

[Several tracts. IV] A letter ... to one of his sons, after his recovery from the smallpox / [John Hales].

Contributors

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Don't forget
the Countess

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By Sir Matthew Hale.

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A
LETTER

FROM

S^r MATTHEW HALE, K^t

Sometime Lord Chief Justice of

ENGLAND:

To One of his

S O N S,

After his Recovery from the

S M A L L - P O X.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. Playford, for W. Shrovsbery, at
the Sign of the Bible in Duke-lane. 1684.

27,249

A

LETTER

FROM

S. MATTHEW HALE, K.

Sometime Lord Chief Justice of

ENGLAND



To One of his

SONS

After his Recovery from the

SMALL-POX.

LONDON,

Printed by G. P. ... for W. Stansbury, &c.

[1]
A
LETTER

FROM

Sir MATTHEW HALE,

To One of his

SONS.

Son —

Although by reason of the Contagiousness of your Disease, and the many dependents I have upon me, I thought it not convenient to come unto you during your sickness; yet I have not been wanting in my earnest Prayers to Almighty God for you, nor in using the best means I could for your recovery.

It hath pleased God to hear my Prayers for you, and above means and hopes now to restore you to a Competent degree of health, for which I return unto him my humble and hearty thanks, and now you are almost ready to come abroad again, therefore I have thought fit to write this little Book to you, for these reasons.

1. Because it is not yet seasonable for you to come to me, in respect of these same reasons above mentioned, which hitherto have restrained my coming to you.

2. Because at your coming abroad, you will be subject to Temptations, by young and inconsiderate Company, which instead of serious Thankfulness to God for his mercy to you, might perchance persuade you to a vain, and light jollity: And I thought fit to send you these Lines to prevent such inconsiderate impressions, and to meet you just at your coming abroad, to season you with more wise and serious principles.

3. Because you are even now come out of a great and sore Visitation, and therefore, in all probability, in the fittest temper to receive the impressions of a serious Epistle from your Father.

And I have chosen to put it into this little Volume, because it is somewhat too long
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for a Letter; and may be better preserved for your future use and memory.

God Almighty hath brought you to the very Gates of Death, and shewed you the Terroure, and Danger of it; and after that he had shewn you this Spectacle of your own Mortality, he hath marvellously rescued and delivered you from that danger, and given you life, even from the dead, so that you are as a man new Born into the World, or returned to Life again, which now you seem as it were to begin: You have passed through those two great Dispensations of the Divine Providence, those two great Experiments, that God is pleased sometimes to use towards the Children of men, namely, Correction and Deliverance, his Rod and his Staff: And therefore in all reasonable conjecture, this is the most seasonable time to give you a Lecture upon both, and those admonitions which may be, render the one, and the other profitable unto you: And this I shall endeavour to do in these following Lines.

First, you shall not need to fear that I intend to upbraid you with the errors of your Youth, or to expostulate with you touching them: For I do assure you, I do from my heart forgive you all your follies, and miscarriages: And I do assure my self,

that you have repented of them, and resolved against them for the time to come, and that thereupon God-almighty hath also fully forgiven what is past: And this is a great assurance thereof to me, in that he hath so wonderfully restored you, and given you as it were a new Life, wherein you may obey and serve him better than ever you yet did: And therefore if in this Letter, there be any touches concerning former vanities, assure your self, they are not angry repetitions, but only necessary Cautions for your future ordering of your Life.

The business of these papers, is principally, to commend unto you, two general Remembrances, and certain Results and Collections, that arise from them, they are all seasonable for your present Condition, and will be of singular use and benefit to you, in the whole ensuing Course of your Life.

First, I would have you as long as you live, remember your late Sickness in all its Circumstances, and these plain and profitable inferences, and advices, that arise from it.

Secondly, I would have you remember as long as you live, your great deliverance, and the several Circumstances of it, and those necessary duties that are incumbent upon you, in relation thereunto.

It is evident to daily experience, that while Afflictions are upon us, and while deliverances are fresh, they commonly have some good effect upon us: But as the Iron is no sooner out of the fire, but it quickly returns to its old coldness, and hardness; so when the Affliction or Deliverance is past, we usually forget them, count them common things, attribute them to Meanes and second Causes: And so the good that Mankind should gather from them vanish, and men grow quickly to be but what they were before they came; their sick-bed promises are forgot, when the sickness is over.

