

venant people, carried by angels, and flying above you, away to meet the Lord in the air, with a shining glory on them?

*Lastly*, How will ye brook your last sight of them, when they having in the first place received their welcome to their kingdom from the Judge on the throne, ye shall get your sentence to depart from him into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and so must turn your backs, and make away to your place, they being then the spectators of your begun misery, and your beloved world being set on fire?

Think on these things in time, and whatever ye are, or have been, know that you are allowed free access into the covenant; and therefore enter into it sincerely. Go alone by yourselves, think on your lost state by nature, examine yourselves as to your liking of the covenant, and if you find your heart pleased with it, go to your knees, and solemnly declare before God, you accepting and entering into it, taking Christ in all his offices, and God in Christ for your God and portion for ever. And so be persuaded, that on this your gathering to Christ in the bond of his covenant now, depends your being gathered to him in glory at the last day.

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THE SAINT'S LIFETIME IN THIS WORLD A NIGHT-TIME; THEIR EXPECTATION OF THE DAY'S BREAKING IN THE OTHER WORLD, AND THE SHADOWS FLEEING AWAY; AND THEIR GREAT CONCERN FOR CHRIST'S PRESENCE TILL THAT HAPPY SEASON COME.

The substance of several Sermons preached at Eitrick, in the year 1730.

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SONG ii. 17.

*Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel.*

In these words you have the breathing of a gracious soul, with respect to the time that may pass in this world, before one comes to enter into the other world; it is to have his countenance and the communications of his grace by the way, until they come there, where there will be nothing to intercept it. And it would be a good sign of meeting with a kindly reception from Christ into that world at last, that we were now saying from the heart, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved, and be

thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." Where observe,

1. The connection of these words with the preceding verse, whereby they appear to be the breathing of a soul really married to Christ, having a sense of the marriage bond, and not ashamed of it, but resolutely owning it. "My Beloved is mine, and I am his.— Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved," &c. The spouse of Christ looks on herself as one that is married to a husband whom she dearly loves, but is not yet ready to take her home; she desires therefore, that until the time come of his taking her home, he will not be a stranger to her, but give her the comfort of his presence with her, that the present situation will allow; thereby intimating, that she is not to look for the comfort of her life from any other, but him, whether he be absent from her or present with her.

2. The words themselves: in which consider,

1st, The happy term that Christ's spouse lives in expectation of, which is expressed by two things, the latter consequential on the former, the "breaking of the day," and the "fleeing away of the shadows." By the day here is meant the day of eternity, that will break in the other world, in the light of glory arising to those that are married to Christ here. That is *the* or *that* day by way of eminency, 2 Tim. i. 18. This implies two things.

(1.) That she looked on her lifetime in this world as a night-time; else why should she have expected the day breaking? and that in that night-time there were many shadows, darkening things to her, and allowing her but obscure views of them; else why should she expect their fleeing away? as one travelling by night, in a mountainous or woody country, if the night were never so clear, it is no wise comparable to broad daylight; and besides there are many dark and gloomy steps caused by the shadows that the hills and woods cast; which though they amount not to a total darkness, yet the light by their means is but a very faint one. Such is the believer's travelling through this to the other world.

(2.) That she believed and expected, that that night would not last, and that the shadows would vanish at length. She looks for the breaking, Heb. blowing of the day, because however dead a calm there may be through the night, ordinarily at break of day a gale of wind rises; and that break or blowing of the day will quickly chase away all the shadows, that they shall not be to be seen more. That blowing will be of the Spirit of Christ, in a full communication of influences to the believer, at the day's breaking to him in the other world; whereby all the shadows now intercepting the light from him, will in a moment evanish.

*2dly*, The great thing her soul desires, and she breathes after, till that happy term come.—It is communion with Christ her Lord and Husband, in such sort and measure as the state of this life by divine regulation will allow. She is not for turning back to, and solacing herself with her former lovers, till her Husband take her home; no, being married to him, her eyes are shut now on all others, and they are towards him alone. “Turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.” It consists of two parts.

(1.) A desire of his countenance towards her, “Turn, my Beloved,” &c. Heb. “Come round about it.” It intimates, [1.] His turning his back on her, shewing some sign of displeasure with her; the frequent lot of God’s children in this world. [2.] That even in that case her heart was upon him as her beloved, and her eyes going after him, that she would have him turn his face. [3.] That she would fain have his countenance again when lost: *q. d.* Turn about to me, that I may behold thee with joy.

(2.) A desire of nearness to him, and the embraces of his love: “Be thou like a roe, or a young heart,” &c. Come to me speedily. She lays not the stress of the speedy meeting on her motion to him; but as of free grace, on his motion to her; by his grace coming over mountains betwixt them, and that speedily; even as a roe comes to its mate, or a young hart to its dam, upon the mountains of Bether, 2 Sam. ii. 29. The word signifies a half part.

From the text thus explained, may be deduced the three following points of doctrine, viz.

Doct. I. A soul once truly married to Christ, will from thenceforth look on the lifetime in this world, as a night-time, a shadowy one, as indeed it is.

Doct. II. To those that are truly married to Christ, the day will break in the other world, and the shadows flee away; and they should live in the constant expectation of it.

Doct. III. It will be the great concern of those married to Christ during their night-journey in this world, that he may turn and come to them, till the day-breaking and the shadows fleeing away, they get to him in the other world.

I shall speak to each of these in order.

Doct I. A soul once truly married to Christ, will from thenceforth look on the lifetime in this world, as a night-time, a shadowy one, as indeed it is.

In touching a little on this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew in what respect the saint's lifetime in this world is a night-time.

II. How the soul once married to Christ comes to look on its lifetime in this world as a night-time.

III. On what grounds such a soul justly looks on it as a night-time, a shadowy one.

IV. Improve the point.

I. In what respect the saint's lifetime in this world is a night-time. To clear this, consider,

1. The life of a child of God in this world, from the moment of the marriage with Christ, is a day-time, in comparison with the time he lived in his natural state, 1 Thess. v. 5. Therefore says the apostle, Eph. v. 8. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." While they are in their natural state, they are in midnight darkness, it is black and dark night with them. But being united to Christ, the night of their natural state is at an end, and the day of grace is come with them. And this is such a day, as will never be succeeded by another night.

2. But in comparison with his state in the other world, it is but a night-time. When he enters there, a day of glory shall break to him, that will so far surpass all he has seen, that he shall be made to think, he never saw day before, Rom. xiii. 12. The natural man is in black and dark night, and the saints in this world are in a cloudy moon-light night; only the saints in the other world are in broad day-light, Col. i. 12.

II. We shall consider how the soul once married to Christ comes to look on its lifetime in this world as a night-time. There are four things concur to it.

1. They then have some new and precious light, however faint, that they had not before. They can say with the blind man cured by Christ, John ix. 25. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." They see that in sin, Christ, and in the other world, that they did not before perceive. Strangers to Christ are like blind men, to whom the night and the day are alike; but being once married to Christ they are like him who said, "I see men as trees walking," Mark viii. 24. They see, but find they do not see clearly, and so conclude, that it is night with them.

