife,
 To Thy blest presence shall I soar,
 And sup with Thee forevermore.

The Sick Person Prays God for the Forgiveness of Sins.

EXHORTATION.

I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. *Job 42, 6.*

It is a fine and laudable custom of true Christians to appear before God every evening and reflect what they have spoken, thought, and done during the day, and to call upon Him for forgiveness of the sins they have committed, and thus to be at peace with God before they lie down to rest. Now, if this is to be done every day, how much more careful should a sick person be not to neglect this practise!

For he should (1) institute an inquiry covering not one day, or one week, or one month, but his entire life. He should ask himself how he has spent his days of health, whether he has em-

ployed them for the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men. He should inquire where, how often, and how grievously he has sinned in his days of health. Since a person has greater leisure on his sick-bed, this inquiry should then be all the more earnest. (2) After such investigation the sick person should call upon God from the heart to forgive him all his sins, especially since he does not know how near or far the moment may be when he shall have to appear before the judgment-seat of God.

(3) If a person on his sick-bed comes to a knowledge of his sins, he should thank God for his sickness by which his eyes were opened, so that he learned to know his misery and was given an opportunity to sue for grace, which might not have been done if he had not been taken sick. (4) However, the sick person must also keep faithfully in his day of health what he has promised during his sickness, lest he bring upon himself a greater evil because he has been faithless in performing what he promised.

PRAYER.

O gracious and loving Father, in Thy name I have resolved to become reconciled to Thee, to pray Thee for grace and the forgiveness of my sins, and then to receive Holy Communion on my sick-bed. I would do this in time, while I still have my full reason. I live, and know not how long; I must die, and know not when. Therefore I come now before Thy throne of grace, and humbly pray Thee to forgive me all sins which I have committed during my whole life.

My God, I must confess that I have provoked Thee to anger in many ways in the past. Alas! I have not always employed my days of health for Thy glory, for attending divine services, for my growth in Christian faith and godliness. Therefore Thou hast reason to visit this sickness upon me, in order that I may examine myself and repent of the misuse of my health and of all my other sins. Forgive me that I have not loved Thee more

ferverently, and have not lived a godlier life than I, alas! have done. O Lord, remember not the sins of my youth; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake. How I tremble when I hear that at Thy judgment-seat I shall have to give account of every idle word that I have spoken! How shall I be able to stand before Thee with the record of my thoughts, since Thou wilt also judge our thoughts? And if I am to give an account of my entire life, of all my works and actions, O Lord, who can stand before Thee?

Therefore I come before Thy throne of grace, trusting wholly in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Have mercy upon me for the sake of His wounds; for the sake of the blood which He shed, forgive me all my sins; for the sake of His agony and bloody sweat, help me, O Lord, my God! I am ashamed, my God, to lift up mine eyes to Thee; I am ashamed of my former years and the sins I have committed. Oh, that I had led a godlier and more Christian life! Therefore I vow to Thee, O God, that I will begin a new life. If Thou wilt restore me to health, I will spend the years which Thou mayest permit me to live on earth for Thy glory, in faith and true godliness, and receive them as a present, as an addition to my life. All my life I shall remember this sickness and the anguish of my soul, but also Thy mighty power. O Lord, have mercy on Thy child, and according to Thy great mercy blot out all my sin for Thy goodness' sake!

"Jesus only" is my need; "Jesus only" is my creed; "Jesus only" is my life; "Jesus only" saves from strife. "Jesus only" brings me joy, Blissfulness without alloy; "Jesus only" is my trust, Loving to the uttermost. "Jesus only" would I preach;

“Jesus only” would I teach; “Jesus only” saves from hell; Trust Him, and thou doest well. “Jesus only” from above, Fills my soul with peace and love; “Jesus only” is the way To heaven’s joys and endless days. Amen.

HYMN.

Dear Jesus — Savior — hear my prayer:
My weakened soul defend;
As tossed about I come to Thee,
As on my knees I bend.

Thou knowest, Lord, that sin and self
For years have had their sway;
Thou knowest, Lord, I’ve wandered far
Along the downward way.

In youthful days I had the choice,
My path in life was free;
I loved the world — its sinful joys —
I turned my back on Thee.

But now I find — alas, so late! —
Its charms are brief and frail:
What is the world when sorrows come,
When awful fears assail?

It still would guide by promise fair
In paths that lead to shame;
But, wiser now, I turn to Thee —
I breathe Thy holy name.

And by Thy blood so freely shed —
My wretched soul to save —
I ask for faith to live each day,
For hope beyond the grave.

Teach me to live in love and trust,
In peace — and yet in fear;
For who can tell the dreaded time
When Death himself draws near?

But when he comes, so dark and grim:
I feel his chilling breath,
O Jesus, then stand by my side
To soothe the hour of death!

The Sick Person Prays before Receiving the Lord's Supper.

EXHORTATION.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? *1 Cor. 10, 16.*

Every true Christian should exercise diligent care to receive the Lord's Supper reverently and worthily. A sick person, in particular, can do this when he examines himself before communing. For (1) he is then free from all those distractions which at public communion with the congregation sometimes disturb devotion. He can continue in his devotion without hindrance, if God keeps him free from pain and the discomforts of his sickness.

(2) Nobody should entertain scruples about receiving private communion, because we know, that Jesus has promised to be with His believers by His gracious presence everywhere and always. (3) At the time of his communion the sick person should also reflect: This may be the last time that I receive the Lord's Supper; and therefore he should with a firmer resolve decide that he will abide in faith and godliness. (4) Godly persons have expressed the wish that their last word might be Jesus, their last food the Lord's Supper, and that their last thought might be of Jesus as He hung bleeding upon the cross. Ought not a sick person, then, rejoice when one of these wishes is to be realized by him? And should he doubt that by the grace of God the other two will also be granted him? (5) But if a sick person were to desire Holy Communion to be administered to him on his sick-bed in order to be restored to health thereby, that would be very wrong and a superstitious notion.

PRAYER.

Dearest Jesus, I desire to receive now, while lying on my sick-bed, the love-feast which Thou hast instituted, since I do not know when I shall depart from this world. However, in order not to appear before the judgment-seat of God without Thee, I desire, while I am still living, to be united afresh with Thee, in order that Thou mayest be

and remain in me and I in Thee. I desire now to receive private communion, and I am certain that Thou wilt gladden and refresh me with Thy grace also in my house.

O dearest Friend of the soul, Thou art nigh to the afflicted; Thou gladdenest them that mourn; Thou art a Helper to them that are oppressed in spirit. Oh, let my heart now be made glad and my soul refreshed by this heavenly food, this heavenly drink. I have, indeed, also received it with the congregation when I was well, but not always, alas! with such reverence and prayerful attention as would have been proper, because I was in many ways distracted by the multitude of people, by vanity, and the lust of my eyes. But now nobody shall disturb my devotion; in my solitude I shall betroth myself to Thee and unite with Thee.

