

AN
APPENDIX.

A BRIEVIATE OF THE HELPS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

A BRIEVIATE OF THE PROOF OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION,
AND THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

I TIMOTHY iii. 16.

Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

THESE are the creed, or six articles of the gospel which the apostles preached.

Sect. 1. God manifested in the flesh of Jesus, is the first and great article. Believe this, and believe all. No wonder that believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is so often made, in Scripture, the description of saving faith, the title to baptism, and pardon, and salvation, the evidence of the Spirit, &c. He that truly and practically believeth that God came in flesh to man, and that Christ is the Father's messenger from heaven, must needs believe that God hath a great value for the souls of men, and for his church, that he despiseth not even our flesh; that his word is true, and fully to be trusted; that he, who so wonderfully came to man, will certainly take up man to him. Who can doubt of the immortality of souls, or that Christ will receive the departing souls of the faithful to himself, who believeth that he took man's nature, and hath glorified it now in heaven, in union with the divine? Who can ever have low thoughts of God's love and mercy who believeth this? and who can prostitute his soul and flesh to wickedness, who firmly believeth that he took the soul and flesh of man to sanctify and glorify it?

Sect. 2. II. The Holy Spirit is the justification of the truth of Jesus Christ. He is Christ's advocate and witness to the

world. He proveth the gospel by these five ways of evidence: 1. By all the prophecies, types, and promises of Christ in the Old Testament, before Christ's coming. 2. By the inherent impress of God's image on the person and doctrine of Christ; which, *propria luce*, showeth itself to be divine. 3. By the concomitant miracles of Christ: read the history of the gospel for this use, and observe each history. 4. By the subsequent gift of the Spirit to the apostles and other Christians, by languages, wonders, and multitudes of miracles, to convince the world. 5. By the undeniable and excellent work of sanctification on all true believers through all the world, in all generations to this day. These five are the Spirit's witness, which fully testifieth the certain truth, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Sect. 3. Quest. But how are we sure, who, ourselves, never saw the person, miracles, resurrection, ascension of Christ, that the history of them is true?

Ans. 1. We may be sure that the spectators were not deceived. 2. And that they did not deceive them to whom they reported it. 3. And that we are not deceived by any miscarriage in the historical tradition to us.

Sect. 4. I. It was not possible that men that were not mad, that had eyes and ears, could, for three years and a half, believe that they saw the lame, the blind, the deaf, and all diseases healed, the dead raised, thousands miraculously fed, &c., and this among crowds of people that still followed Christ, if the things had not been true. One man's senses may be deceived at some one instance, by some deceitful accident: but that the eyes and ears of multitudes should be so oft deceived, many years, in the open light, is as much as to say, no man knoweth any thing that he seeth and heareth.

Sect. 5. II. That the disciples who received the apostles' and evangelists' report of Christ, were not deceived by the reporters, is most evident.

For, 1. They received it not by hearsay, at the second hand, but from the eye and ear witnesses themselves, who must needs know what they said.

2. They heard this report from men of the same time, and age, and country, where it was easy to examine the case, and confute it, had it been false.

3. The apostles appealed to crowds and thousands of witnesses, as to many of Christ's miracles, who would have made it odious, had it not been true.

4. They sharply reproved the rulers for persecuting Christ, which would provoke them to do their best to confute the apostles for their own justification.

5. Christ chose men of no great human learning and subtlety, but common, plain, unlearned men, that it might not be thought a deceit of art.

6. Yea, he did not make much more known to them before his death, than the bare matters of fact which they daily saw, and that he was the Christ, and Moral Doctrine; his death, resurrection, ascension, and kingdom of heaven, they knew little of before; but experience, and the sudden coming down of the Spirit, suddenly taught them all the rest.

7. They taught not one another, but were every one personally taught of God.

8. And yet they all agreed in the same doctrine when they were dispersed over the world, and never differed in any one article of faith.

9. They were men that had no worldly interest, wealth, or dominion, to seek.

10. Yea, they renounced and denied all worldly interest, and sealed their testimony by their sufferings and blood; and all in hope of a heavenly reward, which they knew that lying was no means to obtain.

11. Had they plotted to cheat the world for nothing, the sin is so heinous that some one of them would have repented and confessed it, at least, at death; which none of them did, but died joyfully, as for the truth.

12. Paul was converted by a voice and light from heaven, in the presence of those that travelled with him in his persecuting design.

13. But yet it is a fuller evidence that the doctrine which they delivered, as from God, beareth a divine impress, that, as the light, it is its own evidence.

14. And for the more infallible conviction, they that testified of Christ's miracles, did the like themselves to confirm their testimony. They spake with tongues which they never learned; they healed all diseases; even the shadow of Peter, and the clothes that came from Paul, did heal men; they raised the dead; and they that in all countries converted the nations by their own miracles, attesting the miracles and resurrection of Christ, must needs compel the spectators to believe them.

15. Yet, more than all this, those that believed them were

presently enabled to do the like in one kind and degree or other. The same extraordinary gift of the Spirit fell upon the common multitude of believers, by the laying on of the apostles' hands; so that Simon Magus would fain have bought that power with money. And when men witnessed Christ's miracles, and wrought the like themselves; and those that believed them had and did the like, either healing, tongues, prophecy, or some wonder, it was, sure, an infallible way of testifying.

16. When wrangling heretics quarrelled with the apostles, and would draw away disciples to themselves, by disparaging them, they still appealed to the miracles wrought by these disciples themselves, or in their sight; as Gal. iii. 1, 2, 3, 5. And as Christ, when the Jews said he did all by Beelzebub, when he cast out devils, asked them, "By whom do your children cast them out?" Which, had it been false, would have turned all the people from them.

17. Their adversaries were so far from writing any confutation of their testimony, that they confessed the miracles, and had no shift, but either to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and say that they were done by the devil, or else, by persecution and violence, to oppress them. As if the devil were master of the world, and could remedilessly deceive it against God's will; or God himself would send or suffer a full course of miracles remedilessly to deceive the world, which is to make God like the devil: or, as if the devil were so good, as by miracles to promote so holy, and amiable, and just a doctrine, as that of Christianity, to make men wise, and, good, and just, and kill their sin. So that this blasphemy of the Holy Ghost makes Satan to be God, or God to be Satan.

18. All the cruelty, powers, learning, and policy of their adversaries was not able to stop the progress of this testimony, much less to prevail against it.

III. It is then most certain, that the first witnesses were not deceived by Christ, nor believers after deceived by them. The next question is, whether we be not deceived by a false historical tradition of these things? Had we seen them all ourselves, we must needs have believed; but at this distance we know not what misreports may intervene. What eyesight and hearing was to them, that tradition is to us. Now the question is, is it certainly the very same fact and doctrine which they received, and which we receive?

And here, let it be premised, that there is no other way of

assurance, than that which God hath afforded us, that the reason of man could have desired.

1. If we would see God, and heaven, and hell, this is not a way suitable to the state of probationers that live in flesh on earth. Angels live by vision, and fruition of glory; and brutes, by sense, on sensible things; but reasonable travellers must live by reason, and by believing certain revelation.

2. If God will send his Son from heaven to ascertain us, and we will believe no more than we see ourselves, then Christ must dwell on earth, to the end of the world, and he must be in all places of the earth at once, that all may see; and he must die and rise again before all men in all ages; and how mad an expectation is this!

3. Or if all that deliver us the history must work miracles before our eyes, or else we will not believe them, it is still most absurd. Will you not believe that the laws of the land are genuine, or that ever there were such kings as made them, unless he that tells it you work miracles? Shall not children believe their parents, or scholars their tutors, unless they work miracles?

3. I must premise that there are three sorts of tradition, I. Such as depends on the common wit and honesty of mankind. And this is very much to be suspected, wickedness, folly, and lying being grown so common in the world.

II. Such as depends on the extraordinary skill and honesty of some proved men. And this deserveth much belief; but it is an uncertain human faith.

III. Such as depends on natural necessity, and cannot possibly be false. We have both these last to ascertain us of the gospel history.

This resteth on a distinction of the acts of man's will: some of them are mutably free; and these give no certainty: some of them are naturally and immutably necessary, and man can do no otherwise; and these give even natural, infallible certainty. Such are to love one's self, to love felicity, to hate torment and misery, &c., and to know that which is fully manifest to our sound senses, &c.

When men of contrary interests and temper all confess the truth of known things, about which their interests stand cross, it is a physical evidence of truth.

On this account, men's agreement about natural notices is infallible.

It seems strange that all the world, from Adam's time, are agreed which is the first, second, and third, &c., day of the week, and not a day lost till now. It could be no otherwise, because, being a thing of natural interest and notice, if any kingdom had lost a day by oversleeping, or had agreed to falsify it, all the rest of the world would have shamed them.

Thus all Grecians, Latins, Englishmen, &c., agree about the sense of words; for if some would pervert them, the rest would detect it.

Thus we are certain that the statutes of the land are not counterfeit. For men of cross interests hold their lands and lives by them: and if some did counterfeit them, the rest would, by interest, be bound to detect it.

Arg. 1. There can be no effect without an adequate cause; but in nature there is no cause that can make all men agree to assert a known falsehood, or deny a known truth, against all their known interest; therefore there can be no such effect.

Arg. 2. A necessary cause will necessarily effect; but where men's known interest obligeth them to agree of a known truth, this is a necessary cause of certain credibility; therefore it hath a necessary effect.

You know who were your parents, and when and where you were born, &c., by such tradition in a lower degree. This dependeth not on pretended authority, nor on mere honesty; but on natural necessity.

Having premised this, I come to prove, that we have such tradition of physical, infallible evidence, that the faith of the present church, in the essentials, is the same which the first churches received infallibly from the apostles.

1. The world knoweth, that ever since Christ's ascension, all that believed in him were baptised, as all Abraham's covenanting seed were circumcised. And what is baptism, but a profession of belief in Jesus Christ, as dead, risen, and glorified; and a devoting ourselves in covenant to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? All that ever were Christians by solemn vow professed this same faith; and this is such a tradition of Christianity as human generations, down from Adam, are of the same humanity in the world.

2. They that were baptised were catechised first; in which the three articles of baptism were opened to them; of which Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension were part; and this hath been an undeniable tradition of the same faith.

3. The sum of the christian faith was, from the beginning, drawn up in certain articles called the creed, which expounded the three baptismal articles; and all churches on earth had the same in sense, and most in words; and all at age that were baptised, professed this creed; which is as full a tradition of the same belief in Christ's birth, death, and resurrection, ascension, and glory, as speaking is a tradition of the same human nature.

4. Before Christ's ascension, he instituted the office of the sacred ministry, which friends and foes confess hath continued ever since. And what is this ministry, but an office of publishing the gospel of Christ, his life, death, miracles, resurrection, grace, &c. What else have they done in all ages in the world? so that the office is an undeniable tradition.

5. Christ and his apostles instituted the weekly celebration of the remembrance of his resurrection on the Lord's days: friends and foes confess the history, that the first day of the week hath been kept for such memorial ever since, through all the Christian part of the world, which proveth the uninterrupted belief of Christ's resurrection, as a notorious, practical tradition.

6. Christ and his apostles, ever since his resurrection, instituted solemn assemblies of Christians to be held on those days, and at other times; once a week was the least through the Christian world: and what did they meet for, but to preach, hear, and profess the same christian faith?

7. It was the constant custom of Christians in their assemblies, and their houses, to sing hymns of praise to Jesus Christ, in remembrance of his resurrection, &c. Pliny tells Trajan that this was the practice by which Christians were known by their persecutors: which is a practical tradition.

8. Jesus Christ instituted, and all Christians to this day have constantly used, the sacrament of Christ's sacrifice, called the eucharist; to keep in remembrance his death till he come, and profess their belief that he is our life. And as the constant celebration of the passover, with all its ceremonies, was a most certain tradition of the Egyptians' plagues, and Israelites' deliverance, more than a bare written history would be, so hath the Lord's supper been, of the uninterrupted belief of the history of our redemption by Christ.

9. The church hath, from the beginning, had a constant discipline, by which it hath kept itself separate from heretics,

who have denied any essential article of this faith, which is a sure tradition of the same belief.

10. None question but Christians have, from the beginning, been persecuted for this same faith, and in persecution made confession of it: persecutors and confessors, then, are both the witnesses of the continuance.

11. Whenever heretics or enemies have written against Christians, their apologies and defences show that it was this same faith which they owned.

12. Most of the adverse heretics owned the same matters of fact.

13. The Jews were long before in possession of the books of the Old Testament, which bear their testimony to Christ.

14. The books of the New Testament have, by certain tradition, been delivered down to this present day, which contain the matters of fact and doctrine, the essentials, integrals, and accidents of the faith.

15. No enemies have written any thing against the matter of fact, of any moment.

16. Yea, the Jews, and other bitterest enemies, confess much of the miracles of Christ.

17. Martyrs have cheerfully forsaken life and all in confessing it.

18. God, by his wonderful providence, hath maintained it.

19. The devil, and all the wicked of the world, are the greatest enemies to it.

20. The Holy Ghost hath still blessed it, to work the same holy and heavenly nature and life, in all sincere and serious believers.

Quest. This proveth infallibly the tradition of the same faith in the essentials: but how prove you that the same holy Scripture is delivered as uncorrupted?

Answ. All the Bible is not brought down so unchanged as are the essentials of our religion: when there were no Bibles but what scribes wrote, no wonder if oversight left few copies without some of their slips. There are hundreds of various readings in the New Testament, and of many no man can be certain which is true: but none of them are such as make any difference in the articles of our faith or practice, nor on which any point of doctrine or fact dependeth.

And the words are necessary but for the matter which they do record.

And 1. All ministers, and all churches, constantly used this same Scripture publicly and privately, as the word of God, so that it could not be easily altered.

2. They all knew that a curse is pronounced against every one that addeth or diminisheth ; which must needs possess them with fear of corrupting it.

3. They took it to be the charter of their own salvation.

4. The work of the ministers was to expound it, and preserve it against corrupters.

5. These ministers and churches were over much of the world, and could not agree together to corrupt it ; and if some did it, all the rest would soon detect it.

6. Heresies and quarrels were quickly to rise among them ; so that cross interests and animosities would soon have fallen upon the corrupters.

7. Some heretics made some adding and corrupting attempts, which the church presently condemned, and turned it to their shame.

8. In all the disputations then managed, the same Scriptures were appealed to.

9. The translations into various languages show that the books were the same, without any momentous difference.

10. To this day, when sin and tyranny have torn the church into many factions, they all receive the same canonical Scriptures, except that some receive more apocryphal writings, which yet make no alteration at all of our gospel faith.

Quest. But doth not this laying so much on tradition favour popery ?

Answ. No : The difference is here. 1. Papists are for tradition, as a supplement to the Scripture, as if this were but part of the word of God : and, 2. They plead for a peculiar power of being the keepers and judges of that supplemental tradition, which other churches know nothing of.

But we, 1. Plead for the infallible, practical tradition of the essentials of Christianity by itself, and in the creed, &c., which is less than the Scripture. 2. And next for the certain tradition of the Scripture itself, uncorrupted in all that faith depends on : which Scripture is the complete record of God's will and law, containing more than essentials and integrals.

So much of God, 1. Manifested in the flesh ; 2. Justified in the Spirit.

III. He was seen of angels ; that is, angels were the behold-

ing, witnessing, and admiring servants of this great mystery, God manifested in the flesh.

1. Angels preached Christ at his incarnation.
2. Angels ministered to Christ in his temptations, agonies, &c.
3. Angels were preachers and witnesses of his resurrection.
4. Angels rolled away the stone, and terrified the soldiers.
5. Angels preached his return to them that gazed up at his ascension.
6. Angels opened the prison-doors, and set the imprisoned apostles free once, and Peter alone, afterwards.
7. Angels rejoice in heaven at the conversion of all that Christ brings home.
8. Angels disdain not to be the guardians of the least of Christ's disciples.
9. Angels are protecting officers over churches and kingdoms.
10. Angels have preached to apostles, and been the messengers of their revelations.
11. Angels have been the instruments of miracles, and of destroying the church's enemies.
12. Angels will ministerially convoy departed souls to Christ.
13. Angels will gloriously attend Christ at his return, and sever the wicked from the just.
14. Angels will be our companions in the heavenly choir for ever.

