

A STRING OF PEARLS.

NOTE.

The 'String of Pearls' was first published in 1657, in a particularly pretty volume. The title supplied by the bookseller for this edition, intended for the back, was, 'Mr Brooks His Chain of Pearls.' Our text is taken from the 'second edition, *corrected*.' Its title-page is given below.* Though originally a private 'funeral sermon,' it was immediately equally popular with its author's other writings, having rapidly passed through numerous editions. The '14th' bears the date of 1703. Cf. Sibbes's Works, vol. i. pages 341, 350. G.

* A

STRING OF PEARLS:

OR,

The best things reserved till last.

Discovered in a *SERMON*

Preached in *London*, June 8. 1657.

AT

The Funeral of (that Triumphant Saint)
Mrs. *Mary Blake*, late Wife to (his Wor-
thy Friend) Mr. *Nicholas Blake*, Mer-
chant, with an Elegy on her Death.

By *Thomas Brooks* (her much endeared Friend,
Spiritual Father, Pastor, and Brother, in the
Fellowship of the Gospel, and) Preacher of the
Word at *Margarets New-Fish-street*.

The Second Edition corrected.

The Righteous shall bee livd in everlasting remembrance, Psal.
112. 6.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the Death of his Saints,
Psal. 116. 15.

London, Printed by *R. I.* for *John Hancock*, at the first shop
in Popes-head-Alley, neer the Exchange. 1660.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To his honoured and worthily-esteemed friends, Mr NICHOLAS BLAKE, merchant, husband to the late virtuous Mrs MARY BLAKE, deceased; and Mr THOMAS MATTHEWES, merchant, and Mrs MARTHA MATTHEWES his wife, parents to the late deceased gentlewoman; and to the rest of his and her relations.

All grace and peace, all consolation and supportation from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear Friends,—This little piece had been sooner in your hands, but that my being in the country, and some other important business that hath lain hard upon my hands, hath prevented it till now.

I have read of a certain painter, who, being to express the sorrow of a weeping father, and having spent his skill before in setting forth of the passions and affections of his children, he thought it best to present him upon his table to the beholders' view, with his face covered, that so he might have that grief to be imagined by them, which he found himself unable to set out to the full. I know I am not able to paint out your great grief and sorrow for the loss of such a wife, of such a child, of such a sister, &c., and I could wish that this piece, which is brought forth to satisfy your importunity, may not make the wound to bleed afresh. However, if it doth, thank yourselves, blame not me.¹

I could heartily wish that you and all others concerned in this sad loss, were more taken up in minding the happy exchange that she hath made, than with your present loss. She hath exchanged earth for heaven, a wilderness for a paradise, a prison for a palace, a house made with hands for one eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. She hath exchanged imperfection for perfection, sighing for singing, mourning for rejoicing, prayers for praises, the society of sinful mortals for the company of God, Christ, angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 22–24; an imperfect transient enjoyment of God for a more clear, full, perfect, and permanent enjoyment of God. She hath exchanged pain for ease, sickness for health, a bed of weakness for a bed of spices, a complete blessedness. She hath exchanged her brass for silver, her counters for gold, and her earthly contentments for heavenly enjoyments.

¹ Many a man hath been drowned in his own tears, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

And as I desire that one of your eyes may be fixed upon her happiness, so I desire that the other of your eyes may be fixed upon Christ's fulness. Though your brook be dried up, yet Christ the fountain of light, life, love, grace, glory, comfort, joy, goodness, sweetness, and satisfaction is still at hand, and always full and flowing, yea, overflowing, John i. 16, Col. i. 19, ii. 3.¹ As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is contracted in one piece of gold, so all the sweetness, all the goodness, all the excellencies that are in husbands, wives, children, friends, &c., are contracted in Christ; yea, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth, is epitomised in Christ; *Ipsæ unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia*, saith Augustine, one Christ will be to thee instead of all things else, because in him are all good things to be found.

Dear friends! what wisdom, what knowledge, what love, what tenderness, what sweetness, what goodness did you observe and find in this deceased and now glorified saint, that is not eminently, that is not perfectly, to be enjoyed in Christ? and if so, why do not you bear up sweetly and cheerfully, and let the world know, and let friends see, that though you have lost her corporally, yet you enjoy her spiritually in Jesus? The apostle Paul was so much taken with Christ, that he was ever in his thoughts, always near his heart, and ever upon his tongue; he names him sixteen or seventeen times in one chapter,² 1 Cor. i. Now, oh that your hearts and thoughts were thus busied about Christ, and taken up with Christ, and with those treasures of wisdom, knowledge, grace, goodness, sweetness, &c., that is in him; this would very much allay your grief and sorrow, and keep your hearts quiet and silent before the Lord; this would be like that tree which made the bitter waters of Marah sweet, Exod. xv. 23-25.

Plutarch, in the life of Phocion, tells us of a certain gentlewoman of Ionia, who shewed the wife of Phocion all the rich jewels and precious stones she had; she answered her again, All my riches and jewels is my husband Phocion. So should Christians say, Christ is our riches, our jewels, our treasure, our heaven, our crown, our glory, our all. He is all comforts to us, and all contents to us, and all delights to us, and all relations to us. He is husband, wife, child, father, mother, brother, sister. He is all these; yea, he is more than all these to us, 2 Cor. vi. 10, Eph. iii. 8, Cant. v. 10.

I have read of one [St Martin], who, walking in the fields by himself, of a sudden fell into loud cries and weeping, and being asked by one that passed by and overheard him, the cause of that his lamentation, I weep, saith he, to think that the Lord Jesus should do so much for us men, and yet not one man of a thousand so much as minds him, or thinks of him. But I hope better things of you; yea, I hope and desire that this present counsel will take hold of your hearts, and work as counsel works, when it is set home by a hand of heaven.

Again, friends, it is your wisdom and your glory to mind more your present work, your present duty, than your loss, than your present calamity. David's passion was got above his wisdom, his discretion, when he said, 'O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!' 2 Sam. xviii. 33. Your

¹ *Omne bonum in summo bono.*

² Chrysostom.

present work is not to cry, O my dear wife! O my precious child! O my loving sister! but, O my soul, submit to God! justify God, lie down in the will of God; say amen to God's amen. O my soul! think well of God, and speak well of God, and carry it well towards God, &c. This is your present work; make it but your work, and then, though 'sorrow may abide for a night, yet joy will come in the morning,' Ps. xxx. 5.

Again, Observe how other saints have carried it under such a dispensation as you are under, and do you likewise.¹ To that purpose read and compare these scriptures together: Gen. xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8; Ezek. xxiv. 16-18; 2 Sam. xii. 17-22; 1 Sam. iii. 17-19; 2 Sam. xv. 25-27; Job i. 13-22. It is a more excellent, a more blessed thing to be good at imitating the pious examples of others, than to be good at praising of them. Stories speak of some that could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies that went before them.² The best and highest examples should be very quickening and provoking. Pious examples usually are more wakening than precepts; and they are more convincing and more encouraging; and the reason is, because we see in them, that the exercise of the most difficult points of godliness is yet possible. Other saints' pious examples should be looking-glasses for us to dress ourselves by; and happy are those that make such an improvement of them. Oh, happy husband! oh, happy parents! oh, happy brethren and sisters! if you write after that blessed copy, that this glorified saint, wife, child, sister, hath set before you; which that you may, I desire you seriously to dwell upon the following narrative.

One hint more, and then I have done. Augustine, in one of his epistles, hath this relation, that the very same day wherein Jerome died, he was in his study, and had got pen, ink, and paper, to write something of the glory of heaven to Jerome. Suddenly he saw a light breaking into his study, and a sweet smell that came unto him, and this voice he thought he heard, O Augustine! what dost thou? Dost think to put the sea into a little vessel? When the heavens shall cease from their continual motion, then shalt thou be able to understand what the glory of heaven is, and not before, except thou come to feel it, as I now do.

A little before this glorified saint's translation from earth to heaven, I had thoughts and resolutions to write to her about this blessed state to which she was hastening, but was prevented; however, in the following sermon you will find something of that glorious state glimpsed out unto you, which now she is in possession of. Now, dear friends, above all gettings, get an interest in that glory that she is filled with, and keep up the sense of that interest in your own souls and consciences; and then you will be happy in life, and blessed in death, and assuredly meet her and know her, and for ever enjoy her in perfect happiness and blessedness; which, that you may, is and shall be the constant desires and earnest prayers of

Your soul's servant,

THOMAS BROOKS.

¹ *Bonus dux, bonus comes*, a good leader makes a good follower, was Carus* the emperor's motto. *Præcepta docent, exempla movent*, precepts may instruct, but examples do persuade.—[* 'Carolus'?—G.]

² As Themistocles of Miltiades, and Cæsar of Alexander.—G.

A STRING OF PEARLS;

OR, THE BEST THINGS RESERVED TILL LAST.

Before I name my text, give me leave to speak a few words upon another text, viz., the glorified saint deceased, at whose funeral we are here met.

She was one of those dear spiritual children that the Lord had given me, Isa. viii. 18; she was a precious seal of my ministry, she was my living epistle, 2 Cor. iii. 1, 2; my walking certificate, my letter testimonial, Philip. iv. 1, 2. In life she was my joy, and in the day of Christ she will be my crown, as Paul speaks, 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20, 'For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.' Her application of those words of the apostle to me hath been often a very great refreshing and comfort to my soul: 'For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel,' 1 Cor. iv. 15. The work of grace upon her heart was clear, powerful, and thorough, as all know that knew her inwardly. I should tire both myself and you, and frustrate the end of your meeting, which is to hear a sermon, should I give you an exact and particular account thereof: I shall therefore mention only a few things among many for your imitation, satisfaction, and supportation under this sad dispensation.

She was a knowing woman in the things of Christ; and her knowledge was inward, experimental, growing, humbling, transforming, and practical, Prov. iii. 18; she knew Christ in the mystery as well as in the history; in the spirit as well as in the letter; feelingly, as well as notionally; she did not only eat of the tree of knowledge, but also tasted of the tree of life.

She was as sincere and plain a hearted Christian, I think, as any lives out of heaven; for plain-heartedness she was a Jacob; for uprightness she was a Job. Sincerity is the shine, the lustre, the beauty, the glory of all a Christian's graces, and in this she did excel.¹ A sincere soul is like a crystal glass with a light in the midst of it, which gives light every way; and such a one was she. A sincere soul is like

¹ *Sinceritas serenitatis mater*, sincerity is the mother of serenity.

the violet, which grows low, and hides itself and its own sweetness, as much as may be, with its own leaves ; and such a one was she. She had as many choice, visible characters of sincerity and uprightness upon her, as ever I read upon any Christian that I have had the happiness to be acquainted with. But I must not dwell on these things ; I shall only say she was not like the actor in the comedy, who cried with his mouth, *O cœlum*, O heaven ! but pointed with his finger to the earth. Such professors there be, but she was none of them.

She was as rich in spiritual experiences as most that I have been acquainted with. Ah ! how often hath she warmed, gladdened, and quickened my spirit, by acquainting me with what the Lord hath done for her precious soul. Experiments¹ in religion are beyond notions and impressions. A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue ; and she found it so. Oh ! the stories that she was able to tell of the love of God, the presence of Christ, the breathings of the Spirit, the exercise of grace, the sweetness of the word, the deceitfulness of sin, and the devices and methods of Satan, &c. And though she made use of her experiences, as crutches to lean on, yet she only made use of the promises as a foundation to build on. As the star led the wise men to Christ, so her experiences led her to a higher and sweeter living upon Christ ; her experiences were her sauce, but Christ was still her food.

She did drive a very great private trade towards heaven. She was much in secret duties, in closet communion with God, and this did very much enrich her and advance her in spiritual experiences, when she had once found the sweetness of enjoying Christ behind the door, Cant. ii. 14, Mat. vi. 5, 6. Oh, how inflamedly, how abundantly was her soul carried forth in secret duties ! She knew that Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, and that Christ was oft alone, Acts x. 9. As secret meals make a fat body, so she found secret duties made a fat soul ; and this made her much in that work. It was a witty and divine speech of Bernard, That Christ, the soul's spouse, is bashful, neither willingly cometh to his bride in the presence of a multitude ; and is it not so with the bride in her actings towards her bridegroom, Christ ?

She was many times in the school of temptation, which God made to her the school of instruction.² The Lord did usually so help her to handle the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, that she commonly triumphed over Satan's temptations, and led captivity captive. Though that arrow-master, Satan, hath shot often at her, yet her 'bow still abode in strength, her hands and heart being made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.' Augustine gave thanks to God that the heart and the temptation did not meet together, and so hath she many a time. She was good at withstanding the beginnings of a temptation, knowing that after-remedies often come too late. She was a Christian all over.³ She was a Christian in profession, and a Christian in practice ; a Christian in lip, and a Christian in life ; a Christian in word, and a Christian in work ; a Christian in show, and a Christian in power and spirit. She was not only for the general duties of Christianity, as hearing, praying, &c., but also for the

¹ 'Experiences.'—G.

² 2 Cor. xii. 7–10 ; Eph. vi. 16, 17 ; 2 Cor. ii. 14 ; Gen. xlix. 23, 24.

³ 1 Thes. v. 23 ; Acts xiii. 22, xxiv. 16 ; Luke i. 5, 6.

relative duties of religion, as to be a good wife, a good mother, a good child, a good sister, a good mistress, &c. Most sincerity and holy ingenuity shines in the relative duties of religion; and in those she was excellent. She was also very conscientious and constant, yea, abundant in the general duties of religion, as hearing, praying, &c. She did duties, but durst not for a world trust to her duties, but to her Jesus, as the dove made use of her wings to fly to the ark, but trusted not in her wings, but in the ark. In duty, she had learned the holy art of living above duty; in the business of acceptance with God, and justification before God, and reconciliation to God, and salvation by God, she knew no duty but Jesus.¹ She was as happy in denying religious self as she was resolute in denying of sinful self.

She was, for patience and cheerfulness under her long lingering weakness, as exemplary as any that ever I was acquainted with, James i. 2-4; v. 10, 11. If at any time she groaned, yet she blessed God, as she used to say, that she did not grumble. Oh how quiet, how like a lamb was she under all her trials! Oh how well would she speak of God! Oh how sweetly did she carry it towards God! Oh how much was she taken up in justifying of God throughout her pining, wasting sicknesses!

Time and strength would fail me should I but tell you what I could concerning her faith, her love to God, to Christ, to his ways, to his people, whether poor or rich, weak or strong; and of her humility, lowliness, meekness, wherein she hath left few fellows behind her. She was very high in spiritual worth, and as low in heart; she was clothed with humility as with a royal robe, and with 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price,' 1 Pet. v. 5, iii. 4. But I must hasten to my text, for I see time slides away.

If Ezekiel can commend Daniel, and match him with Noah and Job for his power in prayer, and Peter highly praise Paul, and if the ancient church had her diptychs or public tables, wherein the persons most noted for piety were recorded; nay, if Plato called Aristotle the intelligent reader, and Aristotle set up an altar in honour of Plato, then I hope you will not impute it to me as a transgression that I have presented to you the shining virtues of this glorified saint for your imitation.

What eyes thou read'st with, reader, know I wot,
Mine were not dry when I this story wrote.

AN ELEGY

Upon the death of the virtuous, his dear and never-to-be-forgotten friend, Mrs MARY BLAKE.

IF that affection could but make a poet,
Could grief and sorrow help, sure I should do it;
Mary is dead, a woman whom truth and fame,
With virtue, ever shall embalm her name;
A Mary for love, a Mary for weeping,
A Mary for choice, a Mary for seeking.

¹ Duties trusted to will undo you; when trusted to, they prove but a smooth, a silken way to hell.

With Mary she had chosen the better part ;
 With Mary she did lay Christ near'st her heart.
 Such were her parts, her piety,
 Her youth it was a full maturity.
 Grave although young ; who in her heart did prize
 Grace, truth, and Christ her only sacrifice ;
 Gracious, religious, and sincere was she,
 Courteous, without all court-hypocrisy.

Christ was her study, his glory was her aim ;
 It was her heaven for to advance the same.
 Within the holy treasury of her mind
 Were the choice virtues of all womankind ;
 A knowing woman, and an humble too,
 Which joyed all Christians who had with her to do.
 A praying woman and believing too,
 Which did the praises of other saints renew :
 A holy woman, and a harmless too.
 In saying this, I give her but her due.
 A lively Christian and thriving in grace ;
 Few towards heaven did ever hold her pace.
 The word and ways of God were her delight,
 And in the same she had a great insight.
 A fixed woman, when others staggering were,
 Which was the fruit of holy pains and care ;
 A tried Christian, whose trials were not small,
 Yet faith and patience overcame them all ;
 She lived the sermons which on earth she heard,
 And now receives the crown which was for her prepared ;
 A woman which had more than common worth ;
 I want a tongue, enough to set it forth.

Her latest precious breathings had respect
 To nothing more than divine dialect ;
 Which she committed to her mourning friends,
 In exhortations to their better ends.
 Could prayers, tears, and sighs have kept her here,
 She had not died, you need it not to fear ;
 She lives, though dead, in th' memory of those,
 Who knew her life, and saw its holy close.
 No golden letters half so long as we,
 Shall keep her precious worth in memory ;
 No costly marble need on her be spent,
 Her deathless worth is her own monument.
 Now, shall I let you know what you have lost ?
 She was a temple of the Holy Ghost.
 This we'll apply, that though we lose her here,
 Her soul doth shine in a celestial sphere.
 Mary is to the celestial Canaan gone,
 Where as a star she shines in perfection.
 Mary hath chosen sure the better part,
 Mary with angels sure doth now partake.

But stay, needs she encomiums ? Reader, know,
 She joys above, while we here wail below.
 But now, dear friends, let's mourn in hope and weep,
 Believing this blest saint in Christ doth sleep.
 Hark, don't you hear her sweet delightful voice ?
 Saying, Friends, weep not, but see that ye rejoice
 For me, for now I am perfectly free,
 From sorrow, sin, death, and mortality ;
 Surely you cannot doubt my happiness,
 Who have beheld my faith and stedfastness ;
 Oh then from sorrow see that now ye cease,
 To interrupt my joy and your own peace ;
 Surely our loss to her was greatest gain,
 For crowned in heaven she ever shall remain ;

No sighs, no groans, now from her do come,
But everlasting joys are in their room.
She now without control, no question, sings
Eternal praises to the King of kings;
She now enjoys that ever blessed face,
In hopes whereof she run a happy race :
She now hath chang'd her crosses for a crown,
Her bed of weakness for a royal throne.

Farewell! blessed saint, farewell! to thee we'll haste,
For till we meet in heaven we cannot rest.

THOMAS BROOKS,
Of Margaret's, New-Fish-street.

A WORD TO THE READER.

Now, Reader, if you please to cast a look,
Or spend some spare-time on this little book,
And in it anything that's good do view,
Then challenge it, for it belongs to you;
What's weak or worthless in it, that decline
And pass it by, I challenge that for mine.

THE BEST THINGS RESERVED TILL LAST.

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.—1 PETER I. 4.

BELOVED,—I have chosen this text upon a double ground.

1. To make a diversion of immoderate sorrow and grief from my own spirit and yours, who are most nearly concerned in this sad loss. And,

2. Because it will afford us matter most suitable to the blessed state and condition of this glorified saint, at whose funeral we are here met.

In the inscription, verses 1, 2, you have first a holy salutation, shewing first by whom this epistle was written, viz. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ; secondly, to whom it was written. Now they are described two ways: first, by their outward condition, ‘strangers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.’ There are divers opinions about these strangers, but the most common and received opinion among the learned is, that Peter wrote this epistle to the converted Jews, scattered through the provinces in Asia, who met with much opposition and affliction for the gospel’s sake.¹ Secondly, they are described by their spiritual and inward condition, which is set forth,

(1.) By the fundamental cause of it, to wit, election of God.

(2.) By the final cause, to wit, sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.

(3.) By the subservient cause, to wit, reconciliation, conferred in obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

In the third verse you have, (1.) A very stately proem, and such as can hardly be matched again, ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ (2.) You have regeneration or effectual calling described, and that

[1.] First, By the principal efficient cause thereof, which is, ‘God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’

[2.] By the impulsive cause thereof, the mercy of God, which is described by the quantity of it, ‘abundant.’

[3.] By the immediate effect thereof, a ‘lively hope,’ the singular

¹ Pareus. Compare the 2d of the Acts, the 8th of the Acts, and the 11th of the Acts, with the 1st and 2d verses of this chapter.

cause whereof is shewed to be the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 John iii. 2, 3.¹ Now hope is called a lively hope,

[1.] Because it makes a man lively and active for God and goodness.

[2.] Because it cheers, comforts, and revives the soul. It brings, it breeds, it feeds, it preserves spiritual life in the soul. This lively hope is like Myrtilus his shield, which after the use he had of it in the field, having it with him at sea, and suffering shipwreck, it served him for a boat to waft² him to shore, and so preserved his life.³ This lively hope is a shield ashore, and an anchor at sea.

[3.] It is called a lively hope, in opposition to the fading, withering, dying hopes of hypocrites, and profane persons, 'Whose hope is as a spider's web,' 'the crackling of thorns under a pot,' and 'the giving up of the ghost.'⁴

A Christian's hope is not like that of Pandora, which may fly out of the box, and bid the soul farewell; no, it is like the morning light: the least beam of it shall commence into a complete sunshine; it is *aurora gaudii*, and it shall shine forth brighter and brighter till perfect day; but the hypocrite's hope, the presumptuous sinner's hope is like a cloud, or the morning dew.

Now, in my text you have the object about which this 'lively hope' is exercised; and that is, 'an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away' [What these words import I shall shew you when I open that doctrine which I intend to stand upon at this time], 'reserved in heaven for you.'

There are three heavens: the first is *cælum ærium*, the airy heaven, where the fowls of heaven do fly; the second is *cælum astriferum*, where the stars of heaven are; the third is *cælum beatorum*, the heaven of the blessed, where God appears in eminency, and where Christ shines in glory; and this is the heaven the text speaks of.

The text will afford several points, but I shall only name one, which I intend to stand on at this time, and that is this,

Doct. That God reserves the best and greatest favours and blessings for believers till they come to heaven.

Now, I shall prove this proposition by an induction of particulars; and then give you the reasons of it. I will begin with the inheritance spoken of in the text.

I. *The best inheritance is reserved for believers till they come to heaven.* This is clear and fair in the text,⁵ yet I shall make this further out to you thus:

(1.) First, The inheritance reserved for believers till they come to heaven, *is a pure, undefiled, and incorruptible inheritance.* It is an inheritance that cannot be defiled nor blemished with abuse one way or another. Other inheritances may, and often are, with oaths, cruelty, blood, deceit, &c. The Greek word ἀμείωτος signifies a precious stone, which, though it be never so much soiled, yet it cannot be blemished nor defiled; yea, the oftener you cast it into the fire, and take it out, the more clear, bright, and shining it is.⁶ All earthly inheritances are true

¹ *Corpus spirando, anima sperando vivit*, as the body lives by breathing, so the soul by hoping.

