

A

S E R M O N

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P R E F A C E.

IT is the privilege of christianity, "that life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel." The heathen world sat in darkness, was secure in misery: as one that sleeps is pleased with the scenes of fancy; he dreams of treasures of gold, of gardens, of feasts, and thinks the painted appearances, the superficial colours of good to be realities: thus whilst reason was darkened by sense, the world was content with pleasant delusions. Who amongst the many pretenders to wisdom, had a convincing knowledge of the blessed eternity to come? Who had a glimpse of that happiness that results from the sight of God in glory? This instruction so refreshing our spirits, darkened with sorrows here, comes from the school of heaven: as the sun revives us by its cheerful appearance, and affords that light, without which it were impossible to behold it.

During the legal dispensation, there was a mist upon the future state. The notice of eternal things was a twilight mixed with shadows. The revelation of the heavenly glory was reserved till our Saviour's appearing in the world, who purchased it with the dearest price, and offers it upon such gracious terms, that whosoever sincerely desires and seeks, shall obtain it; and none shall be deprived of it, but for their wilful and guilty neglect. It might be expected that such a proposal were sufficient to engage men with all their active powers to secure such a precious interest, when indeed their best endeavours and most zealous affections are too slight and faint, with respect to that excellent happiness. Are not the first notions of things that are written in our breasts, sufficient to convince us, that what is for ever, is to be preferred before what suddenly passes away? Or is it necessary in matters of temporal concernment, to use strong arguments to persuade us rather to choose a treasure that will

enrich us for our lives, than what will purchase food only for a day? Yet it is strange to amazement, that in things of infinite weight and consequence that respect the soul, and trivial things that respect the body, men make as preposterous a judgment and choice, as if they were irreconcilable enemies to themselves, and obstinately averse from their own happiness. The life to come extends beyond all possible number of ages; the felicity is so complete and sure, that the least shadow of evil shall never eclipse it: the soul shall be in a state of highest perfection and joy; the understanding illuminated with perfect knowledge, with no more study, than opening the eye and fixing it on the glorious objects, the will satisfied with the perfect love and enjoyment of the blessed God: the body shall be clothed with light as with a garment, and shine with a beauty that never disflourishes and decays; the innumerable assembly of angels and saints always affords new and inestimable delights; and what is set in comparison against this transcendent felicity in heaven? The poor despicable vanishing life on earth: whose pleasures are so shallow and empty, that they cannot satisfy the senses, much less our noble and comprehensive faculties: whose griefs are sometimes so heavy and oppressing, that all the comforts of the world are no more effectual to relieve the soul labouring under them, than the sounding of brass, and the tinkling of cymbals, usually done by the heathens, were to free the moon from its dark eclipse, which they fancied to labour in extremity. Yet the petty preferments, the deceitful riches, the vain pleasures here are chosen, and ambitiously and eagerly pursued, and the infinite everlasting happiness hereafter undervalued and rejected. But as the wonder ceases, that a man doth not see in the clearest day, by saying, he is blind: so carnal men are without faith, that is, the internal light of the mind, they do not steadfastly believe the reality of the divine world, though so clearly opened in the gospel. They are under so strong a delusion and error of sensuality, that they vilify a spiritual happiness, a glorious futurity, and present sensible things, of no price in comparison, have the highest place in their esteem and affections. The proper means to recover man from his woful folly, are unceasing fervent prayers, that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory; may give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation

in the knowledge of him : the eyes of their understandings being enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints :” and to represent this world, and the next, as they are to their considerate minds, that their interest and duty, with united efficacy, may overrule their hearts, and turn the stream of their endeavours into the right channel ; that the judicious comparison between objects so vastly differing, may be the governing principle of their lives. All things are vain and transient, within the confines of time ; all things stable and solid in the territories of eternity.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

JOHN XIV. 1.

In my Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you : I go to prepare a place for you.

OUR blessed Saviour in the words, applies heavenly comfort to his disciples, to support their drooping spirits in his absence from them : he foretold his departure ; “ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me : and as I said to the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come : so now I say unto you.” Chap. 13. 33. This tenderly affected their hearts : but that their sorrow might not flow into despair, he assures them, that their separation should not be final, and that it was not the singular privilege of St. Peter, that “ he should follow him hereafter ;” ver. 36. but that there were rooms reserved in heaven for them all, and he would return and receive them to himself. This consolation he addresses to them in a very affectionate manner, “ Let not your hearts be troubled :” chap. 19. 1. no work is more divine, none more proper and delightful to our

Saviour, than to comfort the afflicted spirits of his people. He directs them, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." God is the supreme object of faith, his unchangeable love and faithfulness, with his infinite power in the accomplishing his promises, is the security of believers. Christ, as mediator between God and guilty creatures, is the immediate object of our faith; for he restores us to the favour of God, therefore it is said, we believe in God by him. 1 Pet. 1. 21. After this preface to calm the unquiet agitations of their minds, and make them more receptive of comfort, he proposeth to them;

1. A blessed doctrine; "In my Father's house are many mansions," capable to receive all his disciples.

2. Gives them an infallible assurance of it. 1. From his inviolable love and truth, "if it were not so, I would have told you." 2. That his going away, was not to reign alone in the kingdom of glory, "but to prepare a place for them."

The point that I shall discourse of from these words, is this; there is a blessed place above prepared for all the faithful disciples of Christ, wherein they shall be glorified with him for ever. And in the managing this argument, I will endeavour;

I. To represent the excellencies of this place specified by his Father's house, and the state of felicity that is inseparable from all that dwell in it.

II. Consider the infallible assurance we have of obtaining it.

I. The excellencies of this place may be argued from the Maker of it, and its attributes specified in scripture. * First, God is to be the artificial builder of this city, to signify a correspondent excellency in the work to the divine Maker. All the works of God have a divine impression of his power and providence, but in some are more conspicuous characters of his perfections: for the wise Author of all things, hath ordered their several degrees of excellence, both in the matter, and various art of adorning them, suitable to the end for which they were designed. Now the supreme heaven was made to be the temple of the divine majesty, wherein he would diffuse the richest beams of his goodness and glory to his chosen servants for ever, and accordingly is a most noble work of his omnipotent hand; and

* *Typology.* Heb. 11. 10.

there are two remarks to be made in its creation, from whence we may infer its peculiar excellency.

1st. It is the beginning of the creation. Amongst intellectual beings, the angels are the firstborn of God's power; and in natural and divine prerogatives excel men. From hence it is that the excellency of any praiseworthy quality in men, is set forth by a resemblance of the angels. Excellent wisdom in David, "My Lord, the King, is like an angel of God." Excellent eloquence by St. Paul, is styled "the tongues of angels." Heroic virtue, and excellent holiness in the christian church, "The house of David shall be as the angel of the Lord;" for that which is highest in any kind of perfection, is the rule and measure of the degrees of that perfection. And thus in forming the material world, the supreme heaven hath the precedence in order and dignity, before all the other parts of it. Indeed Moses only recites particularly the creation of the visible world; and by what gradations this great fabric with all its furniture was completed: and the history of that is instructive of the creation of invisible things, which is expressly specified in the gospel. But, as paradise was first made, and then man created to be the inhabitant of it; so we may infer, that the highest heaven, the seat of the angels, was made before they were created. Now the angels (we are informed by divine revelation) were present when the "foundations of the earth were laid, and God stretched his line upon it: then the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38. 4, 5, 7. They saw the rising world, the variety and beauty of its frame, the admirable order that distinguishes and unites its parts, that all things were divinely done, and transported with wonder and joy celebrated the praises of the Creator.

2ndly. The supreme heaven is the effect of God's immediate creation. The earth with all its ornaments was formed of pre-existent matter: the chaos, a confused mass, was the embryo of the sublunary world: but the supreme heaven is his more immediate and exquisite workmanship, and received its being and perfection at once. You may illustrate this by the account that is given by Moses of the creation of man; "God made man of the dust of the ground." Gen. 2. 7. His body derives its birth from the low element; and the wisdom of the Creator is wonderful in the artificial structure of it: it is added, "God breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life ;" and " man became a living soul." The earth enters into the composition of his body, but his soul was inspired by the breath of God ; that is, by his divine power immediately created ; and in nobility of nature, and its spiritual endowments, incomparably excels the body. And the third heaven, though not a spiritual substance, yet in the purity of its nature, far transcends whatever was formed of gross matter.

This being premised, I will now consider what the scripture reveals to us of that place that is eminently the house of God.