Therefore, 1. We should love angels. 2. And be thankful to God for them. 3. And think the more comfortably of heaven for their society. 4. And pray for the benefit of their ministry on earth, especially in all our dangers.

IV. The fourth article is "Preached to the Gentiles." The Jews having the covenant of peculiarity, were proud of their privilege, even while they unworthily abused it; and despised the rest of the world, and would not so much as eat with them, as if they had been God's only people. And, indeed, the rest of the world was so corrupted, that we find no one nation that, as such, renounced idolatry, and was devoted in covenant to the true God alone, as the Jews were. Now that God should be manifested in flesh, to reconcile the heathen world to himself, and extend greater privileges, indefinitely to all nations, than ever the Jews had in their state of peculiarity, this was a mystery of godliness, which the Jews did hardly yield belief to.

And that which aggravateth this wonder is, 1. That the Gentile world was drowned in all idolatry and unnatural wicked-

ness, such as Paul describeth. And that God should suddenly and freely send them the message of reconciliation, and be found of them that sought him not, is that wonder which obligeth us Gentiles, who once lived as without God in the world, to be thankful to him. (Rom. i. 2; Eph. ii., and iii. 18, &c.)

V. The fifth article is "Believed on in the world." The effect of the gospel on the souls of men in their effectual faith, is one of the evidences of the christian truth.

I told you before, that the fifth witness of the Spirit on the souls of all believers, I reserved to be here mentioned. Here, 1. It is a part of the wonder, that Christ should be believed on in the world, even with a common faith. For, 1. To believe a mean man to be the Mediator between God and man, and the Saviour of the world; yea, one that was crucified as a malefactor; this must needs be a difficult thing.

2. The very Jewish nation was as contemptible to the Romans, being one of their poorest subdued provinces, as the Gentiles were to the Jews: and Christ was by birth a Jew.

3. The greatness of the Roman empire then, ruling over much of the world, was such, that by preaching, and not by war, to bring them to be subjects to a crucified Jew, was a marvellous work; and so to bring the conquered nations to become Christ's voluntary subjects.

4. The Roman and Greek learning was then at the height of its perfection: and the Christians were despised by them as unlearned barbarians: and that learning, arts, and empire should all submit to such a King and Saviour, was certainly a work of supernatural power. Christ did not levy armies to overcome the nations, nor did victory move them; but the victors and lords of the world, and these no fools, but the masters of the greatest human wisdom, were conquered by the gospel, preached by a sort of inferior men.

5. And this gospel which conquered them was still opposed by them, and the Christians persecuted as a sort of hated men, till it overcame the persecutors.

It is true that heathenism hath the greatest part of the world, and Mahometans have as much as Christians: but one sort got it by the sword, and the other by the doctrine and holy lives of a few unarmed, inferior men.

II. But I use this of the extent of faith, but as a probable, and not a cogent argument: but the main argument is from the sanctifying effect of faith.

I know it will be said, that many, or most, Christians are as bad as other men.

But it is one thing to be of a professed religion, because it is the religion of the king and country, and therefore maketh for men's worldly advantage, and they hear little said against it : this is the case of most in the world, Christians, Mahometans, and heathens : and it is another to be a serious believer, who, upon trial and consideration, chooseth Christianity.

And it is notorious that such serious Christians are all holy, sober, and just, and so greatly differing from the corrupted world, as fully proveth that God owneth that gospel which he maketh so effectual to so great a change.

Here consider, 1. What that change is. 2. How hard and great a work it is. 3. That it is certainly a work of God. 4. That the gospel is the means by which God doth it.

1. The nature of his holy work on all serious, sincere Christians, is, it sets all their hopes and hearts on the promised glory of the life to come, and turns the very nature of their wills into the predominant love of God and man, and of heaven and holiness. It mortifieth all fleshly lusts, and subjects sense to reason and faith, the body to the soul, and all to God. It sets a man's heart on the sincere study of doing all the good he can in the world, to friends, neighbours, and enemies, especially the most public good ; to live soberly, righteously, and godly, is his delight. Sin is his chief hatred, and nothing more grievous to him than he that cannot reach to greater perfection in faith, hope, obedience, patience, and in heavenly love and joy. It causeth a man to contemn wealth, honour, and fleshly pleasure, and life, in comparison of God's love and life everlasting. This change of God's Spirit worketh on all true believers.

Those that are ungodly have but the name of Christians ; they never well understood what Christianity is, nor ever received it by a true belief. But all that understandingly and seriously believe in Jesus Christ, are sanctified by his Spirit.

II. And this is a greater work than miracles, in excellency and difficulty.

1. It is the very health of the souls. It is salvation itself ; it maketh man in his measure like to God, and is his image. It is a heavenly nature, and is the earnest and preparation for heaven. It delivereth man from the greatest evil on earth, and giveth him the firmest peace and joy, in his peace with God ; the pardon of his sins, and the hope of everlasting glory.

2. It is easy to discern how great a work this is, by the deep roots of all the contrary vices in the corrupted nature of man. Experience assureth us that man, by vitiated nature, is proud and ignorant, and savoureth little but the things of the flesh, and worldly interest, and is a slave to his appetite and lust: his bodily prosperity is all that really hath his heart. Yea, if God restrain them not, all wicked men are bitter enemies to all that are truly wise and holy, even among heathens and infidels; if any be but better than the rest, the wicked are their deadly enemies. There is so visible an enmity between godliness and wickedness, the seed of Christ, and of the serpent in the world, as is a great confirmation of the Scripture which describeth it. And it is not the name of Christians that altereth men's nature. We here, that have peace from all the world, are under such implacable hatred of wicked men, that call themselves Christians, that so many bears or wolves would be less hurtful to us.

3. And the universal spreading of this wickedness over all the earth, in all ages and nations, doth tell us how great a work it is to cure it.

4. And so doth the frustration of all other means, till the Spirit of God do it by setting home the gospel upon the heart. Children will grow up in wickedness, against all the counsel, love, and correction of their parents. No words, no reason, will prevail with them, more than with drunken men or beasts.

5. We find it a very hard thing to cure a man of some one rooted sin, much more of all.

6. The common misery of the world proclaimeth man's vice, and the difficulty of the cure. How else comes the world to live in self-seeking falsehood, fraud, malice, and in bloody wars, worse than wolves and serpents against each other.

7. Lastly, where God cureth this by true believing, it is done with the pangs of sharp repentance, and a great conflict, before God's Spirit overcome.

III. It is evident, then, that this sanctification of souls is an eminent work of God himself. 1. In that it is yet done on so many of his chosen ones in all ages and places.

2. In that, as hard as it is, he usually turneth the hearts of sinners to himself, in a very little time. Sometimes by one sermon.

3. It is a work that none can do but God, who hath the power of souls.

4. It is a work so good, that it beareth God's own image.

It is but the writing of his law and gospel on men's hearts. None is so much for it as God. Satan apparently fighteth against it with all the power he can raise in the world. Mark it, and you will find that most of the stir that there is in the world, by false teachers, and tyrants, and private malice, is but Satan's wars against faith, and holiness, and love. Certainly it is not he that promoteth them.

IV. And it is evident, in experience, that it is the gospel of Christ which God useth and blesseth, to do this great sanctifying work on souls. Among Christians none are converted by any other means. And God would not bless a word of falsehood and deceit to such great and excellent effects. All that are made holy and heavenly, and truly conscionable, among us, are made so by Christ's gospel. And all the wicked are enemies to the serious practice of it, or rebels that despise it. The effects daily prove that God himself owneth it as his word.

If you say, there are as good men among the heathens, and Mahometans, as holy, heavenly, and just: I answer, it is none of my business to depreciate other men, but I can say, 1. That I have lived above seventy-seven years, and I never knew one serious, holy person in England that was made such by the writings of heathens or Mahometans. 2. Many excellent things are in the writings of some heathens, Plato, Cicero, Hierocles, Plutarch, Antonine, Epictetus, and many others; but I miss in them the expressions of that holy and heavenly frame of mind and life, and that victory over the flesh and world, which Christianity containeth.

3. Christ is like the sun, whose beams give some light before it is seen itself at its rising, and after it is set. The light of Jews and heathens was as the dawning of the day before sun-rising. And the light among the Mahometans is like the light of the sun which leaveth it when it is set.

Doubtless, the same God who hath used Mahometans to be his dreadful scourge to wicked Christians, who abused the gospel by a false profession, hath also used them to do abundance of good against idolatry in the heathen world. Wherever they come, idolatry is destroyed. Yea, the corrupt Christians, Greeks, and especially papists, that worship images, angels, and bread, are rebuked, and condemned justly by Mahometans. But O that they who have conquered so far by the sword, were conquered by the sacred word of truth, and truly understood the mystery of redemption, and the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Obj. But they think us idolaters for saying that Christ is God, and believing the Trinity.

I. As to the Trinity: it is no contradiction that one fire or sun should have essentially a virtue or power to move, light, and heat; nor that one soul should have a power of vegetation, sense, and reason; nor as rational, to have a peculiar power or vitality, intellection, and free-will. Why then should the Trinity seem incredible?

II. We do not believe that the Godhead hath any change, or is made flesh, or the manhood made God, but that the Godhead is incomprehensibly united to the human nature by assumption, so as he is united to no other creature, by and for those peculiar operations on the humanity of Christ, which make him our Redeemer.

They that well think that God is all in all things, more than a soul to all the world, and as near to us as our souls to our bodies, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, will find that it is more difficult to apprehend, how God is further from any soul, than that he is so much one with Christ: save that different operations of God on his creatures are apparent to us.

By all this we see that every sanctified Christian hath the certain witness in himself that Christ is true. He is truly a physician that healeth, and a Saviour that saveth all that seriously believe and obey him. The Spirit of God in a new, and holy, and heavenly nature of spiritual life, and light, and love, is the witness.

VI. 'The sixth article in my text is 'Received up into glory.'

That Christ, after forty days' continuance on earth, was taken up into heaven, in the sight of his disciples, is a matter of fact of which we have all the forementioned infallible proof, which I must not here again repeat.

And, I. If Christ were not glorified now in heaven, he could not send down his Spirit with his word on earth, nor have enabled the first witnesses to speak with all tongues, and heal the sick, and raise the dead, and do all the miracles which they did. A dead man cannot send down the holy Spirit in likeness of fiery cloven tongues, nor enable thousands to do such works; nor could he do what is done on the souls of serious believers in all ages and nations to this day. He is sure alive that makes men live; and in heaven, that draws up hearts to heaven.

2. And this is our hope and joy: heaven and earth are in his

power. The suffering and work which he performed for us on earth was short, but his heavenly intercession and reign is everlasting. Guilty souls can have no immediate access to God. All is by a Mediator: all our receivings from God are by him: and all our services are returned by him, and accepted for his sake. And as he is the Mediator between his Father and us, his Spirit intercedeth between him and us. By his Spirit he giveth us holy desires, and every grace. And by his Spirit we exercise them in returns to him.

And our glorified Saviour hath Satan, and all our enemies, in his power: life and death are at his command: all judgment is committed to him. He that hath redeemed us is preparing us for heaven, and it is for us, and receiveth our departing souls to his own joy and glory. He hath promised us that we shall be with him where he is, and shall see his glory. He that is our Saviour, will be our Judge. He will come with thousands of his angels to the confusion of wicked unbelievers, and to be glorified in his saints. He will make a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell. Angels and glorified saints shall, with Christ our head, make one city of God, or holy society and choir, in perfect love and joy, to praise the blessed God for ever.

I. The differences between this world, and that which I am going to.

I. This world is God's footstool. That is his throne.

II. Here are his works of inferior nature and of grace. There he shineth forth in perfect glory.

III. Here is gross, receptive matter moved by invisible powers. There are the noblest efficient communicative powers moving all.

IV. This is the inferior, subject, governed world. That is the superior, regent world.

V. This is a world of trial, where the soul is his that can win its consent. That is a world where the will is perfectly determined and fixed.

VI. Satan winning men's consent hath here a large dominion of fools. There he is cast out, and hath no possession.

VII. Here he is a tempter and troubler of the best. There he hath neither power to tempt nor trouble.

VIII. This world is as the dark womb where we are regenerated. That is the world of glorious light into which we are born.

IX. Here we dwell on a world of sordid earth. There we shall dwell in a world of celestial light and glory.

X. Here we dwell in a troublesome, tempting, perishing body. There we are delivered from this burden and prison into glorious liberty.

XI. Here we are under a troublesome cure of our maladies. There we are perfectly healed, rejoicing in our Physician's praise.

XII. Here we are using the means in weariness and hope. There we obtain the end in full fruition.

XIII. Here sin maketh us loathsome to ourselves, and our own annoyance. There we shall love God in ourselves, and our perfect selves in God.

XIV. Here all our duties are defiled with sinful imperfection. There perfect souls will perfectly love and praise their God.

XV. Here Satan's temptations are a continual danger and molestation. There perfect victory hath ended our temptations.

XVI. Here still there is a remnant of the curse and punishment of sin. Pardon and deliverance are perfected there.

XVII. Repenting, shame, sorrow, and fear, are here part of my necessary work. There all the troublesome part is past, and utterly excluded.

XVIII. Here we see darkly, as in a glass, the invisible world of spirits. There we shall see them as face to face.

XIX. Here faith, alas! too weak, must serve instead of sight. There presence and sight suspend the use of such believing.

XX. Desire and hope are here our very life and work. But there it will be full felicity in fruition.

XXI. Our hopes are here oft mixed with grievous doubts and fears. But there full possession ends them all.

XXII. Our holy affections are here corrupted with carnal mixtures. But there all are purely holy and divine.

XXIII. The coldness of our divine love is here our sin and misery. The perfection of it will be there our perfect holiness and joy.

XXIV. Here, though the will itself be imperfect, we cannot be and do what we would. There will, and deed, and attainment, will all be fully perfect.

XXV. Here, by ignorance and self-love, I have desires which God denieth. There perfect desires shall be perfectly fulfilled.

XXVI. Here pinching wants of something or other, and

troublesome cares, are daily burdens. Nothing is there wanting, and God hath ended all their cares.

XXVII. Sense here rebelleth against faith, and reason, and oft overcometh. Sense there shall be only holy, and no discord be in our faculties or acts.

XXVIII. Pleasures and contents here are short, narrow, and twisted with their contraries. There they are objectively pure and boundless, and subjectively total and absolute.

XXIX. Vanity and vexation are here the titles of transitory things. Reality, perfection, and glory, are the titles of the things above.

XXX. This world is a point of God's creation, a narrow place for a few passengers. Above are the vast, capacious regions, sufficient for all saints and angels.

XXXI. This world is as Newgate, and hell as Tyburn; some are hence saved, and some condemned. The other world is the glorious kingdom of Jehovah with the blessed.

XXXII. It was here that Christ was tempted, scorned, and crucified. It is there where he reigneth in glory over all.

XXXIII. The spiritual life is here as a spark or seed. It is there a glorious flame of love, and joy, and the perfect fruit and flower.

XXXIV. We have here but the first-fruits, earnest, and pledge. There is the full and glorious harvest and perfection.

XXXV. We are here children in minority, little differing from servants. There we shall have full possession of the inheritance.

XXXVI. The prospect of pain, death, grave, and rottenness, blasteth all the pleasures here. There is no death, or any fear of the ending of felicity.

XXXVII. Here, even God's word is imperfectly understood, and errors swarm, even in the best. All mysteries of nature and grace are there unveiled in the world of light.

XXXVIII. Many of God's promises are here unfulfilled, and our prayers unanswered. There truth shineth in the full performance of them all.

XXXIX. Our grace is here so weak, and hearts so dark, that our sincerity is oft doubted of. There the flames of love and joy leave no place for such a doubt.

