

Christians, when absent from the body, are present with the Lord.

A

SERMON,

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FROM THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
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A SERMON.

CHRISTIANS, WHEN ABSENT FROM THE BODY, ARE PRESENT
WITH THE LORD.

II COR. v. 8.

*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from
the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

THE Apostle is here giving a reason why he went on with such immoveable boldness and steadfastness, through such labours, sufferings, and dangers, in the service of the Lord; for which his enemies, the false teachers among the Corinthians, sometimes reproached him as being beside himself, and driven on by a kind of madness. In the latter part of the preceding chapter, he informs the Christian Corinthians, that the reason why he did thus, was, that he firmly believed the promises which Christ had made to his faithful servants of a glorious and eternal reward; and knew that these present afflictions were light, and but for a moment in comparison of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—In this chapter he further insists on the reason of his constancy in suffering, and exposing himself to death in the work of the ministry, even the more happy state which he expected after death.—This is the subject of the text; in which we may observe,

1. The great *Future Privilege*, for which the Apostle hoped; that of being present with Christ. The words in the original properly signify *dwelling with Christ, as in the same country or city, or making an home with Christ.*

2. When the Apostle looked for this privilege; viz. *when he should be absent from the body*: not to wait for it till the resurrection, when soul and body should be united again. He signifies the same thing in Phil. i. 22, 23, “But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour. Yet what I shall choose, I wot not. For I am in a strait between two; having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.”

3. The *Value* which he set on this privilege. For the sake of it, he chose *to be absent from the body*. It was more pleasing to him, to part with the present life and all its enjoyments, if he might be possessed of this great benefit, than to continue here.

4. The *Present Benefit*, which he had by his faith and hope of this future privilege, and of his great value for it ; viz. that hence he received *courage, assurance, and constancy of mind* ; agreeably to the proper import of the word which is rendered, *we are confident*. He is now giving a reason of that fortitude and immoveable stability of mind, with which he went through those extreme labours, hardships, and dangers, which he mentions in this course ; so that, in the midst of all, he did not faint, was not discouraged, but had constant light, and inward support, strength, and comfort in the midst of all ; agreeably to the sixteenth verse of the foregoing chapter, “ For which cause, we faint not ; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” The same is expressed more particularly in the eighth, ninth, and tenth verses of that chapter, “ We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ; always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus, might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” And in the next chap. ver. 4—10, “ In all things, approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report : as deceivers, and yet true ; as unknown, and yet well known : as dying, and behold, we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

Among the many useful instructions, which might be derived from the text, I shall at this time only insist on this :—

The souls of Christians, when they leave the body, go to be with Christ.

They do this in the following respects :—

I. *They go to dwell in the same blessed abode with the glorified Human nature of Christ.*

The Human nature of Christ is yet in being. He still continues, and will continue to all eternity, to be both God and man—His *whole* human nature remains : not only his *soul*, but also his *body*. His body rose from the dead ; and the same that was raised from the dead is exalted and glorified at God's right hand.—That which was dead is now alive, and lives for evermore.

There is therefore a certain place, a particular part of the external creation, to which Christ is gone, and where he remains.—This place is the heaven of heavens: a place beyond all the visible heavens. Eph. vi. 9. 10, “Now that he ascended, what is it, but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens.” This is the same which the Apostle calls the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2; reckoning the *aerial* heaven as the first, the *starry* heaven as the second, and the *highest* heaven as the third. This is the abode of the holy angels; they are called “the angels of heaven,” Matth. xxiv. 36. “The angels which are in heaven,” Mark xiii. 32. “The angels of God in heaven,” Matth. xxii. 30. and Mark xii. 25. They are said always to behold the face of the “Father which is in heaven,” Matth. xviii. 10. They are elsewhere often represented as before the throne of God, or surrounding his throne in heaven, and sent from thence, and descending from thence, on messages to this world. Thither it is that the souls of departed saints are conducted, when they die.—They are not reserved in an abode distinct from the highest heaven; a place of rest, which they are kept in, till the day of judgment; which some call *the Hades of the happy*: but they go directly to heaven itself. This is the saints’ home, being their Father’s house. They are “pilgrims and strangers” on the earth, and this is the “other and better country” to which they are travelling. Heb. xi. 13—16. This is the city to which they belong. Phillip. iii. 20. “Our conversation, or (as the word properly signifies) *citizenship*, is in heaven.” Therefore this undoubtedly is the place to which the Apostle refers in the text, when he says, “We are willing to forsake our former house, the body, and to dwell in the same house, city or country, wherein Christ dwells;” which is the proper import of the words of the original.—What can this house, or city, or country be, but that house, which is elsewhere spoken of, as their proper home, their Father’s house, the city and country to which they properly belong, whither they are travelling all the while they continue in this world, and the house, city, and country where we know the human nature of Christ is; this is the saints’ rest; here their hearts are while they live; and here their treasure is: “The inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, that is designed for them; is reserved in heaven;” 1 Pet. i. 4. Therefore they never can have their proper and full rest till they come there. So that undoubtedly their souls, when absent from the body, (when the scriptures represent them as in a state of perfect rest) arrive there—Those two saints, who left this world, to go to their rest in another world without dying, viz. Enoch and Elijah, went to heaven.—Elijah was seen ascending up to heaven, as Christ was; and to the same resting place, is there all reason to think, to which those

saints go, who leave the world, to go to their rest, by death. Moses, when he died in the top of the mount, ascended to the same glorious abode with Elias, who ascended without dying. They are companions in another world ; as they appeared together at Christ's transfiguration. They were together at that time, with Christ in the mount, when there was a representation of his glory in heaven. Doubtless, also, they were together afterwards, with him, when he was actually glorified in heaven. Thither undoubtedly it was, that the soul of Stephen ascended, when he expired. The circumstances of his death demonstrate it, as we have an account of it, Acts vii. 55. &c. "He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man, (i. e. Jesus in his human nature), standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him.—And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit." Before his death he had an extraordinary view of the glory which his Saviour had received in heaven, not only for himself, but for him, and all his faithful followers ; that he might be encouraged, by the hopes of this glory, cheerfully to lay down his life for his sake. Accordingly, he dies in the hope of this, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." By which doubtless he meant, "receive my spirit to be with thee, in that glory wherein I have now seen thee, in heaven, at the right hand of God." Thither it was, that the soul of the penitent thief on the cross ascended. Christ said to him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." *Paradise* is the same with *the third heaven* ; as appears by 2 Cor. xii. 2—4. There, that which is called the third heaven in the second verse, in the fourth verse is called paradise. The departed souls of the Apostles and Prophets are in heaven ; as is manifest from Rev. xxiii. 20. "Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets." The church of God is distinguished in Scripture, from time to time, into these two parts ; that part of it, which is in heaven, and that which is in earth ; Eph. iii. 14, 15. "Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Col. i. 20. "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself ; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Now what "things in heaven" are they for whom peace has been made by the blood of Christ's cross, and who have by him been reconciled to God ; but the saints in heaven ? In like manner we read, Eph. i. 10. of "God's gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." The "spirits of just men made perfect" are in the same "city of the

living God," with the "innumerable company of angels," and "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant;" as is manifest by Heb. xii. 22—24. The church of God is often in Scripture called by the name of Jerusalem: and the Apostle speaks of the Jerusalem *which is above, or which is in heaven*, as the mother of us all; but if no part of the church be in heaven, or none but Enoch and Elias, it is not likely that the church would be called the Jerusalem which is in heaven.

