

look on Jesus Christ as your head of influences, for sanctification ; and go no more out against temptations and to duties in your own strength, but in his strength who is mighty in battle. The long debate that has been betwixt providence and you, who should carve out your lot in the world, will be at an end. You will say, "He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved."

Lastly, Is there any thing in his covenant that offends you ? Is there any thing in it that is not well ordered in your eyes ? Does the taking up of the cross offend you ? Or are you content to take him to follow him whithersoever he goes, and nothing shall part betwixt him and you ? Blessed is he, whosoever is not offended in him. If nothing in Christ offends you, nothing in you will so far offend him, as to keep him at a distance from you. Nay if you be really offended and grieved at yourselves for that there is any thing in you so apt to be offended in Christ, it shall not mar your communion with him.

But, O brethren, search your hearts this night, for they are deceitful, and put yourselves to an impartial trial. And where you find your heart offended at Christ, put it into his own hand to remove the offence, and to reconcile the heart and gain it entirely to himself. Amen.

Tweedsmuir communion Sabbath evening, June 17, 1716.

BELIEVERS LOOKING AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN.

SERMON VI.

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

You have now been eating your gospel passover, and should therefore be preparing for your journey through the wilderness. You have enlisted under the standard of Jesus Christ, and should march on to follow your leader. You will meet with difficulties in the way, that will make you in danger of fainting, standing still, and giving it over, as a journey which you are not able to accomplish. To prevent this, you must take your aim right, and still keep your eye upon it ; looking not to the things which are seen,

but to the things which are not seen. In the text there are three things to be considered.

1. The mark which the Christian is to keep in view in his journey through the wilderness. The traveller will always be looking to something, and it is of great importance for the journey that he takes his view right. He must look, namely, with an attentive eye, as one does to a mark at which he shoots, taking his aim right. The object which the Christian is to keep in view is described

Negatively, He is not to look at the things which are seen. He must not look to, but overlook and disregard, those things that fall under his senses. The things of this world, by which natural men are led. It is Christ's call to his people, to leave the world with him, and for him, to lift their eyes and hearts from these things, and live like those of another world. "Come says he, with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon."

This object is described *positively*, "but at the things which are not seen." He must with an eye of faith, look to and keep in view, those things that are beyond the reach of the carnal eye. He must have an eye in his heart, to fix on those things that do not lie open to the view of his bodily eyes. God, and grace, and glory, which cannot be seen with our eyes, yet to them we must look.

2. Observe the reasonableness of this view, which the Christian hath. Religion is the most reasonable thing in the world. The world smiles in a very engaging manner on the Christian, to draw him after it, out of the Lord's way; but by these he will not be moved. It frowns bitterly, but he regards it not. What, is the man mad, says the carnal worldling? What is he looking for? What does he see? Why truly he sees other smiles that move him, other frowns that he seriously regards. And good reason, for the smiles and frowns to which worldly men look, are but temporal for a season; the world's favour and enmity also will soon be over. But the smiles and frowns to which the Christian looks are eternal; they will last for ever. Does he not then act most rationally. Observe,

3. The fruit of this believing view. It makes him follow Christ through good and bad report, while others turn their backs upon him. Particularly it keeps him from the ill of afflictions. It is a cordial to keep him from fainting under all pressures from the world. There is a thorn hedge in his way, but he breaks through it, seeing the paradise that is on the other side, ver. 16. "For which cause we faint not." It brings him good out of them. For while the view of things not seen, carries him through the hardest parts of his lot, he comes in the end to be a gainer and not a loser by his

afflictions, ver. 17, 18. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Doctrine.—They that would get safely through this world to Immanuel's land, must so look to things that are not seen, as to overlook, and put on a holy regardlessness of the things that are seen.

In prosecuting this doctrine, I shall,

I. Take notice of some things that are supposed in it.

II. Speak of the unseen things to which we are to look.

III. Shew in what respects we must look to them.

IV. Shew how we must overlook, and put on a holy disregard of the things that are seen. We are then,

I. To take notice of some things that are supposed in the text.

1. It is supposed that there is an unseen world, as well as a seen one. There is a future state into which we shall pass, when we are gone out of time. When we are dead, we are not done, but only enter into another state. This world is but *the present world*, so there is another world, called by our Saviour, *that world*, in opposition to this, Luke xx. 35.