² The early form of 'waft'?—G.

³ The giver of its name to the Myrtoan sea.—G.

⁴ Job viii. 13, 14, xi. 20, xxvii. 8; Prov. xi. 7.

⁵ *Vide Zanchium.*

⁶ *Quam sordet mihi terra, cum cælum intueor.*—Adrian.

gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars, thorns, and thistles, Gen. iii. 18, Isa. xxiii. 9. Oh the hands, the hearts, the thoughts, the lives that have been defiled, stained, and polluted with earthly inheritances! Oh the impure love, the carnal conscience, the vain boastings, the sensual joys, that earthly inheritances have filled and defiled poor souls with! All earthly inheritances, they are no better than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called *Cabul*, 1 Kings ix. 13, that is to say, displeasing or dirty. The world doth but dirt and dust us. But,

(2.) Secondly, *It is a sure, a secure, inheritance*: 'To an inheritance reserved in heaven for you.' See the text. The Greek word that is here rendered 'reserved,' is from *τηρέω*, *tereo*, which signifies to keep solicitously, to keep as with watch and ward. This inheritance is kept and secured to us by promise, by power, by blood, by oath; and therefore must needs be sure.¹ It is neither sin, nor Satan, nor the world that can put a Christian by his inheritance. Christ hath already taken possession of it in their names and in their rooms; and so it is secure to them. If weakness can overcome strength, impotency omnipotency, then may a Christian be kept out of his inheritance, but not till then. But earthly inheritances they are not sure, they are not secure. How often doth might overcome right, and the weakest go to the wall! How many are kept out, and how many are cast out, of their inheritances, by power, policy, craft, cruelty. It was a complaint of old, our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens, James v. 2.

(3.) Thirdly, *It is a permanent, a lasting, inheritance*:² 'To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' The Greek word *ἀμάραντος* is the proper name of a flower, which is still fresh and green after it hath a long time hung up in the house. It is an inheritance that shall continue as long as God himself continues. Of this inheritance there shall be no end. Though other inheritances may be lasting, yet they are not everlasting; though sometimes it be long before they have an end, yet they have an end. Where is the glory of the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms? *Sic transit gloria mundi*; but the glory of believers shall never fade nor wither; it shall never grow old nor rusty: 1 Pet. v. 4, 'And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.' A believer's inheritance, his glory, his happiness, his blessedness, shall be as fresh and flourishing after he hath been many thousand thousands of years in heaven as it was at his first entrance into it. Earthly inheritances are like tennis-balls, which are bandied up and down from one to another, and in time wore out, 1 Tim. vi. 17. The creature is all shadow and vanity; it is *filia noctis*, like Jonah's gourd. Man can sit under its shadow but a little, little while; it soon decays and dies; it quickly fades and withers. There is a worm at the root of all earthly inheritances, that will consume them in time. All earthly comforts and contents are but like a fair picture that is drawn upon the ice, which continueth not; or like the morning cloud, that soon passeth away; but a believer's inheritance endureth for ever. When

¹ Heb. vi. 12-20; Rom. viii. 33, 39; Eph. ii. 6; John xiv. 1-3, x. 27-30. If this inheritance were not kept for us, it might haply go the same way paradise did.

² Daniel ii. 44, vii. 27; Heb. xii. 27, 28; 2 Peter i. 11.

this world shall be no more, when time shall be no more, the inheritance of the saints shall be fresh, flourishing, and continuing. *Nescio quid erit, quod ista vita non erit, ubi lucet, quod non capiat locus, ubi sonat, quod non rapit tempus, ubi olet, quod non spargit flatus, ubi sapit, quod non minuit edacitas, ubi hæret, quod non divellit æternitas*, said Augustine; what will that life be, or rather what will not that life be, since all good either is not at all, or is in such a life? Light, which place cannot comprehend; voices and music, which time cannot ravish away; odours, which are never dissipated; a feast, which is never consumed; a blessing, which eternity bestoweth, but eternity shall never see at an end. So this, all this, is the heritage of all God's Jacobs.

(4.) Fourthly, *It is the freest inheritance.* It is an inheritance that is free from all vexation and molestation. There shall be no sin to molest the soul, nor no devil to vex the soul. 'There shall be no pricking brier nor grieving thorn unto the house of Israel,' Ezek. xxviii. 24; there shall be no Jebusites to be 'as pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides,' Num. xxxiii. 55. There shall be no crying, Oh my bones! oh my bowels! oh the deceit of this man! oh the oppression of that man! &c. No; they shall have a crown without thorns, a rose without prickles, and an inheritance without the least encumbrance. This inheritance flows from free love, and is freely offered, though the soul hath neither money nor money-worth. There is nothing, there is not the least thing about this inheritance that is purchased or paid for by us, Isa. lv. 1, 2. It is all frank, it is all free, it is all of grace. Here is such an inheritance that no eye ever saw, that no mortal ever possessed; and that for nothing.¹ It is freely offered, and it is freely given: Acts xx. 32, 'And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.' All is mercy, all is of free mercy, that God alone may have the glory. Other inheritances they have their encumbrances. Oh the vexations, the molestations that do attend them! Oh the debates, the disputes, the law-suits that are about earthly inheritances, such as have made many a man to go with a heavy heart, an empty purse, and a thread-bare coat; which made Themistocles profess, that if two ways were shewed him, one to hell, and the other to the bar, he would decline that which did lead to the bar, and choose that which went to hell.²

(5.) Fifthly, *It is an inheritance that is universally communicable;*³ to Jews, to Gentiles; to bond, to free; to rich, to poor; to high, to low; to male, to female: Gal. iii. 28, 29, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus;' 'And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise,' Rom. viii. 17. Among men, all sons and daughters be not heirs, yet all God's children, be they sons, be they daughters, be they bond or free, &c., they are all heirs, without exception. Jehoshaphat gave his younger sons 'great gifts of

¹ Rom. vii. 25; Isa. lxiv. 4; 1 Cor. ii. 9.

² Plutarch, *Themistocles*.—G.

³ Acts x. 35; 1 Cor. xii. 13. Oh that excellent inheritance, saith Bernard, *Non angustior multitudine hæredum*, whose portions are not scantied by reason of the number and multitude of co-heirs.

silver and gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities, but the kingdoms gave he to Jehoram, because he was the first-born,' 2 Chron. xxi. 3. And Abraham gave gifts to the rest of his sons, but Isaac only had the inheritance, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. In some countries all children be not heirs, but sons only; and in other countries not all sons, but the eldest son alone. Usually men divide their earthly inheritances. If all the sons be heirs, some inherit one place, others others; but here the whole inheritance is enjoyed by every child; here every child is an heir to all, and hath right to all. In earthly inheritances, the more you divide, the less is every one's part; but this inheritance is not diminished by the multitude of possessors, nor impaired by the number of co-heirs; it is as much to many as to a few, and as great to one as to all. Not a room, not a mansion, not a walk, not a flower, not a jewel, not a box of myrrh, but what is common to all; not a smile, not a good word, not a sweet look, not a robe, not a dish, not a delicate, not a pleasure, not a delight, but is universally communicable, and universally fit for all the thousands millions of thousands that are heirs of this inheritance. If there be a thousand together, every one sees as much of the sun, hears as much of the sound, smells as much of the sweet, as he should do if there were no more than himself alone; so here.

(6.) Sixthly, and lastly, *It is a soul-satisfying inheritance.* He that hath it shall sit down and say, I have enough, I have all.¹ As one master satisfies the servant, and as one father satisfies the child, and as one husband satisfies the wife, so one God, one Christ, one inheritance, satisfies the believing soul: Ps. xvi. 5, 6, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in a pleasant place; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' Will an inheritance of glory satisfy them? Why! this they shall have, 1 John iii. 3, Col. iii. 4. Will an inheritance of power and dominion satisfy them? Why, this they shall have, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 'All things are yours,' &c. Mat. xix. 28, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, &c. Will Abraham's bosom satisfy you? Why! this you shall have, Luke xvi. 22.² The bosom is the place where love lodges all her children; the bosom is the place of delight and satisfaction, and this you shall have; nay, you shall have a better, a choicer, a sweeter bosom to solace your souls in than Abraham's, to wit, the bosom of Jesus Christ, which will be a paradise of pleasure and delight to you. Will Christ's best robe, will his own signet put upon you, satisfy you? Why! this you shall have. Will it satisfy you to be where Christ is, and to fare as Christ fares, and wear as Christ wears, and enjoy as Christ enjoys? Why! this you shall have: John xii. 26, 'Where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' If all these things will satisfy souls, then surely the inheritance reserved in heaven for them will satisfy them; for that inheritance takes in these things, and many more. The good things that this inheritance is made up of are so many, that they exceed number; so great, that they exceed measure; so precious, that they are above all estimation; and therefore it must

¹ *Habet omnia qui habet habentem omnia.*—Augustine. Gen. xxxiii. 11, I have enough, saith Jacob, לֵי, *Li chol*, I have all.

² *Si aliud præter Deum habeo, nec aliud plene possideo nec Deum. Deus qui non deficit, solus mihi sufficit.*—Eusebius, Nuremb.

needs be a soul-satisfying inheritance.¹ But now all other inheritances they cannot satisfy the heart of man :² Eccles. v. 10, 'He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase : this is also vanity.' If you please, you may read the words nearer the original thus : 'He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; and he that loveth it, in the multitude of it, shall not have fruit.' It is the love of silver that is the mischief of it ; it is the love of silver that makes men unsatisfied with silver. Such a man will still be adding house to house, land to land, bag to bag, and heap to heap, and yet after all be still unsatisfied. Bernard³ compareth such a man to one that, being very hungry, gapeth continually for wind, with which he may be puffed, but cannot be filled and satisfied ; and so the same author elsewhere saith well, *Anima rationalis cæteris omnibus occupari potest, impleri non potest*, the reasonable soul may be busied about other things, but it cannot be filled with them ; they can no more fill up the soul than a drop of water can fill up the huge ocean ; they can no more satisfy the desires of the soul than a few drops of water can the thirst of a man inflamed with a violent fever ; nay, as oil increases the flame of the fire, so the more a man hath of the world, the more his heart is inflamed after it.⁴ When Alexander had conquered the known part of the world, say some, he sat down and wished for another world to conquer. Charles the Fifth, emperor of Germany, whom of all men the world judged most happy, cried out with detestation to all his honours, pleasures, trophies, riches, *Abite hinc, abite longe* ; get you hence, let me hear no more of you. They could not satisfy him, they could not quiet him. Such things that a fancy, a conceit, an ungrounded fear will rob a man of the comfort of, can never satisfy him ; but such are all worldly enjoyments, 2 Kings vii. 6, 7. One man will not live because his Delilah will not love ; another with Ahab will be sick, and die because he cannot get his neighbour's inheritance, 1 Kings xxi. ; another wishes himself dead because his commodities lie dead on his hands ; another with Haman can find no sweetness in all his enjoyments, because Mordecai sits at the king's gate, Esther v. 9-14 ; as those things which delude a man can never satisfy him. But the world deludes a man, and puts cheats upon him ; it promises a man pleasure, and pays him with pain ; it promises profit—'all this will I give thee'—and pays him with loss ; loss of God, of Christ, of peace of conscience, of comfort, of heaven, of happiness, of all ; it promises contentment, and fills him with torment ;—and therefore can never satisfy the soul of man, &c.

But the inheritance reserved in heaven, that will satisfy ; it will afford nothing that may offend the soul, it will yield everything that may delight the soul, that may quiet and satisfy the soul ; by all which it is most evident, that the best inheritance is reserved for the saints till they come to heaven. But,

II. Secondly, As the best inheritance, so *the best is reserved for believers till they come to heaven*. This life is full of trials, full of troubles, and full of changes. Sin within, and Satan and the world without, will

¹ August. *de Triplici habitu*, cap. iv.

² This the great caliph of Babylon, Charles the Fifth, and others, found by experience.

Bernard, *Tract. de diligendo Deum*, cap. iii.

⁴ Bernard, *Hom. Mat.* xix. 17.

keep a Christian from rest, till he comes to rest in the bosom of Christ. The life of a Christian is a race; and what rest have they that are still a-running their race? The life of a Christian is a warfare; and what rest have they that are still engaged in a constant warfare? The life of a Christian is the life of a pilgrim; and what rest hath a pilgrim, who is still a-travelling from place to place?¹ A pilgrim is like Noah's dove, that could find no rest for the sole of her foot. The fears, the snares, the cares, the changes, &c., that attends believers in this world, are such that will keep them from taking up their rest here. A Christian hears that word always sounding in his ears, 'Arise, for this is not thy resting-place,' Micah ii. 10. A man may as well expect to find heaven in hell, as expect to find rest in this world. It was the complaint of Ambrose, *Quid in hac vita non experimur adversi? Quas non procellas tempestatesque perpetimur? Quibus non exagitamur incommodis? Cujus parcitur meritis?*² What misery do we not undergo in this life? What storms and tempests do we not endure? with what troubles are we not tossed? whose worth is spared? Man's sorrows begin when his days begin, and his sorrows are multiplied as his days are multiplied; his whole life is but one continued grief; labour wears him, care tears him, fears toss him, losses vex him, dangers trouble him, crosses disquiet him, nothing pleases him; in the day he wishes, Would God it were night, and in the night, Would God it were day; before he rises he sighs; before he washes he weeps; before he feeds he fears; under all his abundance he is in wants, and 'in the midst of his sufficiency he is in straits,' Job xx. 22; his heart, as Gregory Nyssene speaks,³ *Non tantum gaudet in iis quæ habet, quantum tristatur ob ea quæ desunt*, is not so much quieted in those things which it hath, as it is tormented for those things which it hath not. In a word, all the rest we have in this world, is but a very short nap, to that glorious rest that is reserved in heaven for us: Heb. iv. 9, 10, 'There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.' There remains a rest to the people of God, or as the Greek hath it, a sabbatism, a celestial rest, an eternal rest, a Sabbath that shall never have end.⁴ When God had made man, we read that the next day he rested; and why is this set down, saith Anselm, *Nisi per hoc vellet innuere, quod illum post cujus creationem requievit, ad requiem fecit?* but that the Spirit of God would shew unto us, that God made him for rest, after the making of whom God is said to have rested?⁵ Rest is a jewel very desirable on earth, but we shall not wear it in our bosoms till we come to heaven. Ambrose well observes,⁶ that *sex diebus mundus est factus, septimo requietum est die; ultra mundum ergo est quies, ultra mundum etiam fructus quietis*, in six days the world was made, on the seventh day there was rest; it is beyond this world, therefore, that rest is, and it is beyond this world that the fruit of rest is to be had.

¹ Heb. xii. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; Isa. xl. 2; 2 Cor. x. 4; 1 Tim. i. 18; Ps. cxix. 54; Heb. xi. 13; 1 Peter ii. 11.

² Ambrose *de fide resurrectionis*.

³ Gregor. Nyssen. in *Eccles. Hom. 7*.

⁴ σαββατισμός, a sabbatizing.

⁵ Estius—and others—understands this text of a celestial rest, &c.

⁶ Ambrose in *Evangel. Lu. c. ix.*

I shall shew you, observing brevity, the excellency of that rest that is reserved for believers in heaven. As,

(1.) First, *It is a superlative rest*; a rest that infinitely exceeds all earthly rest. All other rest is not to be named in the day wherein this rest is spoken of. Some have purchased rest, for a time, with silver and gold, but this is a rest that all the gold and silver in the world can never purchase. Over this rest is written, not the price of gold, but the price of blood, yea, the price of the best and noblest blood that ever run in veins. That rest we have here must needs be a poor, low-priced rest, *ubi multa cautela custoditur salus corporis, custodita etiam amittitur, amissa cum gravi labore reparatur, et tamen reparata in dubio semper est*,¹ where the health of the body is preserved with much watchfulness, being preserved, is also lost; being lost, is recovered with much labour; and yet being recovered, is always in danger and doubtfulness, what will become of it. Our estate in this world is not a fixed estate; what then is our rest? Our very living is but a passing away; our lives are full of troubles, and they fill our souls full of unquietness. After the Trojans had been tossing and wandering in the Mediterranean Sea, as soon as they espied Italy, they cried out with exulting joy, 'Italy! Italy!' and so when saints, after all their tossings and restlessness in this world, shall come to heaven, then, and not till then, they will cry out, Rest, rest, no rest to this rest. But,

(2.) Secondly, The rest reserved in heaven for believers, *it is an universal rest*, Rev. xiv. 13, a rest from all sin and a rest from all sorrow; a rest from all afflictions and a rest from all temptations; a rest from all oppression and a rest from all vexations; a rest from all labour and pains, from all trouble and travail, from all aches, weaknesses, and diseases. There is no crying out, O my bones! O my back! O my bowels! O my sides! O my head! O my heart! Our rest here is only in part and imperfect; here we have rest in one part and pain in another, quiet in one part and torment in another. Sometimes when the head is well, the heart is sick; and sometimes when there is peace in the conscience, there is pain in the bones. Here many return us hatred for our love, and this hinders our rest;² here we are apt to create cares and fears to ourselves, rather than we will want them, and this hinders our rest; here we are very apt to give offence, and as apt to take offence, though none be given, and this hinders our rest, 1 Cor. x. 32. Sometimes we have rest abroad and none at home; sometimes rest at home and none abroad, Job vii. 13-16. Our rest here is imperfect and incomplete, but our rest in heaven shall be most perfect and complete; there the inward and the outward man shall be both at rest, &c. But,

(3.) Thirdly, *It is an uninterrupted rest*; it is a rest that none can interrupt.³ Here sometimes sin interrupts our rest, sometimes temptations interrupts our rest, sometimes divine withdrawals interrupts our rest, sometimes the sudden changes and alterations that God makes in our conditions interrupts our rest; sometimes the power, and sometimes the policy, and sometimes the cruelty of wicked men interrupts our rest, sometimes the crossness of friends, sometimes the deceitfulness of friends,

¹ Greg. Mor. l. xi. c. 26.

² Ps. xxxviii. 20, cix. 4, Mat. vi. 25-34.

³ Ps. xl. 12; 2 Cor. xii. 7-9; Ps. xxx. 6, 7; Cant. iii. 5; Job iii. 25, 26, &c.

sometimes the loss of friends, and sometimes the death of friends interrupts our rest; one thing or another is still interrupting our rest.¹ Oh! but in heaven there shall be no sin, no devil, no sinner, no false friends; there shall be nothing, there shall not be the least thing that may interrupt a saint's rest; indeed, heaven could not be heaven, did it admit of anything that might interrupt a saint's rest. Heaven is above all winds and weather, storms and tempests, earthquakes and heartquakes. There is only that which is amiable and desirable; there is nothing to cloud a Christian's joy, or to interrupt a Christian's rest. When once a soul is asleep in the bosom of Abraham, none can awake him, none can molest or disturb him. Here is joy without sorrow, blessedness without misery, health without sickness, light without darkness, abundance without want, beauty without deformity, honour without disgrace, ease without labour, and peace without interruption or perturbation. Here shall be eyes without tears, hearts without fears, and souls without sin. Here shall be no evil to molest the soul; here shall be all good to cheer the soul, and all happiness to satisfy the soul; and what then can possibly interrupt the rest of the soul? But,

(4.) Fourthly, As it is an uninterrupted rest, so *it is a peculiar rest*; it is a rest peculiar to sons, to saints, to heirs, to beloved ones: Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'So he gives his beloved rest,' or as the Hebrew hath it, dearling, or dear beloved, quiet rest, without care or sorrow.² The Hebrew word שָׁנָה, *Shena*, is written with ש, a quiet dumb letter, which is not usual, to denote the more quietness and rest. This rest is a crown that God sets only upon the head of saints; it is a gold chain that he only puts about his children's necks; it is a jewel that he only hangs between his beloveds' breasts; it is a flower that he only sticks in his darlings' bosoms. This rest is a tree of life that is proper and peculiar to the inhabitants of that heavenly country; it is children's bread, and shall never be given to dogs. Here wicked men have their good things; their peace, their rest, their quiet, &c., their heaven, whilst the people of God are troubled and disquieted on every side;³ but the day is a-coming wherein the saints shall have rest, and sinners shall never have a good day more, never have an hour's rest more; their torments shall be endless and ceaseless. The old world had their resting-time, but at last patience and justice, tired and abused, put a period to their rest, by washing and sweeping them to hell with a flood; and then Noah, and those righteous souls that were with him, had their time of rest and peace; and so shall it be with sinners and saints at last, &c. But,

(5.) Fifthly, The rest reserved for the saints in heaven, as it is a peculiar rest, so *it is a rest that is universally communicable to all the sons and daughters of God*. 'And to you who are troubled, rest with us,' saith the apostle Paul; "rest with us," with us apostles, with us saints, and with all the family of heaven together, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. Here some saints are at liberty, when others are in prison; here some

¹ *Quid est aliud hic nasci, nisi ingredi laboriosam vitam?* What is it else to be born here, than to enter into a troublesome life?—*Augustine*.

² לִירִירוֹ, it is an allusion to Solomon's name, Jedidiah, 2 Sam. xii. 25.

³ Luke xvi. 25; Ps. lxxiii. 3-21; Job xxi. 7-14.

sit under their own vines and drink the blood of the grape, whilst others have their blood poured out as water upon the ground, &c.; but in heaven they shall all have rest together, the believing husband and the believing wife shall rest together, and believing parents and believing children shall rest together. Here one relation hath rest, when the other hath not, but there they shall all rest together. There the painful preacher and the diligent hearer shall rest together; there the gracious master and the pious servant shall rest together, &c.: Isa. lvii. 2, 'He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness; they shall rest in their beds,' or as some read it, they shall rest in their bee-hives, expressing the Hebrew by the Latin; *cubile* signifies a bee-hive, as well as a couch or bed. Look, as the poor wearied bees do rest all together in their bee-hives, in their honey-houses, so all the saints shall rest together in heaven, which is their bee-hive, their honey-house; and oh what a happy rest will that be, when all the saints shall rest together! But,

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, *It is a permanent, a constant rest.* Of this rest there shall be no end. It is a rest that shall last as long as heaven lasts; yea, as long as God himself shall continue. Time shall be no more, and this world shall be no more, but this rest shall remain for ever, Rev. x. 6, 2 Pet. iii. 10, *et seq.* The rest of the people of God in this world is transient, it is inconstant. Now they have rest, and anon they have none; now a calm, presently a storm; now all is in quiet, anon all is in an uproar. Their rest in this world is like a morning cloud and the early dew, which is soon dried up by the beams of the sun, Hosea vi. 4. Since God hath cast man out of paradise, out of his first rest, he can find but little rest in this world; sometimes the unfitness of the creature troubles him, sometimes the fickleness of the creature vexes him, sometimes the treachery of the creature enrages him, and sometimes the want of the creature distracts him. When in his heart he saith, Now I shall have rest, now I shall be quiet, then troubles and changes come, so that his whole life is rather a dreaming of rest than an enjoying of rest. Oh! but in heaven the rest of the saints shall have no end; there shall be nothing that can put a period to their rest, there shall be everything that may conduce to the perpetuating of their rest. Heaven would be but a poor low thing, did it not afford a perpetual rest.