1. The amplitude of it. Our Saviour tells us, " the way is narrow, and the gate strait that leads to it," to excite our diligence ; but there " are many mansions" in the celestial palace to encourage our hopes. It is therefore called " a city, a kingdom." If we look up to the shining sky, wherein are the sun, that by the computation of late * astronomers, some thousands of times exceeds the earth in its magnitude ; and innumerable stars, and some of that greatness, that they eighty times exceed this globe of earth ; though to the ignorant, and therefore incredulous, they are judged to be as they appear, (upon the account of that unmeasurable distance between the firmament and us) but glistening points of light : our minds will be tired and lost in taking measures of that that seemeth boundless : and this vast expansion, with all the glorious luminaries, is but the portal of the house of God. Therefore Solomon, setting forth the boundless greatness of God, saith, " Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him ;" that is, neither the airy nor ethereal heaven, nor the supreme heaven that encompasses and exceeds it. It is a spacious palace, becoming the divine Maker's greatness, the image of his immensity : and the state of felicity there is answerable. The blessed God, in whom there is an eternal union of all perfections, " is all in all to his people." The sun in its brightness may be as truly included in a spark, as the divine excellencies be measured by created contemplation. There is an infinite variety in the Supreme Good, that makes it always rare and new in the fruition. The universal love, and universal fulness of the Deity, exceedingly satisfies

* Mr. Boyle, on the high Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God, &c. p. 11.

all the desires, and perpetuates the delights of the saints. He styles himself, in the gracious covenant with his people, "I am God all-sufficient; walk before me, and be perfect." He is sufficient in all things that are requisite, to the complete felicity of the most comprehensive spirits; and is sufficient to make all that innumerable company of angels and saints, as happy as one person. "God is light," and emanations of his goodness are sensibly represented by it. Heaven is called, "the inheritance of the saints in light." As the sun (his almoner) diffuses its light and heat so generally, that every one indifferently enjoys it without prejudice to others. As the sun streams forth in rays every moment, yet (which is a perpetual miracle in nature) without the least diminution of his lustre and efficacy: thus the Sun of Righteousness dispenses his influences of knowledge, and love, and joy, to all the blessed assembly above, and is the universal happiness of all, and the entire happiness of every saint. * God is an inexhaustible fountain of felicity: as he that drinks of a living spring, (though inflamed with thirst) yet leaves it flowing and full as before, sufficient to refresh a thousand men without being dry: thus God is able to make many worlds happy. An earthly inheritance is either entirely and peculiarly the first-born's, or is lessened by division: but all "the sons of God" have the dignity of "the firstborn," and "are heirs of God." Heb. 12. Rom. 8. and enjoy an undivided inheritance. Our heavenly Father verifies to every saint, what the father in the parable said to his son, "All that I have is thine."

2. The stability and firmness of it. The apostle saith, "It is a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Cities that are raised by the greatest kings who are corruptible, and mortal, are so slightly built, that they may be consumed by fire, battered by storms, and without external violence, yet from an inward principle of decay, sink into ruins: but heaven is the "city of the living God," the seat of his eternal empire. This present world is like a tent pitched for a time, whilst the church is sojourning in the wilderness: Psal. 102. the most solid parts of it, the visible heaven, and earth, shall perish, either by an entire consumption, or their ruin shall terminate in a renovation to a better state. 2 Pet. 3. But the third heaven is

* *Quantumlibet capacem ventrem afferat. Fons vincit sitientem. Aug.*

above the dominion of the elements, exempted from all changes, and for ever remains. It is "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away:" the integrity, purity, and glory of it are always the same. It is the habitation of God's throne. He "sits in heaven" Psal. 2. secure from all the tumultuous conspiracies of his enemies, and derides their impious attempts, against his Son, and church. His throne is unshaken there, notwithstanding things below are turned about in a vertiginous circle. And as the house, so the inhabitants, and their felicity, are eternal. "Glory, honour, and immortality, are the reward of all that patiently continue in well-doing." Rom. 2. Our Saviour assures his disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also. He tasted death for them, and swallowed it up in victory." He declared in vision to St. John, "Behold, I am alive for evermore." Rev. 1. The Lord of life will uphold the saints in that blessed state for ever: they shall never fall out of the arms and bosom of a gracious God. He will never withdraw his love, and they shall never forfeit it: for sin is from the perverseness of the will, and disorder of the affections, joined with some error of the mind. But in the light of glory, and full enjoyment of God, the understanding is so perfectly illuminated, the will and the affections so exceedingly satisfied, that it is impossible they should apprehend erroneously, or desire irregularly.

This glorious advantage the redeemed saints have (by Jesus Christ who "obtained eternal redemption for them," Heb. 9. 12.) above the grace given to angels and man in the first creation. The angels were upon trial of their obedience, not in a determined state of felicity. Their first declination of love and subjection, was a downfall from their blessed habitation. Woful change! how unlike themselves in their original purity, and glory? An unparalleled example of the frailty of the creature that forsakes God, and of the divine severity. Man did but stand in paradise for a little while, and had a ruinous fall with all his progeny. But the glorified "saints actually sit with Christ in heavenly places," and enjoy an unchangeable happy state. The felicity above is permanent, as the everlasting object that produces and preserves it, and the everlasting soul wherein it dwells. Blessed security! how triumphantly do the glorified in heaven sing, "This God is our God for ever and ever." Earthly relations, how near soever, determine in death;

and the sorrow of losing them, is in proportion to the delightful enjoying them. But the heavenly relation between God and the saints, is as everlasting, as the object on which it is fixed: this God in whom are all amiable excellencies, all sweetness and beauty to feed desires and delights, is our God in strict propriety, in the dearest and most reviving fruition for ever. Their happiness is crowned with eternity. This is so real an accession to their felicity, that without the entire assurance of it, the state of blessedness were incomplete; the least jealousy of losing it, would disturb their peaceful fruition, and joyful tranquillity in heaven: for as hope in misery allays sorrow, so fear in happiness lessens joy. The apprehension of losing such a kingdom, would cause torment. But, as in the contrary state, reprobate sinners that are in hell, under an utter impossibility of deliverance, are racked and tortured by absolute despair: so the blessed above, that enjoy the beatific vision, by the infallible assurance of its perpetuity, are filled with a joy unspeakable and glorious.

3. The sanctity of this blessed house. It is separate from the rest of the world in its sublime situation, and its unparalleled excellencies. Sanctity of place is relative, and is founded, either upon the manifestation of God's special presence, or consecration of it to his service. It is consistent with the divine immensity, to be differently present in several places: as the soul is in another manner present in the head, where it performs its noblest operations, than in other parts of the body; and upon any special appearance of God, a place is sacred. Thus when Moses approached to see the flaming bush, he was enjoined, "Do not come near hither; pluck off thy shoes from off thy feet, the place where thou standest is holy ground." Exod. 3. 5. The visible testimony of the divine presence sanctified the place, and the most humble outward reverence was due, a sign and effect of the internal respect that is owing to his most adorable majesty. The sanctity of that place, was an extraordinary relation, and ceased upon the vanishing of the flame, the sign of God's presence. There is also a relative sanctity, by the consecration of time or place for holy uses. Thus the seventh day, upon the finishing the creation, was hallowed by God himself, set apart as the firstfruits of days for his service, and applied to divine worship, that man might entirely exercise his

mind in admiring and praising the Creator, whose glory was visible in his works. And in both these respects, the temple of Jerusalem was holy, as being appropriated to God's service by his own election and appointment; and being the place wherein he exhibited his presence in a special manner. Solomon expresseth this as the end of building the temple, in his letter to the king of Tyre, desiring his assistance; "Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt-offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God." 2 Chr. 2. 4. And we read, at the dedication of Solomon's temple, that a sudden thick cloud obscured the air, a sign of God's descending and acceptance, whose invisible majesty was veiled under it: and whether from that sacred darkness, or fear at the unexpected miracle, the priests could not minister because of the cloud. 2 Chr. 5. 13, 14. The sacrifices, music, and all the temple-service were interrupted. But the temple built with hands, and all its pompous service, were but an imperfect mutable shadow of the "holy temple" above, Psal. 11. 4. where God exhibits his sacred presence, not in a dark vapour, but in the richest beams of glory, and wherein that most pure Spirit is worshipped in spirit and truth for ever. The saints are "a royal priesthood to God," in a state of eminency, and separation from the rest of the world: they now offer up the sacrifice of praise, and the sacred incense of prayer, infinitely more pleasing to God than all the sacrifice of beasts; and the most precious gums, and aromatic spices, that with their sweet smoke perfumed the temple. But "in the holy of holies above," (where no defiled thing can enter) they perform divine service in a divine manner. The perfect rest in heaven, is "a sabbath's rest," Heb. 4. wherein our fervent affections, the springs of activity, are in their powerful exercise upon God. Here our faint earth clogs our ascending affections; and such is the tender indulgence of our heavenly Father, that "when the spirit is willing, though the flesh be weak," he pardons and accepts us. But there our bodies become spiritual, qualified for the exercises of heaven, and all our powers are in a holy heat and rapture, admiring and praising the blessed God. Here the saints often retire from the world, to worship the divine majesty