II. *They go to dwell in the immediate, full, and constant, sight or view of Christ.*

When we are absent from our dear friends, they are out of sight; but when we are with them, we have the opportunity and satisfaction of seeing them. While the saints are in the body, and are absent from the Lord, he is in several respects out of sight, 1 Pet. i. 8. "Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing," &c. They have indeed, in this world, a spiritual sight of Christ; but they see *through a glass darkly*, and with great interruption; but in heaven, they see him *face to face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "The pure in heart are blessed; for they shall see God," Matth. v. 8. Their beatifical vision of God is *in Christ*; who is that brightness or effulgence of God's glory, by which his glory shines forth in heaven, to the view of saints and angels there, as well as here on earth. This is the Sun of Righteousness, which is not only the light of this world, but is also the sun which enlightens the heavenly Jerusalem; by whose bright beams the glory of God shines forth there, to the enlightening and making happy of all the glorious inhabitants. "The Lamb is the light thereof; and so the Glory of God doth lighten it," Rev. xxi. 23. No one sees God the Father *immediately*. He is the King eternal, immortal, *invisible*. Christ is the *Image* of that invisible God, by which he is seen by all elect creatures. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him and manifested him. No one has ever immediately seen the Father, but the Son; and no one else sees the Father in any other way, than by the Son's revealing him. In heaven the spirits of just men made perfect see him *as he is*. They behold his glory. They see the glory of his divine nature, consisting in all the glory of the Godhead, the beauty of all his perfections; his great majesty, and almighty power, his infinite wisdom, holiness, and grace; and they see the beauty of his glorified human nature, and the glory which the Father hath given him, as God-man and Mediator. For this end Christ desired that his saints might "*be with him, that they might behold his glory*," John xvii. 24. When the souls of the saints leave their bodies, to go to be with Christ, they behold the glory of the work of Redemption, "*which the an-*

gels desire to look into." They have the clearest view of the unfathomable depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God; and the brightest displays of the purity and holiness of God, which appears in that work. They see in a far clearer manner than the saints do here, "what is the breadth and length, and depth and height of the grace and love of Christ," appearing in his redemption. As they see the unspeakable riches and glory of God's grace, so they clearly understand Christ's eternal and immeasurable love to them in particular. In short, they see every thing in Christ which tends to inflame and gratify love in the most clear and glorious manner, without any darkness or delusion, without any impediment or interruption. Now thy saints, while in the body, see somewhat of Christ's glory and love; as we, in the dawn of the morning, see somewhat of the reflected light of the sun mingled with darkness: but when separated from the body, they see their glorious and loving Redeemer, as we see the sun when risen, above the horizon, by his direct beams, in a clear hemisphere, and with perfect day.

III. *They are brought into a perfect conformity to, and union with, Christ.*

Their spiritual conformity is begun while they are in the body. Here, "beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image; but, when they come to see him *as he is*, in heaven, then they become like him in another manner. That perfect sight will annihilate all remains of deformity, and sinful unlikeness; as all darkness is annihilated before the full blaze of the sun's meridian light. It is impossible that the least degree of obscurity should remain before such light; so it is impossible the least degree of sin and spiritual deformity should remain, in such a view of the spiritual beauty and glory of Christ, as the saints enjoy in heaven. When they see the Sun of Righteousness without a cloud, they themselves shine forth as the sun, and shall be themselves as suns without a spot. Then Christ presents his saints to himself, in glorious beauty; "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing;" and having holiness without a blemish. Then their union with Christ, is perfected. This also is begun in this world. *Relative* union is both begun and perfected at once, when the soul first closes with Christ by faith.—The *real* union; consisting in the union of heart[and affection]and in the vital union; is begun in this world and perfected in the next. The union of the heart of a believer to Christ, is begun when his heart is drawn to Christ, by the first discovery of his divine excellence at conversion. Consequent on this is established a *vital* union with Christ; whereby the believer becomes a living branch of the true vine, living by a communication of the sap and vital juice of the stock and root: a member of Christ's mystical body living by a communication of spiritual and vital influences from the

head, and by a participation of Christ's own life. But while the saints are in the body, there is much remaining distance between Christ and them. The vital union is very imperfect; and so is the communication of spiritual life and vital influence. There is much between Christ and believers to keep them asunder, much indwelling sin, much temptation, a heavy moulded, frail body, and a world of carnal objects, to keep off the soul from Christ, and hinder a perfect coalescence. But when the soul leaves the body, all these hindrances are removed, every separating wall is broken down, every impediment is taken out of the way, and all distance ceases; the heart is wholly and perfectly drawn, and firmly and for ever bound to Christ, by a perfect view of his glory. The vital union is then brought to perfection; the soul lives perfectly in and upon Christ; being perfectly filled with his spirit, and animated by his vital influence; living as it were only by Christ's life, without any remainder of spiritual death, or carnal life.

IV. *They enjoy a glorious, and immediate, intercourse and conversation with Christ.*

While we are present with our friends, we have opportunity for a free and immediate conversation with them, which we cannot have when absent. Therefore, by reason of the far more free, perfect, and immediate intercourse with Christ, which the saints enjoy when absent from the body, are properly represented as *present* with him.

The most intimate intercourse becomes that relation in which the saints stand to Jesus Christ; and especially becomes that perfect and glorious union into which they shall be brought with him in heaven. They are not merely his *servants*, but his *friends*; John xv. 15; his *brethren* and *companions*; Psal. cxxii. 8; yea they are the *spouse* of Christ. They are espoused or betrothed to Christ while in the body: but when they go to heaven, their marriage with him is come, and the King brings him into his palace. Christ conversed in the most friendly manner with his disciples on earth, and admitted one of them to lean on his bosom: but they are admitted much more fully and freely to converse with him in heaven. Though Christ be there in a state of glorious exaltation, reigning in the majesty and glory of the sovereign Lord and God of heaven and earth, of angels and men; yet this will not hinder the intimacy and freedom of their intercourse, but will rather promote it. He is thus exalted, not only for himself, but for them. He is Head over all things for their sakes, that they may be exalted and glorified; and, when they go to heaven where he is, they are exalted and glorified with him; and shall not be kept at a greater distance. They shall be unspeakably more fit for it; and Christ will be in more fit circumstances to bestow on them this blessedness. Their seeing the great glory of their friend and Redeemer, will not

awe them to a distance, and make them afraid of a near approach; but on the contrary, will most powerfully draw them near, and encourage and engage them to holy freedom. They will know that he is their own Redeemer, and beloved friend; the very same who loved them with a dying love, and redeemed them to God by his blood; Matt. xiv. 27. "It is I; be not afraid." (Rev. i. 17, 18.) "Fear not: I am he that liveth, and was dead." The nature of this glory of Christ which they shall see, will be such as will draw and encourage them; for they will not only see infinite majesty and greatness, but infinite grace, condescension, gentleness and sweetness, equal to his majesty. He appears in heaven not only as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but as the Lamb, and the Lamb in the midst of the throne;" (Rev. v. 5, 6 :) and this Lamb in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, to "feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water; (Rev. vii. 17 :) so that the sight of Christ's majesty will be no terror to them; but will only serve the more to heighten their pleasure and surprise. When Mary was about to embrace Christ, being full of joy at seeing him again alive after his crucifixion, Christ forbids her to do it for the present; because he was not yet ascended; (John xx. 16, 17,) "Jesus saith unto her, 'Mary.' She turned herself, and saith unto him, 'Rabboni,' which is to say, 'Master.' Jesus saith unto her, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.'" As if he had said, "This is not the time and place for that freedom which your love to me desires. That is appointed in heaven after my ascension. I am going thither: and you who are my true disciples, shall, as my *brethren* and *companions*, soon be there with me in my glory. That is the place appointed for the most perfect expressions of complacency and endearment. Accordingly the souls of departed saints in heaven, find Christ manifesting those infinite riches of love towards them, which he has felt from eternity; and they are enabled to express their love to him, in an infinitely better manner, than they could while in the body. Thus they shall be eternally encompassed by the infinitely bright and mild and sweet beams of divine love; eternally receiving that light, and forever reflecting it to the fountain.