O dearest Jesus, since I am thus about to partake in holy devotion of Thy heavenly feast of joy here on earth, and there is no other hindrance to disturb me, I pray Thee that Thou wouldst subdue my pains in this sickness, and give me relief during this hour, that I may carry out my purpose without hindrance and disturbance. I now show forth Thy death, and remind myself of Thy suffering and dying, Thy wounds and pains, Thy agony and anguish, Thy death on the cross, and all that Thou hast done for me. I think of these things, and thank Thee for them, and say: Oh, for all that wrought our pardon, for Thy sorrows deep and sore, for Thine anguish in the garden, I will thank Thee evermore; thank Thee for Thy groans and sighing, for Thy bleeding and Thy dying, for that last most bitter cry, and shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.

I also remind myself of the institution of Thy Holy Supper, in which Thou givest me food and drink unto eternal life. I believe Thy words, and accept them as the words of an all-knowing, almighty, and truthful God. I believe that in Holy Communion I receive Thy true body and Thy true blood in this manner: when I receive the bread which has been blessed, I receive in an invisible manner Thy true body, O Jesus; and when I receive the cup that has been blessed, I receive in an invisible manner Thy true blood. This heavenly food, now, and this heavenly drink shall strengthen in me the faith that I am reconciled to God. This heavenly food and drink shall comfort me with the assurance that I am not lost, but have eternal life. This heavenly food and drink shall certify to me that I stand in Thy grace, that I have the forgiveness of sins, and am united with Thee, who art the propitiation for our sins, yea, for the sins of the whole world. This heavenly food and drink shall remind me of the heavenly banquet of joy, namely, of the joy and glory everlasting, to which Thou wilt conduct me after my death.

O Jesus, Thou Bridegroom of my soul, sanctify and cleanse me that as Thy bride I may plight and betroth myself to Thee forever. O Shepherd of my soul, lead Thy sheep in green pastures; feed me with the bread of life; refresh me with Thy holy blood. Then Satan cannot harm me; sin cannot raise charges against me nor condemn me. Here I have a perfect ransom for my sins, which Thou hast paid for me on the cross, and by which I am justified and saved.

Ah, how hungers all my spirit For the love I do not merit!
 Oft have I, with sighs fast thronging, Thought upon this food with
 longing, In the battle well-nigh worsted, For this cup of life have
 thirsted, For the Friend who here invites us, And to God Himself
 unites us. Amen.

HYMN.

O Jesus, bruised and wounded more
 Than bursted grape or bread of wheat,
 The Life of life within our souls,
 The Cup of our salvation sweet!

We come to show Thy dying hour,
 Thy streaming vein, Thy broken flesh;
 And still the blood is warm to save,
 And still the fragrant wounds are fresh.

O Heart that with a double tide
 Of blood and water maketh pure;
 O Flesh once offered on the cross,
 The gift that makes our pardon sure, —

Let nevermore our sinful souls
 The anguish of Thy cross renew,
 Nor forge again the cruel nails
 That pierced Thy victim body through.

Come, Bread of heav'n, to feed our souls,
 And with Thee, Jesus enter in!
 Come, Wine of God, and as we drink,
 His precious blood wash out our sin!

**The Sick Person Prays after Receiving the Lord's
 Supper.**

EXHORTATION.

I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which
 I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who
 loved me, and gave Himself for me. *Gal. 2, 20.*

A true Christian always has reason for heartfelt gratitude to
 God when he has received the Lord's Supper; how much more
 should a sick person thank God from his inmost heart when he

has been able to receive the Lord's Supper in sound mind! However, in this connection we are to be reminded, (1) that we must not imagine that a turn for the better must occur after the sick person has communed. A turn for the better has, indeed, taken place if the patient received the Sacrament worthily; for he has obtained the forgiveness of sins and peace with God; he has entered into intimate communion with Jesus. But the Lord's Supper was not instituted for bringing about a change in a person's sickness; we have no promise to that effect.

(2) Accordingly, no sick person should receive Communion to see whether he will get well or die; for that is a misuse of the Sacrament. But he should use it to strengthen his faith, and to assure himself of the forgiveness of his sins, of the grace of God, and the salvation of his soul. When he has thus received it after the order in which Christ has instituted it, he should (3) praise God for it, and with a quiet heart and a believing soul commit himself to God. In war, when people have put away their most valuable goods, they are content. Our soul is our greatest treasure; when in sincere repentance and union with Jesus Christ we have commended this into the hands of God, we are assured that God will deal kindly also with the body.

PRAYER.

My Jesus, I have heartily desired to receive Holy Communion before I die. This desire has now been fulfilled and stilled: Thou hast fed me with Thy holy body and given me Thy holy blood to drink. For this I praise Thee from my inmost heart. I am lying here on my sick-bed, from which I may rise again by Thy almighty power, but on which I may also die if such is Thy holy will. Therefore I have prepared myself. My soul is now restored, after I have been united with Jesus. Yes, I will gladly die now that I have entered into the most intimate communion with Thee, O Jesus. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de-

part in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.

O Jesus, live in me; give me a calm mind, Christian contentment, and a soul that is completely resigned to Thee. Grant me grace constantly to have holy and pious thoughts, and let the lovely and sweet remembrance of Thee be ever alive in my heart. If it is Thy will, O God, to summon me out of this life by death, let Thy will be done. I know that my sin has been forgiven me; therefore I need not be afraid to come before Thee. For where there is forgiveness, there is also life and salvation. I know that Jesus has given me His righteousness; when I appear before Thee, O God, in this beauty and glorious dress, Thou wilt on its account pronounce me free from guilt and exempt from the Judgment. Now that I am justified by faith, I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven and the access to the throne of grace have been opened for me. I know that Jesus is my Advocate with God. I die in the grace of God, in peace with God, I am assured of the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Thus I am saved; I die saved; I depart saved from this world, and shall be saved in eternity.

This is a great favor which Thou hast bestowed on my soul, O God, that in a sound mind I have been able to keep this heavenly feast of love with Jesus. May this heavenly food strengthen and keep me in true faith unto life everlasting! Thus, then, my wish, too, has been fulfilled that the Lord's Supper might be my last food before I die. Grant me also that the last word which I shall speak in this world may be Jesus, and my last thoughts may be

directed to the blood, death, suffering, and dying of Jesus, and to His holy merit. Then I know that I shall live and die happy and blessed. If God be for us, who can be against us? Yea, who will separate us from the love of Christ? I will not let Him go till He brings me to the assembly of the saints and the elect.