III. Thirdly, As the best rest, so *the best sight and knowledge of God is reserved for believers till they come to heaven.* I readily grant that even in this world the saints do know the Lord, inwardly, spiritually, powerfully, feelingly, experimentally, transformingly, practically; but yet, notwithstanding all this, the best knowledge of God is reserved for heaven, which I shall evidence by an induction of particulars, thus:

(1.) First, *They shall have the clearest knowledge and revelation of God in heaven.*² Here our visions of God are not clear; and this makes many a child of light to sit and sigh in darkness, Lam. iii. 44. God veils himself, he covers himself with a cloud. Man, when he is silent concerning God, seemeth to be something, but when he begins to speak of God, it plainly appears that he is nothing.

Simonides being asked by Hiero, the tyrant, what God was, craved

¹ 'Painstaking.'—G.

² *Nihil notum in terra, nihil ignotum in cælo.*

a day for to deliberate about an answer; but the more he sought into the nature of God, the more difficult he found it to express; therefore, the next day after being questioned, he asked two days, the third day he craved four, and so from that time forth doubled the number; and being asked why he did so, he answered, that the more he studied, the less he was able to define what he was, so incomprehensible is his nature.¹

Our visions of God here are dark and obscure. Augustine, asking the question, what God is? gives in this answer,² *Certe hic est, de quo et quum dicitur, non potest dici; quum æstimatur, non potest æstimari; quum comparatur, non potest comparari; quum definitur, ipse sua definitione crescit*: surely it is he, who when he is spoken of cannot be spoken of, who when he is considered of cannot be considered of, who when he is compared to any thing cannot be compared, and when he is defined, groweth greater by defining of him. It is observable, that it was not the Lord which the prophet Ezekiel saw, it was only a vision, Ezek. i. 28. In the vision it was not the glory of the Lord which he saw, but the likeness of it; nay, it was not the likeness of it, but the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord, that made him to fall on his face, as not being able to behold it. Sin hath so weakened, dazzled, and darkened the eye of our souls, that we cannot bear the sight of the glory of the Lord, nor the likeness of it, no! nor the appearance of the likeness of it.

In the Psalms the Lord is said to ride upon a cherub, Ps. xviii. 10; upon which words one saith thus, *Cherub quippe plenitudo scientiæ dicitur, proinde super plenitudinem scientiæ ascendisse perhibetur, quia majestatis ejus plenitudinem scientia nulla comprehendit*, a cherub is so called, as being a fulness of knowledge; and therefore is God said to ascend above the fulness of knowledge, because no knowledge comprehendeth the fulness of his majesty.³

But when believers come to heaven, then they shall have a more clear vision and sight of God: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'⁴ Now we see him obscurely, as in a glass, but then we shall see him distinctly, clearly, immediately; we shall then apprehend him clearly, though, even then, we cannot comprehend him fully.⁵ Some sense those words, I shall know even as I am known, thus: Look, as God knoweth me after a manner agreeable to his infinite excellency, so shall I know God according to my capacity, not obscurely, but perfectly, as it were, face to face; and this is the greatest height of blessedness and happiness. Now all veils shall be taken off; and we shall have a clear prospect of God's excellency and glory, of his blessedness and fulness, of his loveliness and sweetness.⁶ Now all masks, clouds, and curtains, shall be drawn for ever, that saints may clearly see the breadth, length, depth, and height of divine love, and that they may clearly see into the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of Christ's incarnation, the mystery of man's redemption, the mys-

¹ Cicero, *de natura deor.* l. i.

² Augustine *de fide cont. Arrian.* c. vi.

³ Gregory *Mor.* l. vii. c. 15.

⁴ ἐν ἀνίματι, in a riddle.

⁵ In this life, saith Bernard, *erit mira serenitas, plena securitas, æterna felicitas*, there will be wonderful serenity, full security, eternal felicity. ⁶ *Visio clara non comprehensiva.*

tery of providences, the mystery of prophesies ; and all those mysteries that relate to the nature, substances, offices, orders, and excellencies of the angels, those princes of glory, who still keep their standings in the court of heaven ; and all those mysteries that concern the nature, original, immortality, spirituality, excellency, and activity of our own souls, beside a world of other mysteries that respect the decrees and counsels of God, the creation of the world, the fall of Adam, and the fall of angels. Now the most knowing men in the world are much in the dark about these things ; but when we come to heaven, we shall have a close and a clear sight and knowledge of them. Now we shall know, as we are known ; now we shall see God face to face. *O beata visio, videre Regem angelorum, sanctum sanctorum, Deum cœli, Rectorem terræ, patrem viventium !* Oh blessed sight ! to behold the King of angels, the holy of holies, the God of heaven, the Ruler of the earth, the Father of the living !¹ *O beata visio, videre Deum in seipso, videre in nobis, et nos in eo.* Oh blessed vision and contemplation, wherein we shall see God in himself, God in us, and ourselves in God !² But,

(2.) Secondly, As in heaven they shall have the clearest knowledge of God, so in heaven *they shall have the fullest knowledge of God.* Here our knowledge of God is weak, as well as dark, but in heaven it shall be full and complete. ‘Here we know but in part ; but there we shall know as we are known,’ 1 Cor. xiii. 12. As the apostle speaks, here we are able to take in but little of God, either sin or Satan, or else fears, doubts, and scruples, or else the pleasures or profits, the comforts or contents of this world doth so defile the soul, and so fill the soul, that it is able to take in but very little of God. ‘How little a portion,’ saith Job, ‘is heard of him !’ Job xxvi. 14. It is but a portion, a little portion, that we can conceive of him. The Hebrew is שֵׁמֶט, *shemets, particulum*, a little bit, nay, it is said, שְׁמֶט דָּבָר, *shemets dabur, particulam verbi*, a little piece of a word, or *particulam alicujus*, a little piece of something, that we do hear of him. ‘I have many things to say unto you,’ saith Christ, ‘but ye cannot bear them now,’ John xvi. 12.³ Man is a poor, low, weak creature, and is not able to bear any great or full discoveries of God. As weak shoulders cannot bear heavy burdens, nor weak stomachs digest strong meats ; no more were they able to bear the revelation of many high, spiritual, precious, and glorious truths, that Christ was willing to discover to them. Those that have weak eyes, or that have a blemish in their eyes, cannot discern things aright. Now we have all weak eyes, we have all one blemish or another in our eye, which hinders us from a full sight and knowledge of God, and of his excellency and glory. Oh ! but now in heaven, we shall have a full and perfect knowledge of God ; there shall be no sore eyes, no clouds, no mists to hinder us from a full sight of the Sun of righteousness.⁴ Here our understandings shall be full of the knowledge of God, our minds full of the wisdom of God, our wills full of the righteousness and holiness of God, and our affections full of the love and delights of God.

¹ Augustine, *lib. de spir.*, &c. c. lvii.

² Bernard, *Meditat.* c. iv.

³ 1 Cor. iii. 1-3 ; Heb. v. 12-14.

⁴ Our knowledge of God now is rather negative than positive ; we know not so well what God is, as what he is not ; as that he is not a man, as that he is not changeable, &c. Now it is observed to our hand, *ex puris negativis nihil concluditur*, that from pure negatives there can be no certain conclusion made.

Here we have but weak and shallow apprehensions of God, but there, as Bernard speaks sweetly, *Deus implebit animum rationalem sapientia, concupiscibilem justitia, irascibilem perfecta tranquillitate*, God will fill the soul with light of wisdom, the concupiscible faculty with righteousness, the irascible with perfect tranquillity.

If a man did dwell within the body of the sun, surely he would be full of light; if a man did dwell in the midst of a fountain, surely he would be filled with that fountain; so when the saints come to heaven, they shall dwell as it were in the body of the Sun of righteousness; and therefore they cannot be but full of light; they shall dwell in the midst of the fountain of life; and therefore they shall sure be full of the fountain. But,

(3.) Thirdly, The sight and knowledge that we shall have of God in heaven, *will be immediate*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Here our knowledge of God is mediate; here we see him, but it is either through the glass of his word, or the glass of his works.¹ Sometimes through the glass of his word God shews himself; sometimes through the glass of prayer God gives some representation of himself to his people; sometimes through the glass of the Lord's supper he discovers some rays and beams of his glory. All the sight and knowledge that we have of God in this world is through some glass or other. Now there is a vast difference between seeing an object directly, immediately, and in its own proper colours, and beholding it through a glass. The sight of an object through a glass is very weak and unsatisfying. One direct view of the Lord, one immediate sight of God, will infinitely transcend all those sights and views that we have had in this world, either through the glass of his word, or the glass of his works, either through the glass of ordinances, or the glass of the promises, or the glass of providences, Mat. v. 8. One real direct sight of a friend or relation, doth more cheer, quiet, and satisfy us, than a thousand representations of them in glasses, or by their pictures. In heaven we shall see God face to face, without the interposition of men or means; and this direct and immediate sight of God, is that which makes heaven to be heaven to the saints. All the glory of heaven would be but a poor low thing in the eye of a saint, had he not a direct and immediate sight of God there. In heaven all mediums shall be removed, all glasses shall be broken, and the glorified saint shall behold God with open face; all curtains being for ever withdrawn from between God and the soul. Good souls in heaven are like good angels, who are still beholding the face of God, Mat. xviii. 10. As God is still a-looking upon them as the jewels of his crown, so they are still crying and looking upon God as their heaven, yea, as their great all, and that by a direct and immediate act of their souls. But,

(4.) Fourthly and lastly, The sight and knowledge that they shall have of God in heaven, *shall be permanent and constant*. Now saints have a happy sight of God, and anon they have lost it; this hour they have a precious sight of God in the mount, and the next hour they have lost this sight. 'Behold, he that should comfort my soul stands afar off,' Lam. i. 16; and 'he hath covered himself with a cloud, that our prayers cannot pass through,' Lam. iii. 44. Our visions of God here are

¹ God is a supersubstantial substance, an understanding not to be understood, a word never to be spoken.—Dionys. Areop. *de divin. Nom.* c. 1.

transient and vanishing. The visions, the glimpses of majesty and glory which Moses and Peter saw in the mount, were not permanent but transient; their sun was quickly clouded, and both of them soon after were found walking in the dark;¹ and therefore well saith Augustine, *Beatitudo hic parari potest, possideri non potest*,² happiness may be obtained here, but here we cannot have the plenary and take possession thereof. Oh but in heaven, our sight of God, our knowledge of God shall be permanent, it shall be lasting; there shall be no sin, no cloud, no mist, no curtain, to hinder us from a constant sight and vision of God; there we shall see God clearly, fully, eternally. The spouse's question, 'Did you see him whom my soul loves? Cant. iii. 3, shall never be heard in heaven, because God shall be always in their eye, and still upon their hearts; nor Job's complaint, 'Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him,' Job xxiii. 8, 9. Heaven would not be heaven, were it not always day with the soul; did not the soul live in a constant sight and apprehension of God, all the glory of heaven could not make a heaven to a glorified soul. But,

IV. Fourthly, As the best sight and knowledge of God is reserved till last, so the best and choicest presence of God and Christ is reserved till last; and this I shall thus make good.

(1.) First, In heaven saints shall have *the greatest and the fullest presence of God*.³ No man in this world hath so complete and full a presence of God but he may have a fuller; but in heaven the presence of God shall be so full and complete, as that nothing can be added to it to make it more complete. Sometimes sin, sometimes Satan, sometimes the world, sometimes resting in duties, sometimes the weakness of our graces, hinder us from enjoying a full presence of God here; but in heaven there shall be nothing to interpose between God and us; there shall be nothing to hinder us from enjoying a full and complete presence of God. It is this full presence of God that is the heaven of heaven, the glory of all our glory. An imperfect and incomplete presence of God in heaven would darken all the glory of that state. It is the full and perfect presence of God in heaven that is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory; and this you shall have. But,

(2.) Secondly, They shall have *a soul-satisfying presence of God in heaven*. They shall be so satisfied with the presence of God in heaven, that they shall say, We have enough, we have all, because we enjoy that presence that is virtually all, that is eminently all, that is all light, all life, all love, all heaven, all happiness, all comforts, all contents, &c.⁴ Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Though the spiritual and gracious presence of God with the saints in this world doth much cheer and comfort them, yet it doth not satisfy them. They are still crying out, More of this blessed presence! oh more of this presence! Lord, less money will serve, so we may but have more of thy presence!

¹ Exod. xxxiii., Mat. xvii. 1-4.

² Serm. xlv. *de sanctis*

³ Ps. xvi. 11. *Ipse unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia.*—Augustine.

⁴ *Omne bonum in summo bono*, all good is in the chiefest good.

less of the creature will serve, so we may have but more of thy presence! Ps. xlii. 1, 2, xxxvii. 1-3. As the king of Sodom said unto Abraham, 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself,' Gen. xiv. 21, so say gracious souls, Give us more and more of the presence of God, and let the men of the world take the world and divide it amongst themselves. Divine presence is very inflaming; a soul that hath but tasted the sweetness of it cannot but long for more of it; as those that had tasted of the grapes of Canaan longed to be in Canaan, and as the Gauls, who, when they had tasted of the sweet wine that was made of the grapes that grew in Italy, they were very eager after Italy, crying out, 'O Italy! Italy!'¹ so precious souls that have experienced the sweetness of divine presence, they cannot be satisfied with a little of it, but in every prayer this is the language of their souls, Lord! more of thy presence! and in every sermon they hear, Lord! let us have more of thy presence! and in every sacrament they receive, Lord! vouchsafe to us more of thy presence!

Nay, this gracious presence of God that they enjoy here makes them very earnest in their desires and longings after a celestial, a glorious presence of God and Christ in heaven, which presence alone can satisfy their souls.² Look, as the espoused maid longs for the marriage day, the apprentice for his freedom, the captive for his ransom, the traveller for his inn, and the mariner for his haven, so do souls that are under the power and sweet of God's gracious presence long for to enjoy his glorious presence in heaven, which alone can fill and satisfy their immortal souls. As Monica, Austin's mother, a precious godly woman, who enjoyed much of the gracious presence of Christ, with her spirit she cried out, *Quid hic faciemus? cur non ocyus migramus? cur non hinc avolamus?* What do we here? why depart we not swifter? why fly we not hence?

So saith another [Bernard], As what I have, if offered to thee, pleaseth not thee without myself, so, O Lord! the good things we have from thee, though they refresh us, yet they satisfy us not without thyself. Lord! I am willing to die, to have a further discovery of thyself.

And so saith another [Augustine], Thou hast made us, O Lord, for thyself, and our hearts are unquiet till they come unto thee.

And so when Modestus, the emperor's lieutenant,³ threatened to kill Basil, he answered, If that be all, I fear not; yea, your master cannot more pleasure me than in sending me unto my heavenly Father, to whom I now live, and to whom I desire to hasten.

And saith another [Augustine], Let all the devils in hell beset me round, let fasting macerate my body, let sorrows oppress my mind, let pains consume my flesh, let watchings dry me, or heat scorch me, or cold freeze me; let all these, and what can come more, happen unto me, so I may enjoy my Saviour.

Austin wishing that he might have seen three things, Rome flourishing, Paul preaching, and Christ conversing with men upon the earth, Bede comes after, and correcting this last wish, saith, Yea, but let me see the King in his beauty, Christ in his heavenly kingdom; by all which you see that it is not a spiritual presence, but the glorious presence of God and Christ in heaven, that can satisfy the souls of the

¹ Plutarch, *in vita Camilli*.

² 2 Cor. v. 1-8; Philip. i. 23; Cant. viii. 14.

³ Cf. Gell. iii. 9. Macrob. Saturn i. 4, 10, 16.—G.

saints. It was a great mercy for Christ to be with Paul on earth, but it was a greater mercy, and a more satisfying mercy, for Paul to be with Christ in heaven, Philip. i. 23. They enjoy much who enjoy the presence of God on earth, but they enjoy more who enjoy the presence of God in heaven; and no presence below this presence can satisfy a believing soul. But,

(3.) Thirdly, As they shall enjoy a satisfying presence of God in heaven, so they shall enjoy *a constant, a permanent presence of God in heaven*. Here God comes and goes, he is often a removing court, but in heaven the King of glory will be always present: 1 Thes. iv. 17, 18, 'Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.' It is the constant presence of God in heaven, that makes a heaven of comfort to blessed souls. Should this sun ever set, should this presence ever fail, heaven would be as dark as hell, yea, heaven would be another hell. Here Jonah complains that he was cast out of God's presence, and the church complains, that he that should comfort her soul, stands afar off.¹ No saint enjoys the gracious presence of God at all times alike. They that enjoy most of this presence may say of it, as Jacob spake of Laban's countenance, I see, said he, your Father's countenance is not towards me as before, Gen. xxxi. 5; so may they say, Oh we see, Oh we feel, that the presence of God is not with us as before! Oh what a warming, what a cheering, what a quickening, what an enlivening, what a comforting, what a melting, what an encouraging, what an assisting presence of God had we once! Oh but it is not so now with us! we that used always to be upon Christ's knee, or in his arms, are now at a distance from him; he that used to lie day and night as a bundle of myrrh betwixt our breasts, hath now covered himself with a cloud, Cant. i. 13. Oh we cannot see his face, we cannot hear his voice, as in the days of old! &c. But now in heaven saints shall enjoy a constant presence of God; there shall not be one moment to all eternity, wherein they shall not enjoy the glorious presence of God; and, indeed, it is this constant presence of God in heaven, that puts a glory upon all the saints' glory. Heaven, without this constant presence of God, would be but as a court without a king, or as the firmament without the sun. And thus you see that the best and choicest presence of God and Christ is reserved for heaven. But,

V. Fifthly, *The perfection of grace is reserved for glory.*² Though our graces be our best jewels, yet they are imperfect, and do not give out their full lustre; they are like the moon, which when it shineth brightest, hath a dark spot: 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 'For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.' Here 'we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,' Isa. lxiv. 6. Oh the stains, the spots, the blots, the blemishes that attend our choicest graces and services! Our best personal righteousness is stained with much unrighteousness, perfection of grace and holiness is

¹ Jonah ii. 4; Lam. i. 16; Ps. xxx. 6, 7; Isa. viii. 17; Micah vii. 7-9.

² *Perfectum id est cui nihil deest.*

reserved for heaven, Eph. v. 25–27 ; Jude 24 ; Eph. iv. 13. In the work of conversion, God lays the foundation of grace in the souls of his people, but the putting on the top-stone is reserved for heaven. Grace here is but a king in the cradle, but in heaven it will be a king upon its throne.

For the making this truth more fully out, I will only instance in the joy of the saints, and that thus :

[1.] First, *The joy of the saints in heaven shall be pure joy.* Here our joy is mixed with sorrow, our rejoicing with trembling, Ps. ii. 11 : Mat. xxviii. 8, ‘The women departed from the sepulchre with fear and great joy.’ This composition of two contrary passions is frequently found in the best hearts. Here the best have sorrow with their joy, water with their wine, vinegar with their oil, pain with their ease, winter with their summer, and autumn with their spring, &c. But in heaven, Rev. vii. 17, they shall have joy without sorrow, light without darkness, sweetness without bitterness, summer without winter, health without sickness, honour without disgrace, glory without shame, and life without death : Rev. xxi. 4, ‘And 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.’ But,

[2.] Secondly, As they shall have in heaven pure joy, so they shall have in heaven *plenitudinem gaudii, fulness of joy.* Here all joy is at an ebb, but there is the flood of joy, there is fulness of joy : Ps. xvi. 11, ‘In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.’ Here shall be *gaudium super gaudium*, joy above joy, joy surmounting all joy. Here shall be such great joys, as no geometrician can measure ; so many joys, as no arithmetician can number ; and so wonderful, as no rhetorician can utter, had he the tongue of men and angels.¹ Here shall be joy within thee, and joy without thee, and joy above thee, and joy beneath thee, and joy about thee. Joy shall spread itself over all the members of your bodies, and over all the faculties of your souls. In heaven, your knowledge shall be full, your love full, your visions of God full, your communion with God full, your fruition of God full, and your conformity to God full, and from thence will arise fulness of joy. If all the earth were paper, and all the plants of the earth were pens, and all the sea were ink, and if every man, woman, and child, had the pen of a ready writer, yet were they not able to express the thousandth part of those joys that saints shall have in heaven.² All the joy we have here in this world, is but pensiveness to that we shall have in heaven ; all pleasure here to that but heaviness, all sweetness here to that but bitterness. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The joy of the saints in heaven shall be *a lasting joy, an uninterrupted joy.* Here their joy is quickly turned into sorrow, their singing into sighing, their dancing into mourning. Our joy here is like the husbandman’s joy in harvest, which is soon over, and then we must sow again in tears, before we can reap in joy. David’s joy was

¹ If one drop of the joys of heaven should fall into hell, it would swallow up all the bitterness of hell.—*Augustine.*

² A reminiscence of the old poem commencing ‘Could we with ink the ocean fill,’ on which see various curious articles in ‘Notes and Queries,’ First Series.—G.

soon interrupted: 'In my prosperity I said, I should never be removed; but thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,' Ps. xxx. 6, 7. Now David had the oil of joy and gladness, and by and by the spirit of heaviness and sadness: 'Restore to me the joy of thy salvation,' Ps. li. 12. Jacob had much joy at the return of his sons with corn from Egypt; but this joy was soon interrupted by his parting with his dear Benjamin.

I might shew you this truth in other instances, as in Abraham, Job, and other saints; but surely there is no believer but finds that sometimes sin interrupts his joy, and sometimes Satan disturbs his joy, and sometimes afflictions and sometimes desertions eclipse his joy; sometimes the cares of the world, and sometimes the snares of the world, and sometimes the fears of the world, mars our joy; sometimes great crosses, sometimes near losses, and sometimes unexpected changes, turns a Christian's harping into mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that weep.¹

Some say of Rhodes, that there is not one day in the year in which the sun shines not clearly on them. Surely there is hardly one day in the year, yea, I had almost said one hour in the day, wherein something or other doth not fall in to interrupt a Christian's joy.

