

THE
TWO WORLDS;

PRESENT AND FUTURE, VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE;

WHEREIN IS REPRESENTED BRIEFLY

THE UNCOMFORTABLE STATE OF GOD'S CHILDREN IN THIS
WORLD, AND THEIR EARNEST EXPECTATION OF
FUTURE HAPPINESS WITH GOD.

AUTHOR'S EPISTLE.

TO MY DEAR AND LOVING NEPHEWS, AND OTHERS OF MY
NATURAL RELATIONS IN LANCASHIRE.

DEAR FRIENDS,

THE providence of God hath separated me now forty-nine years from my native county, and from the vicinity of all my kindred in the flesh, into another county, where my lot hath been cast amongst a loving and a beloved people, where I have laboured long, and not without considerable success; yet notwithstanding my mind hath not been alienated from my dear relations, but as my poor prayers have been daily to God for you, so I have frequently visited you, preached the word to you publicly and privately, as I had a call and opportunity, written letters to you, sent my printed books to be perused by you, and thought no labour too much to be useful to your souls.

But it is now come to pass that I am superannuated, and much incapacitated for travelling into your parts, having out-lived all my brothers and sisters, and being within a few days of the age of man, seventy years, far longer than ever I expected to have sojourned in this weary world, having been under the sentence of death four times by repeated fevers; and how long this frail life shall yet be prolonged, I cannot tell: but the providence of God brought to my thoughts a suitable word some months ago, which was mentioned as the subject of a funeral sermon, by a dying niece of mine, (my eldest sister's eldest daughter,) I formed a resolution to write it over, and to send it amongst you, and to the persons immediately concerned in that breach, as a testimony of my good-will to you. It is true, I had preached on the same text at home upon the like

occasion : the subject is important ; I wish it had been better managed ; however I shall follow it with my prayers, that it may be profitable to you and others.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS and NIECES, and BELOVED KINDRED, I can truly say with the blessed apostle, " My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved," Rom. x. 1. You cannot but know how many of our ancestors have died in the faith, and are gone to heaven, having " fought a good fight, finished their course, and kept the faith," 2 Tim. iv. 7 ; they have offered up many prayers which are recorded in God's book, and presented many petitions which are still upon the file for their surviving posterity, which will be brought to remembrance either for your conversion, or the aggravation of your sin and condemnation. How dreadful will your case be, to be turned to the left hand with the goats, and hear that dreadful sentence, Matt. xxv. 41, " Go, ye cursed !" when you see your parents and progenitors stand on the right hand, addressed with that gracious word, " Come, ye blessed : " yea, when you shall see " many come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," and you, " the children of the kingdom cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth ! " Matt. viii. 11, 12. Oh what wounds will be left in your consciences, what stings and accusations, on considering parents' prayers and tears, sighs and groans, counsels and admonitions, their prudent carriage and pious examples set before you ! You will not perish at so easy a rate as others. The houses where you live, the chambers you frequent, where they maintained constant communion with God, will be as witnesses against you, if yet you know nothing what it means. If they kept private days of fasting and prayer among God's children, and you slight it ; if they were of a peaceable spirit, you contentious ; if they were industrious in their callings, you slothful ; if they walked with God in their families, and you walk at rovers ; if they were diligent in reading the Scriptures and good books, and you lay them by and mind toys and trifles—how can you look your pious relations in the face ? what can you say for yourselves ? God knows how matters are, he " will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of your

hearts," 1 Cor. iv. 5, which you would be loth any should know, much less relatives distinguished for their piety. O think of this day of revelation, this day of appearing, and make ready for it.

DEAR COUSINS, though you have had religious ancestors and relations, yet remember, Adam after his fall begat a son in his own likeness, not in God's, which he had lost. Grace is not hereditary, to be propagated to natural offspring: many godly parents in Scripture history had wicked children, and David "was conceived in iniquity," Psalm li. 5. Remember you are all by nature children of wrath, and a regenerating work must pass upon you; "except you be born again, you shall not see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3, so saith the Key-keeper, yea, sovereign disposer of heaven. Again, he asserts it with emphasis, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii. 3. Think not to be saved whether Christ will or not, or imagine you can find out some other way to heaven than the Scripture way; whatever Satan or your hearts suggest of this nature, you would be miserably gulled and beguiled by it at last; or if you rest in a notion or form of religion, you may die with a lie in your right hand, and never be undeceived till the flames of hell convince and confound you. Without mortification of our beloved sins, our blessed Lord tells us three several times, we must be cast into hell, that is, "into a fire that never shall be quenched; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," Mark ix. 43—48. Truth itself hath said, "Without holiness no man shall see God," Heb. xii. 14; and it is the hell of hells, to be banished from God. As little as most men care for coming to God here, but are inclining rather to say to him, "Depart from us," Job xxi. 14; yet when God shall pronounce that dreadful sentence, "Depart from me," they shall have their eyes open, and be more affrighted with it than with fire and brimstone: for though the punishment of sense be intolerable, yet the punishment of loss is more formidable, because it is a loss of infinite good. There is an astonishing emphasis in that word, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power," 2 Thess. i. 9. This,

this is the second death, the death of deaths, wherein sinners would gladly choose to die and be annihilated, but must not.

MY DEAR FRIENDS, it may be, this is the last time that I shall address myself to you; make sure of heaven, nothing else can make you happy. Attend carefully on the means of salvation, hear the most powerful preachers, and stifle not convictions; when you have heard awakening truths, descend into your own hearts, and ask your consciences,—is not this my case? do not these things concern me? are they not of importance, and not to be slighted? then fall down on your knees, desire the Lord to set them home, and give you the experience and benefit of divine truths. They are not idle stories, or a sick man's dreams, but the eternal truths of Almighty God, according to which you must be judged at the last day; and that day may be nearer than you are aware. "How can you escape if you neglect so great salvation?" Heb. ii. 3, and expose yourselves to unavoidable perdition? The longer you defer repentance the harder will your hearts grow, and the more difficult will the work be; and God may justly give you up to yourselves, than which there is no greater judgment on this side hell: O tremble to think of that. Be afraid to be deceived, let no marks serve you for trial but Scripture characters, and be faithful in the examination. Let no duty satisfy you without communion with God therein: in all you do, propound the glory of God as your chief end: study the terms of salvation, faith, repentance, and new obedience, and see you be sincere: lament your inability to perform these terms without assisting grace, beg it earnestly of God, in the name of Christ: lay aside all diversions till this work be done: fear no discouragements, God is able to bring you through, and "keep you by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation."

And you, my dear kindred in the flesh, that are of the spiritual kinship, members of the same body whereof Christ is the head, and that are travelling towards Zion, be much in praising God, because he hath remembered his holy covenant, and kept his promise to some generations; spend your time with and for God; do as much good as you can to relations and all about you; live exemplary lives; get your evidences cleared up for heaven; be watchful over your hearts and ways; strive against

sin ; shake off sloth ; make ready for heaven, and long to be there. What can you see in this world worth fixing upon for your rest, in comparison of the immediate enjoyment of God? Mr. Caryl saith, “ It is a piece of great self-denial in a Christian that hath grounded assurance of heaven, to be content to live longer to do God service on earth.” And truly it is no wonder when Moses has got to the top of Pisgah, if he long to be in the goodly land. But we must stay God's time, and surely there will be an end, and your expectation shall not be cut off.

“ Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath saved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work,” 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

So prayeth your only surviving Uncle and Relation,

O. HEYWOOD.

Dec. 30, 1699.

THE
TWO WORLDS.

1 Cor. xv. 19.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

THESE words contain an irrefragable argument to prove a life to come, and a resurrection. It is improbable, yea, morally impossible, that the best men should always fare the worst, contrary to reason and scripture, Isa. iii. 10, 11. The words contain these two things : a supposition, and an assertion.

1. If our hope in Christ be not stretched beyond the limits of this life :* for we are bound to fix our hopes upon Christ while we live ; and even for the things of this life, as well as for the other, according to 1 Tim. iv. 8. But if we did not expect from Christ the good things of a future state in the world to come, then

2. “ We are of all men most miserable.” Here is the comparative for the superlative, ἐλκεινότεροι, more miserable than worldly men, that have their portion in this life, Psal. xvii. 14.

But whom doth the Apostle mean, when he saith “ We ?”

* Si spes nostra non porrigitur ultra terminum hujus vitæ.

(1.) We apostles, ministers of the gospel, that sell all for Christ, and preach the doctrine of eternal salvation by him. If this gospel be not true, we are the veriest arrant cheats among men, and shall fare accordingly; but we know what we do and say, we are no fools to be deceived, nor knaves to deceive the world with a fiction of our own brain: no, no, we know what we believe, and whom we have believed;* we are sure of the reality, certainty, and excellency of what we preach, we have suffered great hardships already, and dare venture our souls upon his authority, and our Lord Christ's resurrection gives us full assurance of it.