O bliss! in Jesus' name I've tendered My prayer; He pleads at Thy right hand for me. Yea and Amen in Him is rendered What I in faith and spirit ask of Thee. O joy for me! And praise be ever Thine, Whose wondrous love has made such blessings mine! Amen.

HYMN.

The Lord is my Shepherd, no want shall I know,
He leadeth me gently where green pastures grow;
Beside the still waters, He giveth me rest,
By the light of His presence my pathway is blessed.

He restoreth my soul as He walks by my side;
In the path of the righteous my feet He doth guide
For His honor and glory that my life may prove
The depths of the Father's unchangeable love.

Through the valley of death my pathway may lie;
Though sorrow's dark clouds hide the light of the sky,
No evil I'll fear through affliction's dark day;
His rod and His staff are my comfort alway.

He spreadeth my table, rich bounties are there;
Though foes may surround me, I'm the child of His care.
My head He anointeth, my cup runneth o'er;
All blessings He gives from His bountiful store.

His goodness and mercy, each day of my life,
Shall follow and guard me from evil and strife
In service below and in glory above —
Forever I'll dwell in the house of His love.

The Sick Person Prays when Taking Medicine.

EXHORTATION.

Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. *Jas. 5, 14, 15.*

Devout prayer is always necessary in days of health; why should a sick person forget to pray, especially when taking medicine? As regards medicine and its use, a sick person (1) should not despise physicians and medicines, and should not think: If I am to become well again, God can restore my health without medicine; and if I am to die, medicine will not help me. No; we are not to think thus; for that would be tempting God. God has not promised to help us without means. What God has not promised us we cannot ask of Him. Those who despise medicine and die thus are murderers of their own body.

(2) However, we must not put our trust in physicians and medicines, but in God. Thus among the sins of King Asa this, too, is charged against him, that in his sickness he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians, and had greater confidence in them than in God, 2 Chron. 16, 12. Therefore, (3) a sick person should choose the mean between the two: he should pray with his lips and heart, and in firm confidence in God's help he should take his medicine and thus use it. In this way he knows that it will be blessed to him.

PRAYER.

O great God, Thou seest the condition in which I am; for nothing is hidden from Thine all-seeing eyes. Thou seest into the most secluded nooks; Thou lookest also upon my sick-bed and knowest how I feel this moment. O my God, I will use the medicine prescribed for me in Thy name; but my only hope is in Thee; for Thou art the Lord that healeth us. Nevertheless, since Thou lettest herbs grow out of the earth and hast Thyself created medicaments which are to serve for our health, I will now take such medicine, praying and calling upon

Thy holy name from my heart: Oh, do Thou put Thy blessing into it!

I know, indeed, that Thou art able without medicine to help and make me well again; for if Thou speak the word only, the sick person is restored to health, and at a mere word from Thee the sickness must yield. Nevertheless, since Thou hast commanded us to use these means also, I will use them in obedience to Thy direction; and I pray Thee, O great God, bless the medicine which, firmly trusting in Thee, I now take in Thy name. Let it be blessed to me for the restoration of my strength and the recovery of my health, for the alleviation of my pains, and for a refreshing in my feeble condition. If Thou pronouncest Thy blessing upon it, even the smallest herb can help me; aye, herbs and plasters help and heal when Thy blessing goes with them. I do not take this medicine to compel my health to return, but as a means which Thou hast permitted me to employ for the purpose of recovering my health at Thy hand. I lift up mine eyes to heaven when I take up my medicine; I sigh unto Thee before using it, while using it, and after using it. If Thou wilt let it take effect in me, I shall recover; for my days are in Thy hands. Nothing can and may prosper without Thy blessing; therefore, O Dispenser of blessings, I cry to Thee for Thy blessing. What Thou, Lord, blessest is blessed forever. If Thou wilt help me by means of medicine, I shall indeed return heartfelt thanks to Thee for the medicine, but I shall also bear in mind that it was not herbs and plasters, but Thy mercy that preserved, and Thy hand that healeth me, and with Hezekiah I will spread Thy praise among all men.

Dear Refuge of my weary soul, On Thee, when sorrows rise,
 On Thee, when waves of trouble roll, My fainting hope relies. To
 Thee I tell each rising grief, For Thou alone canst heal; Thy
 Word can bring a sweet relief For every pain I feel. Amen.

HYMN.

In weariness and pain,
 By sins and fears oppressed,
 I turn me to my Rest again,
 My soul's eternal Rest.

The Lamb that died for me,
 And still my load doth bear;
 To Jesus' streaming wounds I flee,
 And find my quiet there.

Jesus, was ever grief,
 Was ever love like Thine?
 Thy sorrow, Lord, is my relief,
 Thy life hath ransomed mine.

O may I rise with Thee,
 And soar to things above,
 And spend a blest eternity
 In praise of dying love.

A Sick Person Prays for Alleviation of His Pains.

EXHORTATION.

Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, what am I eased? *Job 16, 6.*

Sickness and bodily ailments which God sends men are not all of one kind, as we learn from experience. To some God sends a sickness which causes them no pain in any member, no, not in their little finger; upon others He visits cruel pains. This should remind us, (1) that, if we can pray, learn to know God, and wish to be reconciled with Him, we must do this betimes, and not wait until we become sick, as Sirach says: Do not delay your repentance till you are ill. For in such severe pains how are we to pray, think

of God, seek reconciliation with Him? Our great pains will not let us do so.

But when a sick person is seized with pain, he should (2) not murmur against God on that account, but accept whatever comes calmly and patiently. Still (3) he may ask to have his condition eased; as Christ, too, did in His suffering. Children tell their troubles to their parents, why should not a child of God do the same to his Father?

However, when in great pain, he should (4) remember the great sins which he has committed during his lifetime, and should acknowledge that these sufferings are well merited, but remember also God's great mercy and great power, which can deliver him from his pains. (5) If he is not able to pray much and long because of his pains, let him sigh to God, and know that such sighings of the heart do not go unheard. (6) Impatience, however, does not lessen our pains, but increases them.

PRAYER.

Lord, hear my prayer; give ear to my supplication, my King and my God; for unto Thee will I pray. Oh, I will pray and beseech Thee graciously to look upon me in my bodily weakness, and to lessen my pains and my great suffering. Thou hast certainly promised that Thou wilt not let us be tempted above that we are able, but wilt with the temptation also make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. Oh, behold, my God, the burden is well-nigh growing too heavy for me. My pains are becoming intolerable, my body is faint, my strength is much reduced, my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth, my bones are consumed as with fire, my eyes fail me, because I must wait such a long time for my God. Oh, how long, how long shall my soul be in anguish and long for Thee! Delay not, my God; Thou seest my sore need.