But now in heaven the joy of the saints shall be constant; there shall nothing fall in to disturb or to interrupt their joy: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand is pleasures for ever more.' Mark, for quality, there are pleasures; for quantity, fulness; for dignity, at God's right hand; for eternity, for evermore. And millions of years multiplied by millions, make not up one minute to this eternity of joy that the saints shall have in heaven. In heaven there shall be no sin to take away your joy, nor no devil to take away your joy, nor no man to take away your joy: John xvi. 22, 'Your joy no man taketh from you.' The joy of the saints in heaven is never ebbing, but always flowing to all contentment. The joys of heaven never fade, never wither, never die, nor never are lessened nor interrupted. The joy of the saints in heaven is a constant joy, an everlasting joy, in the root and in the cause, and in the matter of it and in the objects of it. *Æterna erit exultatio, que bono latatur æterno*, their joy lasts for ever whose objects remains for ever.² Isa. xxxv. 10, 'And the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joys upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away.' In this world not only the joy of hypocrites and the joy of profane persons, but also the joy of the upright, is oftentimes 'as the crackling of thorns under a pot,' or as the blaze of a brush faggot, now all on a flame, and as suddenly out again; or as the beast *ephemerou*, that dieth on the day it is born;³ but the joy of believers in heaven shall be like the fire on the altar, that never went out. When Cæsar was sad, he used to say to himself, *Cogitate Cæsarem esse*, think thou art Cæsar; so when your hearts are sad and sorrowful, oh! then think of these everlasting joys that you shall have in heaven. But I must hasten; and therefore in the

¹ Job xxx. 26-31. Some worm or other is still a-gnawing at the very root of our joy, like the worm that made Jonah his gourd to wither.

² *In quibus operamur, in illis et gaudemus*, saith Tertullian: in what things or persons we act, in those things we rejoice.

³ *ἐφ' ἡμέρας*, = living but a day, rather than a particular 'beast' as above; applied to men, *ἐφ' ἡμέρας*, creatures of a day.—G.

VI. Sixth place, As the best joys, so *the best society, the best company, is reserved till last.* It is reserved till believers come to heaven: Heb. xii. 22-24, 'But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,¹ to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' Here *erimus cives celi, socii angelorum, cohæredes Christi*, we shall be citizens of heaven, fellows of angels, co-heirs with Christ, citizens with saints, and of the household of God. *O beata visio, videre Regem angelorum, sanctum sanctorum, Deum celi, Rectorem terre, Patrem viventium!*² Oh blessed sight, to behold the King of angels, the holy of holies, the God of heaven, the Ruler of the earth, the Father of the living! Woe to me, saith one, which am not where the holy saints be; for their life is out of all gun-shot and danger of death, their knowledge without error, their love without offence, and their joy without any annoy. The dignity and diversity of the inhabitants of heaven doth much set forth the glory of heaven. This earth, this world, is full of sinners, but heaven is full of saints; this world is full of men, but heaven is full of angels; this world is full of friends and enemies, but in heaven there shall be only friends and sons. Here the nobility and majesty of the guest casts a great deal of honour and splendour upon the royal palace where they meet. No company so noble, so sweet, so desirable, so delightsome, so comfortable, so suitable as this.

[1.] First, *Here all shall be of one mind, of one judgment.* In heaven there shall be no discord, no wrangling, no quarrelling, no dividing. Here all shall think the same things, and speak the same things, and do the same things. Now, Turks and pagans can agree, and bears and lions, wolves and tigers, can agree; nay, a legion of devils can better agree in one body, than a handful of saints can agree in one city, in one nation, &c.³ There was a temple of Concord among the heathen; and yet how rare is it to find a temple of concord among them that are the temple of the Holy Ghost? Whilst there was a contest among the birds about a rose found in the way, a mischievous owl came in the night and carried the flower away; you know how to apply it. But now in heaven there shall be no heats, no contests, no debates, no disputes, but as the curtains of the tabernacle were all looped together, so all the saints in heaven shall be all looped together in one mind, in one judgment, and in one way.

[2.] Secondly, All the saints in heaven shall be *of a sweet golden disposition.*⁴ Here the different dispositions of saints doth much hinder that sweetness of communion which otherwise would be amongst them. Here some are of a sour disposition, and of a cross and rugged temper, but in heaven all saints shall be of a sweet, a soft, a silken dis-

¹ μυριάδων, to the myriads, or many ten thousands, of angels.

² Aug. *Lib. de Spir.*, &c., cap. 57

³ Strigelius desired to die, to be freed from the implacable strife of divines. [Victorinus Strigelius, one of The Reformers. Died, 1569. His *ὑπομνηματα, in omnes libros Nov. Test.*, 1565, 2 vols., and other exegetical writings, were favourites with the Puritans. His 'Psalms' of David were early translated by Rich. Robinson. 1582-96.—G.]

⁴ Grace in a cross unhewn nature is like a diamond set in iron.

position, which will exceedingly sweeten that royal communion. Here grace in a man of an untoward crooked disposition is like a brass ring upon a leprous finger; and grace in a man of a sweet disposition is like a gold ring upon an alabaster hand. Now in heaven all the saints shall be of a golden disposition, yea, of a God-like disposition, which is the sweetest, the noblest, the choicest. But,

[3.] Thirdly, In heaven the saints shall have *a constant enjoyment of one another*. As they shall ever be with the Lord, so they shall ever be one with another. Here they meet and part, but in heaven they shall meet and never part. Now it is their life to meet and their death to part; now it is their heaven to meet, and their hell to part; but in heaven they shall be always in one another's eye, in one another's arms, or upon one another's knees, 1 Thes. iv. 17, 18.

Themistocles,¹ having a piece of ground to sell, appointed the crier to proclaim, that whosoever would buy it, should have a good neighbour; the saints in heaven shall be always sure of good neighbourhood, they shall never want good company. In this world Abraham and Lot must live asunder, but there they shall always live together. The cynic [Diogenes] of old was fain to look for an honest man with a candle, because of the scarcity of them; but heaven shall be always full of such saints, as shall shine as so many stars, yea, as so many suns in glory.

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, The saints shall have *a real, a personal, a particular knowledge of one another in heaven*. Here we know but a few saints, but in heaven we shall know all; *in cælo nullus erit alienus*, there shall be no stranger in heaven. Now this truth I shall make good by some arguments brought to hand, and by the addition of others. Take them thus:—

(1.) First, *Adam, when he was in his innocency, knew Eve to be bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, as soon as he saw her, though he had never seen her before*, Gen. ii. 23. Now certainly our knowledge in heaven shall be more ample, full, and perfect, than ever Adam's was in innocency. Therefore without all peradventure, the saints shall know one another in heaven. Luther, the night before he died, discoursing with his Christian friends, the question was put, Whether the saints should know one another in heaven? Luther held the affirmative, and this was one of the reasons he gave to prove it, that Adam knew Eve as soon as ever he saw her, and that not by discourse, but by divine revelation, and so shall all the saints know one another in heaven.² But,

(2.) Secondly, *The disciples, Peter, James, and John, being in the mount at Christ's transfiguration, though they had but a taste, a glimpse of the glory of heaven, yet they knew Moses and Elias, though they were dead many hundred years before*, Mat. xvii. 1–4. Now if the disciples, in an unglorified condition, knew Moses and Elias, then certainly when saints shall be in a full glorified condition, they shall know them and all the rest of that royal family. Here they knew Moses from Elias, and Elias from Moses, whom they never saw before, and both

¹ Plutarch in vita *Themistoclis*.

² Melch. Adam. [The great authority on Reformation biography. His 'Lives' have passed through many editions.—G.]

from Christ; and therefore we need not doubt but in that state of blessedness, wherein God shall be all in all, and wherein we shall know as we are known, we shall have a particular and personal knowledge of one another. Chrysostom saith, that in heaven we shall point out the saints, and say, Lo, yonder is Peter, and that is Paul; lo, yonder is Abraham, the great believer, and yonder is Jacob, who as a prince prevailed with God; lo, yonder is Moses, who was the meekest man in all the world, and there is Job, that was the patientest man in all the world; lo, there is Joshua and Caleb, that followed the Lord fully, and there is Jeremiah, that was once in the dungeon; lo, there is Jonah, that was once in the whale's belly, and there is Daniel, that was once in the lions' den; lo, yonder is John the beloved disciple, that used to lie in the bosom of Christ; and there is Mary that hath chosen the better part. But,

(3.) Thirdly, *The saints shall rise with the same bodies that now they lay down in the grave; and if so, then doubtless they shall know one another in heaven*: the husband the wife, the wife the husband; the father the child, and the child the father; the pastor his people, and the people their pastor; the master his servant, and the servant his master. Now that the saints shall rise with the very same individual body is clear: Job xix. 25, 26, 'For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.' In these words we see that Job useth the word my, 'and my eyes shall behold;' as it were pointing to it with his finger, adding not only positively, but exclusively, this and no other. Job did fully believe that the same numerical² body, at which he pointed, should rise again; and Paul saith, not a mortal, a corruptible body at large, but *hoc*, 'This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,' 1 Cor. xv. 53. The apostle did, as it were, lay his hand upon his own body; and then saith he, this corruptible body, and not another, this mortal, and not another, shall be raised when the trumpet sounds. It cannot stand with the unspotted justice and holiness of God, that one body should sow, and another body should reap that never sowed; that one body should labour, toil, sweat, suffer, and another body that hath done none of this should carry the reward. Tertullian saith, that he will pray that the same body may rise again, for the resurrection is not of another body, but of the same that falleth; not a new creation, but a raising up; the self-same body shall certainly rise again, else were it a raising up of a new, rather than a raising again of the old. It cannot stand with equity and right, that one body should sin and another body should suffer. No righteous judge will suffer a victorious person to die, and another that never struck stroke to have the crown of his deservings. It is but justice that those very eyes that have dropped many a tear before God, should be wiped by God; I say those

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 42-45; Acts iv. 2, xvii. 18, xxiii. 6; Mat. xxii. 32; Ezek. xxxvii.

² Even down to South this term was in use; e.g., 'We may contemplate upon his supernatural, astonishing works; particularly in the resurrection and reparation of the same *numerical* body, by a reunion of all the scattered parts.' Vol. I., Sermon 1st.—G.

very eyes, and not another pair of new-made eyes; it is but justice that that very tongue that hath blessed God, should be blessed by God; it is but justice that those very hands that have been much in doing for Christ, and those very lips that have been much in praising of Christ, and those very backs that have been laded with many heavy burdens for Christ, and those very feet that have been in the stocks for Christ, and that have run in the ways of Christ, should at last be raised and crowned by Christ. And this truth you may see clear in the glorious resurrection of Christ from the dead; that very same body that was wounded, crucified, and slain, that very same body did rise again. Christ could very easily, if he had pleased, in three days, nay, in three hours, ay, in three moments, have cured his wounds, but he would not; to confirm his disciples, and to shew that he had the very same body which was wounded and crucified for their sins, for their sakes; and therefore he bids Thomas to reach his finger, and behold his hands, and to reach his hand to thrust it into his side, John xx. 27; Luke xxiv. 36-47; whereby Christ made it evident, that that very same body of his which was wounded, crucified, and buried, was raised, and not another; and therefore as in the head the same body which died rose again, so shall it be with all his members in the great day of the resurrection. Now seeing that we shall rise again with the very same individual or numerical bodies that we lay down in the grave, we need not question but that we shall know one another in heaven. But,

(4.) Fourthly, *That knowledge which may most increase the joy and comfort of the saints, shall certainly be in heaven, but that is a perfect personal knowledge of each other; therefore there shall be a particular personal knowledge of one another in heaven;* the husband shall know the wife, the wife the husband, the father the child, and the child the father, &c.

I have read a story of Austin, how that a widow grieving for the loss of her husband, to comfort her, he told her that it was but a short time that they were parted, and that of all persons she should enjoy her husband most in heaven; nay, saith he, thou shalt not only know thy husband, but all the elect shall know thee, and thou shalt know all them. The personal knowledge of the saints on earth, doth exceedingly increase our joy and comfort; it makes this wilderness to be a paradise. 'They that fear thee will be glad when they see me,' saith the Psalmist, Ps. cxix. 74; yea Seneca, the heathen, saw so much excellency that morality put upon a man, that he saith, that *ipse aspectus boni viri delectat*, the very looks of a good man delight one. Ah! how often are the saints delighted, warmed, and gladdened by hearing well of other saints, whose faces they have never seen! and when God gives them the honour to see their faces, and to enjoy their persons, their presence, oh how doth this advance their joy, and increase their comfort. What a heaven doth this make on this side heaven to their souls! Oh, then, what tongue can express, what heart can conceive, what pen can describe, the unspeakable joy and comfort that will be raised in the hearts of the saints, upon that perfect, particular, personal knowledge that the saints shall have one of another in heaven? Heaven would be but an uncomfortable place, if the saints there should be strangers one to another. The faces, the words, the ways, the works of strangers,

are very little pleasing and delightful to us here; what would they then be in heaven? But,

(5.) Fifthly, *The saints, in the great day of account, shall know the persons of wicked men, who shall be indicted, arraigned, condemned, and judged by Jesus Christ, and all his saints about him.*¹ This great day will be a declaration of the just judgment of God. In this great day, every wicked work, and every wicked worker, shall be brought to light; and indeed it would be but in vain to bring evil works to light, if the evil worker be not also brought to the light. In this great day the saints shall see and know Cain in his person, they shall be able to point at him, and say, Yonder stands that bloody Cain who slew his brother Abel, because he was more righteous than he. And there stands Pharaoh, the great oppressor of God's Israel, and he that stood it out against heaven itself; and look, there stands bloody Saul, who lost his crown, his kingdom, his soul, his all, by disobedience; and there is Haman, who was feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next; lo, there stands Pilate, that condemned Christ, and there is Judas that betrayed Christ. In this great day that word shall be made good, every man shall appear to account for the works that he hath done in his body, 2 Cor. v. 10; so that both wicked works and wicked workers shall plainly appear before our Lord Jesus and all his saints, who with him shall judge the world. Now certainly, if the saints shall know the wicked in that great day, they shall then much more know one another; when they shall all sit as fellow-justices round about Jesus Christ the righteous judge, to pass a righteous sentence upon all unrighteous souls. But,

(6.) Sixthly, *Christ tells the Jews that they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God.*² All the saints shall have communion with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God; they shall have communion with them, not only as godly men, but as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The phrase of seeing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, doth doubtless import thus much, that they shall be known personally and distinctly from all other persons in the kingdom of heaven. Saints in heaven shall be able to point at Abraham, and say, There is Abraham, that was the great pattern for believing; and there is Isaac, that was a sweet pattern for meditating; and there is Jacob, who had the honour and happiness of prevailing with God.³ The saints' happiness in heaven shall be greatly increased by mutual communion, and by their personal knowledge of one another in that blessed state. But,

(7.) Seventhly, and lastly, *In heaven the saints shall know us they are known,* 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Exod. xxxiii. 12. Now God knows all the saints, personally, particularly, corporally, yea, he knows them all by name; and so doubtless all the saints in heaven shall know one another personally, and by name, else how shall they know as they are known? Here in this world we know one another many times only by report, or by writing, or by face, but in heaven we shall know one another by name. So God knows us now, and so we shall know one another in

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 1-4; Rom. ii. 5; Eccles. xii. 14; 1 John iii. 12.

² Luke xiii. 28; Mat. viii. 11 See Beza and Piscator.

³ Rom. iv. 16-23; Gen. xxiv. 63; xxxii. 22-30.

heaven : and this is none of the least parts of glory, that we shall know one another in glory ; yea, that we shall know one another personally, and by name ; the serious consideration of which may much support us, and comfort us under the sad losses of our friends and relations in the Lord. But in the,

VII. Seventh and last place, As the best society is reserved till last, so *the glorifying of our bodies is reserved till last*. I shall a little hint unto you the glory and blessedness of the bodies of the saints when they shall all meet in heaven. I shall not stand upon the privative blessedness of glorified bodies, which consists in their freedom from all defects, deformities, diseases, and distempers which here they are subject to. Here our bodies stand in need of clothes to cover them, food to feed them, sleep to refresh them, physic to ease them, air to breath them, and houses to shelter them, from all which glorified bodies shall be free, Rev. vii. 16, 17. But I shall only speak of the positive prerogatives and heavenly endowments that glorified bodies shall be invested with. As,

(1.) First, *They shall be like the glorious body of Christ*. Philip. iii. 21, ‘Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according unto the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.’ Our bodies shall be as lovely and comely, as bright and glorious, as the body of Christ is. Chrysostom saith, that the bodies of the saints shall be *septies clariora sole*, seven times brighter than the sun. Certainly saints shall be as handsome-bodied and as comely-featured as Christ is. Though their bodies be sown in dishonour, yet they shall be raised in glory, 1 Cor. xv. 43. If Stephen’s face did shine as if it had been the face of an angel, that is, bright and glorious, Acts vi. 15 ; and if there were such a lustre and glory upon Moses his face, that the children of Israel were afraid to come near him, and he forced to put a veil upon it till he had done speaking with them, Exod. xxxiv. 29–36 ; I say, if there were such a glory upon the face of these two mortals, Oh then ! how will the faces and bodies of the saints glitter and shine when their bodies shall be made conformable to the glorious body of Jesus Christ, Mat. xiii. 43.¹ Certainly, as the light and glory of the sun doth far exceed the light of the least twinkling star, so much and more shall the glory of the saint’s bodies excel that glory and splendour that was upon the faces of Moses and Stephen. The bodies of the saints in heaven shall be surpassingly comely, well-favoured, beautiful, and amiable. Plutarch, in the life of Demetrius, saith, That he was so passing fair of face and countenance, as no painter was able to draw him. I am sure I am no ways able to paint out the beauty and glory that shall be upon the bodies of the saints in that day of glory, wherein the saints shall shine as so many suns. But,

(2.) Secondly, *Their bodies shall in a kind be spiritual* : 1 Cor. xv. 44, ‘It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.’ Their bodies shall be spiritual, *non substantivè, sed qualitativè respectu*, not in regard of

¹ What is a spark in the chimney, to the sun in the firmament ?

substance, but state and condition.¹ *Spiritual* in the text is not opposed to *visible*, but to *natural*; for their bodies, though in a sense they are spiritual, yet they shall be as visible as the glorious body of Christ. When I say their bodies shall be spiritual, you must not think that I mean that their bodies shall be turned into spirits. Oh no! for they shall keep their bodily dimensions, and be true bodies still. Look, as in change of old and broken vessels, the matter is the same, only the colour is fresher and brighter, and the fashion newer and better, so in the day of glory, our bodies shall be the same for substance that now they are; they shall retain the same flesh, blood, and bones, and the same figure and members, that now is, only they shall be overlaid or clothed with spiritual and heavenly qualities and prerogatives; their bodies shall be glorious, of a due and comely proportion, of an exquisite feature and stature, of a lively colour, of cheerful aspect, and full of beauty and glory, splendour and favour. Now the bodies of the saints shall be spiritual, *first, in respect of their full, perfect, and perpetual freedom from all heats, colds, hungerings, thirstings, sickness, weakness, wants.* Here one cries out, Oh my back, my back! another, Oh my belly, my belly! with the prophet, Hab. iii. 16; another, Oh my head, my head! with the Shunamite's son, 2 Kings iv. 19; another, Oh my son, my son! as David for Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 33; another, Oh my father, my father! with Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 12. Every one here hath some ailment or other, some want or other, some grief or other, which fills his eyes with tears and his heart with sorrow; but when these natural bodies, these animal or soullly bodies, shall be made glorious, then they shall be fully and perpetually freed from all manner of miseries and calamities; they shall be as the angels, not subject to any sickness, weakness, or wants: Rev. vii. 16, 17, 'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' Rev. xxi. 4, '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;' and in this respect their bodies may be said to be spiritual. But, *secondly*, they may be said to be spiritual *in respect of their spiritual agility and nimbleness.* Now, our bodies are gross, dull, and heavy in their motion: and by this the soul is many times hindered in its lively operations; for when the soul would mount up on high, and busy herself about eternal objects, the body, like a lump of lead, keeps it down; but now, in this glorious state, the body shall put off all grossness, dulness, and heaviness, and be exceeding agile, light, and apt to motion, far beyond the swiftest bird that flies, Isa. xl. 31; 1 Thes. iv. 17.

I know not by what to set forth the agility of glorified bodies; a post, a bird, a torrent, are too short to set forth their agility.

Luther saith, that a glorified body shall move up and down like a thought.

¹ *σῶμα ψυχικόν*, an animal or soullly body, that is, actuated and animated by the soul after a natural way and manner, by the intervention of natural helps, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, and the like.

And Austin saith, The body will presently be here and there, where the soul would have it.¹ Certainly the speed and motion of glorified bodies will be extraordinary and incredible. A glorified saint desiring to be in such or such a place a thousand miles off or more, he will be there in such an incredible short time, that one calls it *imperceptible*, hardly to be discerned : in which respect their bodies may be said to be spiritual. But, *thirdly* and lastly, they may be said to be spiritual, *because of that perfect, full, absolute, and complete subjection that they shall delightfully and perpetually yield to the Spirit of God*. Now they often vex and grieve, affront and fight against the Spirit of God. The members of our bodies, as well as the faculties of our souls, do often make war upon the Spirit of grace, as the apostle fully shews in that Rom. vi. 'The spirit often lusts against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit,' Gal. v. 17. Now the body says to the soul, 'Be not righteous over-much ; neither make thyself over-wise : why shouldst thou destroy thyself ?' Eccles. vii. 16. Cyprian readeth this verse thus, *Noli esse multum justus, et noli argumentari plus quam oportet*, be not just over-much, and do not argue and dispute more than is meet. The body is often apt to say to the soul, Thou art just over-much, O soul ; and thou dost argue and dispute against this sin and that way, and this comfort and that enjoyment, more than is meet ; and the soul seems to answer, ver. 17, 'Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou foolish : why shouldst thou die before thy time ?'

But now in heaven the bodies of the saints shall be fully, perfectly, and delightfully, under the command, conduct, and guidance of the spirit ; and therefore may truly be said to be spiritual. As the spirit serving the flesh may not unfitly be called carnal, saith one,² so the body obedient to the soul may rightly be termed spiritual. Glorified bodies are spiritual, not in their essence, but in condition and quality, as being fully and perpetually under the government of the Spirit. Now the tongue grieves the Spirit, and now the deaf ear is turned to the voice of the Spirit, and now the eye is rolling, when it should be reading the things of the Spirit ; and now the feet are wandering when they should be walking in the ways of the Spirit ; and now the hand is idle that should be diligent in the work of the Spirit, Eph. iv. 29-31, Isa. lxiii. 10. Oh ! but now in heaven, the tongue, the eye, the ear, the hands, the feet, shall be all brought into an angelical, willing, and delightful obedience to the Spirit ; upon which account glorified bodies may truly be termed spiritual. But,

(3.) Thirdly, and lastly, As their bodies shall be spiritual, *so they shall be immortal, they shall be incorruptible*, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 54. Here these elementary bodies of ours, by reason of their earthly and dreggish composition, are subject to mortality and corruption ; and indeed man is so poor a piece, that he no sooner begins to live, but he begins to die ; his whole life is but a lingering death. Death every hour lies at the door ; this sergeant³ constantly attends all men, in all places, companies, changes, and conditions. Petrarch telleth of one, who being invited to

¹ Aug. *de Civ. D. i. l. xxii. c. 30.* Wisdom, iii. 7, In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. [Above is Brooks's fourth quotation from Apocrypha thus far.—G.]

