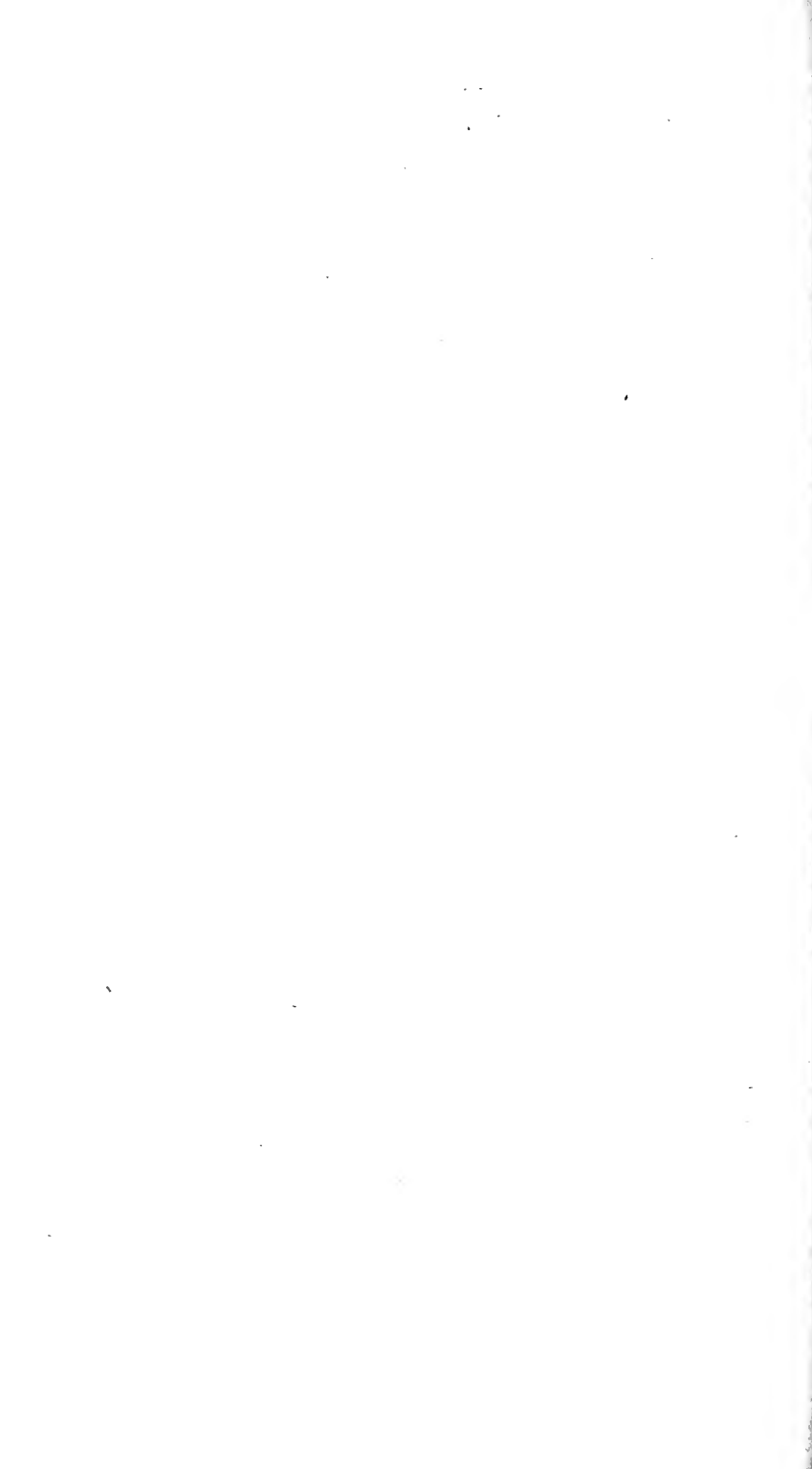


A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
THE REDEEMER'S DOMINION
OVER
The Invisible World,
AND
THE ENTRANCE THEREINTO BY DEATH.
SOME PART WHEREOF WAS PREACHED ON OCCASION OF
THE DEATH
OF
JOHN HOGHTON, Esq.
ELDEST SON OF SIR CHARLES HOGHTON, OF HOGHTON-TOWER, IN THE COUNTY
OF LANCASTER, BARONET.



TO THE
MOST DESERVEDLY HONOURED,
AND
TRULY HONOURABLE,
SIR CHARLES AND THE LADY MARY
H O G H T O N,
OF HOGHTON-TOWER.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace, &c.

YOU will, I know, count it no indecency, that, when God hath so nearly, many years ago, joined you in relation, in affection, and now so lately, in the affliction equally common to you both, I do also join your names on the same paper, and make this solemn address to you together.

It is by the inestimable favour of Heaven, that the mutual interest God hath given you in each other, as it obligeth, doth also (as I have great reason to hope) effectually dispose and enable you, not only to partake in the comforts, but in the sorrows, that are common to you both, so as that the former shall be greatly increased, and the latter proportionably allayed and mitigated, thereby. Thus is the advantage of your conjugal state both *represented* in God's designation, and *apprehended* in your own experience.

And you are to consider the blessing of God herein as having a peculiarity in it, not being extended to all so related, neither to all that were great in this world, nor to all that were pious and good. Great worldly felicity hath been rendered insipid and spiritless; and great calamities, much more bitter, by the want of a meet mutual helpfulness between such relations.

A great and good man (Job 1. 1.) in his time; a prince, as he is thought to have been, in his country; "a man that was perfect, and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil;" when he lost not *one*, not the *eldest*, only, of his numerous offspring, (as you have,) but, all at once, seven sons and three daughters, with such concomitant circumstances of accumulated afflictions, as, blessed be God, are not in your case; and might now expect some relief from his other self, the nearest and most inward companion of his life, and partaker of his joys and sorrows; all the succour he had from her, was an impious endeavour to provoke and irritate his spirit; that taunting scoff, "Dost thou still retain thy integrity?" and that horrid advice, "Curse God and die." Whereas that rational, religious, soul-composing thought, "Shall we receive good at the hand of

God, and shall we not receive evil?" was deeply fixed in the mind of the one: how much more effectually relieving had it been, if it had circulated between both the relatives; and they had alternately propounded and enlarged upon it to one another!

With you, I cannot doubt, it hath been so; and that you have made it your business to improve your mutual interest, not to aggravate, but to alleviate your affliction to each other.

You have, both of you, great occasion and obligation to revolve and recount to each other the many good things you have received at the hand of God, to mitigate what there is of evil in this dispensation.

Both of you have sprung of religious and honourable families, favoured of God, valued and beloved in the countries where he had planted them. They have been both, seats of religion, and of the worship of God: the resorts of his servants: houses of mercy to the indigent, of justice to the vitious, of patronage to the sober and virtuous, and of good example to all about them.

You were both dedicated to God early, and he gave early testimony of his accepting the dedication. He began with you both betimes, blessing your education, and owning you for his, by disposing and forming your spirits to own betimes the God of your fathers. He hath blessed you indeed, adding the spiritual blessings in heavenly things, to your many earthly comforts. This, Jabez might mean, not content with a common blessing; and the more probably, from the acceptance he found, 1 Chron. 4. 9, 10. God granted his request, as Solomon's, when his request was as little vulgar, 1 Kings 3. 10.

You both concurred in the dedication of *this* your son, as in the rest of yours; and I doubt not with great seriousness, you covenanted with God in Christ, to be his God. And if he enabled you to be in good earnest herein, even that was of special grace and favour, and ought to come into the account of the many good things you have received of God's hand; as offering to God willingly, did in the estimate of David, when the oblation was of a meaner kind, 1 Chron. 29. 14.

But then you ought to consider, what the import and meaning was of that your covenant, wherein you accepted God in Christ to be the God of your son; and dedicated him to God through Christ to be his. Was it not absolute, and without limitation, that God should be a God to him entirely and without reserve, and that he should be his absolutely, and be disposed of by him at his pleasure? Otherwise, there was a repugnancy and contradiction in the very terms of your covenant. To be a God to him! Is not *God*, the name of a Being incapable of limitation? Doth it not signify infinite, unlimited power and goodness? To be a God to any one, therefore, under restriction, is to be *a God* to him, and *no* God. And so to covenant with God, can neither have sincerity in it, nor good sense. He can be under no restraint in the exercises of his power and goodness towards any to whom he vouchsafes to be their God in covenant; but what he is pleased to lay upon himself, which must be from his own wisdom and good pleasure, to which in covenanting we refer ourselves; with *particular* faith—in reference to what he hath expressly promised; and with *general*—that all shall be well, where his promise is not express. But from ourselves, nothing can be prescribed to him. He must be our all, or nothing; in point of enjoyment, as our sovereign, all-comprehending good; in point of government, as our sovereign, all-dis-

posing Lord. So we take him, in covenanting with him for ourselves and ours: for he so propounds and offers himself to us. If we accept and take him accordingly, there is a covenant between him and us; otherwise we refuse him, and there is no covenant. When he promises, as to his part, he promises his all; to be God all-sufficient to us; to be ours in all his fulness, according to our measure and capacity: we are not straitened in him, but in ourselves. He undertakes to be to us, and do for us, all that it belongs to him, as a God, to be and do. To give us grace and glory, (Ps. 84. 11.) about which, there can be no dispute or doubt: they are always and immutably good; and to withhold from us no good thing: here, are comprehended, with the former, inferior good things, about which, because they are but mutably, and not always good, there may be a doubt, whether now and in present circumstances, they will be good for us, or not. And now, it belongs to him, as he is to do the part of a God to us, to judge and determine for us, (for which he alone is competent, as being God only wise, and otherwise he were not God all-sufficient,) and not to leave that to us, who are so apt to be partial and mistaken in our judgment.

But when he makes his demand from us, of what we on our part are to be, and do, he demands our all, absolutely; that we surrender ourselves and ours, whatsoever we are and have, to his pleasure and disposal, without other exception or restriction than by his promise he hath laid upon himself.

Nor are we to think it strange there should be this difference, in the tenour of his covenant, between his part and ours. For we are to remember, that the covenant between him and us is not as of equals. He covenants as God; we, as creatures: He, according to the universal, infinite perfection and all-sufficiency of a God; we, according to the insufficiency, imperfection, and indigency of creatures.

These things were, I doubt not, all foreknown, and I hope considered, by you, when you so solemnly transacted with God, concerning this your son; wherein you could not but then take him for your God, as well as his God. It needs now only to be applied to the present case; and it manifestly admits this application, namely, That this his disposal of him, in taking him now up to himself, to be glorified by him, and to glorify him in the heavenly state, was a thing then agreed upon by solemn covenant, between God and you. It was done by your own virtual and unretracted consent. The substance of the thing was agreed to expressly; that God should be his God, and finally make him happy and blessed in himself. But if you say, that you would only have had his complete blessedness yet a while deferred; I will only say, Could you agree with that God whose he was, and whose you are, about the substance of so great a transaction; and now differ with him about a circumstance? And besides, all circumstances must be comprehended in your agreement. For, taking him to be your God, you take him to be supreme Disposer in all things, and his will to be in every thing the rule and measure of yours; which you have expressly consented to as often as you have prayed, either in the words, or after the tenour, of that prayer, wherein our Lord hath taught us to sum up our desires, and represent the sense of our hearts.

But besides the duty that is, both by his law, and by covenant-agreement, owing to God, it is also to be considered as a high dignity put upon you, to be the covenanted parents of a glorified son; a matter of

greater boast, than if you could say, "Our son" (to repeat what I formerly wrote) "is one of the greatest princes on earth!"

How far should Paganism be outdone by Christianity, which exhibits to our view death abolished, and life and immortality brought to light, by Jesus Christ, in the gospel! 2 Tim. 1. 10. Which sets before us all the glories of the other world in a bright representation! Which, if we believe, that faith will be to us, the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we see not, Heb. 11. 1. Thus, though you saw not the kind reception and abundant entrance of this son of your delights into the everlasting kingdom, it will yet be a thing evident to you, and your faith will render it a great and most substantial reality. Pagans had but obscure glimmerings of such things; and in such afflicting cases, when they did occur, comparatively lank and slender supports, yet such as were not to be despised.

Should I transcribe what I find written in way of consolation, by Plutarch to Apollonius, upon the loss of a son, you would see what would give both instruction and admiration. I shall mention some passages. He praises the young person deceased, for his comeliness, sobriety, piety, dutifulness towards parents, and obligingness towards friends; he acknowledges that sorrow, in the case of losing such a son, hath (*φυσικὴν ἀεχχὴν*) *a principle in nature*, and is of the things that are (*οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν*) *not in our power*, or which we cannot help; that to be destitute of it is neither possible nor fit; that an apathy, or insensibleness, in such a case, is no more desirable than that we should endure to have a limb, a part of ourselves, cut or torn off from us, without feeling it. But yet he affirms, that immoderate sorrow, upon such an occasion, is (*παρα φύσιν*) *preternatural*, and hath a pravity in it, and proceeds from a misinformed mind; that we ought in any such case to be neither (*ἀπαθεῖς*, nor *δυσπαθεῖς*) *unaffected*, nor *ill affected*. He tells his friend a story (the meaning whereof is more considerable to us, than the credit of it, as perhaps it was to him) concerning two Grecian youths, Cleobis and Biton, whose mother having a duty to perform in the temple of Juno, and the mules not being at hand, at the instant when she expected them to draw her chariot thither, they most officiously drew it themselves; with which act of piety, their mother was so transported, that she made her request to Juno, on their behalf, that if there were any thing more desirable unto mortals than another, she would therewith reward her sons; who, thereupon, threw them into a sleep, out of which they awoke no more: thereby signifying, that death was the best gift that could be bestowed upon persons of such supposed piety as they!

To which purpose, is what he relates concerning the death of Euthynous, an Italian referred to, towards the close of the following discourse, son and heir to the ample estate of Elysus, a person of principal dignity among the Terineans; to whom, anxiously inquiring of diviners concerning the cause of this calamity, the spectre of his son, introduced by his father, appeared in his sleep, shewing him certain Greek verses, the sum whereof was, Thy inquiry is foolish.

The minds of men are vain, Euthynous rests by a kindly decreed death, Because his living longer, had neither been good for him nor his parents.

He afterwards adds, A good man, when he dies, is worthy, not so much of lamentations, as of hymns and praises.

He animadvert upon the aptness of parents to quarrel with any circumstances of a son's death, be they what they will. If he die abroad, then the aggravation is, that neither the father nor the mother had opportunity to close his eyes; if at home, then, how is he plucked away, even out of our hands!

He gives divers memorable instances, of sundry great persons, bearing, with strange composure of mind, the same kind of affliction. I omit what he wrote to his wife on their loss of a child: as also to recite many very instructive passages out of Seneca writing to Marcia, on the same account, by way of consolation for her loss of a son, and to Helvia, for her loss in the same kind; to Polybius, having lost a near relation, &c.

But we have the oracles of God, and do, too commonly, less need to receive instruction from Heathens than deserve to be reproached by them; that there is so frequent cause for the complaint of that ancient worthy (Hierom.) in the Christian church; *Non præstat Fides quod præstitit Infidelitas*—*The infidelity of Pagans performs greater things than the faith of Christians.* Their sedate temper, their mastery over turbulent passions, may in many instances shame our impotency and want of self-government, in like cases.

For who of them have ever had, or could have, so great a thing to say, as is said to us by the word of the Lord, for this very purpose, "that we may not sorrow concerning them that are asleep, even as others who have no hope: for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say to you," (and it is said by the forementioned authority; the Lord himself having revealed it to this great apostle, and directed him to say it,) "that we who are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up, together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words," 1 Thess. 4. 13—18.

I have transcribed these few verses, that they might readily appear to present view. And because all their efficacy, and all our advantage by them, depend upon our believing them, let us closely put the question to ourselves, Do we believe them, or do we not? The apostle seems to design the putting us upon this self-reflection, by inserting the supposition, *If we believe*; as if he should say, This will effectually do the business of allaying all our hopeless sorrow. For if we believe that one fundamental truth, (and therefore let us see whether we do or no,) of Christ's dying and rising again, it will draw such a train of consequences, all tending to fill our souls with a vital joy, as will leave no place for undue sorrow any longer. That faith will be still urging and carrying us forward, will make us wholly intent upon prospect and expectation. What are we now to look for upon such a foundation, so firmly laid, and fully believed? If we believe that Jesus died! He did not submit to die without a design; and his rising again, speaks him Master of his design; and that he hath it now entirely in his power. He died not for himself, but for them he was to redeem! And being now risen again, what must become of them? All that follows, is now matter of glorious triumph!

If Plato, Plutarch, or Seneca, had but once had such a revelation from heaven as this, and that ground to believe it, that we have, how full would their writings have been of it! How had they abounded in lofty paraphrases upon every period and word of it!

The faith of such things would surely make a truly Christian heart so earnestly press forward in the expectation of the great things still to ensue, as to leave it little leisure for retrospection. And this is the source of all our intemperate sorrow, in such a case as this—our framing to ourselves pleasing suppositions of being as we were, with such and such friends and relatives about us as we heretofore enjoyed. As hope of what is future and desirable, feeds our joy; so memory of good things past, doth our sorrow. In such a case as this, which the apostle here speaks to, the decease of our dear friends and relatives fallen asleep, we are apt to look back with a lingering eye upon the former state of things, and to say, as he, *O mihi preteritos*—*O that God would recal for me the years that are gone over!*—Or, as in sacred language, “O that I were as in months past—when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me; when my children were about me!” Job 29. 1—6.

What pleasant scenes do we form to ourselves afresh, of past things, on purpose to foment present sorrow! And whether we have that design or no, we are more prone to look back to former things which we have known, than forward to future which we know not; especially, if the further we look back, the less we find of trouble intermingled in our former course. A smooth and pleasant path, we would go over again, if reason and the necessity of affairs, do not recal us, and urge us forward.

And so, Sir, might you find matter for a very copious and not ungrateful recollection, to call over again, and revolve in your thoughts the pleasures of your youth, (more innocent than of many others,) when you were incumbered with no cares, entertained with various delights of one sort and another, in this or that pleasant seat of your parents. But how remote is it from you, upon consideration, to wish yourself back into your juvenile state and circumstances! How much more generous and God-like a pleasure is it, to be doing good in the world, and still to abound therein; to go forward, and do still more and more!

And, Madam, who could have a more pleasant retrospect upon former days than you, recounting your Antrim delights, the delight you took in your excellent relations, your garden-delights, your closet-delights, your Lord's-days'-delights! But how much greater a thing is it to serve God in your present station; as the mother of a numerous and hopeful offspring; as the mistress of a large family; where you bear your part, with your like-minded consort, in supporting the interest of God and religion, and have opportunity of scattering blessings round about you!