And therefore I shall give you an account of your sickness, and of your recovery: And let them never be forgotten by you, as often as those Spots and Marks in your Face are reflected to your view from the Glass, as often as this paper comes in your sight, nay as often as you open your Eyes from sleep, which were once closed, and likely never to open again; so often and more often remember your sickness, and your recovery, and the admonitions that this paper lends you from the Consideration of both.

First, therefore touching your late sickness, I would have you remember these particulars: 1. The Disease it self, in its own nature, is now become ordinarily very Mortal, especially to those of your Age: Look upon even the last years General Bill of Mortality, you will find near Two Thousand dead of that Disease the last Year, and had not God been very merciful to you, you might have been one of that number, with as great likelyhood as any of them that Dyed of that Disease: 2. It was a Contagious Disease, that fecluded the access of your nearest Relations: 3. Your sickness surpris'd you upon a suddain, when you seemed to be in your full strength: 4. Your sickness rendred you Noysom to your self, and all that were about you, and a spectacle full of deformity, by the excess of your Disease beyond most that are sick thereof: 5. It was a fierce and violent sickness, it did not only take away the common supplies of nature, as digestion, sleep, strength, but it took away your memory, your understanding, and the very sence of your own Condition, or of what might be conducive to your good: All that you could do was only to make your Condition more desperate, in Case they that were about you, had not prevented it, and taken more
Care

Care for you, than you did or could for your self: 6. Your sickness was desperate, in so much, that your Symptoms, and the violence of your distemper, were without Example; and you were in the very next degree to absolute Rottenness, Putrefaction, and Death it self.

Look upon the foregoing Description, and remember that such was your Condition, you were as sad a Picture of Mortality, and Corruption, as any thing but Death it self could make: Remember it: And Remember also, these ensuing Instructions, that may make that Remembrance profitable and useful to you.

First, Remember that *Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, nor doth trouble spring out of the ground*, Job 5. 6. But this terrible visitation, was sent to you from the wise overruling Providence of God: It is he that bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up again. It is true, that this Disease may seem common, but you may and must know, that there was more than the common hand of God in sending it upon you, in such a manner, and such a measure, and at such a season, when you were grown up to a Competent Age, and degree of understanding, to make a due use of it, that you might see his justice in Afflicting you, and his goodness in delivering you from such a danger.

Secondly,

Secondly, Remember that Almighty God is of most infinite Wisdom, Justice and Mercy, he hath excellent ends in all his dispensations of his providences: He never sends an Affliction, but it brings a message with it, his Rod has a voice; a voice Commanding us, to search and try our ways, and to examin our selves whether there hath not been some great sin against him, or neglect of duty to him; a voice Commanding us to repent of what is a miss, to humble our selves under his mighty hand, to turn to him that striketh us, to seek to him by Prayer for deliverance, to depend upon him by Faith, in his mercy and power; to amend what is a miss, to be more watchful, circumspect, and obedient to him, in the future course of our lives, to fear to offend him: And if a man hear this voice, God hath his end of mercy and goodness, and man hath the fruit, benefit, and advantage of his Affliction, and commonly a Comfortable issue of it: Read often and attentively the 33th. Chapter of *Job*, from the beginning to the end.

Thirdly, Remember how uncertain, and frail a Creature man is, even in his seeming strongest Age, and Constitution of health; even then a pestilential Air, some evil humour in his blood, some obstruction it may
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be of a little vein or artery, a little meat ill-digested, and a thousand small occurrences may upon a suddain, without any Considerable warning, plunge a man into a desperate and mortal sickness, and bring a man to the grave. Remember this terrible sickness seized upon you suddenly, pulled down your strength quickly, and brought you to the very brink of the Grave: And though God hath recovered you, you know not how soon you may be brought into the like Condition.

Fourthly, Remember therefore, that you make and keep your peace with God, and walk in his fear in the days of health; especially after so great a deliverance, and that for very many reasons: 1. You know not whether you may not be overtaken with sudden Death, and then it will be impossible for you to begin that work: 2. If you have sickness to give you warning of the approach of Death, yet you know not whether that sickness may not suddenly take away your senses, memory, or understanding, whereby you may be disabled to make your peace with God, or to exercise any serious thoughts concerning it: 3. But if that sickness give you fair warning, and take not away your understanding, yet your own experience cannot chuse but let you know,
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that pain, and weakness, and distraction of mind, and impatience, and unquietness, are the common attendants of a sick bed, and render that season at least very difficult, then to begin that greatest and solemnness, and most important business of a mans Life.

