

with rust, than worn out with service *. It is your present honour to be active, and will be your singular comfort another day. What greater comfort, when you come to put them off at death, than this, that you have employed them faithfully for God

Inf. 7. Look beyond this embodied state, and learn to live now as you hope to live shortly; begin to be what you expect to be. You know the time is at hand, that you shall live above all bodily concerns and employments, the soul shall be a drudge to the body no more. You shall be as the angels, Matt. xxii. 30. not marrying, nor giving in marriage, which is, by a *synechdoche*, put for all carnal employments and enjoyments; eat no more, drink no more, sleep no more, buy and sell no more. Now suit yourselves as much as your state and the duties of religion will suffer you to that state before hand. The sum of what I aim at is in 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. Be in all your relations as if you had none. Look on those things as if already they were not, which shortly must be none of yours; and both acquaint and accustom your thoughts to the life of separation from the body, which you must shortly leave. Which brings me home to the next point, *viz. The condition of human souls in the state of separation.*



HEB. xii. 23.

—ΚΑΙ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ ΔΙΚΑΙΩΝ ΤΕΤΕΛΕΙΩΜΕΝΩΝ.—*And to the spirits of just men made perfect.*

THE particular scope of this context falls in with the general design of the whole gospel, which is to persuade men to a life of holiness. The matter of the exhortation is most weighty, and the arguments enforcing it most powerful: He doth not talk, but dispute; he doth not say, but prove, that greater and more powerful engagements unto holiness lie upon those who live under the gospel, than upon the people who lived under the law. And thus the argument lies in this context.

If God, at the delivering of the law upon *mount Sinai*, strictly enjoined, and required so great purity and holiness in that people, signified by the ceremonies of two days preparation, the washing of their clothes, abstinence from conjugal society, &c. Exod. xix. 10. much more doth he require, and expect it in us, who are come under a much more excellent and heavenly dispensation than theirs was.

* Ambrose said of Valentinian,—No man was ever such a servant to his master, as Valentinian's body was to his soul.

To make good the *sequel*, he compares the *legal* and *evangelical* dispensations in many particulars, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. giving the gospel the preference throughout the whole comparison.

Hence the privileges of the New-Testament believers are stated, both *negatively* and *positively*.

1. *Negatively*, By shewing what we are exempted from.

2. *Positively*, Shewing what we are to come unto.

1. *Negatively*, What we are exempted, or freed from; ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. "We are not come unto the mount that might be "touched," &c.

The sum of all is this, that the promulgation of the law was accompanied with amazing dread and terror. For, after Moses, by command from God, had sanctified the *mount*, and set rails about it, that neither priest nor people, man nor beast, might touch the very borders of it, lest they die; the Lord descended in fire upon the top of the *mountain* the third day, in the morning, with most terrible tokens of divine majesty, *to wit*, with thunderings, lightnings, dark clouds, and the noise of a *trumpet*, exceeding loud; the *mount* was covered with smoke, as the smoke of a furnace, and * flames mounting up into the midst of heaven, the whole mountain shaking and trembling exceedingly: Out of this horrid tempest the awful voice of God was heard, all the people in the camp trembling, yea, and Moses himself quaking for fear.

This was the manner of the law's promulgation: But to such a terrible dispensation as this we are not come, which is the negative part of our privilege.

2. He opens the positive privileges to which we are come.

(1.) "Ye are come, saith he, to mount Sion,] not the earthly, but the spiritual Sion. Mount Sion was the place celebrated above all the world for the worship of God, Psal. lxxxvi. 7. "All my "springs, saith God, are in thee." There was the temple, the ark of the covenant, the glory of the Lord dwelling between the *cherubims*. The *priests* that attended the service of God had their residence there, as the angels have in heaven. Thither the tribes went up from all quarters of Judea, Psal. lxxxiv. as the children of God now do to heaven, from all quarters of the world. Judea was the best kingdom in the world; Jerusalem the best city in that kingdom; and Sion the most glorious place in that city. Here Christ taught his heavenly doctrine; near to it he finished his glorious work of redemption. Hence the everlasting gospel went forth into all the world: And, on these considerations, it is put to signify the gospel-church, or state in this place, and is therefore called *the heavenly Jerusalem*, in the following words, We do not

* *Crebris micat ignibus æther*; i. e. The sky shines with frequent lightnings,

come to the literal *Sion*, nor to the *earthly Jerusalem*; but to the gospel-church, or state, which may be called a heaven upon earth, compared with that *literal Jerusalem*.

(2.) Ye are come “to an innumerable company of angels.”] To * *myriads of angels*, a *myriad* is ten thousand, but myriads in the plural number, and set down indefinitely too, may note many millions of angels: And therefore we fitly render it, “to an innumerable company of angels.”

They had the ministry of angels as well as we, thousands of them ministered to the Lord in the dispensation of the law at Sinai, Psal. lxxviii. 17. But this notwithstanding, we are come to a much clearer knowledge, both of their present ministry for us on earth, Heb. i. 14. and of our fellowship and equality with them in heaven, Luke xx. 36.

(3.) “Ye are come to the general assembly, and church of the “first-born, whose names are written (or enrolled) in heaven.”] This also greatly commends and amplifies the privileges of the New-Testament believers. The church of God in former ages was circumscribed and shut up within the narrow limits of one small kingdom, which was a garden inclosed out of a waste wilderness: But now, by the calling in of the Gentiles, the church is extended far and wide, Eph. iii. 5, 6. It is become a great assembly, comprising the believers of all nations under heaven; and so speaking of them collectively, it is the general convention or assembly, which is also dignified, and ennobled by two illustrious characters, viz. (1.) That it is *the church of the first-born*, i. e. consisting of members dignified and privileged above others, as the first-born among the Israelites did excel their younger brethren. (2.) That their *names are written in heaven*, i. e. registered or enrolled in God’s book, as children and heirs of the heavenly inheritance, as the first-born in † Israel were registered in order to the priesthood, Numb. iii. 40, 41.

(4.) Ye are come “to God, the Judge of all.”] But why to God the Judge? This seems to spoil the harmony, and jar with the other parts of the discourse. No, they are come to God as a righteous Judge, who, as such, will pardon them, 1 John i. 9. *Crown* them, 2 Tim. iv. 8. and *avenge* them on all their oppressing and persecuting enemies, 1 Thes. i. 5, 6, 7.

(5.) “And to the spirits of just men made perfect.”] A most glorious privilege indeed; in which we are distinctly to consider,

* *Μυριάσιν αγγέλων*, i. e. Myriads of angels. The Hellenists use the word *μυριάδας*, i. e. Myriads, without any addition to signify an innumerable multitude. Grot.

† The first-born of the Israelites were registered in an earthly register, but these in an heavenly register.

1. The quality of those with whom we are associated or taken into fellowship.

2. The way and manner of our association with them.

1. The quality of those with whom we are associated, or to whom we are said to be come; and they are described by three characters, viz.

(1.) Spirits of men.

(2.) Spirits of just men.

(3.) Spirits of just men perfected, or consummated.

(1.) They are called spirits, that is, immaterial substances, strictly opposed to bodies, which are no way the objects of our exterior senses, neither visible to the eye, or sensible to the touch, which were called properly souls whilst they animated bodies in this lower world; but now being loosed and separated from them by death, and existing alone in the world above, they are properly and strictly stiled spirits.

(2.) They are the *spirits of just men*.] Man may be termed *just* two ways, (1.) By a full discharge and acquittance from the guilt of all his sins, and so believers are *just men*, even whilst they live on earth, groaning under other imperfections, Acts xiii. 39.

Or, (2.) By a total freedom from the pollution of any sin. And though in this sense there is not “a just man upon earth that doth good, and sinneth not,” Eccl. vii. 22. yet even in this sense Adam was just before the fall, Eccl. vii. 29. according to his original constitution; and all believers are so in their glorified condition; all sin being perfectly purged out of them, and its existence utterly destroyed in them. On which account,

(3.) They are called the spirits of just men *made perfect*,] or consummate. The word perfect is not here to be understood absolutely, but by way of *synecdoche*; they are not perfect in every respect, for one part of these just men lies rotting in the grave: but they are perfected, for so much as concerns their spirit; though the flesh perish and lie in dishonour, yet their spirits being once loosed from the body, and freed radically and perfectly from sin, are presently admitted to the facial vision and fruition of God, which is the culminating point (as I may call it) higher than which the spirit of man aspires not; and attaining to this, it is, for so much as concerns itself, made perfect. Even as a body at last lodged in its centre, gravitates no more, but is at perfect rest; so it is with the spirit of man come home to God in glory, it is now consummate, no more need to be done to make it as perfectly happy as it is capable to be made; which is the first thing to be considered, viz. the quality of those with whom we are associated.

2. The second follows, namely, the way and manner of our as-

sociation with these blessed spirits of just men, noted in this expression, [*we are come.*] He saith not, *we shall come* hereafter, when the resurrection had restored our bodies, or after the general judgment; but, *we are come* to these spirits of just men. The meaning whereof we may take in these three particulars.

(1.) We that live under the gospel-light, are come to a clearer apprehension, sight, and knowledge of the blessed and happy estate of the souls of the righteous after death, than ever they had, or ordinarily could have, who lived under the types and shadows of the law, Eph. iii. 4, 5. And so we are come to them in respect of clearer apprehension.

(2.) We are come to those blessed spirits in our representative, Christ, who hath carried our nature into the very midst of them, and whom they all behold with highest admiration and delight. By Christ, who is entered into that holy place where these spirits of just men live, we are come into a near relation with them: for he being the common head, both to them in heaven, and to us on earth, we and they consequentially make but one body or society, Eph. ii. 10. Whereupon (notwithstanding the different and remote countries they and we live in) we are said “to sit down with them in heavenly places,” Eph. iii. 15. and ii. 6.

(8.) *We are come.*] That is, we are as good as come, or we are upon the matter come; there remains nothing betwixt them and us but a puff of breath, a little space of time, which shortens every moment: We are come to the very borders of their country, and there is nothing to speak of betwixt them and us: And by this expression, *we are come*, he teacheth us to account and reckon those things as present which so shortly will be present to us, and to look upon them as if they already were, which is the highest and most comfortable life of faith we can live on earth. Hence the note is,

Doct. *That righteous and holy souls, once separated from their bodies by death, are immediately perfected in themselves; and associated with others alike perfect in the kingdom of God.*

That the spirits of just men at the time of their separation from their bodies do not utterly fail in their beings, nor that they are so prejudiced and wounded by death, that they cannot exert their own proper acts in the absence of the body, hath been already cleared in the foregoing parts of this treatise, and will be more fully cleared from this text.

But the true level and aim of this discourse is at a higher mark, viz. the far more excellent, free, and noble life the souls of the just begin to live immediately after their bodies are dropt off from

them by death, at which time they begin to live like themselves, a pleasant, free, and divine life. So much at least is included in the apostle's epithet in my text, spirits of just men made perfect; and suitable thereto are his words in 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 12. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know, even as also I am known."

These two adverbs, *now* and *then*, distinguish the twofold state of gracious souls, and shew what it is whilst they are confined in the body, and what it shall be from the time of their emancipation and freedom from that clog of mortality. *Now* we are imperfect, but *then* that which is perfect takes place, and that which is imperfect is done away, as the imperfect twilight is done away by the opening of the perfect day.

And it deserves a serious animadversion, that this perfect state doth not succeed the imperfect one after a long interval, (as long as betwixt the dissolution and resurrection of the body) but the imperfect state of the soul is immediately done away by the coming of the perfect one. The glass is laid by as useless, when we come to see face to face, and eye to eye.

The waters will prove very deep here, too deep for any line of mine to fathom; there is a cloud always overshadowing the world to come, a gloom and haziness upon that state: Fain we would, with our weak and feeble beam of imperfect knowledge, penetrate this cloud, and dispel this gloom and haziness, but cannot. We think seriously and closely of this great and awful subject, but our thoughts cannot pierce through it: we reinforce those thoughts by a sally, or thick succession of fresh thoughts, and yet all will not do, our thoughts return to us either in confusion, or without the expected success. For alas! how little is it that we know, or can know of our own souls now whilst they are embodied! much less of their unembodied state. The apostle tells us, 1 Cor. ii. 9. "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And another apostle adds, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," 1 John iii. 2.

Yet all this is no discouragement to the search and regular enquiry into the future state; for though reason cannot penetrate these mysteries, yet God hath *revealed them to us*, (though not perfectly) *by his Spirit*. And though we know not particularly, and circumstantially what we shall be, yet this we know, that "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And it is our privilege and happiness, that we are come to the spirits of just men made perfect, i. e. to a clearer knowledge of that state than was ordinarily attainable by believers, under former dispensations.

These things premised, I will proceed to open my apprehensions of the separate state of the spirits of just men made perfect, in *twelve propositions*: whereby, as by so many steps, we may orderly advance as far as safely and warrantably we may, into the knowledge of this great mystery, clearing what afterwards shall remain obscure, in the solution of several questions relating to this subject, and then apply the whole, in several uses of this great point: And the first proposition is this:

Proposition 1. There is a twofold separation of the soul from the body: viz. one mental, the other real: Or,

1. Intellectual, by the mind only.
2. Physical, by the stroke of death.

1. Of intellectual, or mental separation *, I am first to speak in this proposition; and it is nothing else but an act of the understanding, or mind, conceiving, or considering the soul and body, as separate and parted from each other, whilst yet they are united in a personal oneness by the breath of life. This mental separation may, and ought to be frequently and seriously made, before death make the real and actual separation; and the more frequently and seriously we do it, the less of horror and distraction will attend that real and fatal stroke, whenever it shall be given. For hereby we learn to bear it gradually, and, by gentle essays, to acquaint our shoulders with the burden of it. *Separation* is a word that hath much of horror in the very sound, and useth to have much more in the sense and feeling of it, else it would not deserve that title, Job viii. 14. "The kind of terrors," or the most terrible of all terribles: But acquaintance and familiarity abates that horror, and that two ways especially.

(1.) As it is preventive of much guilt.

(2.) As it gains a more inward knowledge of its nature.

(1.) The serious and fixed thoughts of the parting hour, is preventive of much guilt; and the greatest part of the horror of death rises out of the guilt of sin; "The sting of death is sin," 1 Cor. xv. 56. † Augustine saith, "Nothing more recalls a man from sin, than the frequent meditation of death." I dare not say it is the strongest of all curbs to keep us back from sin, but I am sure it is a very strong one.

Let ‡ a soul but seriously meditate what a change death will

* Mental separation, is a conceiving of two things separately, which really are united. *Conimbr. on the soul*, p. 595.

† *Nihil sic revocat a peccato, quam frequens mortis meditatio.* Aug.

‡ He who considers, what he will be in death, will always act with a fear of caution, and live as in the sight of his Creator, he desires nothing that is transitory, and considers himself as almost dead, because he knows he must soon die. *Greg. Mer.* 12.

make shortly upon his person and condition; and the natural effects of such a meditation, through the blessing of God upon it, will be a flattening and quenching of its keen and raging appetite after the ensnaring vanities of this world (which draw men into so much guilt) a conscious fear of sin, and an awakened care of duty. It was once demanded of a very holy man (who spent much more than the ordinary allowance of time in prayer, and searching his own heart) why he so macerated his own body by such frequent and long-continued duties! His answer was, *O! I must die, I must die!* Nothing could separate him from duty, who had already separated his soul from his body, and all this world, by fixed and deep thoughts of death.

(2.) Hereby we gain a more inward knowledge and acquaintance with it, the less it terrifies us. A lion is much more dreadful to him that never saw him, than he is to his keeper who feedeth him every day. A pitched battle is more frightful and scaring to a new-listed soldier, that never took his place in the field before, nor saw the dreadful countenance of an army ready to engage, nor heard the thundering noise of cannon, and volleys of shot, the shouts of armies, and groans of dying men on every side, than it is to an old soldier who hath been used to such things. The like we may observe in seamen, who it may be trembled at first, and now can sing in a storm.

Scarce any thing is more necessary for weak and timorous believers to meditate on, than the time of their separation. Our hearts will be apt to start and boggle at the first view of death; but it is good to do by them as men use to do by young colts; ride them up to that which they fright at, and make them smell to it, which is the way to cure them. "Look, as bread, saith one *, is "more necessary than other food, so the meditation of death is "more necessary than many other meditations." Every time we change our habitations, we should realize therein our great change: our souls must shortly leave this, and be lodged for a longer season in another mansion. When we put off our clothes at night, we have a fit occasion to consider, that we must strip nearer one of these days, and put off, not our clothes only, but the body that wears them too.

Holy Job had, by frequent thoughts, familiarized death and the grave to himself, and could speak of them as men use to speak of their houses and dearest relations, Job xvii. 14. "I have said to "corruption, Thou art my father, to the worm, Thou art my "mother and sister." But it needs much grace to bring, and to

* *Sicut panis necessarius est præ cæteris alimentis, ita intenta mortis meditatio necessaria est præ cæteris donis et exercitiis.* Dionys.

hold the heart to this work ; and therefore Moses begs it of God, Psal. xc. 12. " So teach us to number our days ; and David, Psal. xxxix. 4. " Lord, make me to know my end." Yea, the advantages of it have been acknowledged by men, whose light was less, and diversions more than ours. The Jews, for this use and end, had their sepulchres built before-hand, and that in their gardens of pleasure too, that they might season the delights of life with the frequent thoughts of death, John xix. 41.

Philip of Macedon would be awakened by his page every morning with this sentence, *memento te esse mortalem* : Remember, O king, that thou art a mortal man. A great emperor of Constantinople, not only at his inauguration, but at his great feasts, ordered a mason to bring two stones before him, and say, " * Chuse, " O emperor, which of the two stones thou wilt for thy tomb-stone?" Reader, thou wilt find mental separation much easier than real separation : it is easier to think of death, than it is to feel it ; and the more we think of it, the less we are like to feel it.

Prop. 2. Actual separation may be considered either in fieri, in the previous pangs, and foregoing agonies of it ; or in facto esse, in the last separating stroke, which actually parts the soul and body asunder, lays the body prostrate and dead at the feet of death, and thrusts the soul quite out of its ancient and beloved habitation.

Let it be considered in the previous pangs and forerunning agonies, which commonly make way for this actual dissolution : and to the people of God, this is the worst and bitterest part of death (except those conflicts with Satan, which they sometimes grapple with on a death-bed) which they encounter at that time. There is (saith one) no poinard in death itself, like those in the way or prologue to it. I like not to die, said another) but I care not if I were dead ; the end is better than the way. The conflicts and struggles of nature with death are bitter and sharp pains, unknown to men before, whatever pains they have endured : nor can it be expected to be otherwise, seeing the ties and engagements betwixt the soul and body are so strong, as we shewed before.

The soul will not easily part with the body, but disputes the passages with Death, from member to member, like resolute soldiers in a stormed garrison, till at last it is forced to yield up the fort-royal into the hands of victorious Death, and leave the dearly beloved body a captive to it.

This is the dark side of death to all good men ; and though it be not worth naming, in comparison with the dreadful consequences of death to all others, yet in itself it is terrible.

* *Elige ab his saxis ex quo, invictissime Cæsar, tibi tumultum me fabricare velis.*

* Separation is not natural to the soul which was created with an inclination to the body; it is natural indeed to clasp and embrace, to love and cherish its own body; but to be divided from it, is grievous and preternatural.

The agonies of death are expressed in scripture, by a † word which signifies “the travailing pains of a woman,” yea, by the sharpest and most acute pains they at that time feel, Acts ii. 24.

And yet all are not handled alike roughly by the hands of death; some are favoured with a desirable *ευθανασία*, gentle and easy death.

It is the privilege of some Christians to have their souls fetched out of their bodies, as it were by a kiss from the mouth of God, as the Jewish Rabbins use to express the manner of Moses’ death. Mr. Bolton felt no pain at his death, but the cold hand of his friend, who asked him what pain he felt. Yea, holy Bayneham in the midst of the flames, professed it was to him as a bed of roses.

Every believer is equally freed from the sting and curse of death; but every one is not equally favoured in the agonies and pains of death.

2. Separation from the body is to be considered *in facto esse*, i. e. in the result and issue of all those bitter pangs and agonies, which end in the actual dissolution of soul and body. “† Death, “or actual separation, is nothing else but the dissolving of the tie “or loosing of the bond of union betwixt the soul and body.” “§ Some call it the privation of the second act of the soul, that is, “its act of informing or enlivening the body.” Others, according to the scripture-phrase, the departing of the soul from the body. So Peter stiles it, 2 Pet. i. 15. *μετὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἐξοδὸν*, after my departure, i. e. after my death. Augustine || calls it the laying down of a heavy burden, provided there be not another burden for the soul to bear afterwards, which will sink it into hell.

In respect of the body, which the soul now forsakes, it is called “the putting off this tabernacle,” 2 Pet. i. 14. and, “the dissolving the earthly house or tabernacle,” 2 Cor. v. 1.

In respect of the *terminus a quo*, the place from which the soul removes at death, it is called our departure hence, Phil. i. 23. or

* Seeing the separation made by death is not natural, nor even violent, it follows, from the approved opinion of philosophers, that it may be called preternatural. *Conimb.*

† *Τὰς ὠδύνας τῆς θανάτου, mortis dolorem.*

‡ *Θάνατος ἐστὶ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος διαλύσις, vel animæ a corpore discessus. Vives.*

§ *Privatio actus secundi ejusdem animæ, id est, informationis seu unionis erga corpus Conimb.*

|| *Relictio corporis depositio sarcinæ gravis, modo alia sarcina non patietur, qua homo præcipitetur in gehennam. August.*

our weighing anchor, and loosing from this coast or shore, to sail to another.

In respect of the *terminus ad quem*, the place to which the spirits of the just go at death, it is called our going to, or being with the Lord, Phil. i. 23. To conclude, in respect of that which doth most lively resemble and shadow it forth, it is called our falling asleep, Acts vii. 60. our sleeping in Jesus, 1 Thes. iv. 14. This metaphor of sleep must be stretched no farther than the Spirit of God designed in the choice of it, which was not to favour and countenance the fancy of a sleeping soul after death, but to represent its state of placid rest in Jesus' bosom, if it refer at all to the soul; for I think it most properly respects the body; and thence the sepulchres, where the bodies of the saints were laid, got the name of κοιμητήρια, dormitories, or sleeping places*.

This is its last farewell to this world, never more to return to a low animal life more. Job vii. 9, 10. "For as the cloud is consumed and vanished away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more: he shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more." The soul is no more bound to a body, nor a retainer to the sun, moon, or stars, to meat, drink, and sleep, but is become a free, single, abstracted being, a separate and pure spirit, which the Latins call *lemures*, *manes*, ghosts or souls of the dead, and my text, *Spirits made perfect*; a being much like unto the angels, who are, δυναμεις ασωματες, bodiless beings. An angel, as one speaks, is a perfect soul, a soul is an imperfect angel: I do not say, that upon their separation, they become angels, for they will still remain a distinct species of spirits. Angels have no inclination to bodies, nor were ever fettered with clogs of flesh, as souls were†. And by this you see what a vast difference there is betwixt these two considerations of death: how ghastly and affrighting is it in its previous pangs! how lovely and desirable in the issue and result of them! which is but the change of earth for heaven, men for God, sin and misery, for perfection and glory.

Prop. 3. The separation of the soul and body, makes a great and wonderful change upon both, but especially upon the soul.

There is a twofold change made upon man by death, one upon his body, another upon his soul. The change upon the body is great and visible to every eye. A living body is changed into a dead carcase: a beautiful and comely body into a loathsome spectacle: that which was lately the object of delight and love, is

* *Locus sepulturæ consecratus.* κοιμητήριον, hoc est, dormitorium appellatur.

† *Semper a corporis compedibus et nexibus liberi,* i. e. Always free from the clogs and fetters of the body.

hereby make an abhorrence to all flesh; "Bury my dead out of my sight," Gen. xxiii. 4.

What the sun is to the greater, that the soul is to the lesser world. When the sun shines comfortably, how vegete and cheerful do all things look! how well do they thrive and prosper! the birds sing merrily, the beasts play wantonly, the whole creation enjoyeth a day of light and joy: but when it departs, what a night of horror followeth! how are all things wrapt up in the sable mantle of darkness! or if it but abate its heat, as in winter, the creatures are, as it were, buried in the winding-sheet of winter's frost and snow: just so is it with the body, when the soul shineth pleasantly upon it, or departs from it.

That body which was fed so assiduously, cared for so anxiously, loved so passionately, is now tumbled into a pit, and left to the mercy of crawling worms. The change which judgment made upon that great and flourishing city Nineveh, is a fit emblem to shadow forth that change which death makes upon human bodies: that great and renowned city was once full of people, which thronged the streets thereof; there you might have seen children playing upon the thresholds, beauties shewing themselves through the windows, melody sounding in its palaces: but what an alteration was made upon it, the prophet Zephaniah describes, chap. ii. 14. "Flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations; both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it: their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds, for he shall uncover the cedar-work."

Thus it is with the body when death hath dislodged the soul: worms nestle in the holes where the beautiful eyes were once placed; corruption and desolation is upon all parts of that stately structure. But this being a vulgar theme, I shall leave the body to the dust from whence it came, and follow the soul, which is my proper subject, pointing at the changes which are made on it.

The essence of the soul is not destroyed or changed by the body's ruin; it is substantially the self-same soul it was when in the body. The supposition of an essential change would disorder the whole frame and model of God's eternal design for the redemption and glorification of it, Rom. viii. 29, 30. But yet, though it undergo no substantial change at death, yet divers great and remarkable alterations are made upon it, by sundering it from the body. As,

1. It is not where it was: it was in a body, immersed in matter, married unto flesh and blood; but now it is out of the body, unclothed and stript naked out of its garments of flesh, like pure gold melted out of the ore with which it was commixed; or as a bird let

out of her cage into the open fields and woods. This makes a great and wonderful change upon it.

2. Being free from the body, it is consequently discharged and freed from all those cares, studies, fears and sorrows to which it was here enthralled and subjected upon the body's account: it puts off all those passions and burdens with it: never spends one thought more about food and raiment, health and sickness, wives and children, riches or poverty, but lives henceforth after the manner of angels, Mat. xxii. 30. It is now unrelated to, and therefore unconcerned about all these things.

3. In the unbodied state it is perfectly freed from sin, both in the acts and habits; a mercy it never enjoyed since the first moment it dwelt in the body. The cure of this disease was indeed begun in the work of sanctification; but it is not perfected till the day of the soul's glorification. It is now, and not till now, a spirit made perfect; that is, a soul enjoying its perfect health and rectitude: No more groans, tears, or lamentations, upon the account of indwelling sin.

4. The way and manner of its converse with, and enjoyment of God is changed. There are two *mediums* by which souls converse with God in the body, viz.

(1.) One internal, *to wit*, faith.

(2.) The other external, *to wit*, ordinances.

(1.) If a man walk with God on earth, it must be in the use and exercise of faith, 2 Cor. v. 7. Nor can there be any communion carried on betwixt God and the soul without it, Heb. xi. 6.

(2.) The external *mediums* are the ordinances of God, or duties of religion, both public and private, Psal. lxxiii. 2. Betwixt these two *mediums* of communion with God, this remarkable difference is found: The soul may see and enjoy God by faith, in the want or absence of ordinances; but there is no seeing or conversing with God, in the greatest plenty and purity of ordinances, without faith, Heb. iv. 2.

But in the same moment the soul is cut off from union with the body, it is also cut off from both these ways of enjoying God, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Isa. xxxviii. 11. But yet the soul is no loser; nay, it is the greatest *gainer* by this change. The child is no loser by ceasing to derive its nourishment by the navel, when it comes to receive it by the mouth, a more noble way, whereby it gets a new pleasure in tasting the variety of all delectable food. Hezekiah bemoaned the loss of ordinances upon his supposed death-bed, saying, "I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living:" q. d. Now farewell temple and ordinances; I shall never go any more into his temple, where my soul hath been so often cheered and refreshed with the displays of his grace and goodness; I shall

never more join with the assembly of his people on earth. And suppose he had not, sure he would have lost nothing, had he then exchanged the temple at Jerusalem, for the temple in heaven; and communion with sinful imperfect saints on earth, for fellowship with angels, and “the spirits of just men made perfect.” By this change we lose no more than he loseth, who whilst he stands delightfully contemplating the image of his dearest friend in a glass, hath the glass snatched away by his friend, whom he now seeth face to face.

Upon this change of the mediums of communion, it will follow, that the communion betwixt God and the separate soul, excels all the communion it ever had with him on earth, in

- (1.) The clearness.
- (2.) The sweetness.
- (3.) The constancy of it.

(1.) Its visions of God, in the state of separation, are more clear, distinct, and direct than they were on earth; clouds and shadows are now fled away: The soul now seeth as it is seen, and knoweth as it is known; its apprehensions of God there, differ from those it had here, as the crude and confused apprehensions of a child do, from those we have in the manly state.

(2.) They are also more sweet and ravishing: As our visions are, so are our pleasures; perfect visions produce perfect pleasures: The faculties of the soul now, and never till now, lie level to that rule, Matth. xxii. 37. The visions of God command, and call forth all the heart and soul, mind, and strength, into acts of love and delight. It was not so here; if the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak; but there the clog is off from the foot of the will.

(3.) More constant, fixed, and steady. It is one of the greatest difficulties in religion to fix the thoughts and cure the wildness and roving of the fancy: the heart is not steady with God; and hence are its ups and downs, heatings and coolings; which are things unknown in the perfect state. By all which it appears, the change by dissolution is great and marvellous, both upon the body and soul, but upon the soul more especially.