V. They are received to a glorious fellowship with Christ in his blessedness.

As the wife is received to a joint possession of her husband's estate; and as the wife of a prince partakes with him in his princely possessions and honours; so the church, the spouse of Christ, is received to dwell with him in heaven, and shall partake with him in his glory. When Christ rose from the dead,

and took possession of eternal life; this was not as a *private person*, but as the *Head of his redeemed people*. He took possession of it for *them*, as well as for *himself*; and "*they* are quickened together with *him*, and raised up *together*." So, when he ascended, he took possession of heaven not only for himself, but for his people, as *their* Forerunner and Head, that they might ascend also, "and sit together in heavenly places with him." (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) "Christ writes upon them his new name." (Rev. iii. 12. i. e.) He makes them partakers of his own glory and exaltation in heaven. His *new Name* is that new honour and glory with which the Father invested him, when he set him at his own right hand: just as a prince, when he advances any one to new dignity in his kingdom, gives him a new title. Christ and his saints shall be glorified together, Rom. viii. 17.

The saints in heaven have communion with Christ in his glory and blessedness in heaven, in the following respects.

1. *They partake with him in the ineffable delights which he has in heaven, in the enjoyment of his Father.*

When Christ ascended to heaven, he was received to a peculiar blessedness in the enjoyment of his Father, who in his passion hid his face from him; such an enjoyment as became the relation in which he stood to the Father; and such as was a meet reward for the great and difficult service which he had performed on earth. Then "God showed him the path of life, and brought him into his presence, where is fullness of joy, and and to sit on his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore," as is said of Christ, Psal. xvi. 11. Then the Father; "made him most blessed forever: he made him exceeding glad with his countenance;" as in Psal. xxi. 6. The saints, by their union with Christ, partake of his *child-like* relation to the Father; and are *heirs* with him of his happiness in the enjoyment of his Father; as seems to be intimated by the Apostle, in Gal. iv. 4—7. The spouse of Christ, by her espousals to the only begotten Son of God, is a partaker of his *filial* relation to God; becomes the King's daughter; Psal. xlv. 13; and so partakes with her divine Husband in his "enjoyment of his Father and her Father, of his God and her God." A promise of this seems to be implied in those words of Christ to Mary, John xx. 17. Thus Christ's faithful servants "enter into the joy of their Lord," Matth. xxv. 21, 23.; and "Christ's joy remains in them;" agreeably to those words of Christ, John xv. 11. Christ from eternity is in the bosom of the Father, as the object of his infinite complacence. In him is the Father's eternal happiness. Before the world was he was with the Father in the enjoyment of his boundless love; and had infinite delight and blessedness in that enjoyment; as he declares of himself in Prov. viii. 30. "Then I was by him as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." When Christ ascended to the Father

after his passion, he went to the enjoyment of the same glory and blessedness in the enjoyment of his love ; agreeably to his prayer the evening before his crucifixion, John xvii. 5. " And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." In the same prayer, he manifests it to be his will, that his true disciples should be with him in the enjoyment of that joy and glory, which he then asked for himself ; verse 13. " That my joy might be fulfilled in themselves ;" verse 22. " And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." This glory and joy of Christ, which the saints are to enjoy with him, is that which he has in the enjoyment of the Father's infinite love to him ; as appears by the last words of that prayer of our Lord, verse 26, " That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them." The love which the Father has to his Son is great indeed ; the Deity does, as it were, wholly and entirely flow out in a stream of love to Christ ; and the joy and pleasure of Christ is proportionally great. This is the stream of Christ's delight, the river of his infinite pleasure ; which he will make his saints to drink of with him ; agreeably to Psal. xxx. 8, 9. " They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house : thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life : in thy light shall we see light." The saints shall have pleasure in partaking with Christ in his pleasure, and shall see light in his light. They shall partake with Christ of the same river of pleasure, shall drink of the water of life, and of the same new wine in his Father's kingdom ; Matth. xxi. 29. That new wine is especially that joy and happiness which Christ and his true disciples shall partake of together in glory ; which is the purchase of Christ's blood, or the reward of his obedience unto death. Christ at his ascension into heaven, received everlasting pleasures at his Father's right hand, in the enjoyment of his Father's love, as the reward of his own obedience unto death. But the same righteousness is reckoned both to the head and the members ; and both shall have fellowship in the same reward ; each according to their distinct capacity.

That the saints in heaven thus partake with Christ in his own enjoyment of the Father, manifests the transcendent excellence of their happiness, and their being admitted to a vastly higher privilege in glory than the angels.

2. *They partake with Christ, in the glory of that dominion, to which the Father has exalted him.*

The saints, when they ascend to heaven, and are made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places, are exalted to reign with him. They are through him made kings and priests, and reign with him, and in him, over the same kingdom. As the Father has appointed unto him a kingdom, so he has appointed it to them. The Father has appointed the Son to reign over

his own kingdom, and the Son appoints his saints to reign in his. The Father has given to Christ to sit with him on his throne, and Christ gives to the saints to sit with him on his throne, agreeably to his promise; Rev. iii. 21. Christ as God's *Son*, is the *Heir* of his kingdom; and the saints are *joint-heirs* with Christ; which implies, that they are heirs of the same inheritance, to possess the same kingdom, in and with him, according to their capacity. Christ in his kingdom reigns over heaven and earth; he is appointed the "Heir of all things;" and so all things are the saints; "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come," all are theirs; because they are Christ's, and united to him; (1 Cor. iii. 21—23.) The angels are given to Christ as a part of his dominion, to wait upon *him* as ministering spirits: so they are all ministering spirits, to minister to *them* who are the heirs of salvation. They are Christ's angels, and they are also their angels. Such is the saint's union with Christ, and their interest in him, that what he possesses, they possess, in a much more perfect and blessed manner than if all things were given to them separately, and by themselves, to be disposed of according to their discretion. All things are now disposed of so as in every respect to be most for their blessedness, by an infinitely better discretion than their own; and are disposed of, also, by their head and husband, between whom and them there is the most perfect union of hearts, and of wills, and who are *one*, even as Christ and the Father are *one*.

As the glorified spouse of this great King reigns with him, in his dominion over the universe; so more especially does she share with him in the joy and glory of his reign in his kingdom of grace. This is peculiarly the kingdom which he possesses as Head of the Church, and is that kingdom in which she is more especially interested. It was especially to reign in this kingdom, that God the Father exalted him to his throne in heaven. He set his King on his holy hill of Zion, especially that he might reign over Zion, or over his church, in his kingdom of grace; and that he might be under the best advantages to carry on the designs of his love in this lower world. Hence, the saints in heaven are partakers in Christ's joy when they witness the prosperity of his kingdom of grace on earth, and the success of his gospel here: which he looks on as the peculiar glory of his reign. The good shepherd rejoices when he finds but one sheep that was lost; and his friends and neighbours in heaven rejoice with him on that occasion. That part of the family which is in heaven are surely not unacquainted with the affairs of that part of the same family which is on earth. They who are with the King and are next to him, the royal family who dwell in his palace, are not kept in ignorance of the affairs of his kingdom. The saints in heaven are with the angels, the

