

SERMON XXX.

And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.—ROM. VIII. 23.

In these words the apostle pursueth his main scope, which is to direct believers patiently to wait for their final happiness. He doth it by comparing the disposition of the children of God with the inclination of the creatures, spoken of in the former verses: 'and not only they,' &c.

There is a comparison,—

1. Between persons and persons.
2. Between actions and actions.

1. Between persons and persons; the whole creation, and those that have the first fruits of the Spirit. The one is a feigned, the other a real person; therefore this groaning and expectation is attributed to the children of God, with greater propriety of speech. The creatures are said to groan and wait, upon supposition if they had sense and reason they would groan and wait; we, by certain knowledge and true desire; the creatures groan as they are assisted and directed by God to a better state; we, by voluntary inclination; the creatures groan by others, as they excite our thoughts to consider their vanity and vicissitudes; the saints by themselves, and in themselves; others cannot perform it for them; they expect by God's direction, and groan by our meditation; but we properly, and without a figure.

2. Actions and actions. There are two ascribed to the creature: waiting, ver. 10, groaning, ver. 22. They groan, and we groan; they wait, and we wait; the groaning is amplified by the manner, and the waiting by the object.

[1.] The groaning is amplified by the manner. It may be rendered, *among* ourselves; the whole church of God groaneth, as well as the whole creation; or rather, *in* ourselves, *ex imo corde*; these groans came from the bottom of the heart.

[2.] The waiting is amplified by the object or matter which they wait for: 'For the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.' The last expression explaineth the former, our full adoption and redemption, which shall be accomplished at the general resurrection.

Doct. That those that have received the first fruits of the Spirit, do groan and wait for a better estate than they now enjoy. I shall speak of this point, *First*, By way of explication; *Secondly*, By way of confirmation.

First, For explication.

1. The description of the persons,—'We that have the first fruits of the Spirit.' The expression alludeth to the customs of the law, where the offering of the first fruits sanctified the whole heap: Rom. xi. 16, 'For if the first fruits be holy, the lump also is holy.' Thence it is applied to any such beginnings as are a pledge of more to ensue; as here, the first fruits of the Spirit are the pledges and beginnings of eternal life. What are they? The graces and comforts of the Spirit:

First, the graces. Salvation is begun in our new birth: Titus iii. 5, 'But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;' and sanctifying grace is called an immortal and incorruptible seed, 1 Pet. i. 23; and they that are made partakers of it are implied to have eternal life abiding in them, 1 John iii. 13, because the life is now begun, which shall be perfected in heaven. For the present there is an eternal principle in them which carries them to eternal ends. Secondly, The comforts which are consequent upon the graces. For the Spirit is first a sanctifier, and then a comforter; he worketh holiness; and by holiness, peace, joy, and comfort, which are some foretastes of that sweetness which is in heaven. This peace and joy is raised in us, partly, by the life and exercise of faith and love: 1 Pet. i. 8, 'Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;' and Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' And partly, by the apprehension of God's love and favour to us: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.' And also, by our approaches to him in the word and prayer, where God doth most familiarly manifest himself to his people: Isa. lvi. 7, 'I will bring them into my holy mountain, and make them joyful in the house of prayer.' These comforts of the Spirit they meet with in God's sacred ordinances: Ps. lxxxiv. 10, 'For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.' Thus I have shown you what they are; now for to what use they serve? *Answer*, They are an earnest and a foretaste; an earnest, to show how sure: Eph i. 13, 14, 'In whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession;' 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Now he that hath wrought us to the self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit,'—a begun possession. Secondly, a foretaste, to show how good: 1 Pet. ii. 3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' As the clusters of Canaan grapes were carried before them to animate the Israelites, and the Italian grapes the Gauls; so the graces are pledges of our future perfection; and the comforts, tastes of our future happiness.

2. The acts mentioned are two,—groan, and wait; the one doth more directly respect our present, the other our future estate. We groan because of present miseries; we wait because of our future happiness. Or rather both acts respect both estates compounded; as groaning, our present and future happiness; for there are groans that come from sorrows; and groans which come from hope and desire: 2 Cor. v. 2, 'In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;' and ver 4, 'We groan being burdened.' Grief at our present state, the burden of sin and misery, and desire of future deliverance: Prov. xiii. 12, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it is as a tree of life.' On the other side, waiting importeth two things, an earnest and desirous expectation of what is to come, and a patient submission to God for the present.