² Aug. *de civ. Dei. l. xiii. c. xx.*

³ Another Shakesperian reminiscence : 'This fell sergeant Death is strict.'—Hamlet, V. 2.—G.

dinner the next day, answered, *Ego a multis annis crastinum non habui*, I have not had a morrow for this many years. Many dangers, many deaths, every hour surround these lives of ours. Here, saith one, *accedimus*, we enter into the world; *succedimus*, we succeed one another in the world; *decedimus*, we depart all out of the world. Oh! but in heaven we shall have immortal bodies! Luke xx. 36, 'Neither can they die any more, and are equal to the angels.' By the power, presence, and goodness of God, their bodies shall be so perfumed and embalmed, that they shall never corrupt, nor be subject to mortality. Manna, by a divine power, was kept many hundred years in the golden pot without putrefying or corrupting, and so shall the glorified bodies of the saints be preserved and kept pure and immortal. The immortality of glorified bodies shall far excel that of Adam's in paradise, for they shall be free from all possibility of dying; for they shall be perfectly and perpetually freed from all corruptible and corrupting elements. Glorified bodies shall have no seeds of corruption in them, nor any corruptive, harmful, malignant, or afflictive passion attending them.¹ Adam in his noble estate was in a possibility of dying, but the saints in their glorified condition are above all possibility of dying. This is a happiness that Adam could not reach to in his state of integrity; the greater obligation lies upon all that shall come to glory.

It is reported of the Duke of Bullone [Bouillon] and his company, that when they went to Jerusalem, as soon as they saw the high turrets they gave a mighty shout, that even made the earth ring, crying out, 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem!² so when the saints shall all meet in the heavenly Jerusalem, oh how will they make even heaven to ring again, crying out, Immortality! immortality! immortality!

And thus, I suppose, I have clearly and fully made good that great truth, to wit, that the best and greatest things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven. I shall now give you a brief account of the reasons of this point; and then come to the application and bringing home of this precious truth to our own souls. Now the reasons of the point are these.

Reason 1. First, Because it is his good will and pleasure to reserve the best things for his people till last: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock' (there are two diminutives in the Greek³), 'for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' As it is God's good pleasure to give you a kingdom, so it is his good pleasure not to give you the kingdom till last, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. Edward the Sixth could not give his kingdom away; if he could, it had not come as it did to Queen Mary; but our heavenly Father doth now give a kingdom of grace, and will at last also give a kingdom of glory, to them that walk uprightly, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. But,

Reason 2. Secondly, That he may keep the hearts of his people in a longing and in a waiting frame, for the enjoyment of those great and glorious things that he hath reserved for them till last: Heb. xiii. 14, 'Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.'⁴ The greater and better the things are that are laid up for us, the more we

¹ Aug. *de civ. Dei*. l. xxii. c. xxx.

² Immortalised by Tasso.—G.

³ μικρόν ποίμνιον, Little, little in their own esteem, and in the world's account.

⁴ Heb. xi. 14-16; Col. iii. 1-5.

should long and wait for the happy enjoyment of them. Abraham waited long for a son, and Hannah waited long for a child, and Joseph waited long for his advancement, and David waited long for the crown, the kingdom; and they had all a most happy issue. The longer we wait, the better we shall speed;¹ as that emperor's son said, the longer the cooks are preparing the meat, the better will be the cheer; meaning, the longer he stayed for the empire, the greater it would be. The longer we wait for happiness, the more at last we shall have of happiness. The great things of eternity are worth nothing, if they are not worth a longing and a waiting for. But,

Reason 3. Thirdly, God hath reserved the best and greatest things for his people till last, and that *because else they were above all men in the world the most miserable*: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' No men usually out of hell are so much afflicted, tempted, oppressed, scorned, despised, and neglected as they are. Here they have their hell, they had need of a heaven to come; here they are clothed with shame, they had need hereafter to be crowned with honour, or else they would be the unhappiest men in all the world; here the life of a believer is filled *multis et multiplicibus miseriis*, with many and multiplied miseries; with miseries of body, with miseries of mind. Multiplied miseries attend him, at bed and board, at home and abroad. Every condition is full, and every relation is full, of miseries and calamities; and therefore one saith well, *Quomodo potest amari hæc vita, tantas habens amaritudines? Quomodo etiam dicitur vita, tot generans mortes?*² How can this life be loved, which is so full of loathsome bitterness? Yea, how can it be called a life, which bringeth forth so many deaths? Yet he is a fool, saith one,³ that looketh upon a godly man under trouble and sorrow, and thinketh him to be unhappy, because, as a fool, *attendit quid patitur, et non attendit quid illi servetur*, he attendeth what he suffereth, and doth not attend what is reserved for him. If the best things were not reserved for believers till last, they should have the saddest portion of all men, viz., a hell here, and a hell hereafter; and so sinners should have but one hell, and saints two, which would be blasphemy to affirm. But,

Reason 4. Fourthly, God reserves the best things for his people till last, *for the greater terror and horror, conviction and confusion of wicked and ungodly persons, who now revile them, and judge them to be the unhappiest men in all the world.* Oh! but when the Lord shall in the sight of all the world gloriously own them, and put royal robes upon their backs, and golden crowns upon their heads, then, Oh! what a shame, what covering of the face, what terror, what trembling, with Haman, will possess the hearts of wicked men.⁴ The great honour and glory that God will put upon his people at last, will be to wicked men what the handwriting upon the wall was to Belshazzar, Dan. v. 1-8. Oh! it will make their countenance to change, their thoughts to be troubled, the joints of their loins to be loosed, and their knees dashed one against another. Now that word shall be eminently made

¹ Waiting is *bonum utile*, a profitable good.

² A Kempis, *de Imitat. Christi*, l. 3, c. 20.

⁴ Ps. lviii. 11; Lam. iv. 2; Esther vi. 6, *et seq.*

³ Augustine in Ps. xci.

good : ' He setteth the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock. The righteous shall see it and rejoice, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth,' Ps. cvii. 41, 42. Oh ! what trouble of mind, what horror of conscience, what distraction and vexation, what terror and torment, what weeping and wailing, what crying and roaring, what wringing of hands, what tearing of hair, what dashing of knees, what gnashing of teeth, will there be among the wicked, when they shall see the saints in all their splendour, dignity, and glory ! ' When they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and themselves shut out for ever,' Luke xiii. 28. Now shall the wicked lamentingly say, Lo ! these are the men that we counted fools, madmen, and miserable. Oh but now we see that we were deceived and deluded ! Oh that we had never despised them ! Oh that we had never reproached them ! Oh that we had never trampled upon them ! Oh that we had been one with them ! Oh that we had imitated them ! Oh that we had walked as they, and done as they, that so we might now have been as happy as they ! Oh but this cannot be ! Oh this may not be ! Oh this shall never be ! therefore Oh that we had never been born ! Oh that now we might be unborn ! Oh that we might be turned into a bird, a beast, a toad, a stone ! Oh that we were anything but what we are ! or, Oh that we were nothing ! Oh that now our immortal souls were mortal ! Oh that we might so die, that we may not eternally die ! but it is now too late. Oh we see that there is a reward for the righteous ! and we shall suddenly feel, that by all the contempt that we have cast upon these glorious shining saints, whose splendour and glory doth now darken the very glory of the sun, Dan. xii. 3 ; we have but treasured up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 4-7 ; we have but added fuel to those burning coals, to those everlasting flames, in which we must now lie for ever, Ps. cxl. 10. But,

Reason 5. Fifthly, The Lord hath reserved the best things for his people till they come to heaven, *that so he may save his honour and secure his glory.* Would it make for the honour and glory of God, to put his children, his servants, upon doing hard things, and upon suffering great things, and at last to put them off with nothing ? Surely it would not ; and therefore the Lord, to save the honour of his great name, hath reserved the best wine till last, the best and choicest favours for his people till they come to heaven, John ii. 10. The sweetest honey lies at the bottom. I cannot see how God should save his glory, if he should put his children always upon sowing, and never suffer them to reap, 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7 ; that they should still be sowing in tears, if at last they should not reap in joy, Ps. cxxvi. 4-6. Men that love but their names and honour in the world, will not be served for nought, and will God ? Will God, who is infinitely more tender of his name and honour, than any created being can be of theirs ? Isa. xlii. 8, xlviii. 11.

I have read of Alphonsus, a king of Spain, who when a knight falling into want and being arrested for debt, there was a petition to the king to succour him, Ay, said the King, if he had spent his estate in mine, or in the commonwealth's service, it were reason he should be provided for by me, or the commonwealth. Men of honour will provide for them that spend themselves in their service ; and will not God ? Will not God

do as much, yea more, for them that spend themselves in his service? Surely he will, Heb. xi. 16. 'But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.' As if he had said, Had not God prepared for them a city, had he not made some blessed provision for them, who left so much for him, who did so much for him, and who suffered such great and bitter things for him, they might well have complained that they had but a bad bargain of it, and that God was a hard master; and so God should have been ashamed. Had not God made such happy and blessed provision for them who had run through so many dangers and deaths for his sake, had he not provided and laid up for them, according to his promise, and suitable to his greatness and goodness, his dignity and glory, it would have put God to the blush, to speak after the manner of men. I have read concerning Dionysius of Sicily, that being extremely delighted with a minstrel that sung well, he promised to give him a great reward, and that raised the fancy of the man, and made him play better; but when the music was done, and the man waited for his reward, the king dismissed him empty, telling him that he should carry away as much of the promised reward as himself did of the music, and that he had paid him sufficiently with the pleasure of the promise for the pleasure of his song. But it will not stand with the honour of the King of kings to put off his servants so poorly, whose prayers, praises, and tears, have been most sweet and delightful music to him; no, he will do like himself at last, and that his children know. It troubled a martyr at the stake, that he was going to a place where he should ever be a-receiving wages, and do no more work. But,

Reason 6. Sixthly, That he may make his children temptation-proof, he hath reserved for them the best things till they come to heaven. The great things that God hath reserved for believers in heaven, was that which made those worthies, of whom this world was not worthy, temptation-proof; as you may see in that 10th of the Hebrews, 33d, 34th, 35th, verses, and throughout the 11th chapter of that Epistle. The pleasures, the treasures, the dignities and glories that are reserved for believers in heaven, make them bravely and nobly to resist all those temptations that they meet with from a tempting world or a tempting devil.

Austin blessed God, that his heart and the temptation did not meet together. By the precious things that are reserved for believers in heaven, God keeps their hearts and temptations asunder. When Basil was tempted with money and preferment, saith he, *Pecuniam da quæ permaneat ac continuo duret, gloriam quæ semper floreat*, give me money that may last for ever, and glory that may eternally flourish.¹ Satan made a bow of Job's wife, of his rib, as Chrysostom speaks, and shot a temptation by her at Job, thinking to have shot him to the heart, 'Curse God and die;' but Job's sincerity and integrity, and his hopes of immortality and glory, was a breastplate that made him temptation-proof. Ah Christians! do not you daily find, that the glorious things reserved for you in heaven, do mightily arm you against all the temptations that you meet with on earth? I know you do. But,

¹ Basil in xl. Martyrs.

Reason 7. Seventhly, God hath reserved the best things for his people, till they come to heaven, *because they are not in this mortal and frail condition able to bear, they are not able to take in the glory that is reserved for them*, 2 Cor. iv. 17.¹ Glory is such a great, such an exceeding, such an excessive, such an eternal weight, that no mortal is able to bear it. We must have better and larger hearts, and we must have stronger and broader backs, before we shall be capable of bearing that excellent, exceeding, and excelling weight of glory that is reserved in heaven for us. Nay, glory is such a weight, that when the saints shall enter into it, if then the Lord should not put under his everlasting arms and bear them up by his almighty power, it were impossible they should be able to bear it. In this our frail mortal state, we are not able to bear the appearance, the presence, the glory of one angel.

Ah! how much less then are we able to bear the weight of all that glory that is reserved for us, and of which I have given you some glimpses in what I have already said. But,

Reason 8. Eighthly and lastly, The Lord hath reserved the best things for his people till they come to heaven, *because while they are in this world they are under age. They are not come to full age*.² Here saints are in their non-age, but when they come to heaven, then they come to their full age, and then they shall have the inheritance by the Father of mercies freely and fully settled upon them. Children in their non-age are under tutors and governors, but when they come to age, then is the inheritance settled upon them: so here, it is not for us in our non-age, to mount into the clouds, to pierce this fulness of light, to break into this bottomless depth of glory, or to dwell in that unapproachable brightness.³ This is reserved till we come to full age.

And thus I have given you the reasons why God hath reserved the best and greatest things for his people till they come to heaven. We shall now come to the use and application of this point to our own souls, remembering that close application is the very life and soul of teaching. And as a man doth not attain to health by reading of Galen, or knowing Hippocrates his aphorisms, but by the practical application of them to remove the disease; so no man will attain to true happiness by hearing, reading, or commending what I have spoke or writ, but by a close application and bringing home of all to his own soul. The opening of a point is the drawing of the bow; but the application of the point is the hitting of the mark, the white; and therefore,

(1.) First, If God hath reserved the best things for believers till last, then by the rule of contraries *the worst things are reserved for unbelievers till last*.⁴ Here wicked men have their heaven, hereafter they shall have their hell. The time of this life is the day of their joy and triumph; and when this short day is ended, everlasting lamentations, mournings, and woes follow. Luke xvi. 22-25, 'The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that

¹ The apostle alludeth to the Hebrew and Chaldee words, *Chabodh* and *Jakar*, which signify both weight and glory.

² Gal. iv. 1-4; Ephes. iv. 10-14.

³ Bernard, Cant. Serm. 38.

⁴ Job xxi. 7-22; Ps. lxxiii. 3-12 compared with the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th verses; Rev. xxi. 8.

he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue ; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

Ah sinners ! sinners ! that day is hastening upon you, wherein you shall have punishment without pity, misery without mercy, sorrow without succour, pain without pleasure, and torments without end : Ps. xi. 6, ' Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest : this shall be the portion of their cup.' Ps. cxi. 10, ' Let burning coals fall upon them : let them be cast into the fire ; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.'

Chrysologus, upon that passage in the Gospel, that the angels carried away poor Lazarus into Abraham's bosom, and hell swallowed up the rich glutton, saith : *Eecce fratres, mors pauperis totam vitam dirigit viciis, et elatio sola pauperis totam divitis pompam transcendit et gloriam.*¹ Behold ! brethren, the very death of the poor man excelleth the whole life of the wicked, and the carrying away only of the poor man transcendeth all the pomp and glory of the rich man.

Charon, in Lucian, requesting Mercurius to shew him Jupiter's palace above, How ! says Mercurius, that such a caitiff as thou, whose conversation hath been altogether with black shades and impure ghosts, shouldst set thy foot in that pure place of light ? What a dishonour and derogation were that to the place !

Ah, sinners ! sinners ! what a dishonour would it be to God, to Christ, to angels, to saints, to heaven, if such wretches as you are should be admitted into that royal palace, that heavenly paradise, above.

Ah ! your portion is below, and you are already adjudged to those torments that are endless, easeless, and remediless, where the worm never dies, and the fire never goes out, Rev. xiv. 11. The day is coming upon you, sinners, when all your sweet shall be turned into bitter ; all your glory into shame ; all your plenty into scarcity ; all your joys into sorrows ; all your recreations into vexations ; and all your momentary comforts into everlasting torments.

Now you reign as kings, you look big, you speak proudly, you carry it highly, you walk contemptuously ; but there is an after-reckoning a-coming that will appal you, and torture you for ever.

The time of this life is your summer ; but there is a winter a-coming upon you that shall never have end. God could not be just if your worst were not yet to come ; neither could he be just if the saints' best were not yet to come. The time of this life is the saints' hell, and the sinners' heaven ; but the next life will be the saints' heaven, and the sinners' hell. But,

(2.) Secondly, *Then patiently wait for the enjoyment of those great things that are reserved for you in heaven.* Men will wait, and wait long, for some outward good ; and will not you for the best and greatest good ? Are there not many things that speak out the greatness of that glory that is reserved for you ? as the price that Christ hath paid for it, and the great and glorious things by which it is shadowed out to us ? as Canaan, Jerusalem, paradise ; and the dignity of the inhabitants, there being none admitted under the degree of a king ; and the great and glorious earnest of the Spirit ; and the great care, cost, and charge that God hath

¹ Chrysologus, *Serm.* 121.

been at to prepare and fit souls for the enjoyment of it.¹ What do all these things speak out, but that the glory that is reserved for believers is great glory; and is it not then worth a waiting for? Let not Satan's slaves wait more patiently for a few ounces of gold, than you do for the kingdom of heaven.

Again, as the things reserved for you in heaven are great, and therefore wait, so *they are certain and sure*; and therefore wait, oh patiently wait for the enjoyment of them! Heb. vi. 16-19. When the beggar at the door is sure of speeding, he will wait patiently, he will wait unweariedly. The glorious things reserved in heaven for you, they are made sure and certain to you by word, by covenant, by oath, by blood, by the earnest, by the first-fruits, and by Christ's taking possession of them in your rooms, in your steads, Eph. ii. 6, John xiv. 1-4; therefore patiently wait for the enjoyment of them. O Christians! it is but a very short time that God hath proposed to be between grace and glory, between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown; between our right to the heavenly inheritance, and our possession of the heavenly inheritance. Ah, Christians! bear up bravely, bear up sweetly, bear up patiently, for it will be but a little, little, little while, before he that shall come will come, and will not tarry, Heb. x. 35-37, *ἐτι γὰρ μικρόν ὅσον ὅσον*; and when he doth come, he will not come *vacuis manibus*, empty-handed; no, when he comes, he brings his reward with him; Rev. xxii. 12; when he comes, he will reward thee for every prayer that thou hast made, and for every sermon that thou hast heard, and for every tear that thou hast shed, and for every hour that thou hast patiently waited; and therefore wait patiently till the promised crown be set upon thy head. But,

(3.) Thirdly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, oh then, *let no believer envy nor be troubled at the outward prosperity and felicity of the men of the world*. What is darkness to light, chaff to wheat, dross to gold, gall to honey, pebbles to pearls, earth to heaven? No more is all the glory and felicity that wicked men have in possession to those great and glorious things that saints have in reversion; and therefore, O believer, let not wicked men's prosperity be thy calamity!²

There is a truth in that saying of Chrysostom,³ *præstat serpentem provolutum in visceribus habere, quam invidiam*, a man were better have a serpent tumbling in his bowels than envy; for if a serpent have food given it, it will not feed upon a man; but the more food is given to envy, the more it gnaweth him in whose bowels it is. It is the justice of envy to kill and torment the envious. Envy, it tortures the affections, it vexes the mind, it inflames the blood, it corrupts the heart, it wastes the spirits; and so it becomes man's tormentor and man's executioner at once. Take heed, Christians, take heed of an envious eye, for that usually looks upon other men's enjoyments through a multiplying glass, and so makes them appear greater and bigger than they are; and this increases torment, this often makes a hell.

It is reported of Panormitanus, that a question being asked before

¹ Rev. xxi. ; i. 5, 6; Eph. i. 13, 14; Col. i. 12.

² Ps. xxxvii. 1; lxxiii. 3-7; Job xxi. 7-13; Jer. xii. 1, 2.

³ Chrys. in ii. *ad Corin.* Homil. xix.

king Frederick, what was good for the eye-sight, and the physicians answering some one thing, some another, Samizarius answered, that envy was very good ; at which the company smiling, he gave this reason for it, because that envy makes all things appear bigger than they are. Ah, Christians! envy is a serpent, a devil, that should be abhorred and shunned more than hell itself. O Christian! with what heart canst thou envy wicked men's prosperity and worldly felicity, if thou dost but look up to thine own glory, and seriously consider of their sad reckoning and future calamity? Dives was one day rustling in his purple robes, riches, and worldly glory, and the next day he was rolling and roaring in the flames of hellish misery ; and how soon this may be the portion of those thou enviest, who can tell? and therefore rather pity them than envy them. None need more prayer and pity than those that want hearts, than those that have neither skill nor will to pity themselves, to pray for themselves ; and such are wicked men under their outward prosperity and worldly glory, Job xxi. 7-20. But,

(4.) Fourthly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, oh then *let all believers be contented, though they have but short commons in this world!* He that is an heir to a great estate, though in his non-age he be kept short, yet this comforts and contents him, that though things are now short with him, it will be but a little while before the inheritance is settled upon him, and this makes him bear up sweetly and contentedly under all his wants and straits, Philip. iv. 12-14, 1 Tim. vi. 6-8. Ah, Christians! Christians! though for the present your wants may be many, and God may cut you short in many desirable enjoyments, yet it will not be long before the crown, the inheritance, be fully settled upon you, and then you shall never know what want means more, what short commons means more ; therefore be content with your present condition, with your present portion, though it be never so little, never so mean: Heb. xiii. 5, ' Let your conversation be without covetousness ; and be content with such things as you have' (or as the Greek hath it, *τοῖς παροῦσιν*, the things that are present¹). At this time the Hebrews had been plundered of all their goods, and goodly things, chap. x. 34, and so had nothing, or that which is as good as nothing, left, yet they must be content with present things. When they had changed their raiment for rags, their silver for brass, their plenty for scarcity, their houses for holes and caves, and dens, yet then they must be contented with present things. When men cannot bring their means to their minds, then they must bring their minds to their means, and, when this is done, then a little will serve the turn.² A very little will serve to carry a man through his pilgrimage, and to bear his charges till he comes to his home, till he comes to heaven ; a little will serve nature, less will serve grace, though nothing will serve a man's lusts. I have read of one Didymus, a godly preacher, who was blind ; Alexander, a godly man, being with him, asked him whether he was not much troubled and afflicted for want of his sight? Oh yes! said Didymus, the want of my sight is a very great grief and affliction to me ; whereupon Alexander chid him, saying, Hath God given thee the

¹ *Contenti presentibus.* So Beza.