King's ministers; by whom he manages the affairs of his kingdom; and who are continually ascending and descending from heaven to earth, and daily employed as ministering spirits to each individual member of the church below: beside the continual ascending of the souls of departed saints from all parts of the militant church. On these accounts the saints in heaven must be under far greater advantages than we are here, for a full view of the state of the church on earth, and a speedy, direct, and certain acquaintance with all its affairs in every country. That which gives them a still greater advantage for such an acquaintance, is their being constantly in the immediate presence of Christ, and in the enjoyment of the most perfect intercourse with him, who, as the King of the Church, manages all these affairs, and has a perfect knowledge of them. Christ is the *Head* of the whole glorified assembly; they are mystically his glorified *body*: and what the head sees, it sees for the information of the whole body, according to its capacity: and what the head enjoys, is for the joy of the whole body. The saints in leaving this world, and ascending to heaven, do not go out of sight of things appertaining to Christ's kingdom on earth. On the contrary, they go out of a state of obscurity, and ascend above the mists and clouds, into the clearest light; to a pinnacle, in the very centre of light, where every thing appears in clear view. They have as much greater advantage to view the state of Christ's kingdom, and the works of the new creation here, than they had while in this world; as a man who ascends to the top of a high mountain has greater advantage to view the face of the earth, than he had while he was in a deep valley, or thick forest below; surrounded on every side with those things which impeded and limited his sight. Nor do they view them as indifferent or unconcerned spectators, any more than Christ himself is an unconcerned spectator. The happiness of the saints in heaven consists very much in beholding the glory of God appearing in the work of Redemption: for it is by this chiefly that God manifests his glory, the glory of his wisdom, holiness, grace, and other perfections, to both saints and angels; as is apparent by many scriptures. Hence, undoubtedly much of their happiness consists in beholding the progress of this work in its application and success, and the steps by which Infinite power and wisdom brings it to its consummation. They are under unspeakably greater advantages to enjoy the progress of this work, than we are; as they are under greater advantages to see and understand the marvellous steps which Divine wisdom takes in all that is done, and the glorious ends he obtains; the opposition Satan makes, and how he is baffled and overthrown. They can better see the connection of one event with another, and the beautiful order of all things which come to pass in the church in different ages than to us appear

like confusion. Nor do they only view these things, and rejoice in them as a glorious and beautiful sight; but as persons interested, as Christ is interested; as possessing these things in Christ, and reigning with him, in his kingdom. Christ's success in his work of redemption, in bringing home souls to himself, applying his saving benefits by his Spirit, and the advancement of the kingdom of grace in the world, is the reward especially promised to him by his Father in the covenant of redemption, for the hard and difficult service which he performed while in the form of a servant; as is manifest by Is. liii. 10—12. But the saints shall partake with him in the joy of this reward; for this obedience which is thus rewarded, is reckoned to them as they are his members. This was specially the joy that was set before Christ; for the sake of which, he endured the cross, and despised the shame; and his joy is the joy of all heaven. They, who are with him in heaven, are under much the greatest advantages to partake with him in this joy; for they have a perfect communion with him through whom they enjoy all their heavenly happiness; as much as the whole body has all its pleasure of music by the ear, and all the benefit and refreshment of air by the lungs. The saints while on earth pray and labour for the same thing for which Christ laboured, viz, the advancement of the kingdom of God among men, the promoting of the prosperity of Zion, and the flourishing of religion in this world; and most of them have suffered for that end as Christ did, have been made partakers with their head in his sufferings, and "filled up" as the Apostle expresses it "that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ." Hence they shall partake with him of the glory and joy of the end obtained; Rom. viii. 17. "We are joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." 2 Tim. ii. 12. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." Christ, when his sufferings were past, and he left the earth and ascended to heaven, was so far from having done with his kingdom in this world, that it was as it were but then begun. He ascended for that very end, that he might more fully possess and enjoy this kingdom, and that he might reign in it; as a king ascends a throne to reign over his people, and receive the honour and glory of his dominion. No more have the saints done with Christ's kingdom on earth, when they leave the earth and ascend into heaven. "Christ ascended in the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and was brought near before him," *to the very end*, "that he might receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations and languages, should serve him," Dan. vii. 13, 14. This will be eminently fulfilled after the ruin of Antichrist, which is especially the time of Christ's kingdom. The same is the time when "the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom

under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High God." This is because they shall reign in and with Christ, the Most High, "whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and whom all dominions shall serve and obey." This is true, not only of the saints on earth, but also of the saints in heaven. Hence the saints in heaven, having respect to this time, do sing, in Rev. v. 10. "We shall reign on the earth." Agreeably hereto, it is afterwards represented, that when that time comes, the souls of them who in former ages had suffered with Christ, do reign with Christ; having, as it were, given to them new life and joy, in that spiritual blessed resurrection, which shall then be of the church of God on earth; and thus "The meek," those who meekly and patiently suffer with Christ, and for his sake, "shall inherit the earth;" they shall inherit it, and reign on earth with Christ. Christ is the heir of the world; and when the appointed time of his kingdom comes, his inheritance shall be given him; and there the meek, who are joint-heirs, shall also inherit it. The place in the Old Testament whence these words are taken, leads to their true interpretation; Psal. xxxvii. 11. "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." That these words refer to the peace and blessedness of the latter day, we learn by comparing them with Psalm lxxii. 7. "In his day shall be abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth:" And Jer. xxxiii. 6. "I will reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth:" Also Is. ii. 4. Mic. iv. 3. Is. xi. 6—9; and many other parallel places. The saints in heaven will as truly share with Christ in reigning over the nations, and in the glory of his dominion at that time, as they will share with him in the honour of judging the world at the last day. The promise of Christ to his disciples, Matth. xix. 28, 29. seems to have a special respect to the former of these. In ver. 28. Christ promises the disciples, that hereafter, "when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The saints in heaven reigning on earth in the glorious latter day, is described in language accommodated to this promise of Christ, Rev. xx. 4. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them; and judgment was given them.—And they reigned with Christ." And the promise in the next verse, in that xixth of Matthew, seems to have its fulfilment at the same time: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or wife or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life;" i. e. At the time when the saints shall inherit the earth and reign on earth, the earth, with all its blessings shall be given in great abundance to the church, to be possessed by the saints. This they shall receive in the present world, and in the world to come everlasting.

ing life. The saints in heaven shall partake with Christ in the triumph and glory of those victories which he shall obtain, at that glorious period, over the kings and nations of the world ; which are sometimes represented by his *ruling them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces as a potter's vessel*. To this doubtless there is a reference in Rev. ii. 26, 27. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations ; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father." And in Psal. cxlix. 5, to the end ; "Let the saints be joyful in glory : let them sing aloud upon their beds ; (i. e. in their separate state after death ; compare Is. lviii. 1, 2.) Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand ; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people ; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written : This honour have all the saints." Accordingly, when Christ appears riding forth to his victory over Antichrist, Rev. xix. the hosts of heaven appear going forth with him in robes of triumph, ver. 14. When Antichrist is destroyed, the inhabitants of heaven, and the holy apostles and prophets, are called upon to rejoice, chap. xviii. 20. Accordingly, the whole multitude of the inhabitants of heaven on that occasion, exult, and praise God with exceeding joy ; (chap. xix. 1—8, and chap. xi. 15,) and are also represented as greatly rejoicing on occasion of the ruin of the heathen empire, in the days of Constantine, (chap. xii. 10.) It is observable all along in the visions of that book, that the hosts of heaven appear as much concerned and interested in the events appertaining to the kingdom of Christ here below, as the saints on earth. The commencement of the Church's latter-day glory is eminently "the day of Christ's espousals ;" "the day of the gladness of his heart, when as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so he will rejoice over his church." Then will all heaven exceedingly rejoice with him ; and therefore they say at that time, (Rev. xix. 7,) "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to him ; for the Marriage of the Lamb is come."

Thus Abraham enjoys these things, when they come to pass, which were of old promised to him, which he saw beforehand, and in which he rejoiced. He will enjoy the fulfilment of the promise that all the families of the earth should be blessed in his seed, when it shall be accomplished. All the ancient patriarchs, who died believing in the promises of glorious things to be accomplished in this world ; "who had not received the promises, but saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them ; do actually enjoy them when fulfilled. David actually saw and enjoyed the fulfilment of that promise,

in its due time, which was made to him many hundred years before, and was all his salvation and all his desire." Thus Daniel shall *stand in his lot*, at the end of the days pointed out by his own prophecy. Thus the saints of old, who died in faith not having received the promise, are made perfect, and have their faith crowned by the better things accomplished in these latter days of the gospel. (Heb. xi. 39, 40,) which they see and enjoy in their time.