But our business is not recurring, or looking back. God is continually calling us forward. Time is a stream running on towards the vast ocean. Tending backward, is vain striving against the stream. And as it is the course and method of nature, of providence, and grace, to tend forward, and carry us from less, to greater things in this world; so do all these conspire to carry us on (because our *ἀρχή*, our highest pitch, cannot be here) to yet far greater things in the greater world. Of which vast world, it is the design of the following discourse to give you some account; though, God knows, it is but a very imperfect one. Such as it is, if God only make it an occasion to you, of fixing your minds and hearts upon that

mighty theme, you will find it easy and pleasant to you to amplify upon it and enlarge it to yourselves. And thereby, through God's blessing, I doubt not, arrive to a fulness of satisfaction concerning this late dispensation, which hath a gloom upon it; but is in very deed only gloomy on one side, namely, downwards, and towards this wretched world, this region of sorrow and darkness: but on the side upwards, and towards that other world which casts its lustre upon it, its phasis and appearance will be altogether bright and glorious. And the more you look by a believing intuition into that other world where our blessed Redeemer and Lord bears rule in so transcendent glory, the more will you be above all the cloudy darkness of this event of providence towards yourselves and your family. Herein, your perusal of this very defective essay may be of some use to you. And I reckoned it might be of more lasting and permanent use to you, and yours after you, and to as many others into whose hands it might fall, as a little book, than as one single sermon.

You will, however, I doubt not, apprehend in it the sincere desire to assist you in this your present difficult trial; followed by the faithful endeavour of,

Most honoured in the Lord,

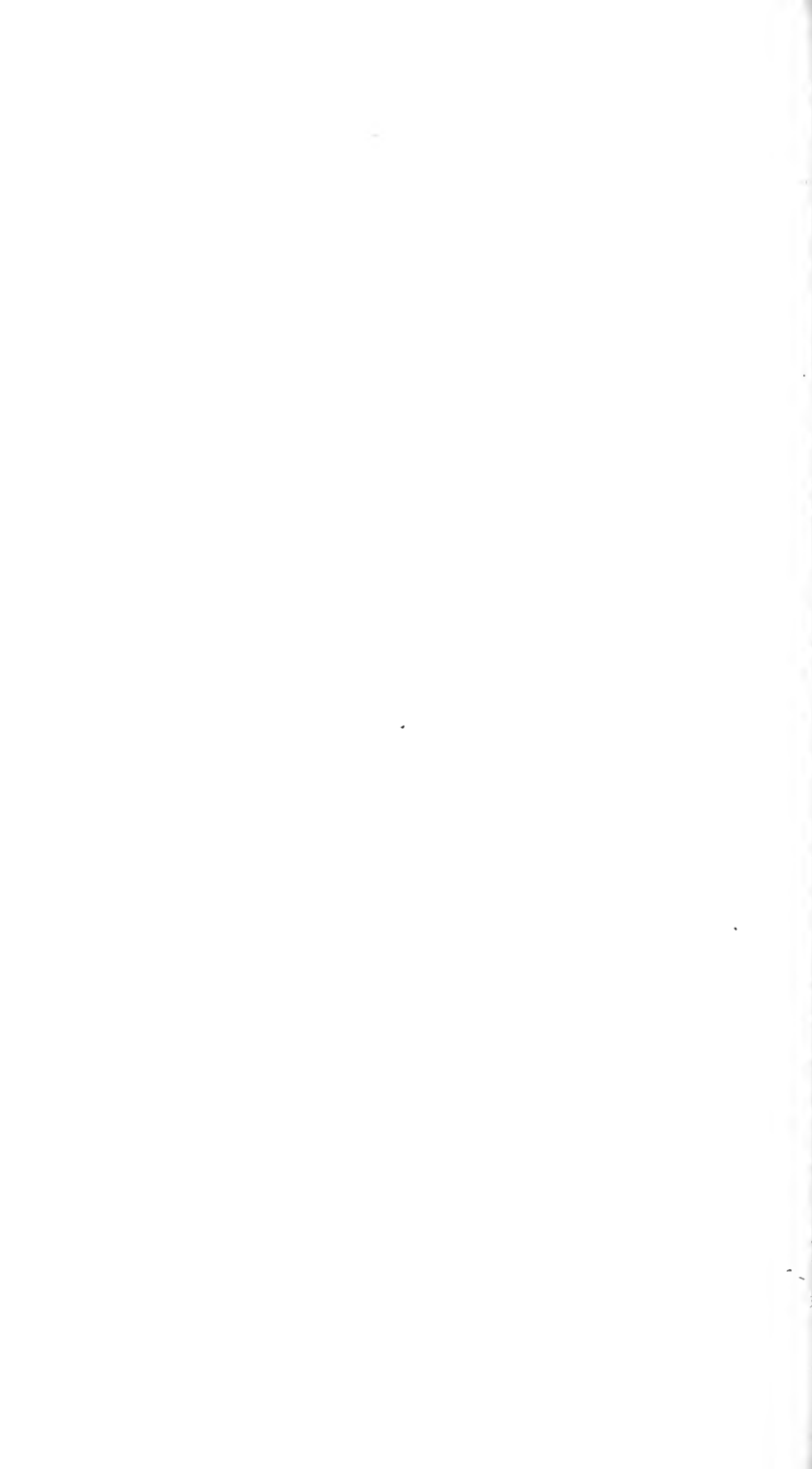
Your very respectful and obliged servant,

In him,

And for his sake,

JOHN HOWE.

May 17, 1699.



THE
REDEEMER'S DOMINION,
&c.

REV. I. 18.

———*And have the keys of hell (Hades, or the unseen world)
and of death.*

THE peculiar occasion of this present solemnity, (I mean, that is additional to the usual business of the Lord's-day,) may be somewhat amusing to narrower and less considering minds ; namely, That I am now to take notice to you of (what the most would call) the premature or untimely death of a most hopeful young gentleman, the heir of a very considerable family, greatly prepared by parts and pious sentiments, and further preparing by study and conversation, to be useful to the age, cut off in his prime, when the mere shewing him * to the world had begun to raise an expectation, in such as knew him, of somewhat more than ordinary hereafter from him, his future advantageous circumstances being considered, of which you will hear further towards the close of this discourse.

Nor did I know any passage in the whole sacred volume, more apt to serve the best and most valuable purpose in such a case, than the words now read ; none more fitted to enlarge our minds, to compose them, and reduce to a due temper even theirs who are most concerned, and most liable to be disturbed, or to instruct us all how to interpret and comment aright upon so perplexing and so intricate a providence as this, at the first and slighter view, may seem unto us.

In order whereto, our business must be to explain and apply this most weighty and awful saying.

First, For the *explication*, these three things are to be inquired into.

* Ostendunt terris hunc tantum, fata nec ultra esse sinunt—The gods have just shewn him to the world, and permitted him to be seen no more. *Virg.*

I. Who it is that claims and asserts to himself this power here spoken of.

II. What it is about which this claimed power is to be conversant.

III. What sort of power it is that this emblematical expression signifies to belong to him.

I. Who it is that claims the power here spoken of ; where the inquiry is not so much concerning the person that makes this claim, which all the foregoing context puts out of question to be our Lord Christ ; but touching the special notion and capacity wherein he claims it, and according whereto it must be understood to belong to him.

And whereas he is described by very distinct titles and attributes, promiscuously interwoven in the preceding verses of the chapter, namely, that sometimes he is introduced speaking in the style of a God ; (as v. 8, I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. And again, v. 11, I am Alpha and Omega ;) but that sometimes he is represented in the form of a man, and accordingly described even from head to foot, and said to appear in the vision that exhibits him as one like the Son of man, that we might certainly understand him so to be, v. 13—16. And such things said of him as are incident to a mortal man, the shedding of his blood, v. 5, and that he was dead, v. 18, *former part*. Yea and expressions of this different import intermingled, that we might know it was the same Person who was continued to be spoken of under these so vastly different characters ; as, I am the first and the last ; I am he that liveth and was dead, v. 17, 18. We may thereupon very reasonably conclude that he is not here to be conceived under the one notion or the other, neither as God nor as man, separately or exclusively of each other ; but as both together, as Θεοῦ Σωτήρ, as *God-man*, under which conjunct notion, he receives and sustains the office of our Redeemer, and Mediator between God and man.

This will enable us the more clearly to answer the third inquiry, when we come to it, concerning the kind of that power which is here claimed ; and which, because there can be no doubt of the justice of his claim, we are hereby taught to ascribe to him.

For the management whereof, we are also hence to reckon him every way competent ; that he was *par negotio*, that it was not too big for him ; no expressions being used to signify his

true humanity, but which are joined with others, as appropriate to deity. And that nothing therefore obliges us to narrow it more than the following account imports, which we are next to inquire about; namely,

II. The large extent of the object about which the power he here claims is to be conversant; that is, *Hades* (the unseen world) and death.

The former of these, we with a debasing limitation, and, as I doubt not will appear, very unreasonably, do render *hell*.

The power belonging to Christ, we are elsewhere taught to conceive, is of unspeakably greater latitude. And here we are not taught to confine it to so vile and narrow limits, as this translation gives it. All things in the context conspire to magnify him, and, agreeably hereto, to magnify his dominion. When therefore the apparent design is to speak him *great*, that he should only be represented as the Jailor of devils, and their companions, is, to me, unaccountable; unless a very manifest necessity did induce to it.

From the word *ᾗδης*—*hades*, there can be no pretence for it. Though it ought to be extended, it is by no means to be restrained to that sense: which as it is the most ignoble, so it will appear but a very small, minute, part of its signification; whether we consider the literal import, or the common use, of the word.

Literally, it signifies only what we see not, or what is out of our sight. But as the word of which it is compounded signifies also to know, as well as to see, it may further signify, that state of things which lies without the compass of our knowledge, even out of the reach of our mental sight; or concerning which, though we are to believe what is revealed, we cannot immediately or distinctly know it; and in reference whereto, therefore, we are to walk by faith, not by sight, 2 Cor. 5. 7.

And the common use of the word has been very agreeable hereto, with writers of all sorts; that is, to signify indefinitely the unseen world; or the state of the deceased out of our world, who are, consequently, gone out of our sight, whether they were good or bad: so as not peculiarly to signify hell, or any place or state of torment, only.

It were easy to abound in quotations to this purpose, if it were either needful or proper in a discourse of this nature.

What I intend in this kind, I shall only set down on the bye in the margin, upon which they that will may cast their

eye ; * that the discourse be not interrupted as to others, that either have no need to be informed in this matter, having known as much before as can be now told them ; or no inclination to be diverted from their present purpose in reading ; ap-

* And here it may suffice to take notice, that Greek writers, poets, philosophers, historians, and other writers, that have made only occasional mention of this word *ἄδης*, or of the words next akin to it, *ἄις*, or *ἄιδης*, or lexicographers, that have purposely given an account of it, from Greek authors, that must be supposed best to understand the use of words in their own tongue ; generally such as have not been engaged in a controversy, that obliges men usually to torture words to their own sense, or to serve the hypothesis which they had espoused ; have been remote from confining this, or the cognate words, to that narrow sense as only to signify a place or state of torment for bad men, but understood it as comprehending, also, a state of felicity for the pious and good.

For such as have been concerned in interpreting this or other like words with reference to the known and famous controversy, which I need not mention, their judgments must weigh according to the reputation they are of with the reader.

The Greeks, no doubt, best understood their own language. And among them can we think that Homer in the beginning of his first *Iliad*, when he speaks of the many brave souls of his heroes, those *ἰφθίμοι ψυχαί*, which the war he is describing sent into the invisible regions, *αἰδι προΐαψεν*, that he ever dreamt they were all promiscuously dispatched away to a place of torment ? Not to mention other passages where he uses the word *ἄδης* to the same purpose. Divers others of the Greek poets are cited by several ready to our hands, with which I shall not cumber these pages. That one is enough, and nothing can be fuller to our purpose, which is quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus *Stromata*, liber 5. as well as by sundry others, and ascribed to the comic Diphilus, though by others to Philemon.

Καὶ γὰρ καθ' ἄδην δύο τριβες νομίζομεν
Μίαν δικαίων, κατέραν ἀσεβῶν ὁδόν.

In *hades* we reckon there are two paths, the one of the righteous, the other of the wicked ; plainly shewing that *hades* was understood to contain heaven and hell. Plato, when in his *Phædo* he tells us that he that comes into *hades*, *ἀμύητος, καὶ ἀτέλειος*, not initiated and duly prepared, is thrown into *Βόρβορες*, a stinking lake, but he that comes into it fitly purified, shall dwell with the gods ; as expressly signifies *hades* to include the same opposite states of misery and felicity. In that dialogue called *Axiochus*, though supposed not to be his, written by one that sufficiently knew the meaning of such a word, we are told that when men die they are brought into the *Πεδίον ἀληθείας*, the field of truth, where sit judges that examine *τίνα βίον*, what manner of life every one lived while he dwelt in the body, that they who, while they lived here, were inspired by a good genius or spirit, go into the region of pious men, having before they came into *hades* been purified. Such as led their lives wickedly are hurried by furies up and down chaos, in the region of the wicked. In the third Book *de Republica*, Plato blames the poets that they represent the state of things in *hades* too frightfully, when they should *μᾶλλον ἐπαίνεσθαι*,

prehending that what is generally told them, only concerning the usual signification of a word, is not said without some ground. And let texts of Scripture be consulted about that, how *hades*, and the correspondent word *sheol*, in the old Testament, are used there. If we take the help of interpreters, the impartial reader is to judge of their fidelity and ability who go our way. *

praise it rather. *Plutarch de Superstitione* brings in Plato speaking of *hades*, as a person, or a God, *Dis*, or *Pluto*, as they frequently do, and says he is *φιλάνθρωπος*, *benign or friendly to men*; therefore not a tormentor of them only. *Cælius Rhodigin.* quotes this same passage of Plutarch, and takes notice that our Saviour speaks of the state of torment by another word, not *hades*, but *Gehenna*; which sufficiently shews how he understood it himself.

And whereas there are who disagree to this notation of this word, that makes it signify *unseen*, as some will fetch it from the Hebrew, and go as far back as Adam in their search, alleging for this the authority of an old Sibyll, others will have it go for *ἀηδής*, and signify as *ἀτεργής*, *unpleasant*; nothing is plainer than that this other is the common notion, which (though fancy hath not a greater dominion in any thing than in etymology) would make one shy of stretching invention to find how to differ from the generality. Therefore Calepin, upon this word, tells us that the Greek grammarians do, against the nature of the *Etymon*, (which plainly enough shews what they understood that to be,) generally direct its beginning to be written with the *spiritus asper*, but yet he makes it signify *obscure*, or *not visible*. And though Plato is endeavoured to be hooked into the deriving it from Adam by a very far fetch; yet it is plain that his calling it *τόπον ἀδηλον*, in a place before referred to, shews he understood it to signify *invisible*: and so lexicons will commonly derive it (*Vulgo*, says *Cælius Rhodig.*). But its extensiveness, as comprehending a state of happiness, is our principal concern, which way (as we might shew by many more instances) the common stream carries it. Pausanias in his ἈΡΚΑΔΙΚΑ, speaking of Hermes (according to Homer) as *Δίος διάκονον*, and that he did lead souls *ὕπὸ τον ἀδην*, could not be thought to mean that they were then universally miserable. Sextus Empiricus is an authority good enough for the meaning of a Greek word. When writing against mathematicians, he tells us, though by way of objection, all men have a common notion *περὶ των ἐν ᾧδου*, (using the genitive with *ἐν*, as Homer, and others do, another word, house or abode, in the dative, being understood,) and yet, as to the thing, he afterwards distinguishes poets' fables, and what, from the nature of the soul itself, all have a common apprehension of. As also Diogenes Laertius has the same phrase, mentioning the writings of Protagoras, who, he says, wrote one book *περὶ των ἐν ᾧδου*, using the genitive, as here, after *ἐν*, as hath been usual, on the mentioned account. And though his books were burnt by the Athenians, because of the dubious title of one of them concerning the gods, so that we have not opportunity to know what his opinion of *hades* was, we have reason more than enough, to think he understood it not of a state of torment only for evil spirits.

* Primate Usher's judgment may be seen in his answer to the Jesuits'

Upon the whole, it being most evident that hell is but a small and mean part of what is signified by *hades*, it will be very unreasonable to represent or conceive of the power here ascribed to our Lord, according to that narrow notion of it. And would be a like incongruity, as if, to magnify the person of highest dignity in the court of a mighty prince, one should say, "He is the keeper of the dungeon."

The word itself, indeed, properly taken, and according to its just extent, mightily greatens him. It is as much as to say, His dominion is of unknown limits; such as no eye can measure. We think with a sort of veneration, of what is represented as too big for our knowledge. We have a natural awe and reverence for unsearchable darkness. But in the mean time we herein suffer a just diminution of ourselves, that when our inquiry stops, and can proceed no further, it being but a very little part of the universe that lies within our compass, having tired our inquiring eye and mind; upon all the rest we write, *Hades*; call it *unseen*, or *unknown*. And because we call it so, God himself, in reference to us, calls it so too; it being his way, (as is observed by that noted Jew, Maimonides,) speaking to men, to use the tongue of the children of men, to speak to them in their own language, and allow them to coin their own words: which at first they often do very oc-

challenge, that this word properly signifies the other world, the place or state of the dead—so that heaven itself may be comprehended in it. Grotius, on Luke 16. 23, makes *hades* most certainly to signify a place withdrawn from our sight; spoken of the body, the grave; of the soul, all that region wherein it is separate from the body. So that as Dives was in *hades*, so was Lazarus too, but in separate regions: for both paradise, and hell, or, as the Grecians were wont to speak, *Elysii*, and *Tartara*, were in *hades*. You may have in him more quotations from the poets, the sense of the Essenes from Josephus, and passages from divers of the fathers to the same purpose. Dr. Hammond's mind was the same, copiously expressed on Matth. 11. 23; but differs from Grotius, in ascribing to Philemon the iambicks above recited, which the other gives to Diphilus. Dr. Lightfoot is full to the same purpose, on the 4th Article of the Creed. And though Bellarmin will have this word always signify *hell*, (which if it do, with *sheol* the correspondent word; Jacob desired to go to hell to his son, as Dr. Hammond argues;) Camero, as good a judge, thinks, except once, it never does. If any desire to see more to this purpose with little trouble to themselves, let them peruse Martinus's lexicon on the word *inferus*, or *infernus*. I could refer them to many more whom I forbear to mention.

Only if any think in some or other text of Scripture this word must signify *hell* only, since it is of that latitude as to signify *heaven* in other places, an impartial view of the circumstances of the text must determine whether there it be meant of the one, or the other, or both.

casional; nor, as to this, could they have a fairer or a more urgent occasion, or that is more self-justifying, than in one word to say of that other world, that it is *hades*, or *invisible*, when that is truly all that they have to say, or can have any immediate notice of about it.

It hath therefore its rise from ourselves, and the penury of our knowledge of things; and is at once both an ingenious confession, with some sort of modest cover, and excuse of our own ignorance: as with geographers, all that part of this globe which they cannot describe, is *terra incognita*, *unknown region*; and with philosophers, such phænomena in nature as they can give no account of, they resolve shortly and in the most compendious way into some or other occult quality, or somewhat else, as occult.