² If thou live according to nature, thou wilt never be poor ; if according to opinion, thou wilt never be rich, said the heathen.—*Jerome.*

excellency of an angel, of an apostle, and art thou troubled for the want of that which rats, and mice, and brute beasts have? And so Augustine, upon the 12th Psalm, brings in God rebuking a discontented Christian thus: What is thy faith? have I promised thee these things? what! wert thou made a Christian that thou shouldst flourish here in this world?¹ So may I say to Christians that are discontented, disquieted, and disturbed about the want of this or that worldly comfort: Why are you troubled about the want of this or that worldly enjoyment? you that have an interest in God, an interest in the covenant, a right to Christ, a title to heaven; you that have so much in hand and more in hope; you that have so much in expectation and so much in reversion; why do you sit sighing for the want of this outward comfort, and complaining for the want of that outward contentment, considering what great and glorious things are reserved in heaven for you? It was said of the great Duke of Guise, that though he was poor, as to his present possessions, yet he was the richest man in France in bills, bonds, and obligations; because he had engaged all the noblemen in France unto himself by advancing of them. A Christian, though a Lazarus at Dives's door; yet, in respect of his propriety² in God and his interest in the covenant, he is the richest and the happiest man in all the world; and why then should he not be content. Well! remember, Christian, that the shortest cut to riches and all worldly contentments is by their contempt. It is great riches, it is the best riches not to desire riches; and God usually gives him most that covets least. When two monks came to king William Rufus to buy an abbot's place, and endeavoured to outbid each other, a third monk that came to wait on them was asked what he would give, he answered, Not a penny; I came to wait on him that shall have the place; upon which the king gave the waiter the place. Just so doth God often carry it towards his people in this world; they that seek it least shall have most. Solomon begs a wise heart, and God gives him that, and abundance of gold and silver and honour, and what not, into the bargain. The best way to have much, is to be contented with a little.

I have read of Dionysius [Plutarch], how he took away from one of his nobles almost his whole estate, and seeing him nevertheless continue as cheerful and well contented as ever, he gave him that again, and as much more. This is a common thing with God, as Job and many thousands can witness;³ the best way to have a pound is to be contented with a penny, the best way to have hundreds is to be contented with pounds, and the best way to have thousands is to be contented with hundreds. Ah! thou unquiet and discontented Christian, canst thou read over that saying of Cato, a heathen, and not blush? *Si quid est quo utar, utor: si non, scio quis sum; mihi vitio vertunt, quia multis egeo; et ego illis, quia nequeunt egere.*⁴ I have neither house, nor plate, nor garments of price in my hands; what I have, I can use; if not, I can want it; some blame me, because I want many things, and I blame them, because they cannot want. How many thousand Christians in these knowing and professing days might

¹ If there were any happiness in riches, the gods would not want them, said Seneca. [See this quoted before in 'Mute Christian.'—G.]

² 'Property.'—G.

³ Job i. and the last of Job compared.

⁴ Aulus Gellius reports this of him.

this heathen put to the blush! O Christians! Christians! let the remembrance of the crown, the kingdom, the treasures, pleasures, and glories that are reserved in heaven for you, make you bear up sweetly and contentedly under all your outward wants in this world. But,

(5.) Fifthly, If the best and greatest things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then *make not a judgment of the saints' condition by their present state.*¹ If you do, you will 'condemn the generation of the just.' What though they are now in rags, it will not be long before they are clothed in their royal robes; what though they are now abased, it will not be long before they shall in the sight of all the world be highly advanced; what though they are now under many wants, it will not be long before they shall be filled with all fulness; what though they are now under many trials and afflictions, yet it will not be long before all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, and their sighing turned into singing, 'and everlasting joys shall be upon their heads;' and therefore do not judge of their condition by their present state. If you will needs be judging, then look that you judge righteous judgment, John vii. 24; then look more at the latter end of a Christian than the beginning. Remember the patience of Job, James v. 11, and consider what end the Lord made with him. Look not upon Lazarus lying at Dives's door, but lying in Abraham's bosom; look not to the beginning of Joseph, who was so far from his dream, that the sun and moon should reverence him, that for two years he was cast where he could neither see sun nor moon; but behold him at last made ruler over all Egypt, and reigning fourscore years like a king, Gen. xxxvii. 9, xli. 40-46. Look not upon David, as there was but a step between him and death, nor as he was envied by Saul, and hated by his courtiers; but behold him seated in his royal throne, where he reigned forty years gloriously, and died in his bed of honour, and his son Solomon, and his nobles about him. When Israel was dismissed out of Egypt, it was with gold and ear-rings, Exod. xi.; and when the Jews were dismissed out of Babylon, it was with great gifts, jewels, and all necessary utensils, Ezra i. 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; the end of that man is peace,' Ps. xxxvii. 37. Whatever the wants, the straits, the troubles, the trials of the saints are in this world, yet their end shall be peace, their end shall be glorious; the best things are reserved for them till last; and therefore do not, oh do not judge of their condition by their present state, but rather judge of them by their future condition, by that glory that is reserved for them in heaven. But,

(6.) Sixthly, If the greatest and choicest things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, why, then, *let believers keep up in their own souls a lively, hopeful expectation of enjoying these great and glorious things that are laid up for them.* The keeping up of those hopes will be the keeping up of your hearts; the keeping up of these hopes will be the bettering of your hearts; the keeping up of these hopes will make every bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet; the keeping up of these hopes will make you bear much for God, and do much for God.²

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 12-15; Mat. vii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. iv. 5.

² Rom. viii. 24, 25, ii. 5; Titus i. 2; Acts xxvi. 7; Titus iii. 7; Col. i. 5; 1 Thes. v. 8; 1 Peter i. 3; 1 John iii. 2, 3.

When Alexander went upon a hopeful expedition, he gave away his gold; and when he was asked what he kept for himself, he answered, *Spem majorem et meliorem*, the hope of greater and better things.

Ah! Christians, there is no work so high and noble, there is no work so hard and difficult, there is no work so low and contemptible, but the hopes of the great things reserved in heaven for you will put you upon it.

Galen speaks of a fish called *uranoscopus*,¹ which hath but one eye, and that is so placed that it is always looking upwards towards heaven; and so should a Christian's eye of hope be always fixed on God, on promises, on heaven, on the inheritance of the saints in light, and on all those precious and glorious things that are laid up for them in that royal palace where Christ is all in all.

A devout pilgrim travelling to Jerusalem, and by the way visiting many brave cities, with their rare monuments, and meeting with many friendly entertainments, would often say, I must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem, this is not Jerusalem; so saith a Christian in the midst of all his worldly delights, comforts, and contents, oh these are not the delights, the comforts, the contents that my soul looks for, that my soul expects and hopes to enjoy. I look and hope for choicer delights, for sweeter comforts, for more satisfying contents, and for more durable riches.

Ah, saints! ah, souls! Shall the great heirs of this world live upon their hopes, and keep up their hopes, that their inheritances shall in time be settled respectively upon them? and will not you, will not you live upon your hopes, and keep up your hopes of enjoying all the treasures, pleasures, and glories that are reserved in heaven for you? A Christian's motto always is, or always should be, *Spero meliora*, I hope for better things; I hope for better things than any the world can give to me, or than any that Satan can take from me. A Christian is always rich in hope, though he hath not always a penny in hand. But,

(7.) Seventhly, If there be such great and glorious things reserved for you in heaven, then *do nothing unworthy of your dignity, nor of that glory that is laid up for you.*² Your calling is high, your honour is great, your happiness is matchless; you have so much in promises, so much in expectation, and so much in reversion, as cannot be conceived, as cannot be expressed; therefore, do not you stoop to sin, nor bow down to Satan, nor comply with the world.

When Alexander was moved to run with some persons of inferior rank, he refused, saying, It was not fit for Alexander to run in a race with any but princes and nobles.

Ah, Christians! are you not more nobly born? are you not better bred? have you not more royal hopes than to stoop to lust, or to do as the men of the world do?

Antigonus, being invited to dinner where a notable harlot was to be present, asked counsel of Menedemus, his tutor, what he should do, and how he should carry himself? His tutor bade him remember that he was a prince, that he was the son of a king, and this would preserve him.³

¹ *ὐρανοσκόπος*, the heaven-gazer. Cf. Pliny, xxxii. 7, 24, sec. 69; xi. 52, sec. 146.—G.

² Heb. xi. 38; Philip. iii. 14; Isa. lxiii. 4; 1 Cor. ii. 9.

³ Diog. Laërtius, ii. 125-144; Athen. l. c.—G.

Ah! Christians! nothing will preserve you from being base, like the remembrance of your present dignity, and of that future glory that is laid up for you.

Ah, Christians! you are kings elected, you are heirs-apparent of a crown, of a glorious crown, of a weighty crown, of an incorruptible crown, of an everlasting crown of glory! Oh why then should you be crowning yourselves with rosebuds? why then should you take up in the low enjoyments and poor contentments of this world? ¹

It was a generous speech of that heathen Themistocles, who, coming by a thing that seemed to be a pearl in the dark, scorned to stoop for it, but bade another stoop, saying, Stoop thou for this pearl, for thou art not Themistocles. Oh let the men of the world stoop and take up the world, oh let them whose practice speaks them out to be of the world, and to be worshippers of that golden calf, the world, let these dance about it, bow down to it, and take up in it; but let the heirs of heaven divinely scorn to bow down to earth, or to take up in it, or to be much taken with it. It was a good saying of Seneca, *Major sum et ad majora natus, quam ut mancipium sim corporis mei*, I am too great, and born to greater things than that I should be as a slave to my body. ²

Ah, Christians! you are too great, and born to greater things, than that you should be slaves to your bodies, or slaves to your lusts, or slaves to the world; can you seriously consider of the great things that are reserved in heaven for you, and not set your feet upon those things that the men of the world set their hearts upon? Can you look up to your future glory, and not blush to be taken with the glory of this world?

What Alexander the Great said to one of his captains that was called Alexander, *Recordare nominis Alexandri*, remember the name of Alexander, and see, said he, that you do nothing unworthy of the name of Alexander. ³ So say I, Remember, O Christian thy name; remember thy dignity and glory, and see that thou dost nothing unworthy of the one or the other. But,

(8.) Eighthly, If the best and greatest things are reserved for the saints till they come to heaven, then *let them desire and long to be possessed of those blessed things that are reserved in heaven for them.* ⁴ Oh, how do the heirs of this world long to have their estates in their own hands! how do they long to have their inheritances settled upon them! some of them wishing their relations dead that stand between them and their inheritances; and others, of a little better nature, wishing them in the bosom of Abraham, that they might come to inherit, and that they might suck the sweet, and take up their rest, in their worldly inheritances. And shall not the saints desire and long to be in a full and happy possession of that crown, of that inheritance, of those jewels that are reserved in heaven for them? O Christians! how is it, why is it, that your heavenly Jerusalem, your mansions above, your glorious treasures, suffer not an holy violence, in respect of your earnest wishes and burning desires after them?

¹ Oh, say not of this world as Peter of his little heaven, *Bonum est esse hic*, it is good to be here.

² Sen. Epist. lxxvi.

³ Plutarch, *Alexandr.*—G.

⁴ *Tota vita boni Christiani, sanctum desiderium est*, the whole life of a good Christian is an holy wish, saith one. [Bernard Serm. Canticles.—G.]

The primitive Christians did so hunger and thirst, look and long, wish and desire after this heavenly kingdom,¹ this glorious inheritance, that the Roman State had a jealousy of them, as if they had affected their kingdom and their worldly glory. But where is that spirit now to be found? Most men live now as if there were no heaven, or else as if heaven were not worth a seeking, worth a desiring; as if heaven were a poor, low, contemptible thing.

But ah, Christians! you have learned better; and therefore be you much in desiring and longing to get into that glorious city, where streets, walls, and gates are all gold, yea, where pearl is but as mire and dirt, and where are all pleasures, all treasures, all delights, all comforts, all contents; and that for ever. This word 'for ever' is a bottomless depth, a conception without end; it is a word that sweetens all the glory above, and that indeed makes heaven to be heaven. I can hardly call him a Christian that doth not long more after spirituals, and after the great things that are reserved in heaven for the saints, than Ulysses did for the smoke of his house after ten years' absence.² But,

(9.) Ninthly, If the best and greatest things are reserved for the saints till they come to heaven, then, *Oh let not the men of the world envy the saints, whilst they are here in this wilderness.*

Ah! sinners, sinners, the people of God have but little in hand; though they have much in hope; they have but little in the bag whatever they may have in the bank; they have but little in the cistern whatever they may have in the fountain; they have but little in possession whatever they may have in reversion; and therefore do not envy them, James ii. 5. Who but monsters will envy the child in his cradle, or in the arms, or in his non-age, though he be an heir to a great estate, inasmuch as it is out of his hand, and he is not in the possession of it? and yet such monsters this world affords, who are filled with envy against Christ's precious ones, though their estates are out of their hands. Old Jacob speaking of his son Joseph, saith, that 'the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him,' Gen. xlix. 23; and Jerome, expounding the words, noteth, *Hic invidiam cum arcu et sagittis introduci ad sagittandum quod immaculatum est*, that here envy is brought in with bow and arrows shooting at that which is immaculate, and where there is no spot to be a mark for it! or else, as an archer doth set up some white thing to be the mark at which he shoots, so it is the whiteness of some good thing or other, against which envy shoots.³ Such is the wrath, the rage, the hatred, the envy of wicked men against the saints, that they will still be envying of them upon one score or another. Such was Saul's envy to David, that David chooses rather to live under king Achish, an enemy, than to live under Saul's envy; nay, such was Saul's envy against David, that when David played on his harp, to cure him of the evil spirit that haunted him, that he threw his spear at him to destroy him, *malens a malo spiritu torqueri, quam Davidem vivere*, choosing rather to be tormented with an evil spirit, than that David should live.⁴ And such was Cain's envy to Abel, that though he had but one brother, nay, though there was but one

¹ Justin Martyr, *Apol.* ii.

² Odyssey, i. 57.—G.

³ Jerome in *quæstionib. Hebræ.*

⁴ Bern de *inter domo.* c. 2.

brother in all the world, yet enraged envy will wash her hands in that brother's blood.

Chrysologus noteth of the rich glutton, who would have Lazarus to be sent to him, that being still cruel and envious towards Lazarus, he would have him to be sent *Ad infernum de gremio, de solio sublimi ad profundissimum chaos, ad tormentorum stridorem, de sancta quiete beatorum*, to hell from the bosom of Abraham, to the bottomless gulf from the highest throne of glory, to the gnashing and grinding of torments from the holy rest of the blessed. The truth is, envy sticks so close to the heart of wicked men, that courtesies provoke it;¹ offices of love and respect swell it, and an eminency in gifts and graces enrages it; no man of worth hath ever escaped it. Neither mine accusers, nor my crimes, saith Socrates, can kill me, but envy only, which hath, and doth, and will destroy the worthiest that ever were; and therefore, the same person wishes that envious men had more eyes and more ears than others, that so they might be tormented more than others, by beholding others' happiness. Well! sinners, if, notwithstanding all that hath been said, you will still be envious against those gracious souls that have but little in hand, though they have much in hope; if you will be envious against those who stand between you and wrath, between you and hell; if you will be envious against those to whom, as instruments, you are beholding for all the mercies, comforts, and contents, that you enjoy in this world, then know, that your envy will torture you,² your envy will slay you, your envy will prepare the hottest, darkest, and lowest place in hell for you. But,

(10.) Tenthly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then *let not any outward losses trouble you, nor deject you*. What is thy loss of a house made with hands to one eternal in the heavens? what is thy loss of rags to the royal robes above? what is thy loss of earth to the gain of heaven? what is thy loss of husband, wife, child, friends, to the enjoyment of God, Christ, angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect? 2 Cor. v. 1; Rev. vi. 11, vii. 9, 13, 14.

When Paulinus Nolanus his city was taken from him by the barbarians, he prayed thus to God: Lord! let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honour, &c.; for thou art all, and much more than all, these unto me.³

When Demetrius asked Stilpo⁴ what loss he had sustained when his wife, his children, and country were all burned, he answered, that he had lost nothing, counting that only his own which none could take from him, to wit, his virtues. What an unlovely, what an uncomely, thing would it be to see a rich heir, upon the loss of a ribbon out of his hat, or upon the loss of a glove from his hand, &c., to stand sighing and grieving, vexing and lamenting; or to see a prince, upon the burning up of his stables and outhouses, to stand wringing his hands and beating his breasts, and to cry out, Undone, undone! when his royal palace is safe, his crown safe, his treasures safe! As unlovely, yea, a more unlovely and uncomely, thing it is to see a saint upon the account of losing

¹ Envy is like certain flies called cantharides, who light specially upon the fairest wheat, and most blown roses.

² Prov. xiv. 30; Job v. 2; Mat. xxiii. 13-15.

³ Cf. *ante*.—G.

⁴ A philosopher of Megara.

wife, child, friend, &c., to cry out, Undone, undone! no sorrow to my sorrow! no loss to my loss! when his great all is safe; when his crown, his heaven, his happiness, his blessedness, is safe. Basil, bringing in Job comforting his wife under all their sad losses and calamities, makes him speak thus:¹ *Semper prospere agere solius est Dei; bibisti liquidum vite laticem et turbidum jam toleranter bibe*, it belongeth to God only always to enjoy contentment. Thou hast drunk of the clear waters of this life; now drink of them patiently when they are troubled. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then *let believers live cheerfully and walk comfortably up and down in this world.*² Ah! how cheerfully and merrily do many great heirs live! Though for the present things goes hard with them, the hopes of a good inheritance makes them sing care and sorrow away. It is not for the honour of Christ, nor for the glory of the gospel, to see the heirs of heaven look so sadly and walk so mournfully and dejectedly, as if there were no heaven, or as if there was nothing laid up for them in heaven. It becomes not the sons of glory, with Rachel, to give so much way to weeping as to refuse to be comforted, Neh. viii. 10. Dost thou not remember, O Christian, that the joy of the Lord is thy strength, thy doing-strength, thy bearing strength, thy prevailing strength. What! hast thou forgotten that 'the joy of the Lord is thy strength' to live, and thy strength to die? If not, why with Cain dost thou walk up and down with a dejected countenance, with a cast-down countenance? A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye, but then especially when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty upon a person, and makes that which before was beautiful to be exceedingly beautiful; it puts a new lustre upon beauty; so doth joy put a lustre and a beauty upon a Christian; and upon all his words, his ways, his works. It was this that made the faces of several martyrs to shine as if they had been the faces of angels. One observes³ of Clispina, that she was cheerful when she was apprehended, and joyful when she was led to the judge, and merry when she was sent into prison; so when she was bound, when she was brought forth, when she was lifted up in a cage, when she was heard, when she was condemned. In all these things she rejoiced; so that they who were miserable thought her to be miserable, who indeed was happy under a spirit of joy. When Cæsar was sad, he used to say to himself, *Cogita te Cæsarem esse*, think thou art Cæsar. Ah, Christians! when you are sad and dejected, think of your dignity and glory; think of all those precious and glorious things that are reserved in heaven for you.

It becomes not Christians, who have so much in reversion, to be like Angelastus, grandfather to Crassus, who never laughed in all his life save once, and that was when he saw a mare eating of thistles; nor like Anaxagoras [of] Clazomenæ, who was never seen to laugh or smile from the day of his birth to the day of his death. Christians, I desire to leave that serious and sad word upon your hearts: Deut. xxviii. 47, 48, 'Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with

¹ Basil, Homil. xxiii.

² Ps. xxxiii. 1, lxxix. 12; Isa. xli. 16; Joel ii. 23; Zech. x. 7; Philip. iii. 1, iv. 4.

³ Augustine in Ps. cxxxvii.

gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things ; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things : and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he hath destroyed thee.' Sad souls ! it will be your wisdom to make this scripture your daily companion, and to ponder it seriously in your hearts, as Mary did the saying of the angel. God takes it so unkindly at his people's hands that they should be sad, and sighing, lamenting, and mourning, when they should be a-rejoicing and delighting themselves in the Lord for the abundance of his mercies, that he threatens to pursue them with all sorts of miseries and calamities to the very death. A sad, dejected spirit opens many foul mouths that God would have stopped, and sads many precious souls that God would have gladdened, and discourages many weak Christians and young beginners whom God would have encouraged and animated ; and therefore we need not wonder if God should deal so sadly and severely with such sad souls, who make little of sadding many at once, viz., God, Christ, the Spirit, and many precious ones, 'of whom this world is not worthy.' Surely there is infinitely more in the great and glorious things that are reserved for believers in heaven, to joy and rejoice them, than there can be in all the troubles and trials, afflictions and temptations, that they meet with in this world, to sad, grieve, and deject them. Ah, Christians ! the great and glorious things that are reserved in heaven for you, will afford you such an exuberancy of joy, as no good can match, as no evil can overmatch. Witness the joy of the martyrs, both ancient and modern. Oh how my heart leapeth for joy, saith one, that I am so near the apprehension of eternal bliss ! But,

(12.) Twelfthly, If the best and greatest things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, why then *let not believers be unwilling to die ; yea, let them rather court it, and when it comes, sweetly welcome it*, 1 Cor. v. 1, 2, 7, Philip. i. 21. There is no way to paradise but by this flaming sword ; there is no way to those heavenly treasures, but through this dark entry ; there is no way to life, immortality, and glory, but by dying ; there is no coming to a clear, full, and constant fruition of God, but by dying. Augustine upon those words, Exod. xxxiii. 20, 21, 'Thou canst not see my face and live,' makes this short but sweet reply, 'Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see thy face.' 'Shall I die ever?' saith one.² 'Yes ; or shall I die at all? yea, why then, Lord, if ever, why not now, why not now?' So St Andrew, saluting the cross on which he was crucified, cried out, 'Take me from men, and restore me to my Master.' So Lawrence Sanders, when he was come to the stake at which he was to be burnt, kissed it, saying, 'Welcome the cross of Christ, welcome everlasting life.'³

Ah, Christians ! can you read over those instances, and not blush,

¹ See [Fox.] Aet. and Mon. 1668-70. &c.

² Monica, mother of Augustine.—G.