3. *They have fellowship with Christ, in his blessed and eternal Employment of glorifying the Father.*

The happiness of heaven consists, not merely nor principally in contemplation and passive enjoyment, but to a great degree in action; and particularly in actively serving and glorifying God. This is expressly mentioned as a great part of the blessedness of the saints in their perfect state, Rev. xxii. 3. "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." The angels are as a flame of fire in their ardour and activity in God's service. The four living creatures, (Rev. iv.) who are generally supposed to signify the angels, are represented as continually giving praise and glory to God, and are said not to rest day nor night. The souls of departed saints are doubtless become as the angels of God in this respect. Jesus Christ is the head of the whole glorious assembly, as in other things pertaining to their blessed state, so in this of their praising and glorifying the Father. When Christ, the night before he was crucified, prayed for his exaltation to glory, it was that he might glorify the Father; John xvii. 1. "These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son; that thy Son also may glorify thee." This he doubtless does, now he is in heaven; not only in fulfilling the Father's will, in what he does as Head of the church and Ruler of the universe; but also in leading the heavenly assembly in their praises. When Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, and ate and drank with his disciples at his table; giving them therein a representation and pledge of their future feasting with him, and drinking new wine in his heavenly Father's kingdom; he at that time led them in their praises to God, in the hymn which they sang. So, doubtless, he leads his glorified disciples in heaven. David, as the sweet psalmist of Israel, led the great congregation of God's people in their songs of praise. In this, as in innumerable other things, he was a type of Christ; who is often spoken of in Scripture by the name of *David*. Many of the psalms which David penned, were songs of praise, which he by the spirit of prophecy, uttered in the name of Christ, as head of the church, and leading the saints in their praises. Christ in heaven leads the glorious assembly in their praises to God, as Moses did the congregation of Israel at the Red Sea: which is

implied in its being said that, "they sing" the song of Moses and the Lamb." (Rev. xv. 2, 3.) In Rev. xix. 5. John tells us that "he heard a voice come out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." Who can it be, that utters this voice *out of the throne*, but "the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne," calling on the glorious assembly of saints to praise his Father and their Father, his God and their God? What the consequence of this voice is, we learn in the following words: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

APPLICATION.

The subject which we have been considering, may be usefully applied in the way of *exhortation*. Let us all be exhorted hence earnestly to seek after that great privilege which has been spoken of; that when "*we* are absent from the body, we may be present with the Lord." We cannot continue always in these earthly tabernacles. They are very frail, and will soon decay and fall; and are continually liable to be overthrown by innumerable means. Our souls must soon leave them, and go into the eternal world. O, how infinitely great will be the privilege and happiness of those, who, at that time shall go to be with Christ in his glory, in the manner that has been represented! The privilege of the twelve disciples was great, in being so constantly with Christ as his family, in his state of humiliation. The privilege of those three disciples was great who were with him in the mount of his Transfiguration; where was exhibited to them a faint semblance of his future glory in heaven, such as they might safely behold in the present frail, feeble and sinful state. They were greatly delighted with what they saw; and were desirous of making tabernacles to dwell there, and return no more down the mount. Great, also, was the privilege of Moses when he was with Christ in Mount Sinai, and besought him to show him his glory, and he saw his back-parts as he passed by, and heard him proclaim his name. But is not that privilege infinitely greater which has now been spoken of: the privilege of being with Christ in heaven, where he sits on the throne, as the King of angels, and the God of the universe; shining forth as the Sun of that world of glory;—there to dwell in the full, constant, and everlasting view of his beauty and brightness;—there most freely and intimately to converse with him, and fully to enjoy his love, as his friends and brethren; there to share with him in the infinite pleasure and joy which he has in the enjoyment of his Father;—there to sit with him on his throne, to reign with him in the possession of all things,

to partake with him in the glory of his victory over his enemies, and the advancement of his kingdom in the world, and to join with him in joyful songs of praise to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God, for ever and ever? Is not this a privilege worth the seeking after?

Here, as a powerful enforcement of this exhortation, I would improve that afflictive dispensation of God's holy Providence, which is the occasion of our coming together at this time: the death of that eminent servant of Jesus Christ, whose funeral is this day to be attended; together with what was observable in him, living and dying.

In this dispensation of Providence, God puts us in mind of our mortality, and forewarns us that the time is approaching when we must be "absent from the body;" and "must appear," as the Apostle observes in the next verse but one to the text, "before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one of us may receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or bad."

In him, whose death we are now called to consider and improve, we have not only an instance of mortality; but, as we have all imaginable reason to conclude, an instance of one, who, being absent from the body, is present with the Lord. Of this we shall be convinced, whether we consider the nature of his experience at the time whence he dates his conversion; or the nature and course of his inward exercises from that time forward; or his outward conversation and practice in life; or his frame and behaviour during the whole of that long space wherein he looked death in the face.

His convictions of sin, preceding his first consolations in Christ, as appears by a written account which he has left of his inward exercises and experiences, were exceedingly deep and thorough. His trouble and sorrow arising from a sense of guilt and misery, were very great and long continued, but yet sound and rational; consisting in no unsteady, violent, and unaccountable frights, and perturbations of mind; but arising from the most serious considerations, and a clear illumination of the conscience to discern and consider the true state of things. The light let into his mind at conversion, and the influences and exercises to which his mind was subject at that time, appear very agreeable to reason and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The change was very great and remarkable; yet without any appearance of strong impressions on the imagination, of sudden flights of the affections, or of vehement emotions of the animal nature. It was attended with just views of the supreme glory of the divine Being; consisting in the infinite dignity and beauty of the perfections of his nature, and of the transcendent excellency of the way of salvation by Christ.—This was about eight years ago, when he was twenty-one years of age.

Thus God sanctified, and made meet for his use, that vessel, which he intended to make eminently a vessel of honour in his house, and which he had made of large capacity, having endowed him with very uncommon abilities and gifts of nature. He was a singular instance of a ready invention, natural eloquence, easy flowing expression, sprightly apprehension, quick discernment, and very strong memory, and yet of a very penetrating genius, close and clear thought, and piercing judgment. He had an exact taste : his understanding was, if I may so express it, of a quick, strong, and distinguishing scent.

His learning was very considerable. He had a great taste for learning ; and applied himself to his studies in so close a manner when he was at college, that he much injured his health ; and was obliged on that account for a while to leave college, throw by his studies, and return home. He was esteemed one who excelled in learning in that society.

He had extraordinary knowledge of men, as well as of things ; and an uncommon insight into human nature. He excelled most whom I ever knew in the power of communicating his thoughts ; and had a peculiar talent at accommodating himself to the capacities, tempers, and circumstances, of those whom he would instruct or counsel.

He had extraordinary gifts for the pulpit. I never had an opportunity to hear him preach ; but have often heard him pray. I think that his manner of addressing himself to God, and expressing himself before him, in that duty, almost inimitable ; such as I have very rarely known equalled. He expressed himself with such exact propriety and pertinency ; in such significant, weighty, pungent expressions ; with such an appearance of sincerity, reverence, and solemnity, and so great a distance from all affectation, as forgetting the presence of men, and as being in the immediate presence of a great and holy God ; as I have scarcely ever known paralleled. His manner of preaching, by what I have often heard of it from good judges, was no less excellent ; being clear and instructive, natural, nervous and moving, and very searching and convincing. He nauseated an affected noisiness, and violent boisterousness in the pulpit ; and yet much disrelished a flat, cold delivery, when the subject required affection and earnestness.

Not only had he excellent talents for the study and the pulpit, but also for conversation. He was of a social disposition ; was remarkably free, entertaining, and profitable in his ordinary discourse : and discovered uncommon ability in disputing ; in defending truth and confuting error.