(2.) We believers, who renounce the pleasures, profits, and honours of this world, who are daily obnoxious to the cross, and exposed to persecutions; surely we are no better than madmen if we did not believe the immortality of the soul, and life to come: for the Sadducees that denied the resurrection, said, "there was neither angel nor spirit," Acts xxiii. 8, and indeed our hope depends on Christ's resurrection, 1 Pet. i. 3, for who would believe in a dead Christ, never to live and rise again?

Hence this doctrine,—*That none are so miserable as real saints, if all their hopes and happiness were in this lower world.*

The Hebrew Rabbies divide the world into three parts:

1. Inferior, the lowest world: this terrestrial globe consisting, (1.) of sea, lakes, and rivers; (2.) deserts, and solitary, uninhabited places; (3.) the inhabited part.

2. Middle, or inmost world; that is, the spheres, containing the aerial region and starry heavens, where the vast luminaries are placed in their orbits.

* 2 Tim. i. 12.

3. The superior world, where God himself manifests his immediate presence to his glorious angels and glorified spirits. This is called the heaven of heavens, paradise, the high and holy place, whither the glorified body of Jesus is advanced.* It is true that God's children centre their spirits and best affections there, of which state it is said, 2 Cor. iv. 18, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

In the prosecuting of this doctrine, I shall speak to it by way of explication, confirmation, vindication, and application.

1. For explication, observe these four maxims:

(1.) The expression in the text implies, that the church of Corinth was deluded with the imagination of an allegorical resurrection, such as Hymeneus fancied, saying, "that the resurrection is past already," 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18, importing that it was to be understood, in a spiritual sense, of regeneration, which indeed is called a resurrection with Christ; † but this is a preparative to the second, which the apostle here asserts and proves.

(2.) The text doth not favour their unscriptural doctrine, that think souls sleep with the bodies till the general resurrection; or as though Paul dreamed of the heathen's Elysian fields, or Mahomet's paradise: but he takes it for granted, that the only hope of Christians refers to the last judgment, as completing the happiness of soul and body together; for the thief on the cross was to be with Christ in paradise, the day of his

* 1 Kings viii. 27. 2 Cor. xii. 4. Isa. lvii. 15.

† John xi. 15. Col. iii. 1.

death; and Paul was to be with Christ at his dissolution.*

(3.) Possibly this expression was directly calculated for the apostle's days, wherein the christian name was most infamous amongst the grandees of the world; so that none durst give up themselves to Christ, but such as reckoned upon death: for the apostles and their followers were as it were appointed to death. † In all public calamities, heathens laid the blame on Christians, and cried out, Cast the Christians to the lions. ‡ Doubtless it was a very calamitous time, and this sentence was best adapted to it.

(4.) We must not think, that God's children have not in this life better things than wicked men have. They have God's favour, pardon of sin, peace of conscience: but these are not the things of this life, though enjoyed in this life. Faith in Christ fetcheth down precious treasures from heaven, and lifteth up the soul to heaven. Spiritual delights are transcendently better than sensual pleasures.

The meaning of the text then is this: if we had trusted Christ for worldly riches, pleasures, or honours, placing the advantage of our faith in worldly enjoyments; if our hope did not exceed the bounds of this mortal life, we should be very miserable: but we are not of the opinion of the Jews, or even some of Christ's disciples, who would erect a temporal kingdom in this world; no, no, our expectation is of the enjoyments of a better world.

2. For confirmation of this great truth, I shall demonstrate it by some particular instances, in an enumeration of difficulties which good men pass through

* Luke xxiii. 43. Phil. i. 23.

† 1 Cor. iv. 9, 10.

‡ Christianos ad leones.

in this life : yet I shall not mention what is common to men, bad as well as good, but what is peculiar to them as the children of God. Such as these :

(1.) Pious persons have often the least share of the comforts of this life, in this world. They often receive their evil things with Lazarus sitting at the rich man's gate : it is the poor that receive the gospel, or are evangelized. "Hearken, my beloved brethren," and mind it carefully, it is worth taking notice of, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom?"* Ordinarily our Lord chooseth not his disciples from the potentates, and grandees of the world ; not many mighty, not many noble are called : nor doth he promise to make them rich, when he hath chosen them. The apostles themselves were poor, yet making many rich. And Christ's sheep often feed on bare commons, while others live in pleasure on the earth. † This is what the world wonders and stumbles at, that our Lord keeps his servants no better : but they consider not that our Lord reserves the best wine for the last.

(2.) Suppose religious persons be rich, yet they cannot take their fill of the world as carnal men do. The world is the element of sinners, they take content in it, they wallow in it as a swine in the mire ; their desires are after creatures, and they feast themselves without fear. There is a suitableness betwixt the faculty and the object ; they are loth to check themselves, or to be interrupted in their sensual delight. But now pious men are delivered from this present, evil world : a gracious soul hath a better principle, and looks on things below with scorn, and holy disdain ; he is as a weaned child, quite alienated from the best that the world can offer ;

* Luke xvi. 20. Matt. xi. 5. James ii. 5.

† 1 Cor. i. 26—28. 2 Cor. vi. 10. James v. 5.

yea, the Christian is crucified to the world, as the world is to him; he mortifies his attachment to things below, and dares not freely avail himself of lawful liberty, lest that liberty be an occasion to the flesh, and so gradually draw him to sin. In delicious meals he puts a knife to his throat, and he is jealous lest he be drawn aside to excess; yea, he keeps down his body by fasting and mortifying exercises, lest he be miserably enticed to sinful acts. However, the devout soul can look through the best of the world, and finds all here below but vanity and vexation of spirit.*

(3.) Religious persons meet with more opposition and persecution in this world than others do; the world will love its own, but such as are chosen out of the world are hated by it, John xv. 18—20. No wonder if this strict sect be every where spoken against. Every Ishmael will mock Isaac, and such as are born after the flesh, will persecute such as are born after the Spirit: so it is now; scarce any on this side the grave have endured such tortures as Christians have done.† A Christian is a cross-bearer: ‡ yet there are strange, seeming contradictions, see 2 Cor. vi. 4—11. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God; this is unavoidable; all sincere professors must be sure to prepare for it. ||

(4.) Pious people have much more work upon their hearts and hands than others have: not but that all have the same to do; even worldly persons have still more to do, but they shift it off, and are not actually engaged therein. Alas! they are not sensible of their

* Jude, 12. Gal. i. 4. Psal. cxxxi. 2. Gal. vi. 14. v. 13. Prov. xxiii. 2. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Eccles. ii. 17.

† Acts xxviii. 22. Gen. xxi. 9. Gal. iv. 29.

‡ Christianus crucianus. || 2 Cor. xi. 23—27. Acts xiv. 22. 2 Tim. iii. 12.

state, but believers lie under deep convictions of the necessity and difficulty of spiritual duties, and especially of faith, love, and repentance, being stirred up and exercised; they have privileges to improve, ordinances to prepare for, communion with God to maintain, many commands to obey, which are of great latitude; for "thy commandments," says David, "are exceeding broad:" they respect God immediately, men, relations, christian brethren, with reference to advice, comfort, and admonition; there is an abundance of sins to be purged out, filthiness both of flesh and spirit. The gracious soul discerns more evil in, and danger by unbelief, pride, hardness of heart, and hypocrisy, than others do.

(5.) Pious persons are more concerned for the church of God than others are: upon them, in some sort, lies the care of all the churches.* They put their shoulders, though weak, under the interests of Christ. A good man, like David, is not quiet though in a cieled house, while the ark of God dwelleth under curtains; yea, with old Eli, his heart trembles for the ark of God. When Nehemiah heard bad news of the church's affliction, he sat down and wept, and mourned certain days: so the city Shushan was perplexed when others rejoiced. And it cannot be otherwise; for all the reproaches belched out against God and his church, fall upon real saints; they cannot but sympathize with the head and members of the body. Such are like-minded, and naturally care for the good of the church. †

(6.) Pious persons are more affected and afflicted with others' sins against God, than people generally are. Irreligious men rather exult over the sins of professors,

* 2 Tim. i. 6. Psal. cxix. 96. 2 Cor. vii. 1. 2 Cor. xi. 28.

† 2 Sam. vii. 1, 2. 1 Sam. iv. 13. Neh. i. 4. Est. iii. 15. Psal. lxix. 9.

and please themselves that others are worse than themselves, and say, "I am not as this publican." But, oh how the sins of others go to the heart of a believer! "I beheld the transgressors," says David, "and was grieved;" yea, he shed rivers of tears for others' omissions and commissions. How was good Ezra vexed at the people's sins, and Jeremiah wept in secret for their pride.* Blessed Paul is humbled for, and greatly bewails the sins of the church of Corinth, 2 Cor. xii. 21.