2. Being once married to Christ indeed, the sun of the world sets upon them. The world's love to them is turned to hatred, it conceives an antipathy against them, John xv. 19. And looks as when the darkness of the night follows the lightsome day, and sits down on the beautiful cities, the green hills, the pleasant meadows and gardens, all these lose their lustre and beauty, and become black and gloomy;

so when once a soul is married to Christ, the world loseth its former beauty to the man; it is quite another thing in his eyes than it was before; the vain world is turned out of its gaudy day-dress, into its night-dress, where its former beautiful appearance is gone, Gal. ix. 14.—“The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

3. Yet the son of righteousness is still hid to their eye sight, however he lets out some rays of light to them, and they discern him by faith, 1 Pet. i. 8. In some northern parts belonging to this kingdom, the body of the sun, about this time of the year, does indeed go out of their sight about the middle of the night; yet still certain rays appear all along; so it is with the believer. Therefore he must look on it as night; though it is but a short one. That Jesus to whom they are joined in spiritual marriage, is gone to heaven, and there he abides hid from their eyes, though manifest to their faith, Cant. iv. 6. As Jacob married to Leah, got not a broad view of her till the morning; so the believing soul married to Christ, will not get a broad view of its Husband, till the day of eternity break.

4. *Lastly*, The beauty of the light let into them natively causes a longing for the perfection of it, Phil. iii. 13, 14. As one with a dim light discerning a beautiful object, presently calls for a clear light whereby to discern it fully; so the soul that has seen as much of Christ's excellency; as to engage the heart to him, longs for a full sight of his glory; and while the light will not serve that purpose, it natively concludes, that it is night still.

III. I shall next shew on what grounds they justly look on it as a night-time, a shadowy one.

1. They justly look on it as a night-time. For,

(1.) It is a time of much darkness with them, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. darkness of ignorance, and of uncomfortableness. However vain men may pride themselves in the knowledge they have reached, puffed up therewith as empty bladders; serious Christians will still be bewailing their ignorance and weakness in the divine mysteries, Psal. lxxiii. 22. Prov. xxx. 2, 3. And however lightsome a life the native vanity of mind may make some; it is not possible, but the imperfections, infirmities, and struggles attending the Christian life here, must make much uncomfortableness in it, Psal. xcvii. 11. How then can they but count it night?

(2.) It is a time, wherein the wild beasts are got out of their dens ranging about, Psal. civ. 20, 21. In the darkness of this life, what howling and yelling of the infernal crew, the devils and wicked men acted by them, do reach the Christian's ears and make his heart to shiver? So that to travel through the world is often as unpleasant, as through an howling wilderness in the night. And not only so,

but they are often in hazard of being devoured by them, and swallowed up, 1 Pet. v. 8. No wonder they long for day-brake, when these wild beasts will go into their dens and be silenced, Psal. civ. 22.

(3.) It is a time inclining to sleep and inactivity, 1 Thess. v. 7. All the unregenerate world is fast asleep about them, and will not awake; and they themselves have a constant struggle to hold up their head. If it were day with them, they could bestir themselves, and apply to their proper business; but it is night, and with difficulty they watch one hour.

2. They justly look on it as a shadowy night.

(1.) Because there are many things intercepting the light from them; by such means shadows are made in the night, as when a house or a hill intercepts the light of the moon or stars by night. Thus it is with God's people in the world; there are many things to mar the light of their Lord's countenance shining on them, Isa. xlix. 2; Psal. xxx. 7. And by means of these interposing hindrances, they cannot have now that light of knowledge and comfort, that they would desire.

(2.) It is a time wherein they had some precious light, yet but faint, and mixed with much darkness. Where there is no light at all, there cannot be shadows, all is but one shadow; and so it is with natural men, "there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20. But souls married to Christ have the light of grace, which however is but a dim and mixed one in comparison of the light of glory, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

(3.) It is a time, wherein the very means of their light and knowledge give but small and dark representations of the knowledge of the other world, and the riches of his kingdom. So does the shadow of a house in the night represent it but very darkly and imperfectly; so the shadow of a man by a looking-glass is, but an imperfect representation of the man, not comparable to seeing face to face. Thus we have a shadow of Christ in the gospel, in the word, in the sacraments; but it is but a shadowy darkly representing him and the happiness of his kingdom, 2 Cor. iii. 18. So that the half is not seen. But as one taken with a beautiful picture, natively longs to see the original; so does a sight of Christ by these shadows, cause one to long for the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away, that they may see him face to face.

We shall now make some improvement of this point, in the following uses.

USE I. Of information. Is the time of this life indeed a night, a shadowy one, to those married to Christ, and do they look on it so? Then,

1. They to whom this life in this world makes such a pleasant day, that they desire no better, are in bad case. If it is so with you habitually, ye are not truly married to Christ, Cant. viii. 5. Ye are yet in your natural blindness, that night and day are alike to you; and the day of grace is not yet risen on you. And if it be so with you only occasionally, you may be sure that while it is so, your souls are out of frame, and the grace of God in you is under a cloud.

2. Then the time of this life is a dangerous time, even to those that are espoused to Christ, and they have no need to watch, "every man having his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night," Cant. iii. 8. They are in danger of sins, snares, and temptations; for it is a time wherein the roaring lion is ranging about, who will be bound down in his den, if once the day were broken. This made the apostle jealous over the Corinthians "with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband," says he, "that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtility, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. They are in danger of various troubles, which are incident to them in this night-season. But it is but to watch a while, if the day were broke, the danger is over.

3. The Christian's life in this world is a lonely and wearisome life; for the travellers to Zion have a night of it, a shadowy one. If one travel by day, he will readily get company, for then every body is astir; and this makes the way to destruction a throng way, the carnal world going at ease in it, because the sun of this world is up on them, and their night is coming in the other world. But if one travels by night, he will readily have a lonely journey of it; and therefore there are but few in the way to life. So it is told us, Matth. vii. 14. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Micah therefore laments the loneliness of it with him, Micah vii. 1. "Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat," and the Psalmist, Psal. cii. 6, 7. "I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top." For it is night with them; but in the other world the day will break to them. This makes it wearisome travelling. It is so ordered, as the march through the wilderness for their trial.

There is a fourfold allowable weariness in the Christian life, which our Lord will not be displeased with in his people, that it make them often to propose that question, Isa. xxi. 11. "Watchman, what of the night?"

(1.) Wearying of an ill world, a world lying in wickedness, Psal. cxx. 5. "Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar." Surely God himself is weary of them, of their obstinate impenitency, carnality, profanity, and formality, Isa. lxxv. 2,—5; and i. 14. It is but kindly that his people weary of their society, who thus weary their God; and that they long for the day when they will be by themselves.

(2.) Wearying of an ill heart, the body of sin and death, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" God has left it in them for their exercise and trial, as he did the Canaanites in the land; but surely they are to make no league with it, but to war against it; and it is acceptable to him to weary and long for the day that they will be rid of it. And there is never a weary look they give for it, but he kindly noticeth it.

(3.) Wearying to be at home in Immanuel's land, where there is no more night, but an eternal day, 2 Cor. v. 4. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Rom. viii. 23. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Indeed the Lord makes their travelling in this world difficult to his people, for that very end, that they may long to be home.

(4.) Wearying for our Lord's gracious visits to their souls, while they are abroad, Psal. cxxx. 6. "My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning." How passionately does the spouse cry for them in the text? It is a sign it is very ill with the Christian, when his Lord is away, and he cares not; when his communion with God is stopt, and yet he is at ease, Cant. v. 3. See Psal. xxx. 7.

4. That a Christian's life in this world has many ups and downs in it, is not at all strange; nay, nor that the alteration comes very suddenly; for he is travelling in a night, a shadowy night. There is nothing more stable than a Christian's state, but nothing more alterable than his frame, Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37. He may be going on cheerfully in the moonshine, singing his song in the night; anon he enters some black and shadowy valley in his way, or a cloud overcasts, and strikes a damp on him; he gets through the valley, the cloud passes off, and he recovers; and so one after another, till the day break, and the shadows flee away.