[1.] An earnest and desirous expectation of what is to come; therefore said to look and long for it: Tit. ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed

hope;’ and Heb. ix. 28, ‘To them that look for him;’ 2 Tim. iv. 8, ‘And to them also that love his appearing.’

[2.] A patient submission to God for what is present. ‘Patience of hope,’ 1 Thes. i. 3; and Ps. xxxvii. 7, ‘Rest on the Lord, and wait patiently for him.’ Our happiness is delayed, and in the meantime we have many trials; our estate to come is excellent and glorious, and our present estate is miserable and despicable. It is offered to us upon sure and gracious terms, therefore we wait; but in the meantime we conflict with difficulties, and therefore we groan. So that as these two duties respect our different estate, so they chiefly express our apprehension and respect to our sinful estate: it is earnest, it is patient and submissive. First, It is earnest; for we groan, as a woman with child doth exactly count her time; or the Israelites in bondage did wait for the year of jubilee; or the hireling when his covenanted time will expire. Secondly, With patience and submission to God’s pleasure and leisure, possessing their souls in meekness. And observe the motive; this waiting is earnest and desirous; for the godly have not only a sense and feeling of the miseries and calamities of this life, but a fervent desire of the joys of heaven. The miseries and troubles of the present world are matters of sense; we need not scripture to tell us that we are burdened, and pained, and conflict with diverse evils; our flesh feeleth it; and we know it to our grief, that here is little else but disquiet and vexation. Sense can discover what should drive us from the world; but sense cannot discover what should draw our desires after a better estate; that we learn by faith; the joy is set before us in the promises of the gospel: Heb. vi. 18, ‘That we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope that is set before us;’ and Heb. xii. 2, ‘Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.’ The promises set it in our view, that we may eye it much, that we may often look upon it, press earnestly towards it. Groaning is stirred up by sense, waiting by faith.

3. This better estate is called adoption, and the redemption of our bodies.

[1.] It is called adoption. We are now taken into God’s family; but our present adoption is imperfect, and inconspicuous. First, It is imperfect, as all our privileges by Christ are. We have not yet our full liberty from the bondage of corruption, nor possession of our blessed inheritance; then we shall be coheirs with Christ, ver. 17; brought into ‘the glorious liberty of the children of God,’ ver. 21. Secondly, It is inconspicuous: 1 Joh. iii. 1, 2, ‘Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Behold, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him;’ and Rom. viii. 19, ‘waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.’ It then appeareth to all the world who are the children of God, and what happiness is provided for them.

[2.] The redemption of our bodies. By redemption is meant our full and final deliverance; and it is applied to the body, because death remaineth upon that part until God redeemeth us from the hand of

the grave, Ps. xlix. 15. But more distinctly, redemption is taken either for the impetration, or application. First, The impetration is by the merit of Christ, and so we were redeemed when the ransom and price was paid for us, Heb. ix. 12; not for the soul only, but for the body also, as appeareth, 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' Secondly, The application is our actual deliverance and freedom by virtue of that price, which is either begun or perfected. Begun, when our bonds are in part loosed: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins;' and perfected in the other world. Therefore the day of judgment is called 'the day of our redemption,' Eph. iv. 30; when the last enemy is destroyed, namely, death, and our bodies are raised up in glory; then we are actually free from all evil. And because this is done by virtue of that price and ransom which Christ paid for us, it is called redemption; and the redemption of our bodies, because the body, which was sown in corruption, is raised in incorruption; and that which was sown in dishonour is raised in glory; and that which was sown in weakness is raised in power, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. Though the price was paid long ago, the full fruit is not enjoyed till then; for then we have our final and complete deliverance from all sin and misery, vanity and corruption. In this life we are not free from those things which lead to corruption, that is, from sin, misery, and afflictions; at death, the soul is made perfect, but the body is in the power of the grave; but then the body enjoyeth a glorious resurrection.

Secondly. By way of confirmation: Why we should groan and long for this estate. The reasons concern either this life, or the next.

1. For this life: I shall prove,—[1.] That there is cause or matter for groaning, and desiring a better estate. [2.] That those that have the first fruits of the Spirit are more apprehensive of this misery than others are or can be.