Proposition 4. *The souls of the righteous, at the instant of their separation, are received by the blessed angels, and by them transferred unto the place of blessedness.*

Though angels are by nature a superior order of spirits, differing from men in dignity, as the nobles and barons in the kingdoms of this world, differ from inferior subjects; yet are they made ministering spirits, i. e. serviceable creatures in the kingdom of providence, to the meanest of the saints, Heb. i. 14. And herein the Lord put a singular honour upon his people, in making such excellent crea-

tures as angels serviceable to them : Luther assigns to them a double office, to wit, to sing the praises of God on high, and to watch over his saints here below. Their ministry is distinguished into three branches : *Νεθετικον*, for admonition or warning ; *φυλακτικον*, for protection and defence ; *βοηθετικον*, for succour, help, and comfort. This last office they perform more especially at the soul's departure : Like tender nurses, they keep us whilst we live, and bring us home in their arms to our Father's house when we die.

They are about our death-beds, waiting to receive their precious charge into their arms and bosoms. When Lazarus breathed out his soul, the text saith it was "carried by angels into Abraham's bosom," Luke xvi. 23. And upon this account, Tertullian calls them *evocatores animarum*, the callers forth of souls. At the translation of Elijah, they appeared in the form of horses and chariots of fire, 2 Kings ii. 11. Horses and chariots are not only designed for conveyance, but for conveyance in state, and truly, it is no small honour to have such a noble convoy and guard to attend our souls to heaven.

Object. If it be demanded, *What need is there of their help or company? Cannot God by his immediate hand and power gather home the souls of his people to himself at death? He inspired them into our bodies without their help, and can receive them again when we expire them, without their aid.*

Sol. True, he can do so ; but it hath pleased him to appoint this method of our translation, not out of mere necessity, but bounty. Souls ascend not to God in the virtue of the angels wings, or arms, but of Christ's ascension. Had he not ascended as our head and representative, all the angels in heaven could not have brought our souls thither : He ascended by his own power, and we ascend by virtue of his ascension. It is therefore rather for state and *decorum*, than any absolute necessity, that they attend us in our ascension.

God will not only have his people brought home to him safely, but honourably : They shall come to their Father's house in a becoming equipage, as the children of a king. This puts honour upon our ascension-day ; that day is adorned by the attendance of such illustrious creatures upon us. It is no small honour which God herein designs for us, that creatures of greater dignity than ourselves, shall be sent from heaven to attend and wait upon us thither.

Yea, that our ascension-day, should, in this, resemble Christ's ascension, is an honour indeed. When he ascended, there were multitudes of these heavenly creatures to wait upon him, Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even " thousands of angels ; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the

“the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high,” &c. A cloud was prepared as a royal chariot, to carry up the king of glory to his princely pavilion; and then a royal guard of mighty angels to wait upon his chariot; if not for support, yet for the greater state and solemnity of their Lord’s ascension. And O what jubilations of blessed angels were heard that day in heaven! How was the whole city of God moved at his coming! The triumph is not ended to this day, no, nor ever shall.

Now, herein God greatly honours his people, that there shall be some resemblance and conformity betwixt their ascension and Christ’s: * Angels rejoice to attend those to heaven, who must be their fellow-citizens for ever in heaven! It is convenient also, that those who had the charge of us all our life, should attend us to our Father’s house at our death: In the one they finish their ministry; in the other they begin their more intimate society.

Moreover, the angels are they whom God will employ, to gather together his elect from the four winds of heaven, at the great day, Matth. xxiv. 31. And who more fit to attend their spirits to heaven singly, than those who must collect them into one body at last, and wait upon that collective body, when they shall be brought to Christ? Psal. lxxv. 14.

Object. *But the sight and presence of angels is exceeding awful and overwhelming to human nature: It will rather astonish and terrify, than refresh and cheer us, to find ourselves, all on a sudden, surrounded, and beset with such majestic creatures. We see what effects the appearance of an angel hath had upon good men in this world: “We shall die, (saith Manoah) for we have seen God,” Judges xiii. 22. So Eliphaz, “a spirit passed before my face; “the hair of my flesh stood up,” Job iv. 15.*

Sol. True, whilst our souls inhabit these mortal and sinful bodies, the appearance of angels is terrible to them, and cannot be otherwise, partly upon a *natural*, and partly upon a *moral* account. The dread of angels naturally falls upon our animal spirits: They shrink and tremble at the approach of spirits; not only the spirits of men, but of beasts, quail at it. A dog, or an ass is terrified at it, as well as a man, Numb. xxii. 25. The dread of spirits strikes the animal, or natural spirits primarily; and the mind, or rational soul by consent. There is also another cause of fear in man, upon the sight or presence of angels, viz. a consciousness of guilt. Wherever there is guilt, there will be fear, especially upon any extraordinary appearance of God to us, though it be but mediately by an angel.

* As they, (i. e. angels) served the head, in like manner do they serve the members. They rejoice to serve them on earth, whom they shall have afterwards for companions in heaven. *Gerhard.*

But when the soul is freed, both from flesh and sin, and shall enjoy itself in a nature, like to these pure and holy spirits, the dread of angels is then vanished, and the soul will take great content and satisfaction in their company and communion: The soul then finds itself a fit companion for them; looks upon them as its fellow-servants, for so they are, Rev. xix. 10. And the angels look upon the spirits of just men, not as inferiors, or underlings, but with great respect, as spirits, in some sense, nearer to Christ than themselves: So that henceforth no dread falls upon us from the presence of these excellent creatures; but each enjoyeth singular delight in each others society. And thus we see in what honourable and pleasing company the souls of the just go hence to their Father's house, and bosom.

Prop. 5. The soul is not so maimed and prejudiced by its separation from the body, but that it both can, and doth live, and act without it; and performs the acts of cogitation and volition, without the aid and ministry of the body.

I know it is objected by them that assert the soul's sleeping till the resurrection, that though its essence be not destroyed by death, yet its operations are obstructed by the want and absence of the body, its tool and instrument. And thus they form their objection.

Object. All that the soul understands, it understands by species: that is, the images of things which are first formed in the phantasy: As when we would conceive the nature of a house, a ship, a man, or a beast: we first form the image, or species thereof in our fancy, and then exercise our thoughts about it: But this depending upon bodily organs, and instruments, the separated soul can form no such images: It hath no such innate species of its own, but comes into the world an ablasta tabula, white paper; and being deprived by separation of the help of senses and phantasms, it consequently understands nothing.*

Thus the soul, in its state of separation, is represented to us as wounded in its powers and operations, to that degree, which seems to extinguish the very nature of it. But,

Sol. 1. We deny that the soul knows nothing now but by phantasms†, and images; for it knows itself, its own nature and powers, of which it cannot possibly feign, or form any image, or represen-

* There are three conditions requisite for the acts of the understanding. 1. The object, a being that is real and intelligible. 2. The phantasm, or sensible image lurking in the phantasy. 3. The intelligible image, which is a spiritual accident, representing to the understanding, in an ideal way, the material object that exists without the understanding.

† The understanding contemplates objects incorporeal and immaterial, such as God and intelligent beings. But these by no means affect the phantasy, for they are beyond the reach of corporeal powers. *Conimb. on the soul.* l. 5. c. 8. q. 8.

tation. What form, shape, or figure, can the fancy of a man cast his own soul into, to help him to understand its nature?

And what shall we say of its understanding during an ecstasy, or rapture? Doth the soul know nothing at such a time? Doth a dull torpor seize and benumb its intellectual powers? No; the understanding is never more bright, clear, apprehensive, and perfect, than when the body, in an ecstasy is laid aside, as to any use or assistance of the mind: The soul for that space uses not the body's assistance, as the very words *ecstasy* and *rapture* convince us.

2. * To understand by *species*, doth not agree to the soul naturally and necessarily, but by accident, as it is now in union with the body: Were it but once loosed from the body, it would understand better without them, than ever it did in the body by them. A man that is on horseback, must move according to the motion of the horse he rides; but if he were on foot, he then uses his own proper motion as he pleaseth; so here. But though we grant the soul doth in many cases now make use of phantasms, and that the agitation of the spirits, which are in the brain and heart, are conjunct with its acts of cogitation and intellection: Yet, as a searching † scholar well observes, the spirits are rather subjects than instruments of those actions; and the whole essence of those acts is antecedent to the motion of the spirits: As when we use a pen in writing, or a knife in cutting, there is an operation of the soul upon them, before there can be any operation by them: They act as they are first acted, and so do these bodily spirits. So that to speak properly, the body is bettered by the use the soul makes of it in these its noble actions; but the soul is not advantaged by being tied to such a body; it can do its own work without it; its operations follow its essence, not the body to which it is for a time united.

Upon the whole; it is much more absonous and difficult to conceive a stupified, benumbed, and unactive soul, whose very nature is to be active, lively, and always in motion, than it is to conceive a soul freed from the shackles and clogs of the body, acting freely according to its own nature. I wish the favourers of this opinion may take heed, lest it carry them farther than they intend, even to a denial of its existence and immortality, and turn them into downright *Somatists* or *Atheists*.

Proposition 6. *That the separated souls of the just having finished all their work of obedience on earth, and the Spirit having finished*

* For if this belongs not to the nature of the soul, but by accident agrees to it, namely from this, that it is tied to the body, as the Platonists affirm, then the question is easily solved. For the soul being loosed from the body, will return to its own nature. *Aquin. p. 1. Q. 8. Art. 1.*

† Howe's *Blessedness*, p. 174, 175.

all his work of sanctification upon them, they ascend to God, with all the habits of grace inherent in them; and all the comfortable improvements of their graces accompanying and following them.

This proposition is to be opened and confirmed in these four branches.

(1.) When a gracious soul is separated from the body, all its work of obedience in this world is finished. Therefore death is called the “finishing of our course,” Acts xx. 24. “The night when man works no more,” John ix. 4. “There is no working in the grave,” Eccl. ix. 10. for death dissolves the *compositum*, and removes the soul immediately to another world, where it can act for itself only, but not for others, as it was wont to do on earth. “I shall see man no more (saith Hezekiah) with the inhabitants of the world,” Isa. xxxviii. 11. That which was said of David’s death, is as true of every Christian, that “having served his generation according to the will of God, he fell asleep,” Acts xiii. 36.

I do not say this lower world receives no benefit at all by them after their death; for though they can speak no more, write no more, pray for, and instruct the inhabitants of this world no more, nor exhibit to them the beauty of religion in any new acts or examples of theirs (which is what I mean by saying *they have finished all their work of obedience on earth*); yet the benefit of what they did whilst in the body, still remains after they are gone: As the apostle speaks of Abel, Heb. xi. 4. “Who being dead, yet speaketh.” This way indeed abundance of service will be done for the souls of men upon earth, long after they are gone to heaven. And this should greatly quicken us to leave as much as we can behind us, for the good of posterity, that *after our decease* (as the apostle speaks, 2 Pet. i. 15.) they may have our words and examples in remembrance. But for any service to be done *de novo*, after death, it is not to be expected: We have accomplished, as a hireling, our day, and have not a stroke more to do.

(2.) As all our work of obedience is then finished by us, so at death all the work of God is finished by his Spirit upon us. The last hand is then put to all the preparatory work for glory, not a stroke more to be done upon it afterwards; which appears as well by the immediate succession of the life of glory, (whereof I shall speak in another proposition) as by the cessation of all sanctifying means and instruments, which are totally laid aside as things of no more use after this stroke is given; *Adepto, fine, cessant media*, means are useless when the end is attained. *There is no work* (saith Solomon) *in the grave*. How short soever the soul’s stay and abode in the body were, though it were regenerated one day, and separated the next, yet all is wrought upon it, which God ever in-

tended should be wrought in this world, and there is no preparation-work in the other world.

(3.) But though the soul leave all the means of grace behind it, yet it carries away with it to heaven all those habits of grace which were planted and improved in it in this world, by the blessing of the Spirit upon those means: Though it leave the ordinances, it loseth not the effects and fruits of them; though they cease, their effects still live. "The truth dwelleth in us, and shall be in us for ever," 1 John ii. 17. "The seed of God remaineth in us," 1 John iii. 9.

Common gifts fail at death; but saving grace sticks fast in the soul, and ascends with it into glory. Gracious habits are inseparable; glory doth not destroy, but perfect them: They are the soul's meetness for heaven, Col. i. 12. and therefore it shall not come into his presence, leaving its meetness behind it. In vain is all the work of the Spirit upon us in this world, if we carry it not along with us into that world, seeing all his works upon us in this life have a respect and relation to the life to come.

Look, therefore, as the same natural faculties and powers which the soul had (though it could not use them) in its imperfect body in the womb, came with it into this world, where they freely exerted themselves in the most noble actions of natural life; so the habits of grace, which, by regeneration, are here implanted in a weak and imperfect soul, go with it to glory, where they exert themselves in a more high and perfect way of acting than ever they did here below. The languishing spark of love is there a vehement flame; the faint, remiss and infrequent delight in God is there at a constant, ravishing and transporting height.

(4.) To conclude, As all implanted habits of grace ascend with the sanctified soul to heaven; (for the soul ascends not thither as a natural, but as a new creature) so all the effects, results, and sweet improvements of those graces which we gathered as the pleasant fruits of them on earth, these accompany and follow the soul into the other world also; "Their works follow them," Rev. xiv. 13. They go not before in the notion of merits, to make way for them, but they follow or accompany them as evidences and comfortable experiences. I doubt not, but the very remembrance of what passed betwixt God and the soul here, betwixt the day of its espousals to Christ, and its divorce from the body, will be one sweet ingredient in their blessedness and joy, when they shall be singing in the upper region the song of Moses and of the Lamb. They were never given to be lost, or left behind us. And thus you see with what a rich cargo the soul sails to the other world, though if it had no other, it would never drop anchor there.

Prop. 7. The souls of the just when separated from their bodies, do not wander up and down in this world, nor hover about the sepulchres where their bodies lie; nor are they detained in any purgatory, in order to their more perfect purification; nor do they fall asleep in a benumbed stupid state: but do forthwith pass into glory, and are immediately with the Lord.

When once the mind of man leaves the scripture guidance and direction, which is it to what the compass or pole-star is to a ship in the wide ocean, whither will it not wander? In what uncertainties will it not fluctuate? and upon what rocks and quick-sands must it inevitably be cast? Many have been the foolish and groundless conceits and fancies of men about the receptacles of departed souls.

1. Some have assigned them a restless, wandering life, now here, now there, without any certain dwelling-place any where. The only grounds for this fancy, is the frequent apparitions of the ghost or spirits of the dead, whereof many instances are given; and who is there that is a stranger to such stories? Now, if departed souls were fixed any where, this world would be quiet and free from such disturbances.

I make no doubt, but very many of these stories, have been the industrious fictions and devices of wicked and superstitious votaries, to gain reputation to their way, speaking lies in hypocrisy, to draw disciples after them. And many others have been the tricks and impostures of Satan himself, to shake the credit of the saints' rest in heaven, and the imprisonment of ungodly souls in hell, as will more fully appear when I come to speak to that question more particularly.

2. Others think, when they are loosed from the body at death, they hover about the graves and solitary places where their bodies lie, as willing, seeing they can dwell no longer in them, to abide as near them as they can; just as the surviving turtle keeps near the place where his mate died, and may be heard mourning for a long time about that part of the wood. This opinion seeks countenance and protection from that law, Deut. xviii. 10, 11. which prohibits men to consult with the dead; of which restraint there had been no need or use, if it had not been practised; and such practices had never been continued, if departed souls had not frequented those places, and given answers to their questions. But what I said before of Satan's impostures, is enough for the present to return to this also.

3. The Papists send them immediately to purgatory, in order to their more thorough purification. This purgatory * Bellarmine

* Bellarmin. lib. 2. de Purg. cap. 6.

thus describes: "It is a certain place wherein, as in a prison, souls are purged after this life, that were not fully purged here, to the intent they may enter pure into heaven; and though the church (saith he) hath not defined the place, yet the schoolmen say, it is in the bowels of the earth, and upon the borders of hell." And, to countenance this profitable fable, divers scriptures are by them abused and misapplied, as 1 Cor. iii. 15. Matth. v. 25, 26. 1 Pet. iii. 19. All which have been fully rescued out of their hands, and abundantly vindicated by our divines, who have proved, God never kindled that fire to purify souls; but the *Pope* to warm his own *kitchen*.

4. Another sort there are, who affirm, they neither wander about this world, nor go into purgatory, but are cast by death into a swoon or sleep; remaining in a kind of benumbed condition, till the resurrection of the body. This was the error of Beryllus; and Irenæus seems to border too near upon it, when he saith, * "The souls of disciples shall go to an invisible place appointed for them of God, and shall there tarry till the resurrection, waiting for that time: and then receiving their bodies, and perfectly, i. e. corporeally, rising again, as Christ did, they shall come to the sight of God."

All these mistakes will fall together by one stroke; for if it evidently appear (as I hope it will) that the spirits of the just are immediately taken to God, and do converse with, and enjoy him in heaven; then all these fancies vanish, without any more labour about them particularly. Now there are four considerations which to me put the immediate glorification of the departed souls of believers beyond all rational doubt.

1. Heaven is as ready and fit to receive them as ever it shall be.
2. They are as ready and fit for heaven as ever they will be.
3. The scripture is plainly for it. And,
4. There is nothing in reason against it.

1. Heaven is as fit and ready to receive them when they die, as ever it shall be. Heaven is prepared for believers, (1.) By the purpose and decree of God, and so far it was prepared from the foundation of the world, Matth. xxv. 34. (2.) By the death of Christ, whose blood made the purchase of it for believers, and so meritoriously opened the gates thereof, which our sins had barred up against us, Heb. x. 19, 20. (3.) By the ascension of Christ into that holy place, as our representative and fore-runner, John xiv.

* *Discipulorum animæ abibunt in invisibilem locum, definitum eis a Deo; et ibi usque ad resurrectionem comorabuntur, sustinentes resurrectionem; post, recipientes corpora, et perfecte resurgentes, i. e. corporaliter, quemadmodum et Dominus resurrexit, sic venient ad conspectum Dei.* Iren. lib. 5.

2. This is all that is necessary to be done for the preparation of heaven; and all this is done, as much as ever God designed should be done to it, in order to its preparation for our souls; so that no delay can be upon that account.

2. The departed souls of believers are as ready for heaven as ever they will be: for there is no preparation-work to be done by them, or upon them after death, John ix. 3. Eccl. ix. 10. Their justification was complete before death, and now their sanctification is so too; sin which came in by the union, going out at the separation of their souls and bodies. They are *spirits made perfect*.

3. The scripture is plain and full for their immediate glorification; Luke xxiii. 43. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke xvi. 22. "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Phil. i. 21. "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is far better." The scripture speaks but of two ways by which souls see and enjoy God, viz. faith and sight; the one imperfect, suited to this life; the other perfect, fitted for the life to come; and this immediately succeeding that, for the imperfect is done away, by the coming of that which is perfect, as the twilight is done away, by the advancing of the perfect day.

4. To conclude; there is nothing in reason lying in bar to it. It hath been proved before, that the soul in its unembodied state is capable to enjoy blessedness, and can perform its acts of intellection, volition, &c. not only as well, but much better than it did, when embodied. I conclude therefore, that seeing heaven is already as much prepared for believers as it need be, or can be; and they as much prepared from the time of their dissolution, as ever they shall be; the scriptures also being so plain for it, and no bar in reason against it; all the forementioned opinions are but the dreams and fancies of men, who have forsaken their scripture-guide; and this remains an unshaken truth, that the spirits of the just go immediately to glory from the time of their separation.

Prop. 8. At the time of a gracious soul's separation from the body, it is instantly and perfectly freed from sin, which, till that time, dwelt in it from its beginning; but thenceforth shall do so no more.

Immediately upon their separation from the body, they are *spirits made perfect*, as my text stiles them; and that epithet **perfect* could never suit them, if there were any remaining root or habit of corruption in them.

The time, yea, the set time is now come, to put an end to all the

* Therefore he calls them consecrated or perfect, because they are no more subject to the infirmities of the flesh, the flesh itself being laid aside. *Marlorate on the place.*

dolorous groans of gracious souls, upon the account of indwelling sin. What the angel said to Joshua, Zech. iii. 3, 4. the same doth God say of every upright soul, at the time of its separation. "Take away the filthy garments from him, and clothe him with change of raiment, and set a fair mitre upon his head." Thus the garments spotted with the flesh, are taken away with the body of flesh, and the pure unchangeable robes of perfect holiness, clothed upon the soul, in which it appears without fault before the throne of God, Rev. xiv. 5.

There is a threefold burdensome evil in sin under which all regenerated souls groan in this life; *viz.* (1.) The guilt; (2.) The filth; (3.) The inherence of it in their nature. And there is a threefold remedy or cure of these evils: the guilt of sin is remedied by justification; the filth of sin is inchoatively healed by sanctification: the inherence of sin is totally eradicated by glorification; For as it entered into our persons by the union of our souls and bodies, so it is perfectly cast out by their disunion or separation at death: the last stroke is then given to the work of sanctification, and the last is evermore the perfecting stroke: sin languished under imperfect sanctification in the time of life, but it gives up the ghost under perfected sanctification, from and after death: sanctification gave it its deadly wound, but glorification its final abolition. For it is with our sins, after regeneration, as it was with that beast mentioned, Dan. vii. 12. which, though it was "wounded with a deadly wound, yet its life was prolonged for a season." And this is the appointed season for its expiration. For if at their dissolution they are immediately received into glory (as it hath been proved they are, in our seventh proposition) they must necessarily be freed from sin, immediately upon their dissolution; because, nothing that is unclean can enter into that pure and holy place; they must be, as the text truly represents them, "the spirits of just men made perfect."

For, if so great holiness and purity be required in all that draw nigh to God upon earth, as you read, Psal. xciii. 5. certainly those who are admitted immediately to his throne, must be without fault, according to Rev. vii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

When a compounded being comes to be dissolved, each part returns to its own principle; so it is here: the spirit of man, and all the grace that is in it, came from God; and to him they return at death, and are perfected in him and by him: the flesh returns to earth, whence it came, and all that body of sin is destroyed with it; neither the one or the other shall be a snare or clog to the soul any more. A Christian in this world, is but gold in the ore; at death, the pure gold is melted out and separated, and the dross cast away and consumed.

Hence three consecratories offer themselves to us.

Consecratory 1. That a believer's life and warfare end together.

We lay not down our weapons of war, till we lie down in the dust, 2 Tim. iv. 7. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." The course and conflict you see are finished together: though they commence from different terms, yet they always terminate together. Grace and sin have each acted its part upon the stage of time, and the victory hovered doubtfully, sometimes over sin, and sometimes over grace; but now the war is ended, and the quarrel decided, grace keeps its ground, and sin is finally vanquished. Now, and never before, the gracious soul stands triumphing like that noble *Argive*,

In vocuo solus sessor, plausorque theatra.

not an enemy left to renew the combat; the war is ended, and with it all the fears and sorrows of the saints.

Consecratory 2. Separated souls become impeccable, or free from all the hazard of sin, from the time of their separation: for, there being no root of sin now inherent in them, consequently no temptation to sin can fasten upon them; all temptations have their handles in the corruptions of our natures: did not Satan find matter prepared within us, dry tinder fitted to his hand, he might strike in temptations long enough, before one of his hellish sparks could catch or fasten upon us. Temptations are grievous exercises to believers; they are darts, Eph. vi. 16. they are thorns, 2 Cor. xii. 7. But the separate soul is out of gunshot; it were as good discharge an arrow at the body of the sun, as a temptation at a translated soul.

Consecratory 3. Separated souls are more lovely companions, and their converses more sweet and delightful than ever they were in this world. It was their corruption which spoiled their communion on earth; and it is their spotless holiness which makes it incomparably pleasant in heaven. The best and loveliest saints have something in them which is distasteful; even sweet briars and holy thistles have their offensive prickles: but when that which was so lovely on earth is made perfect in heaven, and nothing of that remains in heaven, which was so offensive in them on earth; O what blessed, delightful companions will they be! O blessed society! O most desirable companions! let my soul for ever be united to their assembly. I love them under their corruptions; but how shall my soul be knit to them, when it seeth them shining in their perfections?

Proposition 9. *The pleasure and delights of the separate spirits of the just, are incomparably greater and sweeter than those they did, or at any time could experience in their bodily state.*

With what a pleasant face would death smile upon believers!

what roses would it raise in its pale cheeks, if this proposition were but well settled in our hearts by faith! And if we will not be wanting to ourselves, it may be firmly settled there, by these four considerations, which demonstrate it.

Consideration 1. *Whatsoever pleasure any man receives in this world, he receives it by means of his soul.* Even all corporeal and sensitive delights have no other relish and sweetness, but what the soul gives them, which is demonstrable by this; that if a man be placed amidst all the pleasing objects and circumstances in the world, if he were in that centre, where he might have the confluence of all the delights of this world; yet if the spirit be wounded, there is no more relish or savour in them, than in the white of an egg. What pleasure had Spira in his liberty, estate, wife and children; these things were indeed proposed and urged, again and again, to relieve him? but instead of pleasure they became his horror: let but the mind be wounded, and all the mirth is marred: one touch from God upon the spirit, destroys all the joy of this world. Nay,

Let but the intention of the mind be strongly carried another way, and for that time, (though there be no guilt or wound upon the soul) the most pleasant enjoyments lose their pleasure. What delight, think you, would bags of gold, sumptuous feasts, or exquisite melody have afforded to Archimedes, when he was wholly intent upon his mathematical lines? By this then it is evident, that the rise of all pleasure is in the mind, and the most agreeable and pleasing objects and enjoyments signify nothing without it: the mind must be found in itself, and at leisure to attend them, or we can have no pleasure from them.

Consid. 2. *Of all natural pleasures in the world, intellectual pleasures are found to be most agreeable, and connatural to the soul of man.*

The more refined and remote from sense any pleasure is, the more grateful is it to the soul; those are certainly the sweetest delights that spring out of the mind. A drop of intellectual pleasure is valued by a generous and well-tempered soul, above the whole ocean of impure joys, which come to it sophisticated and tinged through the muddy channels of sense.

No sensualists in the world can extract such pleasure out of gold, silver, meat and drink; as a searching and contemplating mind finds in the discovery of truth. * Heinsius, that learned library-keeper of Leyden, professed, "That when he had shut up himself among so many illustrious souls, he seemed to sit down there, as in the very lap of eternity, and heartily pitied the rich and covetous worldlings, that were strangers to his delights."

* *In qua simulac pedem posui, foribus pessulum obdo, et in ipso æternitatis gremio, inter tot illustres animas sedem mihi sumo, cum ingenti quidem animo: ut subinde magnatum misereor, qui hanc felicitatem ignorant.* Epist. prin.

And when * Cardan tells us, "That to know the secrets of nature, and the order of the universe, hath greater pleasure and sweetness in it, than the thought of man can fathom, or any mortal hope for." "Yea, such beauties, saith † Plutarch, there are in the study of the *mathematics*, that it were unworthy to compare such baubles and bubbles, as riches with it." "Yea, saith another, it were a sweet thing to be extinguished in those studies ‡."

Julius Scaliger was so delighted with poetry, that he protested he had rather be the author of twelve verses in Lucan, than emperor of Germany. And to say truth, "there is a kind of enchanting sweetness in those intellectual pleasures and feasts of the mind; such a delight as hardly suffers the mind to be pulled away from them §." These pleasures have a finer edge, a higher gust, a more agreeable savour to the mind than sensitive ones; as approaching much nearer to the nature of the soul, which is spiritual.

Consid. 3. And as intellectual pleasures do as far exceed all sensitive pleasures, as those which are proper to a man, do those which we have in common with beasts: *So divine pleasures do again much more surmount intellectual ones.* For what compare is there betwixt those joys which surprize a scholar in the discovery of the secrets of nature, and those that overwhelm and swallow up the Christian in the discovery of the glorious mysteries of redemption by Christ, and his own personal interest therein.

To solve the *phænomena* of nature is pleasant, but to solve all the difficulties about our title to Christ and his covenant, that is ravishing. Archimedes' *εὕρηκα*, "I have found it," was but the frisk, or skip of a boy, to that rapturous voice of the spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." These are entertainments for angels, 1 Pet. i. 11. a short salvation for the season it is felt and tasted, 1 Pet. i. 8. after these delights, all others are insipid and dry. And yet one step higher.

Consid. 4. *All that divine pleasure, which ever the holiest and devoutest soul enjoyed in the body, is but a sip or prelibation, compared with those full draughts it hath in the unembodied state.*

Whilst it is embodied, it rejoiceth in the earnest and pledges of joy; but when it is unembodied, it receives the full sum; Psal. xvi.

* *Arcana cæli, naturæ secreta, ordinem universi scire; majoris felicitatis et dulcedinis est, quam cogitatione quis assequi potest, aut mortalis sperare.*

† *Talis est mathematicum pulchritudo, ut his indignum sit divitiarum phaleras istas et bullas et puerilia spectacula comparari.*

‡ *Dulce est extinguere mathematicarum artium studio.* Leon. Digg.

§ *Talis suavitas, ut cum quis ea degustaverit, quasi Circeis poculis captus, non potest unquam ab illis divelli.* Cardan.

11. "In thy presence is fulness of joy." This fulness of joy is not to be expected, because not to be supported in this world. The joy of heaven would quickly make the hoops of nature fly. When a good man had but a little more than ordinary joy of the Lord poured into his soul, he was heard to cry, Hold, Lord, hold ! thy poor creature is but a clay vessel, and can hold no more ! These pleasures the soul hath in the body, are of the same kind indeed with those in heaven, but are exceeding short of them in divers other respects.

1. The spiritual pleasures the soul hath in the body, are but by reflection ; but those it enjoys out of the body, are by immediate *intuition*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. now in a glass, then face to face.

The pleasures it now hath, though they be of a divine nature, yet they are relished by the vitiated appetite of a sick and distempered soul ; the embodied soul is diseased and sickly, it hath many distempers hanging about it. Now we know the most pleasant things lose much of their pleasure to a sick man ; the separate soul is made perfect, thoroughly cured of all diseases, restored to its perfect health ; and consequently, divine pleasures must needs have a higher gust and relish in heaven, than ever they had on earth.