How happy were it, if in all matters that concern religion, and in this, as it does so, they would shut up in a sacred venerable darkness, what they cannot distinctly perceive; it being once by the undeceiving word expressly asserted, that it is, without therefore denying its reality, because they clearly apprehend not what it is.

With too many their religion is so little, and their pride and self-conceit so great, that they think themselves fit to be standards; that their eye or mind is of a size large enough to measure the creation, yea, and the Creator too. And by how much they have the less left them of mind, or the more it is sunk into earth and carnality, the more capable it is of being the measure of all reality, of taking the compass of all being, created and uncreated. And so that of the philosopher takes place in the worst sense that can be put upon it; “to see darkness is to see nothing.” All is nullity that their sense reaches not. *Hades* is with such, indeed, empty, imaginary darkness; or in plainer English, there is neither heaven nor hell, because they see them not.

But we ought to have the greater thoughts of it, not the less, for its being too big, too great, too glorious, for our present view: and that it must as yet rest as to us, and so let it rest a while, under the name of *Hades*, the unknown dominion of our great Lord; according to that most express account he at his ascension gave of the existence of both parts together, that less known to us, and that more known, Matt. 28. 18. All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.

That death is added, as contained also within the limits of our Lord's dominion, doth expressly signify his custody of

the passage from this visible world to the invisible. And as he commands the entrance into each distinct part of *hades*, the *invisible world*, consisting of both heaven and hell, so he hath power over death too, which is the common outlet from this world, and the passage unto both.

But it withal plainly implies his very absolute power over this visible world of ours also : for it signifies he hath the power of measuring every one's time here, and how long each inhabitant of this world shall live in it. If it belong to him to determine when any one shall die, it must by consequence belong to him to assign the portion and dimensum of time that every one shall live. Nor is there any conceivable moment in the time of any one's life, wherein he hath not this power of putting a period by death thereunto, at his own pleasure. He is therefore signified to have the power of every man's life and death at once : and the power of life and death is very high and great power. He therefore herein implicitly claims, what is elsewhere expressly ascribed to him, Rom. 14. 7—9. None lives to himself, (that is, *de jure*, no man should,) and no man dieth to himself : for “ whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord ; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living.”

In sum, here is asserted to him a dominion over both worlds ; this in which we live, and that into which we die, whether the one or the other part of it. And so in reference to men, who once have inhabited this world, the sense of this text, and that we are insisting on, is the same. Though *hades* is of vastly larger extent than only to be the receptacle of such as have lived here ; it having also, in both the parts of it, innumerable inhabitants who never had a dwelling assigned them in this world of ours at all.

But thus far we have the vast extent of our Lord Christ's dominion competently cleared to be the proper intendment of this text ; and that it never meant so faint and minute a representation of it, as only to make him Keeper of the bottomless pit ; though of that also he hath the key, as we shall further take notice : but are now to inquire of what will take up less time.

III. The kind of that power over so vast a realm, or manifold realms, signified by this emblematical expression, of *having the keys*, &c.

Every one knows that the keys are insignia ; some of the

tokens of power ; and according to the peculiarity of the object, may be of divine power.

The Jews, as some writers of their affairs say, appropriate the keys of three, others of four things to God only : of life, or the entrance into this world ; of the rain, or the treasures of the clouds ; of the earth, say some,* as of the granary of corn ; and of the grave : “ Of which,” says one of their own,† “ the Holy, Blessed One hath the keys of the sepulchres in his hand,” &c. And as we may be sure he admits thither, so he emits from thence ; and, as he says, “ In the future age, the Holy, Blessed One will unlock the treasures of souls, and will open the graves, and bring every soul back into its own body,” &c.

Nor is this key of the vast *hades*, when it is in the hand of our Redeemer, the less in the hand of the Holy, Blessed One ; for so is he too. But it is in his hand as belonging to his office of Mediator between God and man, as was before said. And properly, the phrase signifies ministerial power, being a manifest allusion to the common usage, in the courts of princes, of intrusting to some great minister the power of the keys ; as it was foretold of Eliakin, (Isa. 22.) that he should be placed in the same high station in Hezekiah’s court, wherein Shebna was, of whom so severe things are there said ; and that the key of the house of David should be laid upon his shoulder, &c. c. 20—22. And the house of David being a known type of the house or church of God, and he himself of Christ, who as the Son, hath power over the whole house, according to this typical way of speaking, our Lord is said (Rev. 3. 7.) to have the key of David, to open so as none can shut, to shut so as none can open ; that is, to have a final, decisive power in all he doth, from which there is no appeal.

Nor could any thing be more congruous, than that having the keys of the celestial house of God, the heavenly palace of the Great King, the habitation of his holiness and glory, (in which are the everlasting habitations, the many mansions, the places prepared for his redeemed,) he should also have the keys of the terrestrial Bethel ; which is but a sort of *portal*, or *vestibulum*, to the other : *the house of God, and the gate of heaven*. And as he is implied to have the keys of this introductive, preparatory kingdom of heaven, (as the keys of the king’s palace, where is the throne or seat of government ; and the keys of the kingdom must mean the same thing,) when he is said to give them to the apostle Peter, and the other apostles : this was but a prelude, and a minute instance of his power of

* Weems.

† Pirke. R. Eliezer. Edit. per G. H. Vorst. C. F.

those keys of *hades*, and of the glorious heavenly kingdom itself contained therein, which he was not to delegate, but to manage himself immediately in his own person.

If moreover he were signified by the angel, (Rev. 20. 1.) who was said to have the key of the bottomless pit; that also must import a power, though great in itself, yet very little in comparison of the immense *hades*, of which he is here said to have the keys. So remote is it, that the power ascribed to him *there*, should be the measure of what he here asserts to himself: and the difference must be vastly greater than it is possible for us to conceive, or parallel by the difference between having power over the palace, and all the most delightful and most spacious territories in the vastest empire of the greatest prince, and only having power over a dungeon in some obscure corner of it: which, for the great purposes whereto all this is to be applied, we can scarcely too much inculcate.

• *Secondly*, And to such *application* let us now, with all possible seriousness and intention of spirit, address ourselves. This will consist in sundry inferences or deductions, laying before us some suitable matter, partly of meditation, partly of practice: the former whereof are to prepare and lay a ground for the latter.

1. Divers things we may collect, that will be very proper for our deep meditation; which I shall propose not as things that we can be supposed not to have known before, but which are too commonly not enough thought on or considered.

And here we shall somewhat invert the order wherein things lie in the text, beginning with what is there latter and lower, and thence arising, with more advantage, to what is higher and of greater concernment: as,

1. That men do not die at random, or by some uncertain, accidental bye stroke, which, as by a slip of the hand, cuts off the thread of life; but by an act of divine determination, and judgment, which passes in reference to each one's death. For as the key signifies authority and power, the turning this key of death, which gives a man his exit out of this world, is an authoritative act. And do we consider in what hand this power is lodged? We cannot but apprehend every such act is the effect of counsel and judgment.

What philosophers are wont to discourse of fortuitous events need no notice to rational agents, or casual, in reference to natural, can be understood only with relation to ourselves, and signify no our own ignorance of naturities, but can have no place in the Christian's mind, as if any thing were a contin-

gency unto that. As for them that live as if they thought they came into this world by chance, it is very natural for them to think they shall die and go out of it by chance too, but when and as it happens. This is worse than Paganish blindness ; for besides what from their poets, the vulgar have been made to believe concerning the three fatal Sisters, to whom they ascribed no less than deity concerned in measuring every one's life, the grave discourses which some of them have written concerning providence, and its extent to the lesser intermediate concerns of life, much more to that their final great concern of death, will be a standing testimony against the too prevailing Christian scepticism (they ought to excuse the solecism who make it) of this wretched age ! But such among us as will allow themselves the liberty to think, want not opportunity and means by which they may be assured, that not an imaginary, but real Deity is immediately and constantly concerned in measuring our time in this world. What an awful thought is this ! And it leads to a

2. Inference. That it is a great thing to die. The Son of God, the Redeemer of man, hath an immediate presidency over this affair. He signalizes himself by it, who could not suppose that he should be magnified by a trifle ! We slightly say, Such a one is dead ! Consider the matter in itself, and it is great. A reasonable soul hath changed states ! An intelligent spirit is gone out of our world ! The life of a gnat, a fly, (those little *automata*, or self-moving things,) how admirable a production is it ! It becomes no man to despise what no man can imitate. We praise the pencil that well describes the external figure of such an *animalculum*, such a little creature ; but the internal, vital, self-moving power, and the motion itself, what art can express ! But a human life, how important a thing is it ! It was one of Plato's thanksgivings, that God had made him a man ! How careful a guard hath God set over every man's life, fencing it by the severest law ! " If any man shed man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed ;" and how weighty is the annexed reason ! " For in the image of God he made man." This then highly greatens this matter. He therefore reserves it wholly to himself, as one of his peculiarities, to dispose of such a life ! " I am he that kills and makes alive." We find it one of his high titles—" The God of the spirits of all flesh." He had what was much greater to glory in, that he was " the Father of spirits," indefinitely spoken. When he hath all the heavenly regions, the spacious *hades*, peopled with such inhabitants " whose dwelling is not with flesh," and,

for vast multitudes of them, never was, who yet, looking down into this little world of ours, this minute spot of his creation, and observing that here were spirits dwelling in flesh, he should please to be styled also the God of those spirits, signifies this to be with him too an appropriate glory, a glory which he will not communicate farther than he communicates Godhead ; and that he held it a divine right to measure the time unto each of them of their abode in flesh, and determine when they shall dislodge.

This cannot be thought on aright, without a becoming, most profound reverence of him on this account. How sharp a rebuke is given to that haughty prince, " The God in whose hands thy breath is, hast thou not glorified," Dan. 5. 23. That would prepare the way, and we should be easily led on, were we once come to think with reverence, to think also with pleasure of this case, that our life and every breath we draw, are under such a divine superintendency. The holy psalmist speaks of it with high complacency, as the matter of his song, that he had a God presiding over his life. So he tells us he would have each *νυχθημερον*, *day and night*, composed not more of *night* and *day*, than of *prayer* and *praise* directed to God under this notion, as the God of his life, Ps. 42. 8. And he speaks it not grudgingly, but as the ground of his trust and boast, Ps. 31. 14, 15.—" I trusted in thee, O Lord ; I said, Thou art my God, my times are in thy hand." That this key is in the hand of the great *Emmanuel—God with us*, will be thought on with frequency, when it is thought on with delight.

3. Our life on earth is under the constant strict observation of our Lord Christ. He waits when to turn the key, and shut it up. Through the whole of that time, which, by deferring, he measures out to us, we are under his eye as in a state of probation. He takes continual notice how we acquit ourselves. For his turning the key at last, is a judicial act ; therefore supposes diligent observation, and proceeds upon it. He that hath this key, is also said in the next chapter, (v. 18.) to have eyes like a flame of fire. With these he observes what he hath against one or another, (v. 20.) and with most indulgent patience gives a space of repentance, (v. 21.) and notes it down if any then repent not, as we there also find. Did secure sinners consider this, how he beholds them with a flame in his eye, and the key in his hand, would they dare still to trifle ? If they did apprehend how he, in this posture, stands over them, in all their vain dalliances, idle impertinencies, bold

adventures, insolent attempts against his laws and government, presumptuous affronts of his high authority ; yea, or but in their drowsy slumberings, their lingering delays, their neglects of offered grace ; did they consider what notice he takes how they demean themselves under every sermon they hear, in every prayer wherein they are to join with others, or which, perhaps, for custom's sake, they put up alone by themselves ; how their hearts are moved, or unmoved, by every repeated call that is given them to turn to God, and get their peace made by application of their Redeemer's reconciling blood ; in what agonies would they be, what pangs of trembling would they feel within themselves, lest the key should turn before their great work be done !

4. Whatsoever ill designs by this observation he discovers, it is easy to him to prevent. One turn of this key of death, besides the many other ways that are obvious to him, disappoints them all, and in that day all their thoughts perish. It is not therefore from inadvertency, indifferency, or impotency, but *deep counsel*, that they are permitted to be driven on so far. He that sitteth in the heavens laughs, and he knows their day is coming. He can turn this key when he will.

5. His power as to every one's death cannot be avoided, or withstood. The act of this key is definitive, and ends the business. No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit ; neither hath he power in the day of death, Eccl. 8. 8. It is in vain to struggle, when the key is turned ; the power of the keys, where it is supremely lodged, is absolutely decisive, and their effect permanent and irrevocable. That soul therefore for whose exit the key is turned, must thereupon then forthwith depart, willing or unwilling, ready or unready.

6. Souls that go out of this world of ours, on the turn of this key, go not out of being. He that hath this key of death, hath also the key of *hades*, a key and a key. When he uses the former, to let them out from this, he uses the latter, to give them their inlet into the other world, and into the one or the other part of it ; into the upper or the lower *hades*, as the state of their case is, and doth require.

Our business is not now with Pagans, to whom the oracles of God are unknown. If it were, the best and wisest of them who so commonly speak of souls' going into *hades*, never thought of their going no whither ; nor therefore that they were nothing. They had reasons, then, which they thought cogent, that induced them, though unassisted with divine re-

velation, to conclude they survived their forsaken bodies. And what else could any unbribed understanding conclude or conceive? When we find they have powers belonging to them, which we can much more easily apprehend capable of being acted without help from the body than by it, we are sure they can form thoughts, purposes, desires, hopes: for it is matter of fact, they do it; and coherent thoughts, and thoughts arising from thoughts, one from another: yea, and thoughts abstracted from any thing corporeal, the notions of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, of moral good and evil, with some agreeable resolves; thoughts quite above the sphere of matter, so as to form a notion of the mind itself of a spiritual Being, as unexceptionable a one as we can form of a body: yea, of an original self-subsistent Mind and Spirit, the Former and Maker of all other. It is much more apprehensible, since we certainly know that all this is done, that it is done without any help of the body, than how flesh, or blood, or bones, or nerves, or brains, or any corporeal thing, should contribute to such methods of thinking, or to any thought at all. And if it can be conceived that a spirit can act without dependence on a body, what should hinder but we may as well conceive it to subsist and live without such dependence? And when we find this power of thought belongs to somewhat in us that lives, since the deserted carcass thinks not; that the body lives not of itself, or life is not essential to it, for life may be retired and gone, and it remain, as we see it does, the same body still; how reasonable is it to suppose, that the soul to which the power of thought belongs, lives of itself, not independently on the first cause, but essentially, so as to receive life and essence together from that cause, or life included in its essence, so as that it shall be the same thing to it, to be, and to live. And hereupon how obvious is it to apprehend that the soul is such a thing as can live in the body, which when it does, the body lives by it a precarious, borrowed life; and that can live out of the body, leaving it, when it does so, to drop and die.

These sentiments were so reasonable, as generally to prevail with the more deeply-thinking part of mankind, philosophers of all sorts, (a few excepted, whose notions were manifestly formed by vicious inclination,) in the Pagan world, where was nothing higher than reason to govern. But we have life and immortality brought to light in the gospel, (2 Tim. 1. 10.) and are forewarned by it that these will be the measures

of the final judgment, to give eternal life at last to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, Rom. 2. 7. To the rest, indignation, and wrath, &c. (v. 8.) because there is no respect of persons with God, v. 11. As supposing the discovery of another world, even by natural light, much more by the addition of supernatural, to be so clear, as that the rule of the universal judgment, even for all, is most righteously to be taken from hence, and that there is nothing but a resolution of living wickedly, to be opposed to it.

It is also no slight consideration, that a susceptibleness of religion should, among the creatures that dwell on earth, be so appropriate and peculiar to man, and (some rare instances excepted) as far diffused as human nature; so as to induce some very considering men, of the ancients as well as moderns, both Pagans and Christians, to think *religion* the more probable specifying difference of man than *reason*. And whence should so common an impression be, but from a cause as common? Or how can we avoid to think that this signature upon the soul of man, a capacity of religion, should be from the same hand that formed the spirit of man within him, and that a natural religiousness, and human nature itself, had the same Author? But who sees not that religion, as such, hath a final reference to a future state? He was no despicable writer, though not a Christian, that positively affirmed hope towards God to be essential to man; and that they that had it not, were not partakers of the rational nature. *

It is so much the more a deplorable and monstrous thing, that so many, not only against the light of their own reason, but of divine revelation, are so industrious to unman themselves: and having so effectually in a great degree done it really and in practice, aim to do it in a more compendious way notionally and in principle too; and make use or shew of reason to prove themselves not to be reasonable creatures; or to divest themselves of the principal dignity and distinction of the rational nature: and are incomparably herein more unnatural than such as we commonly count felons upon themselves, who only act against their own bodily life, but these against the much nobler life of their soul; they against the life of an individual, these against their own whole species at once. And

Philo Judæus, Quod deter. potiori insid. soleat, ὡς τῶν μὴ ἐλπίζόντων πρὶ Θεοῦ, λογικῆς φύσεως ἔμεμριζαμένων.

how deplorable is their case, that count it their interest to be in no possibility of being happy! when yet their so great dread of a future state, as to urge them upon doing the most notorious violence to their own faculties to rid themselves of it, is a very convictive argument of its reality : for their dread still pursues and sticks close to them. This shews it lies deep in the nature of things which they cannot alter. The terrible image is still before their eyes ; and their principal refuge lies only in diverting, in not attending to it. And they can so little trust to their own sophistical reasonings against it, that when they have done all they can, they must owe what they have of ease and quiet in their own minds, not so much to any strength of reason they apprehend in their own thoughts, as in not thinking. A bold jest may sometimes provoke others' laughter, when it does not extinguish their own fear. A suspicion *a formido oppositi*---*fear of what is before them*, will still remain : a misgiving that they cannot nullify the great *hades*, pull down the spacious fabric of heaven, or undermine the profound abyss of hell, by a profane scoff. They will in time discern the difference between the evanid passion of a sudden fright, that takes its rise from imagination, and the fixed dread which is founded in the reason of things ; as one may between a fright in a dream, and the dread of a condemned criminal, with whom, sleeping and waking, the real state of his case is still the same.