2. That the things of the unseen world are of vastly greater importance, than those of the seen world. If we look to the upper part of the unseen world, there is a weight of glory that would infinitely counterbalance the best things here. It is called, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If we look to the lower part of it, there is a weight of wrath heavier by far than the worst things here.

3. We are all in our journey to the unseen world. This is but the place of our sojourning. However strongly we incline to make it our home, it will not be our long home. We can no more abide here, than a man going through a town in his journey, who comes in at one gate and goes out at another. "We have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come." One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh. The saints in glory are come to their journey's end, the damned to theirs, we are only upon the way.

4. The things that are seen in our journey are apt to entangle us, to lead us wrong, and make the end miserable. If we stand to look and gaze upon them, we are ready to be frightened, or flattered out of our way, to our ruin; for the lions have their dens there, and the leopards their haunts in the most pleasant spots of it, Song iv. 1.

Finally, As we look now in this world we will live for ever in another world. It was looking that ruined man. The eyes were

the doors by which destruction at first entered. Our first parents got their first wound in the eye, Gen. iii. 6. And it is by looking we must be saved. "Look unto me, says Jesus, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." And now that we are on our journey through this ensnaring world, it concerns us highly to take our view right; for if we follow the sight of the eyes in our head, it will lead us into the snare of everlasting ruin.

How shall we take our view then, that we may get safely through? To answer this, let us proceed,

II. To speak of the unseen things to which we are to look and keep in view. To represent these things fully is what no mortal can do. "As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." We cannot even conceive them. Yet as a traveller may look to a mountain, though he can never grasp it in his arms, so we may look to what we cannot apprehend. Take a taste of the unseen things then, in these few particulars, assuring yourselves when we have said all, the half is not told.

O ye travellers setting out to Immanuel's land, take these directions along with you. You will see many things in your way at which you must not look, but at things unseen you ought to look.

1. Look at the unseen world, the better, the heavenly country. You will see a fair faced world, a bulky vanity, upon which most men are strongly bent. But as you love your souls do not stand looking at it. You must look at and keep in view the unseen world above the skies where glory dwells. "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off." Look at Immanuel's land. It is the pleasant land. The land to which all the holy patriarchs and prophets directed their eyes. It is a *better country* than the best under the sun. Your Saviour is there and he bids you follow him with your eye, till you personally arrive in the happy place.

2. Look at the unseen God. You will see idols in abundance by the way, craving you to fall down and worship them. But you must look at the unseen God, as Moses did, when he was in the way, "For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." The seen world has three idols that keep many men in their embraces. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." But you must look at the holy Trinity, to be fully enjoyed in the unseen world. The Father, Son, and Spirit. This one God

is the first principle in all things, the fountain of all perfections, in whom our happiness lies, and therefore he is the chief end to whom we are to look, and in the enjoyment of whom only our souls can rest. Look to him then and keep your eye on him always.

3. Look to the way that leads to Immanuel's land. Keep your eye constantly upon it. You will see the way of the world, a broad way, an easy way, lying down the hill, and if you begin to look at it, you may be seduced into it, and in the end tumble into the chambers of death to which it leads. O! look then to the unseen way that leads to the unseen world where felicity and glory for ever dwell.

Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is the unseen *personal way* to heaven. "I am, says he, the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Behold an unseen Jesus at the Father's right hand, who has purchased the pardon of sin, peace, grace, and glory by his precious blood to sinners; and by his intercession is preparing places for them in his Father's house of many mansions. Behold him sitting at the end of the race, with the crown in his hand, to give to him that so runs as to obtain. "Lay aside then every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset you, and run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith." Jesus is the glory of the upper house, and his superlative beauty draws the eyes of all the heavenly company to fix on him. Look to him then, though you see him not. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Remember also that holiness is the unseen *real way* to heaven. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Were the form of godliness and the mere performance of external duties the way to glory, it would be a seen way. But it is not so. The christian life is an unseen, hidden life. *It is hid with Christ in God.* The new man is the *hidden man of the heart*. The king's daughter is indeed all glorious, but it is *within*. He that has no more religion than what eye can see, will be seen by all the world at length to have none at all. Faith, love, and all the duties of internal worship are unseen religion. Look to this, if ever you would see heaven; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