3. The pleasures of a gracious soul on earth are but rare and seldom, meeting with many and long interruptions. And many of them occasioned by the body, which often calls down the soul to attend its necessities, and converse with things of a far different nature ; but from these, and all other ungrateful and prejudicial avocations, the separated soul is discharged, and set free ; so that its whole eternity is spent in the highest delights.

4. The highest pleasures of a gracious soul in the body, are but the pleasures of an uncentered soul, which is still gravitating and striving forward, and consequently can be but low and very imperfect, in comparison with those it enjoys, when it is centered and fixed in its everlasting rest. They differ as the shadow of the labourer, for an hour in the day, from his rest in his bed, when his work is ended.

To conclude ; the pleasures it hath here, are but the pleasures of hope and expectation, which cannot bear any proportion to those of sight and full fruition. O see the advantages of an unbodied state !

Prop. 10. That gracious souls, separate from the body, do attain to the perfection of knowledge, with more ease than they attained any small degree of knowledge whilst they dwelt in the body.

Great are the inconveniences, and prejudices, under which souls labour, in their pursuits after knowledge in this life, *Veritatis in puteo*, Truth lies deep. And it is hard, even with much labour,

pains, and study, to pump up one clear notion; for the soul cannot now act as it would, but is fain to act as it can, according to the limitations and permissions of the body, to which it is confined. By heedful observations, and painful researches it is forced to deduce one thing from another, and is too often deceived and imposed upon by such tedious and manifold connections.

Beside, truth is now forced, in compliance with our weakness, and distance from the fountain, to descend from heaven under vails*, shadows, and umbrages, thereby to contract some kind of affinity with our fancies and exterior senses first, that so it may with more advantage transmit itself to our understanding. It must come under some veil or other to us, whilst we are veiled with mortality, because the soul cannot behold it with its native lustre, nor converse otherwise with it.

And hence it was that Augustine made his rational conjecture, Why men used to be so much delighted with metaphors, because they are so much proportioned to our senses, with which our reason in this embodied state, hath contracted such an intimacy and familiarity: But when the soul lays aside its veil of flesh, truth also puts off her veil, and shews the soul her naked, beautiful, and ravishing face; it henceforth beholds all truth in God, the fountain of truth. There are five ways by which men attain the knowledge of God, say the schools, four of which the soul makes use of in this world; but the fifth, which is the most perfect, is reserved for the separate state. Men discern God here,

(1.) *In vestigio*, By his footsteps in the works of creation. God hath imprest the marks of his wisdom and power upon the creatures, by which impressions we discern that God hath been there. Thus the very Heathens arrive to some knowledge of a God, Rom. i. 20. Acts xvii. 24, 27.

(2.) *In umbra*, By his shadow: If you see the shadow of a man you guess at his stature and dimensions thereby. Thus Christ made some discovery of himself to the world, in the *Mosaical* ceremonies, and ancient types and umbrages, Heb. x. 1.

(3.) *In speculo*, In a glass: This gives us a much clearer representation of a person, than either his *footsteps* or *shadow* could: this is an imperfect or darker vision of his face, by way of reflection. And thus God is seen in his word and ordinances, wherein, "as in a glass, we behold the glory of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18.

(4.) *In Filio*, in his own Son, who is the living image and express character of his Father. Thus we sometimes see a child so

* The light from above never descends without a veil: for it is impossible that divine light could otherwise shine to us, unless it be covered with a variety of sacred shadowings. *Dionys. Arcop. de celest. Hier. c. 1.*

lively representing his father in speech, gate, gesture, and every lineament of his face, that we may say,

—*Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat*;—

“Just so his father spake, so he went, and just such a one he was.”

Thus we know God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. who is the express image of his Father, Heb. i. 3. and John xiv. 9. This is the highest way of attaining the knowledge of God in this life. But then, in the unbodied state, we see him,

(5.) *Face to face*, with a direct vision. This is to *see him as he is*. The believer is a candidate for this degree now, but cannot be invested with it, till he be divested from this body of flesh. Yet the soul, when unbodied, and made perfect, attaineth not to a comprehensive knowledge of God, for it will still remain a finite being, and so cannot comprehend that which is infinite. That question, Job xi. 7. “Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” may be put to the highest graduate in heaven. And yet,

1. To see God face to face, and know him as he is, will be a knowledge of the divine essence itself. To see the divine essence, is to see God as he is; i. e. to see him so perfectly and fully, that the understanding can proceed no farther in point of knowledge, concerning that great question, *What is God?* Thus no man hath seen or can see God in this world. Even Moses himself could not see God, Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19, 20. But the spirits of the just made perfect, have satisfying apprehensions, though not perfect comprehensions of the Divine essence.

2. In this light they clearly discern those deep mysteries which they here racked their thoughts upon, but could not penetrate in this life. There they will know what is to be known of the union of the two natures in the wonderful person of our Emmanuel; and the manner of the subsistence of each person, in the most glorious and undivided Godhead, John xiv. 20. The several attributes of God will then be unfolded to our understandings; for his essence and attributes are not two things, Rev. iv. 8, 9, 10, 11. Oh! what a ravishing sight will this be!

The mysteries of the scriptures and providences of God will be no mysteries then: Curiosity itself will be there satisfied.

3. This immediate knowledge and sight of God face to face, will be infinitely more sweet, and ravishingly pleasant than any, or all the views we had of him here by faith ever were, or possibly could be. There is a joy unspeakable in the visions of faith, 1 Pet. i. 8. but it comes far short of the facial vision. Who can tell the full importance of that one text, Rev. xxii. 4. “The throne of the Lamb shall be in it, and they shall see his face?” Oh! for such a heaven (said one) as to get one glimpse of that lovely face! Earth cannot bear such sights. This light overwhelms, and confounds

the inadequate faculties of imperfect and embodied souls. But there is *lumen confortans*, a cheering, strengthening, pleasant light, as the light of *the morning star*, Rev. ii. 28.

4. This sight of God will be appropriative and applicative. We there see him as our own God and portion. Without a clear interest in him, the sight of him could never be beatifical and satisfying. Sight without interest is like the light of a glow-worm, light without heat. All doubts and objections are solved and answered in the first sight of this blessed face.

5. To conclude: This perfect, and most comfortable knowledge, is attained without labour by the separate soul. Here every degree of knowledge was with the price of much pains. How many weary hours and aching heads did the acquisition of a little knowledge stand us in! But then it flows in upon the soul easily. It was the saying of a great usurer, *I once took much pains to get a little*, (meaning the first stock) *but now I get much without any pains at all*. Oh lovely state of separation! That body which interposed, clogged, and clouded the willing and capable spirit, being drawn aside (as a curtain) by death, the light of glory now shines upon it, and round about it, without any interception, or let.

Prop. 11. The separated souls of the just do live in a more high and excellent way of communion with God, in his temple-worship in heaven, than ever they did in the sweetest gospel-ordinances, and most spiritual duties, in which they conversed with him here on earth.

That saints on earth have real communion with God, and that this communion is the joy of their hearts, the life of their life, and their relief under all pressures and troubles in this life, is a truth so firmly sealed upon their hearts by experience, as well as clearly revealed in the word, that there can remain no doubt about it, among those that have any saving acquaintance with the life and power of religion.

This communion with God is of that precious value with believers, that it unspeakably endears all those duties and ordinances to them, which, as means and instruments are useful to maintain it.

At death, the people of God part with all those precious ordinances and duties, they being only designed for, and fitted to the present state of imperfection, Eph. iv. 12, 13. but not at all to their loss, no more than it is to his that loses the light of his candle by the rising of the sun. A candle, a star is comfortable in the night; but useless when the sun is up, and in its meridian glory. Christian, pray much, hear much, and be as much as thou canst among the ordinances of God, and duties of religion: For, the time is at hand that you shall serve, and wait on God no more this way.

But yet think not your souls shall be discharged from all worship and service of God when you die: No, you will find heaven to be a temple built for worship, and the worship there to be much transcendent to all that in which you were here employed. The sanctuary was a pattern of heaven in this very respect, Heb. ix. 23. And, on this very account, it is called *Sion* in my text, and the *heavenly Jerusalem*; as denoting a church state, and the spiritual worship there performed by the spirits of just men made perfect.

Some help we may have to understand the nature thereof, by comparing it with that worship and service which we perform to God here in this state of imperfection, and by considering the agreements and disagreements betwixt them. In this they agree, that the worship above and below are both addressed and directed to one and the same object, Father, Son, and Spirit; all centers and terminates in God. They also agree in the general quality and common nature; they are both spiritual worship. But there are divers remarkable differences betwixt the one and the other, as will be manifest in the following collation.

1. All our worship on earth is performed and transacted by faith, as the instrument and means thereof, Heb. xi. 6. "He that cometh to God must believe," &c. In heaven, faith ceaseth, and sight takes place of it, 1 Cor. v. 7. There we see what here we only believe. There are now before us ordinances, scriptures, ministers, and the assemblies of saints in the places of worship: But if we have any communion with God, by, or among these, we must set ourselves to believe those things we see not. By realizing and applying invisible things, we here get sometimes, and with no small pains, a taste of heaven, and a transient glance of that glory. In this service our faith is put hard to it, it must work and fight at once; resolutely act whilst sense and reason stand by, contradicting and quarrelling with it. And if, with much ado, we get but one sensible touch of heaven upon our spirits, if we get a little spiritual warmth and melting of our affections towards God, we call that day a good day, and it is so indeed.

But in heaven all things are carried at a high rate, the joy of the Lord overflows us without any labour, or pain of ours to procure it.

We may say of it there, as the prophet speaks of the dew and showers upon the grass, "which tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men," Micah v. 7.

2. No grace is, or can be acted here, without the clog of a contrary corruption, Rom. vii. 21. "When I would do good, evil is present with me." Every beam of faith is presently darkened by a cloud of unbelief, Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." "We often read in the book of experience (saith

"* one) what an inconsistent fickle thing the heart is in duties : " Now it is with us, by and by it is fled away and gone ; we know " not where to find it : It is constant only in its inconstancy and " lubricity." There is iniquity in our most holy things, which needs pardon, Exod. xxviii. 38. Our best duties have enough in them to damn us, as well as our worst sins : But in that perfect state above, grace flows purely out of the soul, as beams do from the sun, or crystal streams from the purest fountain. No impure or imperfect acts proceed from spirits made perfect.

3. Here the graces of the saints are never, or very rarely acted in their highest and most intense degree. When they love God most fervently, there is some coldness in their love. Who comes up to the height of that rule, Mat. xxii. 37. " Thou shalt love the Lord " thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and all thy " strength?" When we meditate on God, it is not in the depth of our thoughts, without some wanderings and extravagancies ; it is very hard, if not impossible, for the soul to stand long in its full bent to God.

But in heaven it doth so, and will do so for ever, without any relaxation or remission of its fervour. Christ, among the saints and angels in heaven, is as a mighty load-stone cast in among many needles, which leap to him, and fix themselves inseparably upon him. They all act in glory as the fire doth here, to the utmost of their power and ability. There is no note lower than " Glory to God in the highest."

(4.) The most spiritual souls on earth, who live most with God, have, and must have their daily and frequent intermissions. The necessities of the body, as well as the defectiveness of their graces, require, and necessitate it to be so. Our hands with Moses will hang down and grow weary. Our affections will cool and fall, do what we can.

But as the spirits of just men made perfect know no remissions in the degree, so neither any intermissions in the acting of their grace : " They shall serve him day and night in his temple," Rev. vii. 15. You that would purchase the continuance of your spiritual comforts but for a day, with all that you have in this world, will there enjoy them at full, without any intermitting, through eternity.

5. If the best hearts on earth be at any time more than ordinarily enlarged in spiritual comforts, they need presently some humbling providence to hide pride from their eyes. Even Paul

* *Sæpe in libro experientiae legimus quomodo a corde nostro relinquimur : Nunc est nobiscum, nunc alibi ; nunc evolat, nunc recurrit : in sola lubricitate manet.* Bern.

himself must have a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him. Bernard could never perform any duty with comfortable enlargement, but he seemed to hear his own heart whisper thus, *Bene fecisti, Bernarde, O well done, Bernard.*

But, in heaven the highest comforts are enjoyed in the deepest humility; and the entire glory is ascribed to God, without any unworthy defalcations. Rev. iv. 10. They put not the crown upon their own heads, but Christ's: They cast down their own crowns, and fall down at the feet of him that sitteth upon the throne.

6. All assemblies for worship in this world are mixed; they consist of regenerate and unregenerate, living and dead souls: This spoils the harmony, and allays the comfort of mutual communion. In a congregation consisting of a thousand persons, Ah! how few comparatively are there that are heartily concerned in the duty? But it is not so above. There are ten thousand times ten thousand, even thousands of thousands before the throne, loving, adoring, praising, and triumphing together, and not a jarring string in all their harps.

7. Here the worship of God is impure, mixed, and adulterated by the sinful additions and inventions of men. This gracious souls groan under as a heavy burden, sighing and praying for reformation; as knowing they can expect no more of God's presence, than there is of his order and institution in worship. But, above, all the worship is pure, the least pin in the heavenly *tabernacle* is according to the perfect pattern of the divine will.

8. We have here duties of divers kinds and natures to perform. All our time is not to be spent in loving, praising, and delighting in God; but we must turn ourselves also to searching, watching, and soul-humbling work. Sometimes we are called to get up our hearts to the highest praise, and then to humble them to the dust for sin and judgments; one while to sing his praises, and another while to sigh even to the breaking of our loins; But the spirits of just men made perfect, have but one kind of employment, *viz.* praising, loving, and delighting in God. There is no groaning, sighing, searching, or watching-work, in that state.

9. The most illuminated believers on earth have but dark and crude apprehensions of Christ's intercession-work in heaven, or of the way and manner in which it is there performed by him. We know indeed that our High-priest is for us entered within the vail, Heb. vi. 20. That he appears in that most holy place for us, Heb. ix. 24. That he there represents his sufferings for us to God, standing before him as a lamb that had been slain, Rev. v. 6. That he offers up our prayers with his incense to God, Rev. viii. 3.

But the immediate intuition of the whole performance, by the person of Christ in heaven, the beholding of him in his work there, with the smiles and honours, the delight and satisfaction of the Father in his person and work. Certainly, this must be a far different thing, and what must make more deep and suitable impressions upon our hearts than ever the most affecting view of them by faith at this distance, could do.

10. *In such ravishing sights and joyful ascriptions of glory to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore, all the separated spirits of the just are employed and wholly taken up in heaven, as they come in their several times thither; and will be so employed in that temple-service unto the end of the world, when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to his Father, and thenceforth God shall be all in all.*

The illustration and confirmation of this assertion we have in these two or three particulars.

(1.) That all the spirits of just men, from the beginning of the world, until Christ's ascension into heaven, did enter into heaven, as a place of rest, as a city prepared for them of God, Heb. xi. 16. and did enjoy blessedness and glory there. But yet there seems to be an alteration even in heaven itself, since the ascension of Christ into it, and such an alteration as advanceth the glory thereof both to angels and saints. "Heaven itself (saith one * who is now there) ' was not what it is, before the entrance of Christ into the sanctuary for the administration of his office. Neither the saints departed, nor the angels themselves, were participant of that glory ' which now they are. Neither yet doth this argue any defect in ' heaven, or the state thereof in its primitive constitution; For ' the perfection of any state hath respect unto that order of things ' which it is originally suited unto. Take all things in the order ' of the first creation, and in respect thereunto, heaven was perfect in glory from the beginning, &c.

' Whatever was their rest, refreshment, and blessedness; what- ' ever were their enjoyments of the presence of God, yet was there ' no throne of grace erected in heaven, no high-priest appearing ' before it, no lamb as it had been slain, no joint ascription of ' glory unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb ' for ever; † *God having ordained some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect*, Heb. xi. 40.

Now both the angels and saints in heaven, do behold Christ in his priestly office within that sanctuary; a sight never seen in heaven before.

* Dr. Owen's *Christologia*, p. 158—355.

† *Priusquam ad nostra tempora preventum est.* Camero.

(2.) This frame of heavenly worship will continue as it is unto the end of the world, and then another alteration will be made in the manner of his dispensatory kingdom; "For then he must deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; and then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all," as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28. So that as the present state of heaven is not, in all respects, what it was before Christ's ascension thither; so after the consummation of the mediatorial kingdom, and the gathering of all the elect into glory, it will not in all respects be what now it is.

Christ will never cease to be the immediate head of the whole glorified creation. God having gathered all the elect, both angels and men, unto a head in him, and he being the knot and centre of that collective body, the whole frame of the glorified church would be dissolved, should he lose his relation of a head to it. Yea, I doubt not but he will for ever continue to be the medium of communion betwixt God and his glorified church: God will still communicate himself to us through Christ, and our adherence, love, and delight, will still be through Christ; In a word, whatever change shall be made, the person of Christ shall still continue to be the eternal object of divine glory, praise, and worship, Rev. xxii. 4.

But when he shall have gathered home all his elect to glory, he will resign his present dispensatory * kingdom, and become subject (*as man, and as head of that body which he purchased*) to his Father himself, "that God may be all in all," as it is 1 Cor. xv. 28.

(1.) *All in all*, that is, all the saints shall be filled, and abundantly satisfied, in and from God alone; there shall be no emptiness, no want, no complaint: For, as there is water enough in one sea to fill all rivers, light enough in one sun to illuminate all the world; so all souls shall be eternally filled, satisfied and blessed in one God. Surely, there is enough in God for millions of souls. For if there be enough in God for all the angels, Mat. xviii. 10. yea, enough in God for Jesus Christ, Col. i. 19. there must be enough for all our souls. The capacity of angels is larger than ours; the capacity of Christ is larger than that of angels: He that fills them, can, and will therefore fill us, or be all in all to us.

(2.) *All in all*, that is, complete satisfaction to all the saints, in the absence of all other things, out of which they were wont to

* For if this dispensatory kingdom (of Christ) had never been delivered up, then he (viz. God) would never receive the full use of his natural kingdom. *Junius.*

suck some comfort and delight in this world. He will now be instead of all; eminently all without them. We shall suck no more sweetness out of food, sleep, relations, ordinances, &c. there will be no more need or use of them, than there is of candles in the sun-shine, Rev. xxii. 5.

(3.) *All in all*, that is, God only shall be loved, praised, and admired by all the saints; they shall love no creature out of God, but all in God, or rather God in them all. This is that blessed state to which all things tend, for which the angels and glorified souls in heaven long. Hence it is that there is joy in heaven upon the conversion of any poor sinner on earth; because thereby the body of Christ mystically advanceth towards its fulness and completeness, Luke xv. 10. No sooner is a poor soul struck by the word to the heart, and sent home crying, O sick! sick! sick of sin, and sick for Christ! but the news of it is quickly in heaven, and is matter of great joy there, because they wait as well as Christ for the time of consummation. To conclude, those that went first to heaven before Christ's ascension, were fully at rest in God, and blessed in his enjoyment, and yet upon Christ's ascension thither, their happiness was advanced: It is a new heaven, as it were, to feed their eyes upon the *man Christ Jesus* there. Those that now stand before the throne, ravished with the face of Christ, and ascribing glory to him for ever, are also in a most blessed state, and are filled with the joy of the Lord. And yet, two things still remain to be farther done, before they arrive at their consummation, viz. the restitution of their bodies, which yet lie in the dust, and the delivering up of the dispensatory kingdom, upon the coming in of the fullness of all their fellow saints; and after that no more alteration for ever, but they shall be both in soul and body for ever with the Lord. What tongue of man or angel can give us the complete emphasis of that word, *ever with the Lord?* or that, of God's being *all in all?* O what hath God prepared for them that love him!

Prop. 12. It pleaseth God at some times, even in this life, to give some men the foresight and foretaste of that blessedness, which holy separated souls do now enjoy, and themselves shall shortly enjoy with God in glory.

Specimens and earnest of heaven are no unknown things upon earth. As the grapes of Eshcol, so the joy of heaven may be tasted before we come thither, and these foresights and prelibations of heaven are either,

1. Extraordinary, or
2. Ordinary.

1. Extraordinary, for the way and manner; when the soul is either, (1.) Caught from the body for a short time in an ecstasy,

when in a visional way heavenly things are presented to it; or, (2.) When the bodily eye is elevated and strengthened above its natural vigour and ability, to behold the astonishing objects of the other world.

(1.) Of the first sort and rank was that famous rapture of Paul, mentioned 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. "I knew a man in Christ fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third heaven," &c. * It is questionable indeed, whether the soul of the apostle was really separated from his body, whilst he suffered that ecstasy, or whether his senses were only laid, as it were, asleep for that time; he himself could not determine the question, much less can any other. But whether so or no, this seems evident, that his senses were for that time utterly useless to him. If his body was not dead, it was all one as if it had been so, for any use his soul then made of it.

† In ecstasies, all the senses and powers are idle, except the "understanding." His soul, for that time, seemed to be disjointed from the body, much as a flame of fire, which you shall sometimes see to play and hover at a distance from the wood, and then catching the fuel again. Probably, this was that trance he fell into, in the temple, when he was praying, mentioned in Acts xxi. 17.

In this rapture his soul ascended above this world, it was caught up into paradise, into the third heaven, the place in which Christ's soul was after his death; and there he heard those *αἰνεῖται ῥημάτων*, unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter; For, alas! poor mortals cannot pronounce the *Shibboleth* of heaven. The heavenly inhabitants talk in no other dialect; but the language of heaven is not properly spoken by any but the inhabitants of heaven. Now Paul was not admitted into their society at that time, as he was at his death, but was only a spectator, a stander-by, as the angels are in the assemblies of the saints here on earth. But, O what a day was that day to his soul! It was as one of the days of heaven; no words could signify to another man what he felt, what he tasted in that hour. Such favours will not be indulged to many: he was a chosen vessel, and appointed to extraordinary sufferings for Christ, and it was necessary his supports and encouragements should be answerable.

* It does not appear with certainty, whether the soul of Paul was then separated from the body; seeing he himself owns his ignorance as to that matter: Hence we cannot determine what befel him as to abstraction from the senses, namely, whether the senses were extinct, his body being dead, through the separation of the soul: Or only sopited, the body not being dead. *Colleg. Conimbr. lib. 3. Art. 3. p. 512.*

† *In extasie fieri omnes potentias præter intellectum.* Abulen.

It was no less an extraordinary and wonderful vision, which Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John had *; such representations of God as overwhelmed them, and made nature faint under them; and no wonder, for if the eyes of creatures are so weak that they cannot directly behold such a glorious creature as the sun, how much less can they bear the glorious excellency and majesty of God?

(2.) And sometimes, without an ecstasy, representations of Christ, and the glory of heaven, have been made, and the very bodily eye fortified and elevated above its natural vigour and ability to behold him. Thus it was with Stephen at his martyrdom. Acts vii. 55, 56. "Who being full of the Holy Ghost, looked stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right-hand of God." This was not a sight of faith, but an extraordinary sight by the bodily eye, is evident, from its effect upon his outward man; it made his face to shine as the face of an angel.

2. There are also, beside this, ordinary, and more common foretastes of heaven, and the glory to come, with which many believers are favoured in this world; and such are those which come into the heart, upon the steady and more fixed views of the world to come, by faith, and the more raised spiritual actings of grace in duty. "Believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. χαρὰ θεοδόξασμενη, with a glorified joy, or a joy of the same kind and nature with the joy of glorified spirits, though in an inferior and allayed degree.

And yet, with the allowance of its allay and rebatement, it is like new wine put into old and crazy bottles, which is ready to make them fly, and would do so, should they be of any long continuance, "Stay me (saith the spouse) with flaggons, comfort me with apples, I am sick of love," Cant. ii. 5. The sickness was not the sickness of desire or of grief; of that she had complained before; but the sickness of love, i. e. she was ready to faint under the unsupportable weight of Christ's manifested and sealed love, not able to bear what she felt, pained with the love of Christ; and the desired cure speaks this to be her case, "Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples." As if she had said, Lord, support, and under-prop my soul, for it reels, staggers, and fails under the pressure and weight of thy love. Much like the case of a holy man, who cried out under the overwhelming sense of the love of Christ, shed abroad into his heart in prayer, Hold, Lord, hold, thy poor creature is a clay vessel, and can hold no more. Though these joys bring not the soul into a perfect *ecstasy*, they certainly

* Isa. vi. 1, 2. Ezek. i. 1. Dan. x. 8, 9. Rev. i. 17.

bring it as near as may be to it. Mr. * Fox tells us of one Giles of Brussels, a godly martyr, who in prison spent most of his time apart from the rest, in secret prayer; in which his soul was so ardent and intent, that he often forgot himself, and the time; and when he was called to meat, he neither saw nor heard those that stood by him, till he was lifted up by the arms: and then he would gladly speak to them, as one newly awaked out of a sweet sleep. These foretastes of heaven may, from the manner of their conveyance, be distinguished into,

1. Mediate. And

2. Immediate.

1. *Mediate*, in, and by the previous use and exercise of faith, heart-examination, &c. The Spirit of God concurring with, and blessing such duties as these, helps the soul by them to a sight of its interest in Christ, and the glory to come; which being gained, joy is no more under the soul's command. I have, with good assurance, this account of a minister, 'Who being alone in a journey, and willing to make the best improvement he could of that day's solitude, set himself to a close examination of the state of his soul, and then of the life to come, and the manner of its being, and living in heaven, in the views of all those things which are now pure objects of faith and hope. After a while, he perceived his thoughts begin to fix, and come closer to these great and astonishing things than was usual; and as his mind settled upon them, his affections began to rise with answerable liveliness and vigour.

'He therefore (whilst he was yet master of his own thoughts) lifted up his heart to God in a short ejaculation that God would so order it in his providence, that he might meet with no interruption from company, or any other accident in that journey; which was granted him: For, in all that day's journey, he neither met, overtook, or was overtaken by any. Thus going on his way, his thoughts began to swell, and rise higher and higher, like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, till at last they became an overflowing flood. Such was the intention of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and such the full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost a sight and sense of this world, and all the concerns thereof; and, for some hours, knew no more where he was, than if he had been in a deep sleep upon his bed. At last he began to perceive himself very faint, and almost choaked with blood, which running in abundance from his nose, had coloured his clothes and his horse from the shoulder to the hoof. He found himself almost spent, and nature to faint under the pres-

* Acts and Mon, p. 811.

‘ sure of joy unspeakable and insupportable; and at last, perceiv-
‘ ing a spring of water in his way, he, with some difficulty, alight-
‘ ed to cleanse and cool his face and hands, which were drenched
‘ in blood, tears, and sweat.

‘ By that spring he sat down and washed, earnestly desiring, if
‘ it were the pleasure of God, that it might be his parting place
‘ from this world: He said, death had the most amiable face in his
‘ eye, that ever he beheld, except the face of Jesus Christ, which
‘ made it so; and that he could not remember (though he believed
‘ he should die there) that he had one thought of his dear wife, or
‘ children, or any other earthly concernment.

‘ But having drank of that spring, his spirits revived, the blood
‘ stanch'd, and he mounted his horse again; and on he went in the
‘ same frame of spirit, till he had finished a journey of near thirty
‘ miles, and came at night to his inn, where, being come, he greatly
‘ admired how he came thither, that his horse, without his direc-
‘ tion had brought him thither, and that he fell not all that day,
‘ which passed not without several trances, of considerable conti-
‘ nuance.

‘ Being alighted, the innkeeper came to him, with some astonish-
‘ ment, (being acquainted with him formerly) O Sir, said he, what
‘ is the matter with you? You look like a dead man. Friend, re-
‘ plied he, I was never better in my life. Shew me my chamber,
‘ cause my cloak to be cleansed, burn me a little wine, and that is
‘ all I desire of you for the present. Accordingly it was done, and
‘ a supper sent up, which he could not touch; but requested of the
‘ people that they would not trouble or disturb him for that night.
‘ All this night passed without one wink of sleep, though he never
‘ had a sweeter night’s rest in all his life. Still, still the joy of the
‘ Lord overflowed him, and he seemed to be an inhabitant of the
‘ other world. The next morning being come, he was early on
‘ horseback again, fearing the divertisement in the inn might be-
‘ reave him of his joy; for he said it was now with him, as with a
‘ man that carries a rich treasure about him, who suspects every
‘ *passenger* to be a *thief*: But within a few hours he was sensible
‘ of the ebbing of the tide, and before night, though there was a
‘ heavenly serenity and sweet peace upon his spirit, which continued
‘ long with him, yet the transports of joy were over, and the fine
‘ edge of his delight blunted. He many years after called that day
‘ one of the days of heaven, and professed he understood more of
‘ the light of heaven by it, than by all the books he ever read, or
‘ discourses he ever had entertained about it.’ This was indeed,
an extraordinary fore-taste of heaven for degree, but it came in the
ordinary way and method of faith and meditation.

There are also immediate illapses of heavenly joy in the hearts of believers at some times; of which we may say as the prophet doth of the dew and rain, "that it tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men;" a surprising light and joy, like that, Cant. vi. 12. "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of "Aminadab."

There is a witness of the Spirit, distinct from that of water and blood, 1 John v. 8. that is, a witness, or sealing, which comes not in an argumentative way, by reasoning from either justification or sanctification, but seems to come immediately from the Spirit. I know both sorts of testimonies, how clear and sweet soever they are for the present, are liable afterwards to be called into question; but certainly, during the abode of them upon the soul, they are no less than *a short salvation*, a real participation of the joy of the Lord. And that which makes them so ravishing and transporting is,

(1.) The infinite weight with which the concerns of eternity lie upon the hearts and thoughts of the people of God; nothing lies so near to their spirits in all the world, as the matters of salvation do, and have still done ever since God thoroughly awakened them in their first effectual conviction. It is said of Luther, "* There "was such a strong impression of God upon his spirit, in his first "conviction, that there was neither heat, nor blood, nor sense, "nor speech discernible in him." Though it rise to that height but in a few, yet it settles into a deep, serious, and most solemn sense and solicitude in all. This heightens the joy.