Nor are the things themselves remote or unconnected ; God's right to punish a reasonable creature that has lived in contempt of him, and his own reasonable apprehension hereof, or his conscience both of the fact and desert. They answer as face to face, as the stamp on the seal, and the impression on the wax. They would fain make their reason a protection against their fear, but that cannot serve both ways : the reason of the thing lies against them already, and there cannot be an eternal war between the faculty and the object. One way or other the latter will overpower the former, and draw it into consent with itself ; either by letting it see there is a just, true cause of fear, or, assisted by divine grace, by prevailing for the change of the sinner's course. Whereupon that troublesome fear, and its cause, will both upon the best terms cease together. And that what has been proposed to consideration under this head, may be the more effectually considered, to this blessed purpose, I add that,

7. The discovery of the invisible world, and the disposal of affairs there, have a most encouraging aspect upon this world :

for both the discovery and the disposal are by our blessed Redeemer, in whom mercy and might are met in highest perfection. How fragrant breathings of grace, how glorious a display of power, are there in what he here says : " Fear not ! I am the first and the last ; I am he that liveth and was dead, and I am alive for evermore, Amen. And I have the keys of *hades* and of death." He hath opened the celestial *hades* to our view, that it might be also open to our safe entrance and blissful inhabitation. He who was dead, but liveth, and had made his victorious triumphant entrance before us, and for us ; he who had overcome him that had the power of death, conquered the gigantic monster at the gate, gained the keys, and designed herein their deliverance from the fear of death, who were thereby subject to bondage ; (Heb. 2. 14, 15.) he who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel ; (2 Tim. 1. 10.) it is *he* who bids us lift up our eyes, and behold the heavens opened, and himself standing at the right hand of God. The horrid, infernal *hades*, he hath discovered too, only that we might fear and shun it. But yet more distinctly consider, why doth he here represent himself under this character, " He that liveth and was dead," but that he might put us in mind of that most convictive argument of his love, his submitting to die for us ; " Greater love hath no man : " and that he might at once put us out of doubt concerning his power, that he yet survives, and is sprung up alive out of that death, victorious over it. How amiable is the representation of such power in conjunction with such love ! The same person having a heart so replenished with love, a hand so armed with power, neither capable of *unkind* design, nor unable to effect the *most kind*. Behold him in this representation ! Who would not now fall at his foot and adore ? Who would hesitate at resigning to him, or be appalled at his disclosure of this unknown world ?

Do but consider him who makes the discovery, and who would not expect from him the utmost efforts of love and goodness ? From him who is the Brightness of his Father's glory, and the express Image of his person ! His essential Image, who is Love ! From him who came into this wretched world of ours, full of grace and truth ! And who could not have come but by the inducement of compassion to our miseries. From him who knows all things, and whose eye penetrates into every recess of the vast *hades* : all his own empire, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ; but who only knows not to deceive : who hath told us, in his Father's house

are many mansions, and if it were not so, would have told us that, John 14. 2. From him into whose mouth guile never entered, but into whose lips grace was poured, and is poured out by them ; so that the ear that hath heard him hath borne him witness, and filled with wonder those that heard the gracious words which came out of his mouth. Who hath told us all concerning that unseen world, that in this our present state it was fit for us to know ; and enough, in telling all that will be his followers, that where he is, there he will have them be, John 17. 24.

And consider the manifest tendency of the discovery itself. What doth it mean or tend to, but to undeceive miserable mortals, whom he beholds from his high throne mocked with shadows, beguiled with most delusive impostures, and easily apt to be imposed upon ? Foolish, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures ; feeding upon ashes, and wearying themselves for very vanity ; sporting themselves in the dust of this minute spot of earth : wasting their little inch of time, wherein they should prepare for translation into the regions of unseen glory. To these he declares he hath formed a kingdom for all that covet to mend their states, and that his kingdom is not of this world ; that for such as will be of this kingdom, he will provide better, having other worlds, the many heavens, above all which he is ascended, at his disposal, Eph. 4. 10. But they must seek this kingdom and the righteousness of it in the first place, and desist from their care about other things. He counsels and warns them not to lay up their treasure on earth, but in heaven ; and to let their hearts be there with their treasure. And what can withstand his power, who, having been dead, liveth victorious over him that had the power of death, and is alive for evermore, possessed of an eternal state of life ?

And have we not reason to expect the most equal and most benign disposal of things in that unseen world, when he also declares, I have the keys, rightful authority, as well as mighty power, to reward and punish ? None but who have a very ill mind can fear from him an ill management. He first became capable of dying, and then yielded himself to die, that he might obtain these keys for gracious purposes. He had them before to execute just vengeance, as he was originally in the form of God, and without robbery equal with God ; an equal sharer in sustaining the wrong that had been done by apostate rebels, and an equal sharer in the right of vindicating it.

But that he might have these keys to open the heavenly *hades* to reduced apostates, to penitent, believing, self-devoting sinners, for this, it was necessary that he should put on man, be found here in fashion as a man, take on him the form of a servant, become obedient to death, even that servile punishment, the death of the cross, Phil. 2. 7, 8. For this he is highly exalted into this power, that every knee might bow to him, in hope of saving mercy, v. 9, 10, compared with Isa. 45. 22, 23. He had the keys without this, of the supernal *hades*, to shut out all offenders, and of the infernal, to shut them up for ever. But that he might have them to absolve repenting believers, and admit them into heaven, and only to shut up in hell implacable enemies—for this he must die, and live again. He was to be slain and hanged on a tree, that he might be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sin, Acts 5. 30, 31. That to this intent he might be Lord of the dead and the living, he must both die and rise, and live so as to die no more, Rom. 14. 9. These keys for this purpose, he was only to have upon these terms. He had a right to punish as an offended God, but to pardon and save as a mediating, sin-expiating God-man.

But as he was to do the part of a Mediator, he must act equally between the disagreeing parties: he was to deal impartially on both sides. To render back entire to the injured Ruler of the world his violated rights, and to obtain for us his forfeited favour, as entire. And he undertook therefore, when as a sacrifice he was to be slain, to redeem us to God by his blood, Rev. 5. 9. To give him back his revolted creature, holy, pure, subject, and serviceable, as by his methods he shall be at last; and procure for him pardon, acceptance, and eternal blessedness.

When therefore he was to do for us the part of a Redeemer, he was to redeem us from the *curse* of the law, not from the *command* of it; to save us from the *wrath* of God, not from his *government*, Gal. 3. 13, 14. Rom. 8. 3, 4. Had it been otherwise, so firm and indissoluble is the connexion between our duty and our felicity, that the sovereign Ruler had been eternally injured, and we not advantaged. Were we to have been set free from the preceptive obligation of God's holy law, then most of all from that most fundamental precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, soul, might, and mind;" had this been redemption, which supposes only what is evil and hurtful, as that we are to be redeemed from? This were a strange sort of self-repugnant redemption, not from sin

and misery, but from our duty and felicity. This were so to be redeemed as to be still lost, and every way lost, both to God and to ourselves for ever. Redeemed from loving God ! What a monstrous thought ! Redeemed from what is the great active and fruitive principle ; the source of obedience and blessedness ; the eternal spring, even in the heavenly state, of adoration and fruition ! This had been to legitimate everlasting enmity and rebellion against the blessed God, and to redeem us into an eternal hell of horror and misery to ourselves ! This had been to cut off from the supreme Ruler of the world for ever, so considerable a limb of his most rightful dominion, and to leave us as miserable as everlasting separation from the Fountain of life and blessedness could make us.

When therefore our Lord Jesus Christ was to redeem us from the curse of the law, it was that the promised Spirit might be given to us, (Gal. 3. 13, 14.) who should write the law in our hearts : (Jer. 31. 33. Ezek. 36. 27.) fulfil the righteousness of it in us, by causing us to walk after his dictates, according to that law ; regenerating us, begetting us after God's image, and making us partakers of a Godlike nature. So we through the law become dead to the malediction and curse of it, that we may live to God more devoted lives than ever, Gal. 2. 19. Thus is God's lost creature given back to him with the greatest advantage also to itself.

With this design it is apparent our Lord redeemed us, and by his redemption acquired these keys. Nor are we to doubt, but in the use of them, he will dispense exactly according to this just and merciful design. And what a perverse distorted mind is that, which can so much as wish it should be otherwise ! namely, That he should save us to the eternal wrong of him that made us, and so as that we should be nothing the better ; that is, that he should save us without saving us !

And hath this no pleasant comfortable aspect upon a lost world, that he who hath these keys will use them for such purposes ? that is, to admit to eternal bliss, and save to the uttermost, all that will come to God by him : (not willing to be everlastingly alienated from the life of God ;) because he ever lives to make intercession, or to transact and negotiate for them, (as that word signifies,) and that in a rightful way, and even by the power of these keys !

8. That there must be some important reason why the other world is to us unseen, and so truly bears the name of *Hades*. This expresses the state of the case as in fact it is, that it is a world lying out of our sight, and into which our dim and

weak eye cannot penetrate. That other state of things is spoken of therefore as hidden from us by a veil. When our Lord Jesus is said to have passed into the heavens, (Heb. 4. 14.) he is also said to have entered into that within the veil; (Heb. 6. 19, 20.) alluding to that in the temple of Solomon, and before that, in Moses's tabernacle; but expressly signifying, that the holy places into which Christ entered, not those made with hands, which were the figure of the true, but heaven itself, filled with the glorious presence of God, where he appears for us, (Heb. 9. 24.) is also veiled from us. As also the glory of the other state is said to be a glory as yet to be revealed, Rom. 8. 18. And we are told, (Job 26. 9.) the great God holdeth back the face of his throne; and above, v. 6, it is represented as a divine prerogative, that *sheol*, which is there groundlessly rendered *hell*, the vast *hades*, is only naked before him, lies entirely open to his view, and therein the dark and horrid part of it, *destruction*, by which peculiarly must be meant *hell*, is to him without a covering, not more hidden from his eye.

Which shews this to be the divine pleasure; so God will have it be, who could have exposed all to common view, if he had pleased.

But because he orders all things according to the counsel of his will, (Eph. 1. 11.) we must conceive some weighty reason did induce hereto, that whatsoever lies beyond this present state of things should be concealed from our immediate view, and so come *uno nomine*—under one name, to be all called *Hades*. And if the reason of God's conduct, and the course of his dispensation herein, had been equally hidden, as that state itself is, it had been a bold presumption to inquire and pry into it; modesty and reverence should have restrained us. But when we find it holds a manifest agreement with other parts of his counsel, that are sufficiently revealed; and that the excellency of the Divine Wisdom is most conspicuous, and principally to be beheld and admired, in ordering the apt congruities and correspondencies of things with each other, and especially of the ends he proposes to himself, with the methods and ways he takes to effect them; it were very great osceitancy, and an undutiful negligence, not to observe them, when they stand in view, that we may render him his due acknowledgments and honour thereupon.

It is manifest that as God did not create man, at first, in that which he designed to be his final state, but as a probationer, in a state of trial, in order to a further state; so when he

apostatized and fell from God, he was graciously pleased to order for him a new trial, and put him into the hands of his merciful Redeemer, who is intrusted with these keys, and with the power of life and death over him, to be managed and exercised according to the terms plainly set down and declared in his gospel. Wheresoever he is with sufficient evidence revealed and made known, men immediately come under obligation to believe in him; to intrust and commit themselves into the same hands; to rely upon the truth of his word in every thing he reveals, as the ground of their submitting to his authority in every thing he requires. What concerns their present practice, he hath plainly shewn them; so much as it was requisite they should pre-apprehend of future retributions, rewards and punishments, he hath revealed also; not that they should have the knowledge hereof by immediate inspection, but by taking his word. That as their first transgression was founded in infidelity, that they did not believe God, but a lying spirit against him; their first step in their recovery and return to God should be to believe him, and take his word about things they have themselves no immediate sight or knowledge of. This point was by no means to be quitted to the first apostates. As if God's saying to them, "If you transgress, you shall die, or go into *hades*," was no sufficient enforcement of the precept, unless he had given them a distinct view of the states of felicity or misery, which their obedience or disobedience would lead them into. This had been to give away the whole cause to the revolted rebels, and rather to confess error and oversight in the divine government, than impute fault to the impugnors of it!

This being the state of the case, how unsuitable had it been to the design of this second trial to be made with men, to withdraw the vail, and let every one's own eyes be their informers of all the glories of the heavenly state! and hereupon proclaim and preach the gospel to them, that they should all partake herein, that would entirely deny themselves, come off from their own bottom, give themselves up absolutely to the interest, love, service, and communion, of their Redeemer, and of God in him! To fortify them against the assaults and dangers of their earthly pilgrimage by reversing that rule, The just shall live by faith; even that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; (Heb. 10. 38.—*ch.* 11. 1.) or by inverting the method, that in reference to such things we are to walk by faith, not by sight, (2 Cor. 5. 7.) and letting it be, We are to walk by sight, not

by faith! And that lest any should refuse such compliance with their great Lord, whole *hades* should be no longer so, but made naked before them, and the covering of hell and destruction be taken off, and their own eyes behold the infernal horrors, and their own ears hear the shrieks and howlings, of accursed creatures, that having rejected their Redeemer, are rejected by him. We are not here to consider, what course would most certainly effect their salvation, but what most became the wise holy God, to preserve the dignity of his own government, and save them too; otherwise almighty power could save all at once. As therefore we have cause to acknowledge the kindness and compassion of our blessed Lord, who hath these keys, in giving us for the kind, such notices as he hath, of the state of the things in *hades*; so we have equal cause to admire his wisdom, that he gives us not those of another kind, that should more powerfully strike the sense and amaze us more, but instruct us less; that continues it to be *hades* still, a state of things to us unseen as yet. As the case would have been on the other supposition, the most generous, noble part of our religion had been sullied or lost; and the trial of our faith, which is to be found unto praise, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, even upon this account; that they who had not seen him in his mean circumstances on earth, nor did *now* see him, amidst all the glories of his exalted state, yet *believing*, loved him, and rejoiced in him with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Pet. 1. 7, 8. This faith, and all the glorious trials of it, with its admirable achievements and performances, whereby the elders heretofore obtained so good a report, (Heb. 11. 2.) and high renown on earth, and which filled the world with wonder, had all vanished into obscurity and darkness; that is, if they had believed no more, or no greater things, than every man besides had the immediate view of by his own eye-sight.

And yet the trial had been greater, on another account, than the divine wisdom, in conjunction with goodness and compassion, thought fit ordinarily to put sincere Christians upon. For who could with any tolerable patience have endured longer abode on earth, after they should once have had the glory of the heavenly state immediately set in view before their eyes! especially considering, not so much the sufferings, as the impurities of their present state? What, for great reason, was a special vouchsafement to one apostle, was, for as great, to be common to all Christians. How great is the wisdom and mercy

of our blessed Lord in this partial concealment of our future state, and that while so much as is sufficient is revealed, there is yet an *hades* upon it, and it may still be said, It doth not yet appear what we shall be, 1 John 3. 2.

But as these majestic life-breathing words of our great Lord do plainly offer the things that have been mentioned, and many more such that might occur to our thoughts and meditation; so will they be thought on in vain, if they be not followed and answered by suitable dispositions and actions of heart and life. Therefore the further use we are to make of this great subject will be to lay down,

II. Divers correspondent things to be practised and done, which must also suppose dispositions and frames of heart and spirit agreeable thereto.

I. Let us live expecting a period to be ere long put to our life on earth. For remember, there are keys put into a great hand for this very purpose, that holds them not in vain. His power is of equal extent with the law he is to proceed by. And by that it is appointed for all once to die, Heb. 9. 27. Therefore as in the execution he cannot exceed, so he will not come short of this appointment: when that once shall be, it belongs to him to determine. And from the course we may observe him to hold, as it is uncertain to all, it can be very remote to none. How short is the measure of a span! It is an absurd vanity to promise ourselves that which is in the power of another. How wise and prudent a thing to accommodate ourselves composedly to his pleasure, in whose power we are; and to live as men continually expecting to die! There are bands of death out of which, when they once take hold, we cannot free ourselves. But there are also bands of life, not less troublesome or dangerous. It is our great concern to be daily, by degrees, loosening and disentangling ourselves from these bands; and for preventing the necessity of a violent rupture, to be daily disengaging our hearts from an insnaring world, and the too close embraces of an over-indulged body. Tell them resolutely, "I must leave you whensoever my great Lord turns the key for me; and I know not how soon that may be." It is equally unhappy and foolish to be engaged in the pursuit of an impossibility, or in a war with necessity; the former whereof cannot be obtained, the latter cannot but overcome. We owe thus much to ourselves, and to the ease and quiet of our own minds, to be reconciled, at all times, to that which may befall us at any time. How confounding a thing is surprisal by that which we regret and dread! How unaccountable and ignominious

must it be to pretend to be surprised with what we have so great reason always to expect, and whereof we are so oft forewarned! Is it no part of Christian watchfulness to wait for such an hour? Though that waiting all the days of our appointed time, mentioned Job 14. 14, refers to another change than that of death, namely, (as the foregoing and following verses shew,) that of the resurrection, yet it cannot but be equally requisite, upon a no less important reason. And the requests that the Lord would make us to know our end, and the measure of our days that we may know how frail we are, (Ps. 39. 4.) and that he would teach us so to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom, (Ps. 90. 12.) are equally monitory to the same purpose, as the most express precepts; as also the many directions we have to watch and wait for our Lord's appearance and coming are as applicable to this purpose. For whensoever his key opens our passage out of this world, and out of these bodies, *hades* opens too, and he particularly appears to us, in as decisive a judgment of our case, as his universal appearance and judgment will at last give for all. The placid agreement of our minds and spirits with divine determination, both as to the thing, and time, of our departure hence, will prevent the trouble and ungratefulness of being surprised; and our continual expectation of it, will prevent any surprisal at all. Let this then be an agreed resolution with us, to endeavour being in such a posture, as that we may be capable of saying, "Lord, whensoever thou shalt move thy key, and tell me this night, or this hour, I will require thy soul, thou shalt not, O Lord, prevent mine expectation, or ever find me counting upon many years' enjoyment of any thing this world can entertain me with."

In further pursuance hereof,

2. Be not over-intent on designs for this present world; which would suppose you to count upon long abode in it. Let them be always laid with a supposition, you may this way, even by one turn of this key, be prevented from bringing them about; and let them be pursued with indifferency, so as that disappointment even this way may not be a grievance. A thing made up of thought and design, as our mind and spirit naturally is, will be designing one way or other; nor ought we to attempt that violence upon our own natures, as to endeavour the stupifying of the intelligent, designing mind, which the Author of nature hath put into us. Only let us so lay our designs, as that how many soever we form that may be liable to this sort of disappointment, we may still have *one*

greater and more important, so regularly and surely laid, that no turn of this key shall be in any possibility to frustrate, but promote it rather. The design for the kingdom of God to be first sought, with his righteousness, (Matth. 6. 33.) or which is pursued by seeking glory, honour, and immortality, to the actual attainment of eternal life, (Rom. 2. 7.) may, if prescribed methods be duly observed, have this felicity always attending it, to be successfully pursued while we live, and effected when we die.

But this is an unaccountable vanity under the sun, that men too generally form such projects, that they are disappointed both when they do not compass them, and when they do. If they do not, they have lost their labour; if they do, they are not worth it. They dream they are eating, and enjoying the fruit of their labour; but they awake, and their soul is empty. And if at length they think of laying wiser and more valuable designs, the key turns, and not having fixed their resolution, and begun aright, they and all their thoughts, foolish, or more wise, perish together. Because there is a fit season for every fit undertaking, a time and judgment for every purpose, or a critical time, such as is by judgment affixed to every such purpose, (Ecc. 8. 6.) and because also men know not their time, (ch. 9. 12.) therefore their misery is great upon the earth, and as birds caught in a snare, they are snared in an evil time that falleth suddenly upon them. O miserable, miserable mortals! So are your immortal spirits misemployed and lost!