Thou knowest that many have been the anxious days and nights which I have passed. Thou hast

heard my moans and sighs, my complaints and cries. Whither shall I turn in my misery and my pains? Oh, whither shall I go? Whither do I know to go? Whither can I go except to Thee alone, the Lord, my God? If I were to tell my troubles to all men, they might have compassion upon me, but would not deliver me. Therefore, I come to Thee; I know that Thou canst help me; it lies with Thee to do so; speak the word only, and I shall live. O dearest Jesus, Thou didst command the raging sea to be calm: oh, oh, command also my pains to abate. Thou didst heal the palsied man with a word: magnify Thy mercy in me also. Refresh me again, after I have suffered so long and endured so much. Oh, come to me with Thy help, before my pains consume me altogether. And if according to Thy counsel I am to suffer pain still longer, let me nevertheless be pastured as Thy sheep in Thy mercy, in order that I may believingly and patiently wait for the favor of my Father, which will quiet my pains. Oh, lay Thy gracious hand upon me, and I shall be made whole and free from pain.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; let Thine ear be attentive to the voice of my supplication. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; for I know that with the Lord there is help. Help me, O God of my salvation, for Thy name's sake; deliver me, and forgive me my sins for Thy goodness' sake. However, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. If I am to endure pain still longer, let Thy will be done. Only give me strength to bear it. Grant me an occasional day, or at least an hour, of rest, my

God, that I may be refreshed and strengthened. Our affliction is light and but for a moment; therefore, do Thou make my pains less severe, and finally deliver me from them.

Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee! E'en though it be a cross That raiseth me; Still all my song shall be, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee! Amen.

HYMN.

When in the hour of utmost need
We know not where to look for aid;
When days and nights of anxious thought
Nor help nor counsel yet have brought, —

Then this our comfort is alone
That we may meet before Thy throne,
And cry, O faithful God, to Thee
For rescue from our misery;

To Thee may raise our hearts and eyes,
Repenting sore with bitter sighs,
And seek Thy pardon for our sin,
And respite from our griefs within.

For Thou hast promised graciously
To hear all those who cry to Thee,
Through Him whose name alone is great,
Our Savior and our Advocate.

And thus we come, O God, to-day,
And all our woes before Thee lay;
For tried, afflicted, lo! we stand,
Perils and foes on every hand.

Ah! hide not for our sins Thy face,
Absolve us through Thy boundless grace,
Be with us in our anguish still,
Free us at last from every ill, —

That so with all our hearts we may
Once more our glad thanksgiving pay,
And walk obedient to Thy Word,
And now and ever praise Thee, Lord.

The Sick Person Sighs to God Not to Forsake Him.

EXHORTATION.

Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands. *Is. 49, 14—16.*

As great joy is caused to a poor person when he finds a rich benefactor, or to one forsaken when he obtains strong aid, so a sick person can have much cheer in his sickness and suffering because he has the promise that God will not forsake him. He should bear in mind, however, (1) that delaying help does not mean forsaking a person. Many sick persons cry and say that God has forsaken them when He does not help them immediately, not as speedily as they had calculated. But we are not to think thus. Though a while it be delayed, He denieth not His aid; though it come not off with speed, it will surely come at need.

The sick person (2) should reflect that God has appointed the hour when He will help him, and he is to wait patiently until that hour arrives. (3) He should reflect whether in days of health he has not forsaken God, and whether he has reason to feel surprised if God now makes him conscious of his unfaithfulness. But it is of this that God would remind the sick person by delaying His help. Therefore, let the sick person (4) persist in saying believingly: God cannot forsake me; I am His child; God will not forsake me, for He has promised me not to do so. God will not forsake me, for He has often helped in times past. If the sick person will thus take courage in God, he will patiently bear the delay of the divine help and will ultimately obtain the glorious proof that he had not been forsaken by God.

PRAYER.

O dearest God and Father, who hast loved me with an everlasting love, and drawn me with loving-kindness, behold, I, a poor sufferer, come to Thee and humbly pray Thee that Thou wouldst not forsake me in my bodily infirmity. Thou knowest, my God, that without Thee there is no help for me.

Thou art the mighty God of Jacob, the Defender of Israel, the Refuge of the afflicted, the Helper of sufferers, and their Succor in times of need. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. He will arise and have mercy upon Zion; He will in mercy look upon me. Men say: We cannot help you, and thus I am indeed forsaken by all men. But I know that I am not forsaken by Thee; for God forsakes no one that trusts in Him. He is faithful to those who put their firm confidence in Him. He may lead me strange ways, but I shall not become terrified; for with rejoicing I shall behold His wonderful counsel in the end.

O my God, do not forsake me; behold how long my suffering has lasted! In the evening I think it will be better in the morning, and at noon I long for the evening to come. Yea, during the night I often cry, Watchman, what of the night? My soul waiteth for Thee more than they that watch for the morning. O my God, do not forsake me; behold how my suffering is becoming ever more grievous. Do not let this burden crush me; remove the stone that oppresses me, the rod that is coming down upon me, the pains that afflict me. Thou knowest my feeble strength, and how much I am able to endure. My God, do not forsake me; behold how my sufferings are multiplied; my sorrows do not seem to grow less, but to increase. Whither shall I go if Thou art forsaking me? If Thou wilt not help me, no creature can help me. If Thou art forsaking me, I shall be left without help.

But I know that Thou dost not forsake me. I appeal to Thy promise; for Thou hast said: "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." They that

trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth forever. The Strength of Israel has promised to give strength unto His people, and to deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. I trust in Thy Word, and my hope is this, that Thou wilt establish Thy faithfulness in the very heavens. Thou canst not forsake me; for I am Thy child. Am I not Thy purchased possession, bought with Thy precious blood? I am Thine own; therefore Thou wilt not and canst not forsake Thine own child. I am confident that Thou wilt not forsake me; Thou hast never yet forsaken me in my afflictions and tribulations, though sufferings without number took hold upon me, and the waves of sorrow closed over my head; hence Thou wilt not forsake me this time. In this thought I rest content; in this I trust and am of good cheer, saying: Lord, I will not let Thee go except Thou help me in such a manner as may be pleasing to Thee.

Bow down Thy gracious ear to me, And hear my prayers,
 Lord, speedily, O grant me Thy protection; For woes and fear
 Surround me here, Help me in my affliction. My God and Shield,
 now let Thy power Be unto me a mighty tower, Whence bravely
 I defend me Against the foes That round me close. O Lord,
 assistance lend me! Amen.

HYMN.

Master, bid me rest awhile;
 I have journeyed many a mile
 O'er a rough and hilly way:
 May I rest awhile to-day?

Long I've known 'tis good for me
 Patiently to follow Thee;
 Pardon me when I forget
 That my way by Thee is set.