XL. By our inconstancy, here one day is joyful and another sad. But there our joys have no interruption.

XLII. We dwell here with sinful companions, like ourselves, in flesh. There holy angels and souls, with Christ, are all our company.

XLIII. Our best friends and helpers are here, in part, our hinderers by sin. There all concur in the harmony of active love.

XLIV. Our errors and corruptions make us also hurtful and troublesome to our friends. But there both Christ and they forgive us, and we shall trouble them no more.

XLV. Selfishness and cross interests here jar, and mar our conversation. There perfect love will make the joy of every saint and angel mine.

XLVI. A militant church imperfectly sanctified here liveth in scandal and sad divisions. The glorious church united in God in perfect love hath no contention.

XLVII. Sin and error here turn our very public worship into jars. The celestial harmony of joyful love and praise is, to mortals, inconceivable.

XLVIII. Weak, blind, and wicked teachers here do keep the most in delusion and division. There glorious light hath banished all lies, deceit, and darkness.

XLIX. The wills of blind tyrants is the law of most on earth. The wisdom and will of the most holy God is the law of the heavenly society.

L. Lies here cloud the innocency of the just, and render truth and goodness odious. All false judgments are there reversed, and slander is silenced, and the righteous justified.

LI. Government is here exercised by terror and violence. But there God ruleth by light, love, and absolute delight.

LII. Enemies reproach, and persecution here annoy and tempt us. All storms are there past, and the conquerors crowned in joyful rest.

LIII. The glory of divine love and holiness is clouded here by the abounding of sin, and the greatness of Satan's kingdom upon earth. But the vast, glorious, heavenly kingdom, to which this earth is but a point and prison, will banish all such erring thoughts, and glorify God's love and goodness for ever.

LIV. This is the world which, as corrupted, is called an enemy to God and us, and which, as such, we renounce in baptism, and must be saved from. That is the world which we seek, pray, and wait for all our lives, and for which all the tempting vanities of this must be forsaken.

LIV. This body and world is like our riding clothes, our horse, our way, and inn, and travelling company; all but for our journey homeward. The other is our city of blessedness, and everlasting rest, to which all grace inclineth souls, and all present means and mercies tend.

LV. The very ignorance of nature and sensible things makes this life a very labyrinth, and our studies, sciences, and learned conversation, to be much like a dream, or puppet play, and a childish stir about mere words. But in heaven, an universal knowledge of God's wonderful works, will not be the least of the glory in which he will shine to saints.

LVI. Distance and darkness of souls here in flesh, who would fain know more of God and the heavenly world, and cannot, doth make our lives a burden by these unsatisfied desires. There glorious presence and intuition giveth full satisfaction.

LVII. Our sin and imperfection here render us incapable of being the objects of God's full, complacential love, though we have his benevolence, which will bring us to it. But there we shall, in our several measures, perfectly please God, and be perfectly pleased in God for ever.

LVIII. All things here are short and transitory from their beginning, posting towards their end, which is near and sure, and still in our eye. So short is time, that beings here are next to nothing; the bubble of worldly prosperity, pomp, and fleshly pleasure, doth swell up, and break in so short a moment; as that it is, and is not, almost at once. But the heavenly substances, and their work, and joys, are crowned by duration, being assuredly everlasting.

Such, O my soul, is the blessed change which God will make.

The reasons and helps of my belief and hope of this perfection.

I. Natural reason assureth me, that God made all creatures fitted to their intended use; even brutes are more fit for their several offices than man is. He giveth no creature its faculties in vain; whatever a wise man maketh, he fits it to the use which he made it for; but man's faculties are enabled to think of a God, of our relation, and our duty to him, of our hopes from him, and our fears of him; of the state of our souls related to his judgment; of what will befall us after death, reward, or punishment, and how to prepare for it. This nature, and its faculties and powers, are not made in vain.

II. Reason assureth me, that all men are bound by nature to prefer the least probability of a life of everlasting joy before all the prosperity of this world; and to suffer the loss of all this short vanity, to escape the least possibility of endless misery; and nature hath such notices of rewards and punishments after death, that no man can say that he is sure there is no such thing. From whence it followeth, that all men are bound by the very law of nature, to be religious, and to seek first and most their salvation in the life to come. And if so, it is certain that there is such a thing to be obtained; else God had made the very nature of man to be deceived by itself, and to spend the chief part, yea, all his life, through labour and suffering, for that which is not; and so made his greatest duty to be his greatest deceit and misery; and the worst men should be least deceived. But all this is not to be imputed to our wise and good Creator.

III. The universal sense of moral good and evil in all mankind, is a great evidence of another life. The vilest atheist cannot abide to be accounted a knave, a liar, and a bad man; nor will equal a vicious servant with another. All would be thought good, who will not be good. And doth not God make a greater difference than man? and will he not show it?

IV. The world is actually ruled much by the hopes and fears of another life, and cannot well be ruled without it, according to the nature of man; but the Almighty, most wise, and most holy God needs not, and will not rule the world by mere deceit.

V. The gospel of Christ hath brought life and immortality into a clearer light than that of nature; and it must be by believing in Christ that we must have our full satisfaction. Oh, what hath God done in the wonders of redemption to make us sure! And against the doubts that are apt to rise from some hard particular text of Scripture, it must be considered, 1. That Christ and his apostles did put the ascertaining seal of the many uncontrolled miracles to the gospel doctrine, primarily; which doctrine, 1. Was delivered and sealed eight years before any of the New Testament was written, and almost seventy before the last. 2. And Christ did not speak in the language in which the gospel is written to us; so that being but a translation as to his own words the matter is the thing first sealed.

II. And that it was the two legislative mediators, Moses and Christ, who came with the great stream of uncontrolled miracles; it being necessary that men should have full proof that a law or doctrine is of God, before they believe it; but the priests and prophets after Moses, and the preachers and pastors of the christian church, who were not commissioned to bring men any new laws or gospel, but to proclaim and teach that which they received, needed no such new testimony of miracles.

III. The belief of every particular priest or prophet after Moses, or every pastor after Christ and his apostles, was not of the same degree of necessity to salvation as the belief of the law and gospel itself. Therefore, though all the holy Scripture be true, the law and the gospel must be much differenced from the rest.

IV. The history of the law and gospel have full, ascertaining, historical evidence; or else there is none such in the world. Therefore the doctrine must be true.

V. The prophecies fulfilled prove the gospel true.

VI. And the divine impress on the whole.

VII. And the sanctifying work of the Spirit wrought by it, in all nations and ages, on serious believers, is a constant, divine attestation.

VIII. And as my faith hath so sure a foundation, it confirmeth my faith and hope, that it hath been so long and great a work of God, by his Word and Spirit on my soul, to raise it to believe, and love, and desire, that holy state of perfection and fruition which I hope for. That which hath made me so much better than I else had been, and turned my heart and life (though imperfectly) to things above the pleasures of the flesh, must needs be of God; and God would never send his grace to work my heart to deceit and lies, and give me such graces as shall all be frustrate; his Spirit is the earnest and first-fruits of glory.

IX. And all the course of religious and moral duty which he hath commanded me, and in which he hath employed my life, were never imposed to deceive me; I am sure, by nature and Scripture, that it is my duty to love God and my neighbour, to desire protection, and to serve God, and do good with all my time and power, and to trust God for my reward, believing that all this shall not be in vain; nor that which is best be made my loss. O blessed be God for commands and holy duty; for they

are equal to promises. Who can fear that he shall lose by seeking God?

X. As God hath sealed the truth of his word as aforesaid, so he hath, by an instituted office and ordinance, sealed and delivered to myself his covenant with the gift of Christ and life, in baptism, and the Lord's supper.

XI. He hath given me such a love to holy things and persons, that I greatly long to see his church in perfect light, and love, and concord; oh! how sweet would it be to see all men wise, and holy, and joyfully praising God. Every Christian longs for this; and, therefore, such a state will be.

XII. I have found here the great benefit of the love and ministry of angels, such as is described in Psalm xci. They have kept me night and day, which confirmeth my hope that I shall dwell with them; for I love them better than men, because they love and serve God better.

XIII. That low communion which I have here with God by Christ and the Spirit, in his answer to my prayers, supports, comforts, experience, tends to more.

XIV. The pleasure which I have by love, in thinking of the happiness of my many, many, many holy departed friends, and of the glory of Christ, and the heavenly Jerusalem, is sure some hopeful approach towards their state.

XV. When I see the fire mount upward, and think that spirits are of a more sublime and excellent nature than fire; and when I see that all that is done in this world, is done by spiritual unseen powers, which move this gross and drossy matter, it puts me past doubt, that my soul, being a spirit, hath a vast and glorious world of spirits to ascend to. God hath, by nature, put into all things an aggregative, uniting inclination: earth hath no other natural motion. The ascent of fire tells us its element is above; and spirits naturally incline to spirits, and holy spirits peculiarly are inclined to the holy.

XVI. I am sure, 1. By understanding that I understand, and by willing that I will, &c. 2. I am sure by these acts, that I have the power or faculties to do them: for none doth that which it cannot do. 3. And I know that it is a substance that hath these powers: for nothing can do nothing.

My soul, then, being certainly an intellective, volitive, vital substance, 1. I have no reason to think, that God, who annihilateth not the least sand, will annihilate so noble a substance.

2. Nor that he will destroy those powers which are its essential form, and turn it into some other thing.

3. Nor that such essential powers shall lie as dead and unactive, and so be continued in vain.

4. There remaining, therefore, nothing uncertain to natural reason, but the continuance of individuation to separate souls.

1. Apparitions and witches have put that out of doubt, notwithstanding many fables and delusions. 2. Christ hath put it more out of doubt. 3. While substance, faculties, and acts continue, it is the error of our selfish state in flesh, which maketh any fear too near an union, which shall end our individuation. The greatest union will be the greatest perfection, and no loss to souls.

XVII. God's wonderful providences for the church and single saints on earth are such as tell us of that love and care, which will bring them afterwards to him.

XVIII. The nature of God taketh off the terror of my departure much; I am sure I shall die at the will, and into the hand, of infinite essential love and goodness; whose love should draw up my longing soul.

XIX. I am going to a God whose mercies have long told me, that he loveth me better than my dearest friend doth, and better than I love myself, and is a far better chooser of my lot.

XX. As he hath absolute right to dispose of his own, so indeed the fulfilling of his will is the ultimate end of all things, and therefore most desirable in itself: and his will shall be fulfilled on me.

XXI. I go to a glorified Saviour, who came down to fetch me up, and hath conquered and sanctified death, and made it my birth-day for glory, and taketh me for his dear-bought own and interest, and is in glory ready to receive his own.

XXII. I go to that Saviour who, on the cross, commendeth his spirit into his Father's hand, and taught me, with dying Stephen, to say, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit."

XXIII. I go no solitary, untrodden way, but follow all the faithful since the death of Abel, to this day, (save Enoch and Elias,) who all went by death into that glorious world, where I shall find them.

XXIV. I have so long groaned under a languid body, and in a blind, distracted, and (by man) incurable world, where Satan, by lies, malice, and murder, reigneth in—alas! how many; and

specially am so weary of my own darkness, and sinful imperfection, that I have great reason to be willing of deliverance.

XXV. I have had so large a share of mercies in this world already, in time, and manifold comforts from God, that reason commandeth me to rest in God's time for my removal.

XXVI. I shall leave some fruits, not useless, to serve the church when I am gone: and if good be done, I have my end.

XXVII. When I am gone, God will raise up and use others to do his appointed work on earth: and a church shall be continued to his praise: and the spirits in heaven will rejoice therein.

XXVIII. When I am gone, I shall not wish to be again on earth.

XXIX. Satan, by his temptations, and all his instruments, would never have done so much as he doth in the world to keep us from heaven, if there were not a heaven which conquerors obtain.

XXX. When darkness and uncertainty of the manner of the action and fruition of separated souls would daunt me, it is enough to know explicitly so much as is explicitly revealed, and implicitly to trust Christ with all the rest: our eyes are in our head; who knoweth for us? Knowledge of glory is part of fruition: and therefore we must expect here no more than is suited to a life of faith.

XXXI. All my part is to do my own duty, and then trust God; obeying his commanding will, and fully and joyfully resting in his disposing and rewarding will. There is no rest for souls but in the will of God, and there with full trust to repose our souls in life, and, at death, is the only way of a safe and comfortable departure.

XXXII. The glorious marriage-day of the Lamb cannot now be far off, when the number of the elect shall be complete, and Christ will come with his glorious angels, and will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all believers, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and that kingdom shall come, where that which God hath prepared for them that love him, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to have a formal, full conception of it.

Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

Fear not then, O my soul, to lay down this flesh: mercy hath

kept it up for my preparing work ; but, oh, what a burdensome and chargeable companion hath it been ! Is it better than the dwelling-place of perfect spirits ? Oh, what are my groans, and all my cold and faint petitions, and my dull thanksgiving, to their harmonious, joyful praise ? If a day in God's courts be better than a thousand, what is a day, yea, what is everlastingness in the heavenly society and work. Oh, how hateful a thing is darkness and unbelief, when the remnants of them thus stop poor souls in their ascent, and make us half unwilling to go home ! What ! unwilling to be with my glorified Lord ! Unwilling to be with saints and angels, who are all life, and light, and love ! Unwilling to see the glory of Jehovah ! O foolish, sinful soul ! hath Christ done so much to purchase the heavenly glory for thee, and now art thou unwilling to go into the possession of it ? Hast thou been seeking, and praying, and labouring, and suffering so many years, for that which now thou seemest scarce willing to obtain ? Dost thou not judge thyself unworthy of eternal life, when thou no more desirest to enjoy it ? All this is along of thy too much adherence unto self and sense : thou art still desiring sensitive satisfaction, and, not content to know thy part, wouldest know that for thyself which Christ knoweth for thee ; as if thou couldest better trust thyself than him. Fear not, weak soul, it is our Father's good pleasure to give thee the kingdom : trust infinite power, wisdom, and love : trust that faithful, gracious Saviour who hath so wonderfully merited to be trusted : trust that promise which never deceived any one, and which is confirmed by so many miracles, and by the oath, and by the Spirit, of God. Whenever thou departest from this house of flesh, the arms of mercy are open to embrace thee ; yea, essential, transcendent love is ready to receive thee : the Spirit of love hath sealed thee to that blessed state : Christ will present thee justified and accepted. Most of my old, holy, familiar friends are gone before me, and all the rest that died since the world began. And the few imperfect ones left behind are hasting after them apace, and if I go before, will quickly overtake me : though they weep as if it were for a long separation, it is their great mistake : the gate of death stands all day open, and my sorrowful friends are quickly following me, as I am now following those for whom I sorrowed. Oh, pity them who are left a while under the temptations, dangers, and fears, which have so long been thine own affliction ! but be not afraid of the day of

thy deliverance, and the bosom of everlasting love, and the society of the wise, and just, and holy, and of the end of all thy troubles, and the entrance into the joy of thy Lord, and the place and state of all thy hope. Oh, say, not notionally only, as from argumentative conviction, but confidently, and with glad desire and hope, to depart and be with Christ, is far better than to be here.