4. But if your sickness be not so sharp, but that it leaves you patience, and attention of mind for that great business, how do you know whether your heart shall be inclined to it? Repentance and Conversion to God is his gift, though it must be our endeavour: And though the merciful God, never refuseth a repenting, returning offender; yet how can a man that all the time of his health hath neglected Almighty God, refused his invitations, and served his lusts and his sin, expect reasonably, that God in the time of sickness, when the man can serve his sins no longer, will give him the grace of repentance?

What ever you do therefore, be sure you make your peace with God, and keep it in the days of your health, especially after so great a deliverance from so desperate a sickness.

Fifthly, Remember that your Condition is never so low, but that God hath power to deliver you, and therefore trust in him: But remember withall, that your Condition

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is never so safe and secure, but you are within the reach of his power to bring you down: You are now by the mercy of God recovered from a terrible sickness, think not with your self that your turn is now served, and that you shall have no more need of him, and therefore that you may live as you list, and never regard your duty to him; deceive not your self herein, remember that this sickness, within two or three days brought you upon your knees, even from a seeming state of health: The Case is the same still, nay much worse, if this Affliction make you not better; Almighty God called you to love, and serve, and obey him, by the still voice of his word, by the perswasion of your Friends, by the advises and reproofs of your Father; and when these were not so effectual, (as I know you now wish they had been,) He sent a messenger that spake lowder, that would be heard, even this terrible sickness; and most certainly, if you have heard the voice of this Rod, (as I am hopeful you have) and thereupon entirely turn to your duty to God in all sincerity and obedience, it is the happiest providence that ever befell you, and you will upon sound Conviction, conclude with the Prophet, *It was good for me that I was Afflicted*: But on the other side, if notwithstanding this voice.

voice of the Rod, you shall after your recovery turn again to folly, and vanity, and excess, and harden your self against this messenger; know for certain you are within the reach of the Divine Justice and Power: *And if you walk contrary to him, he will walk contrary to you, and punish you yet seven times for your sins, Levit. 26. 24.* I therefore give you that Counsel, that our Lord gave to him that he had healed; *Behold thou art made whole, go thy way and sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee.* There is no contesting with Almighty God, he is ready and easie to be reconciled to the worst of men, upon humiliation and true repentance, but he is not to be Mastered or Conquered by obstinacy and opposition: *Who hath hardened himself against him and prospered? Job 9. 4.*

Sixthly, I would have you Remember, that sickness as well as death doth undeceive Mankind, and shews them where their true Wisdom lies: When a young man, especially, is in the full career of his vanity and pleasures, he thinks that Religion, and the fear of God, and walking according to his word, and the serious practice of duties of Religion towards God, prayer unto him, making our peace with him, are pitiful, low, foolish, and inconsiderable matters, and that those that practise them, are a sort

of brain-sick, melancholy, unintelligent persons, that want wit or breeding, and understand not Themselves or the World; that they are mere empty fancies and imaginations, whimsies, puritanism, and I know not what else: But on the other side, they think they are the brave men that live splendidly, deny themselves no Pleasure, can Drink, and Roar, and Whore, and Debauch, and wear the newest Fashions; it may be, this Gallant or Wise man comes to be taken with a fit of sickness, that tells him he must dye, Death is at the door, his Glass is almost out, and but a few sands left in it: And then the man becomes quite of another judgment, he cries out of his former foolishness, he finds his pleasures and intemperance and excess, are not only perfect follies, but madness, vexation, torment; and Religion and Prayer to God, and Devotion and Peace with God, they are now in request; and now nothing but declamations against those Courses, which in his health he valued as the only Wisdom; and nothing but promises of amendment, and reformation of Life, and Devotion to God; so sickness hath undeceived the man, and given him a true and rectified judgment concerning Wisdom, and Folly, quite contrary to what he had before. Therefore I would have you recollect your self.

self, (and if the violence of your Disease left you at any time the use of your reason) bethink your self what opinion you then had of intemperance, wasting of time, unlawful lust, or any of those sins that formerly pleased you in your health, whether they did not appear to you in your sickness, very vain, foolish, vexing things, such as you wished never to have been committed; and on the other side, what opinion you had in your sickness touching Piety towards God, hearing of his word, calling upon his name, redeeming of time, modesty, temperance: Whether those actions of your life past, that favoured of these, were not Comfortable, and Contenting to you in your sickness; whether your purposes, and promises, and resolutions of your sick-bed, were not full of such thoughts as these: If it please God to recover me, I will never be such a fool as I have been, I will never drink to excess, mispend my time, I will never keep such evil Company as I have done, I will be more devout towards God, more obedient to his word, more observant of good Counsel, and the like: And if you find it to be so, I must desire you to remember that affliction, is the School of Wisdom, it rectifies mens judgments; and I must again desire you, to keep your judgment right still, and set not
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the recovery of your health become the loss of your wits; but in your health retain that Wisdom your sickness taught you, and practice what you then promised: *Remember he is the wisest man that provides for his latter end: Deut. 32. 29.*

