

It would have needed his utmost resources to arrange for the battle of to-morrow, a battle in which he knew that defeat was coming, but which he might endeavour, nevertheless, to make as little disastrous as possible. Moreover, he knew it was to be the last day of his life, and troubled thoughts could not but steal in on him as to what should happen when he stood before God. No doubt, too, there were many sad thoughts about his sons, who were to be involved in the same fate as himself. Was there no way of saving any of them? The arrangement of his temporal effects, too, would claim attention, for, restless and excitable as he had been, it was not likely that his private affairs would be in very good order. Anon his thoughts might wander back to his first interview with Samuel, and bitter remorse would send its pang through him as he thought how differently he might have left the kingdom if he had faithfully followed the counsels of the prophet. Possibly amid all these gloomy thoughts one thought of a brighter order might steal into his mind—how thoroughly David, who would come to the throne after him, would retrieve his errors and restore prosperity, and make the kingdom what it had never been under him, a model kingdom, worthy to shadow forth the glories of Messiah's coming reign. Poor distracted man, he was little fitted either to fight a battle with the Philistines or to encounter the last enemy on his own account. What a lesson to be prepared beforehand! On a deathbed, especially a sudden one, distractions can hardly fail to visit us—this thing and the other thing needing to be arranged and thought of. Happy they who at such a moment can say, "I am now ready to depart." "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."