4. Look at the unseen, happy, and glorious society of heaven. You will see carnal company, that will be agents for the devil to lead you off your way. But you must look at the unseen society

above. There dwell the saints and the angels singing their Hallelujahs to the Lamb, and to him that sitteth upon the throne. There full and uninterrupted communion with God is enjoyed; and this shall constitute the eternal happiness of the glorious inhabitants. "They shall be ever with the Lord. Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." There will be no solitude there, no unpleasant company there, no grief, no jarring strings in the harmony, "For God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

5. Look at the glorious reward of heaven. You will see petty profits, gains and advantages, which the men of the world are keenly pursuing, taking the world's offer trifling as it is. These are penny wise, and pound foolish; for while they gain a penny at one hand they are losing a talent at another. But do you look at the unseen profits of heaven, and like "Moses, have respect unto the recompense of reward." There is a treasure before you. A precious treasure which can neither be corrupted nor plundered. Not, however, a treasure of gold, for that is no treasure in the upper world, but serves only to pave the streets of the city, "which is of pure gold, as it were transparent glass." That the saints may eternally tread upon that, upon which the men of the world now set their hearts. But it is a treasure of glory. Even "a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory." A matchless treasure for preciousness, for variety, solidity, and security, so that it can neither be exhausted nor lost. It will make you rich to the most extensive desires and everlasting satisfaction of your souls.

6. Look to the unseen, pure and lasting pleasures and honours of heaven. You will see insipid pleasures, empty honours, and short lived joys, which the men of the world are most actively pursuing, with all the earnestness of children running after butterflies. Yet these things when obtained are little worth, and far from being a recompense for their toil. But do you look at the unseen pleasures, those exquisite pure rivers of pleasures, which flow eternally from the full enjoyment of God, the blessed sight of his glory, which mortals cannot behold. Psal. xvi. 11. Look at the unseen honours which the saints shall obtain, when they arrive at their own country and get home to their Father's house. For then, they shall receive a crown, the very summit of worldly ambition, but such a crown as *fades not away; a kingdom that cannot be moved; a throne, the highest that men are capable of.* "To him that over-

cometh, saith Jesus, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne." Look at the unseen joys that begin, when the world's joy ends. You shall hear the joyful sound of your Saviour's voice at the end of the race, saying, "well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

7. Look at the unseen rest of heaven. You will see crosses, tribulations, and perhaps bloody persecutions by the way, and feel them also. By these the god of this world will set himself to terrify you and draw you out of your way. But you must look at the unseen rest, peace, refreshment, and ease of Immanuel's land. "In the world, says Jesus, ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." When you come to the everlasting rest, you shall no more have the least uneasy thought about all with which you have met. There you shall enjoy an everlasting calm, an eternal repose. "The gates of the city shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there." There the conquerors get on their crown, they lay aside their swords, and get the palm in their hands, and that land rings eternally with the shout of victory, victory for evermore.

8. Look at the fulness and complete happiness of heaven. You will see many wants and miseries in this world. The flesh will always be wanting something. What shall I eat? And what shall I drink? And wherewithal shall I be clothed? And many are so completely engaged in answering these questions, that they entirely forget *the things not seen*. But do you look at the fulness and complete happiness before you. They that can get forward will soon obtain a rich supply of all their wants. There is no want in Immanuel's land. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son, saith the Lord." There you will find God, and Christ, and a full covenant comprehending all to make the believer perfectly happy. And now small drops and foretastes of that fulness are given them in the way, but then it shall be told out to them in full and for ever more.

Uses of this Doctrine.

Use 1. Take these three lessons from it.

1. He is the wisest man that quits the world's certainty for hope. If ever you would be wise, you must become fools. Though the sight of the eyes is better than the wandering of the desire, yet the unseen things upon which faith fixes, are a thousand times better.

It is better to have God's bond, than the world's hand payment; for when the latter is spent and gone, the other will tell out for ever.

2. You will see your way through this ill world best, if you will shut your eyes. And indeed it would be a token for good, that you have seen the Lord this day, if your hearts within you were saying, as one sometimes said coming from duty, "Now my eyes, be thou shut." The sight of our eyes is apt to betray us into a thousand snares. You have been taking an unseen guide, follow not then the sight of your eyes, for they will make the world's molehills mountains before you. And remember they are best guided that follow Christ, as the blind man follows his guide. "I will bring, says he, the blind by a way which they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

3. They will get best through the world's snares, that look least at them. A holy contempt of the world's good and its ill, of its frowns and flatteries, is a noble preservative against them. Flee from idolatry, and from fornication, says the scripture. Turn your backs on them. It is the best way to entertain the world with a holy disdain. It was looking at the forbidden fruit, and it is tampering with temptation, that catches the soul in Satan's snare.