Seventhly, Remember by your former sickness, how pitiful an inconsiderable thing the Body of man is; how soon is the strength of it turned to faintness, and weakness, the beauty of it to ugliness and deformity, the consistency of it to putrefaction and rottenness; and then remember how foolish a thing it is, to be proud of such a Carcass, to spend all, or the greatest part of our time in trimming and adorning it, in studying new Fashions, and new Postures, and new Devices to set it out: In spending our time and provisions in pampering it, in pleasing the Appetite; and yet this is the chief business of most young men of this Age: Learn therefore Humility and Lowliness, learn to furnish thy Noble and Immortal part, thy Soul, with Religion, Grace, Knowledge, Virtue, Goodness, for that will retain it to eternity: How miserable is that mans Condition, that whiles sickness hath made his Body a deformed, weak, loathsome thing, sin hath made his Soul as ugly, and deformed; The Grave will heal or cover the deformity

of the former, but the Soul will carry its Ulcers and Deformity (without Repentance) into the next World: Learn and remember therefore, to have thy greatest Care for thy Noblest part, furnish it with Piety, Grace, Knowledge, the Fear and Love of God, Faith in Christ: And as for thy Body, use it Decently, Soberly and Comely, that it may be a fit Instrument for thy Soul to use in this Life, but be not proud of it, nor make it thy chiefest care and business to adorn, much less defile it.

Eighthly, Remember to avoid intemperance and sinful Lusts: It is true sickness and diseases, and finally death, are by the Laws and Constitutions of our nature incident to all Mankind: But intemperance, excess of Eating and Drinking, Drunkenness, Whoreing, Uncleanneſs and disorder bring more diseases, especially upon young men, and destroy more young, strong, healthy men, than the Plague, or other natural or accidental distempers: They weaken the Brain, Corrupt the Blood, decay and distemper the Spirit, disorder and putrefie the humours, and make the body a very bag full of putrefaction: Some diseases are as it were specifical, and appropriate to these vices, other diseases are commonly occasioned by them, by their inflammation and putrification

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on of the Blood and humours: And all Diseases, even those that are Epidemical, Natural or Casual, yet are rendred by those vices far more sharp, lasting, malignant and incurable, by that stock of Corrupted matter, they lodge in the body to feed those Diseases, and that impotency that these vices bring upon Nature to resist them: Therefore if you ever expect to have as well a sound body, as a sound mind, carefully avoid intemperance and debauchery: The most temperate and sober persons are subject to sickness, weakness and Diseases, but the intemperate can never be long without them.

And thus I have done with the prospect of your Disease, and at least many of these profitable uses you may gather from the remembrance of it.

II. I shall now in the second place, put you in Remembrance of your Deliverance, touching which, you must remember: 1. That it was a great, eminent, and extraordinary Deliverance, you need no other evidence of it, than by looking back upon the greatness and severity of your Disease before-mentioned: 2. It was a deliverance by the immediate power and mercy of that God, that sent you the Visitation.

Una eademque manus vulnus opemque tulit.
If you had been delivered by the immediate

efficacy of means, yet you are blind if you see not that the efficacy of means depends upon the providence of God, it is he that provides it, and that makes means effectual. But in this deliverance God hath pleased to hedge up (as it were) your way from attributing it to means, and hath given you an indication, that it was done by his own immediate power, and that he delivered you above, and beyond means: It is true, you had a very able and careful Physitian, and very great attendance and care was used about you: But when your Physitian and all that were about you, began to despair of your recovery, when means proved ineffectual, when the strength of Nature was exhausted and baffled by your Disease, God Almighty upon a suddain, and beyond expectation, relieved you, and as it were by his own hand brought you back from the very threshold of the Grave: And this he did, that you and all about you, and all your Relations might take notice of it, that it was he that did it.

And thus Almighty God hath exercised towards you, two great Experiments, the first of his severity, the second of his mercy: And as your Sicknes and Rod had its voice, (a lowd and sharp voice) so your recovery and deliverance hath its voice also, a sweet, gentle, and (I hope) effectual voice; and I will as shortly as I can tell you what it is.