(7.) Genuine Christians reckon a greater number of sins and duties than others do: not that they make more of either than God hath made; but their eyes are enlightened to see things more clearly and distinctly. Yet observe it, scrupulous consciences are apt to make more sins and duties than God makes; and as this is their sin, so it is their great affliction, perplexing them with many doubts. But judicious Christians inquire first, whether it be lawful? † by what warrant? ‡ have I a Scripture command to authorize such an action? Then, whether it become me under such circumstances? And lastly, whether it be expedient? for many things are lawful, that yet are not expedient, because they edify not, or are an offence to others, or are occasions of sin. The Christian avoids every appearance of evil, hates the garment spotted by the flesh: || there is however some difficulty here. A tender conscience begets many scruples about recreations, vocations, and conversations with men; see Dan. i. 8: but a carnal heart ventures at all, makes no scruples, and censures those who do, as making more ado than needs, as being more precise than wise.

(8.) Believers have more temptations from Satan

* Luke xviii. 11. Psal. cxix. 136, 158. Ezra ix. Jer. xiii. 17.

† An liceat, an deceat, an expediat. ‡ Quo warranto.

|| 1 Cor. x. 23. 1 Thess. v. 21, 22. Jude, 23.

than sinners have. The devil blinds wicked men's eyes, rocks them asleep, locks them up in ignorance, and so they are led captive by Satan at his pleasure: he is sure of them, and lets them alone in security. But oh what dreadful assaults doth this fiend of hell make against real saints! sometimes shaking and sifting them as wheat, that nothing but bran may remain; at other times, laying snares and stratagems to circumvent them with his devices. He sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light: sometimes lurks as a serpent, to gull and beguile them: oftentimes he comes in his own colours, as a roaring lion to affright or devour them;* and when he appears thus, though it be most terrible, yet it is less dangerous. Says Mr. Rutherford, I love a rumbling and roaring devil: this drives the Christian from him to his strong hold. Sometimes Satan comes with hideous injections of atheism, blasphemy, black and dreadful thoughts of God; as it is said of Luther, † “frightful things concerning God and religion:” so that the Christian is oft weary of his life, and could wish himself out of the world, Satan's walk.

(9.) A real Christian hath more combats and conflicts in his own bosom, than unregenerate men have. Alas! carnal men glide down the stream; the strong man armed keeps the palace, and the goods (the faculties) are in peace. They have no conflicts within, except it be between conscience and the will; but the wilful will soon quells the natural conscience, then the man is quiet in sin. But renewing grace hath a party in the same faculty. There are two armies in one man; Jacob and Esau, twins in the same womb. There is an I for God, and an I for the flesh; “the good that I

* 2 Tim. ii. 26. Luke xxii. 31. 2 Cor. ii. 11. xi. 3, 14. 1 Pet. v. 8.

† *Terribilia de Deo, horribilia de fide.*

would, I do not." O what hard and irreconcilable strugglings are there in the Christian's breast! "Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."* How hard to get to duty, how hard to keep with God in duty? When the Christian would repent, believe, meditate, pray, obey, he is so fastened down with the sin that doth so easily beset him, that he knows not what to make of himself: he is weary of his life with this dead body tied to him, and cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?"

(10.) Believers have more apprehensions of God than others have, and are more afraid of offending him. Carnal men are apt to think God is altogether such a one as themselves, and are ready to say, "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it," he winks at small faults: God is merciful, these are venial sins and infirmities, God will take no notice of them: but the pious Christian looks on his sin through a magnifying glass, and sees the aggravations of that, which the world accounts a peccadillo. David cries out, after numbering the people, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; I have done very foolishly." Besides a good man hath awful apprehensions of God's justice, holiness, and truth, in executing his threatenings. Josiah's heart was tender, and he humbled himself upon hearing God's threatenings. David saith, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments."† So did Habakkuk, chap. iii. 16. And had not the believer relief in Christ, such thoughts would swallow him up; yet faith in Christ is not always at hand, and then he is exceedingly daunted.

* Luke xi. 21. Cant. vi. 13. Rom. vii. 15, 20, 24. Gal. v. 17.

† Heb. xii. 1. Rom. vii. 24. Psal. l. 21. xciv. 7. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. Psal. cxix 120.

(11.) Yet further, pious men are greatly afflicted with God's withdrawings and the hiding of his face. Sinners know not what this means; they think God loves them, though they know not what special love signifies. Poor creatures, they have no qualms upon them, "no bands in life or death; their strength is firm, they are not in trouble as other men." How often do God's children experience sad eclipses; God withdraws from them his quickening influence, their hearts are not enlarged God-wards at seasons, but they complain they are hardened from God's fear. How oft do we find God's dearest children cry out, "Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and countest me for thine enemy?"* They complain they go forward seeking him, but cannot find him, Job xxiii. 8, 9. David, Heman, and even Christ himself have complained of God's forsaking them, not totally and finally, but in their present sense and feeling. And this is a doleful case, an insupportable burden, yea, a kind of death to them. This made the Psalmist cry, "While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted."† David complains of broken bones. None knows what this means but they that experience it.

(12.) Once more, sincere Christians are much liable to fears and jealousies about their spiritual state. The ungodly seldom call this in question, they have always been of a good belief. Their maxim is, Hope while thou breathest. They have honest hearts; and if at any time they dispute their condition, they quell their fears, and quiet their spirits with their good wishes, vows, prayers, attending on ordinances, and acts of charity. But believers have frequent returns of fears, not only respecting their duty, "to work out their

* Psal. lxxiii. 4, 5. Isa. lxiii. 17. Job xiii. 24.

† Psal. xxii. lxxvii. Isa. l. 10. Psal. lxxxviii. 15.

own salvation with fear and trembling ;” but from the consideration of the treachery of their hearts, subtlety of Satan, paucity of sincere believers, and importance of religion ; they are ready to fear, lest a promise being left of entering into rest, they should seem to come short of it : nay, it is well if there be not oft too much slavish fear in the hearts even of the best. It is true, perfect love casteth out this fear ; but alas ! love is not yet perfect, no more than other graces, therefore returns of this fear may be consistent with sincerity, and fear hath torment. Hence it is in all these respects, that if pious men had all their hope and happiness in this life, they would be most miserable.

You will say, All God’s children are not thus exercised, many have a more easy passage to heaven. I answer, some have. But all may expect such troubles at one time or other of their lives. “ What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not ? ” * As long as as there is malice in Satan, corruption in our hearts, or defects in our graces, we may reckon on such troubles as these. Our Lord hath said, “ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me,” Matt. xvi. 24.

3. The next general consideration respects the vindication of the saints of God in this their choice. And this may seem necessary ; for if God’s children be greater sufferers than others in this world, they may be in reason, and are by carnal men, esteemed the greatest fools in nature, who bring upon themselves such troubles in hopes of future happiness, which no man ever saw, nor is capable of seeing in this world ; they however cast the allurements of the world at their heels, and judge all men fools beside themselves. Who will believe them ?

* Phil. ii. 12. Heb. iv. 1. 1 John iv. 18. Heb. xii. 7.

Ans. (1.) The eyes of converts are opened to see things otherwise than most do, or than they themselves formerly did. Satan held his black hand over their eyes, but now God "hath shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6. All the rest of the world have but one eye, Christians have each two eyes, of reason and grace. The scales of ignorance fall from their eyes: the black veil is taken away by the Spirit's illumination. "The eyes of their understandings are enlightened to know the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," Ephes. i. 17, 18. They are placed a degree higher than others, and the higher they stand, the further they see. Our Lord accounts them friends, and courtiers know more of their king's counsels than others: "His secrets are with them that fear him." The emerald helps failing eyes, so doth the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 10—12.

(2.) The graces of faith and hope look beyond time, at things invisible.* Hope that is seen is not hope, but that which we wait for with patience. Right hope is fixed beyond the veil. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," Gal. v. 5. It is essential to the christian religion, to look not at things seen, but things not seen, that is, eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

(3.) The new nature furnisheth the Christian with a holy *impetus*, and tendency to things beyond time and sense. Believers are renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, after the image of God, and thereby they are attracted to invisible objects: † being

* 2 Cor. iii. 16. John xv. 15. Psal. xxv. 14. Heb. xi. 1, 27.

† Heb. vi. 19, 20. Rom. viii. 24, 25. 1 Thess. i. 3. Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24.

“risen with Christ, they seek those things that are above.” They are not satisfied with corporeal, perishing objects: nothing pleaseth them but invisible realities.

