

WORDS OF THE WISE.

MEDITATIONS OF RICHARD SIBBS. (A. D. 1577—1635.)

GOD OUR FATHER.

"God bears not in vain the name of a Father; He fills it up to the full: It is a name of indulgence, of hope, of provision,—a name of protection. It argues the mitigation of punishment: a little is enough for a father. In all temptations, oh let us, by prayer, fly to the arms of our heavenly Father, and expect from Him all that a father should do for his child, as provision, protection, indulgence, yea, and seasonable corrections (which are as necessary for us as our daily bread,) and when we die we may expect our inheritance, because in Christ He is our Father. But yet we must remember the name of a father is a word of relation; duty is expected from us; we must reverence Him as a father, with fear and love: He is a great God, we ought to fear Him; He is merciful, yea, hath bowels of merey, we ought to love Him; if we tremble before Him, we forget that He is loving, and if overbold, we also forget that He is a great and holy God; therefore we should always go to the throne of grace with reverence, holy love, and filial confidence in the name of Jesus.

GODLY LOVE.

"There are four things observable in the nature of love: first, an estimation of the party beloved; secondly, a desire to be joined to him; thirdly, a settled contentment; fourthly, a desire to please the party in all things. So there is first in every Christian a high estimation of God in Christ; he makes choice of Him above all things, and speaks largely in His commendation; secondly, he desires to be united to Him; and where this desire is, there is an intercourse, he will open his mind to Him by prayer, and go to Him in all his consultations for counsel: thirdly, he places contentment in Him alone, because in the worst condition he finds peace and comfort when the light of His countenance shines upon him: fourthly, he seeks to please Him; he labours so to act, that God may in Christ delight in him; love stirs up his soul to remove all things distasteful to Him. He asks, as David did, 'Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?' How can I honour my God?

MARKS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"Where the Spirit dwells largely in any man, there is boldness in God's cause, a contempt of the world: 'He can do all things through Christ that strengthens him;' his mind is content and settled; he can bear with the infirmities of others, and not be offended (for the weak in grace are soonest offended), and is ready to say, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' But if corruption bears sway, then he says, 'O stay a little that I may recover strength;' that is, Stay a while that I may repent: the soul in such a frame not being fit to appear before God, but only when the Spirit imparts grace and divine consolations.

"The Spirit of God may be known to be in weak Christians, as the soul is known to be in the body by the pulse. Even so the Spirit is discovered by groaning under sin, sighing, complaining, that it is so with them, and no better: so that they are out of love with themselves: this is a happy sign that the Spirit dwells in such souls.

COMFORT AT DEATH.

"It is a comfort in the hour of death, that we yield up our souls to Christ, who has gone before to provide a place for us; this was one end of His being taken up to heaven, to provide a place for us. Therefore, when we die, we have not a place to seek, our house is provided beforehand; Christ was taken up to