

CONTINUATION
OF THE
MORNING-EXERCISE QUESTIONS.
(CONCLUDED.)

SERMON XXVI.

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HOW WE SHOULD EYE ETERNITY, THAT IT MAY HAVE ITS DUE
INFLUENCE UPON US IN ALL WE DO.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—2 Corinthians iv. 18.

Eternal! What a sound doth this word “eternal” make in my ears! what workings doth it cause within my heart! what casting about of thoughts! What word is next to be added to it? Is it, “eternal world?” Where? for this is temporal. O! that eternal world is now by us unseen, and as to us is yet to come. But yet my trembling heart is still solicitous to what other word this word “eternal” might be prefixed as to myself, or those that hear me this day, when they and I, who, through the long-sufferance of God are yet in this present and temporal, shall be in that eternal, world. Shall it be “eternal damnation” in that eternal world? How? after so many knockings of Christ, strivings of the Spirit, tenders of mercy, wooings of grace, calls of ministers, warnings of conscience, admonitions of friends, waitings of patience? all which put us into a fair probability of escaping eternal damnation. O dreadful words! Can more terror be contained, can more misery be comprehended, in any two words, than in “eternal damnation?” But we in time are praying, hearing, repenting, believing, conflicting with devils, mortifying sin, weaning our hearts from this world, that, when we shall go out of time, we might find “life” or “salvation” added to “eternal.” *Eternal salvation!* these be words as comfortable as the other were terrible, as sweet as they were bitter. What, then? This word

“eternal” is the horror of devils, the amazement of damned souls, which causeth desperation in all that hellish crew; for it woundeth like a dart, continually sticking in them, that they most certainly know that they are damned to all eternity. *Eternal!* it is the joy of angels, the delight of saints, that while they are made happy in the beatifical vision, are filled with perfect love and joy, they sit and sing, “All this will be eternal.” *Eternal!* this word—it is a loud alarm to all that be in time; a serious caution to make this our grand concern,—that when we must go out of time, our “eternal” souls might not be doomed down to “eternal” damnation, but might obtain salvation that shall be “eternal;” of which we have hope and expectation, “while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

The consideration of these words may be twofold:—

1. *Relative*: as they are a reason of steadfastness in shaking troubles, as a cordial against fainting under the cross: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look,” &c. (Verses 16—18.) Not only the experience of present spiritual good in the inward—by the pressing afflictions on the outward—man, in weakening of sin, in purging away our dross, in weaning us from the world, in humbling us for our miscarriages, in reducing us from wandering, in emptying us of self-conceit, in trying our faith, in exercising our patience, in confirming our hope, in awakening of conscience, in bringing us to examine our ways, in renewing our repentance, in proving our love, in quickening us to prayer,—but also the clear and certain prospect of glory after affliction, of a “weight of glory” after “light affliction,” of eternal glory after short affliction, of a weight of glory “far more exceeding” all our present sorrows, burdens, calamities, than tongue can express, or pen describe, or the mind of man conceive; being more than “eye hath seen, or ear hath heard, or have entered into the heart of man,” (1 Cor. ii. 9.)—must needs be an alleviation of our sorrows, a lightening of our burdens, comfort in our grief, joy in our groans, strength in our weakness. Though “we are troubled on every side, yet [are we] not distressed; though perplexed, yet not in despair;” (2 Cor. iv. 8;) though under afflictions both felt and seen, yet “we faint not,” while we keep our eye fixed upon the glorious things in the other world that are unseen and eternal too.

2. *Absolute*: as they set before us the mark and scope [which] we should have in our eye all the while we are in time; namely, unseen, eternal things. You stand in time; but you should look into eternity: you stand tottering upon the very brink of time, and, when by death thrust out of time, you must into eternity; and if in any case the old proverb should prevail, it should not fail in this,—to “look before you leap.” The analysis of the text breaks it into these parts:—

1. *The objects that are before us* : (1.) Things seen. (2.) Things not seen.

2. *The act exerted on these objects.*—"Looking," expressed,

(1.) *Negatively* : "Not at the things which are seen." The men of the world stand gazing at these, till their eyes are dazzled with them, and their souls damned for them.

(2.) *Affirmatively* : "But at the things which are not seen." Men in this world, minding another world, stand looking at these, who have an eye to see those things that are not seen. There is a mystery in godliness.

3. *The persons exerting this act upon these objects.*—We that have the Spirit of God ; who have our eyes opened ; who consider we are hastening, posting out of time into eternity. These things are set before the men of the world, who have eyes, but they do not see.

4. *The property of these objects* : (1.) Things seen are *temporal*. (2.) Things not seen are *eternal*.

5. *The reason moving believers to keep a steadfast eye upon things unseen, and to look off from things seen*, is the eternal duration of the one, and the short continuance of the other : "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for," or "because," "the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal." The good things in this world that are seen,—as riches, pleasures, honours,—are things of time, and only for time ; therefore we are not much concerned whether we win or lose them : and the bad things in this life which are seen,—as poverty, imprisonment, persecution,—are at longest but for a short space ; and therefore we are not much concerned whether we endure them, or be freed from them. But that which addeth weight to the things in the other world now not seen by the men of this world, and draws our eyes toward them, and keeps them fixed thereon, is the eternity of them.

6. *The influence that this looking upon things not seen hath upon the beholders of them, in keeping them from fainting under any afflictions* : "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

Three words require a little explication :—"looking," "temporal," "eternal."

1. "While we look," *σκοπουντων*.—The verb is used six times in the New Testament, and is variously translated.

(1.) *To take heed* : "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness." (Luke xi. 35.) "Have a care ; see to it." In this sense it is as if the apostle had said, "We take not so much heed, nor are we so full of care, about these visible, transitory things, as we are of the eternal joys of heaven, and the unseen happiness of the saints above."

(2.) *To consider* : "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. vi. 1.) As if he had said, "We seriously consider and weigh in our minds the vanity, insufficiency, and short continuance of all visible things, both good and bad, whether profit or

poverty, honour or disgrace; and the fulness, excellency, and everlasting nature of things unseen; and therefore prefer these before them."

(3.) *To mark, observe, and take notice of*: "Mark them which cause divisions among you." (Rom. xvi. 17.) "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." (Phil. iii. 17.) It is the *observation* that believers make,—that all seen things are temporal; unseen, eternal; which worldly men take no notice of, to influence them in what they do.

(4.) *To look*: "Look not every man on his own things." (Phil. ii. 4.) "To look with a diligent eye," as the archer to the mark whereat he shoots; "to make a thing our scope and aim:" and so the substantive is used, Phil. iii. 14: "I press toward the mark." In this respect the sense is: "The thing that we do aim at in all we do is, to get a title to, and hereafter the possession of, eternal things; to secure our everlasting happy state; to have treasures, not for a while, but for ever; to have honour and glory and joy, not in hasty time, but in abiding eternity." Believers are lowly in heart; but they look high: the men of this world are of a haughty spirit; but they aim at low things.

2. "Temporal:" *ὑποκαίρια*.—Used four times in the New Testament. Twice concerning *temporary believers*: "Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while." (Matt. xiii. 21.) "Who have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time." (Mark iv. 17.) Once concerning *the pleasure of sin*: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Heb. xi. 25.) And in the text comprehensively of *all visible things*. Take, then, a summary account of all that wicked, worldly men have; and all is "but for a while." What *the richest* among them have: their grandeur dureth "but for a time;" and then is past and gone, and hath no more existence. What *the merriest* among them have,—pleasures, mirth, carnal delights and joy: and this is "but for a season;" their merry bouts will be quickly over, and then succeeds weeping and wailing for ever. What *the best* among them have: even their faith is "but for a time;" and their hope but for a short time; at longest, till death shall close their eyes, and then [they shall] lie down in everlasting despair: [so] that all their comings-in—whether profits from the world, or pleasures from their sin, or supposed happiness from their supposed graces,—have their goings-out; that, upon all they have, you may write, "All is temporal." They had riches, but they are gone; honours and pleasures, but they are gone; many good things in time, but, at the end of time, all have an end; and then, when their endless misery comes, this will be their doleful tune, "All our good is past and gone."

3. "Eternal," *αἰώνια*, *quasi aesi ov*, "always existing."—All duration (even time itself, taken metaphysically) is nothing else but the permanency of essence. Time external, *in sensu physico*, is but *ens rationis*, or "nothing." Therefore, according to the manner of

beings must be the manner of their abidings. All beings may be ranked into three sorts ; whence arise three sorts of duration :—

(1.) *Some things have both beginning and end* : as beasts and other corruptible creatures. And their duration is *time*, which hath both beginning and end.

(2.) *Some things have a beginning, and no end* : as angels, and the souls of men, and the state of both in the other world. And the duration by which these are measured in philosophy, to distinguish it from time and eternity strictly taken, is called *eviternity* ; which imports only an initial defectibility of the things in themselves. Though by the absolute power of God there might be a period put unto their being once begun, yet there is no principle of corruption in their own nature which should cause a cessation of their existing essence ; nor is it in the verge of any created power or second cause to take that being from them, which was given to them by the First [Cause]. And these things, because they have no end, are eternal.

(3.) *One only being hath neither beginning nor end, nor can have* : and that is God. And his duration is *eternity*, properly and most strictly taken ; which is a duration inferring simple interminability of essence, all at once existing without succession. “Eternity” in the most proper acceptation doth exclude not only actual beginning and end, but all possibility of both ; and denotes indefectibility of essence *a parte ante et a parte post*,* existing all at once in one continued immovable instant, without consideration of any thing in it past or to come, though it always was and will be. Plainly to every capacity might this be thus adapted :—If you look backward, you cannot think of any one moment wherein God was not ; if you look forward, you cannot think of any one moment when God shall not be. For if there had been one moment when God was not, nothing could ever have been,—neither God nor creature : unless that which is nothing could make itself something ; which is impossible, because working supposeth being ; and a contradiction, because it infers the being of a thing before it was ; for, in order of time or nature, the cause must be before the effect. Neither can you conceive any one moment beyond which God should cease to be ; because you cannot imagine any thing in God, or distinct from him, that should be the cause of his ceasing to be.

The object, then, of believers’ looking is *the unseen, the eternal God*, as their happiness *objectively* considered, which is so eternal as to be without beginning and end ; and *the enjoyment of this unseen, eternal God in the invisible heavens*,—which fruition, being their happiness *formally* considered, hath a beginning, but no ending.

Should I follow the signification of the Greek word, as “looking at” a mark [that] we aim at, or an end which we desire to obtain, I should limit my discourse only to unseen, eternal good things ; but if it be taken in a more extended sense, “to take heed, to mark, and diligently consider,” I might bring-in the unseen evils in the world to come. And, indeed, to keep our eye fixed upon invisible things, both

* “Both before and hereafter.”—EDIT.

good and bad, that make men eternally miserable or everlastingly blessed, would have a powerful influence upon every step we take in our daily travels to the unseen, eternal world :—to look at unseen, eternal *evil* things, that we might not fall into them : to look at unseen, eternal *good* things, that we might not fall short of them. Which is the design of the question propounded from this text ; namely,

QUESTION.

How we should eye eternity, that it may have its due influence upon us in all we do.—Which question will be more distinctly answered by resolving these following questions contained in it.

QUESTION I. *Whether there be an eternity, into which all men must enter, when they go out of time.*—That we might not only suppose what too many deny, and more doubt of, and some are tempted to call into question, but have it proved that no man might rationally deny the eternity of that state in the unseen world : for, upon this lies the strength of the reason in the text, why believers look at things unseen,—because they are eternal ; and the object must be proved, before we can rationally urge the exerting of the act upon that object.