Use II. Hereby ye may try, whether ye are truly married to



Christ, or not? If it is so, ye will look on your life in this world henceforth as a night-time. And,

1. Your former value for this world will be sunk, and your love to it turned into a holy contempt and neglect of it, in comparison with Christ your husband, and his kingdom in the other world, Matth. xiii. 46. The blackness of the night will be sitten down on it, in its most gaudy dress, of profits, pleasures, and honours in it, 1 John ii. 15. You will look on it as a shadow, hiding much of the Bridegroom's glory from you; and so will keep up a struggle against it, as that which getting in betwixt the Sun of righteousness and you, will cause an eclipse of the light of his countenance.

2. Your esteem of Christ will be raised above all, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Your love to him will be a superlative love, above all persons and things, Luke xiv. 26. She that without consideration runs into a marriage with a man, is ready to discover something in him afterwards, that makes her despise him, and, when it is out of time, to prefer some other of her suitors; so they that are rash and indeliberate in their pretended closing with Christ, that were never blessed with a saving discovery of him to their souls by the Spirit, will be ready to rue the match, and to return to the flesh pots of Egypt. But the soul once truly married to Christ, will find him a covering of its eyes; they will charge their eyes henceforth to be closed on all his rivals, as never to see another so fair, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

*Lastly*, Ye will count it day only in the other world, however bright the sunshine in this world may be; "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away," &c. Therefore your main concern will be to reach eternal light there, Phil. iii. 14. to be prepared and made meet for it, Rev. xix. 7. And you will aim at the purity of it, 1 John iii. 3. So you will be going through this world, as in a night journey, with the eye fixed on the other world before, desiring and expecting the break of day that will be there.

USE III. Of caution. This gives a watchword to all that profess their soul's marriage with Christ. It is night-time; therefore,

1. Beware ye fall not asleep, 1 Thess. v. 7. Take heed of carnal security, which is the bed of the devil's making for us; a dangerous bed, how soft soever; and the softer the more dangerous. Satan got David into it, and there he polluted himself with adultery and murder; and Peter also, where he defiled himself with denying his Lord and Master. But it is but few that get the cast of grace to raise and cleanse them in such a case, that these two eminent saints got. People are ready to fall asleep after a full meal, Cant. v. 1, 5,

and wise virgins may be overtaken with sleep, as well as foolish virgins, Mat. xxv. 5.

2. Beware ye fall not a-dreaming. The whole life of some is one continued dream or delusion, which they awake not out of till they are past hope and help, Is. xliv. 20. He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Chap. xxix. 8. God's children also are in hazard of dreaming too in this their night-time, when they fall asleep. David fell a-dreaming of golden mountains in this world, Ps. xxx. 6. Peter of perfect safety, when Satan was laying a snare for him and seeking to winnow him. O Sirs, open your eyes, stand on your watch, know ye are here among the lions' dens, and the mountains of the leopards. Do not dream of world's ease, but lay your account with trials; nor of safety from snares, but lay you account with temptations.

3. Beware of mistakes and misapprehensions of things, to which people are liable in the night. Live by faith, and trust not your own understanding, Prov. iii. 5. Judge not of things in your way by sense, but by the rule of God's word. Our eyes in the night are apt to deceive us. A step will appear much more difficult by reason of the darkness, then really it is; so there will be stones of difficulty appearing in the way, of a duty not to be rolled away, which, yet when ye come up to, will be found rolled away to your hand. A bush will appear a house to the traveller, and disappoint him turning to it for shelter; so does this and the other created comfort to us in this night-journey. In the night we are ready to take our friends for our foes, as did the disciples on the sea; so we are apt to do with our crosses and trials.

4. Beware of stumbling, John xi. 10. and walk circumspectly, Eph. v. 15. Keep up a holy jealousy over yourselves, Prov. xxviii. 14. "Happy is the man that feareth alway." Where the darkness of the night trysts with snares and stumbling blocks in one's way, it is hard for one to keep his feet; so it is in your way to heaven. Peter found a snare in the mount, as well as in the high-priest's hall; and Lot in the cave with his own children, as well as in Sodom. Take then that caution, 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

*Lastly*, Beware of wearying in a way of languishing, fretfulness, and impatience; the which is incident to people in the night not asleep. Whatever be your troubles in the world, yea your struggles with the body of sin and temptations do not weary so as to fall a languishing, unfitting yourselves for bearing and doing; so as to fret and be impatient, and say, it will never be day. For though it is night, the morning cometh.

Use ult. Evidence yourselves truly married to Christ, by your looking on the time of this life, as a night-time, a shadowy one. And this,

1. By stretching your view habitually beyond it, "looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," 2 Cor. iv. ult. A soul married to Christ will not terminate its desires and expectations within the narrow limits of time; nor would they, if it were in their offer, sit down contented with this life perpetuated, more than they would be content of an eternal night here that would never have a day, Job vii. 16. "I loathe it, I would not live away." But live ye in expectation of this night's passing, and of the morning's coming in the other world.

2. By watchfulness and circumspect walking, as not insensible of your hazard. Travellers by night look well to their feet, however carelessly men walk that travel by day, Prov. iv. 26. Many professing to be espoused to Christ, discover their hypocrisy by the looseness and carelessness of their after-walk.

3. By continual eying and use-making of the pillar of fire that gives light in the night in this wilderness. Christ is that pillar of fire, that enlightens the believer's darkness in this world; as he is a husband, he is the soul's guide. Keep the eye of faith on him, while the night lasts, that all your motions, removes, and rests may be directed by him, Col. ii. 6. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." John viii. 12. "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

*Lastly,* By learning and using the song in the night. Our Lord has allowed the travellers to Zion, such a song, as may refresh and cheer them in their night-journey through the wilderness, Isa. xxx. 29. "Ye shall have a song as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel." They learn it out of their bible, Psal. cxix. 54. "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." They sing it by faith, believing the promises, and crediting and applying the blessed report concerning the other world, the day's breaking and the shadows fleeing away. And this cheers them in the melancholy night they have. Slight it not, Job xxxv. 10. "But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" Isa. lxiv. 5. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways." Neh. viii. 10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

DOCT. II. To those that are truly married to Christ, the day will break in the other world, and the shadows flee away; and they should live in the comfortable expectation of it.

In handling this point, I shall,

I. Consider the day's breaking, and the shadows fleeing away thereupon.

II. Believers living in the comfortable expectation of the day's breaking to them in the other world, and the shadows fleeing away thereupon.

III. *Lastly*, Apply the doctrine.

I. I shall consider the day's breaking, and the shadows fleeing away thereupon. And on this head I shall speak of,

1. The day's breaking in the other world to those that are married to Christ.

2. The shadows upon this breaking of the day, fleeing away.

3. Confirm the point, that the day will break, and the shadows flee away, as to those that are married to Christ.

FIRST, I am to speak of the day's breaking in the other world to those that are married to Christ. And here I shall show,

1. What a day will break to them there.

2. How this day will break to them there.

FIRST, I shall shew what a day will break in the other world to those who are married to Christ.

1. A clear and bright day, Isa. lx. 1, 2. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Whatever gloomy, dark and melancholy times the spouse of Christ has here, she will have a bright day of it in the other world. There will be no clouds in it; the dark and cloudy day will then be at an end. The glory of God lightens the upper hemisphere there, whither they go; and in him there is no darkness at all.

2. A fair day and calm. There are no storms nor tempests, no blustering winds nor rains in Immanuel's land, Rev. xxi. 4. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." It will be one continued tempest in the lower part of the other world; there the great rain of his strength will be falling continually on his adversaries; but there will be an absolute calm there, as Ex. ix. 24—26. where we are told, "There was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a

nation.—Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail." O what a pity is it, that the faith thereof should not make us bear better the clouds returning after the rain now!