in their closets ; and the secrecy of the duty, is an argument of the sincerity. They with more freedom pour forth their souls into his bosom, and he insinuates the gracious acceptance of their requests : but the noblest elevation of the affections, is in communion with all the saints and angels above. The ardent seraphims were inflamed, crying one to another, " holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Isa. 6. 3. Here there must be some interval between the solemn acts of worship, the circumstances of the present state require it ; but in the heavenly sanctuary, it is their continual work and delight to celebrate the high praises of God : " they are before his throne, and serve him day and night in his temple." The inhabitants of " Arabia the happy," burn, for their common uses, those aromatic trees, that produce myrrh and precious halm, of which the sacred incense was compounded : and it is no wonder, because those trees grow common in their country, that is open to the most favourable aspects of the heavens, and the strongest heat of the sun : but to our countries, how little of those rich perfumes are brought. And such is the comparison between the praises of the angels and the glorified saints, and ours here below. They are always in the noblest work, excited by the highest motives. They are always under the direct beams of God's favour, which are vigorously reflected in their praises. All their felicity is, to contemplate his excellent perfections, all their pleasure to love him, all their glory to obey him. Their affectionate praises are renewed without intermission, because the divine favours are renewed every moment. There is a perpetual circulation of graces from the blessed Creator, and thanksgivings from the happy creature. All their joyful affections, and their solemn thoughts and reflections are terminated in that great and glorious object. The prophet declares their holy employment ; " They continually speak of the glorious honour of his majesty, and of his wondrous works : they speak of the might of his terrible acts ; and they declare his goodness, and sing of his righteousness. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion ; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints bless thee. They speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom ; and thy do-

minion endures through all generations." They never cease to love, and admire, and therefore never cease to praise him. Their hearts are eternally inflamed, and their mouths eternally opened to glorify him. But with the highest veneration they adore his mercy; that perfection that is the special glory and the dearest delight of God; that which is the supreme of all the glorious attributes in redemption, that will be the principal argument of their praises. "They sing the mercies of the Lord for ever;" that mercy that chose them from everlasting; that mercy that in such an admirable manner conducted them through the world, that never left them, but most wisely ordered all things below in relation to their future happiness; that mercy that crowns them with life and immortality, when the reprobate world feel the most terrible effects of revenging justice. We read of the Jews after their captivity, upon their finishing the temple, that with a transport of joy, they cried, "Grace! Grace!" when God, who is the author of our salvation, shall have finished it, with what a sweet consent shall we celebrate his sacred praises! Mercy upon mercy, all is mercy. Happy exercise! Heaven is a state of joy and thankfulness. "Blessed are those that are in thy house, they always praise thee."

4. The delightfulness of this place. It is called paradise by our Saviour. He promises the penitent thief, the companion of his cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Paradise was a garden planted by immortal hands, to be the habitation of Adam in his state of original righteousness, when the favourite of heaven: it was the beauty and delight, the flower of the world, and with abundance, and variety, exceedingly satisfied all the desires of life, it was watered with four rivers, to make it always pleasant and fruitful. But the celestial paradise as much excels it in beauty and pleasantness, as in its sublime situation: and the joyful satisfaction of the soul in communion with God, and the blessed society there, infinitely excels all the innocent delights of the natural life. Heaven is a state of pure, full, and unfading joy. The joy of the blessed is not mixed with things that may corrupt its excellence. There is an absolute exemption from all evils. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain." The joy is full; it is called "our master's joy." Great

God, how ineffable is that joy! It is the richest reward infinite bounty can give to faithful servants. As "being made like to Christ in glory," 1 John 3. 2. implies a divine and full perfection: so the "entering into his joy," implies the most accomplished and incomprehensible felicity. It is a permanent joy that none shall take from the blessed, as our Saviour promises his disciples. Here below, suppose a person encompassed with all the good things of the world, yet this felicity is neither without defects, nor without dependance upon casual things, that he is never completely happy, but only less miserable: and though he lives long in prosperity, and hath a tenour of health to enjoy it; yet, as the clearest evening is presently followed by night, so the most vigorous old age is certainly attended with death, that extinguishes all sensual pleasures. But in the "presence of God is fulness of joy; at his right hand are pleasures for ever."

To explain this more particularly, let us consider, that knowledge, love, and joy, are the perfections and felicity of immortal spirits, and are correspondent to the excellency of the objects upon which they are fixed, and the capacity of the faculties that are exercised, and the degrees of satisfaction communicated to them. Now in heaven, our noblest faculties, the understanding and will, are raised and enlarged, and entirely united to the best objects. What conception can we frame of joy for an intellectual creature, so full and satisfying, as the clear vision of God invested with all his attractive attributes, his glorious perfections, and in perfect loving the most lovely object, and being perfectly loved by him? When the soul freed from this mortal muddy flesh, and the mind cleared from all terrene images, conveyed by the channels of the senses, sees "God face to face;" how is it ravished with wonder and love in the sight of his most amiable excellencies? How pure a joy is infused to the centre of the soul, and fills all its desires? How permanent, like the everlasting spring from whence it flows? The psalmist inspired with the love of God, breaks forth in an holy ecstasy; "How blessed is that man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts? We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." Psal. 6. 5. 4. Admirable blessedness! dear felicity! The same heavenly saint expresses his esteem and affection; "How excellent

is thy lovingkindness, O Lord! They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasure." Psal. 36. 8. Here we "do but taste and see how good the Lord is;" and that is so powerful a cordial, as gloriously supports the saints under the heaviest sufferings. But heaven is the element of joy. Here a glancing sight of his goodness, how reviving is it? A living vein of light, from his favourable countenance, Acts 16. 24, 25. pierced into the miserable dungeon where Paul and Silas were chained, and raised their spirits to that heavenly pitch, that they sang "Praises to God:" the illustrious reflection of paradise, "lightened them at midnight," and put a gloss of joy upon them. But in heaven, those most divine and amiable titles, that "God is light, and that God is love," are most fully exhibited, and experimentally understood by the saints. "They see him as he is," in his essential glory; and all the secret treasures of his wisdom, in his works of wonder are unfolded, and the sweetest manifestations of his love are given to them. That which the prophet declares of God's tender affections to his church, is verified in the most excellent manner in heaven; "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." Zeph. 3. 17. That the blessed God is well pleased in the glorified saints, is the supreme degree of their felicity. How joyful a complacency arises from the communion with the blessed Redeemer, and the saints in heaven? Love is the first fountain of joy; and the more intense, the more ravishing is the fruition. The love of Christ to them was so great, that from eternity he was infinitely pleased in the thoughts of their salvation; "His delights were with the sons of men," Prov. 8. 31. before they delighted in him. If the design of that blessed work was so pleasing, what is the accomplishment? The evangelical prophet declares, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." Isa. 53. 11. And the love of the saints to Christ, is a correspondent affection, according to their utmost capacity. All the affections that were scattered here below, * are centred in him, for he infinitely deserves their

* *Omnia suspiria in Christo anhelant. Ille unus pulcherrimus qui fœdos allent, at pulchros faceret, desideretur.*

love, having ransomed them with the dearest price, and purchased for them an everlasting inheritance. He loved them in their foul deformity, that he might superinduce a divine beauty upon them, and prepare them for the enjoyment of himself. He is now their desire, and in heaven where he appears in all his brightness and beauty, their everlasting delight. We may conceive a little of their ravishing communion, by the language of divine love, between Christ and the church, in the "Song of Solomon," and their harmonious affections expressed in the most endearing manner; "Open to me my love, my dove, my undefiled:" and the inflamed spouse, in a high and delightful rapture, breaks forth; "I am my beloved's, and he is mine." If a propriety and interest in him, be productive of such a pure joy, what will the everlasting fruition be? The scripture represents it by a marriage-feast, as the most complete resemblance of that spiritual joy. Thus the inhabitants of heaven are introduced, speaking; "Give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Rev. 19. 7. What union! what joy! How will the saints rejoice in God their Saviour, in the view of the surprising wonders of his love? The scripture speaks of another accession to the joys of heaven, the innumerable company of angels and saints that live in perfect concord, inviolable love, the sweetest content, and joyful complacency. Society is a principal ingredient of joy. What exultation of joy will there be, when the whole family of heaven shall meet together in their Father's house? We may conjecture how the angels are affected to us, by what is recorded concerning their appearance at the birth of our Saviour; "There was a multitude of the heavenly host praising God; saying, glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will towards men." It is the first time since the fall of man, that we hear of the angels' song: they were commissioned to punish rebellious sinners, and appeared with flaming swords, the instruments of revenging wrath. But when the Lord of Hosts became the God of peace, they appeared with harps in their hands, with praise and joy, celebrating his mercy. They foresaw that peace on earth would end in the glory of heaven; and the ruins of their celestial country, would be repaired by our salvation. And the glorified saints are all companions in the same joy, and the same

blessedness. For never was there such a transforming of one lover into another here, as there is of the saints in heaven: they are all animated by the same Divine Spirit; their thoughts and inclinations are the same, and have the highest satisfaction in the felicity of one another. Behold, how good, and how pleasant is it for brethren to dwell in unity! Briefly, we find that sensible joy is in its elevation in the times of the harvest and vintage, and after victory; when the blessings of God, the precious fruits of the earth, the hopes of our labours, and the support and comfort of the present life are received, an universal joy fills the country. Now "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. It is sown in tears, but reaped with exultation." We gather the fruits of blessedness from thorns, poverty, and mourning, hunger, and thirst, and persecution: and this gives the more lively tincture to our joy. The joy of victory is transporting, and that always in proportion to the danger and power of the enemies subdued, and the rich spoils taken from them. Now when our spiritual enemies, so numerous, so powerful and irreconcilable to our souls, sin, satan, death, are utterly broken, * how triumphant a joy follows? The historian relating that most glorious triumph at Rome, when Pyrrhus, their proud and potent enemy was expelled from Italy, observes, that of all the show, no part was more joyful, than to see the elephants that had been so terrible, and carried towers on their backs, to be subdued and led in triumph. Thus how joyful is it to see the prince of darkness, with all his infernal legions, not without the tormenting sense of their captivity, bruised under our feet! to see the human nature of Christ raised to the highest honour to which that rebellious spirit did proudly aspire. O how delightful a spectacle! All the saints will cast their crowns before the throne, and sing the praises of their victorious deliverer.