QUESTION II. *How we should eye eternity, or look at eternal things.*—For if they be unseen, how shall we see them ? And if they be to us in this world invisible, how shall we look at them ?

QUESTION III. *What influence will such a sight of and looking at eternity have upon our minds, consciences, wills, and affections in all we do ?*

QUESTION I. *Whether there be an eternity of happiness that we should look at to obtain, and of misery to escape ?*

Doth any question this ? Look at men's conversations ; see their neglect of God and Christ ; their frequent, yea, constant refusals of remedying grace ; their leading a sensual, flesh-pleasing life ; their seldom thoughts of death and judgment ; their carelessness to make preparation for another world ; their minding only things temporal ; and then the question may be, " Who do indeed believe that there is such an eternal state ? " Yet the real existence and certainty of eternal things may be evidently manifested by scripture and by arguments.

1. If you give assent to the divine authority of the *scripture*, you cannot deny the certainty of another world, nor the eternal state of souls therein, though this be now unseen to you. " Jesus said, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage : but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage : neither can they die any more : for they are equal unto the angels." (Luke xx. 34—36.) Is not here plain mention of " this " and " that world," and the different state in both ? In " this," men marry and die ; in " that," they neither marry nor die ; yea, Christ himself affirms, that in " that world " they cannot die. And whatsoever words the scripture borrows from the best things of this world to

help our conceptions of the glorious state of holy ones in the other world, some word denoting the eternal duration of it is annexed to them all. Is it called a "kingdom?" it is an "everlasting kingdom." (2 Peter i. 11.) "A crown?" it is "a crown incorruptible," (1 Cor. ix. 25,) "that fadeth not away." (1 Peter v. 4.) Is it called "glory?" it is "eternal glory." (Verse 10; 2 Cor. iv. 17.) "An inheritance?" it is "incorruptible," (1 Peter i. 4,) "eternal." (Heb. ix. 15.) "A house?" it is "eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. v. 1.) "Salvation?" it is "eternal salvation." (Heb. v. 9.) "Life?" it is "eternal life." (Matt. xxv. 46.)

No less certain is the eternity of the state of the damned, by the scriptures adding some note of everlasting duration to those dreadful things by which their misery is set forth. Is it by "a furnace of fire," (Matt. xiii. 42,) by "a lake of fire?" (Rev. xxi. 8;) it is "fire eternal and unquenchable." (Matt. iii. 12; xxv. 41.) By "a prison?" (1 Peter iii. 19;) from thence is no coming forth. (Matt. v. 25, 26.) By "darkness," and "blackness of darkness?" it is "for ever." (Jude 13.) By "burnings?" it is "everlasting burnings." (Isai. xxxiii. 14.) By "torments?" (Luke xvi. 23;) "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." (Rev. xiv. 11; xx. 10.) By "damnation?" it is "eternal damnation." (Mark iii. 29.) By "destruction?" it is "everlasting destruction." (2 Thess. i. 9.) By "punishment?" it is "everlasting punishment." (Matt. xxv. 46.) By the gnawings of the worm? it is such that never dieth. (Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.) By "wrath that is to come?" (Matt. iii. 7; 1 Thess. i. 10;) when it comes, it will "abide." (John iii. 36.)

Is any thing more fully and plainly asserted in the scripture, than that the things in the other world, now unseen, are eternal things? Those that enjoy the one in heaven, and those that now feel the other in hell, do not, cannot doubt of this; and a little while will put all those that are now in time quite out of all doubting of the certainty of the eternity of the state in the unseen world.

2. The eternity of the unseen things in heaven and hell, the everlasting happy or everlasting miserable state after this life, may be evidenced briefly, yet clearly, by these following arguments:—

(1.) *God did from eternity choose some to be fitted in time to partake of happiness to all eternity.*—"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy;" (Eph. i. 4;) and, being made holy, shall be happy in obtaining that salvation to which he chose us. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." (2 Thess. ii. 13.) "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation." (1 Thess. v. 9.) Which "salvation" doth include absence of all evil, and presence of all good; and this salvation, being "eternal," (Heb. v. 9,) infers the absence of all evil *for ever*, and the presence of all good *for ever*; and whosoever is delivered from all privative evils, and possessed of all positive everlasting good, and that *for ever*, cannot be denied to be happy *for ever*.

(2.) *Christ hath redeemed some to be infallibly brought to eternal glory.*—What reason can be given of the incarnation and death of the Son of God, if there be no eternal misery for men to be delivered from, nor any eternal happiness to be possessed of? For,

(i.) *Did Christ die to deliver his followers from poverty and prisons, from sorrow and sufferings, from trouble and tribulation?*—What! and yet his holy, humble, and sincere people lie under these more than other men that are wicked and ungodly! Why was Paul, then, “in stripes and imprisonments, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in perils and jeopardy” of his life continually? (2 Cor. xi. 23—27;) and such as Pilate, Felix, and Festus in great worldly prosperity? Or can it be imagined, that men persisting in sin should be more partakers of the fruits of Christ’s death, than those that forsake their sin, repent, and turn, and follow him?

(ii.) *Did Christ suffer and die to purchase only temporal good things, as riches, honours, for his disciples?*—Were these worth his precious blood? Whatever Christ died for, it cost him his most sacred blood. Was it, then, for temporal enjoyments only, which Turks and Pagans may and do possess more than thousands of his true and faithful followers? Did Christ intend the benefits of his death for these in more especial manner than for such as remain finally impenitent? and yet shall such reap the fruit of all his sufferings, and those that believe on him go without them? Sober reason doth abhor it, and all the scripture is against it. Would Christ have humbled himself to such a contemptible birth, miserable life, lamentable, painful, shameful death, only for transitory, temporal, fading mercies? If we consider the variety of his sufferings from God, men, and devils, the dignity of the Sufferer, I profess I cannot imagine any reason of all Christ’s undertakings and performances, if there be not an eternal state of misery in suffering of evil things, by his death that believers might be delivered from; and of glory in enjoying of good things, to be brought unto.

(3.) *The Spirit of God doth sanctify some, that they might be “made meet to be partakers of the” eternal “inheritance of the saints in light.”* (Col. i. 12.)—As all are not godly, so all are not ungodly; though most be as they were born, yet many there be that are born again: there is a wonderful difference betwixt men and men. The Spirit of God, infusing a principle of spiritual life, and making some all over new, working in them faith in Christ, holy fear and love, patience and hope, longing desires, renewing in them the holy image of God, is as the earnest and first-fruits, assuring them in due time of a plentiful harvest of everlasting happiness. Faith is in order to eternal life and salvation; (John iii. 16;) love hath the promise of it; (1 Cor. ii. 9; 2 Tim. iv. 8; James i. 12;) obedience ends in it; (Heb. v. 9;) hope waits for it; (Rom. viii. 25;) and because their hope shall never make them ashamed, (Rom. v. 5,) therefore there must be such an eternal blessed state [as] they hope for.

(4.) *The souls of all men are immortal.*—Though they had a beginning, yet [they] shall never cease to be; therefore must, while they be, be in some state; and because they be eternal, must be in some eternal state. This eternal state must be either in the soul's enjoyment of God, or in separation from him; for the wit of man cannot find out a third. For the soul, continuing to be, must be with God, or not with God; shall enjoy him, or not enjoy him: for, to say, "He shall, and shall not," or to say, "He shall not, and yet shall," is a contradiction; and to say, "He neither shall, nor shall not," is as bad. If, therefore, the soul be eternal, and, while it shall be, shall perfectly enjoy God, it shall be eternally happy: if it shall for ever be, and that without God, it shall be eternally miserable; because God is the Chiefest Good, the Ultimate End and Perfection of man. The great work in this, then, is to prove that the soul is eternal, and shall for ever be. For which I offer these things:—

(i.) *There is nothing within or without the soul, that can be the cause of its ceasing to be.*—(Here except God, who, though he can take away the being of souls and angels too, yet he hath abundantly assured us that he will not.) *Nothing within it*, because it is a spiritual being, and hath no internal principle, by contrary qualities, causing a cessation of its being. And because it is simple and indivisible, it is immortal and incorruptible: for that which is not compounded of parts, cannot be dissolved into parts; and where there is no dissolution of a being, there is no corruption or end of it. There is *no creature without it* that can cause the soul to cease: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (Matt. x. 28.) "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." (Luke xii. 4.) If they would kill the soul, they cannot; when they have killed the body, they have done their worst, their most, their all.

(ii.) *The soul of man hath not dependence upon the body, as to its being and existence.*—It hath certain actings and operations which do not depend upon the body: and if the operations of the soul be independent from the body, such must the principle be from whence such operations do arise; and if it can act without dependence on the body, then it can exist and be without the body. In the body, without dependence on the body, it hath the knowledge of immaterial beings, as God and angels; which were never seen by the eye of the body, nor can [be], because there must be some proportion between the object and the faculty. And the soul doth know itself; wherein it hath no need of the phantasy [fancy]; for when it is intimately present to itself, it wanteth not the ministry of the phantasy [fancy] to its own intellection. Besides, it can conceive of universals, abstracted from its singulars; in which it doth not depend upon the phantasy [fancy]; for *phantasmata sunt singularium, non universalium*.* Therefore, since it can act in the body without dependence on the body, it can exist without the body, and not die

* "Fancies or imaginations relate to particulars, and not to generals."—EDW.

when the body doth. Which yet is more plain and certain from the scripture; which telleth us that the soul of Lazarus, after death, "was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom;" (Luke xvi. 22;) but they did not carry it dead or alive, but alive and not dead. Stephen, when dying, expected the continuance of his soul in being, and its entrance into bliss: "Saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts vii. 59.) The thief upon the cross had a promise from Christ, that that day he should be with him in Paradise. In his body he is not yet; therefore, in his soul without the body: therefore the soul doth exist without the body. Paul believed the immortality of his soul, and its existence after the death of his body: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." (Phil. i. 23.) If his soul had not existed, he had not been a moment sooner with Christ. Nay, his soul in the body had some communion with Christ: if it died with the body, it had none; and that was not "far better," but worse.

(iii.) *The original of the soul by immediate creation* is usually brought as an argument of the immortality and continuance of it to eternity.—To assert the creation of the soul, hath this difficulty attending on it,—how to clear the propagating of original sin: to affirm [that] the soul is *ex traduce*, "propagated by generation," hath this knot to be untied,—how it doth consist with the immortality of the soul, when that which is generable is corruptible. But I for [the] present shall take *their* arguing *who* prove it shall exist for ever, because it is created immediately by God; according to the worn axiom, "Whatsoever is ingenerable, is also incorruptible." The soul cannot be from the matter or bodies of the parents, because that which is spiritual and immaterial cannot be produced out of that which is corporeal and material substance: for then the effect would be more noble than its cause, and the cause would give and impart something to the effect which itself hath not; but that which any thing hath not, it cannot give to another. As in a spiritual, so in a natural, sense, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" (John iii. 6;) but the soul is a spirit.

Nor are the souls of the children from the souls of the parents, either by multiplication or division. Not by *division*; that part of the souls of the parents should be communicated and pass from the parents to the children: because it is a spirit; and therefore indivisible into parts, because it hath none; being without matter, therefore without quantity, therefore without divisible parts. Not by *multiplication*: for this must be by participation of something from the parents' souls, or not. If not, then it inferreth creation; for that which is brought out of nothing into being, is created: if by participation of something of the substance of the parents' soul, this infers division; which, before was showed, cannot be.