[1.] The pressures and miseries of this life call for this groaning; 'being burdened,' saith the apostle, 'we groan.' We have an heavy burden upon us, both of sin and misery.

(1.) Of sin. To a gracious heart and waking conscience it is one of the heaviest burdens that can be felt: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of death?' Paul was whipped, imprisoned, stoned, in perils by land and sea, persecuted by enemies, undermined by false brethren; but afflictions did not sit so close to him as sins; the body of death was his sorest burden, therefore did he long for deliverance. A beast will leave the place where he findeth neither food nor rest; it is not the troubles of the world only, which set the saints a-groaning, but indwelling corruption; this grieveth them, that they are not yet rid of sin; that they serve God with such apparent weakness and manifold defects; that they are so often distracted and oppressed with sensual and worldly affections; they cannot get rid of this cursed inmate, and therefore desire a change of states. By the grace of God they have got rid of the guilt of sin and reigning power of sin; but the being of it is a trouble to them, which will still remain till this tabernacle be dissolved; then sin shall gasp its last; and the saints are groaning and longing for the parting

day, when by putting off flesh they shall put off sin, and come and dwell with God.

(2.) Of misery. This burden is a partial cause of the saints' groaning, for they have not divested themselves of the feelings of nature, nor grown senseless as stocks and stones; they are of like passions with others, and love their natural comforts as others do; human nature is the same thing in all that are made of flesh and blood: Job vi. 12, 'Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh of brass?' They feel pain as every one doth, which will extort complaints from them. Now a christian's misery may be reckoned from three things: 1. Temptations from Satan. 2. Grievous persecutions from the world. 3. Sharp afflictions from God himself. All these concur to wean a christian from the world.

1st. Temptations from Satan; who seeketh all advantages, either to withdraw us from God, or to distract us in his service, and make it tedious and wearisome to us: 1 Pet. v. 8, 9, 'Your adversary the devil goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.' All these things are accomplished in your brethren in the flesh; they are all haunted with a busy tempter, who is restless in his endeavours to ensnare their souls; this world is Satan's walk, the devil's circuit, who goeth up and down to destroy unwary creatures; and therefore his assiduous temptations are one of the christian's burdens.

2ndly. Bitter and grievous persecutions; which sometimes make them weary of their lives, that they may be freed from their hard task-masters. As Elijah was weary of the trouble he had by Jezebel's pursuits, that he durst not trust himself in the land of Israel and Judea, but goeth a day's journey into the wilderness, and sat down under a juniper tree, and requested for himself that he might die; 'for,' saith he, 'I am not better than my father's house,' 1 Kings xix. 4, 5. Surely the troubled will long for rest.

3dly. Sharp afflictions from God himself, who is jealous of our hearts, because we are not watchful over them. We are too apt to take up with a worldly happiness, and to root here; looking no further, whilst we have all our comforts about us; our hearts saying, it is best to be here, till God by his smart rod awaken us out of our drowsy fits. We are so pleased with our entertainment by the way, that we forget home; therefore the Lord is fain to embitter our worldly portion, that we may think of a remove to some better place and state, where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes. We would sleep and rest here, if we did not sometimes meet with thorns in our bed; 'All the days of my pilgrimage,' saith holy Jacob, Gen. xlvii. 7, 'are few and evil.' Our days are evil, and it is well they are but few; that in this shipwreck of man's felicity we can see banks and shores, and a landing place, where we may be safe at length. Here most of our days are sorrow, grief, and travail; but there is our repose; our heart would fail, were there not some hopes mingled with our tears.

[2.] That those who have the first fruits of the Spirit are more apprehensive of this misery than others are or can be.

(1.) Of misery and afflictions. Partly, because grace intendereth the heart; they look upon afflictions with another eye than the stupid world doth; they look upon them as coming from God, and as the fruit