But, O my God, I have much more hope in speaking to thee than to myself. Long may I plead with this dark and dull, yet fearful soul, before I can plead it into joyful hopes and heavenly desires, unless thou shine on it with the light of thy countenance, and thou, whom my soul must trust and love, wilt give me faith and love themselves. I thank thee for convincing arguments: but had this been all the strength of my faith and hope, the tempter might have proved too subtle for me in dispute. I thank thee that some experience tells me, that a holy appetite to heavenly work, and a love to the heavenly company and state, doth more to make me willing to die, and think, with pleasure, of my change, than ever bare arguments would have done. Oh, send down the streams of thy love into my soul, and that will powerfully draw it up by longings for the near and full fruition! Oh, give me more of the divine and heavenly nature, and it will be natural and easy to me to desire to be with thee: send more of the heavenly joys into this soul, and it will long for heaven, the place of joy! I must not hope on earth for any such acquaintance with the world above as is proper to the enjoying state. But if the sun can send its illuminating, warming rays, to such a world as this, according to the various disposition of the recipients; doubtless thou hast thy effectual, though unsearchable, ways, of illuminating, sanctifying, and attractive influence on souls. And one such beam of thy pleased face, one taste of thy complacential love, will kindle my love, and draw up my desires, and make my pains and sickness tolerable; I shall then put off this clothing with the less reluctance, and willingly leave my flesh to the dust, and sing my *nunc dimittis*, when I have thus seen and tasted thy salvation. O my God, let not thy strengthening, comforting grace now forsake me, lest it should overwhelm me with the fears of being finally forsaken. Dwell in me as the God of love and joy, that I may long to dwell in love and joy with thee for ever. As grace abounded where sin abounded, let thy strengthening and comforting mercy abound when weakness increaseth, and my ne-

cessities abound. My flesh and my heart faileth, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever : this short life is almost at an end ; but thy loving-kindness is better than life : I know not with what pains thou wilt further try me ; but if I love thee, thou hast promised that all things shall work together for my good. The world that I am going to by death is not apparent to my sight ; but my life is hid with Christ in God ; and, because he liveth, we shall live ; and we shall be with him where he is ; and when he appeareth, we shall appear with him in glory ; and shall enter into our Master's joy, and be for ever with the Lord. Amen.

What sensible manifestation of his kingdom Christ gave in his transfiguration.

Sect. 1. Our Lord, who brought life and immortality to light, well knew the difficulty of believing so great things unseen : and therefore it pleased him to give men some sensible helps by demonstration. In Matt. xvi. and xvii. 1, 2, &c. ; Mark ix. 1 ; Luke ix. 28, he promised some of his disciples a sight of his kingdom as coming in power ; or such a glimpse as Moses had of the back parts of God's glory : this he performed first in his transfiguration, as afterward in his resurrection, ascension, and sending the Holy Ghost to enable them, with power, to preach, and work miracles, and convert the nations.

Sect. 2. By the kingdom of God, is meant God's government of his holy ones, by a heavenly communication of life, light, and love, initially, on earth by grace, and perfectly in heaven by glory. A special theocracy.

Sect. 3. For the understanding of this we must know, that when God had made man good, in his image, he conversed with him in a heavenly manner, either immediately, or by an angel, speaking to him, and telling him his will. But man being made a free, self-determining agent, he was left to choose whom he would follow : and hearkening unto Satan, and turning from God, he became a slave of Satan, and gave him advantage to be his deceiving ruler : not that man's rebellion nullified God's power, or disposing government, or took man from under obligation to obedience ; but that, forsaking God, he was much, though not wholly, forsaken by his special, fatherly, approving government, and left to Satan and his own will : but the eternal Word interposing for man's reprimand and redemption, undertook to break the serpent's head, and to conquer and cast out

him that had deceived and captivated man : and, choosing out a special seed, he made them a peculiar people, and set up a heavenly, prophetic government over them, himself, by heavenly revelation, making their laws, and choosing their chief governors under him, from time to time, and would not leave it to blind and sinful man to make laws, or choose princes, for themselves, but would keep them in a special dependence upon heaven. But the carnal Israelites having provoked God by odious idolatry to deny them much of the benefit of government (save when they repented, and cried to him for help) they thought to amend this by choosing a king like other nations, and ending their dependence on heavenly revelation, and choice for government : and so theocracy was turned into a more human regiment, and God more cast off : though yet he would not quite forsake them. And the rest of the world was yet more left under the power of Satan, and their own corrupted mind and will ; so that Satan hath both an internal kingdom in wicked souls, and a visible political government of the wicked kingdoms of the world, ruling them by men that are ruled by him. And as Christ came to cast him out of men's hearts by his sanctifying, conquering Spirit, so also to cast him out of the political Government of the kingdoms of the world, and to bring them under the laws, and officers, and Spirit of Christ, and rule them by heavenly power and love as his own kingdoms, that he may bring them to perfection in one celestial kingdom at last. And in this sense we pray, "Thy kingdom come."

Sect. 4. To make men believe that he is the heavenly King sent from God, to cast down Satan's kingdom, was the great business of the preaching of the gospel : this he would demonstrate, as by all his miracles which showed him to have the victory of devils, and to be the Lord of life, so also by visible apparition in glory. And it is said, (1 John v. 7, 8,) that there are three witnesses in heaven, and three on earth, so here Christ would have three heavenly and three earthly witnesses of his transfiguration. From heaven he had the witness, 1. Of a voice, proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him." 2. Of Moses, the chief law-giver. 3. And of Elias, the chief prophet ; to tell us, that the law and the prophets are his prognosticating witnesses : but "hear him" notifieth to us, that Christ and his gospel are to be heard above the law and the prophets, and to teach us more than they could teach us : the law was given by Moses (with its types and sha-

dows) but grace and truth (the substance so typified) are by Jesus Christ.

Sect. 5. Light and glory are often of the same signification. Christ was transfigured into a lucid, glorious appearance of body: he tells us by this, that he would have us have some sort of idea of his kingdom, fetched from sense; many apparitions of angels have been in lights. Christ appeared to Saul in a visible light. (Acts ix.) So did he to John: (Rev. i, &c. :) God and the Lamb are the light of the New Jerusalem. It is an inheritance of the saints in light.

Some seem to me to think too basely of sense, and too far to separate it from intellectual spirits, both as to power, act, and object: and all because they find it in lower creatures. They might accordingly deny substantiality to spirits, because brutes are substances: the higher have all the perfections of the lower, either formally or eminently. It is not a spirit's perfection to be insensible, or to have nothing to do with sensible things, but to be eminently sensible, and to be superior agents on lower sensibles. God is love: and love is complacency: and a high degree of complacency is delight or joy. So that God is essential, infinite joy, but without that drossy quality which is proper to souls in flesh, and all that imperfection which belongs to creatures. Can we tell what it is to enter into our Master's joy, or joyfully to love and praise him, without any sense: I rather think, that as vigorous youth makes men capable of more delight than decrepit, languid, painful age and sickness, so heaven shall, by perfecting our natures, make them capable of inconceivably more joy than any on earth is capable of.

And as we shall have sense in exaltation as to power and act, so we shall have sensible objects. God himself delighteth in all his works, and so shall we. We must not, on pretence of taking the heavenly Jerusalem to be merely spiritual, deprive ourselves of all the sensible ideas of it which God's description offereth to us. Light is sensible; Christ glorified there is sensible; Moses and Elias were sensible to Peter, James, and John. Lazarus and Abraham were sensible to the man in hell. (Luke xvi.) Stephen saw heaven open, and Christ sitting at the right hand of God. And all eyes shall see him at his glorious return. Heavenly glory is not enjoyed only by mere thinking and knowing, nor as in a dream, but by the most eminent intellectual sensation, exalted and invigorated.

Sect. 6. Say not then, O my soul, that this kingdom of glory

is so far above thee, that thou canst have no idea of it. Think not that it is therefore unmeet for thy desiring and joyful hopes, because thou canst not know what it is. Hast thou no conception of the difference between light and darkness? If thou hadst been but one year kept in absolute darkness, wouldest thou have no desiring thoughts of light? The blind think themselves half dead while they are alive. Indeed, the faculty and object must be suitable; light may be too great for our weak eyes, as heat may be torment in an unsuitable degree; but when our souls are perfected, they will be suitable recipients of a more glorious light than we can here endure. Moses is not there covered in a cleft of the rock, because he could see but as the back part of God's glory. We must see here but as in a glass, but there as face to face. Though these organical eyes, as spectacles, shall be laid by, we shall have media more perfect, suitable to our perfect state.

And as I can think of heaven as a region of glorious light, so can I think of it as a place and state of life and love. I know somewhat of the difference of life and death, and that a living dog is better than a dead lion. And I have felt what it is to love my friends, and thence to desire their near communion as my delight; and can I then have no idea of that world, where life, light, and joyful love are the very element of souls, as water is to the fishes?

And as I can have some idea of that state in general, so may I of the state of the perfected spirits of the just which are there. They are connatural to their proper element. They are essential, created life, light, and love. And they want not substance to be the basis of those formal powers, nor objects on which to exercise them. Think not, then, that heaven is so far inconceivable, as not by any idea to be thought of. If we have no conception of it, we can have no desires of it, and no delightful hope. What can we conceive of more certainly than of life, and light, and love; of a region, and of persons essentiated of these? Do we not know what knowledge is, and see what light is, and feel what life and love are?

But it is true that our conceptions hereof are lamentably imperfect; and so they must be till possession, fruition, and exercise, perfect them. Who knoweth what light or sight is, but by seeing; or what knowledge is, but by knowing; or what love and joy are, but by love and rejoicing? And who knows

what perfect sight, knowledge, love, and joy are, but by perfect seeing, knowing, loving, and rejoicing? No man by an intuitive or immediate perception. But some abstractive conceptions of it we may have by reasoning deduction from that poor degree which we here in the kingdom of grace possess.

Can I perceive substantiality in the dark terrene appearances, which are but mutable lifeless matter agitated and used by invisible powers, and shall I think of those unseen, powerful substances, as if they were less substantial for being spiritual, or were not objects for a knowing thought? Are the stars which I see less substantial than a carcass in a darksome grave? The Lord that appeared in shining glory hath members in their measure like himself; and hath promised that we shall shine as stars in the kingdom of his Father. If some degree of this be here performed in them who are called the children of light, and the lights of the world, how much more will they shine in the world of light? They that call light a quality, or an act, must confess it hath a substance whose quality or act it is. Alas! what a deceived thing is a sensual unbeliever, who spendeth his life in the pursuit of fugitive shadows, and walketh in a vain show, and thinks of spiritual, glorious substances, as if they were the nothings or delusions of a dream.

Sect. 6. Christ, Moses, and Elias, here visibly appeared as three distinct, individual persons. This tells us that it is a false conceit that death ceaseth individuation, and turneth all souls into one (of which before); perfect, indivisible, infinite unity is proper to God; from this one is multiplicity. Reason forbids us, when we see the numberless individuals in this world, and see also the numerous stars above, to imagine that all the worlds above us have so much of divine perfection, as to be but one undivided substance, and to have no multiplicity of inhabitants. Yea, some of those Sadducees hold that the stars are worlds inhabited as the earth is. And why then should they think whithersoever souls go, that they cease their individuation, when they go among individuals? But Christ hath confuted them even to sense. Moses is Moses still, and Elias is Elias still; and all our friends that are gone to Christ are the same still that they were, and may be called by the same names. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the same in heaven; and Lazarus was Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. When we lay by flesh, and are unclothed, we put not off our personality.

Every one shall receive his own reward according to what he hath done in the body, when every one must give account of his own works and talents.

Why then may not I, with distinct conceptions and joyful desires, look after the souls of my departed friends, that are now in the celestial kingdom? 'Though malignity hath scorned me for naming some few in my 'Saints' Rest,' being such as the despisers hated, yet I forbear not, on such accounts, to solace myself by naming more, but because they are more than it is fit to number. In all places where I have lived, how many excellent souls (though here they were not perfect) are gone to Christ. How sweet is the remembrance of the communion which I had with many of them in Shrewsbury, and other parts of Shropshire; of many at Dudley, and the adjoining parts; of multitudes at Kidderminster, Bewdley, and other parts of Worcestershire; of abundance at Coventry, and other parts of Warwickshire; and of many where I have sojourned in other parts of the land; and, above all, in London, and the adjoining parts. As Mr. Howe hath elegantly expressed it, in his excellent character of my excellent and dear friend, Mr. Richard Fairclough: what a multitude of blessed saints will arise at the last day out of London. And this earth is, as it were, hallowed with the dust and relics of so many blessed souls. But it is heaven that is spangled with these spiritual stars; the place honoured with them, and they with it, and all by Christ. We are like infants, or lambs, or other young ones, that cry for their dams if they be but out of sight; though they are ever so near, if they see them not, they cry as if they were not, or had forsaken them. As Christ told his disciples, that it was needful for them that he departed from them, and yet their hearts for this were sorrowful, till the Holy Ghost came upon them, as better than Christ's fleshly presence, to prepare them joyfully to follow him; so we think of our friends as almost lost to us by separation, till the heavenly Spirit tell us where they are, and prepare us to desire to be with them.

Sect. 6. Elias hath a body now in heaven, and so hath Enoch; but can we think that only two or three that are there with Christ do so much differ from all the rest, as to have bodies when the rest have none? Is there such a dissimilitude of saints in heaven? What are two or three in such a society? Doubtless their bodies are not corruptible flesh and blood, but such spiritual bodies as all saints shall have at the resurrection.

But are they in heaven such visible and shaped bodies as they appeared on the mount? The same difficulty poseth us about the risen body of Christ: he would not have Mary touch him, because he had not yet ascended to his Father; he could appear and vanish from their sight at his pleasure; and yet Thomas handled him, and felt that he had flesh and bones. That body of flesh ascended visibly up toward heaven; and yet it is not flesh and blood in heaven, but a spiritual body: for it is not worse than he will make his members. What shall we say to these things? We must say, that we are not capable of knowing them, but have reason to be thankful that we may know so much, more necessary for us. But yet it seemeth probable that the bodies of Christ, and Enoch, and Elias, were changeable according to the region in which they were to be. Christ could take up a body of flesh and blood, and immediately change that state of it into a pure and incorruptible, spiritual body, as it entered into the incorruptible, spiritual region. And so God did by Enoch and Elias. As Paul saith, that we shall not all die, (those that live till Christ's appearing) but we shall all be changed. And yet if Elias have business on the mount, he can put on the clothing of a grosser body to be seen of men, and can lay it by, or return to his more invisible, spiritual state, when he returneth to the place from whence he came. And no wonder, when angels (and the ancients say Christ, before his incarnation) assumed bodies suitable to their several businesses on earth; yea, such as could eat and drink with men; when they dwelt not in heaven so coarsely clothed.

Sect. 7. But how came Moses to have a body on the mount, who is said to have been buried, and therefore took none with him into heaven? We must still remember, that we inquire of things above our certain knowledge. But in humble conjecture we may say, that it is no more impossible for Moses to assume such a body as he appeared in on the mount, for that occasion, than for angels to appear in human shapes; and departed souls too, as many apparitions have told men. And if bad souls can do it, why not good ones, when God will have it? The tradition seemeth but a jewish dream, that God kept the body of Moses uncorrupted in the grave; and that this was it that the devil is said to strive for against Michael, that the body might be corrupted. And say others, that at this transfiguration it rose again. There need no such conceits to our satisfaction. The soul of Moses could assume a body.

Sect. 8. But still the dissimilitude of Enoch and Elias from all the saints in heaven is an unresolved difficulty. If we knew that God would have it so, it might satisfy us. But there is a symmetry in the body of Christ. And it is like that the same region hath inhabitants of the same nature. What shall we think, then, that Enoch and Elias, at their entrance into those regions, laid by their bodies, and became such as Abraham, and other holy souls? Why are they taken up to be so laid by? The corruptibility, no doubt, they did lay by. God knoweth, but it is much unknown to us. Or shall we think as all those fathers cited by Faustus Regiensis, and as Dr. More, and some of late, that all spirits are souls, and animate some bodies; and so that all in heaven have some bodies. If so, what bodies are they; and how differ they from the resurrection state? As the soul here operateth in and by the igneous spirits in our bodies, it may be so lodged in these as to take some of them with it at death, as the life of a dying plant, yet dieth not in the seed. And a man may be said to go unclothed to bed, though he put not off his shift or nearest garment, and to be clothed again when he puts on the rest. And at the resurrection, as there will be a new heaven and earth, so spirits now in heaven may have much more delightful business on the new and righteous earth than now they have, and therefore may have use for an additional body, as much differing from what they have now in heaven, as the new earth and their employment there require; and as the seed doth differ from the plant. And spirits being communicative, will be more happy by more communication. As God delighteth to do good to all his works, so the souls now confined to heaven will delight to be employed in doing good to the new earth, and to animate the bodies suited to such work; though now they have use for no other than such spiritual, lucid receptacles as are fit for the regions where they dwell. And it will be no debasement or dejection for a spirit now in heaven to animate a body at the resurrection fit for the new earth; no more than it was to angels to speak to Adam, and to Moses, to Abraham, Jacob, Manoah, and others; or than it is to the sun to enlighten and enliven things on earth.