(iv.) *That the soul shall never die, but abide to all eternity.*—I argue, Either God neither can nor will maintain the soul in eternal duration; or he would, but cannot; or he could, but will not; or he both can and will. If he cannot, then God is not omnipotent; for,

the soul being a spirit, it no more implies a contradiction that the soul should live for ever, than that angels and devils should live for ever. If he can, and any say he will not, I desire a reason of this assertion. How shall any man know God's will, but by what he hath revealed? And God hath not revealed that he will not maintain the souls of men in eternal being, but the contrary. It follows, then, that God both can and will; and therefore they must live to all eternity.

(5.) The certainty of an eternal state in the other unseen world is evident from *the innate appetite universally in all men after eternal happiness*.—There is no man but would be happy, and there is no man that would have his happiness cease. A man might as soon cease to be a man, as cast away all desires of happiness, or will to be for ever miserable; though most mistake what their happiness is. This innate appetite cannot be filled with all the good things in this world; for though the rational appetite be subjectively finite, yet it is objectively infinite. God, therefore, and nature, which do nothing in vain, have put unsatisfied, restless desires after happiness into the hearts of men; which cannot be any thing among things seen and temporal. There must be something that must be the object of this appetite, and able to quiet and fill it in the other world; though most, by folly, blindness, and slothfulness, miss of it.

(6.) *The absurdities which follow the denial of an eternal state of men (though now unseen)* demonstrate the certainty of it.

(i.) *For, then the lives of men, even of the best, must needs be uncomfortable*.—And the life of reason would, as such, be subject to more fears and terrors than the life of sense; which is against all sense and reason. For beasts must die, but do not foresee that they must die: but the rational foresight of death would embitter all his sweetest delights of life, if there were no reason to hope for another after this; and the more the life of man, as man, is more noble than the life of beasts, the more the foresight of the certain loss thereof, without another after this, would affright, afflict, torment. Now it is not rational to think, that God, who made man the chiefest and the choicest of all his visible works, should endue him with such powers and faculties as understanding and will, to make his life, as man, more burdensome, by being filled with fretting fears, racking griefs, and tormenting terrors, more than any beasts are liable to or capable of. Nay, and add, that the more any man did improve, exercise, and use his reason in the frequent meditations of death, the more bitter his life would be, to consider that all the present good [which] he doth enjoy must certainly and shortly be lost by death, and he not capable of any good after death in the stead and room thereof.

(ii.) *Then the condition of many wicked, yea, the worst of, men would be better than the condition of the godly that are the best*.—If the wicked have their good things here, and no evil hereafter; and the people of God their evil things here, and no good hereafter: "If

in this life only we had hope, we were of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. xv. 19.)

(iii.) *Then the chiefest and greatest encouragements to undergo sufferings and losses for God's sake were taken away.*—Why did Moses refuse the honours of Pharaoh's court, and choose to suffer afflictions with the people of God, but because he had his eye to "the recompence of the reward?" (Heb. xi. 25, 26.) Why did Paul endure such conflicts, but for the hope of life and immortality which the gospel had brought to light? (2 Tim. i. 10, 12.) And well might he ask, what it would advantage him that he fought with beasts at Ephesus, if the dead rise not to eternal happiness. (1 Cor. xv. 32.) Might not, then, the suffering saints repent, when they come to die, that they had been so imprudent and unwise, to endure so much, and lose so much; and say, they have been losers by obeying God, and by their holy walking; for there is no happiness after death to be hoped for? "Wherefore I do repent that I did not take my pleasures while I might." But did you ever hear a serious, godly man, when dying, utter such words? But on the contrary on their dying beds [they] do grieve and groan, mourn and lament, that they have been no more holy and obedient; and in suffering times, if they had gold as dust, they would count it all as dross; and if they had a thousand lives, they would lose them all to keep in the favour of God, and to gain the crown of everlasting life.

(iv.) *Then would the flood-gates of sin and profaneness be plucked up, to let-in an inundation of all manner of gross abominations.*—For if men will not be affrighted from their sin with all the threatenings of the sorest pains of hell, nor allured to leave them with all the promises of the sweetest pleasures of heaven; if they were sure there were no torments of hell to be adjudged to, nor glory in heaven to be rewarded by; they would run with greater greediness to the commission of the worst of sins that the devil should tempt them, or their wicked hearts incline them, to.

QUESTION II. *How should we eye eternity, or look at unseen, eternal things?*

They are said to be "unseen," as they are not the objects of our external sense; for in this sense they are not to be seen: but we must look at eternal things that are unseen with an eye that also is unseen; and the several things denoted by "the eyes" in scripture, will give some light to see with what eyes we must look at unseen, eternal things; namely, with an eye of *knowledge, faith, love, desire, hope.* Our looking at eternal things comprehends these acts of the soul:—

1. It includes a sure and certain *knowledge* of them.—As things not understood are said to be "hid from our eyes;" so, what we know we are said to "see:" "I sought in mine heart to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men." (Eccles. ii. 3.) Taking away of knowledge is called "the putting out of the eyes;" (Num. xvi. 14;) and the enlightening [of] the mind, "the opening of the eyes." (Acts xxvi. 18.) And "looking" is put for certain

knowing, (Job. xiii. 27 ; 1 Peter i. 12,) and expressed by "seeing." (Acts vii. 34.) So that the looking at and eyeing of eternal things with the eyes of the understanding, includes,

(1.) The bending of the mind to study them ; as, when a man would look at any object, he bends his head, and turns his eyes, that way.

(2.) The binding of the mind to them ; as a man, when he looks earnestly at any thing, fixeth his eye upon it.

(3.) The exercise of the mind thus bent and bound to eternal things ; that it is often thinking on the unseen, eternal God, Christ, heaven, and the life to come.

2. This looking is by an eye of *faith*.—Looking is believing : "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole : and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." (Num. xxi. 8.) The object and the act are both expounded by Christ : "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 14, 15.)

3. This looking is with an eye of *love*.—Though in philosophy the affections, as well as the will, are blind powers ; yet in divinity "the eyes" are put for the affections : "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ?" (Prov. xxiii. 5.) And "the eye of the Lord" denotes his love ; (Psalm xxxiii. 18 ;) and believers, that "love" the coming of the unseen Saviour, (2 Tim. iv. 8,) are said to "look for" it. (Phil. iii. 20.) *Ubi amor, ibi oculus* : "We love to look at what we love."

4. This looking is with an eye of *desire*.—Which is expressed by "the eye : " "That ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes." (Num. xv. 39.) עֵינַיְכֶם לֹא-תִסְתַּמְּרוּ "Every thing desirable in thine eyes." (1 Kings xx. 6.) "If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail." (Job xxxi. 16.) The eye is an index of the desires of the heart.

5. This looking is with an eye of *hope*.—"The eye" is put for hope, Job xi. 20 ; Lam. iv. 17 ; 2 Chron. xx. 12 ; Psalm cxlv. 15 ; xxv. 15. And things hoped for are the objects of our looking : "Looking for that blessed hope." (Titus ii. 13.) In short, the sum is as if it had been said, "While we have a certain knowledge of unseen, eternal things, a firm belief of them, fervent love unto them, ardent desires after them, lively hope and patient expectation of them, we faint not in all our tribulations."

Having opened the eyes with which we are to look at eternal things, I proceed to the manner of our looking : there is a looking *unto* them. (Psalm xxxiv. 5 ; Micah vii. 7.) There is a looking *into* them, by studying the nature of them, to know more of the reality, necessity, and dignity of them : "Which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Peter i. 12.) If angels do, men should. There is a looking *for* them ; either as we look for things that we have lost,—look till we find ; as the man for his lost sheep, or the woman for her lost silver,

(Luke xv. 4, 8,)—or to look for a thing that is yet to come. (Titus ii. 13; Isai. viii. 17.) And there is a looking *at* them; which is not an idle gazing at the unseen, eternal world, but a practical, lively, affecting look in this manner following:—

1. We should look at eternal things *with such an eye of faith, that should presentiate them unto us, though they are yet to come.*—Hence faith is said to be “the substance,” or “subsistence,” “of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. xi. 1.) Faith so looks at things that are far off, that they have a kind of mental, intellectual existence; though absent, as if they were present; being promised, as sure as if they were already possessed. Faith convinceth and assureth the heart of a believer more strongly of the truth of a thing, while it looks to the revelation and testimony of God, than any argument brought forth from natural reason could do; and doth give as firm assent to the certainty and reality of eternal things, (though unseen,) as to any thing [which] he beholdeth with his eyes, or perceiveth by the apprehension of any sense; because our eyes may be deceived, but God neither can deceive, nor be deceived.

Look, then, for instance, at the coming of Christ with such an eye of faith, as if with your bodily eyes you saw him descending from heaven, in flaming fire, with glorious attendance; as if you heard the trumpet sounding, and the cry made, “Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment;” at which command, as if you saw the dead quickened, and peeping out of their graves, to see why they are raised; as if you saw the wicked come forth, fearfully amazed, with vile and filthy bodies, like toads from their holes, with pale and ghastly countenances, with trembling hearts, and their knees for horror knocking one against another, tearing their hair, smiting on their breasts, and crying out, “What is the matter? What meant that loud alarm, that thundering call, that awaked us out of the deep sleep of death?” “O, the Lord is come, the slighted Christ is come!” “Come! how doth he come?” “How? Clothed with vengeance, with fury in his face; and his wrath, like fire, burns before him: because of his indignation, the heavens melt over our heads, and the earth burns under our feet, and all is in flames round about us.” “O terrible day! such as this we never saw. O the storms! the storms! O, such burning, scorching storms we never saw nor felt before! We have been sleeping all the night of death; and the morning is come, the day doth dawn. Dawn! O, it is broad day all about. We were wont to wake, and go to work, and go to sin, to swear and lie, to drink and take our pleasure; but now we wake, and must to hell, to pain, and punishment. Now we must go from God to devils, from the only Saviour to eternal torments. O, what day is this? What *day*? It seems to be rather night than day; for it is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against us all impenitent sinners; and to us all it will prove the great damnation-day. When our souls and bodies by death

were separated, it was a sorrowful parting; but this is a sorer meeting."

The body with doleful groans doth strangely greet its re-united soul: "O thou cursed soul! must I be tied to thee again with a faster knot than ever? Death did heretofore part thee and me, but all the pains of hell hereafter cannot do it. Thou wast commander over me, and shouldest have managed thy government better: thou shouldest have used this *tongue* to call upon thy Maker: thou shouldest have used these *ears* to have hearkened to the calls of Christ, to the woings of grace, to the entreaties of mercy; these *feet* to have carried thee to the means of grace; these *hands* to have been instruments of good. They were all at thy command: what thou badest them do, they did; and whither thou commandedst them to go, they went. O that I might have lien rotting in my grave! for then I had been at rest. For, though in the grave I had no pleasure, yet there I felt no pain: but since I have been again united to this before-damned soul, I feel intolerable punishment; and I now perceive it is past doubt that it will be eternal."