(2.) The restlessness of the soul, whilst matters of salvation hang in a dubious suspense, must needs proportionably overflow it with joy, when God shall clear it. It was the saying of one, and is the sense of many more, "I have borne (said she) seven children, and they have all cost me dear; yet could I be well content to bear them all over again, for one glimpse of the love of God to my soul." This heightens the joy above expression.

And now, having explained the substance of the doctrine in these twelve *propositions*, it remains, that, as a *mantissa*, or cast upon the whole, I farther clear what belongs to this subject, in the solution of several *queries* about the soul, in its unbodied and separated state; and though the nature of some of these *queries* may seem too curious, yet I shall labour to speak according to the rules of sobriety, and contain myself within the line of modesty, in what I shall speak about them. And the first is this;

Query 1. *Whether any notion or conception can be formed of a*

* *Nec calor, nec sanguis, nec sensus, nec vox supresset.* Ep. ad. Melanct.

separate soul; And if so, how we may be assisted duly to form it, and conceive of it?

Sol. 1. It must be acknowledged not only very difficult, but an impossible task, for a soul immersed in matter, and so unacquainted with its own nature and powers, as it is in its embodied state, to gain a perfect, clear, and adequate conception of what it shall be in the world to come. Expect not then a perfect image, much less any magnificent draught of this excellent creature; this would be the same thing, as to go about to paint the sun in its glory, motions, and influences with a pencil. I shall think I have done enough, if I can but give you any unbrage, or faint representation of this sublime and spiritual being, and the manner of its subsisting and acting out of the body. For, seeing it is by nature invisible, and in most of its actions (whilst it is in the state of composition) it makes the same use of the body and natural spirits, that a scribe doth of his pen and ink, without which he cannot decypher the characters which are formed in his fancy; it must needs be difficult to conceive how it subsists and acts in a separate state.

Sol. 2. But though we acknowledge it to be a great difficulty to trace it beyond the limits of this world, though we perceive nothing to depart from the body at the instant of its expiration, but a puff of breath which vanishes like smoke into the air: and though atheistical* wits daringly pronounce an immaterial substance to be a mere jargon, a contradiction in *terminis*; which, being joined together, destroy one another: yet all this doth not make the notion of a separate soul impossible, much less undermine its existence in its unbodied and lonely state; the scriptures having so abundantly obviated all these atheistical suggestions by so many plain discoveries of the happiness of some, and misery of others after this life; yea, my text answers us, that death is so far from destroying or annihilating, that it perfects the spirits of the just.

Sol. 3. There can be no more difficulty in conceiving of a separate soul, than there is in conceiving of an angel. For it is certain, that a separated soul, and an angel, are the liveliest and clearest representations of each other in the whole number of created beings†. Some make the difference betwixt them little more than of a sword in the scabbard, from one that is naked. A soul is but a *genius* in the body, and a *genius* (or angel) is a soul out of the body. An angel (saith another, is a complete and perfect soul, a soul an imperfect and incomplete angel.

The separate soul doth not become an angel by putting off the

* Hobb's *Leviathan*, chap. xxxvi.

† Dr. More's immortality of the soul, l. 2. c. 17. § 4, et 8. *Bell. de Ascen. mentis*:

body ; they are, and still will be divers species : but in this they agree, that in their common nature they are both spirits, that is, immaterial substances, endued with understanding, will, and active powers. And I know not why the one should not be as intelligible as the other ; or if there be any advantage, the soul certainly must have it, seeing our acquaintance with souls is much more intimate than with angels. Angels indeed have larger capacities, and have no natural inclination to be embodied as souls have ; but their common nature, as they are spirits are the same : and if we can conceive of one we may also of the other.

Sol. 4. But the difficulty seems to lie in this, how the soul can subsist alone without a body ; and how the habits of grace, which were infused into it in this life by sanctification, do inhere in it, or can be reduced into act by it, when it hath no bodily organs to work by.

As to the first, there is no difficulty at all, if we once rightly apprehend what is meant, when we call it a spiritual substance ; that is, a being by itself, independent upon any other creature as to its existence, as was opened before : the soul depends not for its life upon the body, but the body upon the soul. It is the same sword when it is drawn, as it was when sheathed in its scabbard ; the soul is as much itself, when separated from the body, as it was when united with it ; its being is independent on it, it can live and act in a body, and it can do so without it ; for it is a distinct being from its body ; a substantial being itself. And,

Sol. 5. As for the habits of grace which accompany it to heaven, it would much facilitate our apprehensions of it, if we but compare acquired and infused habits with each other. It is true, they are of different natures and originals, but the soul is the subject of them both, and their inhesion and improvement is much after the same manner.

Take we then an acquired habit into consideration, which is nothing else but a permanent quality rendering the subject of it prompt and ready to perform a work with ease : suppose that of music or writing, and we shall find these habits to be safely lodged in the soul, as well when the body is laid into the deepest sleep, which is the image of death, as when it is awake and most active ; for they are both artists when asleep, and need learn no new rules to play or write when you awake them ; which shews the habits to be permanently rooted in their minds.

Infused habits of grace are as deeply rooted in the soul, yea, deeper than any acquired habits can be : for when knowledge and tongues shall be done away, love abideth, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. viz. after death, when the body is asleep in the grave.

Sol. 6. Add hereto, that these habits of grace are inseparably rooted or lodged in a subject, which is by nature a *spirit*, that is to say, an intelligent, active being, able to use its faculties of understanding *, will, and affections, and consequently, in their use, to reduce these habits of grace inherent in them, into act, without the help of the body: for to suppose otherwise, were to despirit it, and destroy the very nature of it.

Moreover, let the spirit, thus furnished with gracious habits, be now considered in separation from the body, in which state it enjoyeth and rejoiceth in a double privilege it never had before, viz. perfection both of itself, and of its graces, and the nearest access to God it is capable of, 2 Cor. v. 6. "Absent from the body, "and present with the Lord." It hath now no body to clog or cloud it, nor can it complain of distance from God as it did in this world. Oh! at what rate must we conceive the love and delight of a soul under these great advantages, to cast out their very spirits, as I may say, in their glorious activities and exercises! Well then, here you find 'a spirit naturally endued with understanding, will, 'and affections: in these faculties and affections, the habits of 'grace are permanently rooted, which therefore accompany it in its 'ascension to glory: an ability to use and exercise these faculties 'and graces, and that in a more excellent degree and manner, 'than it did or could in this world, the subject and habits inherent being now both made perfect: the clog of flesh knocked 'off, and all distance from God removed, by its coming home to 'him, even as near as the capacity of the soul can admit. Con- 'ceive such a spirit so qualified, now ranked in its proper order 'among innumerable other holy and blessed spirits, which sur- 'round the throne of God, beholding his face with infinite delect- 'ation, and acting all its powers and grace to the highest, in 'worshipping, praising, loving, and admiring him that sitteth 'on the throne, and the Lamb for evermore.' And then you have a true, though imperfect idea or notion of the spirit of a *just man made perfect*.

I will not here make use of the other glass to represent a damned soul, separate for a time from its body, and for ever from the Lord: that will be shewn you in its proper place.

Query 2. Whether there be any difference in the separation of gracious souls from their bodies? And if so, in what particulars doth the difference appear?

Sol. For the clear stating and satisfying this question, I will lay

* The understanding and will are the primary faculties of the soul, and therefore are called *inorganical*, because not fixed to any member of the body, as the sensitive appetite and loco-motive powers are to their proper organs. The soul therefore hath the free use and exercise of them in its separate state.

down some things negatively, and some things positively about it. On the negative part, I desire two things may be noted.

1. That there is no difference betwixt the separation of one gracious soul and another, in point of safety. Every regenerate soul is fully secured, in and by Jesus Christ, from the danger of perishing, and is out of hazard of the wrath to come.

This must needs be so, because all that are in Christ are equally justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, without difference, to them all; Rom. iii. 22. "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference:" by virtue whereof, they are all equally secured from wrath to come, one as well as another. As all that sailed with Paul, so all that die in Christ come safe to the shore of glory, and not one of them is lost. The sting of death smites none that are in Christ.

2. There is no difference betwixt the departing souls of just men, in respect of the supporting presence of God with them in that their hour of distress; that promise belongs to them all, Psal. xci. 15. "I will be with him in trouble," and so doth that, Heb. xiii. 5. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Their God is certainly with them all, to order the circumstances of their death, and all the occurrences of that day, to his glory, and their good. *Supports* I have, (said a good man in such an hour) though *suavities* I want; and so they have also who meet with the hardest conflict at death.

But notwithstanding their equality in these privileges, there is a great difference betwixt the departing souls of just men. And this difference is manifest both in the

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. External | } circumstances of their death. |
| 2. Internal | |

1. In the external circumstances of their death, all have not one and the same passage to heaven in all respects; for,

(1.) Some go thither by the ordinary road of a natural death from their beds, and the arms of lamenting friends, to the arms and bosom of Jesus Christ, but others swim through the Red-sea to Canaan: from a scaffold to the throne; from a gibbet or stake to their Father's house; from insulting enemies to their triumphant brethren, the palm-bearing multitude. This is a rough, but honourable way to glory.

(2.) Some lie long under the hand of death, before it dispatch them; it approaches them by slow and lingering paces, they feel every step of death distinctly as it comes on towards them; but others are favoured with a quick dispatch, a short passage from hence to glory. Hezekiah feared a pining sickness, Isa. xxviii. 10, 12. what he feared, many feel. O how many days, yea, weeks

and months, have many gracious souls dwelt upon the brink of the pit, crying, *How long, Lord, how long?*

The pains and agonies of death are more acute and sharp to some of God's people than to others: death is bitter in the most mild and gentle form of it. Two such dear and intimate friends as the soul and body are, cannot part without some tears, groans, or sighs; and those more deep and emphatical than the groans and sighs of the living use to be: but yet, comparatively speaking, the death of one, may be stiled sweet and easy to another's. Latimer and Ridley found it so, though burnt in the same flame.

In this respect all things come alike to all, and the same difference is found in the worst, as well as in the best men; some like sheep are laid in the grave, *Psal. xlix. 14.* others die in the bitterness of their soul, *Job xxi. 25.* and by this no man knows either love or hatred.

2. There are besides these, some remarkable internal differences in the dissolution of good men: the sum whereof is this.

1st. That some gracious souls have a very hard, strait, difficult entrance into heaven: just as it is with ships that sail by a very bare wind; all their art, care, and pains, will but just weather some head-land or cape: they steer fast by some dangerous rock or sand, and with a thousand fears and dangers, win their port at last. Saved they are, but yet to use the apostle's phrase, scarcely saved, or saved as by fire. And this difficulty ariseth to them from one, or all these causes.

(1.) It ordinarily ariseth from the weakness of their faith, which is in many souls, without either the light of evidence, or strength of reliance; neither able to dissolve their doubts nor steadily repose their hearts: and thus they die, much at the rate they lived, poor doubting, and cloudy, though gracious souls. They can neither speak much of the comfort of past experiences, nor of the present foretastes of heaven.

(2.) The violent assaults and batteries of temptations make the passage exceeding difficult to some. O the sharp conflicts and dreadful combats many poor souls endure upon a death-bed! O the charges of hypocrisy, fortified by neglects of duty, formality and by-ends in duty, falls into sin after conviction and humiliation, &c. all which the soul is apt to yield to, and admit the dreadful conclusion.

These are the last, and therefore oft-times the most violent conflicts. The malice of Satan will send them halting to heaven, if he cannot bar them out of it.

(3.) To conclude: The hiding of God's face, puts terror into the face of death, and makes a dying day, a dark and gloomy day.

All darkness disposes to fear, but none like inward darkness. They must like a ship in distress, venture into the harbour in the dark, though they see not their land-marks.

2dly, But others have the privilege of an εὐθανασία, easy death, a comfortable and sweet passage into glory, through the broad gate of assurance, 2 Pet. i. 11. even an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. What a difference doth God make, not only betwixt those that have grace, and those that have none, but betwixt gracious souls themselves in this matter: the things which usually make an easy passage to heaven are,

1. A pardon cleared, Isa. xxxiii. 24. The sense of pardon swallows up the sense of pain.

2. A heart weaned from this world, Heb. xi. 9, 13, 16. A heart loosed from the world, is a foot out of the snare. Mortified limbs are cut off from the body with little pain.

3. Fervent love to Christ, and longings to be with him, Phil. i. 23. He that loves Christ fervently, must needs loathe absence from Christ proportionably.

4. Purity and peace of conscience make a death-bed soft and easy. The strains and wounds of conscience, in the time of life, are so many thorns in our bed, or pillow, in the time of death, 1 John iii. 21. But integrity gives boldness.

5. The work of obedience faithfully finished, or a steady course of holiness throughout our life, is that which usually yields much peace and joy in death, Acts xx. 24.

6. But above all, the preference of the Comforter with us in that cloudy and dark day, turns it into one of the days of heaven, 1 Pet. iv. 14. And thus ye see, though all dying Christians be equally safe, and all supported, and carried through by the power of God; yet their farewells to the body are not alike cheerful. There are many external and internal circumstantial differences in the death of good men, as well as a substantial and essential difference betwixt all their deaths, and the death of a wicked man.

Query 3. *Whether any souls have notices and forewarnings given them by signs or predictions, in an extraordinary way of their approaching separation?*

The terms of this question need a little explanation. Let us therefore briefly consider what is meant by signs, what by predictions, and what by extraordinary signs and predictions.

“A sign * is that which represents something else to us than “that which is seen or heard.” And a sign of death is that which gives notice to our minds that our departure is at hand.

* *Signum est quod aliud repræsentat quam quod cernitur.*

“A prediction * is a forewarning of a person more plainly and expressly of any thing which is afterwards to fall out or come to “pass;” and a prediction of death is an express notice or message, informing us of our own, or of another’s death, to the end the mind may be actually disposed to an expectation thereof.

Of signs, some are ordinary and natural, some extraordinary and supernatural, or at least preternatural.

There are natural symptoms and prognostics of death which are common to most dying persons, and by which physicians inform themselves and others of the state of the sick. These are out of this question, we have nothing to do with them here; but I am enquiring after extraordinary signs and predictions by words or things forewarning us immediately, or by others, of our approaching death. The question is, Whether such intimations of death be at any time truly given unto men? or, Whether we are to take them for fabulous reports, and superstitious fancies?

For the negative, the following grounds are laid.

Reason 1. The sufficient ordinary provision God hath made in this case, renders all such extraordinary notices and intimations of our death needless: and be sure the most wise God doth nothing in vain. We have three standing, ordinary, and sufficient means to premonish us of our departure hence, viz. the scriptures, reason, and daily examples of mortality before our eyes. The scriptures tell us, our life is but “a vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away, James iv. 14. That our “days are but as an hand-breadth,” and that “every man in his “best estate is vanity,” Psal. xxxix. 5.

Reason tells us, so feeble a tie as our breath is can never secure our lives long. “The living know that they must die,” Eccl. ix. 5. The radical moisture, which is daily consuming by the flame of life, must needs be spent ere long.

And all the graves we see opened so frequently, are sufficient warnings, that we ourselves must shortly follow. Therefore, as there was no need of manna, when bread might be had in an ordinary way, so neither is there need of extraordinary signs, when God hath abundantly furnished us with standing and ordinary means for this purpose.

Reason 2. And as the scriptures render such signs needless, so they seem to be directly against them. Christ commands us to “watch, because we know not in what hour the Lord cometh.” Yea, even Isaac himself, an extraordinary person, and endowed with a spirit of prophecy, whereby he foretold the condition of his

† *Prædicere est aliquem de re aliqua eventura præmonere.*

suns after him, yet it is said, Gen. xxvii. 2. "That he knew not the day of his death." And it is not reasonable to think that common persons should know that, which extraordinary and prophetic persons knew not.

Reason 3. All mankind belong either to God or the devil. To such as belong to God, such extraordinary warnings are needless, for they have a watchful principle within them which continually prompts them to mind their change; and besides death cannot endanger those that are in Christ, how suddenly or unexpectedly soever it should befall them.

And for wicked men, it cannot be thought God should favour and privilege them in this matter above his own children: and as for Satan he knows not the time of their death himself: and if he did, it would thwart his design and interest to discover it to them, Luke xi. 21. So that upon the whole, it should seem such signs and predictions are of no use, and the relations and reports of them fabulous.

But though these reasons make the common and daily use of such signs and predictions needless, yet they destroy not the credibility of them in some cases and at some times. For,

1. There are recorded instances in scripture of premonitions and predictions of the death of persons. Thus the death of Abijah was foretold to his mother by the prophet, and the precise hour thereof which fell out answerably, 1 Kings xiv. 6, 12. And thus the death of the king of Assyria was foretold exactly both as to kind and place, Isa. xxxvii. 7,—37, 38.

2. These predictions serve to other ends and uses sometimes, than the preparation of the persons warned, even to display the fore-knowledge, power, and justice of God, in marking out his enemies for ruin. And, thus, "the Lord is known by the judgments that he executeth," Psalm ix. 16.

Thus Mr. Knox predicted the very place and manner of the death of the laird of Grange*. "You have sometimes seen the courage and constancy of the laird of Grange in the cause of God, and now that unhappy man is casting himself away. I pray you, go to him from me, (said Mr. Knox) and tell him, that unless he forsake that wicked course he is in, the rock wherein he confideth shall not defend him, nor the carnal wisdom of that man, (meaning the young Leshington) whom he counteth half a God, shall help him: but he shall be shamefully pulled out of that nest, and his carcase hung before the sun." And even so it fell out in the following year, when the castle was taken, and his body hanged out

* Clark's Lives, p. 277.

before the sun. Thus God exactly fulfilled the prediction of his death.

The same Mr. Knox, in the year 1566, being in the pulpit at Edinburgh, upon the Lord's day, a paper was given up to him, among many others, wherein these words were scoffingly written concerning the earl of Murray, who was slain the day before,—“Take up the man whom ye accounted another God.” At the end of the sermon, Mr. Knox bewailed the loss that the church and state had by the death of that virtuous man; and then added, “There is one in this company that makes this horrible murder the subject of his mirth, for which all good men should be sorry; but I tell him, he shall die where there shall be none to lament him.” The man that wrote this paper was one Thomas Metellan, a young gentleman, who shortly after, in his travels, died in Italy, having none to assist or lament him.

3. And others have had premonitions and signs of their own deaths, which accordingly fell out. And these premonitions have been given them, sometimes by strong irresistible impressions upon their minds, sometimes in dreams, and sometimes by unusual elevations of their spirits in duties of communion with God.

(1.) Some have had strong and irresistible impressions of their approaching change, made upon their minds. So had Sir Anthony Wingfield, who was slain at Brest, anno 1594*. At his undertaking of that expedition, he was strongly persuaded it would be his death; and therefore so settled and disposed of his estate, as one that never reckoned to return again. And the day before he died, he took order for the payment of his debts, as one that strongly presaged the time was now at hand; which accordingly fell out the next day.

Much of the same nature was that of the late earl of Marlborough, who fell in the Holland war. He not only presaged his own fall in that encounter, (which was exactly answered in the event) but left behind him that memorable and excellent letter, which evidenced to all the world what deep and fixed apprehensions of eternity it had left upon his spirits. Many examples of this nature might be produced, of such as have in their perfect health, foretold their own death; and others who have dropt such passages as were afterwards better understood by their sorrowful friends, than when they first dropt from their lips.

(2.) Others have been premonished of their death by dreams, sometimes their own, and sometimes others. The learned and judicious Amyraldus† gives us this well attested relation of Lewis of

* Sir John Norris's expedition, p. 46.

† Amyraldus, of divine dreams, p. 122, 123.

Bourbon, That a little before his journey from Dreux, he dreamed that he had fought three successful battles, wherein his three great enemies were slain, but that at last he himself was mortally wounded; and that after they were laid one upon another, he also was laid upon the dead bodies. The event was remarkable; for the Mareschal of St. Andree was killed at Dreux, the duke of Guise at Orleans, the constable of Montmorency at St. Denis: and this was the triumvirate, which had sworn the ruin of those of the reformed religion, and the destruction of that prince. At last he himself was slain at Balsac, as if there had been a continuation of deaths and funerals.

Suetonius in the life of Julius Cæsar, tells us, that the night before he was slain, he had divers premonitions thereof, for that night all the doors and windows of his chamber flew open; his wife also dreamed that Cæsar was slain, and that she had him in her arms. The next day he was slain in Pompey's court, having received 23 wounds in his body.

Pamelius * in the life of Cyprian, tells us for a most certain and well attested truth, that upon his first entrance into Garubis (the place of his banishment) it was revealed to him in a dream, or vision, that upon that very day twelve-month he should be consummate: which accordingly fell out; for a little before the time prefixed, there came suddenly two apparitors to bring him before the new proconsul Galeius, by whom he was condemned, as having been a standard-bearer of his sect, and an enemy of the gods. Whereupon he was condemned to be beheaded, a multitude of Christians following him, crying, Let us die together with him.

And as remarkable is that recorded by the learned and ingenious Dr. Sterne † of Mr. Usher of Ireland, a man, saith he, of great integrity, dear to others by his merits, and my kinsman in blood, who upon the 8th day of July, 1657, went from this to a better world. About four of the clock the day before he died, a matron who died a little before, and whilst living was dear to Mr. Usher, appeared to him in his sleep, and invited him to sup with her the next night: he at first denied her, but she more vehemently pressing her request on him, at last he consented, and that very night he died.

I have also the fullest assurance that can be of the truth of this following narrative. A person yet living was greatly concerned about the welfare of his dear father and mother, who were both shut up in London, in the time of the great contagion in 1665. Many let-

* *Pamelius in vita Cypriani.*

† Dr. Sterne's *dissertatio de morte*, p. 165.

ters he sent to them, and many hearty prayers to heaven for them. But about a fortnight before they were infected, he fell about break of day into this dream, That he was in a great inn which was full of company, and being very desirous to find a private room, where he might seek God for his parents life, he went from room to room, but found company in them all; at last, casting his eye into a little chamber which was empty, he went into it, locked the door, kneeled down by the out-side of the bed, fixing his eyes upon the plastered wall, within side the bed: and whilst he was vehemently begging of God the life of his friends, there appeared upon the plaster of the wall before him, the sun and moon shining in their full strength. The sight at first amazed and discomposed him so far, that he could not continue his prayer, but kept his eye fixed upon the body of the sun; at last a small line or ring of black, no bigger than that of a text pen, circled the sun, which increasing sensibly, eclipsed in a little time the whole body of it, and turned it into a blackish colour; which done, the figure of the sun was immediately changed into a perfect death's head, and after a little while vanished quite away. The moon still continued shining as before; but while he intently beheld it, it also darkened in like manner, and turned also into another death's head, and vanished. This made so great an impression upon the beholder's mind, that he immediately awaked in confusion and perplexity of thoughts about his dream; and awaking his wife, related the particulars to her with much emotion and concernment; but how to apply it, he could not presently tell, only he was satisfied that the dream was of an extraordinary nature: at last Joseph's dream came to his thoughts with the like emblems, and their interpretation; which fully satisfied him that God had warned and prepared him thereby for a sudden parting with his dear relations; which answerably fell out in the same order, his father dying that day fortnight following, and his mother just a month afterwards.

I know there is much vanity in dreams; and yet I am fully satisfied, some are weighty, significant and declarative of the purposes of God.

(3.) *Lastly*, An unusual and extraordinary elevation of the soul to God, and enlargement in communion with him, hath been a signifying forerunner of the death of some good men; for as the body hath its *lexamen anteyferale*, lightning before death, and more vegeate and brisk a little before its dissolution, so it is sometimes with the soul also. I have known some persons to arrive on a sudden to such heights of love to God, and vehement longings to be dissolved, that they might be with Christ, that I could not but look upon it, as Christ did upon the box of ointment, as

done against their death: and so indeed it hath proved in the event.

Thus it was with that renowned saint, Mr. Brewen of Stapleford; as he excelled others in the holiness of his life, so much he excelled himself towards his death, his motions towards heaven being then most vigorous and quick. The day before his last sickness, he had such extraordinary enlargements of heart in his closet-duty, that he seemed to forget all the concerns of his body, and this lower world; and when his wife told him, Sir, I fear you have done yourself hurt with rising so early; he answered, "If you had seen such glorious things as I saw this morning in private prayer with God, you would not have said so; for they were so wonderful and unspeakable, that whether I was in the body, or out of the body, with Paul, I cannot tell."

And so it was with the learned and holy Mr. Rivet, who seemed as a man in heaven, just before he went thither; and so it hath been with thousands besides these. I confess it is not the lot of every gracious soul (as was shewed you in the last question) nor doth it make any difference as to the safety of the soul, whatever it makes as to comfort. Let all therefore labour to make sure their union with Christ, and live in the daily exercises of grace, in the duties of religion; and then, though God should give them no such extraordinary warning one way or other, they shall never be surprised by death to their loss, let it come never so unexpectedly upon them.

Quest. It may be also queried, whether Satan, by his instruments, may not foretel the death of some men? How else did the witch of Endor foretel the death of Saul? and the soothsayers the death of Cæsar upon the *Ides*, i. e. the fifteenth day of March, which was the fatal day to him?

Sol. Foreknowledge of things to come, which appear not in their next causes, is certainly the Lord's prerogative, Isa. xli. 23. Whatever, therefore, Satan doth in this matter, must be done either by conjecture or commission. As to the case of Saul, it is not to be questioned but that he, knowing the kingdom was made to David by promise, and that the Lord was departed from Saul, and seeing how near the armies were to a battle, might strongly conjecture and conclude, and accordingly tell him, "To-morrow thou shalt be with me," 1 Sam. xxviii. 19.

And so for the death of Cæsar, the devil knew the conspiracy was strong against him, and the plot laid for that day; and so it was both easy for him to reveal it to the soothsayers, and his interest to do it, thereby to bring that cursed art into reputation.

As for other signs and forewarnings of death, by the unusual resort of doleful creatures, as *owls* and *ravens*, vulgarly accounted

ominous; *Wall-watches*, upon this account called *death-watches*; and the eating of wearing apparel by rats; I look upon them generally as superstitious fancies, not worthy to be regarded among Christians. God may, but I know not what ground we have to believe, that he doth commission such creatures to bring us the message of death from him. To conclude, therefore,

Let no man expect or depend upon such extraordinary premonitions and warnings of his change, and neglect his daily work and duty of preparation for it. We have warnings in the word, in the examples of mortality frequently before us, in all the diseases and decays we often feel in our own bodies; and by the signs of the times, which threatens death and desolation. Be ye therefore always ready, for ye know not in what watch of the night your Lord cometh.

Query 4. *Whether separated souls have any knowledge of, or commerce or intercourse with men in this life; and if not, what is to be thought of the apparitions of the dead?*

1. *By separated souls*, understand the departed souls, both of godly and ungodly, indifferently and not as it is restrained to one sort only in the text; for of both it is pretended there are frequent apparitions after death.

2. By the knowledge such souls are supposed to have after death both of persons and things in this lower world, we understand not a general knowledge, which one sort of them have of the state and condition of the church militant on earth; for this, we think, cannot be denied to the spirits of the just made perfect, seeing they are still fellow-members with us of the same mystical body of Christ; do behold our High-priest appearing before God, offering up our prayers for us; and long for the consummation of the body of Christ, as well as cry for vengeance against the persecutors thereof, Rev. vi. 10. Nor do I think these words, Isa. lxiii. 16. repugnant hereunto: "Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not:" for I look upon the import of those words only as an humble acknowledgment of their defection, which rendered them unworthy that their forefathers should own, or acknowledge them any more for their children; and not as implying their utter ignorance, or total oblivion of the church's state on earth.

But I here understand such a particular knowledge of our personal states and conditions, as they once had when they dwelt among us in the body; and this seems to be denied them by those scriptures alleged against it in the margin below*.

3. By commerce and intercourse; understand not their intercession with God for us, which the Papists affirm; but their con-

* Job xiv. 21. Eccles. ix. 5, 6. John xix. 25.

cernments about our natural, or civil interest in this world, so as to be useful to our persons, by warning us of death, or dangers; or to our estates, by disquieting such as wrong us, in not fulfilling the wills and testaments they once made; or by giving us notice, by words or signs, of the death of our friends, who died at a distance from us, or come to some violent and untimely end.

The sense of the terms being thus determined, and the question so stated, I will, for the resolution of it, give you,

I. The strength of what I find offered for the affirmative.

II. The general concessions, or what may be granted.

III. My own judgment about it, with the grounds thereof.

I. Some there are, even among the learned and judicious, who are for the affirmative part of the question, and do with much confidence assert, that departed souls both know our particular concerns in this world, and intermeddle with them: confirming their assertion both by reasons to convince us that it may be so, and a variety of instances that it is so. I will produce both the one and the other, and give them a due consideration and censure.

The substance of what is pleaded for the affirmative, I find thus collected and improved by * Dr. Sterne, a learned physician in Ireland, in his book entitled, *A Dissertation concerning Death*; where he offers us these four arguments, to convince that it is possible for departed souls thus to appear, and perform such offices for their friends on earth.

“*Arg.* 1. † Angels by command from God, are useful and helpful to men; they are the saints’ guardians, and it is probable that each Christian hath his peculiar angel: whence it will follow, that separated souls do mingle themselves with human affairs, and that because they are angels, at least equal unto angels, Luke xx. 36. Besides, they being spirits that were once embodied, must needs be more fit for this employment, than those who never had any tie at all to a body;” unless we can imagine them to have lost the remembrance of all that ever they did, and suffered in the body; as also that they put off, and buried all their affections to us with their bodies, which is hard to think. Even as Christ our High-priest is qualified for that office, above all others in heaven, because he once dwelt, and suffered in a body, like ours, here upon earth; so separated souls are

* *Dissertatio de morte*, a p. 208. ad p. 214.

† (1.) *Angeli jussu Dei hominibus opitulantur, haudquaquam ambiguntur; unde animas a corpore solutas sese rebus humanis miscere comprobari videtur. Sequelæ fundamentum duplex est, prius, quod animæ separatæ angeli sunt, saltem angelis æquales: posterius, quod magis idonei sunt quibus officium generi humano succurrendi demandetur, quam spiritus inter quos et corpus nullus unquam intercessit nexus, &c.*

qualified above all other spirits, who are unrelated to bodies of flesh.

