

I continued. "To talk must be painful to you; do not distress yourself to attempt it at present. I will read to you a few sentences out of a beautiful exhortation to the sick, which is to be found in our Prayer Book; and immediately I began with the words, "Good sister, it is written in holy Scripture for our comfort and instruction, that we should patiently, and with thanksgiving, bear our heavenly Father's correction, whensoever by any manner of adversity it shall please his gracious goodness to visit us;" and so I went on to the end of the paragraph, which speaks of our rising again from death with Christ, and dwelling with him in everlasting life.

There is something particularly soothing in this passage; when I have pronounced it with a slow, solemn, and pathetic tone, I have seen an agony of pain hushed into silence and submission. In the present instance, the dying lady seemed to drink in every word, and lay them to her heart. She closed her eyes, and scarcely breathed. Her husband and the rest of her friends were weeping, and trying to conceal their tears; it was unnecessary, she heeded them not; she was absorbed in her own meditations.

After a short pause, I then said, "Let us pray;" and immediately we all knelt down about the bed. She clasped her hands together, without opening her eyes but with tokens of feeling and devotion. I went through the prayer for a sick person, when there appeareth small hope of recovery. In the midst of it I paused once or twice, to collect myself. She raised her eyes to ascertain the cause, and saw that I was sympathizing with her, and almost overcome, and unable to articulate. But the pauses were only for a moment, and at length I finished. She herself, however, continued to pray secretly, as I judged by her still clasped hands, and by the fixedness of her countenance, as if she were looking unto the heavens above. I did not attempt to disturb this sacred silence. At last she turned her eyes on me, as expecting and wishing me to proceed.

I thought it a propitious time for the baptism; and she seemed now, by God's blessing, equal to the fatigues of the ceremony, which I intended to use my discretion in shortening for the occasion. Whilst her attention therefore was yet fully alive, having opened the office for the baptism of persons of riper years, I began, "Hear the words of the Gospel," and I proceeded to the end of the exhortation, leaving out some things, and altering others, so as to make the whole of what I said precisely applicable to the case before me. I then took her hand, and said, "These things, my dear Madam, appear to me very convincing, very authoritative, very consolatory; and to leave us no choice. I think they must appear in the same light to you too. And wonderfully merciful has God been to you, in sparing you to perform this great act of enter-