The soul will give no better salutations to the body: "O cursed flesh! What! alive again? Must I be linked to such a loathsome lump, worse than any carrion? Thou didst rebel against the commands of reason; and thy appetite was pleased, and thy lusts were obeyed; and all the time of life on earth was spent and fooled away in feeding, clothing, and adorning thee: and as I was led away and enticed by thee to live with thee a sensual, flesh-pleasing life, so, formerly sowing to the flesh, now of the flesh we reap that damnation that shall be eternal. For the Judge is come, his throne is set, and all the world is summoned to appear; the separation is made, the books are opened; all on the right hand are acquitted, and called to the possession of an everlasting kingdom; while we are doomed down to eternal torments. Lo! they are going with their blessed, glorious Lord unto eternal glory; and we with cursed devils, like cursed wretches, to everlasting shame and pain, and banishment from God and Christ and saints and angels for ever!"

Look thus believingly on these unseen things, as if you saw all these, and a thousand times more terrible and more joyful, transacted now before your eyes.

2. Look *directly* at unseen, eternal things.—Many do look indirectly at things eternal, but directly at things temporal; *pretending* things not seen, *intending* things that are seen: in praying, preaching, and professing, [they] seem to have an eye to God and Christ and heaven; but they look askint to their worldly profits, credit, and applause. Should [they] pray that they might see God, it is but that they might be "seen of men." (Matt. vi. 5; xxiii. 14.) But this is to look awry, contrary to Solomon's advice: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee." (Prov. iv. 25.)

3. Let unseen, eternal things be *the first* that you look at.—Do not first look at riches, honours, pleasures; and please yourselves with purposes, *after* that, to look after God and Christ and the happiness

of heaven, when sickness cometh, and death approacheth; and, when near the end of time, [to] begin to make preparation for eternity. Men spend their days in getting a visible estate, while the unseen, eternal God and glorious Saviour and heaven's happiness are neglected by them; but it would make a considering man to tremble to think what a sight these sinners shall have after death hath closed their eyes; when the separated soul shall see an angry God, a condemning Judge, the gates of heaven shut against it, and itself in everlasting misery.

Unseen, eternal things are first in order of *duration*; for the invisible God was, when nothing was beside himself: and first in order of *dignity*; and should have the priority of our thoughts, care, and diligent endeavours: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.) When we first take care about eternity, the things of time shall be given to us over and above: but the eternal happiness of heaven shall never be given over and above to those that primarily look at and seek the things of time; for, amongst men, the overplus doth not exceed in worth the things contracted for.

But this damnable preferring [of] things temporal, and cursed postponing [of] things eternal, is the setting of God in the room of the creature, and the creature in the throne of God; as if they would set the heavens where the earth doth stand, and the earth where the heavens are, and so subvert the order of things which God hath appointed to be observed in the nature of things.

4. Look *heedfully* at eternity.—All the things that are only for time, are toys and trifles: the things for an eternal world are the grand concerns [that] we should narrowly look to in time. The gathering of riches in time—to the getting of grace and an interest in Christ, for the escaping of damnation and obtaining of happiness to eternity—is busy idleness, careful negligence, and laborious sloth. If God, "that inhabiteth eternity," (Isai. lvii. 15,) "looks narrowly unto all" our actions done in time; (Job xiii. 27;) how narrowly should we look to our own, when every one is a step to everlasting happiness or eternal misery! We should look narrowly that we do not walk in the broad way that leads unto the one, but in the narrow that will bring us to the other. (Matt. vii. 13, 14.)

5. Look *earnestly, with a longing look*, at unseen, eternal things.—Let your hearts be filled with greatest intense desires after them, as one that looks and thinks it long till the desire be accomplished: as "the mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?" (Judges v. 28.) "Why doth time make no more haste to be gone and flee away, that, when it is gone and past, I might enter into eternal joys, that never shall be past and gone? Why doth the sun, that, by its alternate presence and absence, is the measure of my nights and days, make no swifter speed in its diurnal motion? If it be 'as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race,' (Psalm xix. 5,) why doth it

seem to my longing soul (as in the days of Joshua) to 'stand still?' If the sun in the firmament be so slow, let the Sun of Righteousness make more haste, and come, and lighten my passage to the other, eternal world; that I might see him as he is, and be more like unto him than at this distance I can be! 'Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that I may look upon thee. Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices;' (Canticles vi. 13; viii. 14;) that my looking for and after thee might be turned into looking upon thee. Didst thou say?—'A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me.' (John xvi. 16.) Why, dearest Lord, shall I count that 'a little while,' in which I do not see thee? Hast thou left it upon record?—'Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' (Heb. x. 37.) Sweetest Saviour! to my thirsty, panting soul, it seems *a great while*, while thou dost tarry, and not come; time seems long till I do see thee: but when I shall see thee, in looking on thy lovely, glorious self, eternity shall not seem long. I will mind thee of thy promise, 'Surely I come quickly;' and make it matter of my prayer; and, in confidence of the performance of thy promise and audience of my prayer, will say, 'Amen. Even so,' so quickly, 'come, Lord Jesus.' (Rev. xxii. 20.) For according to my 'earnest expectation' and my hope, I 'groan and am travailing in pain,' (Rom. viii. 19, 22,) until I see thee, who to me art now unseen; that then I might live 'by sight,' and no longer 'walk by faith.'" (2 Cor. v. 7.)

6. Look, though with earnest, yet *with patient, expectation*, at unseen, eternal things.—He that walketh now by faith, that he shall hereafter live by sight, will not make undue, untimely haste: though what he seeth by faith in unseen, eternal joys and glory, doth fill his soul with longing desires after them, yet hope doth help with patience to wait for them. (Rom. viii. 25.) For the beatifical "vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end" of temporal life it will be given: "though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. ii. 3.) Though it tarry beyond some months or years that you desire to be there, yet it shall not tarry one moment beyond the time that God hath appointed to take you to it. Therefore, in the mean time live by faith, and see in things unseen what can be seen by faith; till things unseen shall clearly, and with open face, be seen by you.

7. Look *with a fixed, steadfast eye* at unseen, eternal things.—If you give a glance or cast of the eye toward things seen and temporal, the eye and heart, too, are ready to fix upon them. If you would fix your eye upon eternity, upon God and Christ and the joys above, Satan, sin, the flesh and world will be diverting of it; [so] that now in time, comparatively, you can but glance upon eternity. If you look that way, many objects will interpose themselves, to hinder your sight, and to turn your eyes from things eternal to things temporal, from God to the creature, from things above to things below. But yet if we were "full of the Holy Ghost," as Stephen was, we might

“look up steadfastly into heaven,” as Stephen did; and, though not with the same eye, yet to the same effect and purpose, “see the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.” (Acts vii. 55.) Though the thoughts are immanent, yet in this respect they are too transient,—that they do no longer dwell upon eternity. But if the devil and the world find your thoughts tied to this subject, and go about to loosen them, say, “‘Why do ye this?’ For not my Lord, but I have need of them.” (Mark xi. 3.) Or if you are at any season seasonably got up into the mount, viewing eternity, and they send messengers to you to come down, reply, (for they “think to do you mischief;”) “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?” And though they send more than “four times after this sort,” yet “answer them still after the same manner.” (Neh. vi. 3, 4.)

8. Look *unweariedly* at unseen, eternal things.—The eye might be fixed for a while upon an object, and after a while be weary in looking at it. Can you look unweariedly at the vanities of this world? and will you be so soon tired in beholding the glorious things in the other world? Do you look on things temporal, where seeing is not satisfying, and yet are never satisfied with looking? and will you not look on things eternal, where seeing would be such a filling of your heart with satisfactory content, that looking would not be tedious to your eye? There is so much in God, in Christ, in all eternal things in heaven,—so much beauty, glory, fulness,—that methinks we might stand looking at them night and day, without any irksomeness at all. But, alas! when “the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak;” (Matt. xxvi. 41;) and whilst the soul must look out of flesh to see those glorious things, it is so clogged with corruption, that is like dust within its eyes, that makes it weep, because it can look no longer. But yet in time we should endeavour to be more like to them that are already in that eternity, where they look at God and Christ unweariedly; and though their looking is not measured by days or months or years, but by immensurable eternity, yet they shall never be weary of looking at them to all eternity.

9. Look *with a joyful, pleasant eye* at unseen, eternal things.—Look till you feel your heart to leap for joy; look till you find your spirit is revived within you; look till the sight of your eye affect your heart. Is Christ unseen? Yet not unknown. Do not you now see him with bodily eyes? Yet you do with an eye of faith and love; and therefore may “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” (1 Peter i. 8.) When you look up unto the heavens, and see, and say, “Yonder is the place of my everlasting abode: there I must dwell with God, there I must be with Christ, and joyfully join with angels and saints in praising of my Lord and Saviour;” the foresight of this will make you joyful for the present and pleasant in your looking at it.

10. Look *fiducially* at unseen, eternal things.—With a holy, humble confidence [that], by Jesus Christ, upon the performance of

the conditions of the gospel, they shall be all your own; that, by turning from all your sin, by repentance and faith in Christ, you trust, you shall be possessed of them; that—when you see there are mansions now unseen, there are eternal joys, an immovable kingdom, an incorruptible crown, the eternal God, to be enjoyed; and for all this you have a promise, and you know this promise is made to you—by the performance of the conditions annexed to the promise, you trust in time to come unto it, or rather, when you go out of time into eternity, you shall be blessed in the immediate, full, eternal enjoyment of all the happiness that God hath prepared in heaven, to give you welcome, joyful entertainment in that unseen, eternal world; that you so eye that world, while you live in this, that when by death you are going out of this world into that, you might have this well-grounded confidence to say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.” (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.)

If you get such a sight as this, as now hath been set forth before you, upon such eternal objects as before were propounded to you, you will be able from your own experience to answer the third question contained in the general case. But yet I will proceed unto that branch:—

QUESTION III. *What influence will such an eyeing of eternity have upon us in all we do?*

“*In all we do?* Will its influence be so universal? will the efficacy of such a sight be so extensive, to reach forth its virtue in all we do?” Yes; “in all we do.” Whether we eat, or drink, or go to sleep; whether we trade, or work, or buy, or sell; whether we pray, or hear, or search our hearts, or meditate, or receive, or study, or preach, or sin, or suffer, or die; it will have a mighty influence upon us in any thing wherein we are active or passive, culpable or praiseworthy; in any condition,—be it poverty or riches, health or sickness; in any relation,—be it of husband and wife, of parents and children, of masters and servants; in any office and employment, sacred or civil. Out of such a heap, because I am limited, I will take a handful; and because I have not room to speak of all, I will not cast them into method, according to their nature, connexion, and dependence one upon another, but take them as they come, in some few particulars only.

1. *Such an eyeing of eternity in all we do would make us careful to avoid sin in any thing we do.*—Or, however we might fail in all we do, yet that we suffer it not to reign or have dominion over us. Look at eternity with a believing eye, and you will look at sin with an angry eye: you will cast a deadly look at sin, when you have a lively look at eternity of joy or misery.

(1.) *Sin would deprive me of eternal life.*—Therefore I will be its death. It would keep me from eternal rest: therefore I will never rest, till I have conquered and subdued it. Nothing in the world would bring upon my eternal soul the eternal loss of the eternal God,

his glorious Son, and Holy Spirit,—of the company of his holy angels and saints, of eternal treasures, of a blessed kingdom and incorruptible crown,—but cursed sin. Poverty, sickness, men, death, devils, cannot; nothing but sin: therefore I will be its bane; *that* shall not reign in me, that would not suffer me to live in everlasting happiness.