Use 2. Mind this doctrine, O Christian communicants!

1. When your former lusts come back to you, like Potiphar's wife to Joseph, offering you deadly poison in a golden cup. Look not to the things that are seen. It will be bitterness in the end, if you do. But look to him that is invisible, as he did, and say, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God. As obedient children, you must not fashion yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. But as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." You must not again sit down to dust, it is the serpent's meat; but you have unseen meat to eat in communion with God, to fit you for your journey to the unseen world.

2. When sloth comes to you, like Peter to Christ, covering a sharp sword with words softer than oil, saying, Master, spare thyself. What needs all this bitter repenting, wrestling in prayer, watching over heart and life? Less surely may suffice. Soul, take thine ease. Here is a sound sleep to be enjoyed on the sluggard's bed. A way strewn with roses. Look not to the things that are seen, if you were once asleep, you will be an easy prey to the robbers! And all you have obtained, you may quickly lose. "The

slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting; but the substance of a diligent man is precious." Look to the things that are not seen, and you will see good reason to exert yourselves more and more.

3. When you return to your worldly employments, and your carnal companions come to you, as the chief priests to Judas, offering you thirty pieces, if you will betray Christ, look not then on the things that are seen, but on them that are not seen. You see their way, but look to the end of it. Their joy will be turned into weeping at last. "But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell." And remember, if you intend heaven you must forsake the company of those whose faces you see are not thitherward. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Lastly, When the enemies of God and his work may be let loose upon you, like the Jews on Christ, "gaping upon you with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." Our adversaries are restless. But that is not the chief thing. An impure church looks like as if a fire were abiding it, to try of what metal we are. And who knows how far it may go. Look not then to the things that are seen: if you do, you will deny Christ. But look at the things that are not seen, and you will be carried through safely.

Tweedsmuir, Monday, June 18, 1716.

BELIEVERS LOOKING AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN.

SERMON VII.

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

III. I proceed to shew in what respects we must look to the things that are unseen.

1. We must believe the reality of them. Faith is the eye of the soul, that takes up the things not seen, and views the land afar off. It makes future things present, and discovers the reality of invisible things, "being the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." Faith goes upon divine testimony, and sees these

things by the help of the map of the heavenly Canaan drawn in the scriptures. This is the faith of the operation of God to which the world is a stranger. For in effect to most men, the doctrines of the Bible concerning things not seen, are but as idle tales, and all the promises about them but as fair words; of this the small regard which they pay to them in practice is an evident proof.

2. We must value them in our practical judgment above all other things. For this looking to them plainly implies an overlooking of other things. "Yea, doubtless, says Paul, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." You must not look on them only as good, but as of all good things the best, and not only as the best in general, but best for you at all times. So that when the world makes its offer of seen things, you must prefer the Saviour's offer of unseen things.

3. We must love and desire them above all. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee." If we do not thus love and desire them, our looking to them will be to no purpose for supporting us under sufferings and carrying us forward through the world. Look at them with superlative love and desire, breathing out your souls for these unseen things. "When the many say, who will shew us any good? Do you cry, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou has put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." Hence we find the saints breathing after the land that is afar off, saying, "We have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." After the Lord of the land, saying, "O that we knew where we might find him." And after the perfect holiness and felicity of heaven. "For in this tabernacle we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."

4. We must make them our main scope and aim, looking to them as one does at a mark at which he will shoot. Let it be your chief end to seek God, and not yourselves, to glorify and please your unseen Lord and Master, and to attain the enjoyment of him for ever. Let all things else be but secondary work in comparison of this. Be assured your happiness lies not in this present world; the sweetest smiles of it cannot make you happy, and the severest frowns of the world cannot make you miserable. If you obtain the unseen things, you gain all; if not, you gain nothing.

5. We must accustom ourselves to the habitual consideration of them. For it is not a glance at them on the Sabbath, or at a com-

munion, that will answer the grand purpose, but a fixed looking at them in the whole course of our lives. Whatever we have in hand, and wherever we be, each of us should be ready to say, "I have set the Lord always before me, and when I am awake I am still with him." Our conversation must be in heaven now, if we expect to be received into it at death. We must keep the other world habitually in our view while we walk through this.