Their most valuable design for another world is seldom thought on in season; their little designs for this world they contrive and prosecute with that confidence, as if they thought the world to be theirs, and themselves their own, and they had no Lord over them. This rude insolence that holy apostle animadverts upon, of such as say, "To-day or to-morrow we will go to such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas they know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is their life? A vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," Jam. 4. 13—15. So much of duty and becoming behaviour is in the mean time forgotten, as to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that." This is to bear themselves as absolute masters of their own lives. How bold an affront to their sovereign Lord! They feel themselves well in health, strength, and vigour, and seem resolved it shall be a trial of skill who hath the power, or to whom the keys belong, till it come to the last irrefragable demonstration, that he changes their coun-

tenance, and sends them away ; (Job 14. 20.) and then they go driven, plucked and torn away from their dwelling-place, rooted out of the land of the living, Ps. 52. 5.

But if any premonitory decays make them doubt the perpetuity of their own abode here, they somewhat ease their minds by the pleasure they take in thinking, when they have filled their own bellies, (Ps. 17. 14.) what they shall leave of their substance to their babes, and to them that shall come after. And “their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations ; and they call their lands after their own names, and their posterity approve their sayings,” (Ps. 49. 11.) think and act as wisely as they. Thus they take upon them, and reckon that they for their time, and theirs after them, shall still dwell in their own. A wise thought ! They are the owners, when another keeps the keys.

Several other things of like import I shall more lightly touch, that may be collected from what hath been already more largely said, and leave to be further enlarged upon in your own thoughts ; and shall dilate more upon some other, as they are either more material, or less thought on by the most.

3. Be not prodigal of your time on earth, which is so little in your power. Because you are not to expect much, make the best use you can of your little. It is so precious a thing that it is to be redeemed : it is therefore too precious to be embezzled and trifled away. The connexion of those two precepts, (Eph. 5. 15, 16.) of walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, and that of redeeming the time, more than intimates, that to squander time is a foolish thing. Of the several sorts of things that we make ourselves, their shape and frame shew their use and end. Are we to make a less judicious estimate of the works of God ? If we therefore contemplate ourselves, and consider what a sort of production man is, can we allow ourselves to think God made him a reasonable creature on purpose to play the fool ? Or can we live as if we thought so, without reproaching our Maker ? But whereas he who hath been the Author to us of such a nature, capable of improving a life's time in this world unto most valuable purposes, hath also been the Author of such a law, requiring us to redeem time ; the reproach will be wholly turned off from him upon ourselves, and our consequent ruin be upon our own guilty heads. And he will find some among ourselves, who by the advantage only of the reasonable nature, common to us and them, that are instructors to us not to waste our days in vanity,

and will be witnesses against us if we so foolishly consume what we cannot command.

Some such have unanswerably reprehended the common folly of those that dread the thought of throwing away their whole life at once, that yet have no regret at throwing it all away by parcels and piece-meal. And have told us, *Neque quicquam reperit dignum, quod cum tempore suo permutaret—A wise man can find nothing of that value, for which to barter away his time.* Sen.

And we are to consider, that as we are reasonable creatures, we are accountable. That we are shut up in these bodies, as in work-houses. That when he that keeps the keys lets us out, we are to “receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether good or evil,” 2 Cor. 5. 10. That it belongs to him that measures our time to censure it too, and the use we have made of it.

4. Let him be at once both great and amiable in our eyes, who hath so absolute power over us, and so gracious propensions towards us; who hath these keys, and who acquired them with so merciful intentions, even upon such terms as could not but signify the greatest compassion and good-will towards such as we.

Reconsider what hath been offered as matter of Meditation, to both these purposes. And now, herenpon, let us endeavour to have a correspondent sense inwrought into our hearts, and to bear ourselves towards him accordingly. The power and efficacy of whole Christianity depend upon this, and do very principally consist in it. What a faint, impotent, languishing thing is our religion, how doth it dwindle into spiritless, dead form, without it! The form of knowledge is nothing else but insipid, dead notion, and our forms of worship only fruitless, unpleasant formality, if we have not a vivid sense in our hearts both of his glorious greatness, and of his excellent loving-kindness. As much as words can signify towards the impressing such a sense into our hearts, we have in these words, uttered from his own mouth; so that he may say, as that memorable type of him once did, You may plainly perceive, “It is my mouth that speaketh to you,” Gen. 45. “I am the First and the Last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.” And hereto he now sets his solemn ratifying seal, *Amen*. Wherewith he leaves us to pause, and collect, that thus it was brought about, that he could add, “And I have the keys of the vast *hades*, the whole *unseen world*, and of death.”

And God forbid that, now, these words should be with us

an empty sound, or a dead letter ! Let us cast in our minds what manner of salutation this should be ! Doth the Son of God thus vouchsafe to bespeak miserable abjects, perishing, lost wretches ? How can we hereupon but bow our heads and worship ? What agitations of affection should we feel within ! How should all our internal powers be moved, and our whole souls made as the chariots of Amminadib ! What can we now be unwilling of, that he would have us be, or do ? And as that, whereof we may be assured he is most willing ?

5. Let us entirely receive him, and absolutely resign ourselves to him, as our Prince and Saviour. Who would not covet to be in special relation to so mighty and so kind a Lord ? And can you think to be related to him upon other terms ? And do you not know that upon these you may, when in his gospel he offers himself, and demands you ? What can that mean but that you are to receive him, and resign yourselves ? The case is now brought to this state, that you must either comply, or rebel. And what ! rebel against him who hath these keys, who is in so high authority over the whole unseen world ! Who is the Head of all principality and power, who is gone into the heavens, the glorious upper *hades*, and is at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers, being made subject to him ! 1 Pet. 3. 22. We little know or can conceive, as yet, the several orders and distinctions of the celestial inhabitants, and their great and illustrious princes and potentates, thrones, dominions, and principalities and powers, that all pay him a dutiful and a joyful subjection and obedience. But do we not know God hath given him a name above every name ? and that in his name, or at it, as it may be read, that is, in acknowledgment of his sovereign power, every knee must bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under earth, and all confess that he is Lord, to the praise and glory of God the Father ? And who art thou, perishing wretch ! that darest dispute his title ? Or that, when all the creation must be subject to him, wilt except thyself ?

And when it cost him so dear, that his vast power might be subservient to a design of grace, and thou must at last be saved by him, or lost for ever, what can tempt thee to stand out against such power, and such grace ?

If thou wert to gratify thy ambition, how glorious a thing is it to be a Christian ! a subject, a devoted homager, to so mighty a Prince ! If to provide against thy necessity and distress, what course can be so sure and successful, as to fly for refuge to so compassionate a Saviour ? And dost thou not know there must

be, to this purpose, an express transaction between him and thee? Wonder he will condescend to it! To capitulate with dust and ashes! To article with his own creature, with whom he may do what he will! But his merciful condescension herein is declared and known. If there shall be a special relation settled between him and thee, he hath told thee in what way it must be, namely, by way of covenant-transaction and agreement, as he puts his people of old in mind his way was with them: "I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine," Ezek. 16. 8. This I insist upon and press, as a thing of the greatest importance imaginable, and the least thought of; nor the strange incongruity animadverted on, that we have the seals of such a covenant among us; but the covenant itself slips through our hands. Our baptism soon after we were born, with some federal words then, is thought enough, as if we were a nation always minors. Whoever therefore thou art, that hearest these words, or readest these lines, know that the great Lord is express towards thee in his gospel proposal—"Wilt thou accept me for thine, and resign thyself as mine?" He now expects and requires thy express answer. Take his gospel as from the cross, or take it as from the throne, or as from both, it is the same gospel, interwoven of grace and authority; the richest grace, and the highest authority, at once inviting and requiring thee to *commit* and *submit* thyself unto him. Take heed lest his key turn before thou hast given thy complying answer, importing at once both thy trust and thy subjection.

Give not over pleading with thyself, with thy wayward stupid heart, till it can say to him, "Lord, I yield; thou hast overcome." Till with tender relentings thou hast thrown thyself at his feet, and told him, "Lord, I am ashamed, I am confounded within myself, that thou shouldst die upon a cross to obtain thy high power, and that thou art now ready to use it for the saving of so vile a miscreant as I: that when thou hast so vast an unknown world, so numberless myriads of excellent creatures in thy obedience, thou shouldst yet think it worth thy while to look after me; and that I should so long have withstood thy kind and gracious overtures and intendments! O forgive my wicked aversion! I now accept and resign."

And now this being sincerely done, with fulness of consent, with deep humility, with yearning bowels, with unfeigned thankfulness, and an inward complacency and gladness of heart;

6. Let your following course in this world be ordered agreeably hereto, in continued dependence and subjection. As

we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we are to walk in him, Col. 2. 6. Take him according to the titles here given him, as Christ, a Person anointed, authorized, qualified to be both Jesus, a Saviour, and so we are to walk, according to our first reception of him, in continual dependence on his saving mercy, and to be a Lord, or, as it is here exprest, with eminency, *the Lord*, so we are to walk in continual subjection to his governing power. Otherwise our receiving him, at first, under these notions, hath nothing in it but mockery and collusion.

But if his obtaining these keys, upon the terms here exprest, as having been dead, and now living, and having overcome death, as it is also Rom. 14. 9, did signify his having them for saving purposes, as it must, since for other purposes he had them sufficiently before; and if we reckon this a reasonable inducement to receive him, and commit and intrust ourselves to him as a Saviour, that he died, and overcame death; (for his grace in yielding to die, had not rendered him a competent object of trust, otherwise than in conjunction with his power in overcoming death, and so gaining into his hands these keys;) then, the same reason still remaining, how constant an encouragement have we to continue accordingly walking in him all our days! How potent an argument should it be to us, to live that life which we live in the flesh, by faith in the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us? (Gal. 2. 20.) that is, inasmuch as having been crucified with him, (which is also there exprest,) we feel ourselves to live nevertheless; yet so as that it is not so much we that live, as Christ that liveth in us; who could not live in us, or be to us a spring of life, if he were not a perpetual spring of life in himself.

And consider, how darest thou live otherwise in this flesh, in this earthly house, whereof he keeps the keys, and can fetch thee out at his pleasure? When he hath warned thee to abide in him, that when he shall appear, thou mayest have confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming, 1 John 2. 28. He will certainly then appear, when he comes to open the door, and dislodge thee from this flesh; (though there be here a further and final reference to another appearance and coming of his;) and if he then find thee severed and disjoined from him, (thy first closure with him not having been sincere, truly unitive and vital,) how terribly will he look! how confoundedly wilt thou look in that hour!

Neither hast thou less reason to live in continual subjection

to him, considering that as he died, and overcame death, that he might have these keys, so he now hath them, and thou art under his governing power. The more thou considerest his right to govern, the less thou wilt dispute it. When he was spoken of as a Child to us born, that he might become a Man of sorrows, and be sorrowful unto the death, and have all the sorrows of death come upon him, he is at the same time said to be the mighty God, and it was declared the government should be upon his shoulders, Isa. 9. 6. As he was the first begotten from the dead, both submitting to death, and conquering it, so he was the Prince of the kings of the earth, (a small part of his kingdom too,) his throne being founded on his cross, his governing power in his sacrifice; that is, the power whereby he so governs, as that he may also save; making these two things, the salving the rights of the Godhead, injured by sin, and delivering of the sinner from an eternal ruin, to agree and consist with one another.

What an endearing obligation is this to obey! That he will be the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him! Inasmuch as, while our obedience cannot merit the least thing from him, yet his vouchsafing to govern us doth most highly merit from us. For he governs by writing his law in the heart, which makes our heart agree with the law; and by implanting divine love in us, which vanquishes enmity and disaffection, and virtually contains in itself our obedience, or keeping his commandments, John 14. 15, 23, and 1 John 5. 3. Therefore this government of his, over us, is naturally necessary to our salvation and blessedness, and is the inchoation and beginning of it; as our perfected love to God, and conformity to his nature and will, do involve and contain in themselves our complete and perfect blessedness, with which a continued enmity, or a rebellious mutinous disposition against God, is naturally inconsistent, and would be to us, and in us, a perpetual, everlasting hell.

There can therefore be no enthralling servitude in such obedience, but the truest liberty, that by which the Son makes us free indeed, John 8. 36. Yea a true sort of royalty: for hereby we come, in the most allowable sense, to live as we will, our will being conformed to the will of God. Whereupon that was no high extravagant rant, but a sober expression, "We are born in a kingdom; to serve God is to reign." *Seneca*.

And we know this to be the will of God, that all should honour the Son, as they honour the Father, John 5. 23. Herewith will the evangelically obedient comport with high com-

placency; accounting him most highly worthy that it should be so. Wherein therefore the Christian law seems strictest and most rigorous in the enjoined observance of our Lord Christ, herein we shall discern an unexceptionable reasonableness, and comply with a complacential approbation. And let us put our own hearts to it, and see that without regret or obmurmuration they can readily consent to the equity of the precept.

It is enjoined us, constructively at least, that because Christ died for us, when we were dead, quite lost in death, we that live, hereupon should settle this with ourselves as a fixed judgment, and upon that intervening judgment yield to the constraint of his love, so as henceforth no more to live to ourselves: God forbid we should henceforth be so profane! We must now for ever have done with that impious, unlawful way of living. What! after this, that we have so fully understood the state of our case, that we should be so assuming as ever again to offer at such a thing as living to ourselves, to make ourselves deities to ourselves; or to live otherwise than unto him who died for us, and rose again! 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. This is high and great, and may seem strict and severe. What! to have the whole stream of all the actions and aims, the strength and vigour of our lives, to be carried in one entire, undivided current unto him, and (as it must be understood, Gal. 2. 19.) to God in him, so as never more to live to ourselves, a divided, separate life apart from him, or wherein we shall not finally and more principally design for him! How high is his claim, but how equal and grateful to a right mind! With what a plenitude of consent (taking this into the account) is every divine command esteemed to be right in all things! So that whatsoever is opposite, is hated as a false way, Ps. 119. 128. And as the precept carries its own visible reason, the keeping of it carries its own reward in itself, Ps. 19. 11. And is it too much for him who bears these keys, and obtained them on such terms, and for such ends, to be thus affected towards him?

We are required, without exception, without limitation or reserve, whatsoever we do, whether in word or work, to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Col. 3. 17.

Inquire we, Do our hearts repine at this law? Do not we? Does not this world owe so much to him? Why are we allowed a place and a time here? Why is not this world a flaming theatre? Is it not fit that all should know under whose government they live; by whose beneficence, under whose

protection, and in whose name they may act so or so, and by whose authority ; either obliging; or not restraining them, requiring, or licensing them to do this or that ? Does this world owe less to him, that bears these keys, than Egypt did to Joseph, when thus the royal word went forth in reference to him, “ I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt ?” How pleasant should it be to our souls, often to remember and think on that name of his which we bear, (Isa. 26. 8. Mal. 3. 16.) and draw in as vital breath, the sweet odours of it, Cant. 1. 3. Ps. 45. 6—11. John 20. 28. How glorious a thing should we count it, because he is the Lord our God, to walk in his name for ever and ever, as all people will walk every one in the name of their God, Mic. 4. 5. And then we shall account it no hard law, whatever we do, to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him, and for him ; blessing God every day, that we are put by him under the mild and merciful government of a Redeemer. Then, we shall rejoicingly avow, as the apostle doth, (1 Cor. 9. 21.) That we are not without law to God, but under law to Christ.

Whereupon, when you find your special relation is thus settled and fixed unto the great Lord both of this present visible world, and of *hades*, or the invisible world, also by your solemn covenant with him, and evidenced by the continued correspondence of your heart and life, your dispositions and actions, thereunto :

7. Do not regret or dread to pass out of the one world into the other at his call, and under his conduct, though through the dark passage of death ; remembering the keys are in so great and so kind a hand ; and that his good pleasure herein is no more to be distrusted, than to be disputed or withstood. Let it be enough to you, that what you cannot see yourself, he sees for you. You have oft desired your ways, your motions, your removals from place to place, might be directed by him in the world. Have you never said, If thou go not with me, carry me not up hence ? How safely and fearlessly may you follow him blindfold or in the dark any whither ; not only from place to place in this world, but from world to world ; how lightsome soever the one, and gloomy and dark the other may seem to you. Darkness and light are to him alike. To him, *hades* is no *hades*, nor is the dark way that leads into it to him an untrodden path. Shrink not at the thoughts of this translation, though it be not by escaping death, but even through the jaws of it.

We commonly excuse our aversion to die, by alleging that nature regrets it. But we do not enough consider, that in such a compounded sort of creature as we are, the word *nature* must be ambiguous. There is in us a sensitive nature that regrets it: but taking the case as it is now stated, can we think it tolerable, that it should be regretted by the reasonable nature? Unto which, if we appeal, can we suppose it so untrue to itself, as not to assert its own superiority? Or to judge it fit that an intelligent, immortal Spirit, capable of so great things in another world, should be content with a long abode here, only to keep a well-figured piece of flesh from putrefying, or give it the satisfaction of tasting meats and drinks that are grateful to it, for a few years? And if for a few, why not for many? And when those many were expired, why not for as many more? And the same reason always remaining, why not for always? The case is thus put, because the common meaning of this allegation, that nature regrets or abhors this dissolution, is not that they are concerned for their souls how it may fare with them in another world, which most men little mind or trouble themselves about; but that they are to have what is grateful to them in this world. And was this the end a reasonable spirit was made for, when, without reason, sense were alike capable of the same sort of gratifications? What law, what equity, what rule of decency, can oblige the soul of a man, capable of the society and enjoyments of angels, to this piece of self-denial, for the sake of his incomparably baser body? Or can make it fit that the nobler and more excellent nature should be eternally subservient to the meaner and more ignoble? Especially, considering that if, according to the case supposed, the two last foregoing directions be complied with, there is a sort of divine nature superadded to the whole human nature, that cannot but prompt the soul ennobled by it, to aspire to suitable, even to the highest, operations and enjoyments, whereof it is capable, and which are not attainable in this present bodily state.

And if there were still a dispute between nature and nature, it is enough that the great Lord of *hades*, and of this present sensible world too, will determine it. In a far lower instance, when the general of an army commands it upon an enterprise, wherein life is to be hazarded, it would be an ill excuse of a cowardly declining, to say, their nature regrets and dreads the adventure. The thing is necessary. Against what is so unavoidable as death, that is an abject mind that reluctates. *Miser est quicumque non vult, Mundo secum moriente, mori—*

He is a miserable man, who, while he sees the world dying around him, is himself unwilling to die. Sen. Tr.

Come, then, let us imbolden ourselves; and, when he brings the key, dare to die. It is to obey and enjoy him, who is our life and our all. Say we cheerfully each of us, Lord Jesus receive my spirit: into thy hands I commit it, who hast redeemed it.