(4.) Pious souls have a pledge and earnest of future things; a foretaste, prelibation, and anticipation of heaven. God hath “given the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts,” 2 Cor. i. 22. This is both a privilege and assurance of the bargain;* a pledge is returned back, but an earnest is kept as part of the bargain, till all be consummated:† so that God is, in some sort, a debtor to make good his promise, and “the righteous hath hope in his death,” Prov. xiv. 32.

The subject may now be considered as affording scope for *Instruction, Conviction and Lamentation, Examination, and Exhortation.*

I. Instruction. 1. It teaches us that there is a future state in another world, a world to come, besides this present evil world. God hath made more worlds than one. Things will not always continue in the same posture, as the profane scoffers of the last days affirm, saying, “Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation;” which the apostle disproves, 2 Pet. iii. 3—10. All things are upon the wheel of change. Actors upon the stage are successively taken off, and at last the stage itself shall be taken down, 1 Cor. vii. 31. There is a “world without end.”‡

2. There be some persons in this world, that shall be counted worthy to possess a better world: so our Lord saith. “But they which shall be counted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the

* Col. iii. 1, 2. 2 Cor. v. 5. Eph. i. 13, 14.

† Pignus redditur, arrhabo retinetur.

‡ Heb. ii. 5. Eph. i. 4. Heb. xi. 3. i. 2. Eph. iii. 21.

dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels." There are mansions above, which Christians shall enter and abide in; there are heirs of the heavenly kingdom.

3. A believer's best is reserved for the last. The Ruler of the feast said concerning the water turned into wine, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now;"* so doth our Lord. Sinners have their best things in this life, saints in the other. Philosophers could say, that no man is happy before death. Solomon saith, "The end of a thing is better than the beginning."† I am sure it is so in this affair: heaven is better than the earth. The good things of the throne are better than the good things of the footstool.

4. Real saints are the only happy men: none are truly happy but pious souls, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace," Psalm xxxvii. 37. Let their way be never so rugged, mountainous, and difficult, believers have the eternal God for their portion, Christ for their ransom, the eternal Spirit for their comforter: and though God in a little wrath hide his face from them for a moment, yet with everlasting kindness "will he have mercy on them," Isa. liv. 7; clouds will quickly blow over, and an everlasting sunshine shall comfort God's afflicted children; when all the world is in an uproar, the saints shall lift up their heads and say, "Our redemption draweth nigh," Luke xxi. 28.

II. Conviction and lamentation over those poor souls who have no hope but in the present life. Woe, ten thousand woes, "to the inhabitants of the earth and

* Luke xx. 35, 36. John xiv. 2. James ii. 5. John ii. 10.

† Ante mortem nemo felix. Eccl. vii. 8.

of the sea, that have their portion in this life," and not above.

1. The things thou enjoyest here are but temporary, quickly gone; "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof;" the lustre thereof, the use thereof; "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them."* Your souls will outlive your goods and bodies; and what will you do for a portion when these are gone? You have neglected heaven and cannot keep earth.† "O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth," Jer. xvii. 13. Surely the fire that consumes the earth will blot out your names, your memorial shall perish for ever,

2. Your lives are very uncertain. You little know, "what one day may bring forth."—"This night may thy soul be required of thee;" and thou mayest launch forth into the vast ocean of eternity. You are but frail, mortal creatures, you "dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth." Your breath is in your nostrils, turned in and out every moment; as many members, senses, and pores in your bodies, so many doors to let in death. When God "riseth up, no man is sure of his life;" ‡ then all your contrivances fail and vanish, Psal. cxlvi. 4. Study James iv. 13, 14.

3. A boundless eternity comes in the rear of this short life; an everlasting happiness or misery. "Wicked men go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," Matt. xxv. 46. O methinks,

* Rev. xii. 12. Psal. xvii. 14. 1 John ii. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 13.

† Cælum negligimus, terram non retinemus.

‡ Prov. xvii. 1. Luke xii. 20. Job iv. 19. xxiv. 22.

this word eternity should astonish and confound you! What ailed Felix that he trembled, when Paul at the bar reasoned on righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come? It is a wonder that an unconverted sinner abides in his senses, when he thinks of passing into a world of endless, restless, remediless eternity! so that Dion, an atheist, would rather choose to endure the greatest torment than to die.

4. When death hath struck his last stroke, there will be no remedy, no returning to life again, no message of reconciliation sent into the grave or hell. The door is shut, the gulf is fixed; there is no reversing of things; as sinners are found at death, so they must abide for ever. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment." Then will be the decision of their final state. The richest men may weep and howl for the miseries that come upon them.* Now farewell all their joys in this world, they must lodge with devils and damned spirits: better it had been for them that they had never been born. Crying at the door will avail nothing; pleading privileges will be rejected, "I know you not" will be the answer. O forlorn state of graceless souls! You are like to abide by it "till you have paid the utmost farthing," which will never be; after thousands, ten thousands, yea millions of ages, you will be no nearer an end, than the first moment you entered that infernal lake. O think on these things in time, consider the issue, you that "forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." †

III. Examination. What number are you of, saints or sinners? Are you content with this present life, or expectants of a better? As you love your

* Acts xxiv. 25. Heb. ix. 27. James v. 1.

† Matt. xxv. 11, 12. Luke xiii. 26. Psal. l. 22.

souls, and dread being lost, try your state; be not put off with uncertainties, nor presume without Scripture warrant. Judge yourselves by the same word that must judge you at the last day; you have it in your hands. Oh! be faithful to God and your own souls in this weighty case; it is not a trifling matter, it is as much as your souls are worth.

You will say, How shall we know our state for another world?

Answ. I shall briefly propound these ten questions, answer them faithfully as in the presence of the heart-searching God.

(1.) Are you begotten “again to this lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?” 1 Pet. i. 3. Know for certain, this hope is not born with you, you are without hope by nature; yea, you live without hope till you be born again. I deny not, but most unregenerate sinners have a kind of presumptuous hope, but convincing grace breaks the neck of this, and drives them into woful despair, in order to bring in a better hope. Is thy former hope sunk, lost? hath converting grace introduced a solid, scriptural, well grounded hope? * it is only the poor that have hope. Hath God brought thee into the valley of Achor, and then opened for thee a door of hope? Do you turn to your strong hold as prisoners of hope? I despair of you till you despair of yourselves. †

(2.) Are you very jealous of yourselves and willing to be tried? You have heard so much of the nature of grace, that you grow very suspicious of yourselves, and fear you have it not, because so much goes to it; you think and say, “God forbid I should die with a

* John xii. 48. Eph. ii. 12. Job v. 16.

† Hos. ii. 15. Zech. ix. 12.

lie in my right hand;" I am afraid lest I should think myself something when I am nothing;* therefore I will prove my own work and heart, and desire the assistance of ministers and christian friends, and tell them my case; I will observe their experience and compare myself with them, go to scripture characters, lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, that my treacherous heart may not beguile me about this important case, how I may come off at last.

(3.) What are your thoughts most working upon, or taken up with, things seen or unseen? "Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also."† What are your morning and evening thoughts, your cares, fears, and anxieties? Do you purposely set time apart to study eternity? What occasional meditations have you about this weighty subject? Mr. Ward, that holy divine, sat silent in company a season, at last out of a deep study cried out, "Oh! for ever, for ever, for ever," for a quarter of an hour together, being opprest with the solemn thoughts of an everlasting state; so will you be deeply concerned, so as almost to forget all other things, as those mentioned 2 Cor. iv. 18; little matter how things go with us in this world whether we be rich or poor, honourable or despised, if only it go well with us in the other world.

(4.) Do you feel in yourselves some evidences of a better state, which makes you willing to endure any hardship for it? Heb. x. 34, "Ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods." Why so, were they mad or senseless? no, but "knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." It is strange that they despised worldly enjoyments, but they had better above; as it is said of Alexander going to conquer the

* Isa. xliv. 20. Gal. vi. 3.

† Matt. vi. 21.

Indies, that he threw his gold about him, living in hopes to have enough there; so the believer is going to better riches. How knows he this? Why, he hath the counterpart thereof in his own bosom; something in his heart which answers that above. This he knows not from books or discourses, but from the workings of his own heart, God hath drawn a bill of exchange for better things in the other world; "And he knows whom he hath believed," and dares to venture his soul and all on his promise. Abraham and all his seed have something to build their strong confidence upon and from which to derive consolation, "when they lay hold on this hope set before them."

(5.) Are you disposed to communicate your experience to others, for their benefit? The primitive Christians loved to be talking of their heavenly country, and declared plainly that they sought it;* and indeed "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Anatomists observe, that the heart and the tongue hang both upon one string, so that there is a sympathy and proximity between them. The speech is both the index and the interpreter of the mind. "Come all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. O taste and see that the Lord is good."† I cannot but impart to my christian friends something of God's love to me, that they may praise him and love him with me. This is the duty and character of a child of God, "to be ready always to give an account to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear," 1 Pet. iii. 15. This hope will discover itself.