³ So Moses, Jacob, and old Simeon. So Cowper, Nazianzen, Faninus, Cyprian, young Lord Harrington, and others, &c. *Præcipit ut quisque vitam suam futuri desiderio laboret, præsentium tædio.*—Bernard. [The 'funeral' sermon of 'young' Lord Harrington was preached by Richard Stock, and contains some touching sayings of above kind. Cf our Memoir, prefixed to Stock on Malachi, in the series of 'Commentaries' issued by the present Publisher.—G.]

and not be troubled that these worthies should be so ready and so willing to die, that they might come to a happy fruition of those glorious things that were reserved in heaven for them, whilst you are unwilling to die ; whilst your desires are rather, with Peter, to build tabernacles here, than to be in a full fruition of God, and in a happy possession of your heavenly mansions, Mat. xvii. 4, John xiv. 2, 3. Cyprian tells of a bishop, who, being near his death, and unwilling to die, and praying to God for a longer life, an angel appeared unto him, and, with an angry countenance in reproving him, said, *Pati timetis, exire de vita non vultis, quid faciam vobis?*¹ Ye fear to suffer, ye will not go out of this life, what shall I do unto you? Ah, Christians, Christians! how justly may that father be angry with his child that is unwilling to come home, and that husband with his wife who is unwilling to ride to him in a rainy day, or to cross the seas to enjoy him? And is not this your case? is not this your case? I know it is. Well, Christians! let me a little expostulate the case with you, that if it be possible I may work your hearts into a willingness to die, yea, to desire death, to long for death, that so you may come to a full fruition of whatever is reserved in heaven for you: and that I may, I beseech you, Christians, tell me,

[1.] First, *Can death dissolve that glorious union that is between you and Christ?* No; Rom. viii. 35-39. Why, why then are you unwilling to die, as long as in death your union with Christ holds good? As in death Saul and Jonathan were not parted, 2 Sam. i. 23, so in death a believer and Christ is not parted, but more closely and firmly united. That is not death, but life, that joins the dying man to Christ; and that is not a life, but death, that separates the living man from Christ. As it is impossible for the leaven that is in the dough to be separated from the dough after it is once mixed, for it turneth the nature of the dough into itself; so it is impossible, either in life or death, for the saints ever to be separated from Christ; for Christ, in respect of union, is in the saints as nearly as the leaven in the very dough, so incorporated one into another as if Christ and they were one lump, John xvii. 20, 21; xv. 1-6. But,

[2.] Secondly, For I shall but touch upon things, tell me, O Christian, who art unwilling to die, *Whether death can dissolve or untie that marriage-knot that by the Spirit on Christ's side, and by faith on thine, is knit between Christ and thy soul?* No. Death cannot untie that knot, Hosca ii. 19, 20. Why, why then, O Christian, art thou unwilling to die, as long as the marriage-knot holds fast between Christ and thy soul? Mat. xxv. 1, 2; Rom. vii. 1-4. I readily grant that death dissolves that marriage-knot that is knit between man and wife; but death nor devil can never dissolve the marriage-knot that is knit between Christ and the believing soul. Sin cannot dissolve that marriage-knot that is knit between Christ and a believer; and if sin cannot, then certainly death, that came in by sin, cannot. Though sin can do more than death, yet sin cannot make null and void that glorious marriage that is between Christ and the soul; therefore a Christian should not be unwilling to die: Jer. iii. 1-5, 12-14, compared. But,

[3.] Thirdly, *Can death, O Christian, dissolve that glorious covenant that God hath taken thee into?* No; Death can never dissolve

¹ Cyprian, *de immortalitate*.

that covenant : Jer. xxxii. 40, 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Though Abraham be dead, yet God is Abraham's God still, Mat. xxii. 30-32. By covenant, and by virtue of this everlasting covenant, Abraham shall be raised and glorified. Oh ! then, why shouldst thou be afraid of death ? why shouldst thou be unwilling to die ?

When David was upon his dying bed, he drew his strongest consolation out of this well of salvation,—the covenant : 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, 'Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure ; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.' Dear hearts ! the covenant remains firm and good between you and the Lord, both in life and in death ; and therefore there is no reason why you should be unwilling to die. There are three things that are impossible for God to do, viz. to die, to lie, or deny himself, or that gracious covenant that he hath made with his people ; and therefore death should be more desirable than terrible to gracious souls. But,

[4.] Fourthly, *Tell me, O Christian, can death dissolve that love that is between the Lord and thy soul ?* Ps. cxvi. 15 ; Deut. vii. 7, 8. No, death cannot ; for his love is not founded upon any worth or excellency in me, nor upon any work or service done by me, but his love is free ; he loves because he will love. All motives to love are taken out of that bosom that is love and sweetness itself. His love is everlasting, it is like himself : Jer. xxxi. 3, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee ;' John xiii. 1, 'Whom he loved, he loved to the end ;' Isa. liv. 8-10, 'In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me : for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth ; so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' The love of Jesus Christ was to Lazarus when dead (John xi. 11), 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.' By all which it is most evident that death cannot dissolve that precious love that is between the Lord and his children. Oh ! why then are they afraid to die ? Why then do not they long to die, that they may be in the everlasting arms of divine love ? The love of the Lord is everlasting ; it is a love that never dies, that never decays, nor waxes cold. It is like the stone albestos,¹ of which Solinus writes, that being once hot, it can never be cooled again. Death is nothing but a bringing of a loving Christ and loving souls together. Why, then, should not the saints rather desire it, than fear it or be dismayed at it ? But,

[5.] Fifthly, *Can death, O thou believing soul, dissolve those gracious grants, or those grants of grace that the Lord hath vouchsafed to thee ?* as the grant of reconciliation, the grant of acceptance, the grant of justification, the grant of adoption, the grant of remission, &c., 2 Cor.

¹ 'Asbestos.'—G.

iii. 21-23. No ; death cannot dissolve any of these gracious grants . Rom. xi. 29, ' for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.' Why then, O Christian, art thou unwilling to die ? Indeed, were it in the power of death to make void any of those noble and gracious grants that God hath vouchsafed to thee, thou mightest be afraid and unwilling to die ; but that being a work too great, and too hard for death to accomplish, why shouldst thou not, in a holy triumphing way, say with the apostle, ' O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ,' 1 Cor. xv. 55-57. A Christian, upon the account of what is laid up for him, may and ought divinely to out-brave death, as this precious saint did. A little before she breathed out her last into the bosom of Christ, she called for a candle ; Come, saith she, and see death ; and this she spake smilingly, out-braving death in a holy sense. Being free both from the pains of death, and from the fear of death, she knew him in whom she had believed, 2 Tim. i. 12. She knew right well that death could not dissolve those gracious grants that God had vouchsafed to her ; and therefore when she came to it, she made no more of it to die than we do to dine. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *Tell me, Christians, did not Christ come to deliver you from the fear of death ?* Yes ; he did come into the world, and did take our nature upon him, that he might deliver us from the fear of death, Heb. ii. 14, 15. Why, then, should you be unwilling to die ? Tell me, hath not Christ disarmed death of all its hurting power, and taken away its sting, that it cannot harm you ? Yes, he hath, 1 Cor. xv. 55-57. Why then should you be unwilling to die ? Tell me, souls, will not Christ be with you in that hour ? will he not stand by you, though others should desert you ? Yes ; we have it under his own hand that he will be present with us, and that he will neither, living nor dying, leave us, nor forsake us, Ps. xxiii. 4, Heb. xiii. 5, 6. Why then should you be unwilling to die ? Tell me, O trembling Christians, shall death be any more to you than a change ? a change of place, a change of company, a change of employment, a change of enjoyment ?¹ No, certainly ! Death to us will be but a change ; yea, the happiest change that ever we met with, Job xiv. 14, John xi. 26, 1 Thes. iv. 14 ; why then should you be unwilling to die, seeing that to die is nothing but to change earth for heaven, rags for robes, crosses for crowns, and prisons for thrones, &c. ? But tell me once more, Christians, hath not Jesus Christ, by his lying in the grave, sanctified the grave, and perfumed and sweetened the grave ? Hath he not, by his blood and death, purchased for you a soft and easy bed in the grave ? Yes ; we believe he hath done all this for us. Oh why then should you be unwilling to die ? Once more, tell me, Christians, will not Jesus Christ raise you out of the grave after you have taken a short nap ? Will he not cause you to hear his voice ? Will he not call you out of that withdrawing-room, the grave, and bring you to immortality and glory ? Yes ; we believe he will, John vi. 39, 40, 1 Cor. i. 5, 1 Thes. iv. 14-18. Oh why then should you be unwilling to die ? Oh why should you not, upon

¹ *Ejus est timere mortem qui ad Christum nolit ire, Let him fear death that is loth to go to Christ—Cyprian.*

all these accounts, long for it, and whenever it comes, readily and willingly, cheerfully and sweetly, embrace it? O Christians, Christians! let but your hopes and your hearts be more fixed upon the things that are reserved in heaven for you, and then you will neither fear death, nor feel it when it comes. But,

[7.] Seventhly, *Death will perfectly cure you of all corporal and spiritual diseases at once*: as the aching head and the unbelieving heart; the ulcerous body and the polluted soul.¹ Now your bodies are full of ails, full of aches, full of diseases, full of distempers, so that your wisest physicians know not what to say to you, nor what to do with you, nor how to cure you. It is often with your bodies as it was with the civil and ecclesiastical body of the Jews, which from 'the sole of the feet, even to the crown of the head, was full of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores,' Isa. i. 6. But now death will perfectly cure you of all; death will do that for you that you could not do for yourselves; death will do that for you that all your friends could not do for you; death will do that for you that the ablest and wisest physicians could not do for you. It will cure you of every ache, of every ail, &c. At Stratford Bow, in Queen Mary's days,² there was burnt a lame man and a blind man at one stake. The lame man, after he was chained, casting away his crutch, bade the blind man be of good comfort, for death, said he, will cure us both: thee of thy blindness, and I of my lameness.

Ah, Christians! death will cure you of all your infirmities, of all your distempers; and why, then, should you be unwilling to die? Mæcenas in Seneca had rather live in many diseases than die; but I hope better things of you, for whom Christ hath died.

And as death will cure all your bodily diseases, so it will cure all your soul-distempers also. Death is not *mors hominis*, but *mors peccati*, not the death of the man, but the death of his sin; *peccatum eruit obstetric mortis, et mors sepulchrum peccati*, sin was the midwife that brought death into the world, and death shall be the grave to bury sin.³ Death shall do that for a Christian that all his duties could never do, that all his graces could never do, that all his experiences could never do, that all ordinances could never do. It shall at once free him fully, perfectly, and perpetually from all sin, yea, from all possibility of ever sinning more.

The Persians had a certain day in the year in which they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures; such a day as that will the day of death be to their sins who are interested in a Saviour. When Samson died, the Philistines also died together with him; so when a believer dies, his sins die with him. Death came in by sin, and sin goeth out by death. As the worm kills the worm that bred it, so death kills sin that bred it, Heb. xii. 23, Rom. vi. 7, 1 Cor. xv. 26.

And why, then, should Christians be afraid of death, or unwilling to die, seeing death gives them a writ of ease from infirmities and weaknesses, from all aches and pains, griefs and gripings, distemper and diseases, both of body and soul?

Homer reports of his Achilles, that he had rather be a servant to a

¹ *Ultimus morborum medicus mors.*

² [Foxe] Act. and Mon. fol. 1773.

³ *Quid est mors nisi sepultura vitiourum?* What is death but the burial of vices?—Ambrose de bono mortis, c. 4.

poor country clown here in this world, than to be a king to all the souls departed;¹ and the truth is, the most famous heathens have preferred the meanest life on earth above all the hopes they had of a better life; but I hope better things of you, Christians; and that upon this very ground, that death will certainly and perfectly cure you of all bodily and soul distempers at once. But,

[8.] Eighthly, *Is not your dying day an inevitable day?* Why, yes, yes. Why, then, should you be afraid to die? Why should you be unwilling to die, seeing that your dying day is a day that cannot be put off? The daily spectacles of mortality which we see before our eyes clearly evince this truth, that all must die.² It is a statute-law in heaven that all must die. All men and women are made up of dust, and by the law of heaven they must return to dust. All have sinned, and therefore all must die. The core of that apple which Adam ate sticks in the throats of all his children, and will at length choke them all one by one.³

Masius,⁴ out of *Jacob Ediscenus Syrus*, saith that when Noah went into the ark, he took the bones of Adam with him, and that when he came out of the ark, he divided them among his sons, giving the head, as the chiefest part, unto his first-born, and therein as it were saying unto them, Let not this delivery from the flood make you secure; behold your first parent, and the beginning of mankind; you must all, and all that come from you, go unto the dust to him. What day is there that passes over our heads wherein the Lord doth not, by others' mortality, preach many sermons of mortality to us? and therefore why should we be unwilling to pay that debt that all owe, and that all must pay, and that so many daily pay before our eyes? But,

[9.] Ninthly, *A believer's dying day is his best day*,⁵ and why then should he be unwilling to die? Ecces. vii. 1, 'A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.' In respect of profit, pleasure, peace, safety, company, glory, a believer's last day is his best day; and when then should a believer be unwilling to die? In a printed sermon on this very text, I have proved this truth at large, and to that I refer you, who desire further satisfaction about this truth.⁶ But,

[10.] Tenthly, *A believer's dying day is his resting day*; it is his resting day from sin, from sorrow, from affliction, from temptation, from desertion, from dissension, from vexation, from persecution, and from all bodily labour.⁷ And therefore why should a believer be unwilling to die, seeing that for him to die is no more but to rest? But of this rest I have spoken largely before; and therefore a touch may be enough in this place. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, *The saints' dying day is their reaping day*. Now they shall reap the fruit of all the prayers that ever they have made, and of all the sermons that ever they have heard, and of all the tears

¹ Odyssey, xi. 488.—G.

² Ecces. ii. 16; Zech. i. 5; Heb. ix. 27; Gen. iii. 19; Rom. vi. 23.

³ See Brooks's Will in Appendix to Memoir.—G.

⁴ Masius in *ult. cap. Josh.*, ver. 32. [Andrew Masius, a learned writer, died 1573. His 'Commentary' on Joshua (1574) was reprinted in the 'Critici Sacri.'—G.]

⁵ Ambrose, *de fide resurrectionis*, speaks of some who lamented men's births and celebrated their deaths, &c. ⁶ His 'Believer's Last Day is his Best Day,' 1657.—G.

⁷ Rev. xiv. 13, xxi. 4; Job iii. 13–16; Isa. lvii. 1, 2.

that ever they have shed, and of all the sighs and groans that ever they have fetched, and of all the good words that ever they have spoke, and of all the good works that ever they have done, and of all the great things that ever they have suffered; yea, now they shall reap the fruit of many good services, which themselves had forgot, 2 Cor. ix. 6; Gal. vi. 7-9. 'Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink: or naked, and clothed thee; or sick, or in prison, and visited thee?' Mat. xxv. 34-41. They had done many good works and forgot them, but Christ records them, remembers them, and rewards them. Sabinus in Seneca could never in all his lifetime remember those three names of Homer, Ulysses, and Achilles; and as bad memories have many Christians in spirituals. But our Lord Jesus, as he hath a soft and tender heart, so he hath an iron memory; he remembers not only the best and greatest services, but also the least and lowest services that have been done by his people, and he remembers them to reward them. A bit of bread, a cup of cold water, shall not pass without a reward. Therefore it is good counsel one gives,¹ *Nunquam quum veniat Dominus, inveniat imparatos, sed semper vultus suspensos expansosque sinus habentes, ad largam Domini benedictionem*, Let the Lord when he cometh never find us unready, but always with our faces looking up towards him, always having our bosoms open, our laps spread abroad, as looking to receive a large blessing from him. Christians, however Christ may seem to forget your labour of love, and to take no notice, or but little, of many good services that you have done for him, his name, his gospel, his people, yet when you die, when you come to heaven, you shall then reap a plentiful, a glorious crop, as the fruit of that good seed, that for a time hath seemed to be buried and lost, Prov. xi. 25; Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6. When mortality shall put on immortality, you shall then find that bread which long before was cast upon the waters, Eccles. xi. 1-6. Therefore be not, O Christian, afraid to die! be not, O Christian, unwilling to die! for thy dying day will be thy reaping day. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, *Thy dying-day, O believer! will be thy triumphing day*, John xi. 26. Now thou shalt gloriously triumph over sin, Satan, the world, thy own base heart, yea, and over death itself. I readily grant, that if you consider believers in Christ, as he was a public person, they have then already triumphed over principalities and powers; what Christ did in his greatest transaction, he did as a public person, representing all his chosen ones; he suffered as a public person, representing all his elect; he died as a public person, representing all his precious ones; he rose, he ascended, and now he sits in heaven as a public person, representing all his children: Eph. ii. 6, 'And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Christ hath taken up his children's rooms in heaven aforehand; Christ hath already taken possession of heaven in their names, in their steads, they do now sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.² And so when Jesus Christ spoiled 'principalities and powers, and triumphed openly over them on the cross,' he

¹ Bernard. Ser. xvii. in Cant.

² Eph. iv. 8; Col. ii. 14, 15; a plain allusion to the Roman triumphs; 1 John ii. 13, 14; Rom. viii. 37; 1 John iv. 4, 5.

did this as a public person, representing all his children who triumphed in his triumph over all the powers of darkness; and therefore, in this sense, believers have already triumphed; yea, and I readily grant, that believers, even in this life, by virtue of their union and communion with Christ, and by virtue of his gracious presence, influence, and assistance, they do always triumph, as the apostle speaks: 2 Cor. ii. 14, 'Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.' Believers now are more than conquerors, they are triumphers over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Christ so routed Satan upon the cross, saith Ignatius, that he never since either hears or sees the cross, but he falls a-shaking and trembling. Believers, by holding forth to Satan the cross of Christ in the arms of faith, and by their laying hold on his cross and pleading his cross, they do easily, they do frequently overcome him and triumph over him. But notwithstanding all this, ah! how often doth the best of saints find the world, the flesh, and the devil triumphing sadly over them? Now a Christian triumphs over Satan, Rom. vii. 14-25; by and by Christ withdraws, and then Satan triumphs over him. Now the believer leads captivity captive; anon the believer is led captive; this day a saint gets the wind and the hill of Satan, and beats him quite out of the field; the next day Satan draws forth and falls on with new forces, with new arguments, with fresh strength, and then puts a Christian to a retreat, ay, too often to a rout. In many a battle a Christian is worsted, and much ado he hath to come off with his life. Oh but now death, that brings a Christian to a full, perfect, complete, absolute, and perpetual triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Now a Christian shall for ever have the necks of these enemies under his feet; now these enemies shall be for ever disarmed, so that they shall never be able to make resistance more, they shall never strike stroke more, they shall never affront a believer more, they shall never lead a believer captive more, &c. Oh why then should believers be afraid to die, be unwilling to die, seeing that their dying day is their triumphing day? But,

[13.] Thirteenthly, As a believer's dying-day is his triumphing-day, so a believer's dying-day is *his marriage-day*, Hosea ii. 19, 20. In this life we are only betrothed to Christ; in the life to come we shall be married to Christ. Here Christ and the believer is near, but death will bring Christ and the believer nearer; here Christ and the believer is asked, and all things are agreed on between them, only the marriage-knot must be tied in heaven, the marriage-supper must be kept in heaven, Rev. xix. 5-10. And, therefore, several of the martyrs on their suffering-days, on their dying-days, they have invited several to their marriage, as they have phrased it, knowing right well, that their dying-days would be their marriage-days to Christ; the very thoughts of which hath so raised and cheered, so warmed and inflamed their hearts, that they have made nothing of death, that they have outbraved death, that they have, to the great joy of their friends, and to the amazement and astonishment of their enemies, more resolutely, friendly, and sweetly embraced death, than they have their nearest and dearest relations. But in the

¹ The Romans used in all their battles to lose at first, to win at last; it is so with Christians.

(14.) Fourteenth place, A Christian's dying day is his *transplanting-day*. Death transplants a believer from earth to heaven, from misery to glory, Job xiv. 14. Death to a saint is nothing but the taking of a sweet flower out of this wilderness, and planting of it in the garden of paradise; it is nothing but a taking of a lily from among thorns, and planting of it among those sweet roses of heaven which God delights to wear always in his bosom. Death is nothing but the taking off of a believer fully from the stock of the first Adam, and the planting of him perfectly and perpetually into that glorious stock, the second Adam, the Lord Jesus, who is blessed for ever. Death is nothing but the taking off the believer from a more barren soil, and planting of him in a more fruitful soil. Here some Christians bring forth thirty, others sixty, and others a hundred-fold, Mat. xiii. 8. 23; but heaven is so fruitful a soil, that there are none there but such as abound in the fruits of righteousness and holiness, but such as bring forth a thousand-fold, yea, many thousand-fold. Here our hearts are like the isle of Patmos, which brings forth but little fruit; but when they shall by death be transplanted to heaven, they shall be like the tree in Alcinous's garden, that had always blossoms, buds, and ripe fruits, one under another.¹

In the island of St Thomas, on the back side of Africa, in the midst of it is a hill, and over that a continual cloud, wherewith the whole island is watered and made fruitful. Such a cloud will Jesus Christ be to all those precious souls that shall be transplanted from earth to heaven.

Oh! why, then, should believers be unwilling to die, seeing that their dying day is but a transplanting day of their souls from earth to heaven, from a wilderness to a paradise? But in the

[15.] Fifteenth place, As a believer's dying day is the day of his transplantation, so his dying day is the *day of his coronation*. Here believers are kings elected, but when they die, they are kings crowned; now they have a crown in reversion, but then they have a crown in possession; now they have a crown in hope, but then they shall have a crown in hand, James i. 12, Rev. ii. 10. Death will at last bring the soul to a crown without thorns, to a crown without mixture, to a righteous crown, to a glorious crown, to an everlasting crown. Though a crown be the top of royalty,² and though beyond it the thoughts and wishes of mortal men extend not, yet most may say of their earthly crowns as that king said of his: O crown! more noble than happy! But death will set such a crown upon a believer's head as shall always flourish, and as shall make him happy to all eternity. Here the believer, as his Saviour before him, is crowned with thorns, but death will turn that crown of thorns into a crown of pure gold, Ps. cxxxii. 18, xxi. 3.

Upon a triumph, all the Emperor Severus his soldiers, for the greater pomp, were to put on crowns of bays on their heads, but there was one Christian among them that wore this crown on his arm; and it being demanded why he did so, he answered, *Non decet Christianum in hac vita coronari*, it becomes not a Christian to wear his crown in this life. The truth is, a Christian's crown never sits so fast, nor never so well

¹ Homer *Od.* vi. 12, &c., 62, &c.; and cf. Hyginus. Fab. 125, 126.—G.

² Still another Shakesperian word, 'The round and top of sovereignty?' *Macbeth*, iv. 1, &c., &c.—G.

becomes him, as when it is put on by a hand of death. Here most princes' crowns are the fruits of unrighteousness, but death will at last put upon the believer a crown of righteousness, or a righteous crown, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; and so it is called, not only because it is purchased by the righteousness of Christ, but also to difference it from those unrighteous crowns, or crowns of unrighteousness, that the princes of this world put upon their own heads. Earthly crowns are corruptible, but death will put on the heads of believers an incorruptible crown, 1 Cor. ix. 25.

Worldly crowns are fading and withering. Though king William the Conqueror was crowned three times every year, during his reign, at three several places, viz., Gloucester, Winchester, and Westminster, yet how soon did his crown fade and wither?