Thornier paths by Thee were trod,
 O Thou sinless Son of God;
 Ought I, then, cast down my load
 While I tread an easier road?

Lord, Thy gracious voice I hear:
 "Weary child, be this thy cheer,
 Thou art ever in My sight,
 Even in the darkest night.

"Mine thy burden! Bear it on
 Till thy time of rest shall dawn;
 Light as morning's lightest beam
 Shall My yoke of service seem."

Rise, my soul! Whate'er thy lot,
 Stand therein, and fear it not;
 Ever go where Jesus leads:
 He provides for all thy needs.

The Sick Person Contemplates His Death.

EXHORTATION.

I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing. *2 Tim. 4, 6—8.*

Reflecting upon our death is (1) a useful occupation; for by so doing we withdraw our hearts from vanity and sins; we regard all that is earthly as things which we cannot take with us to heaven, which we cannot keep, and from which we can derive no comfort in the hour of death. To remind ourselves of our death is (2) also a necessary matter; for those who imagine that death is still far away from them often become bold, wanton, and vicious; they plunge into worldliness and become conformed to the world. Now if such persons are suddenly overtaken by death, they are certainly lost. Reflecting upon our death is (3) very salutary; for the person who dies before he dies, that is, who diligently considers his end, does not die when he dies. For him death has no terrors;

for the death of believers is nothing but a sweet slumber and a going to their Father. And who is afraid of going to his Father or of going to bed?

However, (4) we are not to think that it is a sign of death when a sick person talks much about dying, arranges for his funeral, makes his testament, and keeps himself in readiness for dying in peace. Not at all; no one dies a moment sooner on that account than God has determined that he shall. (5) Nor should we picture our dying hour to us as something cruel and terrible, as some sick people do who are afraid to die and to think of their heart stopping. The heathen indeed have said that of all terrible things death is the most terrible; but Christians die in the grace of God, in the arms of Jesus, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. What is terrible in that? Is not this rather a comfort, a pleasure and joy?

PRAYER.

It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life—thus I sigh unto Thee, my God, because in my great weakness which is ever increasing I perceive plainly that the end of my life is at hand. I desire to be unclothed and to be with Christ. I am not afraid of death and dying; I have often thought of it while I was well, therefore it does not seem terrible to me now. As Noah's dove was glad to return to the ark, as a stranger hastens with longing to his fatherland, so I regard my death as my being received into rest out of unrest, as a happy arrival after my pilgrimage in the heavenly land of joy, where my heartfelt longing will be stilled in the heavenly embrace of my Jesus.

I know that the death of believers is a sweet slumber and a passage into the life everlasting. Wicked men and children of the world may be afraid of death; for they have no gracious God, they are not in communion with Jesus Christ, and have not yielded their heart to God the Holy Spirit

for a dwelling. But I am not afraid to die, because I am assured of all these facts. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? God is my Father; Jesus is my Guide and Comforter; I am going to Him, I shall be with Him; why should I be afraid? The Bridegroom of my soul will welcome me, His bride. When my Jesus spoke of His impending death, He said: I go to the Father. Yes, dearest Jesus, I shall repeat these words after Thee: When I die, I go to the Father, to heaven, to joy, to eternal life. Why should I be afraid to die? Jesus is mine; His righteousness is mine; His merit is mine; heaven is mine; why should I not be glad? My body returns to the earth, but my soul ascends to God; it passes from this world into heaven, from vanity into bliss, from mourning to rejoicing, from suffering to happiness, from weeping into glory. Is not this a blessed transition? I go to rest, to joy, to gladness, to light, to everlasting pleasures. Do I not see the angels even now standing about my bed to conduct my soul to yonder glory? Do I not see Jesus extending His arms to receive me, His child? And many thousands of saints ready to welcome me?

Therefore I am without fear; I forget those things which are behind, earth and all things earthly that I possess here, and reach forth unto those things which are before, the heavenly treasure that is reserved for me on high. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me

only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.
 How pleased shall I be when I am unclothed! What
 happiness shall be mine when I am in the arms of
 Jesus! What delight shall seize me when I have
 passed through death into the life eternal!

Death can never kill us even, But relief From all grief To
 us then is given. It doth close life's mournful story, Makes a way
 That we may Pass to heavenly glory. Amen.

HYMN.

When clouds above between the sun
 And earth outspread their colors dun,
 And curtain all my light,
 Thy face, O Lord, lift Thou on me,
 Till all the noisome shadows flee;
 And then Thy glory I shall see,
 Enraptured with the sight.

When foes shall beat against my heart,
 And hurtles there each flying dart
 My faith to overthrow,
 Encircle me, O Lord, with might,
 Till these retreat in quickened flight,
 Like gloom when sunbeam rays benight
 The heavens with their glow.

When trial's hammer, great and stark,
 Descends on me, a quivering mark
 For every thundering blow
 That pounds upon the smithy's block,
 May I, O Lord, receive the shock,
 Believing that each sturdy knock
 Will make my graces show.

When disappointments round me crowd,
 And when my head in grief is bowed,
 Like grasses 'neath the gale,
 Still may I trust, have no despair,
 Cast off my fears and every care,
 And plume my soul with fervent prayer
 Through joyous heights to sail.

Yea, Lord, let come e'en blighting death
 To pinch my heart and seize my breath,
 And lay me in the grave;
 Within the monster's face I'll fling
 The challenge, "Death, where is thy sting?"
 While near me shining angels sing,
 And victory's banner wave.

The Sick Person Contemplates His Grave and Resurrection.

EXHORTATION.

Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. *John 11, 25, 26.*

No matter how dark the grave may look, a person viewing it as a Christian will not be terrified at it. For (1) it is a chamber of rest, where we are relieved of all misery, grief, and heartache. However, while the believer's body will sleep and rest free from pain, his soul (2) will enjoy heavenly and endless joy; for the souls of the righteous are in God's hand; no sorrow can touch them; consolations, joy, and gladness ever encompass them. Nor (3) shall the body remain in the grave; when the bones and weary members have rested, they will rise again in glory on the Last Day, shine like the sun, and be reunited with the soul.

(4) If any one should raise this objection: Must I not, however, leave my dear ones and my earthly possessions? he should be reminded that in heaven there will be a general reunion. If our dear ones will remain faithful and God-fearing, they will follow us, never to be separated from us. As to our earthly possessions, God will give us, instead, heavenly and eternal treasures. If a sick person ponders all these facts, the contemplation of the grave cannot seem terrible to him.

PRAYER.