(6.) What is the tendency of your desires and prayers? Do you "hunger and thirst after righteous-

* 2 Tim. 1, 12. Heb. vi. 13—18. xi. 14.

† Matt. xii. 34. Psal. lxvi. 16. xxxiv. 8.

ness? If God would leave you to choose, the kingdom of heaven, or all the kingdoms of this world, which would you prefer deliberately? Are you of David's mind, Psal. iv. 6, 7, "There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." It is thyself I have chosen to be my portion, my heritage for ever. "The desire of my soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee," day and night, public and secret; "with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in this dry and thirsty land, where no water is. Oh! when shall I come and appear before God?" The whole world is an insignificant cypher; many a time I have opened my bosom to thee, and uttered seriously the words of David, Psal. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Heaven would not be heaven without thee, and earth, yea, hell itself would be heaven, if I may enjoy thee.

(7.) Doth this hope of heaven purify your hearts, cleanse your hands, mortify your passions, and keep your souls at a distance from all occasions of sin? I John iii. 3, "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." You will not be afraid to be called Puritans in this good sense, but will study purity in heart and life. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,"* and none else; "for there shall in no wise enter" the holy city "any thing that defileth;" remember it, "none shall stand in his holy place, but he that hath clean hands and a pure heart." Deceive not yourselves, without holiness you shall never see God.† It is true, you find much pollution in

* Isa. xxvi. 8, 9. Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2. xlii. 1, 2. Matt. v. 8.

† Rev. xxi. 27. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. Heb. xii. 14.

your hearts ; but do you bewail it, complain of it, hate it, and are you “cleansing yourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ?

(8.) Do you make this your great case of conscience upon all occasions ? “Men and brethren, what shall we do ? what must I do to be saved ? how may I inherit eternal life ? asking the way to Zion with your faces thitherwards.”* Are you solicitous and full of care, and thoughtfulness, till this great question be put out of question, upon scripture grounds ? Sometimes you have hopes, then your fears return. What must a soul do in this case ? I answer, he must venture himself on the promise of God. Job saith, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,” and though he walk in darkness, he must stay himself on God ; and when all is done he must appeal to God, desire him to search him, as David frequently did ; † and as Peter, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,” John xxi. 15, 17. The soul setteth itself as a glass in the sun, as Monsieur de Zenti said of himself, to be thoroughly viewed.

(9.) What pains do you take for another world ? do you not only seek slightly to enter into heaven, but do you strive even to an agony ? do you frequent all ordinances, public, private, and secret ? do you fight the good fight of faith, run the race set before you with patience, watch over your own hearts ? Do you “seek first the kingdom of God, and labour hard for the meat that endures for ever.” Do you give “all diligence to make your calling and election sure ?” ‡ are you never weary, is it your delight, your meat and drink

* 2 Cor. vii. 1. Acts ii. 37. xvi. 30. Matt. xix. 56. Jer. l. 1.

† Job xiii. 15 Isa. l. 10. Psal. xxvi. 2. cxxxix. 23.

‡ Luke xiii. 24. Matt. vi. 33. John vi. 27. 2 Pet. i. 5.

to do God's will? his commands are not grievous. When the hunters found Macedonius in his cave in the wilderness, and asked him what he did there? he asked them, what do you here? they said they hunted their game; he answered, "I also hunt after my God."*

(10.) What end do you propose to yourselves in labouring for the life to come? Are your hearts taken off things below, to study the things of eternity? You are not much taken up with the things of this life, good or bad, but make it your scope and business to pursue those of the life to come, 2 Cor. iv. 16—18, "We faint not," we are never weary, so as to desist our course. Why, what is the matter? *μη σκοπούμενων*, we look not at, we make not seen things our scope, or aim, but things not seen, spiritual, eternal things. The enjoyment of God is the main thing we aim at. This, this is both the end of the work and of the workman. This is the object of my aim; "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Nothing short of heaven shall satisfy me. My relations, creature-comforts, yea, ordinances themselves, I will own, and use as helps, in order to obtain a better state above. O that I may at last "receive the end of my faith, the salvation of my soul!"† This is the frame and character of a candidate of immortality. Deal faithfully with your hearts herein.

IV *Use* is of exhortation, and which may be addressed to *worldly minded* and *gracious* persons.

As to the former. It is the hardest thing in the world to divorce men's hearts from the present world, and raise them to the unseen things of another life. We come upon a very difficult errand, to per-

* John iv. 34. 1 John v. 3. Ego etiam venor Deum meum.

† Finis operis et operantis. Phil. iii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 9.

suade men against their own sense, and venture all upon what they never saw. Most men are of the same mind practically, with that cardinal, who said, "He would not exchange his part in Paris, for his part in paradise." O wretched creature, Is not God better than the world? Is not the soul better than the body? Dare you call the gospel a fable? "What will it profit you to gain the whole world, and lose your own soul?" Suppose you had command of the universe, and all creatures were at your beck, what can they do for you? Can they rescue a soul from death, or save a soul from hell, or deliver it from God's wrath? Shall not the kings of the earth, the great, and rich, call to rocks and mountains, to cover and secure them from the wrath of the Lamb,* but all in vain?

Let me pause and ask these four questions:

1. Do you believe that you have an immortal spark within you, which will live when your bodies are turned to dust? The corruptible body and spiritual substance are two distinct things. "God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul." That is something distinct from the body; and at last the body returns to dust, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. † Our Saviour asserts, that the soul will have its existence when separated from the body, Luke xii. 4, 5. And do you think it wisdom to provide only for the worst part, and neglect the better, which is of more value and lasting duration?

2. Do you verily believe that these worldly things will save or satisfy an immortal soul? Do you think that these things are capable of making you happy? The creature is but the instrument, and can do us no

* Matt. xvi. 26. Psal. xlix. 6, 7. Rev. vi. 15, 16.

† Gen. ii. 7. Eccl. xii. 7.

good of itself; it is limited to act in its sphere, but the soul is above it. The creature is material, the soul, of a spiritual nature. The soul was made for God, immediately to love, serve, and enjoy him; creatures formed of matter were made for inferior ends. The creature is of short continuance, David saw "an end of all perfection;" but the soul runs parallel with the life of God, and line of eternity. Though the soul be finite, yet nothing less than an infinite God can content it. Solomon enjoyed the world in as ample a manner as ever man did, yet writes vanity upon all: and, what can the man do that comes after the king? Stop a little and see how others have sped in this case, before you venture too far.

3. Do you really believe that the best and worst of man is in a future state? that there is a heaven for the righteous, and a hell for the wicked, that the righteous go to heaven, the wicked to hell? and that though wicked men flourish in this world, "yet they are reserved to the day of destruction," and a blessed "inheritance is reserved in heaven for the godly."* Do you really believe this? If not, you contradict the God of truth in his promises and threatenings: and whose word shall stand, God's or yours? Or if you do believe it, and do not act accordingly, you are condemned by your own consciences, and out of your own mouths. Consider the helps you have now; it will aggravate your sin, and render your condemnation more intolerable, when you shall see neighbours and strangers "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, and you church-members the children of the kingdom cast out into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." †

* Psal. cxix. 96. Eccl. xii. 7. ii. 17. Matt. xxv. 33—46.

† Psal. ix. 17. Job xxi. 30. 1 Pet. i. 4. Matt. viii. 11, 12.

4. What have you to say for yourselves? Will you plead privileges, as some did Luke xiii. 26, 27? Alas! that will but aggravate your sin and misery, for he will answer you, "I tell you, once for all, I know not whence you are, depart." Will you say you associated with wise virgins, and had oil in your lamps, crying at the door, "Lord, Lord, open to us?" He will give you the same answer, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not," I will not own you, begone out of my sight. Nay, if you could plead that you have prophesied in his name, cast out devils, done many marvellous works, still he will profess unto you, "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Still depart, depart, depart; none of these pleas were valid without a principle of grace, an interest in Jesus Christ: nay, we find that the mouths of guilty sinners will be stopped, whatever now they imagine they can plead then. They will be confuted and confounded, when the king shall say, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?" The text saith, "he was speechless," Matt. xxii. 11, 12. At that day sinners will be nonsuited, and shall not have one word to say for themselves. O look to it, better be silenced here by conviction, than in that day by confusion: "Now every mouth must be stopped, and all the world must become guilty before God," † that by this means men may be driven out of themselves, and fly to the city of refuge.