“*Arg.* 2. * The church triumphant and militant are but one body; and how much better the triumphant are than the militant, by so much the more propense they are to succour and help the other that stand in need of it.” This being the case, we cannot but imagine but they are inclined to perform all good offices for us; for else they should do less for us now, being in a state of the highest perfection in heaven, than they did, or were willing to do, in their imperfect state on earth.

“*Arg.* 3. † A will, or testament (as Ulpian defines it) is the just sentence, or declaration of our minds, concerning that which we would have done after our decease. These testaments have always, and among all nations, been religiously observed, as the apostle witnesseth, Gal. iii. 15. The reasons of this so religious observance are a presumption, that those who made them when alive, continue in the same mind and will after death; that they take care for the fulfilling of them; and revenge the non-performance upon the unjust executors.” For otherwise there can be no reason why so great a stress should be laid upon the will of the dead, if they care not whether their wills be performed or no. Why should we be solicitous and studious about it, and pay so great a reverence to it, but upon this account?

“*Arg.* 4. † The scriptures forbid consultations with the dead, Deut. xviii. 10, 11. This prohibition supposeth some did consult them, and received answers from them; which must needs imply some commerce betwixt the living, and the souls that are departed.” And, considering he had before forbidden their consultation with the devil, it appears that here we must needs understand the very souls of the dead, and not the devil personating them only.

These are the arguments of this learned author for the affirmative, which he closes with two necessary cautions: *First*, That this

¶ (2.) *Ecclesia est corpus unum, cujus membra quo meliora, eo magis ad aliis ejusdem corporis membris opitulandum sunt propensa: hujus autem corporis pars altera est triumphans in caelis, altera militans in terris: Illa melior, hæc opis magis indiga, &c.*

† (5.) *Testamentum (Ulpiano definiente) est voluntatis nostræ justa sententia de eo quod post mortem nostram fieri volumus. Testamentum autem tanquam res sacra ab omnibus gentibus religiose observatur, Gal. iii. 15. Ratio autem tam religiose tamque universalis observantæ est, quoniam animas eorum qui Testamenta condiderant, etiam suam post mortem, in eadem voluntate perseverare, ejus complementa curare, ac deinceps ejus vel executrices, vel non præstitæ vindices esse præsumitur.*

‡ (4.) *In sacris scripturis consulere mortuos passim prohibetur, ut Deut. xviii. 10, 11. Sed si homines a mortuis non suscitentur, legibus haud opus est; et si mortui rogati non aliquando responderent, ab hominibus haudquaquam consulerentur. Stern. de Morte, ubi*

lays no foundation for religious worship, or invocation of departed souls: those that are helpful to us, are not therefore to be worshipped. *Secondly*, That we must acknowledge ourselves to be under much darkness, as to the way and manner of the converse of spirits with us.

The most acute and learned * Dr. More, I find of the same opinion. He affirms, that departed souls are capable of a vital union with an airy vehicle (or body) in which they can easily move from place to place, and appear to the living; and act in their affairs, as in detecting murders, rebuking injurious executors, visiting and counselling their wives and children, forewarning them of such and such courses, &c. To which we may add, the profession of the spirit thus appearing, of being the soul of such a one; as also, the similitude of the person: And all this a-do is in things very just and serious, unfit for a devil, with that care and kindness to promote; and as unfit for a good genius; it being below so noble a creature to tell a lie. All these things put together and rightly weighed, the violence of prejudice not pulling down the balance, I dare appeal (saith he) to any, whether it will not be certainly carried for the present cause? And whether any indifferent judge ought not to conclude, if these stories, which are so frequent every where, and in all ages, concerning the ghosts of men appearing, be but true, that it is true also, that they are their ghosts, &c.

These are the strongest arguments I meet with, for the affirmative, that the matter is possible, it may be so; and then adding the credible instances that it is so, the matter seems to be determined.

To this purpose Dr. Sterne alleges several instances out of scripture; as that appearance of Samuel unto Saul, and the conference betwixt them: as also, the letters that were sent to Jehoram by Elijah, and that Elijah was translated to heaven; as appears by comparing 2 Chron. xxi. 12. with 2 Kings iii. 11. in which it appears, that in Jehoshaphat's time, who preceded this Jehoram, Elijah was dead; and yet, in Jehoram's time, who succeeded him, he is said to receive letters from Elijah. The appearance and conference also betwixt Christ, and Moses, and Elias, upon the mount, in the presence of some of the disciples, confirm it, Mat. xvii. 3.

These are the principal scripture-instances; others are almost innumerable. From among that vast heap, I will select some few, that are most material, and of clearest credit.

“It is a thing (saith * my author) both known and frequent,

* Dr. More's Immortality of the Soul, b. 2. c. 16.

† *Jusularum Scoticarum incolæ ad ægros, cum pro deploratis habentur, accedunt, et*

“ that the inhabitants of the Scottish isles, when their friends are dying, come to them, and request them, that, upon such or such a day, after their death, and in such a place, they would meet them; which the dead accordingly do, at the time and place agreed upon, and have sometimes discourse with them.”

Infinite examples of murders (saith Dr. More) have been discovered by dreams, the souls of the persons murdered seeming to appear to some or other asleep, and to make their complaints to them; giving us a notable example out of Baronius, of Marcilius Ficinius, who having made a solemn vow with Michael Mercatus, (after they had been pretty warmly disputing of the immortality of the soul, out of the principles of their master Plato) that whether of them two died first, he should appear to his friend, and give him certain information of that truth. It was Ficinius' fate to die first, and that not long after this mutual resolution: He was mindful of his promise, when he had left the body; for Mercatus being very intent at his studies, betimes in a morning, heard a horse riding by with all speed, and observed that he stopt at his window, and therewith heard the voice of his friend Ficinius, crying out, aloud, *O Michael, Michael, vera, vera, sunt illa*; that is, *O Michael, Michael, those things are true, they are true*, Whereupon he suddenly opened his window, and espying Marcilius upon a *white steed*, called after him, but he vanished out of his sight. He sent therefore presently to Florence, to know how Marcilius did, and understood that he died about that hour he called at his window.

Much to the same purpose is that so famous and well attested story of the apparition of major George Sydenham, to captain William Dyke, both of Somersetshire, attested by the worthy and learned Dr. Thomas Dyke, a near kinsman of the captain's; and by Mr. Douch, to whom the major and captain were intimately known *. The sum is this: The major and captain had many disputes about the being of a God, and the immortality of the soul, in which points they could never be resolved, though they much sought for, and desired it: and therefore it was at last fully agreed betwixt them, that he that died first, should, the third night after his funeral, come betwixt the hours of twelve and one, to the little house in the garden adjoining to major Sydenham's house, at Dulverton, in Somersetshire. The major died first, and the captain happened to lie that very night which was appointed, in the same chamber and bed with Dr. Dyke; he acquainted

rogant ut certo a morto die, loquere certo ipsos convenient; quod et mortui tempore et præstiterit præstant. Sterne. *ibid.*

* *Sad. Trium.* part 2. p. 185.

the doctor with the appointment, and his resolution to attend the place, and hour that night, for which purpose he had got the key of that garden. The doctor could by no means divert his purpose, but, when the hour came, he was upon the place, where he waited two hours and a half, neither seeing nor hearing any thing more than usual. About six weeks after, the captain and doctor went to Eaton, and lay both in the same inn, but not both in the same chamber, as they had done before at Dulverton.

The morning before they went thence, the captain stayed longer than was usual in his chamber, and at length came into the doctor's chamber, but in visage and form much different from himself, with his hair and eyes staring, and his whole body shaking and trembling: Whereat the doctor wondering, demanded, What is the matter, cousin captain? the captain replied, I have seen my major. At which the doctor seeming to smile, the captain said, If ever I saw him in my life, I saw him but now; adding as follows: This morning (said he) after it was light, some one came to my bed-side, and suddenly drawing back the curtains, calls *Cap. cap.* (which was the term of familiarity that the major used to call the captain by) to whom I replied, What, my *major*? To which he returns, I could not come at the time appointed, but I am now come to tell you, *That there is a God, and a very just and terrible one; and if you do not turn over a new leaf, you will find it so.* This stuck so close to him, little meat would go down with him at dinner, though a handsome treat was provided. These words were sounding in his ears frequently, during the remainder of his life; he was never shy or scrupulous to relate it to any that asked him concerning it, or ever mentioned it, but with horror and trepidation. They were both men of a brisk humour and jolly conversation, of very quick and keen parts, having been both University and Inns-of-court gentlemen.

The apparition of the ghost of Sir George Villiers, father of the duke of Buckingham, giving three solemn warnings, by three several apparitions to his servant, Mr. Parker, is a known and credible story. But I will wade no farther into particulars, they are almost innumerable: let this suffice for a taste.

II. In the next place, therefore, I will lay down some concessions about this matter: and the

First concession is this: *That the separate souls, or spirits of men, are capable of performing and executing any ministry or service of God, (if he should please to commission them so to do) as well as angels are, whom we know he frequently employs about the persons and affairs of his people on earth.*

Though souls become not angels by their separation, as Maxi-

mus Tyrius calls them, but remain spirits specifically distinct from them; yet are they spiritual substances, as the angels are: This their nature capacitates them either to live, and act out of the body, or to assume (as angels do) an *ærial body*, for the time of their ministry: Nor do I know any thing in scripture or philosophy repugnant hereunto.

Conces. 2. *It cannot be doubted, but upon special and extraordinary reasons and occasions, some departed souls have returned to, and appeared in this world, by order and commission from God.*

This is too manifest to be doubted by any that understand and believe the instances recorded in scripture. Moses and Elias, long after their departure, appeared to, and talked with Christ upon the holy mount in the presence of some of his apostles, Mat. xvii. 3. nor is there any reason to question the reality of their apparition, or to think it to be no more than a *phantasm*, or imaginary resemblance of these persons, but very Moses and Elias themselves: For they came to be witnesses to Christ's prophetic office, "And it was not * fit so great a point should be attested by imaginary witnesses," or that they should be called Moses and Elias, if they were not the very same persons.

"It is therefore most likely they both appeared in their own bodies †;" for Moses' body, we know, was hidden by the Lord, and Elias' body was immediately translated, with his soul to heaven: When therefore the Lord would send them upon this solemn errand, the soul of Moses probably reassumed that body, which was never found by man, and Elias was already embodied, and fit immediately for this expedition.

In like manner we read, Mat. xxvii. 52, 53. that, at the resurrection of our Lord, "many bodies of the saints arose, and appeared unto many:" These were no *phantasms*, but the very souls of the departed saints returned (having reassumed their own bodies) unto this world, not only to confirm the truth of Christ's resurrection, and adorn that great day, but as a specimen, or handsel of the resurrection of all the saints, in the virtue of his resurrection at the great day.

Nor will I deny, but, upon some lesser (though never without weighty and solemn) occasions and reasons, God may sometimes send the souls of the dead back again into this world, as in cases before recited, to evidence against the *atheism* of men, &c. ‡ Augustine relates a memorable example, which fell out at Milan, where a certain citizen being dead, there came a creditor, to whom he

* *Non enim conveniebat ut veritas mendacio, vel imaginariis testibus probaretur.* Mal. don. Carpellus in loc.

† *Credibilis est vere corporibus suis apparuisse.* Pareus in loc.

‡ *Aug. in lib. de cura pro mortuis agenda.*

had been indebted, and unjustly demanded the money of his son: The son knew the debt was satisfied by his father, but having no acquittance to shew, his father appeared to him in his sleep, and shewed him where the acquittance lay. Whether it were the very soul of his *father*, or rather, an *angel*, as Augustine thinks, is not certain, though the one, as well as the other, is possible. But though rarely, and upon some weighty and solemn occasions, some souls have returned and appeared; yet I judge this is not frequently done upon slight and ordinary errands; and therefore to give you my own thoughts, I judge,

Conces. 3. *That those apparitions which seem to be, and are generally reputed and taken for the souls of the dead, are not indeed so, but other spirits, putting on the shapes, and resemblances of the dead, and (for the most part) tricks of the devil, to delude or disquiet men.*

In this I think the learned * Dr. Brown delivered his judgment more solidly and orthodoxly, than in some other points; where he saith, “ I believe that the whole frame of a beast doth perish and “ is left in the same state after death, as before it was materialled “ into life; that the souls of men know neither contrary nor corruption; that they subsist beyond the body, and continue, by “ the privilege of their proper nature, and without a miracle; that “ the souls of the faithful, as they leave earth, take possession of “ heaven; that those apparitions and ghosts of departed persons, “ are not the wandering souls of *men*, but the unquiet walks of “ *devils*, promoting and suggesting us into *mischiefs*, *blood*, and “ *villany*.” And with this opinion I concur, as to the ordinary and common apparitions of the dead. And my reasons are,

(1.) Because the scriptures every where describe the state of departed souls as a fixed state, either in heaven or in hell; and assign the good or evil done in this world by spirits, not to the departed spirits of men, but to angels or devils: And it is our duty to regulate our conceits by scripture, and not according to the vain philosophy of the heathens, or the superstitious traditions and opinions of men.

As for the souls of the godly, they are at rest with Christ, Rev. xiv. 13. Isa. lvii. 2. and fixed as pillars in the house of God, Rev. iii. 12.

As for the wicked, their spirits are confined, and secured in hell, as in a prison, 1 Pet. iii. 19. there is a fixed gulph betwixt them and the living, Luke xvi. 27, to 32.

What good offices are to be done by spirits for us, the angels are God's commission-officers to do them, Heb. i. 14. “ They are all “ ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be

“heirs of salvation:” These are the spirits sent forth to walk to and fro through the earth, Zech. i. 10. Their ministry was *emblematically* represented in Jacob’s vision, where they were seen ascending and descending as upon a ladder, betwixt heaven and earth, Gen. xxviii. 12. Yea, their very name *angel*, is a name of office, signifying a messenger, or one sent.

And for the mischief done by spirits in this world, the scriptures ascribe that to the devils; those unquiet spirits have their walks in this world, they compass the whole earth, and walk up and down in it, Job i. 7. and 1 Pet. v. 8. they can assume any shape; yea, I doubt not but he can act their bodies when dead, as well as he did their souls and bodies when alive: How great his power is this way, appears in what is so often done by him in the bodies of *witches*. They are not ordinarily, therefore, the spirits of men, but other spirits that appear to us.

(2.) If God should ordinarily permit the spirits of men inhabiting the other world, a liberty so frequently to visit this, what a gap would it open for Satan to beguile and deceive the living! What might he not by this means impose upon weak and credulous mortals? * There hath been a great deal of superstition and idolatry already introduced under this pretence: he hath often personated saints departed, and pretended himself to be the ghost of some venerable person, whose love to the souls of the people, and care for their salvation, drew him from heaven to reveal some special secret to them. Swarms of errors and superstitious and idolatrous opinions and practices, are this way conveyed by the tricks and artifices of Satan, among the Papists, which I will not blot my paper withal; only I desire it may be considered, that if this were a thing so frequently permitted by God, as is pretended, upon what dangerous terms had he left his church in this world, seeing he hath left no certain marks by which we may distinguish one spirit from another, or a true messenger from heaven, from a counterfeit and pretended one.

But God hath tied us to the sure and standing rule of his word; forbidding us to give heed to any other voice or spirit leading us another way, Isa. viii. 19. 2 Thess. ii. 1, 2. Gal. i. 8. It was therefore a discreet reply which one of the antients made when in a prayer, a vision of Christ appeared to him, and told him, thy prayers are heard, for thou art worthy: the good man immediately clapt his hands upon his eyes, and said, *Nolo hic videre Christum*, &c. i. e. *I will not see Christ here, it is enough for me that I shall behold him in heaven.*

* For what hath more propagated idolatry among Heathens and Christians? Hence did flow many peregrinations, monasteries, temples, festival days, and such like. *Dav. on Job.*

To conclude.—My opinion upon the whole is this, that although it cannot be denied, but in some grand, extraordinary cases, as at the transfiguration and resurrection of Christ, God did, and perhaps sometimes, though rarely, may order or permit departed souls to return into this world; yet, for the most part, I judge those apparitions are not the souls of the dead, but other spirits, and, for the most part, evil ones.

Of this judgment was * St. Augustine, who when he had at full related the story above of the father's ghost directing his son to the acquittance; yet will not allow it to be the very soul of his father, but an angel: where he farther adds, If (saith he) the souls of the dead may be present in our affairs, they would not forsake us in this sort; especially my mother Monica, who, in her life, could never be without me, surely she would not thus leave me being dead.

Obj. 1. *But it was pleaded before, that we allow the apparition of angels; and departed souls, if they be not angels, at least are equal unto angels, and in respect of their late relation to us, are more propense to help us, than spirits of another sort can be supposed to be.*

Sol. It seems too bold and imposing upon sovereign Wisdom to tell him what messengers are fittest for him to send and employ in his service; who hath taught him, or been his counsellor?

Obj. 2. *But these offices seem to pertain properly to them, as they are not only fellow-members, but the most excellent members of the mystical body, to whom it belongs to assist the meaner and weaker.*

Sol. If there be any force of reason in this plea, it carries rather for the angels than for departed souls: for angels are gathered under the same common head with saints; the text tells us, *we are come to an innumerable company of angels*: they and the saints are fellow-citizens, and we know they are a more noble order of spirits; and as for their love to the elect, it is exceeding great, as great to be sure as the departed souls of our dearest relatives can be. For after death they sustain no more civil relation to us: all that they do sustain is as fellow-members of the same body, or fellow-citizens, which the angels also are as well as they.

Obj. 3. *But, saith the doctor, the reason why all nations pay so great honour and religious care to the will of the dead, is a supposition that they still continue in the same mind after death, and will avenge the falsifications of trusts upon injurious executors, else no reason can be given why so great a stress should be laid upon the will of the dead.*

Sol. This is *gratis dictum*, to say no worse, a cheap and unwary expression: Can no reason be given for the religious observance of the testaments of the dead, but this supposition? I deny it: for though they that made them be dead, yet God, who is witness to

all such acts and trusts, liveth: and though they cannot avenge frauds, and injustice of men, he both can and will do it, 1 Thess. iv. 6. which, I think, is a weightier ground and reason to enforce duty upon men than the fear of ghosts. Besides, this is a case wherein all the living are concerned, all that die must commit a trust to them that survive; and if frauds should be committed with impunity, who could safely repose confidence in another; *Quod tanget omnes, tangi debet ab omnibus*: that which is of general concernment, and becomes every man's interest, infers a general obligation upon all.

As for the letters of Elijah, it is a vanity to think they came post from heaven; no, no, they were doubtless left behind him, out of due care to the government, and produced on that fit occasion.

Obj. 4. *But what need of a law to prohibit necromancy or consultation with the dead, if it were not practicable?*

Sol. I do not think the wicked art there prohibited enabled them to recal departed souls; but it was a conversing with the devil who personated the dead, and therein a kind of homage was paid him to the dishonour of God; or he might possibly raise the bodies of wicked men, and appear in them: but I think the spirits of the dead return not, except as was before limited.

Obj. 5. *But the matters they discover are found to be true, and the causes in which they concern themselves are just; real murders are detected by them, and real frauds and injuries corrected and rectified: but the devil being himself a liar, and deceiver, would never do it; it is not his interest to discover or discourage such things.*

Sol. Though it be not his interest merely to discover it, yet it is certainly his interest to precipitate wicked men, and hasten their ruin by the hand of Justice; and he will speak the truth, and seem to own a righteous cause, to bring about his great design of ruining the souls and bodies of men. I will shut up with three cautions.

Caution 1. Strain not conscience to enrich posterity: be true to the trusts committed to you by the dead, or by the living, remembering, that though they be dead, and cannot avenge the wrong, yet the Lord lives, and will surely do it in a severer manner than they could, should they appear in the most terrible and frightful forms to you: Besides, your own consciences will haunt you worse than a ghost. Be just and true therefore in all your promises and trusts, for God is the avenger.

Caution 2. Finish your work for eternity before you die; for as "the cloud is consumed, and vanished away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more; he shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more," Job vii. 9, 10. Your souls will be fixed in eternity

soon after they are loosed from your bodies: when death comes, away you must go, willing or unwilling, ready or unready; but no returning hither, how willing soever.

Caution 3. Keep yourselves from that heathenish and accursed practice of consulting the devil about your absent or dead relations; a practice too common in sea-port towns, and of deep and heinous guilt before God: Isa. viii. 19. "And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?"

You need not call the devil twice; that subtle and officious spirit draws the living into his net by such a bait as this: You meet your mortal enemy under the disguise of your dead friend.

Query 5. *Whether the separated souls of the just in heaven have any converse or communication with each other? and how that can be, seeing all the organs and instruments of speech and hearing are laid aside with their bodies;*

It seems impossible that separated or unbodied spirits should converse together, seeing the instruments by which the thoughts are communicated from one to another, are perished in the grave. Suppose the tongue of a man to be cut out, his eyes and hands perished or made useless, whilst the soul remains in the body; it may enjoy its own thoughts within itself, but it is impossible to signify them to another by words or signs.

Or suppose a man in a deep sleep (wherein the senses are only bound for a little time) he may indeed exercise his own fancy in a pleasant dream, but another cannot understand how it is entertained; but in death the senses are not bound, but extinguished.

Beside, we must not think the felicity of the departed holy souls to consist in mutual converses one with another, but in the ineffable visions of God, and communion with him. To him who is omniscient, and understands their most inward thoughts, they can freely communicate them, and receive his, as well as pour forth their own love; but to do it to their fellow-creatures, who see not as God doth, seems impossible.

Indeed it was never doubted, but after the resurrection they shall both know and talk with one another in a more excellent and perfect manner than now they do; but till that time, the reasons above seem to persuade us, that all the converses above, are only betwixt God and them, which indeed is enough to make them happy; and indeed, if this ability be allowed to separated souls, it seems to render the resurrection of their bodies needless; for they are well enough without them. But certainly the spirits of just men are not mutes; such an angust assembly of holy and excellent spirits, do not live together in their Father's house with-

out mutual converse and fellowship with each other, as well as with God.

That acute and judicious divine, Mr. Joseph Symonds, in his epistle to his book, intituled, *Sight and Faith*, expresseth himself about this matter thus: ‘ I often think (saith he) of the communion of the spirits of men, which is certainly more than many are acquainted with; though we act one upon another in our present state, by the help of sense; yet we are wrought and designed to a more excellent way. Angels, and the spirits of men made perfect, converse and trade in a mutual communication, not without sense, but without such sense as ours. This, as eternal life, begins here, and is found in some degrees in this mortal state, though not in so visible appearances as to lie open to much observation.

‘ Angels, good and bad, do act upon our spirits, and our spirits hold converse with them, and with the Father of spirits, which may be discerned in secret parlies and discourses betwixt them and us; much of this appears in David’s psalms; and there passeth not only an inward speech, but there are invisible approaches, entertainments, and touches, which Paul found when bound in the Spirit, and under the working of God, which wrought in him mightily, Col. i. 29. It is also most certain, that our souls are not mute, and shut out from all mutual traffic with each other, except what they have by the mediation of senses.

‘ Instances are found, that (as they say of two needles touched with the loadstone) the spirit of one at a distance, hath found itself affected with the motion and state of another. And this we are all sensible of, that there is a strong desire in us to communion of spirits; and that, because the way most ready and convenient to our bodily state is by sense, we are carried with much inclination to maintain intercourse of our minds and spirits by sense; but, as being made to a better way, our souls are not satisfied with this present way, as being both painful and short. We cannot give an exact copy of our apprehensions, desires, designs, delights, and other affections, by these two great mediators of communion, the eye and the ear: but, because we are in so great a measure confined to this course, our souls, as it were, stand in these two gates, to send and receive mutual embassies from each other. Which way, as it is short in itself, so it is much shortened by distances, disaffections, impotencies, and disparities.’

I cannot imagine, that men, in a state of imperfection, should have so many ways to communicate their minds, as by speaking, writing, &c. yea, that the very birds and beasts, are, by nature, enabled to signify to each other their inclinations; and that the spi-

rits of just men (which are the best of all human spirits, and that when made perfect too, which is the best and highest state attainable by them) should have none, but live at a greater disadvantage in this respect than they did, or the very birds and beasts in this world do. The sum of my thoughts about this matter, I will lay down in the following sections.

Section 1. The state of heaven, (as was at large opened in our eleventh proposition) being an association of angels and blessed souls, for the glorifying and praising of God in his temple there, and this worship being carried on by joint consent, as appears by their joint ascriptions of glory to God, Rev. vii. 9, 10, 11, 12. they must of necessity, for the orderly carrying on of this heavenly worship understand each other's minds, and communicate their thoughts: for without this it is not imaginable how a joint or common service, in which thousands of thousands are employed, can be decorously and orderly managed, except we conceive of them as so many *machines*, or wind-instruments that are managed by an intelligent agent, though themselves be senseless and merely passive: certainly their consent is a different thing from that of the keys of a *harpsichord*, or strings of a *lute*, they are intelligent beings, who understand their own and each other's mind: and besides, without this ability, that society in heaven would be less comfortable, as to mutual refreshing fellowship, than the society of saints is here. So that it is not to be doubted, but these noble and excellent spirits can, and do communicate their thoughts to each other, and that in a most excellent way.

Sect. 2. But yet we cannot imagine these communications betwixt them to be by words, formed by such instruments and organs of speech as we now use, for they are bodiless beings; words, and articulate sounds, are fitted to the use and service of embodied spirits. It is therefore probable, that they convey and communicate their minds to one another, as the blessed angels do, not with tongues of flesh, (though we read of the *tongues of angels*, 1 Cor. xiii. 1.) but in a way somewhat analogous to this, though much more noble and excellent*. For look, as the scripture stiles the most excellent food, angels food; so the most excellent speech, or most eloquent tongues, angels tongues. The purest rhetoric that ever flowed from the lips of the most charming orator, is but babbling, to the language of angels, or of spirits made perfect.

When Paul was wrapt into the third heaven, where he was admitted to the sight and hearing of this blessed assembly, it is said

* It is certain, angels have not tongues, but something analogous thereunto, by which they communicate their thoughts to one another. *Lightfoot.*

he heard ἀγγεῖα ῥήματα, words unspeakable, spiritual language, such as his tongue neither could, or ought to utter; such as none but heavenly inhabitants can speak. And, Dan. viii. 13. "I heard, (said Daniel) one saint speaking, and another saint said unto "that certain saint that spake," &c. He heard the enquiries of the angels, desiring to know the mystery from the mouth of Christ. A language they have, but not like ours.

Sect. 3. The communications of angels, and souls in heaven, is therefore conceived to be an ability in those blessed spirits, silently and without sound, to instil and insinuate their minds and thoughts to each other, by a mere act of their wills; just as we now speak to God, or ourselves*, in our hearts, when our lips do not move, nor the least outward sign appears.

There are two ways by which the souls of men speak, one outwardly, by the instruments of speech, or sensible signs; the other inwardly, without sound, or sign. This inward, silent speech, is nothing else but an act of the will, calling forth such things into our actual thoughts and meditations, which before lay hid and quiet in the memory, or habit of knowledge. These thoughts, or actual revolvings of things in the mind, are in scripture called דבר עם לבבך a word or speech in the heart, Deut. xv. 9. Take heed to thyself, that there be not a wicked word in thy heart; we translate it, *a wicked thought*: thoughts are the words, and voice of the soul. And so, Mat. ix. 3. they spake within themselves, i. e. their souls spake, though their lips moved not. "All meditation is an "inward speech of the soul, and therefore שׁוּרָה indifferently signifies both to speak, and to meditate†." The objects which we revolve in our thoughts, are so many companions with whom we converse; and thus a man, (like Heinsius) may be in the midst of abundance of excellent company, when he is all alone. And this is silent talk to ourselves, without any sound or noise.

Object. But you will say, *Though the spirit of a man can thus talk to, or with itself; yet this can signify nothing to others*: For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him? 1 Cor. ii. 11. *It is not therefore enough to open this internal door of the will; for except we open also the external ‡ door of the lips, no man can know our minds, or be admitted into the se-*

* We are said to speak to ourselves in our hearts, when we actually think upon, or revolve any thing in our minds; but we think actually, at the command of the will, i. e. when we will. *Zanch.*

† Εἰσπον ἐν αὐτοῖς, שׁוּרָה, *Cum puncto sinistro, loeutus est ore, aut corde cogitavit, meditatus est.*

‡ There are two doors with respect to others, and unless thou open both of these, it is not possible that another man can know what passes in thy mind, or be admitted into the secrets of thy heart. On the part of the soul, the will is the one

crets of your soul ; should we never so earnestly desire that another should know our mind, except we please, to discover it by a word, or sign, he cannot know it ; and therefore an act of the will is not sufficient, without some external signification superadded. And these souls being bodiless, can give no outward signification.

Sol. There is, indeed, a necessity among men in this world, to unlock another door, beside that of the will, to communicate the secrets of their hearts to others ; “but *angels, and the spirits of men, having no bodies, consequently have but one door, to wit, that of the will, to open ; and the opening thereof, (which is done by one act or desire, in a moment) is enough to discover so much of their minds, as they would have discovered to another spirit. If they keep the door of their will shut, no angel, or spirit, can know what is in their thoughts, without a revelation from God ;” and if they but will, or desire others should know, no words can so fully manifest one man’s mind to another, as such an act of the will doth manifest theirs. And this, saith learned Zanchy, is the tongue of angels ; and the same way the spirits of men have to make known their mind in the unembodied state. It is but the turning the key of the will, and their thoughts, or desires are presently seen and known, by others, to whom they will discover them, as a man’s face is seen in a glass, when he pleaseth to turn his face to it. Would one spirit make known his mind to another, it is but to will he should know it, and it is immediately known.

Sect. 4. This internal way of speaking and communication among spirits is much more noble, perfect, and excellent, than that which is in use among us, by words and signs ; and that in two respects, viz.