(2.) *Sin would plunge me into unseen, eternal torments, into endless flames and everlasting burnings.*—If you could speak with a soul departed but a month ago, and ask him, “What do you now think of the delights of sin, of sporting on the sabbath-day, of your pleasant cups and delightful games, of pleasing of the flesh, and gratifying of its lusts?” what a sad reply would he return, and what a doleful answer would he make you!—“Sin! O that was it that was my ruin; that was it which hath brought me (miserable wretch!) to everlasting torment; that was it which shut me out of heaven, that sank me down to hell! O ye foolish sons of men, that are yet in time, be not mad, as I was mad; and do not do as I did. Let not the seen pleasures and profits of the world, which I have found were but for a time, deceive you and bewitch you. The devil showed me the seen delights of sin, but concealed from me the extremity and eternity of the pain that it hath brought me to: the pleasure is past, and the pain continues, and I am lost for ever; and all *this* sin hath brought me to.” Let your eyeing of eternity, whilst you are standing in time, be instead of *one’s* speaking to you in time, *that* hath been in eternity: for the eternal God doth tell you as much as any damned soul can tell you; and would you believe one from hell, and not the Son of God that came from heaven? O, look and view eternity in the glass of the scripture, and firmly believe it; and it will make slaughtering work amongst your sins, and destroy that which would damn you.

2. *Such eyeing of eternity would be a mighty help to quiet your hearts under the dispensations of Providence here to men on earth.*—When you look at the seen afflictions, distresses, disgraces, stripes, imprisonments, persecutions, and poverty of the people and children of God; and the riches, ease, honours, pleasures, and the seen flourishing prosperity of the worst of men, that by their swearing, drinking, whoring, hating of godliness, being patterns of wickedness, proclaim themselves the children of the devil; and you are offended, and your mind disquieted; except in this you have a better heart than Job, (chap. xxi. 6—16,) or David, a man after God’s own heart, (Psalm lxxiii. 2—16,) or Jeremiah, (chap. xii. 1, 2,) or Habakkuk. (Chap. i. 13, 14.)

Now, amongst the many helps to allay this temptation, the eyeing of the *last, yea, everlasting*, things is not the *least*. Look upon these two sorts of men, (which comprehend all in the world,) as going to eternity, and lodged there; and then you will rather pity them [the wicked], because of their future misery, than envy them for their present prosperity. What, if they have their hearts’ desire for a moment, and must be tormented for ever? What, if they have plea-

asures and carnal delights for a season? they must be under the heavy wrath of God for ever. You might stand and see all their mirth at an end; but their sorrow never will have end: all their joy is but for a moment, "as the crackling of thorns under a pot;" (Eccles. vii. 6;) but their misery will be endless misery. Let them laugh a while; they shall weep for ever: let them rejoice for a season; their mirth shall be turned into heaviness, their temporal rejoicing into everlasting howling. And the eternity of joy will be more than a recompence to the afflicted saints, whatsoever their sufferings for Christ and conscience be in this world.

A supposed case might be a help in this temptation. Suppose, then, that you were poor, and full of pain for so long time, (or, rather, for so short,) that you should fall asleep, and, after you awake, should be poor no more, nor afflicted any more, but have a life of manly delights afterwards. Suppose, again, another man were compassed about with all manner of accommodations;—costly dishes to please his palate, beautiful objects to delight his eyes, all manner of music grateful to his ears; many servants to attend him; all standing bare before him, and bowing the knee in honour to him;—and all this, and much more, he were to enjoy as long as he could abstain from sleeping: but, as soon as he doth fall asleep, he should be taken off his bed, and cast into a furnace of boiling lead or scalding pitch. I demand, which of these two men's conditions you would choose. I know it would be the condition of the former, and not the latter. This, and infinitely beyond this, is the case in hand. You are afflicted till you fall asleep; and then you shall be afflicted no more, but live a life of joy for ever. The wicked prosper till they fall asleep; and they cannot long keep open their eyes, but death will come and close them: then the justice of God will arrest them, and then devils will seize upon them; and they shall be cast into a lake of burning brimstone, where they shall have no rest, night or day; but "the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever." (Rev. xiv. 11.) Exercise your thoughts in this manner, and have an eye unto eternity; and you will more easily and successfully overcome such temptations to murmuring and discontent, from the different dispensations of the providence of God here in time to good and bad.

3. *Such eyeing of eternity would have great influence for the well-improvement of our time.*—Time is to be valued in order to eternity; because we go out of time into eternity, and (that which should make every man in time most concerned,) out of time into eternity of misery or glory. O, what a precious thing is time! It is beyond the worth of gold or silver; because we might do more in time in reference to eternity, than we can do by all our gold and silver: jewels are but toys in comparison of precious time. Many are saving of their money, but are prodigal of time, and have more of time than they know what to do with; when others find so much to do, that they know not what to do for time to do it in. O fools and blind! what were a hundred years, to make preparation for eternity? O sluggish, careless sots! do you ask, "How shall we pass away the

time?" Might ye not with more reason ask, "How shall we prevent hasty time from passing away with such winged motion? Or, if that cannot be prevented, how shall we improve our time that is so fast a-posting from us?" Blind world! do any men in thee inquire, "How shall we spend our time?" It is easily answered: In praying, repenting, begging for grace, the pardon of sin, the favour of God, and peace with him, and fitness for eternal life. Had the damned in hell the time that once they had and you now have, do you think they would ask what they should do to pass away the time? Their cry rather is, "O hasty time, whither art thou fled? Why didst thou move so fast, while we sat still? Or why in time did we so swiftly run in ways of sin, as if we could not have sinned enough before time was past and gone? When we had a God to serve, and souls to save, and an everlasting state to make preparation for, we like fools did say, 'How shall we spend our time?' But now our time is spent, and past, and gone; and now the question is, (which never can be answered,) 'How shall we spend eternity?' which never can be spent; no, not in enduring ten thousand thousand millions of years in pain and punishment; for when they are past, it is as fresh and as far from ending as it was the first moment it began." Then eye eternity, and you cannot but improve your time.

4. *Such eyeing of eternity would make us careful how we die.*—Because death is our passing out of time into eternity. Death is dreadful to the ungodly, because it opens the door into everlasting misery; gainful to all endued with saving grace, because it lets them into everlasting happiness. Did you that are yet Christless, impenitent, and unbelieving, see whither you are going, and where you must within a little time take up your everlasting lodgings; what fear and trembling would seize upon all your joints! and when by sickness you perceived death to be approaching, you would cry out, "O death, forbear, forbear! stay thine hand, and do not strike! for if thou cut me down in this condition, I drop into eternal misery. There is nothing but this single thread of my frail life between me and endless woe; and if this be cut or snapped asunder, I sink into irrecoverable misery, without all hope of ever coming forth." Could you but see a soul the next hour after its separation from the body, what a taking it is in, what woe, what despair it is filled with; would you then live without Christ, go to bed without Christ, and rise and trade and still remain without an interest in Christ? What mean ye, sirs, to make no provision for death that is so near, so very near; when you are as near to going into an everlasting world as you are to going out of this transitory world, and your souls [will] be dragged sooner by devils into hell than your bodies can be carried by men unto your graves? Awake, arise, repent, and turn unto the Lord: for if you sleep on in sin till you sleep by death, you will be awaked by the flames of hell; and then, though you be under the power of eternal death, you will sleep no more and rest no more for ever.

And death is as gainful and desirable to a gracious man, as it is

terrible to the ungodly ; for it lets him into unseen, eternal glory ; to the sight of Christ, unseen to us on earth. How willing would you be to go a thousand miles to see Christ and converse with him, if he were on earth ! It is better to see this precious Christ in eternal glory : it is worth the while to die, to have a view of your Lord-Redeemer in the highest heavens. O the wonderful, transporting joys [that] the soul is filled with, when it first cometh into the unseen, but happy, world ! when it hath the first glorious view of its dearest Lord ! Do you think it would desire to return to live in flesh upon earth again ? Do you know what you do, when you are so loath to die ? Do you understand yourselves, when you are so backward to be taken out of time ? It is to be loath to go into everlasting happiness, to go and take possession of unseen, eternal glory.

5. *Such an eyeing of eternity would make us more patient, constant, joyful, in all our sufferings for Christ's sake.*—When we pore upon our seen troubles, and do not look at rest after trouble ; when we see and feel what is inflicted upon us, but do not look at what is laid up in heaven for us ; when we see the rage of men, and do not look at the love of God ; our hearts and flesh do fail. But if we set unseen, eternal things over against things seen and temporal, it will be strength unto us. Against the power of men, which is temporal, set the power of God, which is eternal ; and then you will see their power to be weakness. Against the policy of men, which is temporal, set the wisdom of God, which is eternal ; and then you will see all their policy to be foolishness. Against the hatred of men, which in its effects to you is temporal, set the love of God, which is both in itself and in its effects to you eternal ; and you will see their hatred to be no better than raging, unreasonable madness. Keep your eye upon the unseen torments in the other world ; and you will rather endure sufferings in this, than venture upon sin, and expose yourselves to them. Keep your eye upon the unseen, eternal crown of glory ; and it will carry you through fire and flames, prisons and reproaches for the sake of Christ : “ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king : for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.” (Heb. xi. 26, 27.)

6. *This eyeing of eternity will be a powerful preservative against the temptations of men or devils, a sovereign antidote against the poison of temptation.*—I see, the invisible God looks at me ; shall I, then, yield to the suggestions of the devil, or the solicitations of men to sin ? I see, there is an everlasting state of joy or torment that I must be shortly in, as sure as I am in this place ; and Satan's design is to bring me to that state of torment ; and if I follow him, I shall be excluded from yonder glorious place, from God and Christ and saints above. Therefore, by the grace of God, I will not yield to this temptation ; but strive I will, and watch and pray I will, against the assaults of this deceitful adversary. For why should I be so foolish [as] to lose eternal glory for momentary pleasures, and run my

immortal soul into eternal pain for short delights? I do plainly see what will be the end, if I do yield,—damnation without end, banishment from God without end. I do clearly see that stealing and murder is not a more ready road to a place of execution upon earth, than yielding to a tempting devil is to everlasting misery.

7. *Such eyeing of eternity would wean our hearts from the things of time.*—A sight and view of heaven's glory would darken the glory of the world, as looking at the shining sun over your head doth obscure in your eyes the things under your feet. After a believing view of the invisible God and the glory of the place above, this world would appear as a very dunghill in your eyes. (Phil. iii. 7, 8.) As, where we love, there we look; so, the more we look, the more we shall love; and the more we love the eternal things that are above, the less we shall love the temporal things that are below.

8. *Such eyeing of eternity would make us more like to God and Jesus Christ.*—It will be a transforming and assimilating look: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Therefore, when we shall see Christ, who is now out of sight, we shall be perfectly like unto him: "But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.)

9. *Such an eyeing of eternity would fill our souls with holy admirations of the goodness, grace, and love of God to us.*—When Paul had a sight of such unseen things, he was in a holy ecstasy and divine rapture. (2 Cor. xii. 2—4.) When we consider the eternal happiness of heaven, we shall stand as men amazed, that God should prepare such things for such men, and bear such love and show such mercy to such as we, that are so vile and full of sin; and say, "Lord, what am I, that might for ever have howled in the lowest hell, that I should hope to praise thee in the highest heavens? Lord, what am I, that might have been in everlasting darkness, that there should be prepared for me everlasting light and joy? Why me, Lord? why hast thou designed me, and wrought upon my heart, and made me in any measure meet to be partaker of such eternal glory?" "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.) "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" (Psalm cxxxix. 17.) "O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" (Psalm xxxi. 19.)