3. A glad and joyful day, Psal. cxxvi. 5. "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." Their wo days will then be at an end, Rev. xxi. 4. The light and gladness now under the clod, will be fairly sprung up to them then. It will be the day of the heir of glory's home-coming from his travels in the foreign land, unto his own country, his Father's house, and his Father's embraces. It will be the spouse of Christ's marriage-day, when the marriage with the spiritual bridegroom shall be joyfully solemnized.

*Lastly*, An eternal day. Some places of our world have a long day, but they have a night too, and that a long one. But there will be an everlasting day in Immanuel's land, Rev. xxi. 25. There is a night too in the other world, as well as a day; but they are in different regions, and never change. It will be a day in the upper hemisphere, an eternal day; and night in the lower, an eternal night.

SECONDLY, Let us next see how this day will break there to those who are married to Christ.

1. As coming near their night-journey's end, they enter the passage betwixt the two worlds, the darkness and shadowiness of the night will come to a pitch. For as the darkest hour ordinarily goes before day-break, so is it here, the hour of death is so in a signal manner, "the valley of the shadow of death," Psal. xxiii. 4. When they go down to that valley, there is a gloominess there which they have not had the like of before; they may have much ado to keep their heart from failing, because of the black and dismal aspect. But their Lord and Husband will not leave them, but guide them through it, *ib.* and *xlvi.* ult.

2. As soon as they are got over to the other side, immediately the day breaks, and it is fair day-light to them. Then the welcome day ariseth, never to go down; their hearts are cheered, their eyes enlightened, and there is no fear of stumbling any more.

(1.) A heavenly gale ariseth, such as never before blew on them; they get a full measure of the Spirit of Christ, which in a moment brings them to a state of perfection, Heb. xii. 23. This is that blowing of the day in the text. The Spirit blows upon them here, and conveys grace from Christ to them, excites and strengthens it, Cant. iv. 16. But then he blows on them so as to perfect it.

(2.) The light of glory appears, and spreads over all to them, Is. lx. 1. The shinning ones receive them, to carry them home to

Abraham's bosom. While they pass into the upper regions, the day then is broken, and goes on to the perfect day there, growing more and more lightsome, and filling them with new and unseen delights.

(3.) Getting in to the highest heavens, the Sun of righteousness is up on them; and there they are in inconceivable light and splendour, which we can have no notion of, but what is childish, Col. i. 12. There shines the glory of God, and of the Lamb; and such is the splendour, that there is no need of the sun nor of the moon.

SECONDLY, I proceed to consider the shadows, upon this breaking of the day, fleeing away. And here I shall shew,

1. What is that fleeing away of the shadows.

2. What are the shadows that will flee away, when that day breaks.

FIRST, I shall shew what is that fleeing away of the shadows. We may take it up in three things.

1. The utter removal of every thing interposing betwixt God and them, and intercepting the light of his countenance, Rev. xxi. 3. Now there are many things of that nature; but when the day breaks, there shall be none of them. The day of grace breaking, removed all interposing hindrances in respect of their state of peace and friendship; but the day of glory breaking, will remove all interposing hinderances in respect of their full enjoyment.

2. The removal of all dark, gloomy, and melancholy things out of their condition, Mat. xxv. 23. They shall then put off their blacks, and be clothed in white raiment; no sigh will be heard more, nor the least vestige remain of a sorrowful spirit. There shall be nothing from without them, nor within them, to cause the least downlook. After all the frights they have been in, they shall be perfectly composed, and enjoy an inconceivable serenity.

3. The removal of all imperfection of light, and whatsoever gives but a faint and shadowy representation of Christ and the glories of the other world, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Rev. xxii. 4. By nature we are blind, and cannot see them, though they are to be seen in the looking-glass of the gospel. The day of grace breaking to a man, he beholds them in the glass; but in the day of glory the glass is removed, and he sees face to face. There fleeing away imports,

(1.) The suddenness of their removal. Though the moment before the shadows were at their longest, blackest, and darkest pitch, the next moment they shall be gone. As if the sun should in a moment break from under a cloud, and enlighten all that was dark before.

(2.) The completeness of their removal; they shall vanish, without leaving any mark behind them, where they had been. So does

a shadow flee away turning to nothing. The light of glory extinguishes them quite.

SECONDLY, We are to enquire, what are the shadows that will flee away when that day breaks. They may be comprehended under the following particulars.

1. The shadow of this world will then flee away, 1 Cor. vii. 31. The night comes on by the interposing of the earth betwixt us and the sun; and this cursed earth getting in betwixt Christ the sun of righteousness and us, makes a black and dark shadow, it hides the face of the lovely Jesus from natural men wholly, as the sun is hidden in the night; from the saints it hides his face in great measure, as a cloud interposing betwixt us and the sun, so making them sometimes go mourning without the sun.

But the day of eternity breaking, the believer will see it fled away. At death they will go from it, they will be quite above it, it will be under their feet. It will not be able to cast any more shadow to them, than a hill in a sunny day when one is on the top of it, whatever it may do to those below in the valley. And at the resurrection, the world itself will flee away, being suddenly destroyed, Rev. xx. 11. It was often taken for a substantial good, but then it will flee away as a shadow, 1 John ii. 17. "The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof."

2. The shadow of sin, Heb. xii. 23. The sun shone fair and bright on mankind in the state of innocency, and made this a pleasant world, the very suburbs of heaven, where every thing smiled on man and his condition was altogether lightsome; but no sooner had sin entered, but the darkness of the night was spread over all in one shadow. The day of grace dawning in conversion, a new light arises, sin being removed in its guilt of eternal wrath, and its dominion; but alas! it still remains in its indwelling power, occasioning a continual struggle, oftentimes prevailing; hence are many long and black shadows in the believer's way, extending as far as it reaches, so that, by reason of guilt and defilement contracted, they often find themselves as in the shadow of death, Isa. lix. 2. They keep right a while, and then they walk in the light of the Lord's countenance; they are overtaken again with sin, and then they are under a cloud again, and walk in darkness.

But the day breaking, sin will flee away. There will be no more unbelief, ill heart, or corruption of nature; though it is fixed now with bonds of iron and brass, these will in a moment give way like tow touched with fire; and sin will pass away, leaving no mark behind it, more than a shadow. The believer's wounds will all be healed, and all his now running sores, so as there shall not appear the least scar where they were.

3. The shadow of temptations, Rom. xvi. 20. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." This was the first shadow that was in the world. The command, promise, and threatening were shining clear to our first parents; but in came the subtle serpent with his temptations, which cast a shadow over them that darkened them all to Eve, so that they appeared to her in other colours, Gen. iii. 6. She carried the temptation to Adam, and he also was overshadowed ere he was aware, and he sinned, and then the shadow spread over all the world. Now the light of the word shines, and represents sin as ugly and destructive; temptation arises, and with its shadow mars the light, and sin appears lovely and beneficial. Thus the believer is often by this means left in the dark, robbed and spoiled; and takes poison to himself with his own hands, being blinded with the shadow of temptation.

But when the day breaks, that shadow will flee away. The tempter who got into the earthly paradise, will have no access into the heavenly. All the mist he raised before the eyes of believers here, will be suddenly dispelled, and never gather again more; but there they will have an eternal sunshine, where every thing will appear in its native colours; and they shall not be capable of being deceived any more. There will be no more need of watching, fighting, &c., the hazard being over.

3. The shadow of outward troubles will flee away, of troubles on your bodies, relations, names, affairs, &c., Job iii. 17. Sometimes the sun of prosperity shines on the believer, and there is silence as it were half an hour; anon trouble ariseth, spreads and continues, till it cast such a shadow, as hides prosperity quite out of his sight, and causes him to forget it, Lam. iii. 17; yea, as hides the face of God from him, that he cannot behold his countenance with joy, his weak eyes being unable so to master the shadow as to behold it. Things appear frightful in it, that believers are apt to think he has forgot them, Isa. xlix. 14. that he treats them as his enemies, Job xiii. 24. and can hardly think that they have any more room with him, Job ix. 16, 17.