Gracious and merciful God, behold, I am ready in accordance with Thy holy will either to live or die. I am not afraid to die, because I know that death will bring me rest after so many trials and

afflictions. For departing from this life I leave all my sufferings, tribulations, crosses, and unrest behind me. I enter into rest and joy; I shall be delighted, refreshed, gladdened after I have spent gloomy hours and sorrowful nights in this world. Nor am I afraid of the grave; for, behold, it will be my chamber of rest. My misery, sickness, and suffering do not go into the grave with me, but must remain behind. O quiet retreat, O pleasant place of repose! when shall my weary members and my feeble body be enfolded by thee?

Jesus has hallowed the grave for me. When He was laid in the grave after He had endured all His suffering, His pains and sorrows ceased. And so the Lord has prepared also for my body a chamber of rest in the earth, and for the soul a place of refreshing in heaven. Men seek beautiful houses and soft beds for their rest; but these cannot be compared with my grave. We may be driven from a beautiful house by fire, war, or other calamities; but in my grave no one will disturb me. Jesus will guard my bones that not one of them shall be lost; yea, He will gather them again, out of the world. Many a person must suffer pains and discomforts even in a soft bed; but no evil shall come nigh me and no pain shall touch me in my grave. Thus the grave is a bed free from all suffering and pain; as soon as a person is laid in it, his pains and discomforts cease.

Why should I be afraid of the grave when I am not to remain in it? I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will raise me up from the dust at the latter day. My Jesus says: "He that be-

lieveth in Me hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. Hence my grave is to be a place where I shall tarry but a short time, where my body shall sleep till Jesus comes and says: Arise, ye dead, and appear before the Judge! The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth. When I shall hear that voice, I, too, shall come forth from my grave. My body will be reunited with my soul, made immortal and glorified, and I shall shine as the sun. All the weakness that was in me and around me shall then have disappeared. A grain of wheat that seemed dead when buried in the ground begins to sprout again: thus my bones will be gathered, be furnished with sinews and arteries, and clothed with skin. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body, endowed with heavenly properties. What now sickens, mourns, and sighs, Christ with Him in glory bringeth; Earthly is the seed, and dies; Heavenly from the grave it springeth.

Since Thou from death didst rise again, In death Thou wilt not leave me; Lord, Thy ascension sooths my pain, No fear of death shall grieve me; For Thou wilt have me where Thou art, And so with joy I can depart To be with Thee forever. And so I stretch mine arms to Thee, and gladly hence betake me; Peaceful and calm my sleep shall be, No human voice can wake me, But Christ is with me through the strife, And He will bear me into life, And open heav'n before me. Amen.

HYMN.

No other way, no other name;
 My heart is kindled to a flame,
 As thus with steadfast faith I see
 No other way or name for me.

Loud voices cry, Lo, here; Lo, there;
 Wise men are seeking everywhere
 New lights that gleam o'er hill and plain,
 And tremble far across the main,
 Revealing doctrines strange and new,
 To draw us from the tried and true.
 Still springs my thought, exultant, free,
 No other way, or name for me.

"I am the Way, the Truth, the Life,"
 Sounds clear through all surrounding strife,
 And sitting at His blessed feet,
 This Teacher, in Himself complete,
 No mist can overcast the soul;
 His love doth clarify the whole.

No wayfarer need err therein,
 This path of life revealed by Him;
 And so in storm or calm I see
 No other way or name for me.

My soul no other stair can climb,
 To where eternal glories shine
 Than faith in the dear blood once shed
 To bring my nature perfected,
 O'er the long path of joy or pain,
 To the soul's native home again.

Christ conquered death, and so we bring
 Our Easter blossoms while we sing
 His triumph o'er the cruel grave,
 His power our blessed dead to save.

The darksome night fades far away
 As breaks the morn. of that glad day;
 For some time He will come once more
 With those we loved and lost of yore.
 So all the bells of earth may chime
 To usher in the joyous time,
 And all the flowers of earth may bloom,
 In wealth of beauty, o'er the tomb;
 So through all clouds of pain I see
 None other way or name for me.

The Believing Christian Thanks God for His Restored Health.

EXHORTATION.

Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. *John 5, 14.*

It is a fact that many sick persons make profuse promises to God with their lips that they will become new creatures, pious Christians, fervent in prayer, diligent in church attendance, and altogether different men in heart, manners, and conduct, if God will let them get well. But, alas! daily experience shows that many, after they have recovered their health, do not keep these promises, but become as vain, vicious, unruly, misbehaved, and defiant as they were before, if they do not become even worse.

Therefore, when a true Christian has been raised from his sick-bed, he should (1) recognize the almighty power of God, and praise and glorify the power of God which first cast him on his sick-bed, and then raised him up again and graciously delivered him from the peril of death. (2) A sick person that has been restored to health should pay the vow which he made on the bed on which he might have died, and should keep his promise, because he made it to God, and not to men. For it is better not to promise than not to keep a promise. (3) If, like Hezekiah, he has gained new strength, he should return thanks to the almighty Helper and Deliverer, and praise and glorify God also before other men, thus giving them an opportunity to recognize the grace of God which has been manifested towards him. (4) He should also remember the anguish of his soul, diligently reflect upon the mortal danger from which he has escaped, and lead a pious and godly life to the glory of the almighty Triune God. Yea, he should continue in faith and in a godly conduct, so as to be ready henceforth to die in peace and quit this life gladly, if God should call him hence.

PRAYER.

O almighty and gracious God, I now appear before Thy most holy face, and thank Thee from my inmost soul, because Thou hast raised me up from my sick-bed. I still remember the anxious hours, the grievous suffering, the sorrowful nights, the

great danger that hovered over me. But behold, Thy mighty hand has graciously lifted me from my couch; Thou hast placed me on my feet again, that I may go out and in. Thy mercy has turned my mourning into dancing. Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness. Lord, Lord, Thou hast done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Thy love and mercy has helped me hitherto. For this I know for a truth, that he who serves Thee will be comforted after his affliction, delivered from his trials, and will find grace after the chastening. For Thou, O God, takest no pleasure in our destruction. After the tempest Thou makest the sun to shine again, and after our wailing and weeping overwhelmest us with joy. I, too, have experienced this mercy and faithfulness of my Father in my sickness; therefore as long as I live I will remember the anguish of my soul.

But I will also extol in the presence of the great congregation what Thou, O almighty God, hast done for me. Thou hast blessed my medicine; Thou hast soothed my pain; Thou hast given me strength to overcome my affliction, after nights of toil and suffering Thou hast granted me days of refreshing, and hast had pity on me in my sorrow like a father. Therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble and other sick persons shall hear of it, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, all ye, who like me have ever been in trouble, sickness, and affliction, and let us exalt His

name together. For when we poor ones cried, the Lord heard us, and saved us out of all troubles. They who in faith look unto the Lord in their affliction and call upon Him in prayer, their face shall not be ashamed. He does not let them go away sorrowful from His throne, but has compassion on them according to His mercy.