He excelled in his knowledge of Theology, and was truly, for one of his standing, an extraordinary divine ; but above all in matters relating to experimental religion. In this, I know that I have the concurring opinion of some, who are generally re-

garded as persons of the best judgment. According to what ability I have to judge of things of this nature, and according to my opportunities, which of late have been very great, I never knew his equal, of his age and standing, for clear, accurate notions of the nature and essence of true religion, and its distinctness from its various false appearances. This I suppose to be owing to the strength of his understanding ; to the great opportunities which he had of observing others, both whites and Indians ; and to his own great experience.

His experiences of the holy influences of God's Spirit were not only great at his first conversion ; but they were so *in a continued course*, from that time forward. This appears from a diary, which he kept of his daily inward exercises, from the time of his conversion, until he was disabled by the failing of his strength, a few days before his death. The change, which he looked upon as his conversion, was not only a great change of the present views, affections, and frame of his mind ; but was evidently the beginning of that work of God in his heart, which God carried on, in a very wonderful manner, from that time to his dying day.* He abhorred the course pursued by those, who live on their first evidences of piety, as though they had now finished their work ; and thenceforward gradually settle into a cold, lifeless, negligent, worldly frame.

His experiences were very different from many things, which have lately been regarded by multitudes, as the very height of Christian experience. When that false religion, which arises chiefly from impressions on the imaginations, began first to gain

* This more abundantly appears from a farther acquaintance with his diary, since this sermon was delivered. Grace in him seems to have been almost continually, with scarcely the intermission of a day, in very sensible, and indeed vigorous and powerful exercise, in one respect or other. His heart appears to have been exercised, in a continued course, in such things as these that follow : the most ardent and pure love to God ; great weanedness from the world, and sense of its vanity ; great humiliation ; a most abasing sense of his own vileness ; a deep sense of indwelling sin, which indeed was most evidently, by far the greatest burden of his life, and more than all other afflictions that he met with put together ; great brokenness of heart before God, for his small attainments in grace, that he loved God so little, &c. mourning that he was so unprofitable ; earnest longings and thirstings of soul after holiness ; earnest desires that God might be glorified, and that Christ's kingdom might be advanced in the world ; wrestlings with God in prayer, for these things ; delight in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him ; sweet complacency in those whose conversation savoured of true holiness ; compassion to the souls of men, and earnest intercessions in secret for them ; great resignation to the will of God ; a very frequent, most sensible, renewed renunciation of all things for Christ, and giving up himself wholly to God, in soul and body ; great distrust of his own heart, and universal dependence on God ; longings after full deliverance from the body of sin and death, after perfect conformity to God, and perfectly glorifying him in heaven ; clear views of eternity, almost as though he were actually out of the body, and had his eyes open in another world ; constant watchfulness over his own heart, and continual earnestness in his inward warfare with sin ; together with great care to the utmost, to improve time for God, in his service, and to his glory.

a very great prevalence in the land, he was for a little while deceived with it, so as to think highly of it. Though he knew that he never had such experiences as others told of, yet he thought it was because their attainments were superior to his; and so coveted them, and sought after them, but could never obtain them. He told me that he never had what is called *an impulse, or a strong impression on his imagination*, in things of religion, in his life; yet owned, that during the short time in which he thought well of these things, he was tinged with that spirit of false zeal, which was wont to attend them; but added, that, even at this time, he was not in his element, but as a fish out of water. When, after a little while, he came clearly to see the vanity and perniciousness of such things, it cost him abundance of sorrow and distress of mind, and to my knowledge he afterwards freely and openly confessed the errors in conduct into which he had run, and humbled himself before those whom he had offended. Since his conviction of his error in those respects, he has ever had a peculiar abhorrence of that kind of bitter zeal, and those delusive experiences which have been the principal source of it. He detested enthusiasm in all its forms and operations; and condemned whatever in opinion or experience seemed to verge towards Antinomianism. He regarded with abhorrence the experiences of those, whose first faith consists in believing that Christ died for them in particular; whose first love consists in loving God, because they suppose themselves the objects of his love; and whose assurance of their good estate arises from some immediate testimony, or suggestion, either with or without texts of Scripture, that their sins are forgiven, and that God loves them; as well as the joys of those who rejoice more in their own supposed distinction above others, in honour, privileges, and high experiences, than in God's excellence and Christ's beauty; and the spiritual pride of those laymen, who set themselves up as *public* teachers, and decry human learning, and a learned ministry. He greatly nauseated every thing like noise and ostentation in religion, and the disposition which many possess to publish and proclaim their own experiences; though he did not condemn, but approved of Christians speaking of their experiences, on some occasions, and to some persons, with modesty, discretion and reserve. He abominated the spirit and practice of the generality of the Separatists in this land. I heard him say once and again, that he had had much intercourse with this class of people, and was acquainted with many of them in various parts of the country; and that by this acquaintance he knew, that what was chiefly and most generally in repute among them, as the power of godliness, was entirely a different thing from that vital piety recommended in the Scriptures, and had nothing in it of that nature. He never was more full in con-

demning these things than in his last illness, and after he ceased to have any expectations of life : particularly, when he had the greatest and nearest views of approaching eternity ; and several times, when he thought himself actually dying, and expected in a few minutes to be in the eternal world, as he himself told me.*

* Since this sermon was preached, I find what follows in his Diary for the last summer.

" *Thursday, June 18.* I was this day taken exceeding ill, and brought to the gates of death.—In this extremely weak state I continued for several weeks ; and was frequently reduced so low as to be utterly speechless, and not able so much as to whisper a word. Even after I had so far revived, as to walk about house, and to step out of doors, I was exercised every day with a faint turn, which continued usually four or five hours. At these times, though I could say *yes* or *no* : yet I could not converse at all, nor speak one sentence without making stops for breath. And divers times, in this season, my friends gathered round my bed, to see me breathe my last ; which they looked for every moment, as I myself also did.

" How I was the first day or two of my illness, with regard to the exercise of reason, I scarcely know : but I believe I was somewhat shattered, with the violence of the fever, at times. But the third day of my illness, and constantly afterwards, for four or five weeks together, I enjoyed as much serenity of mind, and clearness of thought, as perhaps I ever did in my life. I think that my mind never penetrated with so much ease and freedom into divine things as at this time ; and that I never felt so capable of demonstrating the truth of many important doctrines of the Gospel as now.

" As I saw clearly the truth of those great doctrines, which are justly styled the doctrines of grace ; so I saw with no less clearness, that the essence of true religion consists in the soul's conformity to God and acting above all selfish views, for his glory, longing to be for him, to live to him, and please and honour him in all things ; and that, from a clear view of his infinite excellence and worthiness in himself, to be loved, adored, worshipped, and served, by all intelligent creatures. Thus I saw, that when a soul loves God with a supreme love, he therein acts like the blessed God himself, who most justly loves himself in that manner ; so when God's interest and his are become one, and he longs that God should be glorified, and rejoices to think that he is unchangeably possessed of the highest glory and blessedness, herein also he acts in conformity to God. In like manner, when the soul is fully resigned to, and rests satisfied and contented with the divine will, here he is also conformed to God.