5. The glory of this place is discovered in the scripture. The "Father of Christ is the God of glory, and the Father of glory;" and heaven is his lofty and glorious throne, becoming his excellent majesty and universal dominion. "The Lord hath pre-

* Sed nihil libentius Populus Romanus aspexit, quam illas quas timebat cum turribus suis bestias, quæ non sine sensu captivitatis submissis cervicibus victores equos sequebantur. *Flor. lib. l. c. 18.*

pared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." Glory in its first notion signifies the brightness and lustre of light, and from thence metaphorically imports excellency in any kind. Thus the divine perfections are expressed, God "is glorious in holiness, glorious in power:" and the joy of believers is called "unspeakable and glorious." Heaven is set forth as glorious in a transcendent manner; it is called, the "Excellent glory;" from whence a voice came to the apostles in that holy mount, declaring Christ to be the Son of God: so it is called, "The richly glorious inheritance; the inheritance of the saints in light." When the sun rises in its brightness, a deluge of gold overflows the world, and adorns the universe: but this is but a shadow of the inherent glory of the highest heaven. It was prepared by God "for the house of his kingdom, and the glory of his majesty." We read of the vast preparations made by two great kings for the building the temple at Jerusalem: such sums of gold and silver, that would empty all the treasures of the princes of the world; that were it not recorded in sacred scripture, it would exceed belief. The number of the workmen were seventy thousand, employed seven years without intermission; the materials were very rich and splendid, gold, and cedar, and precious stones: and the excellency of the architecture was such, that no human art can equal: for it was modelled by the divine mind; and the delineation of its parts was sent to David by an angel. But what are the preparations of earthly kings, to the preparation of God? And what is the glory of the temple made with hands, to that admirable fabric that received its being and perfection immediately from God? We read of the New Jerusalem, the type of heaven, "that the foundations were precious stones, the gates were entire pearls, the streets pure gold, as it were transparent glass." The expressions are in condescendence to our capacities, and but a faint resemblance of the glory of Jerusalem above. In the vision of the prophet Isaiah, the seraphims cried to one another, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, the whole earth is full of thy glory." It is a theatre of wonders divinely decked, * and the wise discerning observer, admires and praises God's power and providence so clearly ma-

* *Obstapescit ob saltuq; miraculis. Aug.*

nifested in it: for the excellency of the work is answerable to the art of the Maker; and the glory of the Maker results from the excellence of the work. But what the apostle saith, in comparing the legal and evangelical dispensation, "That if that which was done away, was glorious, much more that which remains is glorious;" and in that degree of eminence as to obscure the other, may justly be applied to the glory of God appearing in the earth, and the third heaven: for if the earth, the lowest stage of the world, the habitation of brute creatures, and to be continued only for a time, hath so much glory in it, what an excellent glory is in the supreme heavens, the native habitation of the angels, and that is to continue for ever? The earth since man's rebellion, doth not remain in its primitive state, but hath lost much of its beauty and usefulness. At first it was entirely suitable to the rich goodness of the Creator; now terrible mixtures of his justice appear in all the parts of it: barrenness in the earth, thorns and thistles, the fruits of the curse for sin; malignant influences, and storms in the air, tempests in the sea, inundations of water; and how many diseases are fatally natural to our bodies? But the highest heaven remains in its original beauty, and pure integrity. The earth is now the habitation of his enemies, where they oppress his faithful servants by their bold injuries: but heaven is the habitation of his saints. In short, it is a place becoming the majesty and magnificence of God, and his love to his chosen friends. It is said of the patriarchs, whose desires and hopes were not centred in that earthly Canaan, though flowing with milk and honey; but "they desired a better country," that is, "a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." To be styled our God, is a title of the richest value, and implies, that all the perfections of the Deity are to make us happy. It had been a reflection upon his greatness and goodness, if he had only given to the patriarchs a portion in this world. But heaven is a place and state of felicity becoming his infinite majesty, his special love, and eternal duration. It is an observation of Tertullian, * that God who made other

* Totum Deum occupatum, & deditum manu, opere, consilio sapientia. Amor dictabat lineamenta.

things by command, by the omnipotent umpire of his will, applied himself with counsel to form the body of Adam, which was the original model of all perfections that a human body is capable of, for the beauty of aspect without, and the artificial order of the parts within; and the reason was, love drew the lineaments. Thus love, the queen of the divine attributes, employed infinite wisdom, and almighty power, to build this celestial city for the reception of his chosen favourites. The King of glory dwells there in a special manner. "The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men." By right and dominion, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" and the possession of it is from his bounty to men; but heaven is reserved for himself, the place of his glorious residence. As a prince that hath many houses, gives some for to be inhabited by his servants, but the imperial palace is kept for his own dwelling; God manifests himself there in the most refulgent manner. All the perfections of the glorious Deity are revealed to the saints in their purity and radiancy. The divine presence is the supreme glory of heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ is there crowned with the majesty of the divine empire. This glory is the reward of his meritorious obedience and sufferings. He was made a subject and a servant, and endured the most ignominious cruel death to satisfy God's injured justice. What hath not the Son done for the glory of his Father? He lost his life rather than his obedience: and what will not the Father do for the honour of his Son? What recompence is correspondent to such astonishing humiliation? Our Saviour in his last solemn prayer with his disciples, addresses himself to God: "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me with thyself, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." John 17. 4, 5. The Father was so highly honoured by Christ, that to satisfy his infinite love towards him, he hath dignified him with a name and state, that transcends all created glory. He is the Lord of angels, the head of the church, and sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In heaven he appears in his triumphant glory, of which in the transfiguration there was a transient glimpse, when his face did shine as the sun, but allayed and moderated, that his disciples might sustain his presence. There the angels, the princes of the ce-

lestial court, in all their bright orders encompass the throne of God, and pay their humblest homage to him. The saints appear there in their robes of glory, for they are transformed into the glorious likeness of the Son of God: their souls radiant with pure unspotted holiness, shine through their bodies, as sunbeams transmitted through crystal. They all reign in sovereign state for ever. It becomes the divine majesty, that all God's subjects should be kings; and the highest principality on earth, is but servitude compared with the royalty enjoyed by the saints above: for often are the mightiest monarchs on earth in perfect bondage to their lawless passions, and the soul in dull captivity to the sensual appetites. How often are the strongest empires dissolved and ruined? But the saints in heaven, by obeying God, reign triumphantly: no passions, no fears, no desires, resist their will; nothing is able to trouble the sincere delight, the perfect tranquillity of their state. They in their several degrees of glory, shine like the stars for ever and ever.

To sum up all; what is promised to the church, is fulfilled in heaven; "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, nor the moon by night; but the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." Isa. 60. 19.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent that luminous palace, and the bright inhabitants: but how short is the description of the glorious realities, all human words are too weak and narrow to express it as it is. The glory and joy of that blessed state are unspeakable, as the apostle, a spectator thereof, certifies. And it is observable that our Saviour himself expresses the greatest things, by low familiar terms and resemblances; as he tells his faithful disciples, they shall eat and drink at his table in his kingdom. In his promises of rewards, it was not his intention merely to make a show of his power, but to declare his love: like a God, he doth not magnify the favours he will bestow, but leaves it to their spirits to conceive what becomes almighty goodness to bestow on his servants. In the plainest manner of promising the reward, there is a clear character of the excellent greatness of the giver and his gifts.

II. I will now consider the infallible assurance we have of this blessed place and state. This is built on our Saviour's love to them, and his truth; and his going to prepare that blessedness for them. He saith to his disciples, "Otherwise I would have

told you;" implying, that his affection and sincerity, make it impossible that he should deceive them with an empty promise of future happiness.