But you may ask, what would you have us to do? I answer,

(1.) Study the vanity of sublunary good, the unsuitableness and uncertainty of all things in this lower world; the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and

* Matt. xxv. 11, 12. vii. 21. xxii. 46. Rom. iii. 19.

pride of life; these are the best things below the moon; and scripture and experience testify that the world passeth away and the lust thereof. Solomon long since hath passed this sentence upon them, "That all is vanity." And, why "wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" Alas! these things have a non-existence as to soul concerns: they have nothing to do in this main affair; you cannot buy grace with silver, nor heaven with gold, nor soul-ease with sensual pleasures: "your gold and silver are cankered, yea, the rust of them will be a witness against you, and eat your flesh like fire."* However, there is a great snare in this world, when too hotly pursued, which excites "foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction." O how many have lost their souls by an eager pursuit of the world! Judas and Demas stand as monuments and a warning to all posterity. O look through the grave at this world, then you will see how insignificant it is! "Whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?" Can they advantage you in the grave, or in the other world, or shall you live for ever to enjoy these, or will their enjoyment make you happy? Ponder a little on this head.

(2.) Study the excellence and necessity of things above: consult the scriptures and the experience of all the saints. They will tell you, "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," 1 Cor. ii. 9. Heavenly things excel earthly, as far as heaven is above earth. O the glorious above! "In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand are pleasures for evermore."† The Gauls having tasted the sweet wines made of Italian grapes,

* 1 John ii. 16, 17. Eccl. i. 2. Prov. xxiii. 5. James v. 3.

† 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. Luke xii. 20. Psalm xvi. 11.

never rested till they had conquered the country where they grew. If you had but a taste of heavenly delights, you would think no labour too much to obtain them; and if you would study them, you could not but desire them, your eye would affect your heart. Heavenly objects are most suitable to your heaven-born spirits. Let dingy colliers of the world dig in the earth; let your souls study spiritual objects. See the majesty of God, the excellency of Christ, and the sweetness of God-enjoyment, and then you will be so transported, as to take the greatest pains to get prepared for heavenly mansions.

(3.) Study the necessary qualifications for the enjoyment of God. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6; "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life; this is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ" in a sincere and saving manner. "There is a repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live," that is, be saved. "Christ is become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him."* Self-denial, renouncing the world, dedicating yourselves to God, walking according to the rules of the word; these and such like, "are things that accompany salvation."† O be concerned about these; if you intend to be happy, you must go in God's way, accept his terms, else in vain do you think to be happy: God will not abate any thing of what he hath lined out in his word as the conditions of salvation; you must therefore inquire with the convinced jailor, Acts xvi. 30, "What must I do to be saved?" Consult the scriptures, pro-

* John iii. 15. xvii. 3. 2 Cor. vii. 10. Rom. viii. 13. Heb. v. 9.

† Heb. vi. 9.

pound your case to ministers, ask christian friends, and be very serious in this weighty case.

(4.) Study the great end of your creation and redemption. Learn the meaning of the first question in your catechism, and the answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever." What have you else to do? Do you think God sent you into the world to eat, and drink, and sleep, like the brutes? O remember you have noble souls, capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying God! Can you find in your hearts to neglect your chief good, and your highest end? Will you be so brutish as to mind only objects of sense? What did God put rational souls into your bodies for? Was it to contrive to be rich, or get estates, "or to make provision for the flesh," or to scheme and plod to maintain yourselves and families? Did not God make them for himself to serve him according to their capacities? Must animals serve God better than you, and rise up as witnesses against you? And can you effect any thing in your callings without God's blessing? Do you not read, "that godliness is profitable to all things?" Are not creatures unavailable without God's blessing? Yea, doth not God say, "He will curse your blessings if you lay it not to heart?"* Alas! sirs, "Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread?" Why do you despise the true riches? Remember "one thing is needful;"† earth will avail nothing, heaven will recompence all your pains.

(5.) Duly weigh the ends of the righteous and wicked, the event of sin and holiness. Judge of these, not as you see at present, but as the issue will be. Judge not according to outward appearance, but judge righteous

* Rom. xiii. 14. Prov. xvi. 4. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Mal. ii. 2.

† Isa. lv. 2. Luke x. 40.

judgment. Read Job xxi. Psal. lxxiii. and xxxvii. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, the end of that man is peace," all is well that ends well. If believers have a tossing sea, they have a quiet haven. Look not on persons through the world's spectacles, be not determined by the world's jury. Stay till the last scene, and conclude not too soon. A decisive day is coming, "judge nothing before the time." Stand at God's bar, let scripture be heard, by which you must be judged. See the exit, "The wicked are driven away in their wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death."* The angel fetched poor Lazarus's soul, and carried it into Abraham's bosom; but the devil hurries away the souls of wicked men to hell-torments. Think with thyself, man, what number thou art of, and who is thy master; consider thus, how shall I come off at last, when the tables are turned, and all must appear in their proper colours; not as they seemed to men, or in their self-delusions; there will then be strange discoveries.

(6.) Attend diligently upon ordinances, divine institutions. When God sets up a candle, turn not your backs on it, waste it not, sin it not away, every sermon is an alarm for eternity, an offer of Christ and eternal life, slight it at your peril. You must give account of opportunities. Remember, "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets." Read and study Prov. i. 20—32. Ministers treat with you in Christ's name, entreat you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Come now and you are welcome, yield to the calls of God, stand out no longer, let not the word of salvation return in vain. Alas! why should "line be upon line, precept

John viii. 15. Psal. xcii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5. Prov. xiv. 32.

upon precept?" yet you will not hear, but go backward, and so be broken, and snared, and taken. Why should the dust of ministers' feet, the studies of their brains, and sweat of their brows rise up as witnesses against you? Mind what you hear, and hear for the time to come. Apply what you hear, and live up to it.

(7.) Associate with God's people. Let those be your companions here, whom you desire to be with in the other world. David saith, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee."* As this is a good sign of your lodging with them hereafter, so it is a great help heaven-wards. For, godly persons will be counselling, admonishing and "provoking you to love, and to good works," edifying "and building up yourselves in your most holy faith," keeping one another lively, and helping you up when you are fallen. It is not good to be alone. Improve christian society, desire them to be faithful to you, to pray for you, and with you. An humble Christian may prove of great use to help you heaven-wards. Improve from the gifts and graces of all, "Go your ways forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed your kids besides the shepherds' tents," Cant. i. 8.

(8.) "Redeem time." Upon this moment depends eternity; twice was this sentence written from the prison in Rome. Improve every inch of time; be diligent either in your general or particular calling. † Be like Christ and Mary, the former was still doing good, the latter still receiving good. Time is precious; cast it not at your heels. God gives us not time to be lavished out on trifles: possess not days, weeks, months, or years of vanity. Live every day as if it were

* 2 Cor. v. 20. vi. 2. Isa. xxviii. 12, 13. Psal. cxix. 63.

† Heb. x. 24. Jude, 20. Eccl. iv. 9—12. Eph. v. 16. Col. iv. 5.

the last day, so your last will be your best day. It is a dreadful thing for men to spend their days as a tale that is told, to lavish out their time, *nihil agendo*, in doing nothing, or *male agendo*, in doing evil, or *aliud agendo*, in doing something else than what they ought: trifling, sporting, jesting, and drinking when they should be about their master's business. As, suppose a factor beyond sea, after seven years, should bring in an account of so much time and money, spent in hawking, hunting, gaming, frequenting alehouses and taverns, but little or no time spent about his employer's affairs: how would this be taken? Pray remember that text, Rom. xiv. 12, "So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

(9.) Fall presently on soul-work, defer not at your peril. Observe and close in with the Spirit's suggestions. If you must not say to your neighbour, "go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee;" much less must you say so to God. Imperatives have no future tense. Present despatch is essential to God's commands; he will not be put off with delays; the market lasts not all the year; time and tide stay for no man; what you do, do quickly, God will not always strive with you, nor wait your leisure;* besides your good intentions will cool, your hearts will grow harder, Satan get faster hold of you. Hence saith the apostle, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," Heb. iii. 13; therefore when you are convinced that any thing is your duty, fall close to the practice of it; and what you see to be a sin, instantly renounce it; be quick at work, for God may be quicker than you are aware, and you can do nothing in the grave, Eccl. ix. 10.

* Job vii. 3. Prov. iii. 28. Gen. vi. 3.