It is a foolish thing to think, as some do, that departed souls will be as dormant and unactive as in apoplectic or sleeping persons, for want of organized bodies to act in. Spirits are essentially active, intellective, and volitive; and will God continue such essential powers in vain? Moses and Elias wanted

not bodies; and those in heaven can praise Jehovah and the Lamb with holy, concordant love and joy; whether in any sort of ethereal bodies, or without, we shall shortly know.

Sect. 8. It is said that Moses and Elias talked with Christ; this showeth that Christ hath familiar communion with the blessed. He that would come into flesh on earth, and live with man in an humbled state, and refused not familiar converse with poor men and women, and would eat and drink with publicans and sinners, will not refuse everlasting, near familiarity with the glorified. If the church be his dearly beloved spouse, and as it were one with him, as his body, surely he will be no stranger to the least and lowest member of it.

Sect. 9. But what was it that they talked about? Luke (ix. 31) saith, "They appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." This was not to make it known to Christ, who came into the world to die for sin; what then was it for? Did Christ tell them of it, as not knowing it before? That is not likely neither. Did he need their comfort, as angels in his trials ministered to him and strengthened him? The particular uses of this speech we know not; but in general we know it was somewhat preparatory to his great sufferings and death.

And must Christ's sufferings and death have such preparation, and must not mine have much premeditation? And do I not need the consolatory messages of God? Carnal men would rather have chosen pleasanter discourse, than the talk of sufferings and death. But that which must be undergone, and requireth greatest strength, must be forethought of, and requireth the most preparing thoughts. It is worse than madness to be surprised with sufferings and death, before it is seriously forethought of. So sharp a trial, and so great a change, require the greatest preparation. He that can refuse to suffer and die, may refuse to talk or think of it. If Christ must have men from heaven to talk with him of his cross, what cause have we to study the cross; even all our lives to foresee it, and, by obedient consent, to submit unto it, and take it up to follow Christ, and even to determine, with Paul, to know nothing in the world but Christ and him crucified; that is, to take this for the only needful and excellent learning? But, alas! how senselessly is death and suffering talked of till it comes! We are to learn how to suffer when suffering is upon us; and to learn how to die when nature, or the physician, passes the sentence of death

on us at hand. And it is God's mercy to some of us to make our sufferings long, that we may have a competent time of learning. As we learn to write by writing, and to discourse by discoursing, and every art and trade by practice; even so by suffering we learn to suffer, and the lesson is very hard. Malefactors suffer without learning, whether they will or not; but to suffer obediently, with child-like affections, is the lesson to be learned. Oh! little, too little, do many honest Christians think how much of their excellent obedience consisteth in child-like, holy suffering; therefore they little expect it, and provide for it; and then they are overwhelmed with the unexpected surprisal when it comes. Even in the sufferings which men bring on the faithful for righteousness' sake, how many shrink, and shift off their duty, or venture on forbidden things for safety, because they were not prepared for it. The loss of goods, or imprisonment and want, seem to many almost insufferable trials. But I can tell such, by some experience, that bodily pain and torment is a far greater trial, which none of them are secured from, and requireth greater strength of faith obediently to accept it at the hand of God: and others can tell them that the violence of temptations, and the terrors of God on a wounded conscience, and troubled soul, are yet far harder than all these: and these are the saddest, because they make the mind unfit at present to improve them, and to refer them to holy ends and uses. Christ, in all his agony, and even when he cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" had his intellectuals free and perfect, to know the nature, the reason, the uses, and end of all his sufferings: but so have not many poor, distressed, troubled, distracted souls. O how great a part of Christianity is it to understand and rightly bear the cross! Most of our care is how to escape it, or to be delivered from it, rather than obediently to bear it.

Sect. 10. Experience of a suffering, painful state is a great help to our understanding of the gospel. It taketh off from me the scandal of Christ's cross, and helpeth me to perceive the great use and reasons of it, when I am under sufferings. Oh! what need have I of such an example as Christ's. All the parts of his sufferings are as useful to teach me how to suffer, as the ten commandments to teach me what to do. That he was put to fly from proud, domineering pharisees, false teachers, and worldly rulers, and to converse most with the poor, in wildernesses, or various obscure places; that he was hated and per-

secuted for doing good, and accounted a sinner for neglecting men's ceremonies and traditions; that he was hardly believed, even by them that saw his miracles; and his own disciples were so slow in learning; and that in his suffering they all forsook him and fled, and one denied him with oaths and curses: all these are instructing instances. That Christ's natural, though sinless, aversation to death and suffering, and his fear, should be so powerful, and the sense of God's punishing justice so terrible, as to make his soul sorrowful, even to the death, and cast him into an agony, where he sweat water and blood, and to pray thrice that the bitter cup, if possible, might pass from him, which he came into the world to drink: all these also are teaching parts of the sufferings of Christ, that rulers, and priests, and soldiers, and the rabble, should agree to scorn him, clothe him in derision, spit on him, buffet him, scourge him, make him their jest, that came to save them; that they should make a sinner of him that never sinned, but came to destroy it, and save men from it; yea, to make him no less than a deceiver, a blasphemer, and an usurping rebel against Cæsar, and write this last as his accusation on his cross, thinking to leave his innocency no vindication or defence. For the Lord and Saviour of the world to undergo all this, is very instructing to a suffering believer: that he should, as such a malefactor, be reviled on a cross, and numbered with transgressors, and his side be pierced, and he there cry out to his Father as forsaken by him; that thus dying he was buried, and his soul went to the place of separated souls, and yet into paradise. They are excellent lessons which may be learned from all this.

I am not to suffer for others, nor to make God's justice a satisfying sacrifice for sin, as Christ did; but I must suffer God's fatherly corrections, and the castigation of paternal, healing justice. I must be saved as by fire, and pass through this purgatory, that I may be refined: I must suffer from Christ and for Christ, for my sin, and also for righteousness' sake: and I must, with a filial justification of God's holiness and chastening justice, bear his indignation, because I have sinned against him. I am predestined to be conformed to Christ's image, in suffering and in sanctity; yea, I must "count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," (Rom. viii. 30, &c.,) for whom I must not refuse to suffer the loss of all things, and count them dung, that I may win him, and be found in him, and not only know the power of his resurrection, but

also the "fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable to his death." (Phil. iii. 8—10.) Paul rejoiced in such infirmities, and in his sufferings for the church, filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh. (Col. i. 24.) Peter bids us "rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter iv. 13.) "If we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him." (Rom. viii. 17.) It is a great gift to suffer for his sake. (Phil. i. 29.) It is for the kingdom of God that such suffer. (2 Thess. i. 5.) It is happiness and joy to suffer for righteousness' sake, for well doing. (1 Pet. ii. 10; and iii. 14, 17; and iv. 15, 16, 19; Matt. v. 10, 11.) It is the sufferings of Christ that abound in such, that their consolations may abound. (2 Cor. i. 5.)

But, alas! I suffer much more for my own sin than for Christ and righteousness: but even this also by the cross of Christ is sanctified, and made a great remedy against my sin. As Christ suffered for our sins, and yet merited by his suffering; so if we accept the castigatory punishment, and exercise repentance and mortification in our suffering, and an obedient submission to the rod, God will take this as acceptable service, and bless it to our further good.

Sect. 11. But how is it that Christ is said "to learn obedience by the things that he suffered, and so to be made perfect." (Heb. v. 8, 9.) Was he unlearned and imperfect before? He had no culpable imperfection; but his satisfactory mediation was imperfect till it was all performed: it was not perfectly done; and when it was done, he thereby was constitutively made a perfect Mediator: as he said upon the cross, "It is finished;" and as this human nature received additional acts of knowledge, as he grew up, and conversed with more objects, and so is said to increase in wisdom (as Adam knew the creatures when he saw them); so he had a new acquaintance with obedient suffering, when he was under the experience of it; and is said to learn it, in that he now exercised it.

And should not my suffering be God's school? Should I not learn obedience by it? Surely, as it smartly tells me of the evil of former disobedience, so it calls me to remember in whose hands I am, and with whom I have to do, and what is my duty in such a state: God can do no wrong to his own: he will do nothing finally hurtful to his children. In all our afflictions he is said to be afflicted, to signify that he afflicts not willingly, or

without our provocation. Justice is good, and holiness is good ; and it is good for us to repent, and be weaned from the flesh and world : and all good must be loved, and the means as such : sharp, heart-breaking sermons are unpleasing to nature ; and yet to be loved for their use : and afflictions are God's powerful sermons : the proud and hardened are forced to hear them, who scorn and prosecute preachers for speaking the same things : and shall believers under sufferings be untaught ? Words are but words, but stripes go by forcible sense unto the heart : obedient submission to the greatest pains is a serious acknowledgement of God's dominion, and of his wisdom and love, and the certain hopes of a better life. Impatience hath in it somewhat of atheism, or blasphemy : God is not duly acknowledged and honoured. Job's wife would have had him thus purposely provoke God, to end his misery by death : as if she had said, ' Speak no more well of him, by whom thou sufferest so much, nor honour a God that will not help thee : ' but patience saith, " I will look unto the Lord ; I will wait for the God of my salvation ; my God will hear me." (Mic. viii. 7.)

Impatience showeth a misunderstanding of God's dealing with the afflicted ; but patience yieldeth, because it understandeth whence all comes, and what will be the fruit and end. A man that is let blood for his life, is not impatient with the surgeon ; but a beast will strive, and a swine, or child, will cry.

Our burdens are heavy enough of themselves : impatience maketh them heavier, and is oft more painful than the thing which we suffer : some have gone mad with crosses, which to another would have been light. Patience is our cordial and *nepenthes*, yea, the health of the soul, by which it is able to bear its infirmities. " In our patience we possess our souls." (Luke xxi. 19.) Whatever else we lose, we lose not ourselves. He that keepeth his faith, and hope, and love by patience, keepeth his soul : but the impatient lose themselves, as if their other losses were not enough. A poor man singeth that gets his living only by his day labour ; when a lord or knight would be tormented with sorrow, if he were reduced to his degree. Striving under our yoke and burden maketh it gall the more : and we cannot so hopefully or comfortably pray for deliverance from the pain which we make ourselves, as from that which God layeth on us ; though also there, we must pray for the grace that must save us from our own impatience.

Patience preventeth many sins which impatience causeth ; hard

thoughts of God, if not hard and unseemly words: "Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly:" impatience tempteth men to think that piety and prayer are in vain, and to condemn the generation of the just, and to leave off duty, and say, 'Why should I wait on God any longer?' Yea, and to venture on false and sinful means, in hopes of deliverance and ease.

Were it to men, we have much to allay our impatience: but impatience against God hath no just excuse. Infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, can do nothing that deserveth blame: we have God's promise that all things shall work together for our good: and is he not to be trusted? Or is the means of our good to be accused?

Impatience is unseemly for them that believe that heavenly rest and glory are at hand; where all their pains and sorrows will end. Were a man on the rack, and were sure to have all that he desired after it, he would the more easily endure it. Why else did the martyrs so patiently suffer? It is incongruous to complain of any thing that brings a man to heaven.

Christ himself was innocent, and yet accused not God for his sufferings. But we suffer justly for our faults; and it is so much less than they deserve, that the sins which we suffer most for are said to be forgiven us, in that the everlasting punishment is forgiven: should we so often sinfully please the flesh, and yet must it not smart? Shall we so often grieve the Spirit of God, and not be grieved? Shall we lose our time, neglect our duty, forget our home, fall in love with the world, and yield to temptations, and defile our souls with filth and vanity, and must not correction tell us of our sinful folly? "If we suffer for our faults, and bear it patiently, it is not thankworthy." (1 Pet. ii. 20.)

Our merciful Father doth use to shame us for our impatience, by the blessed end of our afflictions. The end that God made with Job showed the reasonableness of his patience: when our afflictions are over, do not all believers see cause of thankfulness for them, and say, 'It is good for me that I was afflicted?' The pain is past, and the benefit remaineth. And if all that is past was mercy to us, why should we much fear that which is to come. Heaven will end all, and shame impatience for ever.

Our patience is much of our perseverance: what a deal of labour do those impatient men lose, that learn, and pray, and are somewhat religious, and have not patience at the last assault to bear the trial, but fail when they seemed to be near the crown!

Hold out, then, poor desponding soul! lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and run with patience the race which is set before thee, looking to Jesus, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross. God will not deceive thy hopes. Sin hath brought pain and death on man; but Christ hath sanctified it, and is the Lord of Life. Yet a little while, and the heavenly possession shall turn thy sorrows into everlasting joy, and thy moans and groans into thanks and praise, and there shall be no more sickness, pain, or death. O foolish, unbelieving hearts! that cry out of suffering, and fear deliverance; that would fain be free from all affliction, and yet fly from the only state of freedom; that are impatient under their calamity, and yet afraid of passing to the only rest!

Sect. 12. But it is neither pain alone, nor death alone, that will sufficiently try our strength, and exercise our faith and patience. It must be great pain (and often long) in order to a certain, expected death. These two conjunct were the case of Christ. The torment of his agony, scourging, crucifying, piercing, and desertion, and the certainty of death that followed. Great pains, with hopes of recovery and ease, may be borne, even by a worldly man; because there is still the worldly hope of better: and so there is no denial of all, while life itself is not denied. We must receive the sentence of death in ourselves, if we will find that we trust in God alone, and trust him as one that raiseth the dead, that is, for another and better life.

As long as a man hath any hope of life and ease, a man's faith is not tried to the uttermost, by actual forsaking all. And yet an easy death alone doth not fully try a man: for they that know that all must die, may submit to this, who cannot bear long pains before it. But great and long pains, and the sentence of death together, are the trial.

And if God will so try me, why should I repine? Flesh will groan, but the mind may obediently submit. It is but flesh; that flesh that hath tempted and imprisoned my soul. I have too much loved it, and am too loth to leave it: and is it not mercy from God to make me weary of it? God is engaged against idols, that is, all that is loved and pleased before him; and if any thing, that is likest to be this flesh. Its corruptibility tells us, that both its pleasure and its pain will be but short. Long pain is usually tolerable: and intolerable pain will conquer nature, and not be long. The grace of Christ is sufficient for us, and his strength is manifested in our weakness,

when he will not take the thorn out of our flesh, though, as Christ and Paul did, we pray thrice, or oftener.

And to be impatient with death is to repine that we are born mortal men ; and to fly from heaven and all true hopes, and all the felicity purchased by Christ: and is this renouncing the world, and trusting Christ for life everlasting? And why fear we that which endeth all our pains and fears? A true believer never suffereth so much, but his mercies are far more and greater than his sufferings. His soul is united to Christ: his hopes of heaven have a sure foundation: he is sealed up to glory: rest and joy are near at hand ; and former mercies should not be forgotten ; and should not such men patiently endure? O what a shameful contradiction is it, to choose heaven as our only portion, to believe in Christ for it, and to seek it as the business of all our lives, and yet to be loth to die, that we may obtain it, and to fly with fear from that which we so seek and hope for ! What a contradiction is it to call God our God and Father, the God of Love, and to call Christ our gracious, glorified Redeemer, and to fly from his presence with distrustful fear ! Almighty love may correct us, may kill us, but it cannot finally hurt true believers.

So much of Moses' and Elias' discourse of the sufferings and death of Christ.

Sect. 13. Sure it is not true that the souls of the fathers, before Christ's coming, did not enter into heaven, but lay in some inferior *limbus*. For Moses and Elias came from heaven; their shining glory showed that, and their discourse with Christ, and the voice and glory that went with them. And it is not to be thought that they were separated from the rest of the souls of the faithful, and, with Enoch, were in heaven by themselves alone, and the rest elsewhere. Though it is said that God's house hath many mansions, and there are various degrees of glory, yet the blessed are all fellow-citizens of one society, and children in one family of God. And they that came from east and west, shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God; and Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom, and the believing thief with Christ in paradise.