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First, Remember this benefit, remember it was reached out unto you, from the mere power, goodness, and mercy of God: Remember evermore in your Heart and Soul, to be thankful to him for it: Remember as long as you live upon all occasions to acknowledge it; daily to return upon your knees humble thanks for it, to him that had regard to you, and remembered you in your low Estate, to him that forgave your Iniquities, and healed your Disease, to him that did this for you when all means failed, that did it for you, when you had not the understanding to call upon him for it; to him that did it for you, that deserved it not, for you that had provoked him, and neglected him too much in the time of your health. This God it was, that thus delivered you; Read often the 103 *Psalms* attentively, and apply it to your own Condition, it will do you good.

2. Remember to acknowledge this goodness of God with all humility; your deliverance was not the purchase of your own power, nor of your own desert, it was an Act of the free and undeserved goodness of God; what Almighty God said by *Moses* unto the *Israelites*, Deut. 9. 4. 6. I shall say to you with some variation; understand therefore that the Lord thy God hath not

given thee this deliverance for thy Righteousness: No it is the mere effect of his own goodness, and to give you opportunity to praise him, and serve him, better than ever you did before.

3. Remember that although great deliverances, require your great acknowledgments, yet there is somewhat more required, namely, a real practical glorifying of God, by ordering your Conversation aright, by serving him, pleasing him, obeying him, living to his honour: This Almighty God expects as well as praises, and acknowledgments: As the end of God in afflictions is to make men better, so the end of God in deliverances is to make men better, and if we are not the better men by both dispensations, we do as much as in us lies disappoint Almighty God in his design, and disappoint our selves of the benefit and advantage intended in both, and easily to be gained by both. This therefore is the voice of this deliverance, it calls sweetly, and gently indeed, but earnestly and effectually for amendment of life: And that upon two great and moving arguments: 1. Your recovery and great deliverance calls for this from you, upon the accompt of common ingenuity and good nature, which obligeth a man to be observant and dutiful to his benefactor:

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God Almighty is the greatest Benefactor, and hath manifested himself such to you, upon a visible and eminent account; this is engagement enough upon the account of common humanity, to be dutiful and obedient to him: When therefore you are at any time by the Temptation of your own Corruption, or by the sollicitation of evil persons, solicited to evil Actions: Consider thus with your self, Is this a becoming return to that God, that hath thus wonderfully delivered me? Is this the requital that I shall make to him for his mercy? Shall I please a vain Lust, or a vain Companion, and displease the great God of Heaven and Earth, that hath thus delivered me and done me more good, than all the World could ever do me, or than I can ever recompence? *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O ye foolish People, and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?* Deut. 32. 6.

2. This mercy calls for your obedience to God, in an eminent manner upon the account of common prudence and discretion; the benefit of your obedience to him will be your own, your own happiness in this Life, and in that to come: There is no greater moral security against future dangers and troubles, than obedience, and reformation of Life upon great deliverances received, nor is there

there any greater invitation of new troubles and mischiefs, than ingratitude, disobedience, and great sins after great mercies and deliverances: There is a kind of certain and infallible connexion between great sins, after great mercies received, and great Judgments to follow, *Ingentia beneficia, ingentia peccata, ingentia supplicia*. Again, as I have formerly told you, you do not know how soon you may stand in need of the same mercy, and goodness of God, which you have formerly found: You are never out of the reach of his power, and the necessity of his help; what ever you do, therefore never disoblige him, by whom you Live, and whose extraordinary mercy you may stand in need of, you know not how soon: There is nothing in the World doth more provoke God, than neglect, forgetfulness, or willful disobedience after signal mercies: These provoke the merciful God to a severity of the highest kind, because the sweetest and most obliging call of mercy and deliverance is neglected: Read the first Chapter of the *Proverbs* attentively.

And the merciful God hath given us a plain Rule and Method, how he may be served, obeyed, and pleased, he hath given us a plain discovery of his will in the Scriptures of both Testaments; Read that often,
you

you have it by you, and you need not go far to find what is your Maker's Will, and what that obedience is, that he requires as the return of this, and all other his mercies: Yet I think it not amiss, to mind you of some particulars, that may be useful for you upon this occasion, and to direct you how particularly to improve it, and so order your future Life in some measure answerable to it.