8. Let us quietly submit to divine disposal, when our dear friends and relatives are by death taken away from us. For consider into what hands this affair is put, of ordering every one's decease, and removal out of this into the other world, and who hath these keys. It is such a one, whose right, if we use our thoughts, we shall not allow ourselves to dispute; or to censure his administration. His original right, is that of a Creator and a God. "For all things were created for him, and by him," Col. 1. 16. "And without him was nothing made that was made," John 1. 3. "The first and the last" to all things, Rev. 1. 17.

His supervening right was that of a Redeemer, as hath been already noted from this context, and as such he had it by acquisition, dying to obtain it, and overcoming death! "I am he that liveth and was dead." And then, as he elsewhere declares, by constitution, "All power is given me both in heaven and on earth," Matth. 28. 18. The word (*ἐξουσία*) imports *rightful power*. And who are we, or any relatives of ours, whom all the power of heaven and earth hath no right to touch? What exempt jurisdiction can we pretend ourselves to belong unto?

Or will we adventure to say, not denying his right, He did not use it well in this case? Who is more fitly qualified to judge, than he that hath these keys? And let this matter be yet more thoroughly discussed. What is it that we find fault with in the removal of this or that person, that was near, and delightful to us? Is it that he was to die at all? Or that he died so soon? If we say the former; do we blame the constitution appointing all men once to die, by which this world is made a portal to another, for all men, and whence it was necessary none should stay long in this, but only pass through, into that world wherein every one is to have his everlasting abode? Or is it that, when we think it not unfit this should be the general and common course, there should yet have been a particular dispensation for this friend or relation of mine?

Let the former be supposed the thing we quarrel at, and consider the intolerable consequences of the matters being other-

wise, as the case is with this apostate sinful world. Such as upon second, better-weighed thoughts, we would abhor to admit into our minds, even as the matter of a wish. What! would we wish to mankind a sinning immortality on this earth, before which a wise heathen * professed to prefer one day virtuously spent? Would we wish this world to be the everlasting stage of indignities and affronts to him that made it? Would we wish there should never be a judgment-day, and that all the wise and righteous counsels of heaven should be rauverst and overturned, only to comport with our terrene and sensual inclinations? Is this our dutifulness and loyal affection to our blessed Lord, the Author of our beings, and the God of our lives, whose rights and honours should be infinitely dearer to us than ourselves? Is it our kindness to ourselves, and all others of our kind and order, that are all naturally capable, and many, by gracious vouchsafement, fitly qualified, to enjoy a perfect felicity in another world, that we would have all together confined for ever to this region of darkness, impurity, and misery?

Or if it displease us, that our relatives are not, by some special dispensation, excepted from the common law of mortality, we would surely as much have expected an exemption ourselves; otherwise, our dying away from them, would make the so much regretted separation, as well as theirs from us. And what then, if we were required to draw up our petition, to put it into express words, to turn our wish for ourselves, and all our relatives and peculiar friends, into a formed, solemn prayer, to this effect, that we are content the law stand in force, that all the world should die, with only the exception of some few names; namely, our own, and of our kindred and more inward friends? What ashamed confounded creatures should we be upon the view of our own request! Should we not presently be for quelling and suppressing it, and easily yield to be non-suited, without more ado? What pretence can we have not to think others as apt to make the same request for them and theirs? And if all the rest of the world shall die, would we and our friends dwell here alone, or would we have this world be continued habitable only on this private account, to gratify a family? And if we and our friends be holy, heavenly-minded persons, how unkind were it to wish to ourselves and them, when fit for the society of angels and blessed spirits above, a perpetual abode in this low earthly state! Would we not now,

* Cicero.

upon riper, second thoughts, rather be content that things should rest as they are, and he that hath these keys, use them his own way?

But if by all this we are put quite out of conceit with the desire of a terrestrial immortality, all that the matter finally results into is, that we think such a relative of ours died too soon. We would not have coveted for him an eternity on earth, but only more time. And how much more? Or for what? If we were to set the time, it is likely that when it comes, we should be as averse to a separation, if coexistent, then, as now; and so we revolve into the exploded desire of a terrestrial immortality back again at last. If we were to assign the reason of our desire, that would seem, as in the present case, a plausible one to some, which is mentioned by Plutarch in his consolation to Apollonius for the loss of his son, concerning another such case (as he instances in many) of one Elysius an Italian, whose loss of his son Euthynous was much aggravated by this, that he was a great heir. But what was said to that, there, and what is further to be said to any thing of that kind, I shall reserve to a more proper place.

It is a more weighty allegation, and of more common concernment, when a useful person is gone, and one very capable of becoming very eminently so. And this requires deeper consideration, and sundry things ought to be considered, in order to the quieting their minds, who are apt to behold such darker dispensations, in the course of providence, with amusement, and disturbance of spirit; that is, when they see persons of excellent endowments and external advantages beyond the most, cut off in their prime, while the world is cumbered with drones never likely to do good, and pestered with such as are like to prove plagues to it, and do great hurt and mischief to the age wherein they live: an ancient and not uncommon scruple to pious observers heretofore. "Wherefore," says holy Job, "do the wicked live, become old, yea are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight," *ch.* 21. 7, 8, when his seed was cut off before his eyes. And here let us consider,

(1.) That this world is in apostasy from God: and though he is pleased to use apt means for its recovery, he doth what he thinks fit herein of mere grace and favour, and is under no obligation to do all that he can. His dispensation herein must correspond to, and bear upon it, the impress of other divine perfections, his wisdom, holiness, justice, as well as grace. And for grace itself, whereas all since the apostasy lie together

in a fearful gulf of impurity and misery : and some, made more early sensible hereof than the most, do stretch out a craving hand, and cry for help. If now a merciful hand reached down from heaven take hold of them, and pluck them sooner out : is this disagreeable to the God of all grace, to make some such instances, and vouchsafe them an earlier deliverance ; though they might, being longer delayed, be some way helpful to others, that continue stupid and insensible ?

(2.) When he hath done much, in an age still obstinately unreclaimable, he may be supposed to let one appear, only with a promising aspect, and in just displeasure presently withdraw him, that they may understand they have forfeited such a blessing, to this or that country, as such a one might have proved.

(3.) This may awaken some, the more to prize and improve the encouragements they may have from such as remain, or shall spring up in their stead, who are gone, and to bless God that the weight of his interest, and of the cause of religion, doth not hang and depend upon the slender thread of this man's life. "The God of the spirits of all flesh" can raise up instruments as he pleases ; and will, to serve his own purposes, though not ours.

(4.) He will have it known, that though he uses instruments, he needs them not. It is a piece of divine royalty and magnificence, that when he hath prepared and polished such a utensil, so as to be capable of great service, he can lay it by without loss.

(5.) They that are most qualified to be of greatest use in this world, are thereby also the more capable of blessedness in the other. It is owing to his most munificent bounty, that he may vouchsafe to reward sincere intentions, as highly as great services. He took David's having it in his heart to build him a house, as kindly as Solomon's building him one : and as much magnifies himself in testifying his acceptance of such as he discharges from his service here, at the third hour, as of them whom he engages not in it till the eleventh.

(6.) Of their early piety he makes great present use in this world, testifying his acceptance of their works, generally in his word, and particularly by the reputation he procures to them in the minds and consciences of such as were best able to judge, and even of all that knew them, which may be truly accounted a divine testimony, both in respect of the object, which hath on it a divine impress, and speaks the self-recom-

mending power of true goodness, which is the image of God, and in respect of the subject, shews the dominion God hath over minds, engaging not only good men to behold with complacency such pleasant, blooming goodness, correspondent to their own; but even bad men to approve in these others, what they entertain not in themselves. "The same things are accepted with God, and approved of men," Rom. 14. 18. "Thus being dead, they, as Abel, yet speak," Heb. 11. 4.

(7.) And it is a brighter and more unsullied testimony, which is left in the minds of men, concerning such very hopeful persons as die in their youth. They never were otherwise known, or can be remembered, than as excellent young persons. This is the only idea which remains of them. Had they lived longer, to the usual age of man, the remembrance of what they were in youth would have been in a great degree effaced and worn out by latter things; perhaps blackened, not by what were less commendable, but more ungrateful to the greater part, especially if they lived to come into public stations. Their just zeal and contestations against the wickedness of the age, might disoblige many, and create them enemies, who would make it their business to blast them, and cast upon their name and memory all the reproach they could invent. Whereas the lustre of that virtue and piety which had provoked nobody, appears only with an amiable look, and leaves behind nothing of such a person but a fair, unblemished, alluring and instructive example; which they that observed them might, with less prejudiced minds, compare with the useless, vicious lives of many that they see to have filled up a room in the world, unto extreme old age, either to no purpose, or to very bad. And how vast is the difference in respect of usefulness to the world, between a pious young gentleman dying in his youth, that lived long in a little time, untainted by youthful lusts and vanities, and victorious over them, and an accursed sinner of an hundred years old; (Isa. 65. 20.) one that was an infant of days, and though an hundred years old, yet still a child, that had not filled up his days with any thing of real value or profit to himself or others: so some very judicious expositors understand that text. And as Seneca aptly speaks, *Non est quòd quenquam propter canos aut rugas, putes diu vixisse. Non ille diu vixit, sed diu fuit*—had nothing besides grey hairs, and wrinkles, to make him be thought a long liver; but who might truly be said not to have lived long, but only to have *been* long, in the world. How sweet

and fragrant a memory doth the one, how rotten and stinking a name doth the other, leave behind him to survivors !

Therefore such very valuable young persons as are taken hence in the flower of their age, are not to be thought, upon that account, of usefulness to this world, to have lived in it that shorter time in vain.

They leave behind them that testimony which will turn to account, both for the glory of God's grace, which he hath exemplified in them, and which may be improved to the good of many who shall have seen that a holy life, amidst the temptations that the youthful age is exposed to, is no impracticable thing ; and that an early death is as possible also to themselves.

But besides their no little usefulness in this world, which they leave, we must know,

(S.) That the affairs and concernments of the other world, whither they go, are incomparably greater every way, and much more considerable. And to this most unquestionable maxim must be our last and final resort, in the present case. All the perturbation and discomposure of mind which we suffer upon any such occasion, arises chiefly from our having too high and great thoughts of this world, and too low and diminishing thoughts of the other ; and the evil must be remedied by rectifying our apprehensions in this matter. Because that other world is *hades*, unseen, and not within the verge of our sense, our sensual minds are prone to make of it a very little thing, and even next to nothing, as too many will have it to be quite nothing at all. We are concerned, in duty to our blessed Redeemer and Lord, and for his just honour, to magnify this his prefecture, and render it as great to ourselves as the matter requires, and as our very narrow minds can admit : and should labour to correct it as a great and too common fault, a very gross vulgar error, to conceive of persons leaving this world of ours, as if they hereby became useless ; and, upon the matter, lost out of the creation of God. So is our fancy prepossessed and filled with delusive images, that throng in upon it through our unwary senses, that we imagine this little spot of our earth to be the only place of business, and all the rest of the creation to be mere vacuity, vast empty space, where there is nothing to do, and nothing to be enjoyed. Not that these are formed, positive thoughts, or a settled judgment, with good men, but they are floating imaginations, so continually obtruded upon them, from (what lies next) the objects of sense, that they have more influence to affect the heart, and

infer unsuitable, sudden, and indeliberate emotions of spirit, than the most formed judgment, grounded on things that lie without the sphere of sense, can outweigh.

And hence when a good man dies, elder or younger, the common cry is, among the better sort, (for the other do less concern themselves,) "O what a loss is this! Not to be repaired! not to be borne!" Indeed this is better than the common stupidity, not to consider, not "to take it to heart, when the righteous man perisheth, or is taken away." And the law of our own nature obliges and prompts us to feel and regret the losses which afflict us. But such resentments ought to be followed and qualified by greater thoughts, arising from a superior nature, that ought presently to take place with us, of the nobler employments which God calls such unto, "of whom this world was not worthy," Heb. 11. 38. And how highly his great and all-comprehending interest is to be preferred before our own, or the interest of this or that family, country, or nation, on earth!

And, at once both to enlarge and quiet our minds, on such occasions we should particularly consider,

[1.] The vast amplitude of the heavenly *hades*, in comparison of our minute spot of earth, or of that dark region, wheresoever it is, reserved for the just punishment of delinquents, according to such intimations as the holy Scriptures give us hereof; which being written only for the use of us on earth, cannot be supposed to intend the giving us more distinct accounts of the state of things in the upper world, than were necessary for us in this our present state.

But it is no obscure hint that is given of the spaciousness of the heavenly regions, when purposely to represent the divine immensity, it is said of the unconfined presence of the great God, that even heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain him, 1 Kings 8. 27. 2 Chron. 6. 18. How vast scope is given to our thinking minds, to conceive heavens above heavens, encircling one another, till we have quite tired our faculty, and yet we know not how far short we are of the utmost verge! And when our Lord is said to have ascended far above all heavens, (Eph. 4. 10.) whose arithmetic will suffice to tell how many they are? Whose uranography to describe how far that is?

We need not impose it upon ourselves to judge their rules infallible, who, being of no mean understanding, nor indiligent in their inquiries, have thought it not improbable that there may be fixed stars within view, at that distance from our earth,

that if moveable in as swift motion as that of a bullet shot from a cannon, would be fifty thousand years in passing from one to the other.* But how much remoter that star may be from the utmost verge of the universe, is left altogether unimaginable. I have been told that a very ingenious artist going about, in exact proportions, to describe the orb or vortex to which our sun belongs, on as large a table as could be convenient for him to work upon, was at a loss to find a spot not too big, in proportion, for our earth, and big enough, whereupon to place the point, made very fine, of one foot of his compasses.

If any suspect extravagancy in our modern computations, let him take a view of what is discoursed to this purpose by a writer of most unexceptionable wisdom and sobriety, as well as most eminent sanctity, in his time.†

Now when the Lord of this vast universe beheld upon this little spot intelligent creatures in transgression and misery, that he did so compassionately concern himself for the recovery of such as should, by apt methods, be induced to comply with his merciful design; and appoint his own eternal Son to be their Redeemer, in order wherefo, as he was God with God, he must also become Man, among men, one of themselves; and so, as God-man, for his kindness to some, be constituted universal Lord of all. Shall mere pity towards this world greatness it above the other?

But we are not left without ground to apprehend a more immediate reason for his being, as Redeemer, made Head and Lord of all those creatures that were the original inhabitants of the invisible world. For when it had been said, (Col. 1. 16.) that all things were created by him, not only the visible things

* Computation by the Hon. Francis Roberts, Esq. Philosophical Transactions for the months of March and April, 1694.

† Bolton, in his *Four Last Things*, who speaking of heaven, directs us to guess the immeasurable magnitude of it, (as otherwise——so) by the incredible distance from the earth to the starry firmament; and adds, “If I should here tell you the several computations of astronomers, in this kind, the sums would seem to exceed all possibility of belief.” And he annexes in his margin sundry computations which I shall not here recite; you may find them in the author himself, *p.* 21. And yet besides, as he further adds, the late most learned of them place above the 8th sphere, wherein all those glorious lamps shine so bright, three moving orbs more. Now the empyrean heaven comprehends all these; how incomprehensible, then, must its compass and greatness necessarily be! But he supposes it possible, the adventure of mathematicians may be too audacious and peremptory, &c. and concludes the height and extent of the heavens to be beyond all human investigation.

on earth, but the invisible things in heaven, here is a regression to these latter, who were before, for their greater dignity, generally first mentioned. and now some enumeration given of them, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, and all things again repeated, that these might appear expressly included ; said over again to be created by him, and for him, which was sufficient to express his creative right in them. It is presently subjoined, (v. 17.) “ And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” All owe their stability to him ; namely, the mentioned thrones, dominions, &c. as well as other things. But how ? or upon what terms ? That we might understand his redemptory right was not here to be overlooked, it is shortly after added, “ And having made peace by the blood of his cross, it pleased the Father” (to be repeated out of what went before) “ by him to reconcile all things to himself ;” and this *by him*, iterated ; as if he had said, “ By him shedding his blood on the cross, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven ;” lest the thrones, dominions, &c. mentioned before, should be forgot. And a word is used accommodable enough to the several purposes before expressed, *ἰποκατάλλαξις*, which doth not always suppose enmity, but more generally signifies, upon a sort of commutation, or valuable consideration, to procure or conciliate, or make a thing more firmly one's own, or assure it to himself ; though it is afterwards used in the stricter sense, v. 21.

I have often considered with wonder and pleasure, that whereas God is called by that higher and far more extensive name, *the Father of spirits*, he is also pleased so graciously to vouchsafe, as to be styled *the God of the spirits of all flesh* ; and thereby to signify, that having an order of spirits so meanly lodged that inhabit frail and mortal flesh, though he have a world of spirits to converse with whose dwelling is not with flesh, yet he disdains not a relation to so mean and abject spirits, his offspring also, in our world. And that, because this was the place of offending delinquents that he would recover, the Redeemer should sort himself with them, and, as they were partakers of flesh and blood, himself likewise take part of the same ! This was great and Godlike, and speaks the largeness and amplitude of an all-comprehending mind, common to Father and Son, and capable of so applying itself to the greatest things, as not to neglect the least : and therefore so much the more magnifies God and our Redeemer, by how much the less considerable we and our world are. But that hence we should so over-magnify this world, as if nothing were considerable

that lies without its compass, is most perversely to misconstrue the most amazing condescension.

The Spirit of God, by holy David, teaches us to reason the quite contrary way : and from the consideration he had of the vastness and splendour of the upper world, of the heavens, the moon and stars, &c. not to magnify, but diminish our world of mankind, and say, What is man !

And let us further consider,

[2.] The inexpressible numerousness of the other world's inhabitants, with the excellencies wherein they shine, and the orders they are ranked into, and how unlikely it is, that holy souls that go thither should want employment. Great concourse and multitudes of people make places of business in this world, and must much more do so, where creatures of the most spiritual and active natures must be supposed to have their residence. Scripture speaks of *myriads*, which we read, *an innumerable company*, of angels, besides all the spirits of just men ; (Heb. 12.) who are sometimes said to be more than *any one*—*ἐῖς*, which we causelessly render *man*, could number, Rev. 7. And when we are told of many heavens, above all which our Lord Jesus is said to have ascended, are all those heavens only empty solitudes ? Uninhabited glorious deserts ? When we find how full of vitality this base earth of ours is ; how replenished with living creatures, not only on the surface, but within it, how unreasonable is it to suppose the nobler parts of the universe to be less peopled with inhabitants, of proportionable spirituality, activity, liveliness, and vigour, to the several regions, which, the remoter they are from dull earth, must be supposed still the finer, and apt to afford fit and suitable habitations to such creatures ? Whether we suppose pure unclothed spirits to be the natives in all those heavens, all comprehended under the one name of *angels*, or whether, as some think of all created spirits, that they have all vital union with some or other vehicles, ethereal or celestial, more or less fine and pure, as the region is to which they belong, having gradually associated unto them the spirits of holy men gone from us, which are said to be *ἱσάγγελοι*—*angels' fellows*, (Luke 20. 36.) it is indifferent to our purpose.