Sect. 14. It seems that Moses and Elias appeared thus, to foreshow the resurrection of Christ, and of the faithful, and to make it easier to the three disciples to believe it. Why should they doubt whether Christ should rise, when they saw that Moses was risen before him? And why should they doubt of

the resurrection of the faithful, and the glory following, when they saw these glorified saints? Some think that this apparition was for the strengthening of Christ himself, whose human nature had use for such ministry also of angels, but it is more certain that it was for the strengthening of the disciples' faith, and of ours by their testimony. As it is said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." (John xii. 30.)

Sect. 15. It is much worth our noting, in what a communion this specimen of the kingdom of heaven was represented in the holy mount. Here was a voice of God, and a glimpse of his glory: here was our Redeemer in a glimpse of his glory: here was a Moses and Elias in a glimpse of their glory: and here were three beloved disciples yet in the flesh, and in weakness of faith, which needed such confirmation. God, our Father, and our Saviour, the saints of heaven, and those on earth, are all of one society or kingdom. There is a near relation, and a near communion among them all. When the eternal Word disdained not so wonderful condescension as to come to us in the form of a servant, even of a poor, despised, crucified man, it is less wonder that Moses and Elias should come down as his witnesses and servants. (Heb. xii. 23, &c.) The heavenly Jerusalem, and city of the living God, of which we are enrolled burgesses or heirs, hath many parts. There is the assembly of the first-born, and innumerable angels, and the Spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and God, the Judge of all. Oh, what holy, glorious, joyful company shall we have above! Christ and his angels will not despise the least of saints.

Sect. 16. But what was the introduction to this apparition and transfiguration? It was Christ's praying, "He went up into a mountain to pray, and, as he prayed, he was transfigured." (Luke ix. 28, 29.) Surely this is written to invite and encourage us to pray. We are in greater need than Christ. It is folly in unbelievers to think prayers vain, because God is unchangeable. We are not unchangeable: and the exercise of faith, dependence on God, and true desires, being the condition required in a due receiver, maketh those blessings become ours, which else we had been incapable of. God, who commandeth fervent prayer, hath promised to answer it. Though we must not think to be the rulers of the world, nor have whatever our flesh or folly doth desire, because we ask it earnestly, yet true prayer is the appointed way for obtaining what we need, and is

best for us, and we are fitted to receive. And as Christ had this wonderful return to his prayers, his servants have experience that their choicest mercies for soul and body have come this way.

Sect. 17. Though the three disciples were admitted to this glorious society, how different was their case from that of Christ, and Moses, and Elias! In the beginning of the heavenly concourse, they were asleep with heaviness, even while this glorious company stood near them. Alas! such is our infirmity in flesh, and such a clog are these earthly bodies to us, that when God is present, and heaven is before us, and we have the greatest cause to watch and pray, a heavy, weary, sluggish body, even fettereth an active spirit, and we sleep, or turn away in wandering thoughts, when we should seriously converse with Christ and heaven. Alas! what unworthy servants hath our Lord! Are such as these meet for his work, his love, his acceptance, or his kingdom? But oh, how merciful a Saviour have we, who taketh not his poor servants, at the worst, but when they have served him thus in his agony, he gently rebuketh them; "Could you not watch with me one hour?" and that with an excuse, "The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Sect. 18. It is a matter of great moment to understand in what cases this excuse will hold, and our weakness will not make the willingness of the Spirit unacceptable to God. If a drunkard, fornicator, or other sensualist should say, 'My spirit is willing to leave my sin, but my flesh is weak, and a temptation doth prevail,' *Video meliora probog*; &c. This excuse would not prove God's forgiveness. If a man live in known sin, which he could forbear were he truly willing, and say, "To will is present with me, but to do I am unable; it is not I, but sin, that dwelleth in me;" this would be but a frivolous excuse, and yet to the sleepy disciples it was a good excuse, and I think to Paul, Rom. vii. Where, then, is the difference? There are some acts of man which the will hath not power to rule, and some that it can rule. The will hath not power always to keep a sleepy man awake: this sleep might be of the flesh without any will at all; and this excuseth from all guilt. There are some acts of man which the will cannot rule, but by a great degree of power and endeavour: as perhaps, with much ado, by preventing and resisting diligence, the disciples might have kept awake: in this case, their sleep is a fault, but a pardoned fault of weakness. Some persons are liable to inordinate fear and grief, which so surpriseth them by the constitution of their bodies,

that the greatest unwillingness would not hinder them. And some could do more to resist these passions than they do, but very hardly with the greatest diligence. These are accordingly excusable in degree. Paul would have perfectly obeyed God's law, and never have sinned. But there is no perfection in this life: mere imperfection of true grace, which is predominant in the will, doth not damn men. But there are acts which are so subject to the will, that a sincere will, though imperfect, can command them. He that doth these, (or doth the contrary,) it is not because he sincerely would, and cannot, but because he hath but ineffectual wishes, and is not sincerely willing, if he know them to be what they are; especially if they be materially great sins which he yieldeth to, which true grace more strongly resisteth than it doth an idle word, or thought, or action. In short, all omissions or commissions, in which the will is positively or privatively guilty, are sinful in some degree; but only these do damn the sinner, which are inconsistent with the predominant love of God, and heaven, and holiness, in the soul.

Sect. 19. When the disciples awaked, they saw these glorious ones in converse. Did they hear what they said, or did Christ after tell them? The latter is most probable. Doubtless, as Moses tells us how God made the world, which none could tell him but by God's telling them first, so the apostles have written many things of Christ which they neither saw nor heard, but from Christ, that told it them by word, or inspiration. How else knew they what Satan said and did to him in his temptations in the wilderness, and on the pinnacle of the temple? How knew they what his prayer was in his agony? And so in this instance also. But Christ's own testimony was enough to put them out of doubt, to them that daily saw his confirming miracles.

Sect. 20. How great a difference was there between mount Sinai and this mount? When God delivered the law to Moses, that mount was terrible in flame, and smoke, and thunder, so that the people trembled and fled: but now here is nothing but life, and light, and love from heaven. A merciful Redeemer, whose face shone as the sun, with heavenly company, appearing nearly to the disciples, pitying and bearing with their heaviness and infirmity, strengthening their faith and hope, and proving to them a resurrection, and a heavenly kingdom, by a visible apparition of some of its possessors. This was not a frightful, but a confirming, delectable sight: the law in terror was by Moses, but grace and truth, peace and pleasure, are by Christ.

This was an inviting and delighting, and not an affrighting, apparition. Was it not a shameful infirmity, and a sin, that Peter should deny Christ after such a sight as this, and the rest of the disciples forsake him and fly? What! after they had seen the kingdom of God come in power, and Christ's face shine as the sun in its brightness, could they forget all this? Or could they doubt whether he or his persecutors were the stronger, and liker to prevail at last? O, how frail, how uncertain, how bad a thing, is depraved man!

But though Christ found them asleep, and though he foreknew that they would forsake him, he forsook not them, nor used them as they deserved, but comforted them with a glimpse of heaven: for he died for his enemies.

Sect. 21. But this was but once in all the time of his abode among them. It was an extraordinary feast, and not their daily bread: they had Christ still with them, but not transfigured in glory, nor Moses and Elias in their sight. We are too apt to think, that if God give us a joyful, extraordinary glimpse of heaven, we must have it always, or that he forsaketh us, and casts us off when he denieth it us. O that we were as desirous of holiness and duty as we are of the joy which is the reward! But our Father, and not we, must be the chooser both of our food and feast. Moses did not dwell on mount Nebo, that he might still see the land of promise: it was enough to have one sight of it before his death. As flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven, so it is little of heaven that entereth into it.

Sect. 22. When the disciples awake, they see his glory, and the two men that stood with them. It must not be a sleeping but an awakened Christian, that will have a sight of heavenly glory. As we must love God with all the heart, and soul, and might, all must be awakened in seeking him, and in attending him, before we can have a joyful foretaste of his love. Carnal security, supine neglect, and dull contempt, are dispositions which render us incapable of such delights. Heavenly joy supposes a heavenly disposition and desires. Angels sleep not, nor are clogged with bodies of clay: earth hath no wings: it must be holy vivacity that must carry up a soul to God, notwithstanding the fetters of flesh. It is with each other's souls in the body that we converse together on earth. And it is not sluggish, but lively faith, and fervent desire, that must converse in heaven with Moses and Elias, and our living Head.

Sect. 23. But how did Peter know Moses and Elias, whom he

had never seen before? Perhaps glorified saints do bear each one his notifying signature, and need not names and sound of words to make them known: perhaps Christ told the disciples who they were that talked with him: perhaps he made them know it by inspiration, as the prophets have their knowledge. Any of these ways God could notify them: it is not needful that we know which of them it was; but that they were known, is certain. We shall be no strangers to any saints in heaven, and therefore not to our old acquaintance. Whether we shall have any greater love to them, or delight in them, for old acquaintance' sake, or because they were instruments of our good on earth, I know not, but I know that our love to them, with whom we had holy comfort on earth, may well render heaven more familiar to us now, and more suitable to our desires. O! how great a number of my godly friends are there! They are so many that I cannot make a catalogue of their names, but the memory of abundance of them doth delight me. And when we meet there, we shall be far better known to each other than we were to the most intimate on earth.

Oh, let Christians now so converse together, as remembering that they must meet in heaven, where all that was secret will be brought to light. If we now put on any vizor, and seem better than we are; if we hide any sin, or base corruption; if we, by fraud or falsehood deceive our friends, all this will be opened when we meet in heaven. It is a daily grief and shame to my soul, to think of the sins that I have committed against some that are now in heaven, which I either excused, extenuated, or hid, and to think how much evil they will know of me there, which on earth they knew not by me. But God, who pardoneth them, will cause his servants there to forgive each other; but the detected sin, for all that, will be an odious, shameful thing. Lying and hypocrisy are there no cloak, but an aggravation, of the shame. If we cannot confess, and take shame to ourselves, by repentance, upon earth, how shall we appear in the open light, and see the faces of those whom we have wronged. What diminution it will make of our joy, I know not, but it must needs be a dishonour to have been false to God or man, and especially when we meet where sin is perfectly hated, to think how we either sinned together, or that we tempted and ensnared one another in any sin; how it will affect us then I do not fully know, but it is now to me a far greater grief to think of any in heaven whom I have tempted or wronged, than it was

while they lived with me on earth. And I think there is somewhat of this nature common to good and bad: even the consciences of wicked men do haunt them for notable injuries to others, especially concealed ones, and especially for persecuting the servants of God, when they are dead, more than while they lived. Insomuch that (though I doubt not of real apparitions) I am ready to think, that some that say they are haunted by the sight and the voice of such as seem to them to be deceased persons, are rather haunted by their own consciences, which strongly represent those persons to their imaginations.

But on the other side, it is a great delight to me to think of the good which I received from many that are now in heaven. Of the profitable sermons which I have heard from some, and the profitable conversation which I have had with others: how oft we sweetly consulted together of the things which concern everlasting life: how many days in public and private we spent in preparation, and in some prospect of the blessedness which now they enjoy. And it is not a small mercy to me, that I can think of the multitudes now in heaven, of whose conversion and salvation God hath made my weak endeavours a prosperous means. O what a mercy is it to think on, that while I am yet compassed with temptations, and languishing in weakness, and groaning in pain, and, worst of all, burdened with a dark and sinful soul, so many are past all this with Christ, by means of any help which he sent them by my labours. It hath oft humbled me greatly to read in the lives of such men as John Janeway and Joseph Allen, how much of their proficiency they ascribed to my writings, and how far they overwent me, and left me quite behind them in holy delights and praises of God! But how much more am I below a multitude now in heaven, who called me father here on earth!

And if here I must rejoice with them that rejoice, as well as mourn with them that mourn, why should I not much more rejoice with all the blessed society above; and more familiarly with my old acquaintance, pupils, and dear friends? My love should be most to the best; and therefore, more to them than to any other of my friends; and therefore, my union with them being closer, and their felicity far greater, I should think with more joy of them than of any left behind. They are safe in the harbour, past all our dangerous storms and waves; and though they know, or will know, more of my sins than they did

on earth, and hate them more, yet they that feel the comfort of the pardon of their own, will imitate God in pardoning me, and rejoice in God's forgiveness of me. Though their vile bodies lie like common dust, how much better do they now know the love of God, the mysteries of grace, the heavenly glory, the state of spirits in the city of God, than I do who was wont to preach it to them. God, that sent down Moses and Elias to show that saints in heaven and on earth have communion, will bring me and my friends now in heaven together again, into a far sweeter communion than ever we had here.

Sect. 24. It is no great wonder that Peter should be transported with this glorious sight ; and greatly delighted with this heavenly communion, and say, " Master it is good for us to be here." Would not a sight, a glimpse, of heaven, have transported any holy soul; yea, even those that now lie in tears and fears, and are overwhelmed with doubts and troubles? When they are groping after God, and groaning on their knees, because they feel more of his frowns than of his love, if then they had such a sight as this, what a change would it make upon them? Perhaps you will say, that the doubt of their own sincerity might still deprive them of their joy. No; this sight would banish doubts and troubles. It is a communication of love, and such as will fully convince the communicants.

Without such a miraculous glimpse of glory, God sometime giveth some of his servants such a mental illustration, and inward glimpse and taste of heaven, as greatly overcometh all the fears of pain and death; such many old and later martyrs have had. It was a strange word of the godly Bishop of St David's, Mr. Farrar, to his neighbours, ' If I stir in the fire, believe not my doctrine :' and accordingly he stirred not. If he had not had some prophetic inspiration, this could not have been justified from being a presumptuous tempting of God. And Mr. Baynam's case was a mere wonder, who, in the flames, called to the papists to see a miracle, professing to them, that in the fire he felt no more pain than if he had been laid on a bed of down, or roses.

I am just now reading in Melch. Adam's Lives of the German Philosophers, the Life of Olympia Fulvia Morata, which ended with some such experience. In many ages there hath been some one rare woman, who hath excelled men in the languages,

philosophy, and other human learning. Such an one was this Olympia Fulvia Morata, of Ferrara. She married Andr. Gundler, a physician: she removed with him into Germany; and was by the way convinced of the guard of angels, by her young brother falling out of a high window, on cragged stones, without any more hurt than if it had been on the soft ground. In Germany, she thus wrote to Anna Estensis, a Guisian princess: 'As soon as, by the singular goodness of God, I was departed from the Italian idolatry, and came with my husband into Germany, it is incredible how God changed my soul, (or mind,) which, being formerly most averse (or abhorring) to the divine Scriptures, am now delighted in them alone, and place in them all my study, labour, care, and mind; and, as much as possible, contemn all the riches, honours, and pleasures, which formerly I was wont to admire.' But the cross presently following, in God's usual method, her husband and she were, by soldiers, stripped naked, save the shift next the body, and narrowly escaping with life, were put so to wander from place to place, none daring to entertain them, even when she was sick of a fever; till at last they found liberal entertainment, in which she shortly fell into a mortal disease, of which she died. And in her last sickness, and after much torment of body, near death, she pleasantly smiled. Her husband asked her the cause; who said, 'I saw a certain place which was full of a most clear and beauteous light;' intimating that she should quickly be there, and saying, 'I am wholly full of joy.' And spake no more till, her eyesight failing her, she said, 'I scarce know any of you any more; but all things else about seem to be full of most beauteous flowers;' which were her last words; having a long time professed, that nothing seemed more desirable to her, than to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, in all her sickness magnifying his mercies to her.

Many have thus joyfully laid down the flesh to go to Christ; what wonder, then, if Peter was loth to lose the pleasure of what he saw.