1. I would have you make it your first business after your perfect Recovery, to Consider the course of your Life past, since you came to the Age of discretion, and see what hath been amiss in it; whether you have not neglected Religion, and the Duties of it too much, as Prayer, hearing the Word Preached, observing the Lords day, receiving the Sacrament; whether you have not been guilty of intemperance, excess of drinking, wantonness, uncleanness, idleness, mispending your time, and those supplies which have been allowed you for your maintenance; whether you have not too much delighted in vain and sinful, and disorderly Company, vanity and expence in Apparel: And if any such, or the like faults have been, repent of them, be sorry for them, resolve against them; and let the future course of your Life be amended in relation thereunto:

I have before told you, that your heavenly Father hath forgiven you, and I have forgiven you, neither do I mention these things to upbraid you for them, but that you upon the consideration of what hath been amiss, may be thereby the better enabled to rectify and set in order your future Life: If this be done and practised, I will reckon your late sickness and distemper one of the greatest blessings that ever beset you.

2. I would have you always keep a habit of the fear of God upon your heart; Consider his presence, order your Life as in his presence, Consider that he always sees you, beholds, and takes notice of you, and especially whether you carry your self answerable to this great deliverance, it is one of those Talents for which he will expect an Account from you.

3. I would have you frequently and thankfully consider of the great Love of God in Jesus Christ, whom he hath given to be the Instructor, and Governour, and Sacrifice for the sins of you and all Mankind, through whom upon Repentance you have assurance of the remission of your sins and eternal Life; and frequently consider how great an ingagement this is upon you, and all Mankind, to live according to such a hope and such a mercy.

4. I would have you every morning read a portion of the Holy Scriptures, 'till you have read the Bible from the beginning to the end: Observe it well, read it reverently and attentively, set your heart upon it, and lay it up in your memory, and make it the direction of your life; it will make you a wise and a good man: I have been acquainted somewhat with Men and Books, and have had long experience in Learning, and in the World: There is no Book like the Bible for excellent Learning, Wisdom, and Use, and it is want of understanding in them, that think or speak otherwise.

5. Every morning and every evening, upon your knees with all reverence and attention of mind, return hearty thanks to God for his mercy to you, and particularly for this deliverance, desire his Grace to enable you to walk in some measure answerable to it, beg his Providence to protect you, his Grace to direct you, to keep you from evil Actions, and evil Persons, and evil occurrences, beg his pardon for your sin, and the continuance of his favour, always concluding with the Lords Prayer.

6. Observe conscientiously the Lords day to keep it Holy, avoid idle Company, idle Discourse, Recreations, and secular employments upon that day; resort twice that day
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to the publick Prayers and Sermon, come early to it, be attentive at it, keep your Eyes and Mind from roveing after vain thoughts or objects; and spend the rest of that day, that is free from necessary occasions, in Reading the Scriptures, or some good Books of Divinity.

7. Once ever Term at least come preparedly, and reverently to the Holy Communion, receive it with great reverence, and thankfulness, and due Consideration of the end of its institution: Renew your Covenant with Almighty God that you made in Baptism, and to live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly before him, and beg his Grace and Strength to perform it.

And as those directions before, do more specially relate to Almighty God, and your deportment immediately towards him; so these that follow, more especially relate to your self and others, and your moral Conversation: Therefore,

8. Be very moderate in Eating and Drinking, Drunkenness is the great vice of the time, and by Drunkenness I do mean not only gross Drunkenness, but also Tipling, Drinking excessively, and immoderately, or more than is convenient or necessary; avoid those Companies that are given to it, come not into those places that are devoted
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to that beastly Vice, namely, Taverns and Alehouses, avoid and refuse those devices that are used to occasion it, as Drinking and Pledging of Healths: Be resolute against it, and when your resolution is once known, you will never be solicited to it: The *Rechabites* were Commanded by their Father not to drink Wine, and they obeyed it, and had a blessing for it; my Command to you is not so strict, I allow you the moderate use of Wine and strong Drink at your meals, I only forbid you the excess, or unnecessary use of it, and those Places and Companies, and Artifices that are Temptations to it.

9. Avoid Wanton and Lascivious Actions, Speeches and Company: Read *Proverbs* 2, 5, 6, 7. 9. A Whore hunts for the precious Life of a man, and that vice brings a ruine with it to the Body, Soul, and Estate: If you cannot Conveniently contain your self in a single Life, and be of Competent health, Marry, but with the Advise and Counsel of your Father, while he lives.

10. Be frugal of your time (it is one of the best Jewels we have) and to that end avoid Idleness, it consumes your time, and lays you open to worse inconveniences; let your Recreations be healthy, and Creditable, and Moderate, without too much expence of time, or money: Go not to Stage-plays, they
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are a most profuse wasting of time; value time by that estimate we would have of it, when we want it, what would not a sick-man give for those portions of time of health, that he had formerly improvidently wasted?