10. *Such an eyeing of eternity would have this influence surely upon us, to set ourselves under a painful, skilful, serious ministry.*—It doth much concern you; for you are going to an endless life, and preaching is the appointed means to fit you for an endless happy life. Then, do you choose the most lively, searching, powerful preaching; it is for the life of your souls, for the everlasting life of your everlasting souls. If you were sick and in danger of death, when your

life lies upon it, you would have the advice of an able physician, that is serious and afraid that he no way become guilty of your death. Would you like that physician that seems to be unconcerned, and cares not whether you live or die, if he might but have his fee? or that should merrily jest with you, when you are sick at heart and near to death, if you be not cured? Would you take pleasure in his witty sayings, and be jested into your grave? Or if you go unto a lawyer about your whole estate, though it were in leases that will expire, would you choose one that, you think, did not care whether you win or lose your cause? Would you be pleased with some witty sayings, impertinent to the pleading of your cause? Would you not say?—"Sir, I am in danger of losing all I am worth; my estate lies at stake. Deal plainly with me, and be serious in your undertaking for me; and tell me, in words that I can understand, the plain law by which my case must be tried." And will you be more careful about the temporal life of a body that must die, and about a temporal estate which you must leave when you die? and not about your soul, that must ever live, and never die? No! not so much as to set yourselves under faithful preachers, that shall, in words that you can understand, plainly tell you the laws of Christ, by which you must be tried for your life, and according to them be eternally damned or saved?

11. *Such an eyeing of eternity would make you serious and lively in all your spiritual duties, in all your approaches unto God.*—If you have no grace, the serious thoughts of the unseen, eternal world would stir you up to beg and cry and call for it; if you have [some] to desire more, and to exercise what you have; to confess your sins with such contrite, broken, penitent hearts, as though you saw the fire burning, which by your sins you have deserved to be cast into; to beg for Christ and sanctifying grace and pardoning mercy with that lively importunity, as if you saw the lake of boiling brimstone, into which you must be cast, if you be not sanctified and pardoned; to hear the word of God, that sets this eternal world before you, with that diligent attention, as men hearkening for their lives. To commemorate the death of Christ with such life while you are at the Lord's supper, while you do, as it were, see the torments [that] you are delivered from, and the eternal happiness by faith in a crucified Christ [which] you have a title to; it will cause a fire and flame of love in your hearts to that Lord that died for you, ardent desires after him, complacential delight in him, thankfulness, hope of heaven, hatred to sin, resolution to live to or die for him that died for you. If your hearts are dead and dull and out of frame, go and look into the unseen, eternal world; take a believing view of everlasting joys and torments on the other side of time; and you shall feel warmth and heat and lively actings to be produced in you.

12. *Particularly this eyeing of eternity would make ministers sensible of the weightiness of their work.*—That it calls for all possible diligence and care, our utmost serious study and endeavours, our fervent cries and prayers to God for ability for the better management of our work, and for success therein; forasmuch as our employ-

ment is more immediately about eternal matters,—to save (under Christ) eternal souls from eternal torments, and to bring them to eternal joys. When we are to preach to people that must live for ever in heaven or hell, with God or devils; and our very preaching is the means appointed by God to fit men for an everlasting state: when we stand and view some hundreds of persons before us, and think, “All these are going to eternity: now we see them, and they see us; but after a little while they shall see us no more in our pulpits, nor we them in their pews, nor in any other place in this world; but we and they must go down unto the grave, and into an everlasting world:” when we think, “It may be, some of these are hearing their last sermon, making their last public prayers, keeping their last sabbath; and, before we come to preach again, might be gone into another world:” if we had but a firm belief of eternity ourselves, and a real lively sense of the mortality of their bodies and our own, and the immortality of the souls of both, of the eternity of the joy or torment we must all be quickly in; how pathetically should we plead with them, plentifully weep over them, fervently pray for them; that our words, or rather the word of the eternal God, might have effectual operation on their hearts! This eyeing of eternity should,

(1.) *Influence us to be painful and diligent in our studies to prepare a message of such weight as we come about.*—When we are to preach to men about everlasting matters, to set before them the eternal torments of hell, and the eternal joys of heaven: especially when we consider how hard a thing it is to persuade men to leave their sins, which do endanger their immortal souls; when, if we do not prevail with them to hearken to our message, and obey it speedily and sincerely, they are lost eternally; when it is so hard to prevail with men to accept of Christ, the only eternal Saviour, on the conditions of the gospel. You might easily see that idleness, either in young students that are designed for this work, or in ministers actually engaged in it, is an intolerable sin, and worse in them than in any men under heaven. Idleness in a shop-keeper is a sin, but much more in a minister; in a trader, much more in a preacher. Bear with me, if I tell you [that] an idle cobbler, that is to mend men’s shoes, is not to be approved; but an idle preacher, that is to mend men’s hearts, and save their souls, shall be condemned by God and men; for he lives in daily disobedience of that charge of God: “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them.” (1 Tim. iv. 13, 15, 16.)

(2.) *It would provoke us to be faithful in delivering the whole counsel of God, and not to “daub with untempered mortar.”*—Not to flatter them in their sin, or to be afraid to tell them of their evils, lest we should displease them or offend them. Is it time to soothe men up in their ignorance, in their neglect of duty, when we see them at the very door of eternity, on the very borders of an everlasting world; and this the fruit,—that they shall die in their sins, and their

blood be required at our hands? (Ezek. xxxiii. 1—9.) But [it would provoke us] so to preach and discharge the ministerial function, that, when dying, [we] might be able to say, (as Acts xx. 25—27,) “And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”

(3.) *To be plain in our speech.*—That every capacity—[even] of the weakest in the congregation, that hath an eternal soul that must be damned or saved for ever—might understand, in things necessary to salvation, what we mean and aim and drive at. It hath made me tremble to hear some soar aloft, that knowing men might know their parts, while the meaner sort are kept from the knowledge of Christ; and put their matter in such a dress of words, in such a style, so composed, that the most stand looking the preacher in the face, and hear a sound, but know not what he saith: and while he doth pretend to feed them, [he] indeed doth starve them; and [while he doth pretend] to teach them, keepeth them in ignorance. Would a man of any bowels of compassion go from a prince to a condemned man, and tell him, in such language that he should not understand, the conditions upon which the prince would pardon him; and the poor man lose his life, because the proud and haughty messenger must show his knack in delivering his message in *fine* English, which the condemned man could not understand? But this is *coarse* dealing with a man in such circumstances that call for pity and compassion: Paul had more parts and learning, but more self-denial, than any of these, when he said, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4.) “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.” (2 Cor. iii. 12, 13.) Some put a veil upon their words, that people of mean education, that yet have souls that must be damned or saved, cannot look into those truths that shall never be “abolished.” But what is this, but a cursed preferring their own parts and praise, before the salvation of eternal souls; and the preaching themselves, and not Christ? which will not be their praise, but shame, at the eternal judgment; when some shall plead [that] they stand there condemned, because the learned preacher would not stoop to speak to them of eternal matters in language that they might have understood.

(4.) *This eyeing of eternity would stir us up to improve our interest in God and men for a continual succession of men in the ministerial function.*—In God, by prayer “that the Lord of the harvest would send forth more labourers into his harvest:” (Matt. ix. 38:) in men; whether such as have children of pregnant parts, studious and

bookish, serious in religion, and inclined to this employment,—that they would give them to God, and give them education in order to it, which would be the honour of parents, to have such proceed from their loins that shall be ambassadors to call the blind, ungodly world to mind eternity, to escape everlasting damnation, and obtain eternal life; or whether they be such as have no children so qualified or disposed, yet have riches to be helpful to such as have such children, but not an estate to bring them up. For there is a necessity of a standing, continued ministry. Men in all ages are hasting to eternity: those that were our ancestors in former ages are already there, and have taken up their lodgings where they must for ever dwell; and we are following after them. And what a mercy is it, that we have the gospel preached unto us, wherein we have directions how to escape everlasting torments, and obtain eternal joys, in the other eternal world to which we are a-going! And those that shall live after us, when they have been upon the stage of this world awhile, shall follow us and our fathers into eternity, and give place to those that follow after them. Thus this world doth often change its inhabitants. What is the life of man, but a coming into time, and a going out into eternity? O, how needful is it, then, that while they make their short stay on earth, they should have preaching ministers, to warn them of eternal misery, and teach them the way to eternal glory! Those that are now engaged in the work, will shortly be all silenced by death and dust; and how desirable is it that your children and posterity should see and hear others preaching in their room! And the honourableness of the office might allure young men to incline unto it: is it not an honour to be an ambassador of the great eternal God, to propound articles of everlasting peace between him and everlasting souls? What is buying and selling temporal, transitory things, in comparison of a calling wherein it is men's work and business to save souls from eternal misery, and to bring them to the eternal enjoyment of the glorious God?

Thus in some few particulars we have showed the influence that the eyeing of eternity will have upon us in what we do. Do you see eye eternity; and the rest, here for want of room omitted, you shall by experience find out; which will be better than knowing of them in the notion only, because they are told you.

The conclusion of this discourse shall be some particular USES, omitting many that it would afford.

USE I.

Is there an eternal state,—such unseen, eternal joys and torments? Who, then, can sufficiently lament the blindness, madness, and folly of this distracted world, and the unreasonableness of those that have rational and eternal souls?—To see them busily employed in the matters of time, which are only for time, in present honours, pleasures, and profits; while they do neglect everlasting things. Everlasting life and death are before them, everlasting joy or torment is hard at hand; and yet poor sinners take no care how to avoid the

one, or obtain the other. Is it not matter of lamentation, to see so many thousands bereaved of the sober, serious use of their understandings? that while they use their reason to get the riches of this world, they will not act as rational men to get the joys of heaven; and to avoid temporal calamities, yet not to escape eternal misery? Or if they be fallen into present afflictions, they contrive how they may get out of them; if they be sick, reason tells them [that] they must use the means, if they would be well; if they be in pain, nature puts them on to seek after a remedy: and yet these same men neglect all duty, and cast away all care, concerning everlasting matters. They are for seen pleasures and profits, which are passing from them in the enjoyment of them; but the unseen, eternal glory in heaven, they pray not for, they think not of. Are they unjustly charged? Let conscience speak, what thoughts they lie down withal upon their pillow: if they wake, or sleep fly from them, in the silent night, what a noise do the cares of the world make in their souls! With what thoughts do they rise in the morning? of God, or of the world? of the things of time, or of eternity? Their thoughts are in their shops, before they have been in heaven; and [they have] many desires after visible, temporal gain, before they have had one desire after the invisible, eternal God, and treasures that are above. What do they do all the day long? What is it that hath their endeavours, all their labour and travail, their most painful industry and unwearied diligence? Alas! their consciences will tell themselves, and their practices tell others; when there is trading, but no praying; buying and selling, but no religious duties performed; the shop-book is often opened, but the sacred book of God is not looked-into all the week long.

O Lord, forgive the hardness of my heart, that I can see such insufferable folly among reasonable creatures, and can lament this folly no more! Good Lord, forgive the want of compassion in me, that can stand and see this distraction in the world, as if the most of men had lost their wits, and were quite beside themselves; and yet my bowels yearn no more toward immortal souls that are going to unseen miseries in the eternal world! To see distracted men busy in doing things that tend to no account, is not such an amazing sight as to see men, that have reason for the world, to use it not for God and Christ and their own eternal good; to see them love and embrace a present dunghill-world, and cast away all serious, affecting, and effectual thoughts of the life to come; to see them rage against the God of heaven, and cry out against holiness as foolish preciseness, and serious godliness as madness and melancholy.