of sin, and they dare not slight any of God's corrective dispensations. There are two extremes, slighting, and fainting, Heb. xii. 5. Affliction cannot be improved if we have not a sense of it; we owe so much reverence to God, as to tremble at his anger, Num. xii. 14; when he crosseth and disappointeth us, it must not be slightly passed over. Look as in the flood, Gen vii. 11; when the windows of heaven were opened from above, and the fountains of the great deep were broken open from below, the flood increased; so when nature and grace concur to heighten the afflictions, the children of God must needs have a greater and more tender sense of it than others have. As those that are of a delicate constitution are more capable of pain than the stubborn and robustious; and the tender flesh of a child will sooner feel the lash than the thick skin of a slave; so the children of God, who have a more serious apprehension of things, and a more tender spirit, soonest feel the burden of their Father's displeasure, and do more lay it to heart, than careless spirits, who laugh out their cross, and drink away their sorrows. And partly, because they are more exercised with afflictions; the world hateth them because they are so good, and God chastens them because they are no better: 'Many are the troubles of the righteous,' Ps. xxxiv. 19. There is more squaring, and hewing, and cutting used about stones, which are to be set in a stately palace, than those which are placed in an ordinary building; the vine is pruned, when the bramble in the hedge is not looked after; the child is put under discipline when the bastard liveth more at large. God meaneth to destroy those, whom by a just judgment he permitteth to go on in their sins, to their eternal undoing.

(2.) They are more sensible of sin as a burden: Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head; they are a burden too heavy for me.' That sins are a burden to a wounded conscience is evident by their complaints; if a millstone fall upon them, it is not so heavy and bruising, as one spark of God's wrath lighting upon the conscience for sin; but they are also a burden to a tender conscience. And partly, because they have more light than others, and see more into the heinous nature and evil of sin: Jer. xviii. 31, 'After I was instructed, I smote upon the thigh;' and Rom. vii. 9, 'When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' And partly, because they have more love than others have; and they that love much, will mourn most for sin, Luke vii. 47; she wept much, because she loved much. The more holy any are, the more they are troubled about offending God than others are, or themselves were before. What is the reason? It is not from the increase of sin, but the increase of light and love; they see more and more into sin than formerly they did, or could do; as in a glass of pure water the least mote is soon espied. And partly, because they have more heartily renounced sin; therefore the relics of it are a greater burden to them. Elements burden not in their own place; wicked men are in their own element; it is a sport to them to do evil; for 'fools make a mock of sin.' But it is otherwise with the children of God; sin is that they hate, and pray down, and strive against; they are aspiring after a better estate; and it is a trouble to them, they find so little of it while they are in the body.

2. The other sort of reasons concern the other life. A christian

here is unsatisfied, and waiteth for a better and purer estate, a state of constant felicity, and exact conformity to God; and that for four reasons.

[1.] By the first fruits of the Spirit he is confirmed in the belief of the certainty of this estate; for the Holy Ghost openeth his eyes to see the reality of the world to come: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints in light.' 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that ye may know the things that are freely given us of God.' Faith is the eye of the soul, Heb. xi. 1; and an eagle-eye it is, that helpeth us to look above the mists and clouds of the lower world, and see eternity at the back of time, and glory following shame, and rest labour. Now affections follow persuasion: Heb. xi. 13, 'Being persuaded of these things, they embraced them.' They that see there is another world, a life infinitely more desirable than that which we now enjoy, will find their affections stirred towards it; an estate so blessed, if it were soundly believed it would be earnestly desired; and certainly men do not believe this blessedness, if they be coldly affected towards it.

[2.] By the first fruits of the Spirit, they do in part know the excellency of it. Surely it is no slight and vain thing which is so desired, groaned after, and waited for by all the saints. They find somewhat in themselves which makes them to value and esteem it; if the first fruits be rich and glorious, what will the whole harvest be? If the taste be so ravishing, what will the whole feast prove? Surely it will wholly swallow us up with joy. The joys of the Spirit are unspeakable things, 1 Pet. i. 8; but 'at his right hand there is fulness of joy for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. The refreshings we meet with by the way doth mightily support us; what comfort shall we have when we come to our journey's end, and enjoy what we have heard of? And what we have heard is little to the enjoyment. The saints would not part with their communion with Christ here for all the world; what will it be when our union and communion is full and perfect? To get a glimpse of Christ, as he showeth himself through the lattice, doth much revive the drooping soul; but there we shall see him with open face; here we get a little from him in his ordinances, and that little is as much as we can hold; but there he is all in all, and we are filled up with the fulness of God. Christ in us now is the hope of glory, Col. i. 27; but Christ in us then is glory itself; the Spirit in us now is a well springing up, but then the water groweth not only into a stream, but into ocean; holiness here is called the seed of God, but then it is the life of God; grace tendeth to the place whence it cometh, as a spark of fire tendeth to the element of fire; there it is in its perfect estate. In short, look what difference there is between the spring-head and the out-fall of the water into the sea; such difference there is between our enjoyment of God now, and hereafter.