O my God, let the grace and mercy which Thou hast manifested towards me be ever before my eyes and in my heart. Now I know and have made proof of it, that Thou art an almighty God: Thou canst quicken the dead, restore the sick to health, make the weak strong, and gladden the sorrowful. I was nigh unto death, but Thy goodness has preserved my life this time. Therefore, my God, I am firmly resolved by Thy grace to employ the health which Thou hast granted me, the life which Thou hast renewed to me, and the years which by Thy counsel I am still to spend in this world, for Thy glory and in true godliness. Oh, in my pains and sickness I have learned that silver and gold, worldly honor and glory, even good friends, could not take from me the burden of my cross; but for Thy help I should have had to perish in my affliction. Therefore, I will henceforth seek after vain things no longer, but find my delight in Thee. I will shun the sinful society of the world; I will compass Thine altar, O Lord, that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Thy wondrous works. Having had this special mercy revealed to me, I will deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, in order that like the wise virgins I may be ready,

when Thou comest to me with the summons of death and my life shall end, to enter in at the marriage of the Lamb in everlasting joy and glory.

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but Thou art mighty, Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand: Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more. Open now the crystal fountain Whence the healing streams do flow, Let the fiery, cloudy pillar Lead me all my journey through: Strong Deliverer, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield! When I tread the verge of Jordan, Bid my anxious fears subside; Death of death, and hell's Destruction, Land me safe on Canaan's side; Songs of praises I will ever give to Thee. Amen.

HYMN.

How can I thank Thee, Lord,
For all Thy loving-kindness?
Thou hast so long a time
Had patience with my blindness,
When dead in many sins
And trespasses I lay,
And kindled, holy God,
Thine anger every day.

Lord, Thou hast shown to me
Divine commiseration:
I persevered in sin,
But Thou in great compassion;
I did resist Thee, Lord,
Deferring to repent;
Thou didst defer Thy wrath
And instant punishment.

It is Thy work alone
That now I am converted,
Thy power o'er Satan's work
In me Thou hast asserted;
Thy mercy, that doth reach
Unto the clouds, O Lord,
Did break my stony heart
By Thine own mighty Word.

Though able to offend
Thee, Lord, by sin and failing,
Still to regain Thy grace
My strength was unavailing.
Though I could fall from grace
And choose the way of sin,
I had no strength to rise,
A new life to begin.

But Thou hast raised me up,
And with divine compassion
Hast shown me, Lord, the way
That leadeth to salvation.
I thank Thee, Lord, that now
My former sins I hate,
And freely — not from fear —
Dead works abominate.

That I may not backslide,
But life in heav'n inherit,
Grant me, while here I live,
O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit
That He may give me strength
In mine infirmity,
And e'er renew my heart
To serve Thee willingly.

O guide and lead me, Lord,
While here below I wander;
Grant that I follow Thee,
My Guide and my Commander.
For if I lead myself,
I soon am led astray;
But if Thou ledest me,
I do my duty aye.

O Father, God of love,
Hear now my supplication!
Lord Jesus, Son of God,
O grant me Thy salvation!
And Thou, O Holy Ghost,
Always abide with me
That I may serve Thee here
And there eternally!

**Scripture Passages and Short Prayers for Those
to Ponder Who Were Sick and have been Restored
to Health.**

O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.
Ps. 30, 2.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath shown to me His marvelous loving-kindness. Thy vows are upon me, O God; I will renew praises unto Thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, my feet from falling, that I may come before Thee in the light of the living.

I cried to God in my distress, His mercy heard me calling; My Savior saw my helplessness, And kept my feet from falling; For this, Lord, praise and thanks to Thee! Praise God most high, praise God with me! To God all praise and glory!

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant. *Gen. 32, 10.*

O yes, my God! It is nothing but mercy and love on Thy part that Thou hast delivered me from my pains and troubles. I am altogether unworthy of all such benefits. Thy faithfulness has been truly glorified in me when Thou didst deal with me in loving-kindness, as Thou didst promise. Let this never pass out of my mind. Let me always be roused by this remembrance to show love and faithfulness to Thee as long as I live, in order that I may as Thy servant render Thee acceptable service, and finally as a good and faithful servant receive Thy cheering welcome: Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord!

You ask me how I know That when all life below Is past for me, I, often stained by sin, Shall meet heaven's welcome in To purity? I answer, Not because I keep God's holy laws. Alas!

I fail. No righteousness of mine Before that court divine Can then avail. But One did say, "Believe On Me, and thus receive My gift of life." How can I trust my Lord, Or honor His dear Word, If doubts are rife? 'Tis not that I am good; That must be understood; But I believe, And, therefore, not to know That I to Him shall go Would my Lord grieve. It is not I who save, Nor any worth I have; Do you not see? But I can be quite sure I shall reach heav'n so pure, Because 'tis He.

He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. *Job 33, 28—30.*

Lord Jesus, Thou hast proved Thyself to me a true Redeemer and Deliverer, because Thou hast not only kept my soul, but also preserved my body when there was but a step, yea, a hair's breadth between death and me. Deliver me still from spiritual and bodily destruction. Deliver me from the hand of all my enemies. Deliver me especially from the dominion of sin. Grant me grace that I may become a light in the Lord and walk as a child of light. Let me serve Thee without fear in holiness and righteousness before Thee all the days of my life. Give me strength to keep my faith and preserve a good conscience to the end. The rest of my time in the flesh let me live, not in the lusts of men, but to Thy will, that I may thus remain Thine forever.

As thy day thy strength shall be: As thou needest hour by hour, Comes the promise unto thee What thou needest — nothing more. "Take no thought," the Master says, "What shall greet the morrow's sun; Leave with Me thy yesterdays This is thine — this day alone. "Lies it through the sunny meads, Rosy-hedged and velvet-lined; Joy sufficient for thy needs Every gladsome step shall find." Is it of all beauty shorn, He will heavenly beauty lend;

If thou falter, weary, worn, He is there, thy Savior, Friend. Well He knows thy every loss — Who hath none from hill to shore? He will help thee bear thy cross, He hath borne one long before. “Come,” He pleads, “and every care I will lift from off thy breast: Come, ye burdened, nothing spare; Come, and I will give you rest.” “Come!” And, wherefore, dearest Lord, Should I turn away from Thee, Thee, who holdest in Thy hand Strength that shall sufficient be, Strength to toil and strength to wait, Strength to suffer and be strong; Strength to reach yon pearly gate, Where all tears are turned to song?

This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.
John 11, 4.