But when the day breaks and the shadows flee away, they will have a profound peace, an eternal calm, in Immanuel's land. Though the storm blow never so long and hard on them, in this their night; when once the day is broken and Christ has them home, he will never let an air blow on them more. They may then look back on the tossed and troublous life they have had, but they will remember them all as waters that fail.

5. The shadow of inward spiritual troubles, through desertions, and hidings of the Lord's face. These are sometimes so black and



gloomy, that they are apt to cry out, that their hope is perished from the Lord. Such a damp may seize them, as that they begin to think that all they have had, has been but delusions; and they may be at razing foundations. They may have much ado to keep up hope, saying as Psal. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Their spirits may be wounded, the arrows of God sticking in them. Then it is dark night.

But if the day were broken, and the shadows fled away, they will be comforted fully with the greatest tenderness, when brought into Abraham's bosom, Isa. lxi. 13. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." And readily they that have had the sharpest conflicts, will have the greatest comfort; sure, bitter entertainment here, will make sweet sauce to the entertainment there.

6. The shadow of ordinances will flee away, Rev. xxi. 23. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The word and sacraments give but faint representations of the Bridegroom's glory, they show him but as it were in his night dress; they are but the looking-glass wherein they see his shadow, 2 Cor. iii. ult. Though they show more glory in him than in the whole creation, yet the half is not discovered thereby.

But when the day breaks, and the shadows flee away, they will get an immediate sight of him, as he is, 1 John iii. 2, see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The ordinances that served them in their night-travelling through the wilderness, will be honourably laid aside when the day is broken to them in the promised land, as was the tabernacle when the temple was reared up. There will be no need of the lower table, when they are set down with the King at the higher. So preaching, prayers, sacraments, &c. shall flee away.

7. *Lastly*, The shadow of all manner of imperfections, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. There are many imperfections attending the believer here, natural and moral. He must eat, drink, sleep, &c. for his body; his soul is compassed about with many spiritual infirmities, there is a weakness in all his faculties. These cast a broad shadow, and hide much of the King's glory to him.

But when the day breaks and the shadows flee away, the body shall no more be a clog to him; all the faculties of his soul shall be brought to their perfection. The mind shall arrive at a perfection

of knowledge, the will of conformity to the will of God, and the affections of regularity and order. Their enjoyment of God shall be full; they shall be put off no more with sips and tastes, but drink of the rivers of his pleasures for evermore. Faith shall be turned to sight, and desire and hope into full and unhampered possession.

THIRDLY, I shall now confirm this point, That the day will break and the shadows flee away, as to those who are married to Christ. Consider for this purpose the following things,

1. It was so with their Head and Husband, and the procedure with them must be conformable to that with him, Heb. xii. 2. "Jesus, 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." 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. "It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer we shall also reign with him." Our Lord Christ had a dark shadowy night of it in this world; the sun of this world's prosperity hid itself from him all along, and the farther on in the night it was with him, it grew still the darker, till it came to the utmost pitch in the valley of the shadow of death. And then the day brake to him, and all shadows fled away; and now he is for ever in the light.

2. The nature of God's work of grace in them; it cannot be left unperfected; Psal. cxxxviii. ult. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Time was when they were in a state of blindness, no light being in them, Isa. viii. 20. God has brought them out of that state, and there is a light arisen to them, a light of grace, the nature of which is to go on to perfection, Prov. iv. 18. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Grace and corruption are like the house of David and Saul; struggle they may for a while, but the latter must be extinct, and the former enjoy all.

3. The bounty and goodness of God to his people. God is essentially good, and he is good to them in Christ his Son. It is inconsistent with the goodness of his nature to keep them always in the darkness of the night, and horror of shadows. Surely, looking to his good and gracious nature, we may conclude that the day will break and the shadows flee away, especially considering, that there is a longing for it in them created by his own Spirit.

4. *Lastly*, The nature of the covenant, which is everlasting, and cannot be broken. It secures by promise the perfecting of the happiness of his people; it was made for that end; the promises are not accomplished here perfectly; nay it is an earnest only of their accomplishment that is given. Therefore there must be a time, when the day shall break, and the shadows flee away.

II. I proceed to consider believers living in the comfortable expectation of the day's breaking to them in the other world and the shadows fleeing away. It implies these following things,

1. Their looking on themselves as travellers only through this world, who are not to stay in it, Heb. xi. 13. As soon as the soul is married to Christ, it begins to be a pilgrim on earth, in its own account, reckoning heaven the home, and earth the house of its pilgrimage. Men in their natural state are like the Egyptians in their darkness, who moved not from their place; but being touched with converting grace, they are like the Israelites travelling through the wilderness to Canaan.

2. Their laying their account with the continuance of the night and gloomy shades, while they are here. Our Lord has told them, that it must be so, John xvi. ult. "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" and though sometimes they fall a dreaming of light and ease, Psal. xxx. 6. yet their habitual course is not so, being persuaded that "they must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22. They are resolved to trust their portion, and rest till they come to the other side, and, in the mean time, to bear their trials till they are safely arrived there.

3. A contentedness to leave this world, and go to the other, Luke ii. 29. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word." Every body sincerely joining themselves to the Lord Christ as their Head and Husband, are thus contented, Cant. viii. 5. They may indeed have a natural horror of death, but they are reconciled to the pleasant land on the other side of it; as one is unto health, while yet they have a horror of the bitter potion, whereby it must be compassed. Sometimes again they are unclear as to their interest, and this may make them unwilling to remove; but this is consistent with that contentedness, since it makes not an absolute unwillingness, but only in such circumstances; as one may be willing to go to a place, yet not willing to take the journey blindfolded.

4. A faith of the day, the clear and bright day that is in the other world, Heb. ix. 13. "Those all died in faith." The report of it is no more to them as idle tales, but they are persuaded of it, and look on it as the land of light and comfort; as far preferable to this world as the day is to night. If they were not persuaded of the other's being a better world than this, they could not be content to part with this for it.

5. A desire to be there in the other world, where the day breaks and the shadows flee away, Phil. i. 23. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far

better." As it is natural for the walking traveller to desire the breaking of the day, and to be there where it is daylight; so it is natural for the walking Christian, to desire to be there where it is eternal day in the other world. And this desire is at the root of the believer's desire of a total deliverance from sin, and of a full uninterrupted communion with God; these they desire, and these they know are not to be reached, but in the other world.

6. A hope and expectation of the day's breaking to them there, and the shadows fleeing away, Rom. viii. 23, 24. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope." There is a lively hope of the glory to be revealed, so that they hope, however dark it is for the time, it will not be always so; the morning will come. Hope has its struggles as well as faith; but the hope of believers is never totally overthrown, more than their faith.

*Lastly*, A comforting themselves in this world with the prospect of the other world, 2 Cor. iv. 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." If the night be gloomy here, they should comfort themselves with the prospect of the day's breaking there, and the shadows fleeing away, and sing in the house of their pilgrimage, in hope of the joy abiding them at the end of their journey.

I shall now make some practical improvement of this doctrine.

USE I. Of information. This informs us,

1. That whatever be the trials of believers in this world, there is a happy state abiding them in the other world, wherein they will be beyond them all, Heb. iv. 9. "Their remaineth a rest to the people of God." The wicked may have a fair and calm day here, but there will be an everlasting night for them there. But it is better to have our night here, and an eternal day there, than to have our day here, and eternal night there.