1. His love secures them. He would never have chosen them to be the companions of his cross, never have exposed them as sheep among wolves, to suffer for his sake, and to leave them for ever, and reign alone in heaven. Love is a benevolent affection rising in the breast, and expressing itself in real benefits, according to the power of the lover, and the wants or the capacity of the person beloved: and the more intense the affection is, the more evident and noble effects of kindness will proceed from it. All the most liberal expressions, without real performance, are but a vain pageant of friendship. Now, the love of our Saviour to his disciples, was not only sincere, but in such a degree of eminence, that they might safely rely upon his promises. His pure love, was the motive of selecting them from the world, and dignifying them with the endearing title of his friends. His conversation with them was infinitely sweet, a miracle of benignity: and that glorious performance of his love for them, and all believers, in leaving heaven for their sakes, is the strongest assurance that he will bring them to his Father's house above. It is represented as the peculiar glory of Theodosius, that he seated majesty and love in the same throne: * for love unites and conforms persons, and makes them, as it were, peers: and it seems too low a submission for a sovereign to descend from his throne to a kind of equality with a subject, or too high an exaltation to assume a private person into such a degree of affection, as to make him as himself; yet such was the condescension of that great and amiable emperor. But how distant is the greatest monarch in the world from the eternal Son of God, the Prince of the kings of the earth? Love brought him down from his throne in heaven, where he was adored by the angels, and united him to our nature in our lowly state, in order to the raising us to his kingdom, and uniting us to himself in glory. Love invaluable and incomparable! If Solomon, upon God's descending in a cloud to take possession of the temple, was surprised with heavenly astonishment; "But

* *Amicitiae nomen privatum non solum intra aulam vocasti, sed indutam auro, gemisq; redimitam solio recepisti. Lat. paen. paneg. ad Theod.*

will God indeed dwell on earth?" with infinite more cases have we, considering the incarnation of the Son of God, to say, "Will God indeed dwell on earth?" For what was the appearance of a vapour that might be easily dispelled, to the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt substantially? What is so worthy of reverence and admiration? New things suspend the actings of the mind, glorious things overwhelm the faculty; and never was there so rare and excelling an object. This so signal and amazing effect of our Saviour's love, gives assurance to christians, that he will take them to an everlasting communion with himself in glory. As it is more for a prince to live with a private person in a cottage with complacency, than to receive that person into his court, and invest him with honour. The love of our Saviour never abated to his disciples; when he was in view of death, with its troops of terrors, it is said, "having loved his own, he loved them to the end." And after his resurrection to a heavenly life, he expressed the same dear affection, "Go to my brethren!" a style as high as love can rise.

It is further considerable what was touched on before, that the disciples of Christ, besides the common calamities of mankind wherein they are involved, are for his truth and cause exposed to indignities and injuries of all kinds and degrees, which the malices of Satan and his instruments, the perverted world, can fasten upon them. The complaint of the church of old is often renewed; "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." And can the love of Christ, so tender, so compassionate, that the love of a mother to a sucking infant is not an adequate representation of it; can such love let the saints be separated from him for ever? Then, according to the apostle's expression, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

2. His truth gives an infallible assurance that we shall be received with him in glory. He declares his own titles, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." If truth itself be true, and deserves our entire trust, we may rest upon his promises, who values his word more than the world. The pillars of heaven shall fall, and the foundations of the earth be overthrown, before one tittle of his words shall be without a full accomplishment.

Matt. 5. "If any man serves me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be." John 12. 26. It is his most gracious promise to encourage obedience: and he assures his disciples, "If I go away, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." To show the validity of Christ's promise, let us consider, the unchangeable perfections of God's nature are the foundation of his unchangeable councils; and from thence the unchangeableness of his promises is justly inferred. The decrees of God are engraven with the point of a diamond, and are un retractable. "The counsel of the Lord shall stand:" for such is the perfection of his knowledge, that he can never be surprised by any sudden unforeseen event that should induce a change of his will; and such is his omnipotence, that he gives an infallible accomplishment to his decrees: "and his word endures for ever." 1 Pet. 1. 25. The immutability of his nature, gives firmness to his counsels; and the fidelity of his nature to his promises. "In him there is no variableness, nor shadow of change: and he is a God that cannot lie:" he reveals himself by his name Jehovah to his people; to signify, that he is the same in performing, as in promising. Now Jesus Christ his Son is equal to the Father in all essential perfections. He styles himself "the Amen, the true and faithful witness:" if he deceive his servants with a false expectation of a joyful glorious state hereafter, it would be a blemish to his unspotted holiness, an eternal reflection upon his inviolate truth. It is therefore a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that where Christ is in glory, there shall his servants be with him, otherwise "he would have told them."

3. We are to consider the other firm ground of assurance in our Saviour's next words: "I go to prepare a place for you." This specially respects his ascension into heaven, but it supposes his death. He purchased heaven by his death: he prepares it by his ascension. His blood shed on the cross, and pleaded in heaven, gives to believers a right to it here, and actual possession hereafter.

(1.) His obedient sufferings are the price of this glorious inheritance. In our guilty state, heaven is as inaccessible to us, as paradise was to Adam after his expulsion, when guarded by a cherubim with a flaming sword. For neither the divine wis-

dom, nor the law of God would permit that an unpardoned sinner should be received into his kingdom. The justice of God doth not infringe his rich goodness, but that he may bestow upon an innocent creature the most excellent blessings, the testimonies of his bounty. If Adam had persevered in his duty, God might have translated him to heaven, and that happy change had been a free favour: for his obedience had not been comparable to the glory that shall be revealed in the saints. But justice sets up a legal bar against the guilty; they are excluded from the heavenly glory. The creature must be entirely innocent, or graciously pardoned, to be capable of enjoying that supreme happiness. When the guilt of sin is abolished, it hath no malignant power, either to subject us to evil, or deprive us of good. Now our Saviour by satisfying the injured justice of God, hath washed away our sins in his blood; and hath infinitely pleased God, that we obtain by him, not only redemption from hell, but the possession of heaven. This was the design of God's love, in giving his "only begotten Son, that whoever believes should not perish, but have everlasting life." Heb. 9. 12. Accordingly the apostle saith, "That being justified by his grace through Jesus Christ, we should be made heirs of eternal life." Titus 3. 7. And by the gracious unalterable tenour of the gospel, these great benefits are inseparable; it being equally impossible that an unpardoned sinner should enter into heaven, or that a pardoned sinner should be excluded. The connexion is indissoluble; "whom he justifies, them he glorifies." Rom. 8. 30. Nay, it is more easily credible, that a pardoned sinner should be admitted into the glorious presence of God, than that a guilty sinner should be reconciled to him. As supposing the revival of a phoenix from its ashes, it is more easily conceivable that it should take its flight upwards, which is the natural motion of a living bird, than that it should be restored to life in such a miraculous manner. In short, heaven is a free gift to us, but dearly bought by our Saviour; it is "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He had a double title to heaven, as the Son of God, he was heir of his kingdom; this title is incommunicably his own: and he acquired it by his meritorious sufferings: this he imparts to believers, "who enter into heaven by the new and living way, which he consecrated for them through his flesh."

(2.) He ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us. The actions of our Saviour may be considered two ways; either as terminated in himself, or with a relative respect to believers, as the head of the church. His resurrection was merely personal, but hath an operative force in raising all the members of his mystical body: as David's subduing Goliath, was not his own personal victory simply, but was extended in its happy consequences to all his nation: for in him, as their champion, the army of Israel overcame the Philistines. Jesus Christ, as head of the church, hath broken the dominion of death; and by virtue of his conquest, the grave shall restore the saints at the general resurrection. And his ascension was not a personal act purely to obtain his own right; but as our forerunner he is entered for us into heaven. As the highpriest in his majestic mysterious habit, with the names of the children of Israel upon his breast, entered into the holy of holies; so Jesus Christ entered into the eternal sanctuary as our representative, to take possession of it for us. The language of despair is silenced for ever, "Who shall ascend up to heaven to raise us thither?" Christ is lifted up to the highest glory, and will draw all his people after him. The first Adam was from the earth, earthly; but Christ is the Lord from heaven, and is returned to heaven: and shall earth destroy what heaven cannot restore? The apostle tells us, that "believers sit with Christ in heavenly places;" that is, as he is the head of that sacred society, his church; and his promise is expressed, "To him that overcomes, will I grant personally to sit with me in my throne, even as I also am set down with my Father in his throne." After victorious obedience, the saints shall be taken into sovereign alliance with Christ, and reign for ever. In short, his excellent merit is the foundation of our glorious hope: and his prevailing intercession introduces us into actual possession. He that purchased heaven, disposes of it by his last will; thus he addressed to his Father immediately before his death; "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may see my glory." And he has power to accomplish his own testament. What he hath done already for believers is an uncontrollable evidence, and invincible assurance of what he hath promised. There is a vaster distance between the Deity and misery, than between man and the heavenly glory. For the sun to go back-

wards ten degrees, was miraculous and astonishing; but to ascend the horizon, is according to natural order. The abasement of the Son of God was stupendous, but his advancement to the highest glory is most becoming his divine relation, and infinitely due to his exuberant merits, and a firm foundation of hope, that all his redeemed saints "shall be where he is," and be conformed to him in all supernatural divine excellencies of soul and body for ever.

THE APPLICATION.