Let us only consider them all as intelligent, spiritual beings, full of holy light, life, active power, and love to their common Lord and one another. And can we imagine their state to be a state of torpid silence, idleness, and inactivity, or that they have not much higher and nobler work to do *there*, than

they can have in such a world as this, or in such bodies as *here* they lug to and fro?

And the Scriptures are not altogether silent, concerning the distinct orders of those glorious creatures that inhabit all the heavens which this upper *hades* must be understood to contain; though it has not provided to gratify any one's curiosity, so far as to give us particular accounts of their differences and distinctions. And though we are not warranted to believe such conjectures concerning them as we find in the supposititious Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy*, or much less the idler dreams of Valentinus and the Gnosticks about their *Æones*, with divers more such fictions; yet we are not to neglect what God hath expressly told us, namely, That giving us some account of the creation in the *hades*, or the invisible part of it, there are thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, angels, (and elsewhere archangels,) authorities: (Col. 1. 16. with 1 Pet. 3. 21.) which being terms that import order and government, can scarce allow us not to conceive, that of all those numberless multitudes of glorious creatures that replenish and people those spacious regions of light and bliss, there are none who belong not to some or other of those principalities and dominions.

Whence therefore, nothing is more obvious than to conceive, that whosoever is adjoined to them, ascending out of our world, presently hath his station assigned him, is made to know his post, and how he is to be employed, in the service and adoration of the sovereign Lord of all, and in paying the most regular homage to the throne of God and the Lamb: it being still to be remembered, that God is not worshipped there, or here, as an *ἐνδεής*, or as though he needed any thing, since he gives to all breath and being, and all things, (Acts 17.) but that the felicity of his most excellent creatures doth in great part consist in acting perpetually according to the dictate of a just and right mind; and that therefore they take highest pleasure in prostration, in casting down their crowns, in shrinking even into nothing, before the original, eternal, subsistent Being, that he may be owned as the All in all, because they follow, herein, a most satisfied judgment, and express it when they say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created, Rev. 4. 11. And worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive riches, and wisdom, and strength," &c. *ch.* 5. 12.

And they that rest not night or day from such high and glo-

rious employments, have they nothing to do? Or will we say or think, because we see not how the heavenly potentates lead on their bright legions, to present themselves before the throne, to tender their obeisance, or receive commands and dispatches to this or that far remote dynasty; or suppose to such and such a mighty star, (whereof there are so numberless myriads; and why should we suppose them not replenished with glorious inhabitants?) whither they fly as quick as thought, with joyful speed, under the all-seeing Eye, glad to execute wise and just commands upon all occasions. But alas! in all this we can but darken counsel with words without knowledge. We cannot pretend to knowledge in these things; yet if from Scripture intimations, and the concurrent reason of things, we only make suppositions of what may be, not conclusions of what is; let our thoughts ascend as much higher as they can. I see not why they should fall lower than all this. And because we cannot be positive, will we therefore say or think there can be no such thing, or nothing but dull inactivity, in those regions? Because that other world is *hades*, and we see nothing, shall we make little or next to nothing of it? We should think it very absurd reasoning, (if we should use it, in reference to such mean trifles in comparison, and say,) There is no such thing as pomp and state, no such thing as action or business, in the court of Spain or France, of Persia or Japan, because no sound from thence strikes our ear, or the beams of majesty there dazzle not our eye.

I should indeed think it very unreasonable to make mere magnitude, or vast extent of space, filled up with nothing but void air, ether, or other fine matter, (call it by what name you will,) alone, or by itself, a very considerable note of excellency of the other invisible world, above this visible world of ours. But I reckon it much more unreasonable and unenforced, (to say no more,) by any principles, either of philosophy or religion, finding this world of ours, a baser part of the creation, so full of life, and of living inhabitants, of one degree or another; to suppose the nobler parts of the universe, still ascending upwards, generally unpeopled, and desert, when it is so conceivable in itself, and so aptly tending to magnify our Creator and Redeemer, that all the upper regions be fully inhabited with intelligent creatures; whether mere spirits, unclothed with any thing material, or united with some or other matter, we need not determine.

And whereas Scripture plainly intimates, that the apostate revolted spirits that fell from God, and kept not their first sta-

tions, were vastly numerous; we have hence scope enough for our thoughts to conceive, that so spacious regions being replenished with intelligent creatures, always innocent and happy, the delinquents, compared with them, may be as despicable for their paucity, as they are detestable for their apostasy: and that the horrid *hades*, wherein they are reserved to the blackness of darkness for ever, may be no more in proportion, nay, inexpressibly less, than some little rocky island, appointed as a place of punishment for criminals, in comparison of a flourishing, vast empire, fully peopled with industrious, rich, sober-minded, and happy inhabitants.

We might further consider,

[3.] The high perfection they presently attain to, who are removed, though in their younger years, out of this, into that other world.

The spirits of just men are there said to be made perfect. Waving the Olympick metaphor, which is, at most, but the thing signifying; that which is signified, cannot be less than the concurrence of natural and moral perfection: the perfecting of all our faculties, mind, will, and active power, and of all holy and gracious excellencies, knowledge, wisdom, love, holiness. The apostle makes the difference be, as that of a child, and that of a man, 1 Cor. 13. And would any one that hath a child he delights in, wish him to be a child always, and only capable of childish things? Or is it a reasonable imagination, that by how much we are more capable of action, we shall be the more useless, and have the less to do?

We may further lastly add, that which is not the least considerable,

[4.] That all the active services and usefulness we are capable of in this world, are but transitory, and lie within the compass of this temporary state of things, which must have an end. Whereas the business of the other world, belongs to our final and eternal state, which shall never be at an end. The most extraordinary qualifications for service on earth, must hereafter; if not by the cessation of the active powers and principles themselves, as tongues, prophecies, and such knowledge as is uncommon, and by peculiar vouchsafement afforded but to a few, for the help of many: these endowments, designed for the propagation of the Christian faith, and for the stopping the mouths of gainsayers, must in the use and exercise, at least, by the cessation of the objects and occasions, fail, and cease, and vanish away, 1 Cor. 13. 8. The like may be said of courage and fortitude to contend against prevailing wicked-

ness ; skill, ability, with external advantages, to promote the impugned interest of Christ, and Christian religion ; of all these there will be no further use in that other world. They are all to be considered as means to the end. But how absurd were it to reckon the means of greater importance than the end itself ? The whole present constitution of Christ's kingdom on earth, is but preparatory and introductive to the celestial kingdom. And how absurd were it to prefer this temporary kingdom to the eternal one, and present serviceableness to this, to perpetual service in the other ?

It is true, that service to God and our Redeemer in this present state, is necessary in its own kind, highly acceptable to God, and justly much valued by good men. And we ought ourselves willingly to submit to serve God in a meaner capacity in this world, while it is his pleasure we shall do so ; especially if God should have given any signification of his mind, concerning our abode in the flesh some longer time, as it is likely he had done to the apostle Paul, (Phil. 1. 24.) because he says, he was confident, and did know, that so it should be, (v. 25.) we should be abundantly satisfied with it, as he was. But to suppose an abode here to be simply and universally more eligible, is very groundless and unreasonable ; and were a like case, as if a person of very extraordinary abilities and accomplishments, because he was useful in some obscure country village, is to be looked upon as lost, because his prince, being informed of his great worth, calls him up to his court, and finding him every way fit, employs him in the greatest affairs of state !

To sum up this matter, whereas the means are always according to usual estimate, wont to derive their value from their end ; time, from eternity ; this judgment of the case, that usefulness in this present state is of greater consequence and more important than the affairs of the other world, breaks all measures, overturns the whole frame, and inverts the order of things ; makes the means more valuable than the end ; time more considerable than eternity ; and the concerns of a state that will soon be over, greater than those of our fixed, permanent, everlasting state, that will never be over.

If we would allow ourselves the liberty of reasoning, according to the measure and compass of our narrow minds, biassed and contracted by private interest and inclination, we should have the like plausible things to think, concerning such of ours as die in infancy, and that when they have but newly looked into this world, are presently again caught out of it ;

that if they had lived, what might they have come to? How pleasant and diverting might their childhood have been? How hopeful their youth? How useful their riper age? But these are commonly thoughts little wiser than theirs, and proceed from a general infidelity, or misbelief, that whatsoever is not within the compass of this little, sorry world, is all emptiness and nullity! Or if such be pious and more considering, it is too plain they do not, however, consider enough, how great a part it is of divine magnificence, to take a reasonable immortal spirit from animating a piece of well-figured clay, and presently adjoin it to the general assembly above! How glorious a change is made upon their child in a moment! How much greater a thing it is to be adoring God above, in the society of angels, than to be dandled on their knee, or enjoy the best provisions they can make for them on earth! That they have a part to act upon an eternal stage! and though they are but lately come into being, are never to go out of being more, but to be everlasting monuments and instruments of the glory of their great Creator and Lord!

Nor, perhaps, is it considered so deeply as it ought, that it hath seemed meet to the supreme Wisdom, upon a most important reason, in the case of lengthening or shortening the lives of men, not ordinarily, or otherwise than upon a great occasion, to interrupt the tendencies of natural causes. But let nature run its course: for otherwise, very frequent innovations upon nature would make miracles cheap and common, and consequently useless to their proper, great ends, which may be of greater significancy in the course of God's government over the world, than some addition to this or that life can be worth. And therefore this consideration should repress our wonderment, why God doth not, when he so easily can, by one touch upon this or that second cause, prevent or ease the grievous pains which they often suffer that love him, and whom he loves. He reckons it fitter, and they will in due time reckon so too themselves, when the wise methods of his government come to be unfolded and understood, that we should any of us bear what is ungrateful to us, in point of pain, loss of friends, or other displeasing events of providence, than that he should make frequent and less necessary breaches upon the common order and course of government which he hath established over a delinquent, sinful world.

Whereupon it is a great piece of wisdom and dutifulness towards our great Lord, not to pray absolutely, peremptorily, or otherwise than with great submission and deference to his wise

and holy pleasure, for our own or our friends' lives, ease, outward prosperity, or any external or temporary good thing. For things that concern our spiritual and eternal welfare, his good and acceptable will is more expressly declared, and made known already and before-hand.

But as to the particular case of the usefulness of any friend or relative of ours in this or the other state, the matter must be finally left to the arbitrement and disposal of him who hath the keys of *hades* and of death. And when by his turn of them he hath decided the matter, we then know what his mind and judgment are, which it is no more fit for us to censure, than possible to disannul. Whatever great purposes we might think one cut off in the flower of his age capable of serving in this world, we may be sure he judged him capable of serving greater in the other.

And now by this time I believe you will expect to have somewhat a more particular account of this excellent young gentleman, whose early decease hath occasioned my discoursing so largely on this subject: not more largely than the importance, but much less accurately than the dignity, of it did challenge.

He was the eldest son of Sir Charles Hoghton, of Hoghton Tower, in the county of Lancaster, Baronet, and of the Lady Mary, daughter of the late Lord Viscount Masserene, his very pious consort: a family of eminent note in that northern part of the kingdom, for its antiquity, opulency, and interest in the country where it is seated; and which has intermarried with some or other of the nobility, one generation after another: but has been most of all considerable and illustrious, as having been itself, long, the immemorial, known seat of religion, sobriety, and good order, from father to son; giving example, countenance, and patronage, to these praise-worthy things to the country round about: and wherein, hitherto, through the singular favour and blessing of Heaven, there has not been that visible degeneracy that might be so plainly observed, and sadly deplored, in divers great families. As if it were an exemption from what was so anciently remarked by the Poet, *Ætas parentum, pejor avis*—*The age of our fathers is worse than that of their ancestors*. But, on the contrary, such as have succeeded have, by a laudable ambition and emulation, as it were, striven to outshine such as have gone before them, in piety and virtue.

In this bright and lucid tract and line, was this most hopeful young gentleman, now arrived to the age wherein we use

to write man, beginning to stand up in view, and to draw the eyes and raise the hopes of observers and well-wishers, as not likely to come short of any of his worthy ancestors and predecessors. But Heaven had its eye upon him too, and both made and judged him meet for an earlier translation, to a more eminent station there.

He was from his childhood observed to be above the common rate, docile, of quick apprehension, solid judgment, and retentive memory, and, betimes, a lover of books and learning.

For religion, his knowledge of the principles of it continually grew, as his capacity did more and more admit, under the eye and endeavours of his parents, and such other instructors as they took care he should never want. But his savour and relish thereof, and the impression made thereby upon his soul, was so deep, and so early, as to be apparently owing to a higher cause, the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, and a singular blessing thereby, upon his pious education. And in this way, it could not be easy, to such as were his most diligent and constant observers, to conclude or conjecture when God first began to deal with his spirit.

Above ten years ago, I had opportunity, for a few days, to have some conversation with him in his father's house : and, as I could then perceive, his spirit was much tinctured with religion ; so I received information, that for a considerable time before, there constantly appeared in him such *specimina* of serious piety, as were very comfortable to his parents, and might be instructive to others that took notice of them.

In the course of divers following years, he greatly improved, under domestic and private instruction, both in grammar-learning and academical studies, for which he wanted not apt helps. When there was great reason to hope he was so well established in religion and virtue as neither to be shocked by the importunate temptations of a sceptical vicious age in the general, nor betrayed by the facility of his own youthful age, his prudent, worthy father, judged it requisite, and not unsafe, to adventure him into a place of more hazard, but greater advantage for his accomplishment in that sort of culture and polishing that might, in due time, render him both in reality, and with better reputation, serviceable in a public station ; that is, where he might gain such knowledge of the world, of men, and of the laws of his country, as was proper for his rank, and one that was to make such a figure in the nation, as it was to be hoped he might ; and upon that account, not yet a year ago,

brought him up to London, entered him in the Temple, took for him convenient lodgings there, and left him settled, unto mutual satisfaction.

He was little diverted by the noise, novelties, or the gaieties of the town, but soon betook himself to a course of close study; discontinued not his converse with God, and thereby learned, and was enabled, to converse with men warily and with caution, so as he might be continually improving and gaining good, without doing or receiving hurt.

The substance of the following account I received from a pious intelligent young man, who several years attended him before his coming to town, and afterwards, to the finishing of his course.

“Mr. Hoghton’s early seriousness increased with his years. His deportment was grave, composed, without any appearance of pride, which he carefully avoided. His diligence in study was unusual, and his proficiency very great; neither was this less an effect of his conscientiousness in the improvement of his time, than of his desire after knowledge.

“As to his demeanour and performance of duties towards his several relations, his self-denial, his sedateness of mind, his fear of sin, his tenderness of conscience, love of the best things, and unconcernedness about things of an inferior nature, so far as hath fallen under my observation, in near six years’ time, I believe few, if any, of his years, did exceed him.

“In his sickness he was very patient, submissively undergoing those heavy strokes it pleased God to lay upon him.

“Upon his apprehension of death, he seemed very little discouraged, but quietly resigned himself into the hands of the all-wise Disposer of all things.

“Some time before his sickness, and in the time of it, he said, afflictions were very proper for God’s children; and those that were never afflicted, had reason to question the truth of their grace, and God’s love to them; quoting that Scripture, ‘If ye are without chastening, then are ye bastards, and not sons.’

“He often repeated those words, in the beginning of his illness: ‘It is a hard thing to make our calling and our election sure.’—‘I desire to glorify God.’

“When he understood, from some expressions of his physician, how dangerous his distemper was, he said, he knew very well the meaning of his physician’s words; but that however it proved, he hoped he was safe.

“He was so strict in the observation of the Lord’s-day, that if he happened to lie longer than ordinary in the morning, he would continue the later in duties in the evening; saying, we ought not to make that day shorter than other days.

“Though he was very intent on his studies, yet on Saturdays he always broke them off at noon, and spent the afternoon in reading divinity, and preparing himself for the Lord’s-day.

“He was always constant in his secret duties, and suffered nothing to hinder him from the performing of them.

“Before he expired, he spoke with great assurance of his future happiness, and hopes of meeting his relations in glory.” Thus far goes that account.

His sickness was short. When, hearing of it, I went to visit him, I was met in an anti-chamber, by his ingenious, dear brother, to whom it is no reproach to be second to him, and who, it is to be hoped, will be at least truly so; making him, though a fair example, yet not a standard; who has for divers years been most intimately conjunct and conversant with him, known his way, his spirit, his manner of life, his purity; and may be led on and excited thereby, wherein he hath observed him to excel others, to endeavour not to come short, but, if it were possible, to excel him; remembering, he is to be the next solace of his parents, hope of his family, and resort of his country, if God shall vouchsafe to continue him, in succeeding time.

From him, I had little expectation of finding his sick brother in a conversable condition, the malignity of his fever having before seized his head, and very much disordered his intellects; but going in, I was much surprised to find it so far otherwise. He presently knew me, and his understanding, that served him for little else, failed him not in the concerns of religion and of his soul. There was not an improper or misplaced word, though the case could not admit of interchanging many, that came from him. Concerning the substance of the gospel of Christ, as it could be shortly summed up to him, he said, he had no doubt. And his transactions with Christ himself, accepting him, resigning and intrusting himself absolutely and entirely to him, and God in him, were so explicit, distinct, and clear, as could leave no place of doubt concerning him. He professed his concurrence to such requests as were put up to God concerning him, and the next morning slept quietly in the Lord.

Nor now will it be unfit, to shut up the discourse with some

few suitable reflections upon this double subject : the *text*, and *this providence*, taken together.

1. How happy is it, when this power of our great Redeemer and Lord, mentioned in the text, and a preparation, with cheerful willingness, dutifully to comport with it, concur and meet together, as they have done in this instance ! Our Lord hath shewn his power: he *asserted* it, in the text : in this instance he *used* it ; giving an open testimony that he takes it to belong to him, to make such translations from one world to another, whensoever he judges it a fit season ; nor is solicitous whether men acknowledge his right so to do, or no, or what censures they will pass upon what he hath done. He does his own work, and leaves men to their own talk, or mutterings, or wonder, or amusement at it, as they will. So it becomes sovereign power to do, established upon the most unquestionable foundations, exercised according to the wisest and most righteous measures. He hath used his own right, and satisfied himself in the use of it. He thought not himself concerned to advise with any of us about it, who, as his counsellor, should instruct him, Isa. 40. 13. Rom. 11. 34. He owes so much to himself, to act as accountable to no one, nor liable to any one's control.

Here is most rightful, resistless power, justly and kindly used on the one hand ; and, on the other, how placid, how calm, a resignation ! Here was no striving, no crying, no reluctant motion, no querulous, repining voice : nothing but peaceful, filial submission ; a willingness to obey the summons given.