2. The report of unbelief to the people of God in their dark hours, whereby it is said to them, It will never be better, is false, and not to be credited, Lam. iii. 17, 18. It is the work of faith to contradict these evil surmisings tending to cut off hope; and to believe the promise, when one does not see. Satan ruined the world at first by working a misbelief of the threatening; now he carries it on by a misbelief of the promise.

3. This is the time wherein we are called to walk by faith, 2 Cor.

v. 7. In the other world we will walk by sight, for there the day will be broken, and there will be no shadows to interpose; but till we come there, we must be content to live by faith, trusting our good things to come after we have patiently received our evil things, and made our way through the gloomy shades here.

4. That there will be a vast difference betwixt the state of believers here and in the other world. What a difference is there between a dark shadowy night, and a fair bright day? such will there be between the state of grace and glory. Their knowledge will be exceedingly extensive, beyond what it is now; and their comfort and joy exceedingly great, beyond what any time they now are.

*Lastly*, It is the Christian's own fault, if he wants comfort in the hardest pieces of his lot, John xiv. 18. They were never ill dined, we say, that know of a good supper. Whatever be the entertainment of a child of God here, there is a blessed entertainment awaiting him there, and as the workman works cheerfully in prospect of his wages, and the traveller goes cheerfully knowing he is going home? so the Christian should comfort himself in this world, with the prospect of the other world.

USE II. Of exhortation. Let such as are married to Christ, having received him in his covenant, and given themselves to him, learn to comfort themselves with the prospect of the other world, where the day will break, and the shadows flee away. To move unto this, consider these things,

1. You will certainly need comfort in this world. Take what way ye will, ye will meet with sorrows, difficulties, and hardships, that ye will be in need of some cordials to keep you from fainting; and being married to Christ, ye will need them in a special manner; for then your God will have you exercised with various trials, the world will withdraw its countenance from you, and Satan will set himself against you with a peculiar spite.

2. The comforts of this world are deceitful, and will never be found able to balance the sorrows of it, being but "broken cisterns that can hold no water," Jer. ii. 13. Some of them they can do nothing at all to, as in Belshazzar's case under the terror of God; at best they can but amuse for a while, but the grief recurs. So that in the end one must say to them, "Miserable comforters are ye all." They are a weak dyke that will be carried away with the flood in a little.

3. The other world is a fountain of comfort in all cases ye can be in, temporal or spiritual.

Here the man in outward trouble may find a salve for his sore.

If he is oppressed with poverty, he may comfort himself with the prospect of the treasure there, and the inheriting all things; if he is under contempt of the proud, he may comfort himself with the prospect of the glory there; if he is under sickness of body, the leaves of the trees there are for the healing of the nations. If he weary, there is rest there; has he no certain abode? there they go no more out, &c.

Here the man in spiritual distress may comfort himself. Is the body of sin heavy? in the other world there will be a freedom from it. Is he dogged with temptations? there the tempter cannot enter. Is he under desertion? there is uninterrupted communion with God there. There is nothing one can meet with heavy here, but a believing view of the other world may afford suitable consolation against it.

*Lastly*, The comforting of yourselves with the prospect of the other world, is a duty wherein ye will at once singularly honour God, and consult your own interest.

(1.) Hereby ye will honour God's testimony, trusting him for things unseen, Heb. xi. 1. So ye will give him the glory of his faithfulness. He has magnified his word above all his name, and you will magnify it by believing it indeed.

(2.) It will strengthen you notably in your Christian walk, Neh. viii. 10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." It will carry you above the world's smiles, and make the world's great things little in your eyes, Phil. iii. 8. It will strengthen against its frowns, and bear you up under the greatest trials, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

I shall close with the following directions.

1. Keep Christ the Lord of the other world in your view as your Lord and Husband, looking to "be found in him, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. We can draw no comfort from the other world, but in that blessed channel; in him are all our hopes, for by him only we have a title to heaven.

2. Inure yourselves to an habitual looking to the other world, 2 Cor. iv. 18. When the habitual frame of the heart is carnal, no wonder that a glance with the eye to the other world be not comfortable; but when the habitual bent is upward, occasional glances that way will have a good effect.

*Lastly*, Frame the whole course of your life in a suitableness, not to this, but the other world, Rom. xii. 2. Carry as travellers to Zion, going through this wilderness to the promised land. Let your conversation be suitable to an expectant of that better world, namely, in heaven, Phil. iii. 20.

I now go on to the last doctrine I observed from the text, namely,

Doct. III. It will be the great concern of those married to Christ during their night-journey in this world, that he may turn and come to them, till the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away, they get to him in the other world.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what is Christ's turning and coming to them, that will be their great concern to have.

II. Give the import of this concern, that he may turn and come to them, till the day break and the shadows flee away.

III. Give the reasons of this concern.

IV. Confirm this point, that this will be the great concern of those married to Christ.

V. *Lastly*, Apply the doctrine.

I. I am to shew what is Christ's turning and coming to those married to him, that will be their great concern to have. We may take it up in two things.

1. His affording them his presence. That will be their great concern to enjoy during their night-journey; that if they must have a dark and shadowy night-journey of it through the world, he would not leave them, but be with them in it, Exod. xxxiii. 15. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." No body can want God's essential presence, whereby he is every where present, Psalm cxxxix. 7. and downwards. He is not far from any, Acts xvii. 27. But where is his gracious presence, whereby he is present with the children of men by his Spirit of holiness working in them; in which respect he is far from the wicked, Prov. xv. 29. and sometimes withdraws from his own in part, Cant. v. 6. though never totally, Heb. xiii. 5. Their concern then will be for,

(1.) His seen or sensible presence with them, of the want of which Job complains, Job xxiii. 8, 9. and in the enjoyment of which the Psalmist triumphs, Ps. xxiii. 4. As the Israelites had the pillar of fire by night present with them, discovering itself by its own light; so would they have the presence of God with them, discovering itself to them by its own light. For though they have it, if they perceive it not, they cannot have the comfort of it, as in Mary's case, John xx. 14, 15.

(2.) His operative or efficacious presence in them, Phil iii. 8, 10. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." As the Israelites' concern was for the

pillar of fire to enlighten their darkness, to guide them in their night-marches, &c. so will believers be concerned for Christ's presence to enlighten them, quicken, strengthen, and purify them; to work in them mightily. And unless they find it operative, they will not reckon they have it.

2. His affording them his countenance, the shining of his face, and the manifestation of his favour, Ps. vi. 6. "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." The unbelievers never have, Ps. vii. 11; there is always a cloud on it to them; they are not pleased with him, and he is never pleased with them, Heb. xi. 6. And this believers sometimes want, Isa. lvii. 17. "I hid me, and was wroth;" though they are never cast out of his favour, they may fall to be deprived of the manifestations of it for a time. Their concern then will be for,

(1.) The turning away of his anger, and removal of any ground of controversy he has with them, Ps. lxxxv. 4. "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease." Herein the church rejoiceth, Isa. xii. 1. "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." They will be concerned, that while the shades are thick and gloomy about them below, heaven may not be lowering on them too; but that it may be clear above, though it be dark and shadowy below.

(2.) The manifestations of his love, Cant. viii. 6. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm," and i. 2. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine." The carnal world knows none of these things, and therefore cannot be concerned for them. Proud scornful sinners deride them as vain imaginations of fantastic fools. But in the experience of the saints, they are more powerful and efficacious, than all the pleasurable enjoyments earth can afford, Psal. iv. 6, 7. They will carry them through the dark and difficult steps, where all the world's cordials will leave its votaries to faint.