" I saw further, that as this divine temper, whereby the soul exalts God, and treads itself in the dust, is wrought in the soul by God's discovering his own glorious perfections, in the face of Jesus Christ, to wit, by the special influences of his Holy Spirit ; so he could not but have regard to it as his own work : As it is his image in the soul, he could not but take delight in it. Then I saw again that if God should slight and reject his own moral image, he must needs deny himself ; which he cannot do. Thus I saw the stability and infallibility of this religion ; and that those who were truly possessed of it, had the most complete and satisfying evidence of their being interested in all the benefits of Christ's redemption, having their hearts conformed to him ; and that these, and these only, were qualified for the employments and entertainments of God's kingdom of glory : as none but these would have any relish for the business of heaven, which is to ascribe glory to God, and not to themselves ; and that God, (though I would speak it with great reverence of his name and perfections) could not, without denying himself, finally cast such away. ' The next thing I had then to do, was to inquire, whether *this was my religion*. Here God was pleased to help me to the most easy remembrance, and critical review of what had passed in course, of a religious nature, through several of the latter years of my life. Although I could discover much cor-

As his inward appearances appear to have been of the right kind, and were very remarkable as to their degree, so were his outward behaviour and practice agreeable. In his whole course, he acted as one who had indeed sold all for Christ, had entirely devoted himself to God, had made *his* glory his highest end, and was fully determined to spend his whole time and strength in *his* service. He was animated in religion, in the right way: animated not merely, nor chiefly, with his tongue, in professing and talking; but animated in the *work* and *business* of religion. He was not one of those who contrive to shun the cross, and get to heaven in the indulgence of ease and sloth. His life of labour and self-denial, the sacrifices which he made, and the readiness and constancy with which he spent his strength and substance to promote the glory of his Redeemer, are probably without a parallel in this age in these parts of the world. Much of this may be perceived by any one who reads his printed Journal; but much more has been learned by long and in-

ruption attending my best duties, many selfish views and carnal ends, much spiritual pride, and self-exaltation, and innumerable other evils which compassed me about; I say, although I now discerned the sins of my holy things, as well as other actions; yet God was pleased, as I was reviewing, quickly to put this question out of doubt, by showing me that I had, from time to time, acted above the utmost influence of mere self-love; that I had longed to please and glorify him, as my highest happiness, &c. This review, was through grace, attended with a present feeling of the same divine temper of mind. I felt now pleased to think of the glory of God; and longed for heaven, as a state wherein I might glorify God perfectly, rather than a place of happiness for myself. This feeling of the love of God in my heart, which I trust the Spirit of God excited in me afresh, was sufficient to give me full satisfaction, and make me long as I had many times before done, to be with Christ. I did not now want any of the sudden suggestions, with which many are so pleased, '*That Christ and his benefits are MINE,*' '*That God loves ME,*' in order to give me satisfaction about my state. No: my soul abhorred those delusions of Satan; which are thought to be the *immediate witness of the Spirit*, while there is nothing but an *empty suggestion* of a certain fact, without any gracious discovery of the divine glory, or of the Spirit's work in their own hearts. I saw the awful delusion of this kind of confidences; as well as of the whole of that religion from which they usually spring, or of which at least they are the attendants; the false religion of the late day, though a day of wondrous grace; the imaginations and impressions made only on the animal affections; together with the sudden suggestions made to the mind by Satan, transformed into an angel of light, of certain facts not revealed in Scripture; These I say, and many like things, I fear have made up the greater part of the religious appearances in many places.

"These things I saw with great clearness, when I was thought to be dying, and God gave me great concern for his church and interest in the world at this time: Not so much because the late remarkable influence upon the minds of the people was abated, and almost wholly gone, as because the false religion, the heats of imagination, and wild and selfish commotions of the animal affections, which attended the work of grace, had prevailed so far. This was that which my mind dwelt upon almost day and night: And this to me was the darkest appearance respecting religion in the land. For it was this chiefly that had prejudiced the world against inward religion. This I saw was the great misery of all, that so few saw any manner of difference between those exercises which are spiritual and holy, and those which have self-love only for their beginning, centre, and end."

timate acquaintance with him, and by looking into his Diary since his death, which he purposely concealed in what he published.

As his desires and labours for the advancement of Christ's kingdom were great, so was his *success*. God was pleased to make him the instrument of bringing to pass the most remarkable alteration among the poor savages, in enlightening, awakening, reforming and changing their disposition and manners, and wonderfully transforming them, of which perhaps any instance can be produced in these latter ages of the world. An account of this has been given the public in his Journal, drawn up by order of the Honourable Society in Scotland, which employed him. This I would recommend to the perusal of all who take pleasure in the wonderful works of God's grace, and who wish to read that which will peculiarly tend both to entertain and profit a Christian mind.

Not less extraordinary were his constant calmness, peace, assurance and joy in God, during the long time he looked death in the face, without the least hope of recovery ; continuing without interruption to the last ; while his distemper very sensibly preyed upon his vitals, from day to day, and often brought him to that state in which he looked upon himself, and was thought by others, to be dying. The thoughts of approaching death never seemed in the least to damp him, but rather to encourage him, and exhilarate his mind. The nearer death approached, the more desirous he seemed to be to die. He said, not long before his death, that " the consideration of the day of death and the day of judgment, had a long time been peculiarly sweet to him." At another time he observed, that he could not but think of the propriety there was in throwing such a rotten carcass as his into the grave : It seemed to him to be the right way of disposing of it." He often used the epithet *glorious*, when speaking of the day of his death, calling it *that glorious day*. On Sabbath morning, Sep. 27, feeling an unusually violent appetite for food, and looking on it as a sign of approaching death, he said " he should look on it as a favour, if this might be his dying day, and that he longed for the time." He had before expressed himself desirous of seeing his brother again, whose return had been expected from New-Jersey ; but then, [speaking of him] he said, " I am willing to go, and never see him again ; I care not what I part with, to be for ever with the Lord." Being asked that morning, how he did ? he answered, " I am almost in eternity ; God knows, I long to be there. My work is done : I have done with all my friends : All the world is nothing to me." On the evening of the next day, when he thought himself dying, and was apprehended to be so by others, and he could utter himself only by broken whispers, he often repeated the word *Eternity* ; and said. " I shall soon be with the holy angels.

"Jesus will come, he will not tarry." He told me one night, as he went to bed, that "he expected to die that night;" and added "I am not at all afraid, I am willing to go this night, if it be the will of God. Death is what I long for." He sometimes expressed himself as "having nothing to do but to die: and being willing to go that minute, if it was the will of God." He sometimes used that expression, "O why is his chariot so long in coming!"

He seemed to have remarkable exercises of resignation to the will of God. He once told me that "he had longed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God, and the glorious times of the church, and hoped they were coming: and should have been willing to have lived to promote religion at that time, if that had been the will of God." "But," said he, "I am willing it should be as it is: I would not have the choice to make for myself for ten thousand worlds."*

He several times spoke of the different kinds of willingness to die: and mentioned it as an ignoble, mean kind of willingness to die, *to be willing only to get rid of pain; or to go to heaven only to get honour and advancement there.* His own longings for death seemed to be quite of a different kind, and for nobler ends. When he was first taken with one of the last and most fatal symptoms in a consumption, he said, "O now the glorious time is coming! I have longed to serve God perfectly; and God will gratify these desires." At one time and another, in the latter part of his illness, he uttered these expressions. "My heaven is, to please God, to glorify him, to give all to him, and to be wholly devoted to his glory: That is the heaven I long for; that is my religion; that is my happiness; and always was, ever since I supposed I had any true religion. All those who are of that religion, shall meet me in heaven."—"I do not go to heaven to be advanced; but to give honour to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven; whether I have a high or low seat there; but I go to love, and please, and glorify God. If I had a thousand souls, if they were worth any thing, I would give them all to God: But I have nothing to give, when all is done. It is impossible for any rational creature to be happy without acting all for God; God himself could not make me happy in any other way."—"I long to be in heaven, praising and glorifying God with the holy angels; all my desire is to glorify God."—"My heart goes out to the burying place, it seems to me a desirable place: But O to glorify God!

* He writes thus in his Diary: Aug. 23. 1747. "In the week past, I had divers turns of inward refreshing. Though my body was inexpressibly weak, followed continually with agues and fevers, sometimes my soul centred in God as my only portion; and I felt that I should be for ever unhappy if he did not reign. I saw the sweetness and happiness of being *his subject at his disposal.* This made all my difficulties quickly vanish."