6. We must entertain the hope of unseen things. "For we are saved by hope : but hope that is seen is not hope : for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for ? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The soul of man is an empty thing and must be fed by hope, till it come to enjoyment. And if there be not settled hope of unseen things, the heart will naturally embrace seen things. "When there is no hope, the soul says, I have loved strangers, and after them I will go." Despondency cuts the sinews of the traveller through the world, and will quickly cause him stop.

Lastly, Look to them, so as to overlook and put on a holy disregard of the things that are seen. And this brings me,

IV. To shew how we must overlook and put on a holy disregard of the things that are seen. The seen things are the things of this world. We cannot avoid seeing them while we are in it. But we must not look at them, we must see them as if we saw them not, and put on a holy disregard of them. They may be reduced to two heads. The evil and the good things of the world.

1. Put on a holy disregard of the evil things of the world, which tend to divert you from your Christian course. This world was and ever will be a *weary land* to the travellers to Zion. You must go into the world, and I tell you before, that there is an ill air blowing in it, which none of us shall ever be able to correct ; and the more we set our faces heaven-ward, the more it will blow upon us. But we must resolve to be forward, and take it as we find it.

Put on then a holy disregard of the seen evil things of the world, such as its crosses and tribulations. These we must both see and feel, for in the world *we shall have tribulation*. But mind your Lord and Master who set his face to the storm, and being resolved to be forward, put on a holy contempt of it. "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame." And indeed we will need to have our foreheads steeled with holy resolution, when going through the world. For we may lay our account with having a cross for every day. Every day will have the evil thereof. The follower of Jesus must take up his cross *daily* ; and the clouds will return after the rain. We may meet with these,

where we least expect them, perhaps by the time we enter our own houses, we will see one ready shapen out for us, and we must take it up. We may lay our account also with what may be called holy-days' crosses, the day of Zion's distress and persecution, or public calamity. "Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about; so that in the day of the Lord's anger none escaped nor remained: those that I had swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed." Ever since the Christian race was opened, Satan hath raged against those that have set out in it. He hath set up reproaches, poverty, blood and slaughter in it, to drive people from it. And he wants but to have his chain lengthened, and the enemy would begin the bloody work as keenly as ever.

But happy they, who, though they see this evil of worldly crosses, do not look at them, but put on a holy disregard of them. That is, do not pore upon them, for often while one muses that way the fire burns. And the cloud, which in itself is but like a man's hand, by a faithless looking at it, increases till it appears to blacken the very heavens. Do with them as a man on his journey, who meets with a mire or rugged step, he cannot avoid seeing it, but he must not stay to look at it, especially in a place where all around is mire. It is remarkable of Jacob, that when Rachel named the child of which she died, *Benoni*, the son of my sorrow, *but his father called him Benjamin*; the son of my right hand; near and dear and precious to him as his right hand.

Do not terminate your view upon your crosses, but look beyond them to the bright side of the cloud. If the mist of trouble rise before you in the way, look through it to the unseen things before you and press forward. Some professors are like delicate persons that go abroad in a fair hour to take the air; but whenever a shower comes on they wrap themselves up in their cloaks, and return to their houses. Their religion endures till they meet with a cross: and then they take such a look of their cross, as drives them at once out of all the little wisdom which they ever had in religion; "For having no root in themselves, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by they are offended." But be you like one who is travelling on necessary business, he cannot command the clouds, but he looks to his business; and be it fair or foul weather he must be forward.

You must also put on holy contempt of the world's way, which must be reckoned among its evil things. If you design for heaven, you will soon see that the multitude are not going your way, and that their course is opposite to the one you must steer. "They walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince

of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Their way leads to things that are seen, but to none of the things that are unseen, except the wrath to come. They despise religion, the profane mock at it; worldly wise men gravely pronounce it folly. Every one of them disregards it and goes after his own way, any way, but God's way.

You will see all this, and behold it to mourn over and watch against it. But look not at it, to esteem, love, choose, or tamper with it. "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Many look at it, so as that their eyes betray their hearts, they fall in with it; because they see it is the way that is most frequented, as if they thought it safe enough to go to hell with company. "But be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Therefore I would say to you as Peter did, *save yourselves* from this untoward generation. And remember that the separation to be completed at the last day, is begun and working now. *For thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

2. Put on a holy disregard of the world's good things also. This is necessary if ever you would go safe through the world, for its good as well as its evil things have a tendency to divert you from your Christian course. And the case is much the same, whether the world cudgel us to death with its blows, or hug us to death with its treacherous embraces. The fawning as well as the frowning world is dangerous, and we may say of it as Solomon does of wine. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Like Joab, the world pretends fair, while it gives a home thrust to the soul. Like the panther, which with the sweet smell of his breath draws other beasts to him, and then devours them.