I have realized, my Savior, that in me has been done what once upon a time Thou didst say concerning Thy sick friend Lazarus. My past sickness was not unto death; for in a manner quite glorious Thou hast delivered me from it. To Thee alone belongs the glory. Let my recovery also redound to Thy glory. Give me a new heart and a new mind. Let me proclaim everywhere the great things Thou hast done for me. Give me strength to live to Thy glory alone, and to praise Thee without ceasing with my body and with my spirit.

Thus all my pilgrim way along I'll sing aloud Thy praises, That men may hear the grateful song My voice unwearied raises; Be joyful in the Lord, my heart! Both soul and body, bear your part! To God all praise and glory!

Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. *John 5, 14.*

O Lord Jesus, let me always bear in mind this warning. One well-deserved punishment for my sins Thou hast taken from me by delivering me from the sickness through which I have passed. Something worse than that can easily happen to me

if I again consent to sin and act contrary to God's commandment. From this preserve me graciously. Guard me that henceforth I may no more sin purposely, but walk before Thee and remain godly. O unite my heart to fear Thy name.

Grant honor, truth, prosperity, And love thy Word to ponder;
False doctrines, Lord, keep far from me, And grant both here and
yonder What serves my everlasting bliss; Preserve me from un-
righteousness In all my life and doings.

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. All the days of the afflicted are evil; but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. *Prov. 15, 13. 15—17.*

My God, Thou hast taught me the truth of this by my late sickness. There I have learned what a vain thing property and money, prosperity and good fortune are, and how useless they are when we are deprived of health. Yea, I have learned that this valuable gift cannot be purchased with all that we possess. Thanks be unto Thee for this wholesome lesson! Now enable me also to heed it. Keep me from becoming enamored of earthly things and from prizing them more highly than I should. Enable me to esteem health very highly as a precious gift, to guard it with all diligence, and to avoid everything by which I might forfeit it.

O God, Thou faithful God, Thou Fount that ever flowest,
Without whom nothing is, Who all good gifts bestowest, A pure
and healthy frame, O give me, and within A conscience free from
blame, A soul unhurt by sin. And if a longer life Be here on
earth decreed me, And Thou through many a strife To age at last
wilt lead me, Thy patience in me shed, Avert all sin and shame,
And crown my hoary head With pure, untarnished fame.

I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments. *Ps. 119, 106.*

Oftentimes during my past sickness I have thought of amending my life. Oftentimes, too, I have vowed to Thee, O God, to do so. I now renew my promise. Remind me of it often, lest I forget to pay Thee my vows. Give me the strength of Thy Spirit to fulfil them. Make me through Him a person who henceforth walks in Thy ways, keeps Thy commandments, and does according to them. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me in all my ways. Let me to the end live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, in order that I may thus realize that godliness is profitable unto all things and has the promise of this life and of that which is to come.

My God, accept my heart this day, And make it always Thine, That I from Thee no more may stray, No more from Thee decline. Before the cross of Him who died, Behold, I prostrate fall; Let every sin be crucified, Let Christ be all in all! Anoint me with Thy heavenly grace, Adopt me for Thine own; That I may see Thy glorious face, And worship at Thy throne. May the dear blood, once shed for me, My blest atonement prove, That I from first to last may be The purchase of Thy love. Let every thought and work and word To Thee be ever giv'n; Then life shall be Thy service, Lord, And death the gate of heav'n!

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. *Ps. 37, 37.*

Dear Father, let this faithful call of Thine ever resound in my heart and ring in my ears; also make me able to follow it faithfully. Make me truly godly. Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God. Thy Spirit is good; lead me in the land of uprightness. Grant me strength in even greater measure to fol-

low after holiness, and to do Thy will. Enable me to grow and increase in faith, in love, in godliness from day to day, and bless me with prosperity while I live here.

Thou Treasure inexhaustible, Thou Source of true delight, What care I for the world's applause Or for its diamonds bright? More prized by far one smile from Thee Than all earth holds most dear; I want for nothing man can give, For I have Jesus here. Yes, yes, this Lov'd One is my own; Could any richer be, When all He has and all He is — All, all, belong to me? In Him is bread that can sustain, And living wine to cheer; And there's a heart that beats for me, For I have Jesus here. 'Tis sweet to linger by His side, To listen to His voice, For, oh! He speaks in melting tones, Which make my heart rejoice. And when His name, His own dear name, Resounds upon my ear, I can but weep for very joy, For I have Jesus here. And often now I love to sit, And watch for His return, For though in spirit He is here, I still His absence mourn; But soon shall dawn that brightest day, Soon, soon, He shall appear. And, oh! I must be with Him then, For I have Jesus here.

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; for He maketh sore, and bindeth up; He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. *Job 5, 17—19.*

How true is Thy Word, O my God; for I have fared exactly as it is written here: Thou didst make me sore, and bind me up; Thou didst wound me, and make me whole. Thou hast delivered me from many and various troubles. Blessed be Thy holy name! Perhaps some new trouble awaits me; Thou alone knowest. If it should come, grant that I may be truly prepared and ready for it, and let me firmly rely on Thy Word when it comes. Let me recall how often Thou hast gloriously helped me. Let me look to Thee in childlike confidence and hope, and

wait until Thou wilt help me again. Let me taste and see, even beneath Thy chastening rod, Thy good purposes concerning me, and that all things work together for good to them that love Thee.

If sorrow comes, He sent it, In Him I put my trust; I never shall repent it, For He is true and just, And endeth every ill; My life and soul I render, To God, my strong Defender, Let Him do as He will. Whate'er shall be His pleasure Is surely best for me; He gave His dearest Treasure, That our weak hearts may see How good His will is toward us; And in His Son He gave us Whate'er could bless and save us; Praise Him who loveth thus!

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Rom. 6, 11.*

My God, Thou hast spared my life and given it anew to me. Hence it belongs to Thee alone. Put me always in mind that I must consecrate it to Thee alone. Let me daily die unto sin and live unto righteousness. Let me live to Thy glory, and order all that I do or forbear doing according to Thy will. Let me always find favor in Thy sight through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Renew me by Thy grace from day to day, and make me to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Thee. Keep me in Thy fellowship to the end that no one may pluck me out of Thy hand.

I need a dying Savior, Whose efficacious blood My soul within can cleanse from sin, And bring me peace with God. I need a living Savior, Who sees my daily need; For me to stand at God's right hand, And for my soul to plead. I need a patient Savior, Whose love can still forget The many days I've left His ways, When sin has me beset. I need a faithful Savior, Sometimes to use the scourge To keep my eyes upon the prize, And on my feet to urge. I need a human Savior, Who knows what sorrow means, To wipe my tears in all life's years, And temper all its scenes. I need a mighty Savior, The very Lord of heav'n, To hold me fast until the last, Whom grace has first forgiv'n.