1. Let us adore the inconceivable love of God, who hath prepared such a place of joy, and glory for his children when they leave the world. The Father prepared it in his decree from eternity, and by his creating power from the foundation of the world: and we are assured it is such a place and state, as fully answers the design of God's love, that is, to make a reasonable creature as happy as it is capable to be. When man was turned rebel against his Creator, when so changed from the divine resemblance impressed at first upon him, into the disgraceful "likeness of the beasts that perish," as the psalmist justly reproaches him; then to pardon us, and prefer us; to restore us to his favour, and image, and the nearest communion with himself in his palace above, is such an astonishing mercy as is only proper to "God who is love." And the love of our Redeemer is equally admirable; when we were expelled paradise, he makes a re-entry for us, and intercepts the stroke of the flaming sword that had destroyed us. We neither know the depth of our misery from whence we are freed, nor the height of glory to which we are raised by our Redeemer. In what heart but that of the Son of God, could ever such compassion and charity be conceived? He took our flesh to heaven to prepare it for us, and interchangeably left his spirit on earth to prepare us for heaven. How just is the solemn and terrible denunciation of the apostle, "He that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha." And how are we obliged to God for the blessed and glorious gospel, that infinitely excels all human books in the matter it contains, the everlasting happiness of man, and the certain way to obtain it, and in the manner of conveying those great and sacred truths by divine revela-

tion? And what an argument of thankfulness is it to consider the distinguishing grace of God; that when the most are so blind in the clear light of the gospel, as not to discover the lustre of the pearl of price, and so immersed in vanities as to disrelish heavenly joys, that he is pleased to enlighten the eyes of our mind, that we may know "what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

The number of fools that understand not the price that is put into their hands, in comparison of the truly wise, is greater than of common stones that lie in the mire of the streets, to precious stones of the highest value, diamonds, and rubies: "How affectionately should we give thanks to the Father who has made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." But we have such allays by the relics of carnality, that without the heavenly Spirit's inspiring our cold earth, we shall never be ardent and lively in the praises of our blessed benefactor. Even David himself was fain to call upon his soul with repeated fervency, and excite every faculty within him, "to bless the Lord, who had forgiven his iniquities, and redeemed his life from destruction, and crowned him with lovingkindness, and tender mercies."

2. From hence we may infer the great guilt of unbelievers in the christian church; and such are all those who implicitly despise and reject heaven for the present world. This will aggravate the sin and sentence of the carnal and worldly, that they despise such glorious realities for empty vanities. Desperate gamblers, that venture a kingdom at every throw! What blindness of mind, or rather perverseness of heart is it, that men pursue with their best strength and desires, the fading and false world, and slight heaven an inestimable and everlasting treasure. Certainly when death shall open their eyes, they will have changed thoughts of things. It is related by a wise historian, * that a citizen pleaded his own cause of great moment before Philip king of Macedon, who slept during the plea; and a little after passed an unrighteous judgment against him; the injured person replied, I appeal from your sentence. A word that seemed so presumptuous to an independent sovereign, that with indignation the king asked him, to whom he appealed?

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He answered, from the king sleeping, to the king waking. Thus men who are led by sense, are asleep, whilst the cause of infinite concernment, eternal salvation, is faithfully pleaded by the advocates of their souls; and they determine for the interest of the flesh against the spirit: but their waking thoughts will discover the unrighteousness of their carnal judgment. In the next state how will they with restless anguish remember their foolish bargain, to exchange an everlasting treasure for fading toys? We may a little conjecture the torments of the damned, by the terrors of the dying; then the enlightened guilty conscience makes them cry out, O that we had been wise, so to use the world that we might enjoy God! O that we had been so careful to have obtained an interest in heaven, as we have been to gain the earth! Then the stinging remorse begins that shall never end.

3. Let us make it our fixed aim, our zealous constant endeavour to secure our title to this heavenly inheritance. Let eternity be our counsellor, and guide our choice. Let us not build our felicity on the sand, but on the rock that cannot be shaken. Such is the excellent goodness of God revealed in the gospel, that every person that sincerely and regularly seeks heaven, shall obtain it, and no person shall be deprived of it, but for his wilful neglect. Now our blessed Saviour, who opened the eternal kingdom, has declared to us upon what terms it may be obtained, in his conference with Nicodemus; "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3. Natural birth, and accomplishments, though never so high and noble, are of no advantage there. The degeneracy of man from his primitive holiness, makes him both unworthy and incapable of having a right or possession of heaven, without a divine change, a spiritual regeneration. The supernatural inheritance is annexed to the being born of God: that is, the receiving a principle of life, and actions suitable to the life of God, in universal holiness and righteousness. It is not a ground of title to heaven, that we have a natural alliance to God, as the Father of spirits in the first creation, but we must be his offspring by a new and more excellent creation, according to our Saviour's words, "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. We must be renewed in the spirit of our minds," spiritualized in our affections, before

we can obtain an interest in his love, which was forfeited by our rebellion, and consequently in his kingdom. Adoption into God's family, and the line of heaven, is always in conjunction with the renovation of the divine nature and image in us. The Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirits, "that we are the children of God:" but his witnessing is always consequent to his working in us those graces that constitute us to be the children of God: an humble fear to offend him; a care to please him, a zeal for his glory, delight in communion with him, resignation to his will and wisdom, trust on his fatherly love, and a desire to be in his blessed presence. By the discovery of these filial affections, our divine relation is made sure. The apostle infers, "if sons, then heirs." Holiness is the infallible evidence of election; for "the vessels of mercy are prepared by holiness for glory;" the seal of adoption, whereby God's children are distinguished from the world; and "the earnest of their inheritance" for heaven, 2 Cor. 5. 5. is a blissful state of purity; and the graces with the comforts of the Spirit, are the beginnings of it here. It is further to be observed, that our right in the heavenly inheritance, depends upon our union with Christ. He instates his members in the same relation with himself to God. Thus he declares to his disciples, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God." Christ's relation hath precedency in point of dignity and causality; and he derives a right to us in his Father's house: "we are co-heirs with Christ." Now it is universally and necessarily true what the apostle saith, "Whoever is in Christ, is a new creature." For our vital union with him, is by the sanctifying Spirit on Christ's part; and by faith and love on our part. Briefly, "without holiness no man shall see God." The exclusion is absolute and universal of all unsanctified persons. It is impossible God should admit them into heaven; for the rights of justice are inviolable: we must come to Christ's tribunal before we come to his throne: we must "come to God the judge of all, before we are admitted into the number of just men made perfect." Heb. 12. 23. According to our works the reward will be: and men are incapable of enjoying heaven without holiness. The wisdom of God appears, in that the various sorts of creatures live in the elements from which they were produced, and have natures suitable to the places of their residence. The beasts that were formed from

the earth, walk and rest there : the birds and fishes that were produced out of the waters, the one sort flies in the air, that is, rarefied water ; the other swims in water, that is, the thickest air ; and that wisdom more evidently appears in suiting the everlasting states of men to their moral dispositions, " thus we must be born from above," if we would joyfully live above, * The apostle tells us, " That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven." The natural body must be spiritualized and invested with celestial qualities, before it can enter into that glorious place : and the reason is more strong, that earthly sensual souls can never enter into heaven, there being an absolute contrariety, and opposition between the habitual constitution of such, and that place and state : they must be holy and heavenly, to be prepared for the divine presence, and to converse with the purified assembly above ; " till they are wrought for that blessed end," 2 Cor. 5. 5. cleansed, and purified, and endued with holy qualities, till they are " made meet, they cannot possess the inheritance of the saints in light." How vain and impossible are the hopes of unrenewed sinners ? The presence and conversation of the saints is now an offence to them, damps their carnal jollity and wild mirth, for it upbraids their neglect of serious religion. How fearful will the sight of God be to them ? If the unpurged eye cannot bear the light of a candle, how will it sustain the glorious light of the sun ? The Lord's day, in its sacred employment, is their burden ; how can they expect to enjoy an everlasting sabbath above ? How can there be a lively hope of heaven, that implies perfection of holiness, when they neither seriously desire, nor endeavour to be holy ? They may have a cobweb hope that will be swept away, but hope that is as an anchor to secure the soul, hath always a purifying influence on the heart and life. " Whoever hath this hope of being" like to Christ in glory, " purifies himself even as he is pure." 1 John 3. 3. In short, as the Jews had a carnal conceit of the Messiah, and transformed him into a temporal prince coming with pomp and splendour, to free their nation from bondage, and exalt it to the highest dominion in the world : and this conceit so strongly possessed them, that when the Son of God, who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sin-

ners, appeared in an humble state to reform and save mankind, they rejected him: thus the unregenerate have a carnal conceit of heaven: they can only fancy it as a place of visible glory, and a sanctuary and refuge from the torments of hell, and in that notion desire it; but as the place wherein that holy God is enjoyed and glorified by the saints, they cannot desire nor delight in it.

4. From hence we should be induced to regulate our minds, affections, and conversation, becoming our present state and future hopes. Our Father's house, our everlasting home is above, and here we are strangers in condition, and should be so in disposition to present things. This should lessen our esteem, our desires and delights, and moderate our endeavours with respect to the present world. It is the wise and earnest counsel of St. Peter, "Dearly beloved brethren, I beseech you, as pilgrims and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul." Sensual lusts darken the mind, that it doth not rightly value things, nor make judicious comparisons between superficial fleeting things of time, and the sure and solid good things of eternity. The lower appetites are not capable nor careful to obtain a spiritual and future happiness, but intensely applied to what is present and sensible. But the serious thoughts of our present tenure, how frail, how uncertain, and of the next state how unchangeable and fixed, would be effectual to frame our hearts that we may manage the world with indifferent affections; "To rejoice in it, as if we rejoiced not; to buy as if we possessed not; to use it so as not to abuse it." How doth the faith of the saints under the law upbraid our infidelity. They had not so clear a revelation of the heavenly state, yet they "confessed they were pilgrims and strangers on earth, and desired a better country." And David not only when he was as a partridge chased upon the mountains, but when seated on the royal throne, acknowledges, "We are strangers, as all our fathers were;" and his affections were accordingly weaned from the world. Was ever passenger so foolish, that being to pass over a narrow strait of the sea of a day's sailing, makes provisions for a voyage of a year? or that will be at great cost to paint an inn, and adorn it with rich furniture, where he is to lodge but a night? It is incomparably more reproachful

folly, to spend the best of our time, and strength, and spirits for the gaining the present world, as if we were to continue here for ever. How many are sensual, and secure in their earthly enjoyments, till as the rich voluptuary, that was clothed in purple, and fared deliciously every day, they unexpectedly die, and irrecoverably drop into hell. Just like a traveller, that lays himself under the shadow of some trees in his way home, and sleeps till the night with its darkness and dangers surprises him, and he is destroyed by robbers or wild beasts. How plain and necessary a lesson is the vanity and shortness of the present life? but how few effectually learn it? The psalmist addresses himself to God for instruction; "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Let men fancy what they please of their tenure here, they are "but strangers, and have no continuing city here;" and the consequent duty is most clearly and strongly urged by the apostle, "Let them seek one to come."