The world will court you, with its profits, saying, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." And O what an ensnaring sight to many! "For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

The world thus prevails with many to take away their desire from the unseen things. "And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused." Men who are led by sense count nothing substantial good,

but what they can see with their eyes, or handle with their hands and which will improve their fields and fill their barns and coffers. These are the bird in hand, with them preferable to the unseen treasures of another world, that are but the bird in the bush in their esteem.

The world will court you also with its seen pleasures, that gratify the senses. "Even all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." O what a bewitching sight is this to many. And how many does it keep back from the Christian course. Hence if you will look through the world, you will see multitudes, plunged in the mire of sensuality, whose souls are sacrificed to please their flesh. They are bound over to death in these silken cords and ruined with these siren songs, that will be bitterness in the end.

And we are not only in danger by the unlawful, but also by the lawful comforts of the world. It is a sad but true observation, that many perish by lawful things. The inhabitants of the old world "were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, all lawful things, until the day that Noah entered into the ark. And knew not till the flood came and swept them all away." Two unhappy sons stole away the heart of good Eli; and the gourd of a night, the heart of the prophet Jonah.

But look not at the world's seen good, if ever you would get safe through it. Do not tamper with its unlawful profits or pleasures. Check the first side look of the heart after them, the first rising of strong desire to them, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. They that begin to look at them are in the fair way to leap over the hedge for them. The fort is near to surrender that comes to a parley. And they that parley with temptations can hardly ever come fair off.

Make not the world's seen good your main scope and aim, you need the world's comforts in this state of mortality, and God requires as well as allows us, "To provide things honest in the sight of all men." But let your great view be beyond the clouds, and be not seekers of the world, but seekers of the kingdom of God. And you may know your case in this point by this mark. That is your main view, to which your other views are made to yield. If you manage in seen good, so as may best suit the advancing of your enjoyment of the unseen good; then it is well.

You must also moderate your affections to the seen good of the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Let not your hearts sink deep among these ensnaring good

things, but go lightly over them. Loose reins given to the affections even in lawful things, may soon give you a miserable fall. The way through the best of this present world is slippery, and there is need to keep a good bridle hand. The boundaries betwixt lawful and unlawful things are so very small, that it is difficult to go to the utmost of what is lawful, without slipping into what is unlawful. For though the very edge of the rock be firm, yet our heads are too light to venture on it.

Finally, Undervalue and disregard the best things of the world in comparison of Christ. "If any man, says he, come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." When they come in competition with him, give up with them. When they stand in your way to him, tread over them, that you may get forward, and count them but dung that you may win Christ. It was the commendation of Levi, when seen things and unseen were in competition, he looked not at them; "Unto his father and mother, he said, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren; nor knew his own children."

For the improvement of what has been said,

1. You may see here, where your danger lies, in your course through this world. It is on the one hand in looking at things that are seen. These things will present themselves to your view, and strive to wind themselves into your affections. And the farther you launch into this deep, the more will you lose sight of Immanuel's land. Therefore take heed that you be not betrayed by the sight of your eyes, driven out of the way by the world's evil, or flattered out of it by its good things.

On the other hand your danger lies in losing sight of things not seen. We are apt to do so, and if we do not watch we cannot escape doing it. It is difficult to cause wet wood take fire, and as difficult to make it keep fire. And so carnal are our hearts, that it is difficult to get our eyes lifted up to look at the unseen things of another world, and when we have it, it is as difficult to keep the view. Therefore be upon your guard.

Use 2. For exhortation. Let me exhort you all as ever you would see heaven, so look to unseen things as to overlook the things that are seen.

Motives 1.—Consider the vast disproportion of the objects. Why should you not look at what is most worthy of your regard? Is the world, and all that is in it, to be laid in the balance with the favour and enjoyment of God? Can all the world's gain recompense the loss of the soul? I will give you only two views betwixt them that may shew the disproportion.