Alas! these men are brutes in the shape of men; for, like the very beasts, they live by sense, and are led away by a sensitive appetite. The brute takes pleasure in his present provender, and feels the smart of the present spur or goad: and so do sensual sinners find sweetness in their present pleasures and profits, and do complain of present pain and sickness; but of pains to come and joys to come, that are eternal, they have no care or serious thoughts. Better such had been

toads and serpents, than rational creatures; for, as they mind no future things in the other world, so they are not subjects capable of eternal punishment or everlasting happiness. They are not so provident as the ant, that in summer lays up for winter; and, while the warm sun doth shine, provides for a cold and stormy day: but men, that have immortal souls, are only for this present world; but do not provide for a stormy day that is a-coming, nor for an eternal state to which they are hastening.

Let us call the whole creation of God to lament and bewail the folly of man, that was made the best of all God's visible works, but now by such wickedness is bad beyond them all; being made by God for an everlasting state, and yet minds nothing less than that for which he was principally made.

O sun, why is it not thy burden, to give light to men to do those works and walk in those ways that bring them to eternal darkness? O earth, why dost thou not groan, to bear such burdensome fools, that dig into thy bowels for gold and silver, while they do neglect everlasting treasures in the eternal world? O ye sheep and oxen, fish and fowl, why do ye not cry out against them that take away your present life to maintain them in being, but only mind present things,—but forget the eternal God, that gave them dominion over you, to live upon you, while they had time to mind eternal things, but do not? O ye angels of God, and blessed saints in heaven, were ye capable of grief and sorrow, would not ye bitterly lament the sin and folly of poor mortals upon earth? Could ye look down from that blessed place where ye do dwell, and behold the joy and glory which is to us unseen, and see how it is basely slighted by the sons of men; if ye were not above sorrow and mourning, would not ye take this up for a bitter lamentation? O ye saints on earth, whose eyes are open to see what the blind, deluded world doth not see, do ye bitterly take on; let your heads be fountains of water, and your eyes send forth rivers of tears, for the great neglect of the eternal joys and happiness of heaven. Can you see men going out of time into eternity in their sin and in their blood, in their guilt and unconverted state; and your hearts not [be] moved, your bowels not yearn? Have ye spent all your tears in bewailing your own sin, that your eyes are dry when ye behold such monstrous madness and unparalleled folly of so many with whom daily ye converse?

Ye sanctified parents, have ye no pity for your ungodly children? nor sanctified children for ungodly parents?—"O, my father, my father, by whom I had my being, is going to eternal darkness! Alas for my mother, my dear mother! that carried me in her womb, that dandled me upon her knees, that suckled me at her breasts; that did delight to break her sleep, to quiet me when I was froward, to look to me when I was sick; that bound my head when it was pained; that wiped mine eyes when I did weep, and my face when I did sweat, because of my disease;—this my mother is forgetful of her own immortal soul; was more troubled for me when she thought I was near my grave, than for herself, though near to hell. When I was

young, she took care for me for things temporal; but for herself, neither young nor old, for things eternal. Ere long, she will be dead, and, I am afraid, damned too: ere long, she must go out of time; and, for any thing I can perceive, being ignorant and fearless of God and unmindful of eternity, her soul will go into eternity of torments. O how loath am I to have such thoughts of one so near, so dear unto me! O, it is the cutting of my heart, it is bitterness to my soul! I had rather die, than [that] she [should] be damned; and yet it is my fear, she is hastening to eternity of woe; for, to my observing eye, she is taken wholly up with the cares and pride and vanity of this life, and apparently regardless of that eternal world."

Why do not also ye that are parents, that have a belief of an everlasting state, take on, and bewail the doleful state of your ungodly children, that in their sinful courses are posting to eternal pains?—"What, my son? the son of my loins? the son of my womb? did I bear him with so much sorrow, and shall he be a cast-away? Did I travail with him with so much pain, and brought and nursed him up with so much labour; and must he be for ever fuel for the flames of hell? Have I brought forth a child to be a prey to devils, and a companion with them to all eternity? O, my son, my son! what shall I do for thee, my son, my son?" Thus, whatever relation, neighbour, friend, or acquaintance you have, or others, that you see go on in sin, let it be your grief, trouble, lamentation; when there is an eternity of joys, and they will lose it; an eternity of torments, and they be cast into it.

USE II.

Do something every day in preparing for an eternal state.—If any thing of weight lieth upon your hands, this is it. If I could prevail with you in any thing, O that it might be in this! If, in any thing [which] I am to preach, I had need to have gone unto my knees, to beg that my message might be regarded; this is it. If in any thing I should be serious in preaching, and you in hearing; still this [is] it. The longer your abode shall be, the greater preparation you should make. When we exhort you to prepare for other duties, it is but in order unto this,—that you might be prepared for the eternal world. When we exhort you to repent, believe, be holy, or prepare for death, in all we have an eye unto eternity. But if my words be slighted and rejected by you, will you do so by the word of the eternal God himself, that hath given you this in charge? If I show you express commands from God, that will shortly take you into heaven, or judge you down to hell; that will quickly call you out of time into eternity; will you promise [that] you will do it then? Then read—and do what you shall read—Matt. vi. 18—20, 33; Luke xiii. 24; John vi. 27; 1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Peter i. 10, 11. To these scriptures I will add these following arguments to persuade you:—

1. *God hath set you in this world for this very work,—to make ready for eternity.*—Consider, I beseech you, and demand an answer of yourselves: why hath God brought you out of nothing, and given

you a being more noble than all his visible works, in making your souls immortal, enduing you with reason and understanding? Do you think, it was that you should look after riches, and not grace; things temporal, not eternal; to buy and sell, and eat and drink and sleep? Do you in your conscience think that God hath appointed you no higher things to mind, no more lasting things to get? Reason will convince you, and conscience will prove it to your face, and the immortality of your own souls, considered, doth undeniably argue, that God hath made you for more noble ends, higher employments, and greater concerns. Why, then, do you not mind the end of your creation, and do the work that God hath set you in time to do, and look after that eternal state that God hath made you for? I have read of a devout pilgrim, [who was] travelling to Jerusalem; and in his way passed through many cities, where he saw many stately buildings, rare monuments, and delightful things: but he was wont to say, "But this is not Jerusalem; this is not the end of my coming hither." I am sure that you are pilgrims; but whether devout or no, let conscience speak: and you should be travelling to the heavenly Jerusalem; and if not, you are [travelling] to eternal torments. Why, then, do you stand gazing at the temporal things [which] you see in your journey, and [why are] your hearts and eyes so taken with them? Sirs, "this is not" the heavenly "Jerusalem; this is not the end of your coming hither." Be sure, the minding, loving, looking after things of time, in the neglect of God and Christ and heaven, is not preparing for eternity; except it be for an eternity of woe and misery; and [for] what need you be at so much pains and labour to get thither?

2. *God doth give you your time in this world to prepare for eternity.*—You have time to repent, to get an interest in Christ, to mortify sin, to pray for grace, to make your peace with God, to get the pardon of your sins; and all this, that you might be fitted for eternity. Why, then, do not you do in time that which God hath given you time for? Can you imagine that God doth lengthen out so long the day of his patience, only that you might labour for temporal riches, or that you should live a life of carnal pleasure, or gratify the flesh? Can it enter into your heads, that God supporteth you in being, and keeps you yet out of the grave and hell, that you might scrape together things temporal, and neglect the things that are eternal? Doth he make his sun to rise upon you every morning, to give you light to drudge for things that are but for a moment, and let alone the things that are for ever? And if God hath given you time in order to eternity, why do you spend your time in getting things that are but for a time, and not for eternity? O the years that you have had! the months, the weeks, that God hath given you, to be improved for eternity! and you spend it,—some in things absolutely sinful, in serving of the devil and your lusts; some in things in themselves lawful, but unlawfully; but none in the things absolutely necessary, that you may be happy in eternity: some in taking of your carnal pleasures; some in trading; some in every thing but the one

thing needful; [so] that none is left for an everlasting state. But when you shall be in eternity, you will repent, though then too late, that in this world you so spent your time.

3. *As you go out of time, so you must in the same state go into eternity.*—If you die in your sin, you must in your sin go down to hell. This is a life of trial; here in time you are probationers for eternity; and as you are found at the end of time, so your state shall be determined to eternity of happiness, or misery without end.

4. *You stand upon the brink of time; you are near the borders of eternity.*—So near, that you that are in time to-day, might be in eternity to-morrow, or sooner: for you never yet saw that hour that you could say, you are sure of the next; when you have drawn one breath, you are not sure to draw another. "Time is short;" (1 Cor. vii. 29;) set forth sometimes by "years;" if seventy, how much is already past! (Psalm xc. 10:) sometimes by "months," (Job xiv. 5,) by "days," (Psalm xc. 12,) by one "day," (Job xiv. 6,) by a "span," and "nothing," (Psalm xxxix. 5,) by "a vapour." (James iv. 14, 15.) But what, if you were to live a thousand years in pleasure upon earth, and after that pass into eternity of pain and torment? would you not, when there, cry out of your own folly,—that you should purchase a thousand years of pleasure at so dear a rate, as to endure for them everlasting burnings? One would think, you should not get it out of your heads that you are almost in eternity. One would think, you should think on this when you lie down and when you do rise up, or dream of this in your sleep,—that you are as near to heaven or hell, to an eternity of joy or misery, as to your grave.

5. *When time is past and gone, and you are entered into eternity, it will be too late to prepare for it.*—Preparation for eternity must be done in time, not in eternity. Now or never; if once death stop your mouth and close your eyes, dying in your sin, you must bid farewell to God and Christ for ever. When time is gone, your hope and all is gone. When time is gone, it will never come again. Yesterday you shall never see more; and the time that is going while I speak and you hear, when gone, will never come; that which is to come will be present, but not that which is past. If you lose your health, you might recover it again; if your estate, you might get it again; but if you lose your time, it is gone for ever.

6. *If you go out of time unfitted for eternity, better you had never been in time.*—Better for you, if you had been always nothing; or, if a being, to have been a dog, a toad, or a serpent; for these do live in time, but after time they do not live in eternal misery, as they are not capable of eternal happiness. And when you lie in extremity and eternity of pains in hell, this will be your judgment,—that it had been better never to have been, than to be for ever miserable.

7. *Multitudes have, and more shall, come short of eternal happiness, and go down to everlasting misery.*—And yet doth it not concern us to be preparing for eternity? What means this sottishness of mind,—that, when multitudes are going daily out of time into eternity, from seen pleasures to unseen pains, we are thus secure and

careless; as if we should live so long in time as never to live in eternity, or that our being should end with time? Have not we deserved eternal punishment, as well as they that in eternity are now enduring of it? and do you know you have deserved it, and take no care to prevent it? not so much as ask of God, by serious prayers and tears, that you might not be cast into everlasting burnings? Do you think you can make as light of the wrath of God when you shall feel it in eternity, as you do when you hear of it in time? Can you be merry in the flames of hell? Can you jest and sport and play, when you shall be filled with the indignation of a provoked God, or when the arrows of the Almighty shall stick so fast as never to be plucked from you? Why, then, do you in time cry out and roar and bitterly complain under the smarting pain that the gout or stone or cholic puts you to? Why do you say, [that] if this were to continue for one year without intermission or mitigation, you had rather die than live? Do not many walk in the broad way that leads to eternal damnation? (Matt. vii. 13, 14.) Are not the holy, humble, penitent ones saved with much difficulty? (1 Peter iv. 18.) Are not many professors gone to hell, and preachers too? (Matt. viii. 12; vii. 22, 23.) And yet is it not time for you in good earnest to mind your eternal state; lest, there being an everlasting kingdom, you should never enter into it; and everlasting torments, and you should feel them to all eternity?