This was a happy accord, the willingness of this departing soul, proceeding not from stupidity, but trust in him who kept these keys ; and such preparedness for removal, as the gospel required. O happy souls ! that, finding the key is turning, and opening the door for them, are willing to go forth upon such terms, as " knowing whom they have believed," &c. And that neither " principalities nor powers, life nor death, &c. can ever separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord." Life, they find ; hath not separated, whereof was the greater danger ; and death is so far from making this separation, that it shall complete their union with the blessed God in Christ, and lay them enfolded in the everlasting embraces of divine love ! Happy they, that can hereupon welcome death, and say, " Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace !" that before only desired leave to die, and have now obtained it ; that are, with certainty of the issue, at the point of becoming complete victors over the last enemy, and are ready to enter upon their triumph, and to

take up their *ἐπινίκιον*, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." Happy soul! here will be a speedy end of all thy griefs and sorrows; they will be presently swallowed up in an absolute plenitude and fulness of joy. There is already an end put to thy tormenting cares and fears; for what object can remain to thee of a rational fear, when once, upon grounds such as shake not under thee, thou art reconciled to death? This is the most glorious sort of victory, namely, by *reconciliation*. For so, thou hast conquered, not the enemy only, but the enmity itself, by which he was so. Death is become thy friend, and so no longer to be feared; nor is there any thing else, from whence thou art to fear hurt; for death was thy last enemy, even this bodily death. The whole region beyond it is, to one in thy case, clear and serene, when to others is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. There are no terrible *ὑπερβάλλοντα*, no formidable consequences, no reserves of misery, no treasures of wrath to be feared by thee. To one in thy condition, may that, without hesitation, be applied, *Nihil metuit, qui optat mori; He fears nothing, who desires to die*. Sen. Tr. What is the product of some men's infidelity, is the genuine product of their faith. From so contrary causes may proceed the same effect. The effect, a willingness to die, or a bold adventure upon death, is the same, but only in respect of the general kind; with great differences in the special kind, according to the difference and contrariety of the causes, whereof they discernibly taste and savour. With *infidels*, it is a negative, dead, stupid, partial willingness, or but a non-aversion; and in a lower, and much diminished degree: or if some present, intolerable, disgraceful calamity urge them, a rash, obstinate, presumptuous rushing upon death; because they *do not consider consequences*. With *believers*, such as in reference to the concerns of the other world do walk by faith; while as yet they cannot walk by sight, in reference to those things, (2 Cor. 5. 7.) it is a positive, vital, courage, (v. 8.) *Θαρεῖν μὲν, We are confident*; and a preponderating inclination of will, "We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord;" because, as is manifest, they *do consider consequences*, and how blessed a state will certainly ensue! How vast are these special differences, of the same thing in the general, willingness to die!

O the transports of joy that do now most rationally result

from this state of the case, when there is nothing left lying between the dislodging soul, and the glorious unseen world, but only the dark passage of death, and that so little formidable, considering who hath the keys of the one, and the other ! How reasonable is it, upon the account of somewhat common herein, to the Redeemer and the redeemed, although every thing be not, to take up the following words, that so plainly belong to this very case : “ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth ; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in *sheol*, or *hades* ; thou wilt not forsake or abandon it in that wide world, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life ; the path that leads unto that presence of thine, where is fulness of joy, and to those pleasures which are at thy right hand ; or in thy power, and which are for evermore ; and shall never admit either of end, or diminution,” Ps. 16. 9—11.

Now, what do we mean to let our souls hang in doubt ? Why do we not drive things for them to an issue ? Put them into those same safe hands that hold these keys ; absolutely resign, devote, intrust, and subject them to him ; get them bound up in the bundle of life ; so adjoin and unite them to him, (not doubting but as we give them up, he will, and doth, in that instant, take hold of them, and receive them into union with himself,) as that we may assure our hearts, that because he lives, we shall live also, John 14. 19. Thus the ground of our hope becomes sure, and of that joy which springs from such a hope, Rom. 5. 2. Our life, we may now say, is hid with Christ in God ; even though we are, in ourselves, dead, or dying creatures, Col. 3. 3. Yea, Christ is our Life ; and when he “ who is our Life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory,” v. 4. He hath assured us, that because “ he is the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in him, though he were dead, shall yet live :” and that “ whosoever lives, and believes in him,” hath thereby a life already begun in him, in respect whereof “ he shall never die,” John 11. 25, 26. What now can be surer than this ? So far we are at a certainty, upon the included supposition, that is, that we believe in him.

And what now remains to be ascertained ? What ? Only our own intervening death. We must, it is true, be absent from these bodies, or we cannot, as we would, be present with the Lord. And is that all ? Can any thing now be more certain than that ? O happy state of our case ! How should

our hearts spring and leap for joy, that our affairs are brought into this posture ; that in order to our perfect blessedness, nothing is farther wanting but to die ; and that the certainty of death completes our assurance of it ! What should now hinder our breaking forth into the most joyful thanksgivings, that it is so little doubtful we shall die ; that we are in no danger of a terrestrial immortality ; and that the only thing that it remained we should be assured of, is so very sure : that we are sure it is not in the power of all this world to keep us always in it ; that the most spiteful enemy we have in all the world, cannot do us that spite to keep us from dying ! How gloriously may good men triumph over the impotent malice of their most mischievous enemies ! namely, that the greatest mischief, even in their own account, that it can ever be in their power to do them, is to put it out of their own power ever to hurt them more ; for they now go quite out of their reach. They can (being permitted) kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, Luke 12. 4. What a remarkable, significant, *after that*, is this ! what a defiance doth it import of the utmost effort of human power and spite, that here it terminates ! It is now come to its *ne plus ultra* !

And so we are to look upon all our other trials and afflictions, that in any providential way may befall us ; we may be sick, in pain, in poverty, in disgrace, but we shall not be always in mortal flesh, which is the *subtratum* and the root of all the rest. Can we be upon better terms, having but two things to be concerned about, as necessary to our complete felicity, union with Christ, and disunion from these bodies ? God is graciously ready to assist us in reference to the former, though therein he requires our care, subserviently hereto : in reference to the latter, he will take care himself, in his own fit season, without any care or concern of ours in the matter ; and only expects us to wait with patience, till that fit season come. And come it will, perhaps, sooner than we may think. He doth not always go by our measures in judging of the fit season, as this present instance shews.

2. From the text, taken in conjunction with this act of providence, we may observe the great advantage of a pious education. Though the best means of such education do not always prove effectual ; yet this being much the more probable course, upon which to expect God's blessing, than the parents' profane negligence of the souls of their children, such an example, wherein God by his blessing testified his approbation of

parental care and diligence, should greatly quicken the endeavours of parents herein ; as hoping, hereby, to serve his great and merciful and most principal design, who hath these keys, and whose office it is, to transmit souls, when they are prepared and ready, out of this world of ours, into that blessed, glorious world above. And though they may think themselves disappointed, when, through God's blessing upon their endeavours, they have educated one to such a pitch as this young gentleman was raised and brought up unto, with a prospect and hope of his having a long course of service to run through here on the earth, yet let parents hence learn to correct what was amiss, or what was wrong, not what was right and well. Their action and endeavour were, what ought to be ; their error or mistake, if there were any, was more principally, as the case is here stated, about their design and end. Not that they designed such an end, for that also was very justifiable and laudable : but if they designed it as their more principal end, which the case, as it is now put, supposes ; that is, that they take themselves to be disappointed : for no man complains of it as a disappointment, if he miss of an inferior end, and attain that which is far nobler and more excellent. Our great aim should be, the subserving the design of the great Lord of heaven and earth, which ultimately and supremely refers to the heavenly, eternal state of things ; and that souls may be ripened and fitted for that, and to do service here on earth, subordinately to the other, and while they are in preparation for the heavenly state. His principal design must be for that which is principal : and concerning that, as was formerly argued, there can be no more doubt, than whether heaven or earth, eternity or time, a fixed, permanent, everlasting, or a temporary, transitory, vanishing state of things, be more valuable, and to be preferred.

Our Redeemer hath acquired, and doth use these keys, for the translating of souls, as soon as he shall judge them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. 1. 12. Some he makes meet much earlier than others. His design, so far as it is known, or may be supposed, should give measure to ours ; therefore ours must be to make them meet, as early as is possible, for his purposes, as knowing it cannot be too early : they were devoted to him early, and pursuantly hereto, no time should be lost from the great business of fitting and forming them for him ; inasmuch also, as the same qualifications, namely, that are of higher excellency and value, do equally prepare them to serve and glorify him, in either world, as he shall choose to dispose of them. And it unquestionably belongs to

him to make his choice, as it does to us to endeavour to make them ready. If any of us, having purposely educated a son for the service of his prince, and present him accordingly, we should submit it to his pleasure, to choose the station wherein he shall serve him; especially if he be a prince of celebrated wisdom and goodness. And should we complain, that he is put early into a station of much higher dignity than we thought of?

How little is this matter considered, by most, that go under the name of *Christian* parents; that are, more generally, very solicitous to have, as they call it, their children *christened*; but never have it in their thoughts to have them educated in the knowledge of Christ, or trained up for Christ. As if their baptism were intended for a mockery, their education, in the whole course of it, hath no such reference. It is how they may with better reputation bear up, not the name of Christ, but their own. Their aim looks no higher than that they may inherit their lands, maintain the honour of their families; appear, if such be their own rank, well-accomplished gentlemen: and of some of those little things that are thought requisite hereto, we may say, as our Saviour did in another case, These things ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other, the much greater things, undone.

What should hinder, but that learning to sing, or dance, or fence, or to step gracefully, might consist with learning to know God in Christ, in which knowledge stands eternal life! Whatsoever hath real excellency, or hath any thing in it of true ornament, will no way disagree with the most serious Christianity. And how lovely is the conjunction of the well-accomplished gentleman, and the serious Christian! Only sever inconsistencies, as how fashionably to curse, and swear, and damn, and debauch, which are thought to belong to good breeding in our age.

Let not religion, reason, shame, and common sense, be so totally abandoned all at once, as that the same persons shall take care to have their children baptized into Christ's name, and be taught to renounce, by their deeds, that great name, almost as soon as they can pronounce the word.

Where so direct a course is not taken to make those of the succeeding age ignominiously bad, yet how little is done towards the making of them truly and usefully good? Much care is taken to shape and adorn the outside of the man, how little to form and furnish their minds! Here, if they can be brought to make or judge of a verse, or a jest, or a piece of wit, it is a great attainment. Or if, at home, they can have them taught

so much law as shall hereafter enable them to squeeze their tenants, and quarrel with their neighbours, or so much of behaviour as shall qualify them to keep gentlemen company ; or if, as our pious poet phrased it, they ship them over, the thing is done : then they shall be able to talk a little of the fashions of this or that foreign country, and make much the better figure in their own.

But if, with all other parts of useful knowledge and good breeding that are thought requisite for this world, they be also well instructed touching their Redeemer's dominion over it, and the other world also ; and concerning the nature, constitution, design, laws, and privileges of his kingdom ; if it be seriously endeavoured to make them apt and prepared instruments of serving his interest here, as long as he shall please to continue them in any station on earth ; and that they may also be made meet to be partakers, at length, of a far more excellent inheritance than an earthly parent could entitle them to, that of the saints in light ; (Col. 1. 12.) if they can be fitted to stand in the presence of the Eternal King, and to keep company with angels and blessed spirits above—how worthy and noble a design is this ! And with what satisfaction is it to be reflected on, if the parents have ground to apprehend they are herein neither unaccepted nor disappointed !

3. It is of ill presage to our land, that when he that hath these keys, uses them in the so early translation of so hopeful a person as this young gentleman was, so few such are observed to spring up for the support of the truly Christian interest in the succeeding generation. That the act of our great Redeemer and Lord herein was an act of wisdom and counsel, we cannot doubt. Against the righteousness of it, we can have no exception. The kind design of it towards them whom he so translates, is so evident in the visible agreement of their spirit and way, with the heavenly state as their end, as puts that matter out of question. But we are so much the more to dread the consequences, and to apprehend what may make our hearts meditate terror.

By the Christian interest, I am far from meaning that of a party : but what every one must take for Christianity, that will acknowledge there is any such thing. And for the support of that, in the most principal doctrines and laws of it, what is our prospect ?

To go down here somewhat lower.

Let us suppose a rational susceptibleness, or capacity of religion, to be the difference of man, wherein the controversy

may seem to admit of being compromised ; whether it be religion alone, or reason alone, of which this must be said, that it distinguishes man from the inferior creatures. And let it be reason, with this addition, an aptness, *susplicere numen*, to be impressed with some religious sentiment, or to conceive of, and adore, an original Being ; the wise and mighty Author and Cause of all things. And now, how near akin are religion and humanity.

Let us next understand Christianity to be the religion of fallen man, designing his recovery out of a lapsed and lost state ; that is, man having violated the law of his creation, and offended against the throne and government of his Creator, the supreme and universal Lord of all, it was reckoned not becoming so great a Majesty (though it was not intended to abandon the offenders to a universal ruin, without remedy) to be reconciled, otherwise than by a mediator and a reconciling sacrifice. For which, none being found competent but the Eternal Son of God, the Brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his own person, who was also the First and the Last, the Lord God Almighty ; and partaking with us of flesh and blood, was capable, and undertook to be both Mediator and Sacrifice. It seemed meet to the offended Majesty, to vouchsafe pardon and eternal life, and the renewing grace requisite thereto, to none of the offenders, but through him ; and accept from them no homage, but on his account. Requiring, wheresoever the gospel comes, not only repentance towards God, but faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the summary of the counsel of God contained therein ; (Acts 20. 21—27.) and that all should honour the Son, as the Father requires to be honoured, John 5. 23.

Whereas now so apt a course as this was established for restoring man to himself and to God, through the influence of the blessed Spirit, flowing in the gospel dispensation from Christ as the Fountain ; what doth it portend when, amidst the clear light of the gospel, that affords so bright a discovery of the glorious Redeemer, and of all his apt methods for bringing to full effect his mighty work of redemption, an open war is commenced against him and his whole design, by persons, under seal, devoted to him ! If there were but one single instance hereof in an age, who would not with trembling expect the issue ?

But when the genius of a Christian nation seems, in the rising generation, to be leading to a general apostasy from Christianity, in its principal and most substantial parts ; and they are

only patient of some external rituals, that belong, or are made appendent to it, so as but to endure them, either with reluctance, or contempt : when the juvenile wit and courage which are thought to belong to a gentleman entering upon the stage of the world are employed in satirizing upon the religion into which they have been baptized, in bold efforts against the Lord that bought them ! whither doth this tend ?

Some would seem so modest, as in the midst of their profane oaths, and violations of the sacred name of God, to beg his pardon, and say, God forgive them. But so ludicrously, as he whom Cato animadverts upon, for begging pardon, that he wrote in Greek, which he was unacquainted with, saying, he had rather ask pardon, than be innocent : * for what should induce him to do so unnecessary a thing, for which pardon should be necessary ? These men think pardons very cheap things ; but will God be mocked ? Or doth he not observe ? It is the prevailing atheistical spirit we are to dread, as that which may provoke jealousy, and to make himself known by the judgments he shall execute.

There is great reason to hope God will not finally abandon England. But is there not equal reason to fear, that before the day of mercy come, there may be a nearer day of wrath coming ? A day that shall burn as an oven, and make the hemisphere about us a fiery vault ! In our recovery from a lapsed state, which the religion professed among us aims at, there are two things to be effected : the restoring reason to its empire over the sensitive nature, that it may govern that, and the restoring religion and love to God to their place and power, that he may govern us. While the former is not done, we remain sunk into the low level with the inferior creatures ; and till the latter be effected, we are ranked with the apostate creatures that first fell from God. The sensuality of brutes, and the enmity of devils, rising and springing up observably among us, import the directest hostility against the Redeemer's design. And them that bid this open defiance to him, he hath every moment at his mercy !

In the mean time, is this Immanuel's land ? His right in us he will not disclaim. And because he claims it, we may expect him to vindicate himself. His present patience, we are to ascribe to the wisdom and greatness of an all-comprehending mind. He counts not a heap of impotent worms his match ! But when the besom of destruction comes, one stroke of it

* Corn. Nep. Frag.

will sweep away multitudes: then contempt will be answered with contempt. They cannot express higher, than to oppose and militate against a religion, introduced and brought into the world by so clear, divine light, lustre, and glory, not by arguments, but by jests! O that we could but see their arguments, to dispute those keys out of his hands that holds them! But do they think to laugh away the power of the Son of God? "He also will laugh at their calamity," &c. (Prov. 1.) or expose them to the laughter of men wiser than they, Ps. 52. 5, 6. It is little wit to despise what they cannot disprove. When we find a connexion between death and judgment, how will they contrive to disjoin them. They will be as little able to disprove the one, as withstand the other.

But a great residue, it is to be hoped, our blessed Redeemer will, in due time, conquer in the most merciful way, inspiring them with divine wisdom and love, detecting their errors, mollifying their hardness, subduing their enmity, making them gladly submit to his easy yoke and light burthen. He is, before the world end, to have a numerous seed, and we are not to despair of their rising up more abundantly than hitherto among ourselves, so as no man shall be therefore ashamed to be thought a serious Christian, because it is an unfashionable or an ungentle thing.

Then will honour be acquired, by living as one that believes a life to come, and expects to live for ever, as devoted ones, to the Ruler of both worlds, and candidates for a blessed immortality, under his dominion. Nor will any man covet to leave a better name behind him, here, or a more honourable memorial of himself, than by having lived a holy, virtuous life. It signifies nothing, with the many, to be remembered when they are gone: therefore is this trust wont to be committed to marbles and monumental stones. Some have been so wise, to prefer a remembrance among them that were so, from their having lived to some valuable purpose. When Rome abounded with statues and memorative obelisks, Cato forbade any to be set up for him, because (he said) he had rather it should be asked, Why he had not one, than why he had. *Plutarch de gerund. Republ.*

What a balmy memory will one generation leave to another, when "the savour of the knowledge of Christ shall be diffused in every place," (2 Cor. 2. 14.) and every thing be counted as dross and dung, that is in any competition with the excellency of that knowledge: when that shall overflow the world, and

one age praise his mighty works; and proclaim his power and greatness to the next: and the branches of religious families, whether sooner or later transplanted, shall leave an odour, when they are cut off, that shall demonstrate their nearer union with the true Vine, or speak their relation to the "Tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations;" even those that were deciduous, and have dropped off, may (without straining a borrowed expression) signify somewhat towards this purpose.

4. From both the mentioned subjects, good parents may learn to do God and their Redeemer all the service they can, and have opportunity for, in their own time; without reckoning too much upon what shall be done, by a well-educated, hopeful son, after they are gone, unless the like dispensation could be pleaded unto that which God gave to David, to reserve the building of the temple to his son Solomon, which, without as express a revelation, no man can pretend. The great Keeper of these keys may cross such purposes, and without excusing the father, dismiss the son first. But his judgments are a great deep, too deep for our line: and his mercy is in the heavens, (Ps. 36.) extending from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children, Ps. 103.