1. Of clearness.
2. Of dispatch and speed.

1. Spiritual language is more clearly expressive of the mind and thoughts, than words, writings, or any other external signs can be. The greatest masters of language do often cloud their meaning, for want of words fit and full enough to express it : truth suffers by the poverty and ambiguity of words ; many controversies are but mere strifes about words, and scufflings in the dark, by

door, for unless thou incline to reveal to others these things which lie hid in thy heart, who can know them ? the other door is the body of flesh itself, and therefore, although having, as it were, opened the first and inward door, thou incline to make known unto another what is in the mind, yet he can in no way know this, unless thou also open the other door which is external. *Zanchius, on the works of God, book 3. chap. 29.*

* *Quoniam igitur angeli iis carent crassis corporibus, idcirco nihil impedit, quo minus quæ unus angelus in sua versat mente, ea alter videat, voluntas : si enim ea nolit ab altero resciri, numquam, nisi Deo revelante, rescientur.* Zanch. ubi supra.

the mistake of each other's sense and meaning; few have the ability of putting their own meanings into apt, proper, and full expression; and, if they can, yet others to whom they speak, want an answerable ability of understanding and clearness of apprehension to receive it. If we could discern the true and natural sense of things, just as it is in the mind of the speaker, or writer, how many controversies would be thereby quickly ended?

But spirits unbodied so convey their sense and mind to one another, that there can be no mistakes, no darkenings of counsel, by words without knowledge; but one receives it just as it lies in the other's mind.

2. Spiritual language is more easy, and of quicker dispatch; some men have voluble tongues, and are more ready and presential than others; their tongues are as the pen of a ready scribe: and others, no less ready with their hands, which keep pace with, yea, out-run the tongue of the speaker, as Martial notes.

Currant verba licet, manus est velocior illis:

Nondum lingua suum dextra, peregit opus.*

Yet all this is but bungling work, to the ready dispatch of spirits; one act of the will opens the window to discern the mind of another clearly; so that the converse of spirits must needs be more excellent, in both respects, than any we are accustomed to, or acquainted with in this world. I will shut up this question with one.

Corollary. Long to be associated with the spirits of just men made perfect. You that are going to join that blessed assembly, will even in this respect, gain an invaluable advantage. It is true, there is much of comfort in the present converses of embodied and imperfect saints; it is sweet to fast and pray, to sigh and groan together; it is sweeter to rejoice and praise our God together; it is sweet to talk of heaven with our faces thitherward; but alas! what is this to the converses that are among the spirits of just men made perfect! With what melting hearts have we sometimes sat, under the doctrine of the gospel! How have our ears been chained with delight to the preacher's lips, whilst he hath been discoursing of those ravishing subjects, *Christ*, and *heaven*! But alas! how dry and dull a thing is the best of this, to the language of heaven! Three things debase and spoil the communications of the saints on earth, viz. the darkness, dulness, and frothiness thereof.

1. The darkness and ignorance of our understandings. How crude, weak, and indigested are our highest and purest notions of spiritual things! we speak of them but as children, 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

* *Martial, Epigr. lib. 14. ep. 176.*

for alas ! the vail is yet upon our faces. The body of sin, and the body of flesh cast a very dark shadow upon the world to come ; but the apprehensions of separated souls are most bright and clear. This darkness begets mistakes ; mistakes beget so many quarrels and janglings, that our fellowship on earth loseth, at once, both its profit and pleasure.

2. There is much dulness and deadness accompanying the communion of saints on earth, abundance of precious time is wasted among us in unprofitable silence, and when we engage in discourses of heaven, that discourse is often little better than silence ; our words freeze betwixt our lips, and we speak not with that concernedness and warmth of spirit, which suits with such subjects.

It is not so among our brethren above ; their affections are at the highest pitch, giving *glory to God in the highest*.

3. To conclude ; In the discourses of the best of men on earth, there is too much froth and vanity ; many words, like water, run away at the waste spout, but there God is the centre, in which all terminates. O therefore let us long to be among the unbodied people ! this world will never suit us with companions in all things agreeable to the desires of our hearts. The best company are got together in the upper-room ; an hour there is better than an age below. Whatever fellowship saints leave on earth, they shall be sure to find better in heaven.

Query 6. *Whether the separated souls of the just in heaven, do incline to a re-union with their own bodies ? And how that re-union is at last effected ?*

That these blessed souls have no such inclination or desire, these reasons seem to persuade.

1. That their bodies, whilst they lived in them, were no better, than so many prisons ; many were the prejudices, damages, and miseries they have sustained and suffered in them. It kept them at an uncomfortable distance from the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 6. their bemoaning cries spake their uneasy state : how often hath every gracious soul thus lamented itself, "Wo is me that I dwell in Me-
"sheek." It inclosed their souls within its mud walls, which intercepted the light and joy of God's face. Death therefore did a most friendly office, when it set it at liberty, and brought it forth into its own pure and pleasant light and liberty *. These blessed spirits now rejoice as prisoners do in their recovered liberty ; and can it

* The body obstructs and obscures the mind in its conceptions, and pollutes it by its union with the flesh ; hence the light of the mind is more defective, as it passes, in a manner, through a glass of flesh : doubtless, when, by the power of death, the soul is as it were, squeezed out of the body, to which it was so closely united, and in this manner purified, than it breaks from its confinement in the body, to a pure and unmixed light suitable to its nature. *Tertullian on the soul.*

be supposed, after all these sufferings, groans, and sighs to be dissolved, they can be willing to be embodied again? Surely there is as little reason for souls at liberty to desire to be again embodied, as there is for a bird got out of the snare or cage, to fly back again to its place of confinement and restraint. Yea, when we consider how loath some holy souls, when under the excruciating pains of sickness, and as yet in the sight of this alluring world, have been to hear of a return to it by the recovery of their health; we cannot think, but being quite out of the sight of this, and in the fruition of the other world, the thoughts of the body must needs be more loathsome to them than ever.

We read, that when a good man in the time of his sickness was told by his friends, that some hopeful signs of his recovery began now to appear, he answered, And must I then return to this body? I was as a sheep driven out of the storm almost to the fold, and then driven back into the storm again: or as a weary traveller near his home, who must go back again to fetch something he had neglected: or as an apprentice whose time was almost out, and then must begin a new term. Of some others it hath been also noted, that the greatest infirmities they discovered upon their death-bed, have been their two passionate desires to be dissolved, and their unsubmitiveness to God's will in their longer stay in the body. Now, the bodies of the saints being so cheerfully forsaken, and that only upon a fore-taste of heaven by faith; how can it be thought they should find any inclination to a re-union, when they are so abundantly satisfied with the joys of his face in heaven? Certainly the body hath been no such pleasant habitation to the soul, that it should cast an eye or thought that way when it is once delivered out of it: if it were burdensome here, a thought of it would be loathsome there.

2. We have shewed before, that the separate soul wants not the helps of the body, but lives and acts at a more free and comfortable rate than ever before. It is true, it is not now delighted with meat and drink, with smells and sounds, as it was wont to be; but then it must be considered, that it is happiness and perfection not to need them. It is now become equal to the angels in the way and manner of its living; and what it enjoyed by the ministry of the body, it eminently and more perfectly enjoys without it. What perfections can the soul receive from matter *? What can a lump of flesh add to a spirit: And if it can add nothing to it, there is no reason why it should hanker after it, and incline to a re-union

* The rational soul receives no perfection from matter, which it could not receive without it; therefore, when it shall be separated from it, it is not said to have a propensity to it. *Conimb.*

with it. It added nothing of happiness to it, but much trouble, and therefore becomes justly undesirable to it.

3. The supposition of such a propension and inclination, seems no way to suit with that state of perfect rest which the souls of the just enjoy in heaven. The scripture tells us, that at death they enter into rest, Isa. lvii. 2. Heb. iv. 9. That they rest from their labours, Rev. xiv. 13. But that which inclines and desires (especially when the desired enjoyment, as in this case, is suspended so long) must be as far from rest, as it is from satisfaction in the enjoyment of the thing desired. We know what Solomon hath observed of such a life, (and his observation is experimentally true,) that "hope deferred makes the heart sick," Prov. xiii. 12. Who finds not his own desires a very rack to him in such cases! If we be kept but a few days in earnest expectation and desire of an absent friend, and he comes not, what an uneasy life do we live! But here we must suppose some have such an unsatisfied life for hundreds, and others for thousands of years already; and how much longer they may remain so, who can tell? We use to say, Lovers hours are full of eternity. These reasons seem to carry it for the negative.

But if the matter be weighed once more, with the following reasons in the counter-scale, and prejudice do not pull down the balance; we shall find the contrary conclusion much more strong and rational. For,

Arg. 1. The soul and body are the two constitutive parts of man; either of these being wanting, the man is not complete and perfect. The good of the whole is the good of the parts themselves; and every thing hath a natural desire and appetite to its own good and perfection*. It is confessed, the soul, for as much as concerns itself singly, is made perfect, and enjoys blessedness in the absence of the body; but this is only the perfection and blessedness of one part of man; the other part, *viz.* the body, lies in obscurity and corruption: and till both be blessed, and blessed together, in a state of composition and re-union, the whole man is not made perfect. For this therefore the soul must wait.

Arg. 2. Though death hath dissolved the union, yet it hath not destroyed the relation betwixt the soul and the body; that dust is more to it than all the dust of the whole earth. Hence it is that

* A separate soul has a propensity to union with the body, for it desires the actual constitution of the whole compound being, seeing it is for this, as its end, that it exists, and is found within the compass of real beings. And this is that perfection which the soul obtains by that propensity: for the good of the whole compound being is the good of the parts themselves. It must therefore be affirmed, that the separate soul naturally desires the resurrection. *Alsted. natur. theol. part 1. p. 214, 215.*

the whole person of a believer is sometimes denominated from that part of him, namely, his body, which remains captivated by death in the grave. Hence, 2 Thess. iv. 15. dead believers are called *those that sleep*, which must needs properly respect the body, for the soul sleeps not, and shews what a firm and dear relation still remains betwixt these absent friends. Now we all know the mighty power of a relation, if it be at least among entities. Surely it is one of the greatest things in the world in efficacy.

It is difficult to bear the absence of our dear relatives, especially if we be in prosperity, and they in adversity: As the case here is betwixt the spirit in heaven, and its body in the grave; this associated with angels, that preyed upon by worms. Joseph's case is the liveliest emblem that occurs to my present thoughts to illustrate the point in hand. He was advanced to be lord over all Egypt, living in the greatest pomp and splendor there; but his father, and brethren, were, at the same time, ready to perish, in the land of Canaan, Gen. xliii. 29, 30, 31. He had been many years separated from them, but neither the length of time, nor honours of the court, could alienate his affections from them. O see the mighty power of relation! no sooner doth he see his brethren, and understand their case, and the pining condition of Jacob, his father, but his bowels yearned, and his compassions rolled together for them; yea, he could not forbear, nor stifle his own affections, though he knew how injurious his brethren had been to him, and betrayed him, as the body hath the soul: Yet notwithstanding all this, he breaks forth into tears, and outcries, over them, which made the house ring again with the news that Joseph's brethren were come. Nor could he be at rest in the lap of honour, and plenty, until he had got home his dear, and ancient relations to him. Thus stands the case betwixt soul and body.

Arg. 3. The regret, reluctancy, and sorrows expressed by the soul at parting, do strongly argue its inclination to a re-union with it, when it is actually separated from it: For why should we surmise, that the soul, which mourned, and groaned so deeply at parting, which clasped, and embraced it so dearly, and affectionately, which fought, struggled, and disputed the passage with death, every foot, and inch of ground it got, and would not part with the body, till by plain force it was rent out of its arms; should not, when absent, desire to see, and enjoy its old and endeared friend again? Hath it lost its affection, though it continue its relation? That is very improbable: Or doth its advancement in heaven make it regardless of its body, which lies in contempt and misery? That is an effect which Christ's personal glory never produced in him towards us, nor a good man's preferment would

produce in him to his poor and miserable friends in this world, as we see in the case of Joseph, just now instanced in. It is therefore harsh, and incongruous, to suppose the soul's love to the body was extinguished in the parting hour, and that now, out of sight out of mind.

Object. But was it not urged before, in opposition to this assertion, that the souls of the righteous looked upon their bodies as their prisons, and sighed for deliverance by death, and greatly rejoiced in the hope, and foresight of that liberty death would restore them to? How doth this consist with such reluctancies at parting, and inclinations to re-union?

Sol. The objection doth not suppose any man to be totally free from all reluctancies, and unwillingness to die; the holiest souls that ever lived in bodies of flesh, will give an unwilling shrug, when it comes to the parting point, 2 Cor. v. 2. but this their willingness to be gone, arises from two other grounds, which make it consistent enough with its reluctancies at parting, and inclination to a second meeting.

(1.) This willingness to die, doth not suppose the soul's love to the body to be utterly extinguished, but mastered, and overpowered by another, and stronger love. There is in every Christian a double love, one natural to the body, and the things below, the other supernatural, to Christ, and the things above; the latter doth not extinguish, though it conquer and subdue the other. Love to the body pulls backward, love to Christ pushes forward, and finally prevails. This is so consistent with it, that it supposes natural reluctance, and unwillingness to part.

(2.) The willingness of God's people to be dissolved, must not be understood absolutely, but comparatively; in that sense the apostle will be understood, 2 Cor. v. 8. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord," i. e. rather than to live always a life of sin, sorrow, and absence from God: death is not desirable in, and for itself, but only as it is the soul's outlet from sin, and its inlet to God.

So that the very best desire is but comparative, and it is but few who find the love of this animal life sub-acted and over-powered by high-raised acts of faith and love. The generality, even of good souls, feel strong renitencies, and suffer sharp conflicts at their dissolution; all which discovers with what lothness and unwillingness the soul unclasps its arms to let go its body. Now, as divines argue the frame of Christ's heart in heaven towards his people on earth, from all those endearing passages and demonstrations of love he gave them at parting; so we here argue the continued love and inclination of the soul to its body after it is in heaven, from the

manifold demonstrations it gave of its affection to it in this world, especially in the parting hour. No considerations in all the world, less than the more full fruition of God, and freedom from sin, could possibly have prevailed with it to quit the body, though but for a time, and leave it in the dust. Which is our third argument.

Arg. 4. And as the dolorous parting hour evidenceth it, so doth the joy with which it receives it again at the resurrection. If it part from it so heavily, and meet it again with joy unspeakable; sure, then, it still retaineth much love for it, and desires to be re-espoused to it in the interval. Now, that its meeting in the resurrection is a day of joy to the soul, is evident, because it is called *the time of refreshment*, Acts iii. 19. and they *awake with singing out of the dust*, Isa. xxvi. 19. If the direct and immediate scope of the prophet points not (as some think it doth) at the resurrection, yet it is allowed by all to be a very lively allusion to it, which is sufficient for my purpose: And, indeed, none that understand and believe the design, and business of that day, can possibly doubt but there was reason enough to call it a time of refreshment, a singing morning; for the souls of the righteous come from heaven with Christ, and the whole host of shouting angels, not to be spectators only, but the subjects of that day's triumph: They come to re-assume, and be re-espoused to their own bodies, this being the appointed time for God to vindicate and rescue them from the tyrannical power of the grave, to endow them with spiritual qualities, at the second marriage to their souls, that in both parts they may be completely happy. O the joyful claspings, and dear embraces, betwixt them! who but themselves, can understand! And, by the way, this removes the objection before-mentioned, of the miseries and prejudices the soul suffered in this world, in, and from the body; for now it receives it a spiritual body, (i. e.) so subdued to, and fitted for the use of the spirit, as never to impede, clog, or obstruct its motions and inclinations any more, 1 Cor. xv. 44. In this hope it parted from it, and with this consolation it now receives it again.

Arg. 5. There are many scriptures which very much favour, if they do not positively conclude for the soul's inclination to, and desire to be re-united with its own body, even whilst it is in the state of its single glorification in heaven: Certainly our souls leave not their bodies at death, as the *ostrich* doth her egg in the sand, without any further regard to it, or concernment for it; but they are represented as crying to God to remember, avenge, and vindicate them, Rev. vi. 10, 11. "How long, Lord, how long wilt thou not avenge our blood?" *Our blood*, speaks both the continued relation, and the suitable affection they have to their absent bodies.

And to the same sense * a judicious and learned pen expounds that place, Job xiv. 14. (which is commonly, but I know not how fitly accommodated to another purpose) "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." Which words, by a diligent comparing of the context, appears to have this for their proper scope and sense.

'Job in the former verse had expressed his confidence by way of petition, that at a set and appointed time God would remember him so as to recal him out of the grave; and now, minded to speak out more fully, puts the question to himself, If a man die, shall he live again?' and thus answers it, 'All the days of my appointed time, (that is, of the appointed time which he mentioned before, when God should revive him out of the dust) 'will I wait till my change come;' that is, that glorious change, when the corruption of a loathsome grave should be exchanged for immortal glory: Which he amplifies, and utters more expressly, ver. 15. 'Thou shalt call, and I will answer; thou shalt have a desire to the work of thy hands:' Thou wilt not always forget to restore and perfect thine own creature. And surely this waiting is not the act of his inanimate sleeping dust, but of that part which should be capable of such an action: q. d. I, in that part which shall be still alive, shall patiently wait the appointed time of reviving me in that part also, which death and the grave shall insult over in a temporary triumph in the mean time.'

Upon these grounds I think the inclination of the separated spirits of the just to their own bodies to be a justifiable opinion. As for the damned, we have no reason to think such a re-union to be desirable to them; for alas, it will be but the increase and aggravation of their torments; which consideration is sufficient to overpower and stifle the inclination of nature, and make the very thoughts of it horrid and dreadful. To what end (as the prophet speaks in another case) is it for them to desire that day? It will be a day of darkness and gloominess to them; re-union being designed to complete the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other.

But before I take off my hand, and dismiss this question, I must remember that I am a debtor to two objections.

Object. 1. *The soul can both live and act separate from the body, it needs it not; and if it do not want, why should it desire it?*

Sol. The life and actings of the glorified are considerable two ways, (1.) Singly and abstractedly for the life and action of one part: And so we confess the soul lives happily, and acts forth its own powers freely in the state of separation. (2.) Personally, or

* Mr. Howe's blessedness of the righteous, p. 170, 171.

consecrately, as it is the life and action of the whole man, and so it doth both need and desire the conjunction or re-union of the body; for the body is not only a part or Christ's purchase, as well as the soul, and to have its own glory, as well as it, but it is also a constitutive part of a complete glorified person; and so considered, the saints are not perfectly happy till this re-union be effected, which is the true ground and reason of this its desire.

Object. 2. But this hypothesis seems to thwart the account given in scripture of the rest, and placid state of separate souls: for look, as bodies which gravitate and propend do not rest, so neither do souls which incline and desire.

Sol. There is a vast difference betwixt the tendencies, and propensions of souls in the way to glory, and in glory: We that are absent from the Lord, can find no rest in the way; but those that are with the Lord can rest in Jesus, and yet wait without anxiety, of self-torturing impatience for the accomplishment of the promises to their absent bodies, Rev. vi. 10, 11.

Corollary. Let this provoke all to get sanctified souls, to rule and use these their bodies now for God. This will abundantly sweeten their parting at death, and their meeting again at the resurrection of the just; else their parting will be doleful, and their next meeting dreadful. And so much for the doctrine of separation.

The Uses of the Point.

Our way is now open to the improvement and use of this excellent subject and doctrine of separation; and certainly it affords as rich an entertainment for our affections, as for our minds, in the following uses; of which the first will be for our information in six practical *inferences*.

Inf. 1. If this be the life and state of gracious souls after their separation from the body, *Then holy persons ought not to entertain dismal and terrifying thoughts of their own dissolution.*

The apprehensions and thoughts of death should have a peculiar pleasantness in the minds of believers. You have heard into what a blessed presence and communion death introduceth your souls; how it leads you out of a body of sin, a world of sorrows, the society of imperfect saints, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, to that lovely mount Sion, to the heavenly sanctuary, to the blessed visions of the face of God. Oh! methinks there hath been enough said, to make all the souls, in whom the well-grounded hopes of the life of glory are found, to cry out with the apostle, "We are confident, I say, yea, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 8.

When good Musculus drew near his end, how sweet and pleasant was this meditation to his soul! Here his swan-like song;

* *Nil superest, vitæ frigus præcordia captat ;
 Sed, tu Christe, mihi vita perennis ades :
 Quid trepidas anima, ad sedes abitura quietis ?
 En tibi ductor adest angelus ille tuus.
 Linque domum hanc miseram, nunc in sua fata ruentem
 Quam tibi fida Dei dextera restituet.
 Peccasti ? Scio, sed Christus credentibus in se
 Peccata expurgat sanguine cuncta suo.
 Horribilis mors est ? Falcem, sed proxima vita est,
 Ad quam te Christi gratia certa vocat.
 Praesto est de Satana, peccato et morte triumphans
 Christus ; ad hunc igitur laeta alacrisque migra.*

Which may be thus translated.

Cold death my heart invade, my life doth fly :
 O, Christ, my everlasting life draw nigh.
 Why quiverest thou, my soul, within my breast ?
 Thine angel's come, to lead thee to thy rest.
 Quit cheerfully this drooping house of clay ;
 God will restore it in the appointed day.
 Hast sinn'd ? I know it, let not that be urg'd ;
 For Christ, thy sins, with his own blood hath purg'd.
 Is death affrighting ? True, but yet withal,
 Consider, Christ through death to life doth call.
 He triumphs over Satan, sin, and death ;
 Therefore with joy resign thy dying breath.

Much in the same cheerful frame was the heart of dying Bulfinger*, when his mournful friends expressed their sense of the loss they should sustain by his removal. “ Why, said he, if God will “ make any farther use of my labours in the ministry, he will re- “ new my strength, and I will gladly serve him : But if he please “ (as I desire he would) to call me hence, I am ready to obey his “ will ; and nothing more pleasant can befall me, than to leave this “ sinful and miserable world to go to my Saviour Christ.” O that all, who are out of the danger of death, were thus got out of the dread of death too.

Let them only tremble and be convulsed at the thoughts and sight of death, whose souls must fall into the hands of a sin-revenging God by the stroke of death ; who are to breathe out their last hope with their last breath. Death is *yours*, saith the apostle,

* Melchior Adams, in *vita Masculi*, p. 535.

† *Si Deo visum fuerit, mea opera ulterius in ecclesiæ ministerio uti ; ipso vires sufficere, et libens illi parebo ; sin me voluerit (quod opto) ex hac vita evocare, paratus sum illius voluntati obsequi ; ac nihil est quod mihi jucundius possit contingere, quam ex hoc misero et corruptissimo seculo ad Christum servatorem meum migrandum sit.* Idem. p. 505.

1 Cor. iii. 22. your friend, your privilege, your passage to heaven ; it is your ignorance of it, which breeds your fears about it.

Inf. 2. Gather from hence, the absolute, indispensable necessity of your union with Christ, before your dissolution by death.

Woe to that soul which shall be separated from its body before it be united with Christ. None but the spirits of just men are made perfect at death. Righteous souls are the only qualified subjects of blessedness.

It is true, every soul hath a natural capacity of happiness, but gracious souls only have an actual meetness for glory. The scriptures tell us in the plainest words, that " without holiness no man " shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. that " except we be regenerate, " and born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. You make the greatest adventure that ever was made by man ; indeed, an adventure infinitely too great for any man to make, when you shoot the gulph of vast eternity upon terms of hazard and uncertainty.

What thinkest thou, reader? Darest thou adventure thy soul and eternal happiness upon it, that the work of regeneration and sanctification, that very same work of grace, on which the Spirit of God has placed all thy hopes of heaven in these scriptures, is truly wrought by him in thy soul ? Consider it well, pause upon it again and again before thou go forth. Should a mistake be committed here, (and nothing is more easy or common, all the world over, than such mistakes) thou art irrecoverably gone. This venture can be made but once, and the miscarriage is never to be retrieved afterwards ; thou hast not another soul to adventure, nor a second adventure to make of this. Well might the apostle Peter call for all diligence to make our calling and our election sure : That can never be made too sure, which is so invaluable in its worth, and to be but once adventured.

Inf. 3. How prejudicial is it to dying men to be then incumbered, diverted, and distracted about earthly concerns, when the time of their departure is at hand.

The business and employment of dying persons is of so vast importance and weight, that every moment of their time needs to be carefully saved and applied to this their present and most important concern. How well soever you have improved the time of life, believe it, you will find work enough upon your hand at death : dying hours will be found to be busy and laborious hours, even to the most painful, serious, and industrious souls, whose life hath been mostly spent in preparations for death. Leave not the proper business of other days to that day ; for that day will have business enough of its own. Sufficient for that day are the labours thereof.

Let a few considerations be pondered, to clear and confirm this inference.

Consid. 1. The business and employment of dying persons, is of the most serious, awful, and solemn nature and importance; it is their last preparatory work on earth, to their immediate appearance before God their judge, Heb. ix. 27. it is their shooting the gulph into eternity, and leaving this world, and all their acquaintance and interests therein for ever, Isa. xxviii. 11. It is therefore a work by itself to die, a work requiring the most intense, deep, and undisturbed exercises of all the abilities and graces of the inner man; and all little enough.

Consid. 2. Time is exceeding precious with dying men; the last sand is ready to fall, and therefore not to be wasted, as it was wont to be. When we had a fair prospect of many years before us, we made little account of an hour or a day; but now one of those hours, which we so carelessly lavished away, is of more value than all this world to us, especially if the whole weight of eternity should hang upon it, (as oftentimes it doth) then the loss of that portion of time, is the loss of soul, body, and hope for evermore.

Consid. 3. Much of that little precious time of departing souls will be unavoidably taken up, and employed about the inexcusable, pressing calls and necessities of distressed nature; all that you can do for your souls must then be done only by fits and snatches, in the midst of many disturbances, and frequent interruptions: So that it is rarely found, that a dying man can pursue a serious meditation with calm and fixed thoughts: for besides the pains and faintings of the body, the abilities of the mind usually fail. Here also they fall into a sad *dilemma*; if they do not with the utmost intention of mind fix their hearts and thoughts on Christ, they lose their comfort, if godly, and their souls, if ungodly; and if they do, *friends* and *physicians* assure them they will destroy their bodies. These are the straits of men bordering close upon eternity; they must hastily catch a few moments in the intervals of pain, and then are put by all again.

Consid. 4. There is no man living but hath something to do for his own soul in a dying hour, and something for others also.

Suppose the best that can be supposed, that the soul be in real union with Christ, and that union be also clear: yet it is seldom found but there are some assaults of Satan: Or if not, yet how many relations and friends need our experiences and counsels at such a time? How many things shall we have to do after our great and main work is done? And others have a great deal more to do, though as safe as the former. O the knots and objections that are then to be dissolved and answered! The usual onsets and assaults

of Satan that are then to be resisted ! And yet most dying persons have much more upon their hands than either of the former. The whole work of repentance and faith is to do, when time is even done.

Consid. 5. Few, yea, very few, are found furnished with wisdom, experience, and faithfulness, to give dying persons any considerable assistance in soul-affairs. It may be there may be found among the visitants of the sick, now and then, a person who hath a word of wisdom in his heart ; but then either he wants opportunity or courage and faithfulness to do the part of a true spiritual friend. Elihu describes the person so qualified as he ought for this work, Job xxx. 23, 24. and calls him, *One among a thousand*, Some are too close and reserved, others too trifling and impertinent ; some are willing, but want ability ; others are able, but want faithfulness ; some cut too deep by uncharitable censoriousness ; others skin over the wound too slightly, speaking peace where God and conscience speak none : So that little help is to be expected.

Consid. 6. How much therefore doth it deserve to be lamented, that where there is so much to do, so little time to do it, and so few to help in the best improvement of it, all should be lost as to their souls by earthly incumbrances and worldly affairs, which might have been done sooner and better in a more proper season ! O, therefore, let me persuade all men to take heed of bringing the proper business of healthful days to their sick-bed.

Inf. 4. *What an excellent creature is the soul of man, which is capable, not only of such preparations for God, whilst it is in the body, but of such sights and enjoyments of God, when it lives without a body.*

Here the Spirit of God works upon it, in the way of grace and sanctification, Eph. ii. 10. The scope and design of this his workmanship, is to qualify and make us meet for the life of heaven, 2 Cor. vi. 5. For this self-same thing, or purpose, our souls are wrought, or moulded by grace, into quite another frame and temper, than that which nature gave them ; and when he hath wrought out and finished all that he intends to be wrought in the way of sanctification, then shall it be called up to the highest enjoyments and employments for ever, that a creature is susceptible of.

Herein the dignity of the soul appears, that no other creature in this world, beside it, hath a natural capacity, either to be sanctified inherently in this world, or glorified everlastingly in the world to come ; to be transformed into the image, and filled with the joy of the Lord. There are *myriads* of other souls in this world, beside ours, but to none of them is the Spirit of sanctification sent,

but only to ours: The souls of *animals* serve only to move the dull and sluggish matter, and take in for a few days the sensitive pleasures of the creation, and so expire, having no natural capacity of, or designation for any higher employment or enjoyment.

And it deserves a most serious animadversion, that this vast capacity of the soul for eternal blessedness, must of necessity make it capable of so much the more misery and self-torment, if at last it fail of that blessedness: For it is apparent they do not perish because they are *unable*, but because they are *unwilling*; not because their souls wanted any natural faculty that others have, but because they would not open those they have, to receive Christ in the way of faith and obedience, as others did.

Think upon this you that live only to eat, and drink, and sleep, and play, as the birds and beasts in the field do; What need was there of a reasonable soul for such sensual employments? Do not your noble faculties speak your designation for higher uses? And will not you wish to exchange souls with the most vile and despicable *animal* in this world, if it were possible to be done? Certainly it were better for you to have no capacity of eternal blessedness (as they have not) if you do not enjoy it; and no capacity of torment beyond this life) as they have not) if you must certainly endure it.