1. Seen things can never be truly satisfying, but unseen things are perfectly satisfactory to the soul. Seen things are not commensurate to the desires of the soul. If the world should cast all its best things into your bosom, would there not still be a want? "I have seen an end of all perfection." You have long squeezed the world for its sap, but did you ever yet come to say, it is enough? No, and you never will. For as a circle can never fill a triangle, so the world can never fill the heart of man. He was a fool that said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

But unseen things are perfectly satisfying. They are suited to the spiritual nature of the soul, and an infinite good is sufficient for the boundless desires of the soul. See what they are in time, Psal. iv. 7. "Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." See what they are in eternity, Psal. xvii. 15. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Therefore I would say, "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

2. Seen things are but temporal, unseen things are eternal. The world's smiles and frowns will soon be over, but God's smiles and frowns will last for ever. Ere long this stage of vanity and misery will be taken down, but another scene will commence that will last for ever. Will you look forward to death, that will be the end of seen things to you. Look to the end of the world, that will be the end of them to all. But then the unseen things take place, never to give place to a change. Let me say then, Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away, as an eagle toward heaven.

Motive 2. Consider this is the way in which all the saints have gone to glory. "They walked by faith, not by sight." Had the fair ones now in heaven looked to what was seen, their carcasses had fallen with others in the wilderness. But they had more noble views, "The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. They desired a better country, that is an heavenly." Thus the cloud of witnesses steered their course, and thus did the King of saints upon their head, "Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Motive 3. There is an unseen evil in the best things of the world, that afterwards comes to be severely felt. "But they that will be

rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts; which drown men in destruction and perdition." Since the curse was laid upon the earth, thorns and briars have not ceased to grow up with our greatest worldly comforts. Brethren! Why all this looking at seen things? Have you not found sometimes your greatest cross, where you looked for your greatest comfort? Have you not, sucking greedily at the dry breasts of the world, wrung out blood instead of milk? Have you not often been therein like one striking at a flinty rock for water, and got nothing but fire flashing in your faces.

4. Looking to the unseen things will help you on your way to Immanuel's land, whatever wind blow. This will make you easy, go the world as it will. He that while he has the world's good things does not stand by them, will stand without them when they are gone. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." This has made confessors take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and martyrs joyfully to embrace a stake or a gibbet.

5. If you look to the things that are seen, then seen things will be your portion. And when the turn of unseen things comes, you will get that cutting memorandum, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." You will never see the land that is afar off, otherwise than the rich man saw it in hell. And by the time you are in another world, the support which you have derived from the world's good things will be gone, and you will awake and find yourselves faint; but through eternity you shall not once taste the comforts of another world.

Lastly, If you overlook the things that are seen, and look at the things which are not seen, you shall not be disappointed. "For unto them that look for him shall Christ appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." What you look for now, you shall then fully enjoy, and be happy for ever, in being for ever with the Lord.

Directions.

1. Live much by faith. "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." The life is the soul's continual travelling betwixt Christ's fulness and self-emptiness.

2. Be much in prayer, so will you converse with the Lord of the unseen world, and about the unseen things of it.

3. Be much employed in reading the scriptures, for in them we have the account of the unseen things.

4. Be much given to meditation. Use stated meditations, and particularly I would recommend solemn secret fasting and humiliation. "And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart."

Lastly, Converse most as you have access, with those that are best acquainted with the unseen things and seem to have the savour of them most upon their spirits. And watch your hearts, that they slip not into a forgetfulness of things unseen, and return to a fondness for things that are seen. Amen.

Ettrick, June 24, 1716.

Sermons preparatory for the Lord's Supper.

CHRIST DEMANDING ADMISSION INTO SINNERS' HEARTS.

SERMON VIII.

PSALM xxiv. 9.

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.*

THIS psalm is judged to have been composed when David brought up the ark from the house of Obed Edom to mount Zion, 2 Sam. iv. chap. to be sung on that occasion, and others like it, particularly on the bringing of the ark into the temple, which was afterwards to be built, to which the Psalmist seems here, by the spirit of prophecy, to have a special reference.

The ark was a type of Christ, and so this psalm concerns him. The sum of it is, that though all the world be the Lord's, yet the church is his in a peculiar manner; for there, and in his people, he dwells and all ought to receive him. It was sung by the Jews ordinarily on the first day of the week, which is now the Christian Sabbath, and the matter of it is very agreeable to the Sabbath, being the day in which Christ solemnly demands admission into the hearts of the hearers of the gospel.

In the words there are two things.