Two things are necessary to great and solid joy; first, that the object be truly and greatly amiable, and delectable; and, secondly, that the apprehensions of it be clear and strong. As to the first, we have so great and glorious things to delight us as would feast our souls with constant joy, were not the second, alas! much wanting. What man could choose but be even in Peter's rapture continually, if he had but ascertained heavenly

glory, apprehended by him, in as satisfactory a manner as these sensible things are? If I lay in prison, yea, or in torment of cholic, stone, or any such disease, and had but withal such apprehensions, or sight, of assured glory, surely the pain would not be able to suppress my joy. What a mixture, what a discord, would there be in my expressions; torment would constrain my flesh to groan, and the sight of heaven would make me triumph. I cannot but think how this great discord would show the difference between the spirit and the flesh. What a strange thing it would be to hear the same man, at the same time, crying out in pain with groans, and magnifying the love of God with transporting joy! But we are not yet fit for such joyful apprehensions; our weak eyes must not see the sun, but through the allaying medium of a humid air, at a vast distance, and by the chrystalline humour, and organical parts of the eye. Fain we would get nearer, and have sight, or clearer apprehensions, of the spiritual society, and glorious world. We study, we pray, we look up, we groan under our distance, darkness, and unsatisfying conceptions; but yet it must not be. We must be ripened before the shell will break, or the dark womb will deliver us up to the glorious light; but Christ vouchsafed that to his three apostles which we are unworthy of, and yet unfit for. O happy sight! O happy men! It is incongruous to say, 'What would I not give for such a sight?' lest it should savour of Simon Magus' folly; and I have nothing to give; but it is not incongruous to say, 'What would I not do; and what would I not suffer for such a sight?' Yea, Christ puts such kind of questions to us; O that I had better answered them in the hour of duty, and in the hour of temptation! When he asked, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptised with the baptism, that I am baptised with?" I have been ready, with James and John, to say, I can; but when the trial comes, (as they after in his suffering forsook him and fled,) how insufficient is my own strength to perform my promise? When he did impose on me the denying of myself, forsaking all, taking up the cross and following him, I yielded and covenanted by vow to do it; but it was by the help of the Holy Spirit, which he promised to give me. I stand, Lord, to my covenant; help me to perform it; and give me, though not his present sight, yet some of Peter's mental apprehensions, and a glimpse, a taste, of that which transported him with delight. Let who will (or who thou wilt) take the riches and grandeur

of the world. O give me some delightful taste of that which I am made for, redeemed for, and which thy Spirit hath long taught me to seek and hope for, as my all!

Sect. 25. Peter was not weary with the sight of this heavenly apparition. Why should I be weary of the believing contemplation of greater things? Though sight affect us more sensibly than mere believing and thinking, yet these have their happy office, which may be effectual. And Christ, who thus appeared in glory to Peter, hath said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And Peter himself saith of them that see not Christ, that "They rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," in believing. O how unexcusable am I for every weary prayer or meditation of such a glory; and for yielding to Satan and a backward heart, which have oft made me shorten these sweet employments, when I had time, and leave, and need, to lengthen them. What! weary of communion with Christ! weary of speaking to my heavenly Father, for endless blessedness, upon such joyful terms of hope as he hath given me! weary of the thoughts of the city of God, the heavenly society, and work! weary of exciting divine love, and exercising it in divine praise, which are the works of angels, and all the heavenly host! Oh, how justly might God be, as it were, weary of me, and of my weary services; yea, of the best that I can offer him, which hath in it so much to give him cause!

Sect. 26. Peter did not fly from this glorious prospect; but would fain have had more of it, and have dwelt upon the holy mount. And when God will call me to a more glorious vision and fruition in heaven, shall I draw back, and be unwilling to go? Was that mount a better place than heaven? Is not Christ now to be there seen in greater glory? Is the Jerusalem above, the glorious company of saints and angels, no better and more desirable a sight, than Moses and Elias were on the mount? Alas! when we have read, and heard, and thought, and talked so much of heaven, and done and suffered so much for it, that yet we should draw back with fear and unwillingness to go to it! O what lamentable weakness of faith, and power of flesh, doth this discover! When I read Peter's words "It is good to be here," I am grieved that I, who dwell in a world so near like hell, among the implacable haters of holiness and holy peace, and in a painful, tired body, and who have thought, said, and written so much of heaven, do yet say, with

no stronger desire and joy, "It is good to be there." When I see all natural appetites desire earnestly their proper food, and even the brutes desire their beloved company, shall my holy appetite be so dull and indifferent? Lord, quicken it by the fuller communications of thy Spirit, and save me from this hated, dangerous disease.

Sect. 27. But Peter spake he knew not what, when he talked of building tabernacles on earth, for the fruition of that which is proper to heaven. Alas! this is our common malady and folly: we would have Christ in the splendour of his glory; but we would have him here: we would see Moses and Elias, if they will come down to us: we would have that in the flesh, which flesh and blood cannot possess. O if we knew in what land, what city, what country, what private house, we might live in the least glimpse of the heavenly glory, how joyfully should we run to such an habitation! Merchants make towards the most gainful place for trade: poor men inquire after the most fertile and delectable countries for plantation: gentlemen delight themselves with a sweet and pleasantly-seated mansion; but if saints on earth could find a place where they could see what Stephen, or Paul, or the apostles saw, and have a little of heaven without dying and putting off this body, what a desirable dwelling would that seem to them? And yet, alas, how cold are our desires of the time and place where we shall have much more! We have Christ on earth, in the manner and measure that we are capable: we have here some communion with heaven, as verily (though not so sensibly) as our eye hath with the sun. God will not deny believers their title, their earnest, and some first-fruits; but when we would have our all, or our best on earth, or that on earth which is proper to heaven, we know not what we desire or say.

Are we, vile, dirty sinners in flesh, now fit for heavenly sights or joys? Or is this world a place for building tabernacles, where we may see the Lord, and take up our rest? What! in a world of temptations, of wickedness, of sufferings, where we are daily wrestling for our lives, and fighting, not merely against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, even spiritual wickedness (or wicked spirits) in high places (above the greatest men that are their servants). (Eph. vi. 12.) But that which is of the earth is earthly. Our earthly part would have an earthly felicity; but when we know that it is corruptible, and a dying

thing, and that we have here no continuing city, both faith and reason bid us seek for one to come. The unfaithful steward had so much wit as to make sure of another habitation, when he knew that he must be no longer steward.

God hath so constantly confuted and befooled me, by his marvellous providence, whenever I have said, 'Soul take thy ease,' and have thought of building tabernacles on earth, as hath convinced me, that such folly is not the least part of the danger of a soul, from which his mercy did so watchfully save me. If a little health and ease, or a pleasant habitation, or beloved company and friends, have but flattered me into earthly delight and hopes, and made me say, "It is good to be here;" I never was long without some pains, and dangerous sickness, or some loss or cross in friends, or some removal by personal or public changes, to tell me, that I knew not what I said, and that rest and happiness are not here. As the laborious ants and bees are long gathering a heap of treasure, and furnishing a hive with winter provisions, and a contemptuous foot soon spurneth about the one, and the chief owner of the hive destroyeth the other; so (while I neglected wealth and honour) when I have but treasured up the choicest books, and taken pleasure in my works and friends, God saw that such pleasure needed an allay, and hath taken away books and friends together, or driven me oft from them and my habitation, to tell me, sensibly, that I have higher to look, and further to go; and that Moses and Elias appeared not to turn earth into heaven, and make me think that now I am well, but to invite my soul to their celestial habitation. When Christ hath comforted me by hearing prayers, by great deliverances, by wonderful success of my defective labours, by comfortable friends, by public mercies, it was not, by making my condition pleasant, to keep down my desires from heaven, but to draw them thither by such foretastes. Contentment with our condition, as without more of the world, is a great duty; but to be content with the world, or any thing on earth, without more holiness and communion with God, and without a part in the heavenly perfection, is a heinous and pernicious sin.

But, alas! it is a far worse mistake than Peter's, which deceiveth the greatest part of men. They say, indeed, as he, "It is good to be here," (till melancholy or misery make them intolerable to themselves,) but it is not because they have seen a glimpse of heaven on earth, or tasted the sweetness of

the holy society and work, but because their bodies are in health, their purses full, their appetites pleased, and their inferiors do their wills, and honour them. This is all the heaven that they love; and, to leave all this is the death which they abhor and fear. And they will not hear God, and the experience of all mankind befooling them, till near the night that their souls shall be required, and then, whose will all their treasure be?

Sect. 28. But yet it was a greater part of Peter's dotage, to think of tabernacles for Christ, Moses, and Elias, and of detaining of heavenly inhabitants upon earth. If you would offer the lowest saint in heaven an earthly kingdom in exchange for his condition, with what disdain would he despise the offer? Christ's kingdom was not of this world, nor would Moses and Elias change their lot with Alexander or Cæsar. Poor trifles allure us, and seem somewhat to us (as toys to children) while we are dreaming in the flesh; but if once we be delivered, and see what the celestial glory is, what a change will it make upon our judgments? We fear now in the dark to go unto that world of light, and are loth to put off the rags of flesh, and to depart from a known, though a dirty, falling habitation: but if we get to heaven, we shall be loth to return to earth again, and be so coarsely clothed: when once we are there, a world would not hire us to come back into this corruptible body, till God will make it spiritual and incorruptible. Our friends, whose deaths we passionately lamented, would be loth now to change their company for such as we are, or their abode for such a wicked world as this, or their work for the best of ours on earth: no wonder that departed souls appear not to their friends on earth: most apparitions are of devils, or miserable souls, to whom it is no loss or condescension. Were I once in heaven, could I possibly be willing to be turned again into a Bedlam world, and laid under the feet of blinded pride, and raging madness, and live among Sodomites (called Christians) whose God is their belly, and who glory in their filthiness and shame, and mind nothing, with love, but earthly things; and are bitter enemies, not only to the cross, but to the government of Christ? Would I be again among dogs and swine; yea, devils in flesh, who hate and persecute the regenerate seed, and all that will not receive their mark, and be as mad and bad as they? Would I again be groaning here in pain, or tired with a weary body, and more with a feeble, sinful soul, weak in faith, cold in love, of doubtful hope, and imperfect duty? Would I be here again in

the prospect of a grave, with fear of dying; as strange as now to the heavenly felicity? Lazarus will not come from Abraham's bosom, for the rich man's wealth and belly-pleasure, no, not to warn his sensual brethren. Had Peter seen heaven as he saw the glory on the mount, he would never have made so blind a motion for Christ, Moses, and Elias, to continue there, who have so much better a habitation.

Sect. 29. But this glorious apparition was but short: as the glory of God's back parts to Moses, which did but pass by. Presently a cloud cometh, and separateth the company, and ends the pleasant sight. When Christians receive some extraordinary sense of the love of God, some sweet foretastes of promised happiness, they must not look that this should be ordinary, or always so. When some fervent prayer is extraordinarily answered, and a sacrament sweetened with unusual drops of heavenly sweetness, or a holy discourse or meditation hath raised us higher than ever before, we must not expect that this should be our constant diet, and God should thus feast us all the year. The times of fasting also have their turn. Moses did not dwell on Mount Horeb, nor Mount Nebo or Pisgah, from whence he saw the Land of Promise. God's children do not always laugh and sing; while they have their sinning times, they will have their suffering and crying times. How suddenly doth the lark come down to the earth, who before was soaring out of sight, and singing pleasantly in the higher air, as if it had been aspiring towards the sun. A luscious diet is not best for such as we, that have so many corruptions to be cured by cleansing means: cordials must not be all our physic; unwarrantable expectations of greater or more continued joys than we are meet for is injurious both to God and to ourselves. Desires of more we may and must have: but those desires must look up to heaven, where, indeed, they may be satisfied.

30. The joy of these spectators was turned into fear (saith the text) when they entered into the cloud. No wonder: the change was sudden and great; from a sight of the kingdom of God in power unto a dark cloud. Just now they seemed almost in heaven, and presently they knew not where they were: from glorious light to a kind of prison of obscurity.

Such changes here we are liable to. The same soul that lately tasted of transporting joy, may lie in terror, hardly resisting temptations to despair. The same person that was confident of the love of God, may be quickly, not only doubting of it,

but sinfully denying it : the same that had assuring evidence of sincerity, may shortly conclude that all was but hypocrisy. The same that was triumphing in the sense of love, may cry out, O miserable man that I am ! And the same that magnified the grace of Christ, may say, the day of grace is past ; especially if either the tempter get the advantage of a melancholy body, or of casting the soul into renewed guilt of some wounding sin, or into impatient discontents, with the things that befall it in the world.

There is a stability in the essentials of holiness : it is life eternal that is here begun : but, alas ! the degrees of grace, the exercise of it, the evenness and integrity of our obedience, and accordingly our comforts, are lamentably liable to change : even as all worldly things are mutable to the ungodly, though their hardened hearts are too little changeable. Expecting nothing but joy from God, or expecting more than we are meet for, maketh our dejections the greater, and more grievous. None are cast lower with terror, trouble, and almost despair, than some that have been most transported with joy : when some other Christians of an even conversation have an evenness and constancy of holy peace, though no such joys.

Sect. 31. The cloud separated the company ; Moses and Elias are seen no more ; no, nor the glory of Christ : but yet Christ is not separated from them : his ordinary presence still abideth with them. Christ doth not leave the soul when extraordinary joys do leave it : it loseth not his saving grace, nor the presence of his Spirit, as oft as it loseth heavenly delight. Desire showeth love to him, and to his holiness : and he never forsaketh those that love him : as long as the soul breatheth after Christ, and after more communion with God, and, conscious of its imperfection, would fain be perfect, and resolveth to continue waiting for increase of faith and holiness in the use of the means which Christ hath appointed, it is not forsaken. Christ, by his Spirit, dwelleth and worketh in that soul. It may enter into a cloud, and Christ may be unseen, and seem quite lost, but the cloud will vanish, and he will appear ; and he will first find us, that we may seek and find him. If he appear to us but as in his humiliation, and as crucified, and thereby humble us, and crucify us to the world and the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof, and cause us but to seek first his kingdom and righteousness, he will raise us higher, and show us his glory, when grace, and conquest, and perseverance have pre-

pared us : we are in a cloudy world and body ; and our sins are yet a thicker cloud between God's glorious face and us : but as God is God, and heaven is heaven, so Christ is Christ, and grace is grace, when we see it not, but fear that we are undone, and entering into outer darkness : and at sun-rising, all our darkness, and all our doubts and fears will vanish.

Sect. 32. "There came a voice out of the cloud, this is my beloved Son ; hear him." (Luke ix. 15.) Had I heard such a testimony from heaven, would it not have set my faith above all doubts and unbelief? For the voice that thus owned Christ and his word, might embolden me fully to trust all his promises, as it bindeth me to obey his precepts.

God's love is effective and communicative ; and as his life and light cause life and light, so his love causeth love ; and Christ, that is called his beloved Son, is likest him in love ; none loveth us so much as God our Father, and his beloved Son, who is also as God, essential love. And shall I think with cold or little love of such a God, and such a Saviour? It is as unreasonable to fly from God or Christ, as fearing that he wanteth love to a capable soul, as to fly from the sun, as wanting heat or light. Oh, what an unruly, froward thing is the corrupted soul of man ! When we think of God's judgment, and how we are in his hands, as to all our hopes, for soul and body, we fear, and are uncomfortable, lest he have not so much love and mercy as should cause us confidently to trust him : we could trust some friends with life and soul were we in their power ; but infinite love itself, and a loving Saviour, we can hardly trust, so far as to quiet us in pain or death. And yet when Christ, to cure this distrust, hath manifested his love by the greatest miracles that ever God showed to mortal men, even by Christ's incarnation, his life, his works, his death, resurrection, intercession, and the advancement of human nature in him above angels, the greatness of this incomprehensible love occasioneth the difficulty of our believing it ; as if it were too great and wonderful to be credible : thus dark and guilty sinners hardly believe our Father's love, whether it be expressed by ordinary, or by the most wonderful effects.

Sect. 33. As Christ is called the Son of God, so also are all his members : we have so far the same title, that we might partake of the same comforts : he is God's only Son by eternal generation ; and the hypostatical union upon his miraculous conception : but through him we are sons by regeneration and

adoption. And shall not the love of such a Father be trusted, and the presence and pleasing of such a Father be desired? If Manoah's wife could say, "If he would have killed us, he would not have accepted a sacrifice of us;" I may say, if he would have damned me, or forsaken my departing soul, he would not have adopted me, nor made and called me his Son. Christ was made his incarnate son, that we might be made his adopted sons: and we are made his adopted sons, for the sake, and by the grace, of Christ, his natural Son.