Inf. 5. If our souls and bodies must be separate shortly, how patiently should we bear all lesser separations, that may and will be made, betwixt us and any other enjoyments in this world?

No union is so intimate, strict and dear, as that betwixt our souls and bodies. All your relations and enjoyments in this world, hang looser from your souls than your bodies do: and if it be your duty, patiently and submissively, to suffer a painful parting pull from your bodies; it is doubtless your duty to suffer meekly and patiently a separation from other things, which are but a prelude to it, and a mere shadow of it. It is good to put such cases to ourselves in the midst of our pleasant enjoyments.

I have now many comfortable relatives in the world; wife, children, kindred, and friends; God hath made them pleasant to me, but he may bereave me of all these. Doth not providence ring such changes all the world over? Are not all kingdoms, cities, and towns, full of the sighs and lamentations of widows, orphans, and friends bereaved of their pleasant and useful relations? But if God will have it so, it is our duty to bound our sorrows, remembering the time *is short*, 1 Cor. vii. 29. In a few days we must be stript much nearer, even out of our own bodies by death.

God may also separate betwixt me and my health by sickness, so that the pleasure of this world shall be cut off from me; but sickness is not death, though it be a prelude and step towards it; I

may well bear this with patience, who must submissively bear sharper pains than these ere long. Yea, and well may I bear this submissively, considering that by such imbittering and weaning providences, God is preparing me for a much easier dissolution, than if I should live at ease in the body all my days till death comes to make so great and sudden a change upon me.

God may also separate betwixt me and my liberty by restraint. It hath been the lot of the best men that ever were in the world; and if it should be ours also, we should not be much startled at it, considering these bodies of ours must be shortly pent up in a straiter, darker, and more loathsome place of confinement, than any prison in this world can be. The grave is a darker, place, Job xvii. 13. and your abode there will be longer, Eccl. xi. 8.

These, and all our other outward enjoyments, are separable things, and it is good thus to alleviate our loss of them.

Inf. 6. How heavenly should the tempers and frames of those souls be who are candidates for heaven, and must be so shortly numbered with the spirits of just men made perfect.

It is reasonable that we all begin to be that which we expect to be for ever; to learn that way of living and conversing, which we believe must be our everlasting life and business in the world to come. Let them that hope to live with angels in heaven, learn to live like angels on earth, in holiness, activity, and ready obedience.

There is the greatest reason that our minds be there, where our souls are to be for ever. A spiritual mind will be found possible, congruous, sweet, and evidential of an interest in that glory, to all those holy souls, who are preparing and designed for it.

1. It is possible, notwithstanding the clogs and entanglements of the body to be heavenly-minded. Others have attained it, Phil. iii. 20. Two things make a heavenly conversation possible to men, viz.

(1.) The natural abilities of the mind.

(2.) The gracious principles of the mind.

(1.) The natural abilities of the mind, which can, in a minute's time, dispatch a nimble messenger to heaven, and mount its thoughts from this to that world in a moment. The power of cogitation is a rich endowment of the soul, such as no other creature on earth is participant of. Though spiritual thoughts be not the natural growth of the soul, yet thoughts capable of being spiritualized are. And without this ability of projecting thoughts, all intercourse must have been cut off.

(2.) The gracious principles implanted in the soul, do actually incline the mind, and mount its thoughts heaven-ward. Yea, this will prove more than a possibility of a conversation in heaven;

whilst saints tabernacle on earth, in bodies of flesh, it will almost prove an impossibility that it should be otherwise, for these spiritual principles setting the bent and tendency of the heart heavenward, we must act against the very law of our new nature, when we place our affections elsewhere.

2. A mind in heaven is most congruous, decorous, and comely for those that are the enrolled inhabitants of that heavenly city. Where should a Christian's love be, but where his Lord is! Our hearts and our homes do not use to be long asunder. It becomes you so to think, and so to speak now, as those who make account to be shortly singing *hallelujahs* before the throne.

3. It is most sweet and delightful: no pleasure in this world is comparable to this pleasure; Rom. viii. 6. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." It is a young heaven born in the soul in its way thither.

4. To conclude: It is evidential of your interest in it: an agreeable frame is the surest title, Col. iii. 1, 2. Mat. vi. 21. If heaven attract your minds now, it will centre them for ever.

Use 2. This doctrine of the separation of the spirits of the just from their bodies, as it lies before you in this discourse affords a singular help to all the people of God, to entertain lovely and pleasant thoughts of that day; to make death not only an unregretted, but a most pleasant and desirable thing to their souls.

I know there is a pure, simple, natural fear of death, from which you must not expect to be perfectly freed, by all the arguments in the world. And there is a reverential, awful fear of death, which it would be your prejudice and loss to have destroyed. You will have a natural, and ought to have a reverential fear of death: the one flows from your sensitive, the other from your sanctified nature.

But it is a third sort of fear which doth you all the mischief: a fear springing in gracious souls out of the weakness of the graces, and the strength of their unmortified affections: a fear arising partly out of the darkness of our minds, and partly out of the sensuality and earthliness of our hearts; this fear is that which so convulseth our souls when death is near, and imbittereth our lives, even whilst it is at a distance. He that hath been over-heated in his affections to this world, and over-cooled by diversions and temptations, neglects and intermissions, to that world, cannot chuse but give an unwilling shrug, if not a frightful screech at the appearance of death.

And this being the sad case of too many, good and upright souls for the main; and there being so few, even among serious Christians, that have attained to that courage and complacence in the thoughts of death, which the apostle speaks of, 2 Cor. v. 8. to be

both confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord; I will, from this discourse, furnish them with some special assistance therein. But withal, I must tell you upon what great disadvantages I am here to dispute with your fears; so strong is the current of natural and vicious fear, that except a special hand of God enforce, and set home the arguments that shall be urged, they will be as easily swept away before it, as so many straws by a rapid torrent; nor will it be to any more purpose to oppose my breath to them, than to the tides and waves of the sea.

Moreover, I am fully convinced, by long and often experience, how unsteady and inconstant the frames and tempers of the best hearts are; and that if it be not altogether, yet it is next to an impossibility to fix them in such a temper as this I aim at is. Where is that man to be found, who after the revolutions of many years, and in those years various dispensations of providence without him, altering his condition, and greater variety of temptations within, can yet say, notwithstanding all these various aspects and positions, his heart hath still held one steady and invariable tenour and course?

Alas, there be very few (if any) of such a sound and settled temper of mind, whose pulse beats with an even stroke, through all inequalities of condition, alike free and willing at one time as another, to be unclothed of the body, and to be with Christ. This height of faith, and depth of mortification; this strength of love to Christ, and ardour of holy desire, are degrees of grace to which very few attain.

The case standing thus, it is no more than needs, to urge all sorts of arguments upon our timorous and unsteady hearts; and it is like to prove a hard and difficult task to bring the heart but to a quiet and unregretting submission to the appointment of God herein, though submission be one of the lowest steps of duty in this case.

If it be hard to fix our thoughts but an hour, on such an unpleasant subject as death, how hard must it be to bring over the consent of the will? If we cannot endure it at a distance, in our thoughts, how shall we embrace and hug it in our bosoms? if our thoughts fly back with distaste and impatience, no wonder if our will be obstinate and refractory: we must first prevail with our thoughts to fix themselves, and think close to such a subject, before it can be expected we cheerfully resign ourselves into the hands of death. We cannot be willing to go along with death, till we have some acquaintance with it; and acquainted with it we cannot be till we accustom ourselves to think assiduously and calmly of it. They that have dwelt many years at death's door, both in

respect of the condition of their bodies, and the disposition of their minds, yet find reluctancy enough when it comes to the point.

Object. But if separation from the body be (as it is) an enemy to nature, and there be no possibility to extinguish natural aversation; to what purpose is it to argue and persuade where there is no expectation of success?

Sol. Death is to be considered two ways by the people of God:

1. As an enemy to nature.

2. As a *medium* to glory.

If we consider it simply in itself as an enemy to nature, there is nothing in it for which we should desire it: but if we consider it as a *medium*, or passage into glory, yea, the only ordinary way through which all the saints must pass out of this into a better state; so it will appear not only tolerable, but desirable to prepared souls. Were there not a shore of glory on the other side of these black waters of death, for my own part, I should rather chuse to live meanly than to die easily. If both parts were to perish at death, there were no reason to persuade one to be willing to deliver up the other; it were a madness for the soul to desire to be dissolved, if it were so far from being better out of the body than in it, that it should have no being at all. But Christians, let me tell you, death is so far from being a bar, that it is a bridge in your way to glory, and you are never like to come thither, but by passing over it: except, therefore, you will look beyond it, you will never see any desirableness in it. “I desire to be dissolved (saith Paul) and to be with Christ, which is far better.” To be with death is sad, but to be with Christ is sweet; to endure the pains of death is doleful, but to see the face of Christ is joyful; to part with your pleasant habitations is irksome, but to be lodged in the heavenly mansions is most delightful; a parting hour with dear relations is cutting, but a meeting hour with Jesus Christ is transporting; to be rid of your own bodies is not pleasing, but to be rid of sin, and that for ever, what can be more pleasing to a gracious soul?

You see, then, in what sense I present death as a desirable thing to the people of God: and therefore seeing nature teacheth us (as the apostle speaks) to put the more abundant comeliness upon the uncomely parts; suffer me to dress up death in its best ornaments, and present it to you in the following arguments, as a beautiful and comely object of your conditional and well-regulated desires.

And,
Arg. 1. If upon a fair and just account, there shall appear to be more gain to believers in death, than there is in life; reason must needs vote death to be better to them that are in Christ, than life can be; and consequently, it should be desirable in their eyes.

It is a clear dictate of reason, in case of choice, to chuse that

which is best for us. Who is there that freely exercises reason and choice together, that will not do so?

What merchant will not part with an hundred pound's worth of glass beads and pendants for a tun of gold? A few tinsel toys for as many rich diamonds? *Mercatura est amittere, ut luceris*; that is true merchandise, to part with things of lesser, for things of greater value.

Now, if you will be tried and determined by God's book of rates, then the case is determined quickly, and the advantage appears exceedingly upon death's side. Phil. i. 21. "To me to live, is Christ; and to die, is gain."

Object. *True, it might be so to Paul, who was eminent in grace, and ripe for glory; but it may be loss to others, who have not attained the height of his holiness or assurance.*

Sol. The true and plain sense of the objection is this, whether heaven and Christ, be as much gain to him that enjoys them, though behind others both in grace and obedience, as it is to them who are more eminent in grace, and have done and suffered more for their sake? And let it be determined by yourselves. But if your meaning be, that Paul was ready for death, and so are not you; his work and course was almost comfortably finished, and so is not yours; his death, therefore, must needs be gain to him, but it may be loss to you, even the loss of all that you are worth for ever.

To this I say, the wisdom of God orders the time of his people's death, as well as all other circumstances about it: And in this, your hearts may be at perfect rest, that being in Christ you can never die to your loss, die when you will. I know you will reply, That if your union with Christ were clear, the controversy were ended; but then you must also consider, they are as safe who die by an act of recumbency upon Christ, as those that die in the fullest assurance of their interest in him.

And beside, your reluctancies and aversations to death, are none of your way to assurance; that such a strong aversation to sin, and such a vehement desire after, and love to Christ, as can make you willing to quit all that is dear and desirable to you in this world for his sake, is the very next door or step to assurance; and if the Lord bring your hearts to this frame, and fix them there, it is not likely you will be long without it.

But to return: Paul had here valued life, with a full allowance of all the benefits and advantages of it; "To me to live, is Christ;" that is, if I live, I shall live in communion with Christ, and service for Christ, and in the midst of all those comforts which usually result from both. Here is life, with the most weighty and desirable benefits of it, laid in one scale, and he lays death, and proba-

bly, a violent death too, (for of that he speaks to them afterwards chap. ii. 17.) in the other scale. Thus he fills the scale, and the balance breaks on death's side; yea, it comes down with a πολλῶ μαλ' ὄν κρείσσον, a far, far better.

But here falls in (as an excellent person * observes) a rub in the way: there are in this case two judges, the flesh and the spirit, and they cannot agree upon the values, but contradict each other. Nature saith, It is far better to live than to die, and will not be beaten off from it. What then? I hope you will not put blind and partial nature in competition with God also, as you do life with death. But seeing nature can plead so powerfully, as well as grace, let us hear what those strong reasons are that are urged by the flesh on life's side, and what the soul hath to reply and plead on death's side, (for the soul can plead, and that charmingly too, though not by words and sounds) and then determine the matter, as we shall see cause: but be sure prejudice pull not down the balance.

And here the doleful voice of nature laments, pleads, and bemoans itself to the willing soul.

' O my soul, what dost thou mean by these desires to be dissolved? Art thou in earnest, when thou sayest thou art willing to leave thine own body, and be gone? Consider, and think again, ere thou bid me farewell, what thou art to me, and what I have been, and am to thee; thou art my soul, that is, my prop, my beauty, my honour, my life, and indeed all that is comfortable to me. If thou depart, what am I but a spectacle of pity, an abhorred case in a few moments? a prey to the worms, a captive to death? If thou depart, my candle is put out, and I am left in the horrors of darkness.

' I am thy house, thy delightful habitation, the house in which thou hast dwelt from the first moment of thy creation, and never lodgest one night in any other: every room in me hath one way or other, been a banqueting-room for thy entertainment, a room of pleasure; all my senses have been purveyors for thy delight, my members have all of them been thine instruments and servants to execute thy commands and pleasure. If thou and I part, it must be in a shower: thou shalt feel such pains, such travailing throes, such deep, emphatical groans, such sweets, such agonies as thou never felt before: for death hath somewhat of anguish peculiar to itself, and which is unknown, though guessed at by the living. Besides, whenever thou leavest me, thou leavest all that is, and hath been comfortable to thee in this world: thy house shall know thee no more, Job vii. 10. thy lands, thy money,

* Mr. How, in Mrs. Margaret Baxter's funeral sermon,

‘thy trade, which have cost thee so many careful thoughts, and
 ‘yielded thee so many refreshments, shall be thine no longer; death
 ‘will strip thee of all these, and leave thee naked.

‘Thou hast also, since thou becamest mine, contracted manifold
 ‘relations in the world, which I know are dear unto thee: I
 ‘know it by costly experience: How hast thou made me to wear
 ‘and waste myself, in labours, cares, and watchings for them?
 ‘But if thou wilt be gone, all these must be left exposed, God
 ‘knows to what wants, abuses, and miseries! for I can do nothing
 ‘for them, or myself, if once thou leave me.’ Thus it charms
 and pleads; thus it layeth, as it were, violent hands upon the
 soul, and saith, ‘O my soul, thou shalt not depart.’ It hangs
 about it much, as the wife and children of good Galeacius
 Caracciolus did about him, when he was leaving Italy, to go to
 Geneva, (a lively emblem of the case before us). It saith to the
 soul, as Joab did to David, “Thou hast shamed thy face this day,
 “in that thou lovest thine enemy, death, and hatest me thy
 “friend.” ‘O my soul! my life! my darling! my dear and
 ‘only one! let nothing but unavoidable necessity part thee and
 ‘me.’ All this the flesh can plead, and a great deal more than
 this, and that a thousand times more powerfully and feelingly, than
 any words can plead the case. And all its arguments are backed
 by sense; sight and feeling attest what nature speaks.

Let us, in the next place, weigh the pleas and reasons, which
 notwithstanding all this, do over-power, and prevail with the be-
 lieving soul to be gone, and quit its own body, and return no more
 to the elementary world.

And thus the power of faith and love enables it to reply:

‘My dear body, the companion and partner of my comforts
 ‘and troubles, in the days of my pilgrimage on earth, great is my
 ‘love, and strong are the bonds of my affections to thee. Thou
 ‘hast been tenderly, yea, excessively beloved by me; my cares
 ‘and fears for thee have been inexpressible, and nothing but the
 ‘love of Jesus Christ is strong enough to gain my consent to part
 ‘with thee; thy interest in my affection is great, but as great as
 ‘it is, and as much as I prize thee, I can shake thee off, and thrust
 ‘thee aside, to go to Christ.

‘Nor may this seem absurd, or unreasonable, considering that
 ‘God never designed thee for a mansion, but only a temporary
 ‘tabernacle to me: it is true, I have had some comfort during my
 ‘abode in thee; but I enjoyed these comforts only in thee, not from
 ‘thee; and many more I might have enjoyed, hadst thou not been
 ‘a snare and a clog to me.

‘It is thou that hast eaten up my time, and distracted my thoughts,
 ‘ensnared my affections, and drawn me under much sin and sor-

row : however, though we may weep over each other, as accessories to the sins and miseries we have drawn upon ourselves ; yet in this is our joint relief, that the blood of Christ hath cleansed us both from all sin.

‘ And therefore I can part the more easily and comfortably from thee, because I part in hope to receive and enjoy thee in a far better condition than I leave thee. It is for both our interests to part for a time ; for mine, because I shall thereby be freed and delivered from sin and sorrow, and immediately obtain rest with God, and the satisfaction of all my desires in his presence and enjoyment, which there is no other way to obtain, but by separation from thee : and why should I live a groaning, burdened, restless life always, to gratify thy fond and irrational desires ? If thou lovest me, thou wouldst rejoice, not repine at my happiness. Parents willingly part with their children at the greatest distance, for their preferment, how dearly soever they love them ; and dost thou envy, or repine at mine ? I have lived many months a suffocating, obscure life, with thee in the womb, and neither you nor I had ever tasted or experienced the comforts of this world, and the various delights of sense, if we had not struggled hard for an entrance into this world. And now we are here alas ! though thou art contented to abide ; I live in thee, but as we both lived in the womb, an obscure, uneasy, and unsuitable life ; thou canst feed upon material bread, and delight thyself amidst the variety of sensitive objects thou findest here ; but what are all these things to me ? I cannot subsist by them ; that which is food to thee, is but chaff, wind, vanity to me : if I stay with thee, I shall be still sinning, and still groaning ; when I leave thee, I shall be immediately freed from both, and arrive at the sum and perfection of all the hopes, desires, and whatsoever I have aimed at, and laboured for, in all the duties of my life. Let us therefore be content to part.

‘ Shrink not at the horror of a grave ; it is indeed a dark and solitary house, and the days of darkness may be many ; but to thee, my dear companion, it shall be a bed of rest, yea, a perfumed bed, where thy Lord Jesus lay before thee : and let the time of thy abode there be never so long, thou shalt not measure it, nor find the least tediousness in it ; a thousand years there shall seem no more in the morning of the resurrection, than the sweetest nap of an hour seemed to be when I was wont to lay thee upon the bed to rest.

‘ The worms in the grave shall be nothing to thee, nor give thee the thousandth part of that trouble that a flea was wont to do ; and though I leave thee, Jesus Christ shall watch, in the

‘ mean time over my dust, and not suffer a grain of it to be lost :
 ‘ and I will return assuredly to thee again, at the time appointed ;
 ‘ I take not an everlasting farewell of thee, but depart for a time,
 ‘ that I may receive thee for ever. To conclude, there is an una-
 ‘ voidable necessity of our parting ; whether willing or unwilling,
 ‘ we must be separated : but the consent of my will to part with
 ‘ thee, for the enjoyment of Jesus Christ will be highly accepta-
 ‘ ble to God, and greatly sweeten the bitter cup of death to us
 ‘ both.’

This, and much more the gracious soul hath to say for its separation from the body ; by which it is easy to discern where the gain and advantage of death lies to all believers, and consequently, how much must it be every way their interest to be unbodied.

Arg. 2. To be weary of the body upon the pure account and reason of our hatred to sin, and longing desires after Jesus Christ, argues strongly grace in truth, and grace in strength ; it is both the test of our sincerity, and measure of our attainment and maturity of grace, and upon both accounts highly desirable by all the people of God.

It is so great an evidence of the truth of grace, that the scriptures have made it the descriptive periphrasis of a Christian : so we find it in 2 Tim. iv. 8. the crown of life is there promised to all them that love the appearance of Christ, i. e. those that love to drink of it, that delight to steep their thoughts in subjects belonging to the other world, and cast many a yearning look that way : and 2 Pet. iii. 12. they are described to be such as are “ looking for, “ and hastening to the coming of the day of God.” Their earnest expectations and longings do not only put them upon making all the haste they can to be with Christ, but it makes the interposing time seem so tedious and slow, that with their most vehement wishes and desires, they do what they can to accelerate and hasten it. As Rev. xxii. “ Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” Lovers hours, saith the proverb, are full of eternity. ‘ O, said Mr. Rutherford, that Christ would make long strides ! O that he would ‘ fold up the heavens as a cloak, and shovel time and days out of the ‘ way !’ Such desires as these can spring from none but gracious and renewed souls ; for nature is wholly disaffected to a removal hence, upon such motives and considerations as these : if others wish at any time for death, it is but in a pet, a present passion, provoked by some intolerable anguish, or great distress of nature : but to look and long, and hasten to the other world, out of a weariness of sin, and a hearty willingness to be with Christ, supposes necessarily a deep-rooted hatred of sin, abhorring it more than death itself, the greatest of natural evils, and a real sight of things

invisible by the eye of faith, without which it is impossible any man's heart should be thus framed and tempered.

And as it evidenceth the truth, so also the strength and maturity of grace; for alas, how many thousands of gracious souls that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, are to be found quite below this temper of mind! O it is but here and there one among the Lord's own people, that have reached this height and eminence of faith and love. It is with the fruits of the Spirit, just as it is with the fruits of the earth; some are green and raw, others are ripe and mellow: the first stick fast on the branches, you may shake and shake again, and not one will drop; or as those fruits that grow in hedges, with their coats and integuments enwrapping them, as nuts, &c. you may try your strength upon them, and sooner break your nails, than disclose and separate them: so fast and close do their husks stick to them: but when time and the influences of heaven hath ripened and brought them to perfection, the apples drop into your hands without the least touch, and the nut falls out of its case of its own accord. So much more doth the soul part from its body, when maturated, and come to its strength and vigour.

Arg. 3. It may greatly prevail upon the will and resolution of a believer, to adventure boldly and cheerfully upon death, that our bodies, of which we are bereaved and deprived by death, shall be most certainly and advantageously restored to us by the resurrection. The resurrection of the dead is the encouragement and consolation of the dying; the more our faith is established in the doctrine of the resurrection, the more we shall surmount the fears of dissolution. If Paul urged it as an argument to reconcile Philemon to his servant Onesimus, ver. 15. "That he therefore departed for a season, that Philemon might receive him for ever;" the same argument may reconcile every believer to death, and take off the prejudice of the soul against it. You shall surely receive your bodies again, and enjoy them for ever.

Now the doctrine of the resurrection is as sure in itself as it is comfortable to us; the depth and strength of its foundation fully answers to the height and sweetness of its consolation. Be pleased to try the two pillars thereof, and see which of them may be doubted or shaken. Mat. xxii. 29. "You err (saith Christ to the Sadducees, who denied this doctrine) not knowing the scriptures, and the power of God." This is the ground and root of their error, not knowing the scriptures, and the power of God: q. d. did you know and believe the scriptures of God, and the power of God, you would never question this doctrine of the resurrection, which is built upon them both. The power of God convinceth all men that know and believe it, that it *may be so*, and the scriptures of

God convince all that know and believe them, that it *must be so*. As for his power, who can doubt it? At the command and fiat of God, the earth brought forth every living creature after his kind, Gen. i. 24, 25. at his command Lazarus came forth, John xi. 43. And was there not as much difficulty in either of these, as in our resurrection? By this power our souls were quickened, and raised from the death of sin and guilt to the spiritual life of Christ, Eph. i. 19. And is it not as easy to raise a dead body as a dead soul? But what stand I arguing in so plain a case, when we are assured this mighty power is able to subdue all things to itself, Phil. iii. 21.

And then, for his promise that it shall be so, what can be plainer? See 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16. "This we say unto you by the word of *the Lord*," &c. i. e. in the name or authority of the Lord, and by commission and warrant from him. He first opens his commission, shews his credentials, and then publishes the comfortable doctrine of his resurrection, and the saints pre-eminence to all others therein.

Well then, what remains in death to fright and scar a believer? Is it our parting with these bodies? Why, is it not for ever that we part with them; as sure as the power and promises of God are true, firm, and sufficient to accomplish it, we shall see and enjoy them again. This comforted Job, chap. xix. 25, 26. over all his diseases, when of all his enjoyments that once he had, he could not say, my friends, my children, my estate; yet then he could say, my Redeemer. When he looked upon a poor wasted, withered, loathsome body of his own, and saw nothing but a skeleton, an image of death, yet then could he see it a glorious body, by viewing it believably in this glass of the resurrection. So then all the damage we can receive by death, is but the absence of our bodies for a time; during which time, the covenant-relation betwixt God and them, holds good and firm, Mat. xxii. 32. He therefore will take care of them, and in due time restore them with marvellous improvements and endowments, to us again, divested of all their infirmities, and clothed with heavenly qualities and perfections, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. And in the mean time, the soul attains its rest, and happiness, and satisfaction in the blessed God.

Arg. 4. The consideration of what we part from, and what we go to, should make the medium, by which we pass from so much evil to so great good, lovely and desirable in our eyes, how unpleasant or bitter soever it be in itself.

No man desires physic for itself. There is no pleasure in bitter pills and loathsome potions, except what rises from the end, viz. the disburdening of nature, and recovery of health; and this gives it a

value with the sick and pained. Under a like consideration is death desired by sick and pained souls, who find it better to die once, than groan under burdens continually.

Death certainly is the best physician, next, and under Jesus Christ, that ever was employed about them; for it cures radically and perfectly, so that the soul never relapses more into any distemper. Other medicines are but anodynes, or at best they relieve us but in part, and for a time; but this goes through the work, and perfects the cure at once. Methinks that call of Christ which he gives his spouse in Cant. iv. 8. “(Come with me from Lebanon, “(my spouse) with me from Lebanon: and look from the top of “Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions “dens, from the mountains of the leopards)” scarce suits any time so well as the time of death. Then it is that we depart from the lions dens, and the mountains of leopards, places uncomfortable and unsafe. More particularly at death the saints depart.

1. From defiling corruptions	into	1. Perfect purity.
2. From heart-sinking sorrows		2. Fulness of joy.
3. From entangling temptations		3. Everlasting freedom.
4. From distressing persecutions		4. Full rest.
5. From pinching wants		5. Universal supplies.
6. From distracting fears		6. Highest security.
7. From deluding shadows		7. Substantial good.

1. From defiling corruptions into perfect purity. No sin hangs about the separated, though it do about the sanctified soul. They come out of the body suitable to that character and encomium, Cant. iv. 7. “Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in “thee.” It doth that for the saints, which all their graces and duties, all their mercies and afflictions, could never do. Faith is a great purifier, communion with God a great cleanser, sanctified afflictions a refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap; these have all done their parts, and been useful in their places: But none of them, nor all together, perfect this cure till death come, and then the work is done, and the cure perfected.

All weeping, all praying, all believing, all hearing, all sacraments, all the means and instruments in the world, cannot do what death will do for thee. One dying hour will do what ten thousand praying hours never did, nor could do. In this hour the design of all those hours is accomplished; as he that is dead by mortification, is at present freed from sin, in respect of imputation and dominion, Rom. vi. 7. so he that is justified and mortified, when dead naturally, is immediately freed from the very indwelling and existence of sin in him. We read of the washing of the robes of the saints, in Rev. vii. 14. The blood of the Lamb cleanseth

them from every spot; but it doth it gradually. The last spot of guilt indeed was fetched out by one act of justification; but the last spot of filth is not fetched out till the time of their dissolution; when they are come out of the agonies of death (which the scripture calls great tribulation) then, and not till then, are they perfectly cleansed. Sin brought in death, and death carries out sin.

Oh! what a pure, lovely, shining creature, is the separated spirit of a just man? how clear is its judgment, how ordinate its will, how holy, and altogether heavenly are all its affections now! and never till now it feels itself perfectly well, and as it would be.

2. From heart sinking sorrows, into fulness of joy. The life we now live is a groaning life, 2 Cor. v. 2. where is the Christian, that if his inside could be seen, and his heart laid naked, would not be found wounded from many hands? from the hand of God, of enemies, of friends, of Satan; but especially by the hands of its own corruptions? Christ our head was stiled *a man of sorrows*, from the multitude of his sorrows; and it is the lot of all his to be in a state of sorrow in the body. "In the world (saith he) you shall have trouble." When I consider how oft the candle of sorrow is held to the thread of life, I justly wonder how it is protracted to such a length. What friend, what enjoyment had we ever in this world, from which no sorrow, nay, many sorrows have not sprung up to us? And if the best comforts bring forth sorrows, what do the worst things we meet with here bring forth? I suppose there are many thousands of God's people this day in the world, that have as much reason to assume the same new name that Naomi did, and say, Call me *Marah*. Look, as day and night divide all time betwixt them; so do our comforts and our sorrows, only with this difference, that our nights of sorrow, like winter nights, are long, cold and dark; and our days of comfort short, and frequently overcast.

But when we put off these bodies, we put off our mourning garments with them, and shall never sorrow any more: Thenceforth God wipes away all tears from his people's eyes, Rev. xxi. 4. And that is not all, but they enter into their Master's joy, even fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. Groans are turned into triumphs, and sighs and tears into joyful acclamations and songs of praise. Oh that we were once made thoroughly sensible of the advantages that come by this exchange!

3. From entangling temptations into everlasting freedom. It is this body, and the interests and concerns of it, upon which Satan raises most of his batteries against our souls: It is our flesh that causeth our souls to sin; and whilst the soul dwells in the body, it is within Satan's reach to tempt, and defile, and trouble it. Oh

what grievous things do the best souls endure, and suffer on this account!

Temptations are of two sorts; ordinary and mediate, by Satan's exciting and managing our corruptions, by presenting objects to them; or extraordinary and immediate, like fiery darts shot immediately out of hell into the soul, which puts it all into a flame and combustion: Of the former you read in James i. 14. the latter, Eph. vi. 16. and upon the account of the one and the other, the people of God are weary of their lives. Think what a grief it must be to a soul that loves God, to feel in itself such things as militate against, and wound the name and honour of God, which is, and ought to be dearer to it than its life.