11. Be diligent in your Study and Calling; it is an Act of duty to Almighty God that requires it, and it will be your wisdom and benefit; it will be a good expence of time, a prevention from a Thousand inconveniences and temptations, that otherwise will befall a man; it will furnish you with knowledge and understanding, give you the advantage and means of a comfortable and plentiful subsistence, and make you a support, comfort and benefit to your Friends and Country.

12. Be frugal in your expences, live within the Compass of that Exhibition, that Gods Providence and your Father's abilities shall supply you withall; it is enough to maintain an honest provident man, and ten times more will not be enough for a profuse mind: A frugal man will live Comfortably and Plentifully upon a little; and a profuse man will live beggerly, necessitously and in continual want, whatever his supplies be.

13. In all your expences consider before hand : Can I not be well enough without this that I am about to buy ? Is there an absolute necessity of it ? Can I not forbear 'till I am in a better Condition to compass it ? If I buy or borrow can I pay ? And when ? And am I sure ? will this expence hold out ? How shall I bring about the next Quarter, or the next year ? If young men would but have the patience to consider, and ask themselves Questions of the like nature, it would make them Considerate in their Expences and provident for the future ; and these Considerations will in a special manner concern you, in respect of your Fathers great Expences for you, which though I have forgiven, and forgotten, I would have you remember with Gratitude and Caution.

14. The vanity of Young-men in loving fine Cloaths, and new Fashions, and valuing themselves by them, is one of the most Childish pieces of folly that can be, and the occasion of great profuseness and undoing of Young-men : Avoid curiosity and too much expensiveness in your Apparel : Let your Apparel be comely, plain, decent, cleanly not curious or costly ; it is the sign of a weak Head-piece, to be sick for every new Fashion, or to think himself the better in it, or the worse without it.

15. Be careful what Company you consort with, and much more careful what persons you grow intimate with; chuse sober, wise, learned, honest, Religious Company, you will gain Learning and Wisdom, and improve your self in Virtue and Goodness, by conversing with them: But avoid debauched, foolish, intemperate, prodigal, atheistical, prophane Company, as you would avoid a Plague; they will Corrupt and undo you, they are a sort of the most pitiful fools in the World, and familiar acquaintance and conversation with them, will endanger to make you like them.

16. Weigh and consider your words before you speak them, and do not talk at random or at a venture; let your words be few, and to the purpose, be more ready to hear others than to speak your self; accustom your self to speak leisurely, and deliberately, it will be a means to make you speak warily and considerately.

17. Be very careful to speak truth, and beware of lying; as lying is displeasing to God; so it is offensive to man, and always at the latter end returns to the reproach or disadvantage of him that useth it; it is an evidence of a weak and unmanly mind. Be careful that you believe not hastily strange news, and strange stories, and be much more careful

careful that you do not report them, though at the second hand, for if it prove an untruth, (as commonly strange stories prove so) it brings an imputation of levity upon him that reports it, and possibly some disadvantage to others.

18. Take heed what you promise, see that it be just, and honest, and lawful; and what is in your power, honestly and certainly to perform: And when you have so promised, be true to your word. It is for the most part the fashion of inconsiderate and Young-men, (especially that run in debt) they will with great asseverations, promise precise payment, at this or that day; when either they certainly know they cannot perform, or at least have no probable assurance that they can do it; and when their turn is served, they are as backward in performance, as they were before liberal in their promises. Breach of promises and lying are much of a nature, and commonly go together, and are arguments of an impotent and unmanly mind.

19. Beware of Gaming, it is the suddenest Consumption of an Estate that can be, and that vice seldom goes alone; commonly debauchery of all kinds accompanies it: Besides it makes a man of a wild,

vast and unsettled mind; and such men are impatient of an honest Calling, or of moderate or honest gain.

20. Run not into debt either for Wares sold, or Money borrowed; be content to want things that are not of absolute necessity, rather than to run upon the score; such a man pays at the latter end a third part more than the Principal comes to, and is in perpetual servitude to his Creditors, lives uncomfortably, is necessitated to increase his debts, to stop his Creditors mouths, and many times falls into desperate Courses.