(10.) Down on your knees before the Lord, confess your sins of omission and commission, your defects and imperfections in your best duties, your impotency and inability to help yourselves, earnestly beg converting grace, as Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18, "Turn me, and I shall be turned;" if thou dost this, the work will be done to purpose: and thou hast promised in the covenant of grace, to take away the heart of stone, and give a new heart, and put thy fear in our hearts, that we may not depart from thee; this I want, this I must have; I cannot be denied of it. A new heart is fit for new heavens; as for this world, it is too little for my aspiring soul, I cannot, I will not be put off with it; let the world go, so I may have God; let earth go, so I may have heaven. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, there is none," person or thing "I desire in comparison of thee." It is true, I am a beggar, and have nothing; but I find thou givest thy Spirit to such as ask him of thee.* I am a debtor, and cannot pay one farthing; but Christ hath discharged the debts of penitent, believing souls. I am a great sinner and prodigal, not worthy to be called thy servant, much less thy son; but Christ came into the world to save sinners, yea, some chief of sinners. It is true, I cannot work faith or repentance in my heart, but thou canst; they are both the gift of God, they are covenant mercies; though I cannot claim them, yet I beg them for Christ's sake. O pay not my portion in gold, silver, pleasures, or honours; I cast away these things with a holy disdain, though I praise God for worldly conveniences; "What wait I for? my hope is in thee,"† thou art my portion in the land of the living; give me

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. Jer. xxxii. 40. Psal. lxxiii. 25. John iv. 10.

† Luke xv. 17—19. 1 Tim. i. 15. Psal. xxxix. 7.

pardon, peace, grace, glory, the God of heaven, God in heaven.

The second sort are pious persons to whom this use belongs, by way of—*caution—counsel—comfort* and *encouragement*.

1. Caution. If this be true, that none are so miserable as real saints, should all their hopes and happiness be in this lower world; then first, be not weary of living in the world: life is a mercy, let no pressures make you discontented with it: this is too common when in some straits; and in an ill humour, some good men have wished for death. Moses saith, Numb. xi. 15, “If thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand.” “Elijah requested for himself, that he might die.”† Jonah would needs die of pettishness; and twice he said, “It is better for me to die than to live,” Jonah iv. 3, 8; and God interprets this to be a fruit of his anger, or violent passion, verse 4; and indeed present pressures and disappointments are apt to breed discontent, because the holiest men have too much of sense, and too little of faith. But take heed of this, it is a fault:

For consider (1.) When thus you are weary of life, and would needs die in this sullen humour, you are most unready and unfit to die; you know not what you ask: when you come to yourselves, you will perhaps be of another mind: as the poor man under his burden, called for death, it came and asked what he would with it, he answered, only help me up with my burden. So it is a question, if death come indeed, and your eyes be opened, what mind you will be of. If you were yourselves, you would be loth to die in such a humour.

* 1 Kings xix. 4.

(2.) Your lives are none of your own, but at God's disposal; "to God the Lord belong the issues from death." Thus he holdeth our souls in life; our times are in his hands: it is a piece of arrogancy and presumption to dispose of ourselves, or imagine that any mortal man is *sui juris*, at his own disposal.

(3.) You are to look upon natural life as a mercy, yea, the foundation of all outward mercies. David saith, "Thy loving kindness is better than life;" as if he had said, if there were any thing better than life, God's love exceeds it. Hence it was, that in the midst of honest Baruch's sad complaints, and mixture of personal and public calamities coming upon him, God promiseth for all that, "thy life will I give unto thee for a prey," Jer. xlv. 3, 5. Surely that is worth accepting, thou hast no cause then to complain.

(4.) The wheel of providence may turn; you may outlive your present distresses, and see a fairer day, as many have done. Job cursed the day of his birth, but he lived to see a strange revolution, "God blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." So it may be with you.

You will say, It is not merely affliction that creates my discontent and weariness of life; no, no, it is sin, this body of death, I am even wearied out with it.

I answer, It is well that this is your burden, but you must continue in the field till your Captain call you off, and give you a discharge. However, know that you must not absolutely, or impatiently desire death, merely to be rid of sin, but still with submission and under correction. You may perhaps be in a strait as Paul was, whether to choose life or death,* but still you must refer yourselves to God, let him use his pleasure. Should it be his pleasure that I should re-

* Psal. lxxviii. 20. lxiii. 3. Job iii. 1—3. xlii. 12. Phil. i. 23.

main *still* longer *here* to conflict with spiritual enemies, if grace will support me, and God have any glory by me, I am content.

Oh, but you say, Why should I continue to live, I do no good in my place, I do but cumber the ground, and do not honour God.

Ans. (1.) No man doth know of what use he is while he lives. It is your humility to judge thus meanly of yourselves; that is good, only let not your modesty issue in discontent, but provoke you to more activity for God and usefulness in your generation. There is a medium between vain arrogance and base pusillanimity. Thank God if you be a stick in the hedge, though you be not a main post, or a pillar in the house of God. Be content to be dismissed, like old Simeon, Luke ii. 29, "Lord, said he, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word."

(2.) Let Christians on the other hand take heed lest they too eagerly desire to live, and be unwilling to die. In this case also the best of God's children may be loth to die; for death is an enemy to nature, though a friend to grace: it is "the king of terrors." Even good Jeremiah makes supplication that he might not "return to the house of Jonathan, lest," saith he, "I die there," Jer. xxxvii. 20. Christ tells Peter that even when he was old, they would carry him whither he would not, John xxi. 18. Alas! the best persons may linger in this world, as Lot in Sodom, though vexed in it. We are in bondage in these bodies of clay, but too like Israel, loth to leave our slavery.* It is the grace of God that must help us to look beyond death, that can make us willing to die. But grace is not always in exercise, and we know that death is a parting of the dearest friends, body and soul, as Jona-

* Job xviii. 14. Gen. xix. 16. Exod. xiv. 12.

than and David. The best believe but in part, yet when faith prevails, unseen things are most desirable: and the believer can say with triumphant David, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me," Psal. xxiii. 4. But "the spirit is willing," though "the flesh be weak."* As assurance increaseth, holy confidence gains ground. And why are you short, after making so long a profession and enjoying so many privileges? Dare you not trust God with your souls? Do not children long to go to bed in their father's hand, though in the dark? What have you been doing all this while? Are you in love with this polluted world? Do not you long to throw off this burden of sin? Is not your case suspicious, when you are so loth to die? Say to your dull souls as a good man did,† "Go forth my soul, go forth, to meet thy beloved bridegroom."

2. By way of instruction, counsel may be given to pious persons, in these ten particulars.

(1.) Study contentment. Be content with God's allowance in the world, be it less or more.‡ A little of the world will serve to bear your charges to heaven. Seek not to be rich, which may prove a burden to you. The text saith, "Abraham was very rich," *valde gravis*, very heavy; so the Hebrew. It is that which will render your passage to heaven more difficult, as a camel going through the eye of a needle: and this will make your accounts greater and worse to settle, beside the temptation and snare to which riches would expose you. A middle state is most eligible, wise Agur desired neither poverty nor riches. || Your busi-

* Matt. xxvi. 41. † Egrederere, anima, egredere. ‡ Heb. xiii. 5.

|| Gen. xiii. 2. Matt. xix. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

ness is to derive your contentment from God's providence. Paul learned this hard lesson, Phil. iv. 12; so must you. God's allowance with his blessing is an eligible dish; let it not be patience perforce, because you cannot help it, but let it be your choice; a little time will mend things.

(2.) Take pains in heaven's road; you are not to work long, work hard. Think no labour too much; you know that it "shall not be in vain in the Lord." Your wages will abundantly compensate your work. These poor things of the world are not obtained without industry; and do you think to get heaven without diligence? "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," saith our Lord, "for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Sluggish seekers are final losers. "Work out your own salvation: labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life;" not that you must earn heaven with all your labour, for eternal life is God's free gift; but God hath determined, you shall not have it without:* in good earnest begin your work, watch and pray; ply hard at the throne of grace. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life; watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong:" † live like saints, and you shall die as saints.

(3.) Draw forth your faith, and hope to better objects than this world affords, or can be obtained here. Indeed the proper object of faith is things invisible; and hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? ‡ nothing attainable

* 1 Cor. xv. 58. Luke xiii. 24. Phil. ii. 12. Rom. vi. 23.

† 2 Pet. i. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 12. 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

‡ Heb. xi. 26, 27. Rom. viii. 24.

in this world is either suitable or durable, and therefore cannot be your happiness. I suffer hard things, *sed meliora spero*, but I hope for better: when the lease of my life is expired, I shall take possession of my inheritance. God is the hope of Israel; he hath helped me in straits; I have rich experience of assistance; these things I call to mind, therefore have I hope; were it not for this my heart would sink and break: "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." In this land of life, a sojourner having to receive money, will remit large sums to his own country; so do you take letters of credence to be paid above.