That is it! That is above all!"—"It is a great comfort to me to think that I have done a little for God in the world: It is but a very small matter; yet I have done a little; and I lament it that I have not done more for him."—"There is nothing in the world worth living for, but doing good, and finishing God's work; doing the work that Christ did. I see nothing else in the world that can yield any satisfaction, beside living to God, pleasing him, and doing his whole will. My greatest joy and comfort has been to do something for promoting the interest of religion, and the souls of particular persons."*

After he came to be in so low a state that he ceased to have the least expectation of recovery, his mind was peculiarly carried forth with earnest concern for the prosperity of the church of God on earth: this seemed very manifestly to arise from a pure disinterested love to Christ, and a desire of his glory. The prosperity of Zion was a theme on which he dwelt much, and of which he spake much; and more and more, the nearer death approached. He told me when near his end, that "he never, in all his life, had his mind so led forth in desires and earnest prayers for the flourishing of Christ's kingdom on the earth, as since he was brought so exceedingly low at Boston." He seemed much to wonder, that there appeared no more of a disposition in ministers and people, to pray for the flourishing of religion through the world. Particularly, he

* In his Diary he writes thus; "*Sept. 7, 1747* When I was in great distress of body, my soul desired that God should be glorified. I saw there was no heaven but this. I could not but speak to the by-standers then of the only happiness, viz. pleasing God. O that I could for ever live to God! The day I trust is at hand, the perfect day! O, the day of deliverance from all sin!

"*Sept. 19.* Near night, while I attempted to walk a little, my thoughts turned thus: How infinitely sweet it is to love God, and be all for him! Upon which it was suggested to me, 'You are not an angel, nor lively and active.' To which my whole soul immediately replied, 'I as sincerely desire to love and glorify God, as any angel in heaven.' Upon which it was suggested again, 'but you are filthy, not fit for heaven.' Hereupon instantly appeared the blessed robes of Christ's righteousness, in which I could not but exult and triumph. I viewed the infinite excellency of God; and my soul even broke with longings, that God should be glorified. I thought of dignity in heaven: but instantly the thought returned, I do not go to heaven *to get* honour, but *to give* all possible glory and praise. O, how I longed that God should be glorified on earth also! O, I was made for eternity, if God might be glorified! For bodily pains I cared not; though I was then in extremity, I never felt easier; I felt willing to glorify God in that state of bodily distress, as long as he pleased I should continue so. The grave appeared really sweet, and I longed to lodge my weary bones in it: But, O, that God might be glorified! This was the burden of all my cry. O, I knew I should be active as an angel in heaven, and that I should be stripped of my filthy garments! So that there was no objection. But O, to love and praise God more, to please him for ever! This my soul panted after, and even now pants for, while I write. O, that God may be glorified in the whole earth! Lord, let thy kingdom come. I longed for a spirit of preaching to descend and rest on ministers, that they might address the consciences of men with closeness and power. I saw God had the residue of the Spirit; and my soul longed it should be poured out from on high. I could not but plead with God for my dear congregation, that he would preserve it, and not suffer his great name to lose its glory in that work: my soul still longing that God might be glorified."

several times expressed his wonder that there appeared no more forwardness to comply with the proposal lately made from Scotland, for united extraordinary prayer among God's people, and for the coming of Christ's kingdom; and sent it as his dying advice to his own congregation, that they should practice agreeably to that proposal.

But a little before his death, he said to me, as I came into the room, "My thoughts have been employed on the old dear theme, the prosperity of God's church on earth. As I waked out of sleep, I was led to cry for the pouring out of God's Spirit, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, for which the dear Redeemer did and suffered so much. It is that, especially, which makes me long for it."

But a few days before his death, he desired us to sing a psalm, which related to the prosperity of Zion, which he signified engaged his thoughts and desires above all things. At his desire we sung part of the 102d psalm. When we had done, though he was then so low that he could scarcely speak; he so exerted himself, that he made a prayer, very audibly, in which, beside praying for those present, and for his own congregation, he earnestly prayed for the reviving and flourishing of religion in the world.

His own congregation especially, lay much on his heart. He often spoke of them; and commonly when he did so, it was with peculiar tenderness; so that his speech was interrupted and drowned with weeping.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent something of the character and behaviour of that excellent servant of Christ, whose funeral is now to be attended.—Though I have done it very imperfectly; yet I have endeavoured to do it faithfully, and as in the presence and fear of God, without flattery; which surely is to be abhorred in ministers of the Gospel, when speaking "as messengers of the Lord of hosts."

Such reason have we to be satisfied that the person of whom I have been speaking, now he is "absent from the body," is "present with the Lord;" not only so, but also with him, now wears a crown of glory, of distinguished brightness.

How much is there in the consideration of such an example, and so blessed an end, to excite us, who are yet alive, with the greatest diligence and earnestness, to improve the time of life, that we also may go to be with Christ, when we forsake the body? The time is coming, and will soon come, we know not how soon, when we must eternally take leave of all things here below, to enter on a fixed unalterable state in the eternal world. O, how well it is worth the while to labour and suffer, and deny ourselves, to lay up in store a good foundation of support and supply, against that time! How much is such a peace as we have heard of, worth at such a time? How dis-

mal would it be, to be in such circumstances, under the outward distresses of a consuming, dissolving frame, and looking death in the face from day to day, with hearts uncleansed, and sin unpardoned, under a dreadful load of guilt and divine wrath, having much sorrow and wrath in our sickness, and nothing to comfort and support our minds, nothing before us but a speedy appearance before the judgment seat of an almighty, infinitely holy, and angry God, and an endless eternity in suffering his wrath without pity or mercy! The person of whom we have been speaking, had a great sense of this. He said, not long before his death, "It is sweet to me to think of eternity: The endlessness of it makes it sweet. But, Oh, what shall I say to the eternity of the wicked!—I cannot mention it, nor think of it!—The thought is too dreadful!" At another time, speaking of an heart devoted to God and his glory, he said, "O, of what importance is it, to have such a frame of mind, such an heart as this, when we come to die! It is this now that gives me peace."

How much is there, in particular, in the things which have been observed of this eminent minister of Christ, to excite us, who are called to the same great work of the Gospel-Ministry, to earnest care and endeavours, that we may be in like manner faithful in our work; that we may be filled with the same spirit, animated with the same pure and fervent flame of love to God, and the same earnest concern to advance the kingdom and glory of our Lord and Master, and the prosperity of Zion? How lovely did these principles render him in his life; and how blessed in his end!—The time will soon come, when we also must leave our earthly tabernacles, and go to our Lord, who sent us to labour in his harvest, to render an account of ourselves to him. O how does it concern us so to run as not uncertainly; so to fight, not as those that beat the air! Should not what we have heard excite us to a careful dependence on God for his help and assistance in our great work, and to be much in seeking the influences of his Spirit, and success in our labours, by fasting and prayer; in which the person of whom I have been speaking abounded? This practice he earnestly recommended on his death-bed, from his own experience of its great benefits to some candidates for the ministry who stood by his bedside. He was often speaking of the great need which ministers have of much of the Spirit of Christ in their work, and how little good they are like to do without it: and how "when ministers were under the special influences of the Spirit of God, it assisted them to come at the consciences of men, and, as he expressed it, to handle them with *hands*: whereas, without the Spirit of God, said he, whatever reason and oratory we employ, we do but make use of *stumps*, instead of hands."

Oh that the things which were seen and heard in this extraordinary person ; his holiness, heavenliness, labour and self-denial in life ; his so remarkably devoting himself and his all, in heart and practice, to the glory of God ; and the wonderful frame of mind manifested, in so steadfast a manner, under the expectation of death, and under the pains and agonies which brought it on ; may excite in us all, both ministers and people, a due sense of the greatness of the work which we have to do in the world, of the excellency and amiableness of thorough religion in experience and practice, of the blessedness of the end of those whose death finishes such a life, and of the infinite value of their eternal reward, when "absent from the body and present with the Lord ;" and effectually stir us up to constant and effectual endeavours that, in the way of such an holy life, we may at last come to so blessed an end ! Amen.