II. I shall give the import of this concern of those married to Christ, that he may turn and come to them, till the day's breaking and the shadows' fleeing away, they get to him in the other world. It imports,

1. That during the night-journey in this world, Christ sometimes turns away and withdraws from his people; so that seeking him they cannot find him, Cant. iii. 1. "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him but I found him not." Even as Moses who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, was withdrawn from them in the wilderness, and they knew not what was be-



come of him. Christ seems sometimes to lock up himself from his people, for his own holy ends, that they cannot have that access to him as sometime before. So he puts a difference betwixt earth and heaven, the house of their pilgrimage and their home, that they may like home the better.

2. The travellers to Zion, when Christ is away, though it be night, they readily miss him, Cant. iii. 3. "The watchmen that go about the city, found me, to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" Indeed it may at times be with them as with Samson, Judg. xvi. 20, who "wist not that the Lord was departed from him." But that is through the inadvertancy; if they once begin to look about them, they will be sure to miss him, as the spouse did, Cant. v. 6. It is a property of a gracious soul, to be capable to tell Christ's visits, his goings and comings. It is not every one can do that: worldly men reign as kings without him, they miss him not; the blind man cannot tell when the day comes in, or when the night; but the seeing can do both. The wife can readily tell when her husband goes abroad, and when he comes home; though the servants being without about their work, may know neither the one nor the other.

3. A holy dissatisfaction with all things, while he is away. An angel's presence could not please Moses in the wilderness, Ex. xxxv. 2, 15. nor dry Mary's cheeks in the garden, while she knew not where her Lord was, John xx. 12, 13. The house though thronged with servants is empty to the wife, while her beloved husband is not there. The gracious soul would make stepping-stones of all, to carry it to Christ the best beloved.

4. A holy resolution to give him a welcome reception, if he will turn and come again; then the doors should be cast wide open to receive him, Cant. viii. 1, 2. "O that thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother!" &c. And this is joined with self-loathing, for giving him occasion to depart. "What a madman," says one in this concern, "was I, that I could not keep his presence when I had it? But O! if I had it again, I should not so easily quit it."

5. Earnest outgoings of the heart after him in desires for his return, Isa. lxix. 1. "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence." Job xxiii. 3. "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!" While the soul is in this concern, one messenger will be sent to heaven after another, in solemn prayer, and frequent ejaculations, with that message, Cant. v. 8. "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Be-

loved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love." And when they can do no more, they will send greedy looks after him, to the place where his honour dwells, as did David, Ps. v. 3. and the church, Lam. iii. 49, 50.

*Lastly*, A holy restlessness in the soul, till he turn and come again, Cant. iii. 1. and downwards. In this concern how restless was Job, going backward and forward, looking on the right and left hand? chap. xxii. 8, 9. As the needle in the seaman's compass touched with a good loadstone, rests not till it turn about to the north; so the soul touched by the Spirit of Christ, presently moves towards him, Cant. v. 4. or as the dove sent out of the ark could not rest till it was taken in again.

III. Let us next give the reasons of this concern in those married to Christ, that he may turn and come to them. I offer you the following,

1. Their superlative love to Christ, Cant. i. 3, 4. "Because of the savour of thy good ointment, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee—The upright love thee." Love natively tends to union and communion; hence the soul is more where it loves than where it lives; it exerts itself in desire after the presence of its object, when at a distance; and has much ado to bear absence. But alas! Christ may tell most of us, as Delilah did Samson, Judg. xvi. 15. "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?"

2. Their comfort in their night journey depends on it; without it they must go drooping, for nothing will make up the want thereof. It is Christ's turning to them in it, that makes all they meet with by the way savoury to them, and the want of it is a worm at the root of their enjoyments. The dove could find nothing out of the ark, but carrion, that it could not feed on; and therefore returns; but the raven could feed on it very well, and therefore comes not in again. Hypocrites will bestow a few faint wishes on Christ; but if he answers them not, they are not sore slain therewith; they have more doors than his to go to; if they come not speed at his, they know how to shift for themselves otherwise. But sincere souls must either be served or die at his door, John vi. 68. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

3. Their experience of the desirableness of his presence and countenance in their night-journey, Ps. lxxiii. 1—3. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life; my lips shall praise

thee." It is natural to be in concern for that which one still needs, and remembers himself to have been the better of formerly. They know his presence has made them safely pass many a dangerous step, and easily get over many a difficult one ; that his countenance has often enlightened the darkness of their night, and made them confidently pass many a gloomy shade.

*Lastly*, Their felt need of it ; they know not how they will ever make out the night-journey without it, Ex. xxxiii. 15. "And he said unto him, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." It was in the faith of his presence and countenance, that ever they ventured on it ; and in the faith of the same, that ever they look to get fair to the journey's end. And felt need of it must produce a concern for it, Mark vii. 24, 25. rising from,

(1.) The sense of their liableness to mistake their way, that they need him for their direction and guidance, Jer. x. 23. If he should leave them, they will reckon themselves left in a wilderness, and that in the night ; no wonder then they be in such concern for his presence and countenance.

(2.) The sense of their weakness for the journey, that they need to go leaning on him, as a weak woman on her husband, Cant. viii. 5. Sense of weakness in themselves, and of the fulness of strengthening grace in him, prompt them to this concern.

(3.) The sense of the great opposition and difficulty to be met with in the way, Eph. vi. 12, 13. Christian soldiers have no brow for battle, if Christ their Captain be not on their head, 2 Cor. iii. 5. and they will stick at nothing howsoever hard, if he be, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things," says Paul, "through Christ which strengtheneth me."

IV. We shall now confirm this point, That it will be the great concern of those married to Christ, during their night-journey in this world, that he may turn and come to them till the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away, they get to him in the other world. To evince this, we offer the following things :

1. Christ their Lord and Husband has got their heart above all other, and it rests in him. They have answered the call, Prov. xxiii. 26. "My son, give me thine heart." They have said, he is their rest, Heb. iv. 3. as in the state of marriage ; they close their eyes on all others, never thinking to see an object so desirable, Ps. lxxiii. 25. Now, "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also," Mat. vi. 21. Wherefore it cannot miss to be their concern, that he may turn and come to them ; even as when a woman has fixed her heart on and accepted one for her husband, it is natural to desire frequent visits, till he take her home for altogether.

2. They are partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. partakers of Christ, of his Spirit, his grace, his image; and like draws to like; the carnal worldling to the world, and the Christian to Christ. As the water exhaled from the sea by the influence of the sun, is gathered into clouds, which dissolved it falls down on the earth again, where cast up by springs it empties itself by rivers, and brooks into the sea again whence it came, Eccl. i. 7.; so grace comes down from above, from the fulness thereof in the man Christ, into his Christians, and watering them does in the exercise thereof mount up again towards him in such breathings after him, and concern that he may turn and come to them.

3. All believers may be observed to be great miscounters of time, when Christ is turned away from them in their night-journey, Is. liv. 7. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee," &c. compare Psal. xiii. 1. "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" As the time wherein the moon hides her head to the traveller by night seems long, in comparison of the time of her shining bright; so the time of Christ's withdrawing and hiding his face from a gracious soul is a weary time, a kind of petit eternity. Which speaks a mighty concern.

*Lastly*, When they are themselves, they are resolute for his presence and countenance, Eph. vi. 15. Grace gives men an edge for holy violence, Matt. xi. 11. It will make men very peremptory for Christ, that they will not take a refusal, Gen. xxxii. 26, to threaten kindness on him, and special interest in him, Is. lxiii. 16. to make an argument of their unworthiness and misery, mustered up against them to mar their confidence, Mat. xv. 27. and to stick at nothing standing betwixt Christ and them, so as they may get to him, Phil. iii. 8.