8. *God doth give you all the helps and means you have, that you should make ready for eternity.*—Have not you had sermons and sabbaths? Have not God's ministers preached to you, and warned you from God of the wrath to come, and charged you in the name of God to repent, believe, and turn, and told you [that] you must turn from sin, or burn in hell? And will you go from hearing on earth, to howlings in hell? from the light of the gospel, to utter darkness? with the sound of the voice of mercy in your ears? after a thousand calls to mind your souls, to accept of Christ and remedying grace? Do you mean to have the hottest place in that infernal lake, the heaviest load of wrath in that eternal furnace? Read, and tremble when you read, Matt. xi. 20—24.

9. *This will be approved wisdom ere long by all the sons of men.*—Those that now do mock at praying, and make a mock of sinning, and deride serious godliness, shall quickly be of another mind; shall confess and know that *they* were the wisest men *that* in time prepared for eternity, and *they* were the fools *that* spent their time in sin and vanity. Some do say as much when they lie a-dying, and wish, "O that I had been convinced of this, before my time had been so near an end, before my glass had been so nigh out! O my folly! O my vanity! that had eternity to make preparation for, and yet, of all the time I had, I never spent one hour in hearty prayer unto God to save me from everlasting torments! Woe is me! my strength is almost gone; my time is almost gone; and I in danger of eternal torments, that never shall be past and gone!" Or if they be blind or hardened on their death-beds, yet a moment after death they shall

be convinced indeed that it was worse than madness to neglect eternity. When stepped into the other world, [they] shall be amazed and confounded, saying, "Where am I now? What a place is this! what a state is this! I heard of such a place before; but it is worse than any man's tongue in time could tell. What! is time gone? This is not time. Here is no sun to measure it by its motion; here is no succession of night and day; here is no turning of an hour-glass, no striking or telling of clocks; no morning, noon, and evening: this is not time; I see nothing like the things I saw in time. But a little while ago, I was among my friends on earth. Did I say, *a little while ago?* Alas! I am but lately come, and this 'little while' seems to me a thousand years. No while in this place is little; and it will never be less, because it doth not go. O, happy they that are in eternity, but in another place than I am in! They were wise indeed that have prevented their coming hither, and are got into a place that is as light as this is dark, as joyful as this is sorrowful, as full of ease as this is of pain: and yet this must last as long as that; and that makes this as bitter and dreadful as that is pleasant and delightful. Wise were they that did foresee while they were in time; but I, like a blind fool, did not see, before I felt, what I must endure for ever. I did not see; but death did draw the curtain, open the door, and let me into an everlasting state; but, woe is me! it is of misery and damnation."

You are for being of the mind of the most, and doing that which the generality do approve. Take in but these words, "first or last," and then do so; even that which all, *first or last*, shall confess to be truest wisdom; and the neglect of it, folly and madness. God, angels, good men, do all approve of this as sober wisdom; and the devils cannot deny it—and all damned souls in hell; and all the wicked upon earth, as fast as they go down to them, and feel what now they do not believe and fear, shall not deny it—to be wisdom in them that escaped that, and got to a better place in the eternal world.

10. *In eternity there will be no mixture.*—In the other world there is all pure love, or all pure wrath; all sweet, or all bitter; without all pain, or without all ease; without all misery, or without all happiness: not partly at ease, and partly in pain; partly happy, and partly miserable; but all the one or the other. This life is a middle place betwixt heaven and hell; and here we partake of some good and some evil. No judgment on this side hell upon the worst of men but there is some mercy mixed with it; for it is mercy [that] they are yet on this side hell: and no condition on this side heaven but there is some evil mixed with it; for, till we get to heaven, we shall have sin in us. In heaven all are good, in hell all are bad; on earth some good, but more bad. In hell misery, without mixture of mercy or of hope: they have no mercy,—and that is bad; and they can hope for none,—and that is worse. While they be in time, they are pitied; God doth pity them, and Christ doth pity them, and good men do pity them; their friends and relations do pity them, pray for them, and weep over them: but when time is past, all pity will be past, and

they in misery without pity to all eternity: "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." (Rev. xiv. 10, 11.) "No?" Then, for the Lord's sake, for your souls' sake, as upon my knees I beseech you, if you have any dread of God, any fear of hell, any desire of heaven, any care whither you must go, take no rest night or day in time, till you have secured your everlasting happy state, that you might have everlasting rest night and day in eternity; or that you might pass into that eternity where it is always day, and no night; and not into that where it shall be always night, and never day.

Sirs, what say ye? What are ye resolved upon? To sin still? or to repent that ye have already sinned, and by the grace of God to sin so no more? To work in time, for things of time? or in time to prepare for eternity? Will ye obey my message, or will ye not? Speak in time, or, I will not say, hold your peace for ever; but repent in time, or ye shall cry and roar for ever. The time of this sermon is out, and the time of your life will be quickly out; and I am afraid I shall leave some of you as unfit for eternity as I found you: and my heart doth tremble, lest death should find you as I shall leave you, and the justice of God and the devils of hell shall find you as death shall leave you; and then vengeance shall never leave you, and the burning flames, tormenting devils, and the gnawing worm, shall never leave you. Will ye, then, work it upon your hearts, that ye came into time unfit to go into eternity? that in time ye have made yourselves more unfit? that the only remedy is the Lord Jesus Christ, that in the fulness of time did die, that sinners might not be damned for ever? that this crucified Christ will not save you from eternal misery, nor take you to eternal glory, except ye do perform the conditions of the gospel; without which, his death puts no man into an actual state of happiness? Ye *must* repent and be converted; ye *must* take him for your Saviour and your Lord; ye *must* be holy sincerely, hate sin universally, love Christ superlatively; or else the Saviour will not save you, mercy itself will not save you, from everlasting misery. Ye *must* persevere in all this to the end of your time; and then ye shall be happy in eternity, to eternity.

Otherwise,—[if] ye shall not give audience, Sirs,—otherwise ye shall not be happy. "Happy?" No; ye shall be miserable. If the loss of God and Christ and heaven will make you miserable for ever, ye shall be miserable for ever. If the pains of hell, the company of devils, the stings of conscience, the terrors of darkness, total, final despair of having any end of your damned condition, will make you miserable, ye shall be miserable. If all that God can lay upon you, if all that devils can torment you with, if all that conscience can for ever accuse you for, if all that is in hell, can make you miserable; except you repent in time, and believe on Christ in time, and be sanctified in time, ye shall be miserable for ever.

O my God! be thou my witness of this doctrine. All ye that fear God, that hear me this day, bear me witness that I have published this in the ears of all that hear me. Thou conscience, that art in that man that is yet going on in sin and posting with speed to eternal misery, bear me witness now and at the day of judgment, that I told him what must be done upon him, in him, and by him, if he would escape eternal torments. If he will not hearken nor obey while he is in time, conscience, I bespeak thy witness against him, and that thou bring thy accusation against him, and upbraid him to the confusion of his face,—among all the devils in hell; and all that shall be damned with him,—that he was told he could not keep his sins, and be kept out of that place when he died; he could not reject Christ and finally refuse him, and be saved for ever.

Sinner! carest thou not? wilt thou still on? Good God! must we end thus? Must I come down without hopes of his repenting? and he die with foolish hopes of being saved, and after death be cast into that eternity where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched? But in those endless flames [he] shall cry out and roar, "O cursed caitiff! what did I mean all the while I was in time, to neglect preparation for eternity? O miserable wretch! this is a doleful, dreadful state; and still the more [so], because it is eternal. Woe is me, that I cannot die, nor cease to be! O that God would cut me off! O that devils could tear me into a thousand, thousand pieces! or that I could use such violence to myself, that I might be no longer what I am, nor where I am! But, alas! I wish in vain, and all these desires are in vain; for though the union of my soul and body in my mother's womb was liable to a dissolution, yet since this body did arise out of the bosom of the earth, and is re-united to its soul, [it] admits of no separation for ever; and, which still is worse, this soul and body, now separated from God and Christ and all that be above in that blessed eternity, must never, never be admitted near unto them. O, cursed be the day that ever I was born! Cursed be that folly and madness that brought me to this cursed place! for here I lie under extremity of pain, which, if it were for a year or two, or many millions, and then [to] end, would be in this respect exceeding heavy, because it were to last so long; but that then [it] should be no longer, would make it in the mean while to be the lighter. But when eternity is added to extremity, nothing can be added to make me extremely, because in this extremity I am eternally, miserable. O eternity, eternity! in my condition what is more dreadful than eternity? This fire burns to all eternity; the heavy strokes of revenging justice will be laid on me to all eternity; I am banished from God and happiness to all eternity. O eternity, eternity! nothing cuts me to the heart like the corroding thoughts of this eternity. I am an object of the wrath of God, of the contempt of angels, of the derision of saints, of the mockings of devils and cursed fiends, to all eternity: I burn, but cannot be consumed; I toss and roll, and cannot rest to all eternity. O eternity, eternity! thou art enough to break my heart and make it die, but that it cannot break nor die to all eternity."

And if this shall be the doleful language, the direful lamentations, of souls that went Christless out of time into eternity, do ye, while ye are in time, eye eternity in all you do, and get a title to eternal happiness; or else, when ye are in eternity, ye shall remember that in time ye were forewarned; which warning, because ye did not take [it], shall be a vexation to your hearts to all eternity.

SERMON XXVII.

BY THE REV. MATTHEW BARKER, A.M.

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

A DISCOURSE OF THE RIGHT WAY OF OBTAINING AND MAINTAINING COMMUNION WITH GOD.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.—1 John i. 7.

THE subject I am to treat upon is *communion with God, how to attain it, and how to maintain it, in as constant a course as we may be capable of in this world*: and for that end I have chosen this text. My usual course is to provide matter for a text; but in this lecture I provide a text for the matter I am to treat upon. The subject is high and copious, much spoken of; but, I fear, not so well understood, and less experienced, though the subject mainly relates to Christian experience. Before I come to the subject, I shall speak something of the text upon which it is grounded.

The author of this epistle is St. John, "John the apostle," "John the divine," as he was anciently called; and he writes this epistle, some think, to the believing Jews only; others think, rather to the whole catholic church; and the matter of the epistle is partly to distinguish the true and the false Christian, and for that end lays down many signal characters to distinguish them; and partly to vindicate the doctrine of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ the true Messiah,—his person, his natures, and salvation by him alone,—from the many errors that were crept-in by false teachers and seducers in his time; as Cerinthus, Ebion, &c., as he intimates in 1 John ii. 26: "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." He also vindicates the holiness of the Christian profession from the impure practices of the Nicolaitanes and the Gnostics, who began early to abuse the true liberty of the gospel, and to turn the grace of God into wantonness. And, lastly, he doth earnestly press them to the Christian love of one another, because of the persecutions [which] he saw were coming upon the church from the Roman empire, and the divisions that would arise amongst themselves from many false brethren.