5. Let our conversation be in heaven, whilst we are upon the earth. Every thing in nature, hath a tendency to its original and perfection. Rivers that come from the sea, are in a living motion returning thither; if you stop their course, and confine them, though in receptacles of marble, they corrupt and die. The divine nature in the saints hath a strong tendency to heaven from whence it came, and raiseth the soul by solemn thoughts, and ardent desires, to that blessed place. A philosopher that was asked of what country he was; replied, he was a citizen of the world. The scripture corrects the language, and teaches us that we are citizens of heaven; we are passing to the Jerusalem above, the "Land of promise, the true land of the living:" and all our aims and endeavours should have a final respect thither. "Our hearts should be where our treasure is." How joyful, how advantageous is a heavenly conversation? The serious and believing contemplation of heaven, is a temperate ecstasy, and brings the soul into the divine presence: anticipates the joy of it by a sweet foretaste, by a supernatural elevation of mind; by frequent lively thoughts of our glorious inheritance, we gradually enter into it: the prospect of that causes in the saints, a holy contempt of the world, as not worthy our ambition and diligence: it causes such a self-denial from the inviting

temptations of sense, that men, whose portion is in this life, are forced to admire their restraint from those objects that ravish carnal hearts. A heavenly christian will improve sensible things for spiritual ends ; as feathers that have a natural weight inclining to the centre, yet planted in the wings of a bird, by a living motion, carry it aloft in the free air. Our rising in the morning, is an emblem of the resurrection from the grave, to behold the bright day of eternity. All the refreshments and comforts of the present life, should be an advantage to raise our minds to God, who is the supreme good, whose fulness eminently contains all good, and infinitely exceeds all our expectations. Heavenly love will dry up the vanity of our thoughts and affections, and rescue the mind from the prostitution to sensible things, and most pleasantly exercise it upon things above. Love between friends is maintained by immediate converse, or by letters, when absent : thus is love between God and the soul : and if God, that is to himself his own blessedness, his own kingdom and glory, yet is pleased in his gracious communications to his children on earth ; how much more should they by frequent and affectionate duties, address to him who is their eternal infinite good. Thus they are acquainted with him, and enjoy a sweet peace, and obtain an humble confidence of appearing before him in his holy and glorious habitation : whereas those who live without God in the world, are justly fearful of death ; for then the spirit returns to God that gave it. Briefly, let us with zealous affections, and persevering diligence prepare ourselves for the presence of God, and the society of blessed spirits in our Father's house : " Let us always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing our labour is not in vain : " let us join works of charity with works of piety ; employ the fading riches of the world for the relief of the saints ; that as our Saviour promises " when we shall fail," when in the hour of death our " flesh and hearts shall fail us," and our souls be dislodged from our earthly tabernacles, we " may be received into eternal habitations." Luke 16. 9. The everlasting Judge, that dispenses rewards and punishments, has acquainted us with the rule of judgment at the last day : those who mercifully relieve him in his members, shall " inherit the kingdom of glory ; " and those who neglect that duty, shall be cast into the lake of fire. Though many who are wretchedly careless of doing good according to their ability, now satisfy themselves that they

are not injurious to others : yet it will be a small mitigation of their sentence at last, that they are condemned, not for the defect of justice, but of charity.

6. Let the belief that there are mansions of rest and joy prepared for the saints in their Father's house, gloriously support them under their heaviest troubles here. The world is the devil's circuit, wherein he is always ranging about seeking to devour : the pleasant things of the world are his temptations to ensnare the carnal ; the men of the world are his instruments to oppress the saints ; and were it not for the restraints of the divine power, what desolations would be made in God's heritage ? It was a strange and barbarous custom among the Persians, * that upon the death of the emperor, for five days the empire was left without government. And as upon removing the stone from the fabulous cave of *Æolus*, the winds broke out in their fury : so by taking away the authority of the laws, licence was given to all licentiousness, and the whole kingdom was in mortal paroxysms. All were in arms, some to do injuries, others to revenge them : the chastity of none was secure, but concealed, nor the estates of any but defended : the bridle of fear was taken off, no wickedness but was boldly committed, or attempted, and the kingdom became a field of bloody war. But when the new king was proclaimed, all things were immediately reduced to order, that the advantage of government might be set off by the experimental confusions and mischiefs of anarchy. But if God left the perverted world, and satan the prince of it, one day to their rage against his people, did he not shut "it in with doors and bars," as he doth the impetuous ocean ; so swelling and diffusive is their malignity, that it would, like the deluge, drown all, and not a remnant of the saints would be left. Yet God wisely permits many temporal evils to be inflicted on his servants by their enemies, for the trial of their fidelity, and their noble resolution to glorify him whatever they suffer for his sake. And it becomes them, with an undisturbed serenity of mind, and harmony of affections, with an invincible patience, to bear all the scorn and contempt, all the malice, and fury to which they are exposed upon a christian account. Let them remember "they are strangers and sojourners here," and live by other laws than the

* *Sext. Empiric cont. Mathem.*

world doth, which causes their hatred: but in their Father's house there will be perfect rest. St. Paul, who had experience of both in a singular manner, declares, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present state, are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us." In that state of pure felicity, there are no remains of afflicting evils; all is peace, and joy, and glory.

* Seneca the philosopher, when an exile, and confined to the mountains of Corsica, entertained himself with the contemplation of the heavens, and the bright luminaries, in their various but regular motions: thus when banished from the court and city, he dwelt amongst the stars, and casting his eyes down upon the earth, despised all human greatness and possessions, (that are so vainly magnified by figurative flatteries) as we do a grain of sand. Did philosophy inspire him with such principles of patience and fortitude? yet it ascended no higher than the visible heavens. How much more should faith that raises a christian, by high and steady thoughts, to the supreme heaven where the divine glory shines, comfort him in all the troubles of this world. Add further, that it is an excellent preservative from envy and fretfulness at the prosperity of the wicked, to consider that their felicity is as transient and vanishing as the trouble of the saints: "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree: yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, and he could not be found." Psal. 37. 35, 36. All the riches, and greatness, and pleasures of the world are weighed, numbered, and measured by the psalmist, and found to be as light and fading as vanity. "Naked they came into the world, and naked they must go out;" and how much more tormenting will it be to be stripped of all their enjoyments; how much more sorrowful will they be to go from their great possessions, than for one that leaves the world, and never had them? Their hopes are like the giving up of the ghost, and expire with their breath for ever. "I went into the sanctuary, saith the troubled saint, then understood I their end:"

* Dum oculi mei ab illo spectaculo cujus insatiabiles sunt, non abducantur, dum mihi lunam, solemq; intueri liceat, dum cæteris inherere Syderibus, & dum cum his sim, & Cœlestibus qua homini fas est miscer, dum animam ad cognitarum rerum conspectum tendentem in sublimi semper habeam, quantum refert mea quid calcem? *Consol. ad Hler. c. 9.*

Psal. 73. 17. the end of their felicity, and the miseries of the righteous. Besides the evils suffered for righteousness-sake, there are innumerable sorrows that befall the saints here. How many afflicting diseases, sad occurrences, vexing passions harass them? Some afflictions are so wounding to their spirits, that no balm that grows on earth can heal. But the lively hope of heaven is an universal cure for all their troubles. Let the mourning christian consider the wise providence of God, that orders all events, and believe his love in sending, and his end in all their afflictions. Such is the divine power that God could immediately free us from all troubles, as easily, as turn the wind from a blasting quarter of the heavens, to the most benign, and refreshing. Are we pained with diseases? he can more easily change the tone of nature in a sickly body, and make it healthy; than one can change the stop in an organ that presently alters the sound: but his love dispenses bitter thing to us, that are necessary for our spiritual and everlasting good. His end is to prepare us for heaven, that is prepared for us. The apostle declares, "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God:" that is, made us fit for the heavenly glory. The divine disposal of things here to the saints, has a certain order to their eternal state. He purgeth out our vicious guilty affections to the world by sharp physic, that our hopes of heaven may be more pure and vigorous, more actuated by serious thoughts and intense desires, that we may feel the sense of the psalmist's expression, "O when shall we come and appear before God!"