(4.) Let your hearts go out to things above, study the excellence, certainty, necessity of these divine objects, that your hearts may be elated therewith. O how the thoughts thereof will sweeten your bitter pilgrimage; "set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." This is a sign you are risen with Christ, Col. iii. 12; where should your "hearts be but where your treasure is?"* O what "riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints!" This is transporting. A young heir hath his thoughts running out upon his estate, which he is to enjoy when he comes to full age. Human art cannot take the dimensions of the third heavens, much less of those things, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor hath it entered in the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."† But though you cannot comprehend them, yet you should admire them, and raise up your affections to them.

(5.) Make haste through this evil world to heaven,

* Jer. xiv. 3. Lam. iii. 21. Psal. xxvii. 13. Matt. vi. 21.

† Eph. i. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

2 Pet. iii. 12, "Looking for, and hasting to this blessed day," and state. Do not you see how fast the blessed society is hasting home into the arms of their beloved? O why do you lag behind? Linger not like Lot in Sodom: lift up your feet and follow your leaders. It hath been said of old by some godly souls, Let us flee into the celebrated country above, there is our Father, there is rest, there is all.* You can have no rest here; the only rest is above with God. How must we haste, say you? I answer, Get your work done, your corruptions subdued, your graces perfected, read and practise what you find Paul did, Phil. iii. 12—14. Study the emphasis of the expressions διώκω, "I follow after," with utmost eagerness, ἐπεκτεινόμενος, stretching out head and hands like runners in a race.

(6.) Be content to leave this world, and go home. Say as David, Psal. cxx. 5, 6, "Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech," this tiresome world. When shall I launch forth into that serene ocean of bliss? O that I may be delivered from this body of clay, and of death together; "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."* Heaven is my home, I shall never be quiet till my soul land there; I am content to live, but willing to die, that I may be with Christ. "To me to live is Christ, and to die gain; I groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with this heavenly house."† Are you yet in love with your fetters? Are you not weaned from this earth? Is not your life labour and sorrow? God will tire us out, by increasing our burdens, so that new troubles come daily upon us; "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."† Never expect that your tears should be fully wiped off here.

* Fugiendi citò ad clarissimam patriam, ibi pater, ibi requies, ibi omnia. † Rev. xxii. 20. Phil. i. 21. 2 Cor. v. 2.

‡ Psal. xc. 10. Matt. vi. 34

The truth is, we are daily making new work for repentance and affliction: we cannot cease from our own work till we enter into that blessed rest.

(7.) Persevere to the end of your days; hold fast till he come. "Be not weary of well doing, for in due time you shall reap, if you faint not: he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." The promise is performed to those who overcome. Hold on, hold out in God's work, or else you lose all: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward, 2 John, 8; there must be a "patient continuance in well-doing," or no "eternal life."* The husbandman doth not sow and reap in one day. It is true, the Hyperboreans sow shortly after sun-rising, and reap before sun-set, because the half year or a portion of it, is one continual day with them. So it is in some sense to the saints after the day-star is risen in their hearts;* yet still they must have long patience, till reaping time come. Honour God, and do credit to religion by adhering close to God in the greatest difficulties.

(8.) Put yourselves into God's hands by faith and prayer. God alone is able to "keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, Jude, 24. You cannot keep yourselves, you are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." He gives power to the faint; but see that your hearts be sincere and sound in God's statutes, that you may not be ashamed.† If you have no root in yourselves, you will endure but for a time; yea, you may have a taste of the powers of the world to come, yet may fall away.‡ Be up-

* Heb. iv. 10. Gal. vi. 9. Matt. xxiv. 13. Rom. ii. 7.

† 2 Pet. i. 19. James v. 7, 8. 1 Pet. i. 5. Psal. cxix. 80.

‡ Mark iv. 16, 17. Heb. vi. 5, 6.

right and conscientious before God ; fear none of those things that may come on you : keep God's way, and God will keep you : though your beginning be small, your latter end shall increase. Small measures of grace shall be preserved and crowned, when great gifts wither. Be persuaded that God is "able to keep that which you have committed to him against that day," 2 Tim. i. 12.

(9.) Live as candidates for immortality. Live as expectants of heaven, whither you are travelling, "let your conversation be in heaven."* Labour to do God's will here upon earth, with such faithfulness, cheerfulness, zeal, and constancy, as it is done in heaven. Live by heaven's laws, act with heavenly hearts, managing all your business in a heavenly manner for right ends, improving common objects for heavenly purposes. O discover a heavenly disposition in all you do ! The pearl grows in the sea, and shines in the light. Labour to increase, though covered with waves of persecution, and shine bright in the firmament of the church ; yea, so living below, and conversing with God above, that the "life of Jesus may be manifest in your bodies."† O beware of sin, which will obstruct your progress, obscure your evidences, increase your present trouble, and render your journey to heaven more tedious.

(10.) Do what you can to draw others with you heaven-wards. There is room enough, there are many mansions. The greater the number, the greater the joy. There is no envy in spiritual things. O that all my neighbours, friends, kindred may be saved ! Counsel, instruct, admonish, persuade sinners to come in : every soul you bring unto God, will be a new pearl in your crown of glory. It is not only the business of ministers, but of private Christians to endeavour after the

* Phil. iii. 20. † 2 Cor. iv. 10.

salvation of all about them. "O that Ishmael might live before thee," saith Abraham!* Surely the everlasting welfare of men's souls should lie near your hearts. Study to do them good; "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Consider one another to provoke unto love; † do what you can to save one another's souls: and know this, that "he which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins," James v. 20.

3. The last branch of this use, is for comfort and encouragement to God's children. Because,

(1.) Nothing that befalls you here shall be able to separate you from the love of God; tribulations, or distresses, or persecution, or whatever else you can name: nay, you shall be "more than conquerors," even triumphers, "through him that loved you," Rom. viii. 35, 37. It is true, we do not know what is before us, public or personal trials: but "fear none of those things that you may suffer; be faithful unto death." ‡

(2.) This yields comfort to such as have buried their pious friends and relations. You need not mourn or sorrow as others which have no hope; for they sleep in Jesus, and shall come again with him. || At present they are safely preserved from all the miseries of this wretched life; they would be loth to be sent back into the body again, to miss one day those joys which now they possess. They may say as our Saviour, to the daughters of Jerusalem, "Weep not for us, but weep for yourselves;" † we are landed safe, but you are in the storm, weather-beaten, and in great hazard.

(3.) The worst things by the favour of God shall

* Gen. xvii. 18.

† Heb. iii. 13. x. 24.

‡ Rev. ii. 10. || 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. § Luke xxiii. 28.

prove beneficial: "All things work together for good to them that love God."* Temptations make you more cautious, and send you to the throne of grace. Persecutions quicken grace, afflictions are for your profit; yea, the out-breakings of corruptions humble you, make you jealous, send you into your own hearts; bless God if it be thus with you, and it will be so if you be God's children.

(4.) Death itself will be an advantage to you, the sting of it is plucked out, the grave is sweetly perfumed; and though it be an enemy to nature, yet it is the best friend grace hath; it is a trap-door to let you slip into heaven. A believer's motto, when dying, is "well for the present, and will be better shortly;" it is but shutting the eyes and opening them in heaven. By death the real saint goes,—from absence, into God's immediate presence—from defects in grace, to perfection—from deep sorrow, to the height of joy—from weary tossings, to perpetual rest—from busy working, to abundant reward †—from the shameful cross to a glorious crown—from conflicts of sin, to uninterrupted holiness—from persecution by men, to divine approbation and enjoyment—from human intercourse, to converse with angels—from deep disgrace, to highest dignity—from restraint in prison, to present liberty—from rending division, to complete unity—from languishing famine, to a celestial feast—from having nothing, to enjoying all things—from use of means, to the ultimate end—from assaults of temptation, to consolation and joy—from sad desertions, to perpetual fruition—from perplexing fears, to endless peace—from sad diseases, to complete cure—from midnight

* Rom. viii. 28.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 10. Heb. xii. 23. Matt. xxv. 21. Rev. xiv. 13. Luke vi. 35.

ignorance, to glorious light—from shameful pollution, to white robes—from mournful prayers, to joyful praises—from a dark grave, to a celestial paradise—from comforts in time, to endless eternity.

O what a change doth death make! We mortals cannot conceive of it. Study that text, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” See what diminutives are in the one, and superlatives in the other; affliction in the one, glory in the other; lightness in the one, weight in the other; for a moment in the one, eternal in the other, and a far more and exceeding weight of glory. O what an emphasis there is in the expression! the apostle seems in great want of words to set off the glories above; so shall we be in our highest conceptions. We may quickly lose ourselves in this contemplation; Christ and heaven admit no hyperbole. Let not your spirits droop, “He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry; and when he comes, his reward is with him, and work^h before him.”* “The dead in Christ shall rise first; and they which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” †—Amen. So be it.

* Isa. xl. 10.

† 1 Thess. iv. 16—18.