I shall now conclude this subject with some application of what has been said.

USE I. Of information. This shews that,

1. The grace of God ennobles the heart, makes it to aspire to the highest things, and gives it a bent of desire beyond others. (1.) It carries the heart off this world and sets it on the other world, as the place of their great hopes, Col. iii. 1. Others may desire their portion in this life, and eagerly pursue it there; but they will certainly carry their views quite beyond it to the other world, Phil. iii. 13, 14. (2.) It gives them a new notion of heaven, and refined desires thereof, as the place where they may be with Christ, Phil. i. 23. Carnal men have carnal desires of heaven, as a place of rest, welfare, and happiness, abstracted from the enjoyment of God in

Christ; but it is Christ's being there, and full communion with him to be enjoyed there, that is the main spring of the gracious soul's desire to be there, Col. iii. 3, 4.

2. That the soul once truly married to Christ is fixed as to its choice, never to alter it, on any terms; neither to be boasted from him by the world's frowns, nor bribed from him by its smiles, Heb. iv. 3. Cant. viii. 6, 7. Be the night never so dark, the journey never so hard, they are resolute to go on, till the day-breaking they get to him in the other world.

3. The travellers to Zion desire and look for their furniture for the way from Christ, as well as their entertainment at the journey's end, Cant. viii. 5. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" There are many who discover their hypocrisy, by desiring no more of him, than that he will take them into his covenant at the beginning of their way, and into his heaven at the end of it; having little concern for his presence and countenance during their progress. They would have a rest to their consciences from him at their setting off, and a rest to their souls from him at the end; but the rest to their hearts, while they are going on their way, they look for in the world and in their lusts. Such will be miserably disappointed; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14.

Use II. Of trial. Hereby ye may try your state. If ye be really joined to the Lord Christ as your Head and Husband, to be with him in the other world, it will be your great concern to enjoy such communion with him here, as is allowed his people by the way, till ye come to get full communion with him there. There is a two-fold communion with Christ allowed to his people by the way to the other world.

1. Habitual communion, which is a commonness of interest with him, 1 John i. 3. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." This is a necessary result of the spiritual marriage-tie, and believers never want it from the moment of their union with Christ. They may set their names on what is his, as having a joint interest therein with him;—"all are yours; and ye are Christ's," 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. They have with him a common interest in his righteousness, what he did, what he suffered, in his Spirit, purchase, graces wherewith he is filled, &c.

2. Actual communion, which consists in a certain friendly intercourse betwixt Christ and the soul, he letting down the influences of his grace on them, and they moving towards him in the exercise of grace, Cant. i. 4. "Draw me, we will run after thee; the King hath brought me into his chambers," &c. This a believer may want for

a time; and this is the thing desired in the text, under the name of Christ's "turning, and being like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." And the desire of this communion with him is the touchstone of a gracious state. There are several degrees of it.

(1.) Communion with Christ by desires awake after him, Isa. xxvi. 9. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early;" when the spiritual hunger and thirst after him is created in the soul, and the soul longs, thirsts, and pants after him, Ps. lxxiii. 1. This cannot be but by influences from him, whereby the soul is set in motion after him, Cant. v. 4. It is a step to more, Mat. v. 6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

(2.) Communion with Christ in the exercise of a faith of adherence to him, Ps. xxii. 1. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Though the soul cannot sing, yet it will resolutely say to him, "My God." Though his dispensations are black and drumly, and seeming to go against the promise, yet the soul will hold by the grip of the promise, saying as Job xiii. 15. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." It is a power from on high that teacheth one's hands so to war.

(3.) Communion with Christ in the exercise of hope, Ps. xlii. 5. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." Though sensible enjoyment is wanting, and there is no present feeling; yet the soul, believing the promise, hopes for the accomplishment of it in due time. So it waits on about his hand, in the diligent use of the means; expecting a good issue at length. This is the product of divine influences, according to the apostle's prayer, Rom. xv. 13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

(4.) Communion with Christ in sensible enjoyment; when they are admitted to see his face by a faith of assurance, hear his voice so as to know it, taste of his goodness, smell the savour of his name, Cant. i. 3, and to feel the workings of his grace on their souls. This fills the soul with solid comfort, refined delight, and sometimes with heavenly rapture, 1 Pet. i. 8.

Now what gust have ye for these things? Is it indeed your great concern to reach them the habitual course of your life, and so to have communion with Christ while in this world, till ye get full communion with him in the other? If the enjoyment of such communion with Christ while here, is your great concern, then,

[1.] Ye will desire it above all things else ye can reach in this world, preferring it to the best things that earth affords, Psal. iv. 6, 7. Ye will value it more than the profits and pleasures of the world, counting them but dung in comparison thereof.

[2.] Ye will highly prize holy ordinances, public, private, and secret, as the means of communion with Christ; and yet not be satisfied with them without communion with him in them. They to whom these are a burden or tasteless, plainly discover they value not communion with Christ, these being the galleries wherein the King is held, Cant. vii. 5.; they are not of the Psalmist's mind, who say, Psal. lxxxiv. 10. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Those that rest in them, and are pleased when the task is got done, shew they value not the true use of them, represented to us in the spouse's practice, Cant. iii. 2. "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth."

[3.] It will be your great concern to guard against whatever may mar it, or keep you back from it; and to keep the way wherein you may obtain it. That is you will beware of living in the allowed practice of sin, but be tender and holy in your lives, Psal. lxvi. 18. John xiv. 21.

USE III. Evidence yourselves truly married to Christ, by making it your great concern to have actual communion with Christ here, till ye come to the full enjoyment of him in the other world, To press this, I offer these motives very briefly.

1. This is necessary to evidence your sincerity in the marriage covenant, 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." Being careless of communion with Christ, speaks that the heart is not with him, but with other lovers.

2. It is necessary to your getting safe through an ensnaring world; therefore says Christ to his people, Cant. iv. 8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir, and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards," if ye are left alone, ye will fall in the wilderness.

*Lastly*, Without communion with Christ here, there will be no communion with him in the other world, according to what the Psalmist says, Psal. lxxiii. 24, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." Communion with Christ in grace here, is the foundation of communion with him in glory hereafter.

I close with these few directions.

1. Look for communion with Christ in the way of free grace and unhired love; that he may come over mountains to you, mountains of guilt and unworthiness, as undeserving such a high privilege.

3. Seek it resolutely in all means of his appointment, going from one mean and ordinance to another till ye find him, as the spouse did, Cant. iii. 1. and downwards. So may ye, persevering, succeed, whatever difficulties be in your way.

3. Be diligent observers of providences, and make a due improvement of them as means of communion with him, Psal. xcii. 4. and cvii. ult.

*Lastly*, Be habitually tender in your walk; keeping off from every thing that may grieve his Spirit, and provoke him to depart; acting in this case as the spouse did, Cant. iii. 5. "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please."

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READINESS FOR OUR REMOVAL INTO THE OTHER WORLD OPENED UP, URGED, AND ENFORCED.

The substance of several Sermons preached at Ettrick in the year 1730.

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Luke xii. 40.

*Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

AFTER all we have heard of the other world, what will it avail, if it issue not in preparing for our removal into it? That is certainly the use which all of us are to make of it, which we have in the words of the text. In which we have two things:

1. An alarm to be ready for the removal into the other world, "Be therefore ready also," In the parable of the rich man, ver. 16—21. our Saviour had shown the dreadful surprising removal of secure sinners into it, when they are not at all ready for it, but dreaming of a long continuance at ease here, which puts preparation for it out of their heads. And thence he proceeds to caution against inordinate care for this uncertain life, and to stir up to be ready, to be on the wing, for the other life, ver. 35.; and to be