But death will put such a crown upon the believer's head as shall never fade nor wither, 1 Pet. v. 4. Worldly crowns are tottering and shaking; most princes' crowns hang but on one side of their heads, and all their interest, power, and policy cannot make them sit fast on both sides. But death will put upon the heads of believers an immortal crown, an unmoveable crown, an everlasting crown, an eternal crown, a crown that none can shake, that none can take, that none can conquer or overcome, 2 Cor. iv. 14–18, Rev. ii. 10.

Oh, why then should Christians be afraid to die, or unwilling to die, seeing that their dying day is but their coronation day? Who would be unwilling to ride to a crown through a dirty lane or a rainy day? But in the

[16.] Sixteenth place, *A gracious soul shall never die till his work be finished, and he prepared to die*: and why then should he be unwilling to die when his work is done, and he prepared to go home? When God hath no more work for you to do in this world, why then should you be unwilling to die, to go home? Now, till your work be finished that God hath cut out for you in this world, no power nor policy shall ever be able to cut off the thread of your lives; in despite of all the world, and all the powers of hell, you shall do that work, be it more or less, that God hath appointed you to do in this world. The life of Christ was very often in danger, both among pretended friends and professed foes, but yet he still escapes all the snares that they had laid for him, and all the pits that they have digged for him, and that upon this very ground, 'That his time was not yet come, his hour was not yet come;' John vii. 30, 'Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come;' viii. 19, 20, 'Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.'¹ God can and will secure his people from the rage and malice of their enemies by a secret and invisible hand of providence, till they have finished the work that he hath set them about in this world. David was surrounded with enemies on all hands, but yet, in spite of them all, he keeps up till his work was done: Acts xiii. 36, 'For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell

¹ God often bridles wicked men's malice and fury invisibly.

on sleep.' Though many thrust sore at him, yet he did not fall asleep, he did not die till he had served his generation. Bonds and afflictions waited on Paul in every city, Acts xx. 23; so in that 2 Cor. xi. 23-28, 'In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often. Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one' (the Lord commanded that the number of strokes should not exceed forty, Deut. xxv. 3, and therefore the Jews, that they might not transgress that law, gave one less); 'thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep, in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils amongst false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,' Acts xvi. 23, xiv. 17. And yet notwithstanding all these hazards, hardships, dangers, deaths, Paul lives, and bravely bears up till his work was done, his course finished: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;' and so in that Rev. xi. 7, The beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit, and that made war against the two witnesses, could not overcome them, nor kill them, till they had finished their testimony. Christians shall live to finish their testimony, and to do all that work that God hath cut out for them to do, in spite of all the beasts in the world, in spite of hell or antichrist.

It was so with Ambrose; a certain witch sent her spirits to kill him, but they returned answer, that God had hedged him in, as he did Job, so that they could not touch him. Another came with a sword to his bedside to have killed him; but he could not stir his hand, till repenting, he was by the prayer of Ambrose restored to the use of his hands again. No means, no attempts, could cut him off till his work was done.

So for Luther, a poor friar, to stand so stoutly against the pope, this was a great miracle; but that he should prevail against the pope as he did, this was a greater; and that after all he should die in his bed, notwithstanding all the enemies he had, and the several designs they had to have destroyed him, this was the greatest of all; and yet for all that the pope or the devil his father could do, Luther, when he had finished his testimony, dies in his bed. Oh! why then should any Christian be unwilling to die, seeing he shall not die till his work be done, till his testimony be finished?

And as a believer shall not die till his work be done, so he shall not die till he be prepared to die. A believer is always habitually prepared to die; ay, even then when he is not actually prepared; yet then he is habitually prepared to die, for he hath not his ark to build, nor his lamp to trim, nor his oil to buy, nor his pardon to seal, nor his peace to make, nor his graces to get, nor his interest in Christ to seek, nor divine favour to secure, nor a righteousness to look after, &c. That promise is full of honey and sweetness that you have in Job v. 26, 'Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.' The husbandman brings not his corn into his barn till it be full ripe, no more will God take his children out of this world till they are fit for another world; he will not transplant

them from earth till they are fit, till they are prepared for heaven. It is with Christians as it is with the fruits of the earth ; some are ripe sooner, some later ; but as we, so God will gather none till they are ripe for glory. Some souls, like some fruits, are ripe betimes ; other Christians, like other fruit, are a longer time of ripening ; and so God gathers his fruit in as they ripen, some sooner, some later, but none till they are in a measure ripe for heaven. And why, then, should Christians be unwilling to die, seeing they shall not die till they are prepared to die ? I do not say they shall not die till they think they are fit to die, or till they say they are prepared to die ; for they may be graciously prepared and sweetly fitted to die, and yet may judge otherwise, by reason of Satan's sleights, or some spiritual distemper that may hang upon them, or from a natural fear of death, and some great unwillingness to die ; but they shall not die till they are either actually or habitually prepared to die, till they are ripe for glory ; and therefore be not, oh be not, Christians, unwilling to die. But in the

[17.] Seventeenth place, *When a righteous man dies, he shall leave a sweet savour behind him, his name shall live when he is dead*, Heb. xi. Are not the names of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and other saints, a sweet savour to this very day ? We know there is no sweet savour to that they have left behind them : Ps. cxii. 6, 'The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.' Prov. x. 7, 'The memory of the just is blessed : ' the Septuagint thus translates it, 'The memory of the just is with praises.' Many are the praises that wait on the name of the just when their bodies are in the dust ; no scent so sweet as that which the just man leaves behind him : Eccles. vii. 1, 'A good name is better than precious ointment.' He doth not say a great name, a name arising from outward greatness, but a good name, a name arising from inward goodness, and manifested by outward holiness ; that is the name that is better than precious ointment. Ointment only reaches the nostrils, but a good name reaches to the cheering and the warming of the heart. The Chaldee reads this verse thus : *Melius est nomen bonum quod comparabunt justi in hoc sæculo, quam unguentum unctionis, quod fuerit inunctum super capita regum et sacerdotum* : better is the good name which the just shall obtain in this world, than the ointment of anointing which was poured upon the heads of the kings and priests. Though a believer may not leave great sums of money behind him, nor yet thousands nor hundreds a-year behind him, yet he shall leave a good name behind him, which answers to all, nay, which outweighs all the riches, gallantry, and glory of this world. That heathen [Plautus] hit right who said, *Ego si bonam famam servasso, sat dives ero*. If I may but keep a good name, I have wealth enough. It is a greater mercy to leave a good name behind us than to leave the riches of a kingdom, yea, of a world, behind us. But in the,

[18.] Eighteenth place, *Death is nothing but the believer's inlet into glory*. Death is the gate of life, it is the gate of paradise ; it is the mid-wife to bring eternity to bed. When Jacob saw the chariots that were to bring him to Joseph, his spirit revived, Gen. xlv. 27. Ah, Christian !

¹ The initial letter **ב** of the Hebrew word *tov*, that is, for good, is bigger than ordinary, to shew the exceeding excellence of a good name.

death is that chariot that will bring thee not only to a sight of Jacob and Joseph, but also to a blessed sight of God, Christ, angels and 'the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23, 24. Here we meet with many inlets to sin, to sorrow, to affliction, to temptation; but death, of all inlets, is the most happy inlet; it lets the soul into a full fruition of God, to the perfection of grace, and to the heights of glory; and why, then, should a gracious soul be unwilling to die? But I must hasten to a close; therefore in the,

[19.] Nineteenth place, *Was Jesus Christ so willing to leave heaven, his Father's bosom, his crown, his dignity, his glory, his royal attendance, to come into this world to suffer the saddest and the heaviest things that ever was thought of, that ever was heard of, for thy sins, for thy sake? and wilt thou be unwilling to die, and to go to him who hath suffered so much, who hath paid so much, who hath prepared so much for thee?*¹ Ah, Christian, Christian! why dost thou not rather reason thus with thy own soul: Did Christ die for me, that I might live with him? I will not therefore desire to live long from him. All men go willingly to see him whom they love, and shall I be unwilling to die, that I may see him whom my soul loves? Oh, I will not! oh, I dare not! oh, I may not! Others venture through many dangers and many deaths to see their friends and relations, and why then shouldst not thou, O Christian! be willing to venture through death to the Lord of life, to him that is thy crown, thy comfort, thy head, thy husband, thy heaven, thy all? &c. But, in the

[20.] Twentieth and last place, *Consider, O believer! that thou always standest before God in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who is called the Lord our righteousness, and who, of God, is made unto thee wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, Jer. xxiii. 6; 1 Cor. i. 30. Whilst thou livest thou standest before God, not in the righteousness of thy duties, nor in thy gracious dispositions, which are but weak and imperfect, but in the pure, perfect, matchless, and spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ. And when thou diest thou appearest before God in the same glorious righteousness, so that thou mayest appear before God's unspotted justice and holiness with the greatest boldness and comfort that is imaginable, upon the account of that righteousness with which thou art clothed: Ps. xlv. 13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within' (there is her inward glory; grace makes the soul glorious within); 'her clothing is of wrought gold.' Some read it purled work, or closures of gold, enamelled with gold; such as precious stones were set in, which were exceeding splendid and glorious, and which shadowed forth the glorious righteousness of our Lord Jesus, Exod. xxviii. 11, 14; xxxix. 1-5, &c. This clothing of wrought gold is the glorious righteousness of our Lord Jesus. Now, in life and in death, the believer stands before God in the glorious golden robes of Christ's righteousness; and hence it is that believers are said to be all fair and without spot, and to be without spot or wrinkle, and to be complete in Christ, and to be without fault before the throne of God;² and why then should a believer be unwilling to die and appear before God? By reason of this clothing of wrought gold, you stand spotless,*

¹ One of the fathers longed to die, that he might see that head that was crowned with thorns.

² Cant. iv. 7; Eph. v. 27; Col. ii. 10; Rev. xiv. 4, 5.

blameless, and faultless before God. This golden clothing, this glorious righteousness of Christ, is as truly and really the believer's, and as fully and completely the believer's, as if it were his very own. Ah! no clothing to this. The costly cloak of Alcisthenes, which Dionysius sold to the Carthaginians for a hundred talents, was indeed a mean and beggarly rag to this embroidered mantle that Christ puts upon all believers. And therefore a Christian, both living and dying, should say with the psalmist, 'I will make mention of thy righteousness, of thy righteousness only,' Ps. lxxi. 15, 16, 19. Let them be afraid to die, let them be unwilling to die, who must appear before God in their sins, and in their own righteousness, which at best is but as filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 6. But as for thee, O Christian, who shalt always appear before God in clothing of wrought gold, be not thou afraid of death, be not thou unwilling to die, but rather desire it, rather long for it, 1 Cor. xv. 55-57, because thou art clothed with such righteousness as will bear thee up sweetly in it, as will carry thee bravely through it, and as will make thee triumph over it. Christ's righteousness is a Christian's white raiment, in which he stands pure before God, Rev. iii. 18, and Rev. xix. 7, 8, 'Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the linen is the righteousness of saints.' By the fine, clean, white linen which is here called the righteousness, or, as the Greek hath it, the righteousnesses of saints, most understand the glorious righteousness of Christ.¹ Righteousness is an Hebraism, noting that most perfect absolute righteousness which we have in Christ; white is a natural colour, it is a colour of purity, ornament, and honour. It was the habit in times past of nobles, saith Drusius, and others. Now in this pure, clean, white linen all the saints are clothed, and so presented to God by Jesus Christ; and why then should they be unwilling to die? Here is not a speck, not a spot, to be found upon this white linen, which is the righteousness of saints, which should make saints rather to pursue after death, than to fly from it, or to be unwilling to welcome it when it comes.

I am not ignorant that this unwillingness to die most usually springs from those low and dark apprehensions men have of God, and from weakness of faith, and from coldness of love, and from laying the creatures too near our hearts, and from our little communion with God, and our rare taking of turns in paradise, and from our not treasuring up a stock of promises, and a stock of experiences, &c. I have also considered what a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, a grief to the Spirit, a scandal to religion, a blot to profession, a mischief to sinners, and a wrong to saints, it is, for Christians to be unwilling to die, or to be afraid of death, which hath occasioned me to muster up these twenty considerations to work you to be willing to die; and if these will not prevail with you, I profess I do not know what will.

Obj. I would be willing to die, if I had but assurance: but that is the jewel I want; and therefore I am unwilling to die.

(1.) First, I answer, *It may be thou hast assurance, though not such a measure of assurance, such a plerophory or full assurance, as thou*

¹ δικαιοσύνη, i. e. say some, imputed and imparted righteousness.

desirest. A perfect, complete, absolute, and full assurance is very desirable on earth, but I think few attain to it till they come to heaven. This sparkling diamond God hangs in few saints' bosoms till they come to glory. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, *The least grace, if true, is sufficient to salvation*, Mat. v. 3, 10; and therefore the sense of the least grace, or of the least measure of grace, should be sufficient to assurance of salvation. But,

3.) Thirdly, *The time of death is one of the most usual seasons wherein God gives his children the sweetest and fullest assurance of his love, of their interest in him, and of their right to glory.* When there was but a step, a stride, between Stephen and death, then he saw heaven open, and Christ standing at the right hand of his Father, Acts vii. 55-60.

Mr Glover, though he had been long under clouds and much darkness, yet when he came near the fire, he cried out to his friend, O Austin, Austin, he is come, he is come! meaning the Lord, in the sweet and glorious discoveries of his love and favour to him; and so he died, with a heart full of joy and assurance.¹

Mr Frogmorton, a precious godly minister, lived thirty-seven years without assurance, after the Lord had wrought savingly upon him, and then died at Master Dod's, having assurance but an hour before he died.²

I could here give you divers examples, of a later date, of many precious Christians who have lived close with God many years, and have been much in seeking of assurance, and the Lord hath held them off till a few years before their death, and then he hath filled their souls so full of the sense of his love, and the assurance of their everlasting welfare, that they have died under the power of their joys. Assurance is a free gift of God, and God loves to give his gifts to his children when they may most cheer them, and be of greatest use and service to them; and when is that, but at the day of death? And therefore Christians should not be unwilling to die for want of assurance, because that is a special season wherein God usually gives assurance to his children. But,

4.) Fourthly and lastly, *Thou mayest die and go to heaven without assurance.* This truth, with several others of the like import, that may further satisfy such as are unwilling to die, I have made good in that treatise of mine called '*Heaven on Earth*,'³ and to that I refer the reader for further satisfaction, if what is said do not satisfy.

The next inference, then, that I shall make, and so hasten to a close, is this:

¹ Clarke, *as before*.—G.

² The above incident is strikingly told in Brooks's favourite folio, and may here be given:—Mr Frogmorton was a man of high reputation, and a pious and zealous preacher of the word; but labouring, in the decline of life, under a consumption, and being oppressed with melancholy apprehensions about the safety of his state, he removed to Ashby, near Fausley, in Northamptonshire, to enjoy the counsel and advice of the venerable Mr John Dod. A little before he died, he asked Mr Dod, saying 'What will you say of him who is going out of the world, and can find no comfort?' 'What will you say of our Saviour Christ?' replied Mr Dod, 'who, when *he* was going out of the world, found no comfort, but cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"' This administered consolation to Mr Throgmorton's troubled mind, and he departed soon after, rejoicing in the Lord.—Clarke's '*Martyrologie*, as before, p. 172.—G.

³ See this treatise in Vol. II.—G.

If the best things are reserved for believers, then let not Christians mourn immoderately, 1 Thes. iv. 13, 14. Oh! be not over-much afflicted and grieved for the death of husband, wife, child, sister, friend, who dies in the Lord; for they are but gone to take possession of those great and glorious things that are reserved in heaven for them. This deceased saint is now gone to her home, to her heaven, to her God that hath loved her, to her Christ that hath died for her, and to her crown that was prepared for her. Abraham mourned moderately for his dear deceased Sarah, Gen. xxiii. 2, as is imported by a small *caph* in that Hebrew word that signifies to weep; and that not because she was old and over-worn, as some Rabbins say, but because death to her was but an inlet into glory: death did but bring her to a happy fruition of all those glorious things that God hath laid up for them that love him. Death, that seems to dispossess a Christian of all, puts him into a possession of all; of all joys, of all comforts, of all delights, of all contents, of all happiness, of all blessedness; and why then should our sorrow, our tears overflow the banks of moderation? Sorrow is good for nothing but for sin. Now that the child is dead, wherefore should I fast and weep? said David. Grief preceding evil, if it be used for a remedy, cannot be too much; but that which follows an evil past, cannot be too little.

When Ezekiel lost his wife, the delight of his eyes, he must not weep, Ezek. xxiv. 15–17. When Mary the mother of Jesus stood by the cross of her only dear Son, she wept not, as Ambrose saith, John xix. 25–27. We may say of our deceased friend, as the Jews of their father Jacob, *Non est mortuus*, he is not dead; or as our Saviour of Lazarus, ‘He is not dead, but sleepeth,’ John xi. 11; and the maid, ‘Why trouble you yourselves? they are not dead, but sleep.’ To die, in the prophet Isaiah’s phrase, is but to lie down in our beds, Isa. xliii. 17; lvii. 1, 2. So Asa the king’s coffin is called a bed, 2 Chron. xvi. 14. And when ‘thy days shall be fulfilled,’ saith Nathan to David, ‘and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers;’ or, as the original hath it, ‘and thou shalt lie down with thy fathers,’ 2 Sam. vii. 12. Death is nothing but a sleeping with our fathers, or a lying down in the bed with our fathers and friends, who have lain down before us. And, therefore, when a friend, a wife, a child dies, and leaves this world, we are to bid them but good night, as the primitive Christians used to do, in sure and certain hope to meet them in the morning of the resurrection.

The ancients were wont to call the days of their death *natalia*, not dying days but birth-days. It hath been the custom, saith *Haymo*,¹ when a child of God departed this life, to call it not the day of his death, but the day of his nativity. The Jews to this day stick not to call their Golgothas *Batte Cajim*, the houses or places of the living.

The Jews’ ancient custom was, by the way as they went with their corpse, to pluck up every one the grass, as who should say, they were not sorry for the death of their friends and relations, as men without hope, for they were but so cropped off, and should spring up again in due season.² Ah, friends! if you will needs mourn, then mourn for

¹ Bishop of Halberstat: see list of writings in Watt’s Bib. Brit., *sub nomine*.—G.

² The Persian kings would have no mournings, nor mourning apparel worn in their presence.

yourselves, mourn for your sins, mourn for the barrenness and baseness of your own hearts ; but do not mourn, at least excessively, for the death of any Christian friend or relation, seeing that death gives them a quiet and full possession of all that glory and happiness that is reserved in heaven for them.

The next use is cause of comfort and consolation to all the people of God. If it be so that the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then this may serve to comfort the people of God, and that,

(1.) First, against *their poor, low, and mean condition in this world*. Ah ! poor Christians, what though you have little in hand, yet you have much in hope ; though you have little in possession, yet you have much in reversion. He that hath but little in present possession, yet if he hath a fair estate in reversion, he comforts himself, and solaces his spirit in the thoughts of it, that there will come a day when he shall live like a man, when he shall live bravely and sweetly ; and this makes him sing care and sorrow away. Why ! Christians, do you do so : you have a fine, a fair estate in reversion, though you have but little in possession ; and therefore bear up bravely and live comfortably, James ii. 5 ; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8 ; Ps. xvi. 6.

Christ, who was the heir of all, yet he lived poor and died poor, Mat. viii. 20. As he was born in another man's house, so he was buried in another man's tomb. When Christ died he made no will ; he had no crown lands ; only his coat was left, and that the soldiers parted among them. If thy outward condition be conformable to his, there is no reason why thou shouldst be discouraged, for thou hast a rich and royal revenue that will shortly come into thy hand, and then thou shalt never know what poverty and penury means more : and for thy comfort, know, that though men may for thy poverty despise thee, yet the Lord doth highly prize thee. It was a good saying of Basil, *Placet sibi Deus abstrusum in despecto corpore margaritam conspiciatus*.¹ God pleaseth himself, beholding a hidden pearl in a despised and disrespected body. The truth is, Christians, if there were any real happiness in the things of this life, you should have them, but it is not in all the wealth and glory of this world to make up a happiness to you ; and therefore, as the enjoyment of them should not swell the rich, so the want of them should not trouble the poor. The angels and saints departed in heaven are happy, and yet they have neither silver nor gold ; they are blessed and yet they have none of the gay things of this life, they have none of the gallantry and glory of this world. You have now your worst, your best days are to come ; it will not be long before you shall have your portion in hand ; therefore live sweetly and walk comfortably up and down this world. But,

(2.) Secondly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then *this may serve to comfort them against all outward abasements from the malignant world*.² What though you are counted as the scum, the dirt, the filth, the scraping, the offscouring of the world, by men that know not, that see not, that believe not what great and glorious things are reserved in heaven for you ? Yet at last you

¹ Basil, *Selu oratione* 15.

² No man is able to bear so much contempt as Christ bears daily, saith Luther.

shall be advanced to that dignity, and be made partakers of that felicity and glory, which shall work amazement and astonishment in those that now despise you and vilify you. Those that now count you the troublers of their Israel, shall be troubled with a witness, when they shall see you with crowns upon your heads and the royal robes of glory upon your backs, and two-edged swords in your hands, to execute the vengeance written, Ps. cxlix. 4-9. Men that know their future greatness, are not troubled at reproaches; they think themselves above reproaches; they can divinely scorn scorns and contemn contempts. Ah, Christians! how can you seriously consider of your future greatness, happiness, and glory, and not bear up sweetly and comfortably against all the contempt that you may meet with in this world?

And thus I have done with this subject, which of one sermon is multiplied into several, by a good hand of heaven upon me. I shall follow this poor piece with my weak prayers, that it may be a mercy to hearers, readers, and writer.

AN ELEGY

Upon the Death of Mrs MARY BLAKE, the Wife of Mr NICHOLAS
BLAKE, of London, Merchant.

WHERE virtue, seated in the heart,
Shining forth in suiting acts of life,
Oh! what delight doth it impart
To pious minds! Experience rife
Of thee we have, as otherwise,
So in this godly woman's guise.

Her sweet endowments, pregnant wit,
And holy graces from above,
How made they her an object fit
No less for wonder than for love!
Such precious fruit, so ripe, though green
In so few years, is seldom seen.

They who enjoyed the sight and sense
Of her dear converse, to her close,
Oh! what contentment did from thence
To them arise! chiefly to those
Who nearest to her did relate,
In blood, in grace, or married state.

Parents' dear comfort, husband's glory,
Kindred's honour, friendship's praise,
To after-times a fair writ story
For a pattern to their ways:
All these in her did meet, as one
That suited all and failed none.

Thus, while we her enjoyed, she was
A precious cordial to us all;
But now, being taken hence, alas!
From joys unto laments we fall.
Thus sith her loss to all extends,
Sorrow doth seize on all her friends.