21. Be respectfull to all, familiar and intimate with few, be Grateful to your Benefactors, especially to those, who under God, were instrumental for your good, in your late sickness, and return your thanks to them; to your Father that spared no cost for your Recovery, to your Doctor that was exceedingly diligent about you, to those that attended you in your sickness, to those that together with your Father often prayed to God for your Recovery, and for a blessing upon this Affliction, whose names you shall in due time particularly know. But above all, to Almighty God, who not only provided and blessed the means, but saved, and delivered you

you above means, and when means failed.

22. Lastly, I shall conclude with one advice more, without the observance whereof my labour in writing this long Epistle will be probably fruitless: Be not wise in your own conceit, this is the unhappy error, and many times the ruine of Young-men especially: They are usually rash, giddy, and inconsiderate, and yet extreamly confident of that which they have least reason to trust, namely their own understanding, which renders them most reserved from them that are willing and best able to advise them, impatient of reproof, love to be flattered, and so become incapable of good and wise Counsel, 'till their follies have reduced them to extream straits and inconveniences; suspect therefore your own judgment: Advise often with your Father, especially in all things of moment; be glad of his Counsel, and be Contented and willing to follow it, and to guide your Life according to it; at least 'till ripeness of Age, Observation, and Experience, have enabled you better to advise your self: This is an easie, and ready, and cheap way of attaining Wisdom, and avoiding of infinite inconveniences.

And thus I have in this long Epistle, given you the means how you may improve both your sickness, and recovery, to the Glory of God, and your own benefit.

I shall therefore Conclude with two Considerations, that may the more ingage you to this use of both these dispensations.

1. The danger is great, if Afflictions make not a man more humble and dutiful, and the danger is yet greater, if great deliverances and mercies do not make a man more thankful and obedient to God; because it is the most obliging method that the Gracious God can use towards the Children of men, for that end, in this Life: And the neglect of that invitation, adds Ingratitude and Contempt to the neglect of it.

2. The benefit that you will receive by making a good use of these two dispensations, in improving your dutifulness and obedience to God, will be singular and excellent: 1. It will make you a wise man, by making you a Good, and a Religious man: Believe it from your Father, who will not deceive you, nay, believe it from a greater than your Father, the very Spirit of
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of truth, who cannot deceive you; the true fear of God, is the only true Wisdom: Read *Deut.* 4. 6. *Job* 28. 28. *Psal.* 111. 10. *Prov.* 1. 7. *Prov.* 9. 10. *Eccles.* 12. 13. and very many more declarations there are of this great truth: 2. It will make you a happy man, it will give you the Favour and Love of God, which is better than Life it self: You shall have his Mercy to pardon you, his Providence to protect you, his Wisdom to direct you, his Goodness to bless you, and to forgive, and forget whatsoever hath heretofore been done amiss by you: This will make all Conditions Comfortable to you, whether Life or Death, Sicknes or Health: By this means you may be a Comfort to your Father, a support to your Brothers and Sisters, an Instrument of good to your Country, and attain an Honest, Credible, and Competent Subsistence in this World, and an everlasting inheritance of Glory and Immortality in the World to come. Thus I have given you a large Letter of sound and good Counsel: Set your heart to it, and observe and remember it: We see how unstable our Lives are, you nor I know not how soon, either or both of us may leave this World; It may be, this may be
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the last paper of Advice that your Father may give you: But however it shall please God to deal with you or me, touching our continuance in this World, yet let me leave this with you, in the close of this Letter: If I shall find that these directions are dutifully observed, I shall be ready from time to time, freely to advise and direct you; and as I have passed by your former Extravagancies, so I shall thereby have great assurance, that God hath blessed this Visitation to you. But on the other side, if I shall find that you neglect my Counsels, that you make light of them, that you still pursue those Courses that will certainly be bitterness in the end, I must then tell you, I shall pray for you, and be sorry for you with my heart; but I shall not easily be perswaded to give any more Advices or Counsels, where I find them despised or neglected. In this paper there are many things omitted, which might have been inserted; but the constant Reading of the Holy Scriptures will supply unto you that defect: I have chosen only in this paper to mention such things which are seasonable for you upon this occasion. God Almighty hath not been wanting to you in Admonition, Correction,

to One of his Sons.

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rection, Mercy, and Deliverance; neither
hath your Father been wanting to you in
Education, Counsel, Care, and Expence:
I pray God Almighty bless all unto you.
This is the Prayer of,

Your Loving Father,

MATTHEW HALE.

FINIS.

in Mercy, and Deliverance; neither
 have I ever been wanting to you in
 Prayer, Council, Care, and Expenses;
 and God Almighty bless all unto you
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John Loving Father

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