Sect. 34. The command, "hear him," is relative, as to Moses and Elias: 1. Hear him whom the law and the prophets typified and foretold, and were his servants, and preparatory instructors, to lead us to him. 2. Hear him before Moses and the prophets, where his coming and covenant abrogateth the law of Moses, and as a greater light, he obscureth the less: he hath revealed more than they revealed; and, the same more clearly: life and immortality is more fully brought to light by him: his gospel is as the heart of the Holy Bible: we use the Old Testament books, especially as the witnesses of Christ.

Sect. 35. And whom shall we hear so willingly, so obediently, as Christ? Abraham sent not Dives's brethren to the king, or to the high-priest, to know what religion he should choose, or what he should do to escape hell torments; but it was Moses and the prophets that they must hear. But God, from heaven, hath sent us yet a better teacher, and commanded us to hear him: Moses was faithful in God's house as a servant, but Christ as a Son: his authority is above kings and high priests; and they have no power now but from him; and therefore none against him or his laws: all commands are null to conscience which contradict him: the examples in Daniel iii. and vi., and of the Apostles, tell us, whether God or man should be first obeyed: therefore it is that the Bible is more necessary to be searched and learned than the statute-book, or canons: were man to be heard before Christ, or against him, or as necessarily as he, why have we not law-preachers every Lord's-day to expound the statutes and canons to all the people? And why are they not catechised out of the book of canons, or law, as well as out of the Bible.

And sure if we must hear Christ and his gospel before priests or princes, or before our dearest friends, much more before our fleshly lusts and appetites, and before a profane and foolish scorner, and before the temptations of the devil. O had we

heard Christ warning us, when we hearkened to the tempter, and to the flesh, how safely had we lived, and how comfortably might we have died !

Sect. 36. But this word, "hear him," is as comfortable as obligatory. Hear him, sinner, when he calls to thee to repent and turn to God : hear him when he calleth thee to himself, to take him for thy Lord and Saviour, to believe and trust him for pardon and salvation : hear him, when he calleth, "Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden : ho, every one that thirsteth come : whoever will, let him drink of the water of life freely." Hear him when he commandeth, and hear him when he promiseth ; and hear him before the worldly wise, when he teacheth us the way to God : hear him, for he knows what he saith : hear him, for he is true, and faithful, and infallible : hear him, for he is the Son of God, the greatest messenger that ever God sent : hear him, for he purposely came down in flesh, that he might familiarly teach us : hear him, for none else in the world hath made known the things of God like him, and none can do it : hear him, for he meaneth us no hurt : he is our dearest friend, and love itself, and saith nothing but for our salvation, and promiseth nothing but what he will perform. Yea, hear him, for every soul that will not hear him shall be cut off.

Hear him, therefore, if he contradict thy fleshly appetite ; hear him, if great or small, if any or all shall be against it : hear him, if he set thee on the hardest work, or call thee to the greatest suffering : hear him, if he bid thee take up the cross, and forsake all and follow him, in hope of a reward in heaven : hear him, if he call thee to lay down thy life ; for none can be a loser by him.

Hear him now in the day of grace, and he will hear thee in the day of thy extremity, in the day of danger, sickness, death, and judgment, when the world forsaketh thee, and no one's hearing else can help thee.

Sect. 37. But, 'I was not one that saw this vision : had I seen it myself it would have satisfied me, and confuted all my doubts.' Answ. But it is the will of God that the ministry and testimony of men shall be a means of our believing : it is faith, and not sight, that must be the ordinary way of our salvation ; else Christ must have showed himself, and his miracles, resurrection, and ascension, to every one in the world that must be-

lieve in him : and then he must have been visible at once in every kingdom, parish, and place on earth, and continued so to the end of the world ; and must have died, risen, and ascended many millions of times, and in every place. They that will put such laws on their law-giver before they will believe in him, must be saved without him, and against him, if they can. This is more unreasonable than to tell God that you will not believe that there is a heaven or hell unless you see them. But God will have us live, and be saved by believing, and not by sight. And he will use man for the instruction and salvation of man, and not send angels with every message.

Sect. 38. But why did Christ show this vision but to three of his disciples ? Answ. He is not bound to tell us why : but we may know that a sight of heavenly glory is not to be ordinarily expected on earth. Why did God show the back parts of his glory to none but Moses, no, not to his brother Aaron ? Why did he speak to him only in the bush, and on the mount ? Why did he translate none to heaven without dying but Enoch and Elias ? Why did he save but Noah, and seven with him, in the ark ? These are not things ordinary, nor to be common to many.

Sect 39. But by this it appeareth, that even among his twelve apostles Christ made a difference, and preferred some before the rest ; though he set no one over the rest in any governing authority, yet some of them were qualified above the rest, and esteemed, and used by him accordingly. Peter is called the first, and, it seems, was qualified above the rest, by his more frequent speaking and familiarity with Christ, and his speeches and miracles after the resurrection ; though yet the faction that said, " I am of Cephas," or " I am of Paul," was rebuked as carnal ; so far was Christ from directing the churches to end all difference by obeying Peter as their supreme ruler. James and John are called the sons of thunder : they had some more eminent qualification than the rest ; so that James was the first martyred apostle, and John the disciple whom Jesus specially loved. Ministers of the same office and order may much differ in gifts and grace, in labour and success, and in God's acceptance and reward, and in the church's just esteem and love. All pastors were not such as Cyprian, Basil, Gregory, Nazianzen, Chrysostom, or Augustin. And the rest must not envy at the preference of Peter, James, and John. Andrew seems to be Peter's elder brother, and knew Christ before him ; as Aaron was elder

brother to Moses, and yet must give God leave to choose to give pre-eminence to whom he will.

Sect. 40. But why did not these three apostles tell any of this vision till after Christ's resurrection? Answ. Christ did forbid it them. And it is according to the method of his revelation. He would make himself known to the world by degrees; and more by his works than by mere words; and these works were to be finished, and all set together, to be his convincing witness to the world. And the chief of these were his resurrection, ascension, and sending down the Holy Ghost: the apostles could not say till then, 'Jesus is risen, ascended, and hath given us the seal of the Spirit; therefore he is the Son of God.' Christ first preached repentance like John Baptist; and next he told them that the kingdom of God (by the Messiah) was come, and was among them; and then he taught them to believe his word to be sent from God, and to be true; and he taught them the doctrines of holiness, love, and righteousness towards men: and he wrought those miracles which might convince them that what he said, or should say, deserved their belief; but yet before his resurrection, his apostles themselves understood not many of the articles of our creed; they knew not that Christ was to die for sin, and so to redeem the world by his sacrifice, nor that he was to rise, ascend, and reign, and intercede in glory; and yet they were then in a state of grace and life, such as believers were in before Christ's incarnation. And sure no more is required of the nations that cannot hear the gospel.

But the resurrection was the beginning of the proper gospel state, and kingdom, to which all before was but preparatory; and then, by the Spirit, Christianity was formed to its settled consistence, and is a known, unalterable thing.

And it is a great confirmation to our faith, that Christ's kingdom was not settled by any advantage of his personal presence, preaching, and persuasion, so much as by the Holy Ghost in his apostles and disciples, when he was gone from them into heaven.

Sect. 41. But how are we sure that these three men tell us nothing but the truth? Answ. This is oft answered elsewhere. The Spirit which they spake and worked by was Christ's witness and theirs. They healed the sick, raised the dead, spake various languages which they never learned; and preached and recorded that holy doctrine committed to them by Christ, which itself contained the evidence of its divinity, and of their truth;

and Christ then and to this day hath owned it, by the sanctifying efficacy of the same Spirit, upon millions of souls.

How holy a doctrine hath Peter himself delivered, as confirmed by his apparition! "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; and this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Peter i. 16—18.) The words "in whom I am well pleased," are only here and in Matthew; Mark and Luke omitting them, tell us, that the evangelists undertook not to recite all that was said and done, but each one so much as seemed necessary for him to say.

Sect. 42. And now what remaineth, O my soul, but that thou take in the due impression of this apparition of the glory of Jesus and his saints; and that thou joyfully obey this heavenly voice, and hear the beloved Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased?

I. As we that are born in another age and land must know what Christ said, by the transmission and certain testimony of them that heard him, infallible tradition, by act, word, and record, being our way of notice, as immediate sensation was theirs, so even the glorious apparition itself may, by the mediation of their infallible record, be partly transmitted to our imagination. An incorporate soul is so used to a mixed way of knowing by imagined ideas received by sense, that it would fain have such a sort of knowledge of separated souls, and other spirits, and of their glorious state and place, and work, and is hardly fully satisfied without it: seeing Christ hath partly condescended to this our culpable weakness, lose not the help of his condescension. Let this clear description of the heavenly sight make it to thee partly as if thou hadst been one of the three spectators; till thou canst say, 'Methinks I almost see the face of Christ shine as the sun, and his raiment whiter than the snow; and Moses and Elias (no doubt, in some degree of glory) standing with him;' methinks I almost hear them discoursing of Christ's death, and man's redemption: and by this sight I partly conceive of the unseen heavenly company and state; methinks I see the cloud receive them, when Peter had been transported with the sight; and I almost feel his pleasant raptures, and am ready

to say, as if I had been with him, "It is good for us to be here;" methinks I almost hear the heavenly voice, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." And shall I yet doubt of the celestial society and glory? Had I once seen that, what a sense would it have left upon my heart, of the difference between earth and heaven, man and God, flesh and spirit, sin and duty! How thankfully should I have thought of the work of redemption and sanctification?

And why may I not accordingly put myself as into the case of them who saw all Christ's miracles, and saw him risen, and ascend towards heaven? or, at least, of all those ordinary Christians who saw all the wonders done by the reporters of these things? I can easily receive a pleasing idea of some foreign, happy country, which a traveller describeth to me, though I never saw it; and my reason can partly gather what great things are, if I see, but lesser of the same kind, or somewhat like them. A candle showeth somewhat by which we may conceive of the greatest flame. Even grace and gracious actions do somewhat notify to us the state of glory; but the sight on the mount did more sensibly notify it.

Think not, then, that heavenly contemplation is an impossible thing, or a mere dream, as if it had no conceivable subject-matter to work upon: the visible things of earth are the shadows, the cobwebs, the bubbles, the shows, mummeries, and masks: and it is loving them, and rejoicing and trusting in them, that is the dream and dotage. Our heavenly thoughts, and hopes, and business, are more in comparison of these than the sun is to a glow-worm, or the world to a mole-hill, or governing an empire to the motions of a fly. And can I make somewhat, yea, too much, of these almost nothings; and yet shall I make almost nothing of the active, glorious, unseen world; and doubt and grope in my meditations of it, as if I had no substance to apprehend? If invisibility to mortals were a cause of doubting, or of unaffecting, unsatisfying thoughts, God himself, who is all to men and angels, would be as no God to us, and heaven as no heaven, and Christ as no Christ, and our souls, which are ourselves, would seem as nothing to themselves; and all men would be as no men to us, and we should converse only with carcasses and clothes.

Lord shine into this soul with such an heavenly, potent, quickening light, as may give me more lively and powerful conceptions of that which is all my hope and life! Leave me not to the exercise of art alone, in barren notions; but make it as

natural to me to love thee, and breathe after thee: thou teachest the young ones both of men and brutes to seek to the dam for food and shelter: and though grace be not a brutish principle, but works by reason, it hath its nature and inclining force; and tendeth towards its original, as its end. Let not thy soul be destitute of that holy sense and appetite, which the divine and heavenly nature doth contain. Let me not lay more stress and trust upon my own sight and sense, than on the sight and fidelity of my God, and my Redeemer. I am not so foolish as to live, as if this earth were no bigger than the little of it which I see: let me not be so much more foolish as to think of the vast and glorious regions, and the blessed inhabitants thereof, and the receptacles of justified souls, as if they wanted either substantiality or certainty, to exercise a heavenly conversation here, and to feast believing souls with joy, and draw forth well-grounded and earnest desire to "depart and be with Christ."

Sect. 43. II. Hear then, and hear with trust and joy, the tidings and promises of him whom the voice from heaven commanded man to hear. He is the glorified Lord of heaven and earth: all is in his power. He hath told us nothing but what he knew, and promised nothing but what he is able and willing to give. Two sorts of things he hath required us to trust him for: things notified by express, particular promises, and things only generally promised and known to us.

1. We may know particularly that he will receive our departing souls, and justify them in judgment, and raise the dead, and all the rest particularly promised. And we know, in general, that we have a heavenly city and inheritance, and shall see God, and be with Christ in everlasting happiness, loving and praising God with joy in the perfected, glorious church of Christ. All this, therefore, we must explicitly believe. But it is little that we know distinctly of the consistence and operations of spirits and separated souls, as to a formal or modal conception; a great deal about the place, state, and mode, their acting, and fruition, is dark to us; but none of it is dark to Christ: here, therefore, an implicit trust should not only bind and stop our selfish and over-bold inquiries, but also quiet and comfort the soul, as well as if ourselves knew all.

O my soul, abhor and mortify thy selfish trust, and unbelieving thirst to have that knowledge of good and evil thyself, which is the prerogative of thy Lord and Saviour. This was the sin that first defiled human nature, and brought calamity on the

world. God hath set thee enough to learn; know that, and thou knowest enough. If more were possible, it would be a perplexity and a snare, and he that increaseth such knowledge would increase sorrow: but when it is both unprofitable and impossible, what a sin and folly is it to waste our time, and tire and deceive our minds, in long and troublesome searches after it; and then disquietly to murmur at God, and the holy Scripture, and die with sad, distrustful fears, because we attain it not: when all this while we should have understood, that this part of knowledge belongs to Christ, and the heavenly society, and not to sinful mortals here; and that we have without it as much as may cause us to live and die in holiness, safety, peace, and joy, if we can but trust him who knoweth for us. Christ perfectly knoweth what spirits are, and how they act, and whether they have any corporeal organ, or vehicle, or none; and what is the difference between Enoch and Elias, and those that left their bodies here, and what a resurrection will add to souls, and how it will be wrought, and when; and what is meant by the thousand years' previous reign; and who they be that shall dwell in the new earth, and how it will be renewed. All the dark passages of Scripture and providence he can perfectly resolve: he knoweth why God leaveth the far greatest part of the world in Satan's slavery, darkness, and wickedness, and chooseth so few to real holiness: and why he maketh not men such as he commandeth them to be: and why he leaveth serious Christians to so much weakness, error, scandal, and division. These, and all other difficulties, are fully known to Christ. And it is not the child, but the father, that must know what food and clothing he should have, and the physician that must know what are the ingredients of his medicines, and why.

Lord, open my eyes, then, to see what thou hast revealed; and help me willingly to shut them to the rest; and to believe and trust in thee for both: not to stagger at thy sealed promises, nor selfishly to desire particular knowledge, which belongs not to me, as if I could trust myself, and my own knowledge, and not thine. Lord teach me to follow thee, even in the dark, as quietly and confidently as in the light (having the general light of thy promise of felicity). I knew not the mystery of thy conception, incarnation, or the way of the workings of thy Spirit on souls. No wonder if much of the resurrection and unseen world be above my reach; much more that thy infinite majesty is incomprehensible to me: how little do the brutes that see me

know of my thoughts or me ! I have no adequate knowledge of any one thing in the world, but somewhat of it is unknown. O blessed be that love and grace that has given me a glorified Head in heaven, to know all for me which I know not : hear and trust him, living and departing, O my soul ! who hath told thee that we shall be with him where he is, and shall behold his glory ; and that a crown of salvation is laid up for us, and we shall reign with him, when we have conquered and suffered with him, and hath bid us live in joyful hope of our exceeding, eternal, heavenly reward, and at our death to commend our spirits into his hand : receive us, Lord, according to thy promises. Amen.