But by the door of death every gracious soul makes its escape from the tempting power of Satan: He can no more touch or affect the soul with any temptation, than we can better the body of the sun with snow-balls: For as Satan can have no access to that place of blessedness, where the souls of the saints are; so if he could, he can find nothing in them to fasten a temptation upon. The schoolmen give this as the reason why the saints in heaven are impeccable, because all their thoughts and affections are everlastingly fixed in, and employed about the blessed God, whose face they continually behold in glory.

4. From distressing persecutions, into full and perfect rest. As death sets us free from the power of Satan, so from the reach of all persecutors. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest," as it is in Job iii. 17. The price of one Ahab, who had sold himself to work wickedness, was a stock sufficient to purchase many years trouble to all Israel, 1 Kings xviii. 17. "Wicked men are as the unquiet, troubled sea which cannot rest," Isa. lvii. 20. They cannot rest from troubling the saints, till they cease to be wicked or to live: When God puts out the candle of their lives, they are silent in darkness, 1 Sam. ii. 9. And when God puts out the candle of our life, we are at rest, though they rage never so much in this world. Death is the saints *quietus est*, their full and final discharge from persecuting enemies. When we are dying, we may say, as Psal. ix. 6. "O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end."

God may put an end to those persecutions before death; and such a time, according to promise, is to be expected, "when our officers shall be peace, and our exactors righteousness, Isa. lx. 17. but if the accomplishment of the promise be reserved for ages to come, and we must spend our days under the oppression of the wicked; yet this is our comfort, we know when we shall be far enough out of their reach.

5. From pinching wants, to universal supplies. This is the day

in which the Lord abundantly satisfies the desires, and supplies the needs of all his people. There are two sorts of wants upon the people of God: *spiritual* and *temporal*.

Spiritual wants are the just complaints of all gracious souls. You read, 1 Thess. iii. 10. of that which is lacking in the faith of the saints: There are none but find many things lacking to the perfection of every grace: our knowledge of God wants clearness and efficacy; our love to God fervour and constancy; our faith wants strength and stability: Darkness mixes itself with our knowledge, deadness with our love, unbelief with the purest acts of faith. Go where you will, you shall find God's people every where complaining of their spiritual wants: one of a dark head, another of a dead heart, another of a treacherous memory. Thus they are loading one another with their complaints.

Temporal outward wants pinch hard also upon many of God's people: The greatest number of them consist of the poor of this world, James ii. 5. Those whose souls are discharged and acquitted by God, whose debts are paid by Jesus Christ, may yet be entangled in a brake of cares and troubles in the world, and not know which way to turn themselves in their straits and difficulties. But by death the saints pass from all their wants, inward and outward, to a state of complete satisfaction, where nothing is lacking. From that day all their spiritual wants are supplied; for they are now arrived "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, "to a perfect man," Eph. iv. 13. Now "that which is perfect is "come, and all that was in part is done away," 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

And for outward wants, they shall feel them no more: For putting off the body, we must needs put off all cares and concerns about it. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, God shall destroy both it and them," 1 Cor. vi. 13.

6. From distracting fears, into the highest security and rest of thoughts for evermore. The fears of God's people are either about their souls, or about their bodies; the fears they have about their souls are inexpressible. Two things especially exercise their fears about their soul. (1.) Whether they be really united to Christ. (2.) Whether they shall be able to continue and persevere in the ways of Christ to the end? they are afraid of their sincerity and of their stability: And these fears accompany many of God's people from their regeneration to their dissolution. O, what would they not give, what would they not do, yea, what would they not endure to get a full satisfaction in those things! Every working of corruption, every discovery made by temptation, puts them into a fright, and makes them question all that ever was wrought in them.

And, as their fears are great about the inward man, so also about the outward man; especially when such bloody preparations

seem to be making by the enemies that have acted such, and so many bloody tragedies already in the world.

But at death they enter into a perfect peace and security, Isa. lvii. 2. No wind of fear shall ever ruffle or disturb their souls, and put them into a storm any more.

7. From deluding shadows, into substantial good. This world is the world of shadows and delusive appearances. Here we are imposed upon, and baffled by empty and deceitful vanities: All we have here is little else but a dream; at death the soul awakes out of its dream, and finds itself in the world of realities, where it feeds upon substantial good to satisfaction, Psal. xvii. 15.

Now the advantages accruing to the soul by death, being so great and many, though the medium be harsh and ungrateful in itself, yet there is all the reason in the world we should covet it, for the benefits that come by it.

Arg. 5. The foretastes we have had of heaven already in the body, should make all the saints long to be unembodied for the full and perfect fruition of that joy, seeing it cannot be fully and perfectly enjoyed by the soul, till it hath put off the body by death.

That there are prelibations, first-fruits, and earnest of future glory given at certain seasons to believers in this life, is put beyond all doubting, not only by scripture testimonies, but frequent experiences of God's people. I speak not only with the scriptures, but with the clearest experience of many saints, when I say, here are to be felt and tasted, even here in the body, the earnest of our inheritance, Eph. i. 14. "The first-fruits of the Spirit," Rom. viii. 23. The sealing of the Spirit, Eph. i. 13. "The very joy of the Lord," 1 Pet. i. 8. of the same kind, though in a less degree, with that of the glorified.

That the fulness of this joy cannot be in us whilst we tabernacle in bodies of flesh, is as plain. When Moses desired a sight of that face which the spirits of just men made perfect do continually behold and adore, the answer was, "No man can see my face and live," Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19, 20, q. d. Moses, thou askest a great thing, and understandest not how unable thou art to support that which thou desirest: should I shew thee my glory in this compounded state thou now art in, it would confound thee and swallow thee up. Nature, as now constituted, cannot support such a weight of glory: A ray, a glimpse of this light overpowers man, and breaks such a clay vessel to pieces; which is the reason why the resurrection must intervene betwixt this state and that of the body's glorification.

And it is not to be doubted, but one main end and reason why these foretastes of heaven are given us in the body, is to embolden

the soul to venture through death itself for the full enjoyment of those delights and pleasures. They are like the grapes of Eshcol to the faint-hearted Israelites, or the sweet wines of Italy to the Gauls, which, once tasted, made them restless till they had conquered that good country where they grew. Rom. viii. 23. "We
 " which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves do
 " groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, viz. the redemption of our bodies."

Well then, reflect seriously upon these sweet tastes that you have had of God and his love, in your sincere and secret addresses to him, and converses with him. What a holy forgetfulness of all things in this world hath it wrought! How insipid and tasteless hath it rendered the sweetest creature enjoyments! What willingness to be dissolved for a more full fruition of it! God this way brings heaven nigh to your souls, out of design to overcome your reluctancies at death, through which we must pass to the enjoyment of it. And after all those sights and tastes, both of the truth and goodness of that state, shall we still reluctate and hang back, as if we had never tasted how good the Lord is! O, you may justly question, whether you ever had a real taste of Jesus Christ, if that taste do not kindle coals of fire in your bosoms; I mean, ardent longings to be with him, and to be satiated with his love.

If you have been privileged with a taste of that hidden manna, with the sight of things invisible, with joys unspeakable, and full of glory, and yet are loth to be gone to the fountain whence all this flows: certainly you herein both cross the design of the Spirit in giving them, and cast a vile disgrace and reproach upon the blessed God, as thinking there is more bitterness in death, than there is sweetness in his presence. Yea, it argues the strength of that unbelief which still remains in your hearts, that after so many tastes and trials as you have had, you still remain doubtful and hesitating about the certainty and reality of things invisible.

O, what ado hath God with his froward and peevish children! If he had only revealed the future state to us in his word, as the pure object of faith, and required us to die upon the mere credit of his promise, without such pawns, pledges, and earnest as these are; were there not reason enough for it? But after such, and so many wonderful and amazing condescensions, wherein he doth, as it were, say, Soul, if yet thou doubtest, I will bring heaven to thee, thou shalt have it in thy hand, thy eyes shall see it, thy hands shall handle it, thy mouth shall taste it: How inexcusable is our reluctancy?

Arg. 6. It should greatly fortify the people of God against the fears of dissolution, to consider that death can neither destroy the

being of their souls by annihilation, nor the hopes and expectations they have of blessedness, by disappointment and frustration, Prov. xiv. 32. "The righteous hath hope in his death."

Though all earthly things fail at death (upon which account dying is expressed by failing, Luke xvi. 19.) yet neither the soul, nor its well-grounded hopes can fail. The anchor of a believer's hope is firm and sure, Heb. vi. 18. It will not come home in the greatest storm that can beat upon the soul. For (1.) God hath foreknown and chosen them to salvation before the world was, 1. Pet. i. 2. "And this foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. His decrees are as firm as mountains of brass, Zech. vi. 1. (2.) God hath justified their persons, and therein destroyed the power of death over them, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law." If all the hurtful power of death lies in sin, and all the destructive power of sin rises from the law; then neither death nor sin, hath any power to destroy the believer, in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, Rom. viii. 4. namely, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to them, in respect of which they are as righteous, as if in their own persons they had perfectly obeyed all its commands, or suffered all its penalties. Thus death loseth its sting, its curse and killing power over the souls of all that are in Christ. (3.) God hath sanctified their natures, which sanctification is not only a sure evidence of their election and justification, 2 Thess. i. 5, 6. Rom. viii. 1. but a sure pledge of their glorification also, 2 Cor. v. 4, 5. Yea, (4.) He hath made a sure, and an everlasting covenant with believers; and among other gracious privileges thereby conferred upon them, death is found in the inventory, 1 Cor. xiii. 21. *Death is yours*; to die is gain to them: It destroys their enemies, and the distance that is betwixt Christ and them. (5.) He hath sealed them to his glory by the Holy Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. So that their hopes are too firmly built to be destroyed by death; and if it cannot destroy their souls, nor overthrow their hopes, they need not fear all that it can do besides.

Arg. 7. It may greatly encourage and embolden the people of God to die, considering that though at death they take the last sight and view of all that is dear to them on earth; yet then they are admitted to the first immediate sight and blessed vision of God, which will be their happiness to all eternity.

When Hezekiah was upon his supposed death-bed, he complained, Isa. xxxviii. 11. "I shall see man no more, with the inhabitants of the world." We shall see thenceforth these corporeal people no more. We shall see our habitations and dwelling-places

no more, Job vii. 9, 10, 11. We shall see our children and dear relations no more, Job xiv. 21. His sons come "to honour, and he "knoweth it not." These things make death terrible to men; but that which cures all this trouble is, that we shall neither need, nor desire them, being thenceforth admitted to the beatifical vision of the blessed God himself.

It is the expectation and hope of this which comforteth the souls of the righteous here, Psal. xvii. 15. "When I awake, I "shall behold thy face in righteousness." Those weak and dim representations made by faith, at a distance, are the very joy and rejoicing of a believer's soul now, 1 Pet. i. 7, 8. but how sweet and transporting soever these visions of faith be, they are not worthy to be named in comparison with the immediate and beatifical vision, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. This is the very sum of a believer's blessedness: And what it is we cannot comprehend in this imperfect state; only in general we may gather these conclusions about it, from the account given of it in the scriptures.

1. That it will not be such a sight of God as we now have by the mediation of faith, but a direct, immediate, and intuitive vision of God; (* 1 John iii. 2. "We shall see him as he is." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "Then face to face,") which far transcends the vision of faith in clearness and in comfort. This seems to import no less than the very sight of the Divine essence, that which Moses desired on earth to see, but could not, Exod. xxxiii. 20. nor can be seen by any man dwelling in a body, 1 Tim. vi. 16. nor by unbodied souls comprehensively; so God only sees himself. Our eyes see the sun which they cannot comprehend, yet truly apprehend. God will then be known in his essence, and in the glory of all his attributes. The sight of the attributes of God gives the occasion and matter of those ascriptions of praise and glory to him, which is the proper employment of glorified souls, Rev. iv. 11, 12, 13. which is the proper employment of angels, Isa. vi. 3. Oh how different is this from what we now have through faith, duties, and ordinances! See the difference betwixt knowledge by report and immediate sight, in that example of the *queen of the south*, 1 Kings x. 10. the former only excited her desires, the latter transported and overcame her very soul.

Some may think such a vision of God to exceed the abilities of nature, and capacities of any creature. But as a learned † man rightly observes, if the *Divine Nature* be capable of union with a

* The light of glory is an actual illumination, i. e. a supernatural influx of God, elevating the understanding to a sight of the Divine Essence. *Smissing Tract. 2. Dis. 6. N. 55.*

† Norton's *Orthodox Evang.* p. 527.

creature, as it is evident in the person of Christ, it is also capable of being the object of vision to the creature. Beside, we must know the light of glory hath the same respect to this blessed vision, that assisting grace hath to the acts of faith and obedience performed here on earth. It is a comforting, soul-strengthening light, not to dazzle and over-power, but to comfort, strengthen, and clear the eye of the creature's understanding. Rev. ii. 28. "I will give him the morning-star," *lumen confortans*; and Isa. xxxvi. 9. "In thy light we shall see light."

2. It will be a satisfying sight, Psal. xvii. 15. so perfectly quieting, and giving rest to the soul in all its powers, that they neither can proceed, nor desire to proceed any farther. The understanding can know no more, the will can will no more; the affections of joy, delight, and love are at full rest and quiet in their proper centre. For all good is in the chiefest good eminently; as all the light of the candles in the world is in the sun, and all the rivers in the world in the sea. That which makes the understanding, will, and affections move farther, as being restless and unsatisfied in all discoveries and enjoyments here, is the limited and imperfect nature of things we now converse with; as if you bring a great ship that draws much water into a narrow, and shallow river, she can neither sail nor swim, but is presently aground. But let that ship have sea-room enough, then she can turn and sail before the wind, because there is a depth of water, and room enough. So it is here; all that delighted, but could never satisfy you in the creature, is eminently in God; and what was imperfectly in them, is perfectly to be enjoyed in him, 1 Cor. xv. 28. "God shall be all in all;" the comforts you had here were but drop by drop, inflaming, not satisfying the appetite of the soul: But then "the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them unto fountains of living water," Rev. vii. 17. The object fills the faculties.

3. It will be an appropriating vision of God; you shall see him as your own God, and proper portion; else it could never be a satisfying vision, Job xix. 27. "Whom I shall see for myself!" Not look on him as another's God, but as my God and portion for ever. Balaam saw Christ by a spirit of prophecy; but he had no comfort, because no interest in him, Numb. xxiv. 17. The wicked shall see him, but without joy, yea, with weeping eyes and gnashing of death, because they cannot see him as their Lord, Luke xiii. 28. It is but a poor comfort to starving beggars to stand quivering and famishing in the streets in a cold dark night, and see the lights in the bridegroom's house, the noble dishes served in, and to hear the music and mirth of the guests that feast within. Here it will be as clear that he is *our God*, as that he is *God*.

Assurance is that which many souls have desired, prayed, and panted for, but cannot attain. There may be many rubs and stumbling-blocks in the way to that sweet enjoyment; but here we find what we have been so long seeking: There be no doubt, scruples, objections, puzzling cases to exercise your own or others thoughts: but as these did arise from one of these grounds, viz. the working of corruption, the efficacy of temptations, or Divine withdrawments, and the hidings of God's face; so all these being removed perfectly and for ever in that state, the heavens must needs be clear, and not a cloud of doubt or fear to be seen for ever.

4. It will be a deeply affecting sight: your eyes will now so affect your hearts as they were never affected before. The first view of God will snatch away your hearts to him, as a greater flame doth the less. Love will not now distil from the heart, as waters from a cold still, but gush out as from a sluice or floodgate pulled up. The soul will not move after God so deadily and slowly as it doth now, but be as the chariots of Ammi-nadib, Cant. vi. 12. We may say of the frames of our hearts there, compared with what they are here, as it is said, Deut. xii. 8, 9. "You shall not love, or *delight in God*, as you do this day." If the perfection of that state would admit shame or sorrow, how should we blush and mourn in heaven, to think how cold our love, and how low our delights in God were on earth! 1 John iv. 16. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." Look, as iron put into the fire becomes all fiery, so the soul dwelling in the God of love, becomes all love, all delight, all joy. O what transports must that soul feel, that abides under the line of love! feels the perpendicular beams of electing, creating, redeeming, preserving love, beating powerfully upon it, and melting it into love! See some of their transports, Rev. v. 13, 14.

5. It will be an *everlasting vision of God*, 1 Thess. v. 17. "So shall we be ever with the Lord," [ever with the Lord.] Who can find words to open the due sense of these few words! *Vacabimus et vidibimus, videbimus et amabimus, amabimus et laudabimus in fine sine fine*, saith blessed Austin. This is the everlasting sabbath, which hath no night, Rev. xxii. 4, 5. The eternal happiness purchased for the saints by the invaluable blood of Christ. If one hour's enjoyment of God, in the way of faith, be so sweet, and no price can be put upon it, nothing on earth taken in exchange for it; what must a whole eternity, in the immediate and full visions of that blessed face in heaven be!

Well then, if such sights as these immediately succeed the sight you have on earth, either by sense of things natural, or by reason of things intellectual, or by faith of things spiritual, who that believes

the truth, and expects the fulfilling of such promises as these, would not be willing to have his eyes closed by death as soon as God shall please? I have read of a holy man that had sweet communion with God in prayer, who in the close of his duty cried out *claudimini, oculi mei, claudimini, &c. Be shut, O mine eyes, be shut; you shall never see any thing on earth like that I have now seen.* Ah! little do the friends of dead believers think what visions of God, what ravishing sights of Christ the souls of their friends have, when they are closing their eyes with tears.

Arg. 8. The consideration of the evil days that are to come should make the people of God willing to accept of an hiding place in the grave, as a special favour from God.

It is accounted an act of favour by God, Isa. lvii. 1, 2. to be taken away from the *evil to come*. There are two kinds of evils to come, the evil of *sin*, and the evil of *sufferings*. Sins to come are terrible to gracious hearts, when temptations shall be at their height and strength. Oh what warping and shrinking, what dissembling, yea, down-right denying the known truths and ways of God, may you see every where! Many consciences will then be wounded and wasted: Many scandals and rocks of offence will be rolled into the way of godliness: Christ will be exposed and put to open shame. Should we only be spectators of such tragedies as these, it were enough to overwhelm a gracious and tender heart. But what upright heart is there without fears and jealousies of being brought under the guilt of these evils in itself, as well as the shame and grief for them in others? Oh! it were a thousand times better for you to die in the purity and integrity of your consciences, than to protract a miserable life without them. Oh! think what a world it is you are like to leave behind you, in respect of that to come!

And as there are many evils of sin to come, so there are many evils of sufferings coming on: "The days of visitation are coming on, the days of recompence are come, and Israel shall know it," Hos. ix. 7. All the sufferings you have yet met with, have been in books and histories: You never saw the martyrdom of the saints, but in the pictures and stories; but you will find it quite another thing to be the *subjects* of these cruelties, than to be the mere *readers* or *relaters* of them. It is one thing to see the painted lion on a sign-post, and another to meet the living lion roaring upon you. Ah! little do we imagine how the hearts of men are convulsed, what fears, what faintings invade their spirits, when they are to meet the King of terrors, in the frightful formalities of a violent death.

The consideration of these things will discover to you the reason of that strange wish of Job, chap. xiv. 13. "Oh that thou wouldst hide me in the grave; that thou wouldst keep me in

“secret till thy wrath be past ! And it deserves a serious thought, that when the Holy Ghost had, in Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11, 12. described the miserable plight of those poor souls, who being overcome by their own fears and the love of this world, should plunge themselves first into deep guilt, by compliance with Antichrist, and receiving his mark ; then into hell upon earth, the remorse and horror of their own consciences, which gives them no rest, day nor night ; he immediately subjoins, ver. 13. “Blessed are the dead “that die in the Lord ; yea, from henceforth, saith the Spirit,” &c. Oh ! it is a special blessing and favour to be hid out of the way of those temptations and torments, in a seasonable and quiet grave.

Arg. 9. Your fixed aversation and unwillingness to die, will provoke God to imbitter your lives with much more afflictions than you have yet felt, or would feel, if your hearts were more mortified and weaned in this point.

You cannot think of your own deaths with pleasure, no, nor yet with patience. Well, take heed, lest this draw down such trouble upon you, as shall make you at last to say with Job, chap. x. 1. “My soul is weary of my life ;” an expression much like that, 2 Sam. i. 9. “Anguish is come upon me, because my life is whole in me.” My soul is hardened, or become cruel against my life, as the Chaldee renders it.

There is a twofold weariness of life ; one from an excellency of spirit, a noble principle, the ardent love of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 23. “I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.” Another from the mere pressures of affliction and anguish of spirit, under heavy and successive strokes from the hand of God and men. Is it not more excellent and desirable to groan for death under a pressure of love to Christ, than of affliction from Christ ?

I am convinced that very many of our afflictions come upon this score and account, to make us willing to die.

Is it not sad that God is forced to bring death upon all our comfortable and desirable things in this world, before he can gain our consent to be gone ? Why will you put God upon such work as this ? Why cannot he have your hearts at a cheaper rate ? If you could die, many of your comforts, for ought I know, might live. Had Joab come to Absalom when he sent for him the first or second time, Absalom had never set his field of barley on fire, 2 Sam. xiv. 30. And were you more obedient to the will of God in this manner, it is likely he would not consume your health, and estates, and relations with such heavy strokes as he hath done, and will yet farther do, except your wills be more compliant.

Alas ! to cut off your comforts one after another, and make you live a groaning life, the Lord hath no pleasure in it ; but

he had rather you should lose these things, than that he should lose your hearts on earth, or company in heaven: *Impatiens ægrotus crudelem facit medicum.*

Arg. 10. The decree of death cannot be reversed, nor is there any other ordinary passage for the soul into glory, but through the gates of death. Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed for all men once to die, "but after that the judgment."

There is but one way to pass out of the obscure, suffocating life in the womb, into the more free and nobler life in the world, viz. through the agonies of birth: and there is ordinarily but one way to pass from this sinning, groaning life we live in this world, to the enjoyment of God and the glory above, viz. through the agonies of death. You must cast off this mean, this vile body, before you can be happy. Heaven cannot come down to you, you cannot see God and live, Exod. xxxiii. 20. It would certainly confound and break you to pieces, like an earthen pitcher, should God but ray forth his glory upon you in the state you now are in; and it is sure you cannot expect the extraordinary favour of such a translation as Enoch had, Heb. xi. 4. nor as those believers shall have that shall be found alive at Christ's coming, 1 Thess. iv. 17. You must go the common road that all the saints go; but though you cannot avoid, you must sweeten it. God will not reverse his decree, but you may, and ought to arm yourselves against the fears of it. Ahasuerus would not recal the proclamation he had emitted against the Jews, but he gave them full liberty to take up arms to defend themselves against their enemies. It is much so here, the sentence cannot be revoked; but yet God gives you leave, yea, he commands you to arm yourselves against death, and defy it, and trample it under the feet of faith.

Arg. 11. When you find your hearts reluctant at the thoughts of leaving the body, and the comforts of this world, then consider how willingly and cheerfully Jesus Christ left heaven, and the bosom of his Father, to come down to this world for your sakes, Prov. viii. 30, 31. Psal. xl. 7. *Lo, I come, &c.*

O compare the frames of your hearts with his, in this point, and shame yourselves out of so unbecoming a temper of spirit.

(1.) He left heaven and all the delights and glory of it, to come down to this world to be abased and humbled to the lowest; you leave this world of sin and misery to ascend to heaven, to be exalted to the highest. He came hither to be impoverished, you go thither to be enriched, 2 Cor. viii. 9. yet he came willingly, and we go grudgingly.

(2.) He came from heaven to earth, to be made sin for us, 2 Cor.

v. 21. we go from earth to heaven, to be fully and everlastingly delivered from sin; yet he came more willingly to bear our sins, than we go to be delivered from them.

(3.) He came to take a body of flesh, to suffer and die in it, Heb. ii. 24. you leave your bodies that you may never suffer in, or by them any more.

(4.) As his incarnation was a deep abasement, so his death was the most bitter death that ever was tasted by any from the beginning, or ever shall be to the end of the world; and yet how obediently doth he submit to both at the Father's call, Luke xii. 50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Ah Christian, your death cannot have the ten thousandth part of that bitterness in it that Christ's had. I remember one of the martyrs being asked, why his heart was so light at death? returned this answer, because Christ's heart was so heavy at his death. O there is a vast difference betwixt the one and the other; the wrath of God, and the curse of the law were in his death, Gal. iii. 13. but there is neither wrath nor curse in their death who die in the Lord, Rom. viii. 1.

God forsook him when he hanged upon the tree in the agonies of death, Mat. xxviii. 46. "My God, my God, why hasst thou forsaken me?" But you shall not be forsaken; He will make all your bed in sickness, Phil. xli. 3. He will never leave you, nor forsake you, Heb. xiii. 5.

Yet he regretted not, but went as a sheep or lamb, Isa. liii. 7. O reason yourselves out of this reluctancy at death, by this great example and pattern of obedience.

Arg. 12. Lastly, Let no Christian be affrighted at death, considering that the death of Christ is the death of death, and hath utterly disarmed it of all its destructive power.

If you tremble when you look upon death, yet you cannot but triumph when you look believably upon Christ.

For, (1.) Christ died (O believer) for thy sins, Rom. iv. 25. his death was an expiatory sacrifice for all thy guilt, Gal. iii. 13. so that thou shall not die in thy sins: The pangs of death may, and must be on thy outward man, but the guilt of sin and the condemnation of God shall not be upon thy inner man.

(2.) The death of Christ, in thy room, hath utterly destroyed the power of death, which once was in the hand of Satan, Heb. ii. 24. Col. ii. 14, 15. his power was not authoritative, but executive; not as the power of a king; but of a sheriff; which is none at all when a pardon is produced.

(3.) Christ hath assured us, that his victory over death shall be complete in our persons. It is already a complete personal victory in respect of himself, Rom. vi. 9. he dieth no more, death hath

no more dominion over him. It is an incomplete victory already as to our persons. It can dissolve the union of our souls and bodies, but the union betwixt Christ and our souls it can never dissolve, Rom. viii. 38, 39. and as for the power it still retains over our dust, that also shall be destroyed at the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. compared with ver. 54, 55, 56, 57. so that there is no cause for any soul in Christ to tremble at the thought of a separation from the body, but rather to embrace it as a privilege: *Death is ours.*

O that these arguments might prevail! O that they might at last win the consent of our hearts to go along with death; which is the messenger sent by God to bring us home to our Father's house.

But I doubt, when all is said, we are where we were: all this suffices not to overcome the regrets and reluctancies of nature; still the matter sticks in our minds, and we cannot conquer our disinclined wills in this matter. What is the matter? Where lies the rubs and hinderances? O that God would remove them at last!

Objection 1. *This is a common plea with many, I am not ready and fit to die; were I ready, I should be willing to be gone.*

Solution (1.) How long soever you live in the body, there will be somewhat still out of order, something still to do; for you must be in a state of imperfection while you remain here, and according to this plea, you will never be willing to die. (2.) Your willingness to be dissolved and to be with Christ, is one special part of your fitness for death: and till you attain it in some good measure, you are not so fit to die as you should be. (3.) If you be in Christ, you have a fundamental fitness for death, though you may want some circumstantial preparatives. And as to all that is wanting in your sanctification or obedience now, it will be completed in a moment upon your dissolution.

Object. 2. *Others plead that the desire they have to live, is in order to God's farther service by them in this world. O, say they, it was David's happiness to die, when he had served his generation according to the will of God: Acts xiii. 36. If we had done so too, we should say with Simeon, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."*

Sol. (1.) God needs not your hands to carry on his service in the world; he can do it by other hands when you are gone. Many of greater gifts and graces than you, are daily laid in the grave, to teach you, God needs no man's help to carry on his work.

(2.) If the service of God be so dear to you, there is higher and more excellent service for you in heaven, than any you ever were, or can be employed in here on earth. Oh! why do not you long to be amidst the company of angels and spirits made perfect in the temple-service in heaven?

Object. 3. *O, but my relations in the world lie near my heart, what will become of them when I am gone?*

Sol. (1.) It is pity they should lie nearer your heart than Jesus Christ: If they do, you have little reason to desire death indeed.

(2.) Who took care of you, when death snatched your dear relations from you, who possibly felt the same workings of heart that you now do? Did you not experience the truth of that word, Psal. xxvii. 10. "When father and mother forsake me, then the Lord taketh me up." And if you be in the covenant, God hath prevented this plea with his promise, Jer. xlix. 11. "Leave thy fatherless children to me, I will keep them alive; and let their widows trust in me."

Object. 4. *But I desire to live to see the felicity of Zion before I go hence, and the answer of the many prayers I have sown for it; I am loth to leave the people of God in so sad a condition.*

Sol. The publicness of thy spirit, and love to Zion, is doubtless pleasing to God; but it is better for you to be in heaven one day, than to live ever again all the days you have lived on earth in the best time that ever the church of God enjoyed in this world; the promises shall be accomplished, though you may not live to see their accomplishment; die you in the faith of it, as Joseph did, Gen. l. 24.

But, alas! the matter doth not stick here: this is not the main hinderance. I will tell you where I think it lies: (1.) In the hesitancy and staggering of our faith about the certainty and reality of things invisible. (2.) In some special guilt upon the conscience, which discourages us. (3.) In a negligent and careless course of life, which is not ordinarily blessed with much evidence or comfort. (4.) In the deep engagements of our hearts to earthly things: they could not be so cold to Christ, if they were not over-heated with other things. Till these distempers be cured, no arguments can prosper that are spent to this end. The Lord dissolve all those ties betwixt us and this world, which hinder our consent and willingness to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

And now we have had a glance and glimmering light, a faint umbrage of the state of the separated souls of the just in heaven: it remains that I shew you somewhat of the state and case of the damned souls in hell. A dreadful representation it is; but it is necessary we hear of hell, that we may not feel it.