In short, art thou in the vale of tears, languishing in sorrow, and dying every day? by faith ascend to "the mountains of spices," the blessed place above, and thou wilt find the comforts of God to revive and delight thy soul.

7. Let this reconcile death to us. The pale horse is sent to bring us to our Father's house. The apostle expresses the true christian temper: "In this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed with our house that is from heaven: and we are willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." 2 Cor. 5. 2, 8. Every saint in the present world is both a prisoner and a captive: and his soul is detained from the glorious liberty of the sons of God, by confinement to his body. Therefore methinks he should not merely be content to die out of the necessity of nature, when he can live no longer, but desire the

happy removal, and say with the psalmist, "I rejoiced when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." It is true, nature will recoil, and the extinguishing the present life, with all its sensible pleasant operations, is uneasy to us: but as when the candles are put out, the sun rises in its brightness, so when the natural life ceases, the spiritual life springs forth in its oriency and glory: "When the earthly tabernacle is dissolved, the naked separate soul shall be received into a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Our joyful affections, in leaving the world, and ascending to heaven, should be in some manner suitable to our reception there. What a joyful welcome will entertain us from God himself? Our Saviour comforted his disciples with a heavenly valediction, "I go to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God." The gracious relation sweetens the glorious. He that joyfully receives the rebellious, but penitent son to grace, will joyfully receive his obedient sons to glory. He that now receives their prayers with the affection of a father, will receive their persons with the dearest expressions of love. His fatherly providence watched over them in the way, and will triumphantly bring them home. Here many blessed testimonies of God's love are given to the saints, that produce such a spiritual sweetness in their hearts, that they esteem his lovingkindness as better than life, more worth than all the world; but the full revealing of his love is only in heaven. And as a child knows by experience the love of his father, but the degrees and strength of his affection he does not understand till arrived at mature age, and sees the inheritance his father invests him with. Thus in heaven only the saints shall know the excellent and perfect love of God to them, when they are possessed of that glorious kingdom, his most free and rich gift, which transcends all their present thoughts. And our blessed Redeemer, that by so many titles has an interest in us, that is not contented in his own personal glory, without our partaking of it, that by his resurrection opened the grave, and by his ascension opened heaven for us; how dearly will he receive us? He esteems believers to "be his joy and crown," and with an ecstasy of affection will present them to his Father; "Behold I, and the children that God has given me." The angels and saints above overflow with joy; when

the soul, as a pure spark freed from its ashes, ascends to the element of spirits, how joyfully is it entertained by that glorious assembly? The angels that rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, will much more at the glorification of a saint: and the saints have a new accession to their joy, upon the reception of any of their brethren to that state of felicity.

The saints of all ages may be resembled to a fleet of merchant-men that are bound for the same port, some arrive sooner, others later, according to the time of their setting out: but those who arrive first, how do they welcome their friends that come safely afterwards? An imperfect resemblance how dearly and joyfully the saints that are gone before us welcome those who arrive in heaven every day, knowing the dangerous seas they have passed through, where so many have been cast away and lost for ever. All heaven is in music, celebrating the praises of God, and expressing their joyful sense, when a victorious saint is come to receive his reward. How does this consideration upbraid us, that we are so unwilling to be dissolved, and to be with our best friends in the best place? that our tears and sorrows for leaving the earthly tabernacle, and the low comforts of this life, should continue till we come to the gate of heaven? How can we be content with the imperfections of the present state? Here we are as distant from complete happiness, as the highest heaven is from the earth. Where is our faith in the promises of God? Where is our love to our Redeemer and our souls? The loathness of a sincere christian to die, and be with Christ, is a defection from his christianity.

Lastly. This should refresh our sorrows for the loss of our dearest friends that die in the Lord. Here is a mournful parting, when they are laid in the cold, dark and silent mansions of the earth: when those whom we loved as our own souls, are finally separated from us, and we shall see their faces no more. And as one that is directed by the light of a torch in the night, when it is taken away, is more sensible of the darkness, than if he had not been enlightened by it: so when those dear friends are taken away, whose conversation was the light and joy of our lives, we are more darkened with sorrow, than if we had never enjoyed them. But if we duly consider things, there is more reason of joy, than sorrow, at the departure of the saints. Our

Saviour tells his disciples, that were mourning for his signifying that he must go away, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I say I must go to my Father to reign with him in sovereign glory." Sincere love will make us more to rejoice in their gain, than to grieve for our loss. Especially considering within a little while we shall be inseparably united in the kingdom of glory, where love reigns for ever.

A short Character of Mr. DAVID CLARKSON.

Although the commendation of the dead is often suspected to be guilty of flattery, either in disguising their real faults, or adorning them with false virtues; and such praises are pernicious to the living: yet of those persons whom God hath chosen to be the singular objects of his grace, we may declare the praiseworthy qualities and actions which reflect an honour upon the giver, and may excite us to imitation. And such was Mr. David Clarkson, a person worthy of dear memory and value, who was furnished with all those endowments that are requisite in an accomplished minister of the gospel.

He was a man of sincere godliness, and true holiness, which is the divine part of a minister, without which all other accomplishments are not likely to be effectual for the great end of the ministry, that is, to translate sinners from the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Conversion is the special work of divine grace, and it is most likely that God will use those as instruments in that blessed work, who are dear to him, and earnestly desire to glorify him. God ordinarily works in spiritual things, as in natural: for as in the production of a living creature, besides the influence of the universal cause, there must be an immediate agent of the same kind for the forming of it: so the divine wisdom orders it, that holy and heavenly ministers should be the instruments of making others so. Let a minister be master of natural and artificial eloquence, let him understand all the secret springs of persuasion, let him be furnished with learning and knowledge, yet he is not likely to succeed in his divine employment without sanctifying grace. It is that gives him a tender sense of the worth of souls, that warms his heart with ardent requests to God, and with zealous affections to men for their salvation. Besides, an unholy minister

unravels in his actions his most accurate discourses in the pulpit; and like a carbuncle that seems animated with the light and heat of fire, but is a cold dead stone: so though with appearing earnestness he may urge men's duties upon them, yet he is cold and careless in his own practice, and his example enervates the efficacy of his sermons. But this servant of God was a real saint, a living spring of grace in his heart diffused itself in the veins of his conversation. His life was a silent repetition of his holy sermons.

He was a conscientious improver of his time for acquiring of useful knowledge, that he might be thoroughly furnished for the work of his divine calling. And his example upbraids many ministers, who are strangely careless of their duty, and squander away precious time, of which no part is despicable and to be neglected. The filings of gold are to be preserved. We cannot stop the flight of time, nor recal it when passed. *Volat irrevocabile tempus*. The sun returns to us every day, and the names of the months every year, but time never returns. But this servant of God was faithful in improving this talent, being very sensible (to use his own words) 'That the blood of the soul runs out in wasted time.' When deprived of his public ministry, he gave himself wholly to reading and meditation, whereby he obtained an eminent degree of sacred knowledge, and was conversant in the retired parts of learning, in which many who are qualified to preach a profitable sermon, are unacquainted.

His humility and modesty were his distinctive characters wherein he excelled. What a treasure was concealed under the veil of humility? What an illustrious worth was shadowed under his virtuous modesty? He was like a picture drawn by an excellent master in painting, but placed in the dark, so that the exactness of the proportions, and the beauty of colours do not appear. He would not put his name to those excellent tracts, that are extant, wherein his learning and judgment are very conspicuous. He was well satisfied to serve the church, and illustrate the truth, and to remain in his beloved secrecy.

In his conversation a comely gravity mixed with an innocent pleasantness, were attractive of respect and love. He was of a calm temper, not ruffled with passions, but gentle, and kind, and good; and even in some contentious writings, he preserved an

equal tenour of mind, knowing that we are not likely to discover the truth in a mist of passion : his breast was the temple of peace.

In the discharge of his sacred work, his intellectual abilities, and holy affections were very evident.

In prayer, his solemnity and reverence were becoming one that saw him who is invisible : his tender affections, and suitable expressions, how melting and moving, that might convey a holy heat and life to dead hearts, and dissolve obdurate sinners in their frozen tombs.

In his preaching, how instructive and persuasive to convince and turn the carnal and worldly, from the love of sin, to the love of holiness ; from the love of the earth, to the love of heaven. The matter of his sermons was clear and deep, and always judiciously derived from the text : the language was neither gaudy and vain, with light trimmings, nor rude and neglected, but suitable to the oracles of God. Such were his chosen acceptable words, as to recommend heavenly truths, to make them more precious and amiable to the minds and affections of men ; like the colour of the sky, that makes the stars to shine with a more sparkling brightness.

Briefly, whilst opportunity continued, with alacrity, and diligence, and constant resolution, he served his blessed Master, till his languishing distempers, which natural means could not remove, prevailed upon him. But then the best physician provided him the true remedy of patience. His death was unexpected, yet ; as he declared, no surprise to him, for he was entirely resigned to the will of God ; he desired to live no longer, than to be serviceable : his soul was supported with the blessed hope of enjoying God in glory. With holy Simeon, he had Christ in his arms, and departed in peace to see the salvation of God above. How great a loss the church has sustained in his death, is not easily valued ; but our comfort is, God never wants instruments to accomplish his blessed work.