[3.] By the first fruits of the Spirit, we are prepared and fitted for that blessed estate. We read in the scripture, that as heaven is prepared

for the saints, so the saints are prepared for heaven: Rom. ix. 23, 'Vessels of mercy, which he hath aforehand prepared unto glory; Col. i. 12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' Now we are prepared by the Spirit's sanctifying body and soul, and fitting us for the heavenly estate; it is said, 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We are changed into his image from glory to glory.' As grace increaseth, glory hasteneth on; every degree is a step nearer; we grow more meet to dwell with God, as we grow more like God. Now this argument holdeth good on God's part and ours. When God hath formed us and fitted us for any estate, he will bring us to it; as the apostle telleth us, 2 Cor. v. 6, 'Now he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' This piece of workmanship was never designed to be left always here in the world, but suited to a better place, to which it shall be translated. It is the wisdom of God to bestow all things in apt places; every creature hath its element, and a peculiar nature, which carrieth it thither; as fishes desire to live in the water, and fowls in the air; it is answerable to the nature which God hath put into them. The new creature hath a suitableness to the glorious estate to come hereafter; therefore the New Jerusalem is the only convenient place to the new creature; and they that have a divine nature, must live in the immediate presence of God. On their part, God's word telleth them of a better life than this, and their hearts incline them to it, they being formed and fitted for it; for the more a thing is formed for the end, the more vehemently it tendeth towards it. God will not carry us to heaven against our will; therefore there is not only a preparation, but an earnest expectation, which is the fruit of it; they long to enjoy their God, to see their Redeemer, to enter upon that blessed estate for which God hath prepared them, whereof in part he hath assured them. No man is unwilling to be happy, and to attain his end. Certainly a christian out of heaven is out of his proper place; we are like fish in a paddle-trunk, or small vessel of water, which will only keep us alive; we would fain be in the ocean.

[4.] By the first fruits of the Spirit our title and right is assured. For it is compared to a seal, to warrant our present interest: Eph. iv. 3, 'Ye are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise;' to an earnest, to secure our future enjoyment: 2 Cor. iv. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' This blessed state belongeth only to those who have the first fruits of the Spirit; their title is clear; for God will own his seal and impress, will never take back his earnest, but it remaineth with us till there be no place left for doubts and fears. Now who, being secured of a better estate, and for the present burdened with sorrow and temptations, would not groan and long after it?

Use. [1.] Is information. It informeth us of the certainty of blessedness to come. If there were any perfect estate in this life nothing would sooner bring us to it than a participation of the Spirit; but this doth not; for they that are partakers of the Spirit groan, wait, and are not satisfied with their present estate, but long for a better, breathe after something greater, and beyond what they here enjoy. Therefore certainly God hath reserved for them a better estate in another world.

We prove another life by the disposition and instinct of nature towards happiness in the general, yea, eternal happiness; all would be happy; they grope and feel about after eternal good, Acts xvii. 26. This being the universal desire of all mankind, it is an argument that there is such a thing as eternal good, for natural desires are not frustrate; for nature doth nothing in vain. But the desires of the sanctified do much more prove it; for these act more regularly, direct their desires and groans to a certain scope and end; and those are excited by the Holy Spirit of God; he imprinteth the firm persuasion of this happiness in them, and stirreth up these groans after it, and that usually in our gravest and severest moods, when we are solemnly conversing with God in his holy worship; then he doth raise up these affections towards heavenly things, by the word, prayer, and sacraments, and leaveth this heavenly relish upon our hearts as the present reward of our duties. And the more serious and holy any are, the more do they feel of this. Now this is a greater argument; for holiness was never designed for our torment; and these desires being of God's own planting, they will not be disappointed.

[2.] That none but those who have the first fruits of the Spirit will groan and hope for eternal life. Others have no warrant, for they have not God's earnest; and God never giveth the whole bargain, but he first giveth earnest; for 'without holiness no man shall see God.' Others have no inclination; for most men's thoughts are not busied about this, but rather go after worldly things; they are for serving their lusts, and pleasing their fleshly appetites and fancies; whereas the apostle biddeth us be sober, and truss up the loins of our minds, 1 Pet. i. 13, if we would hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is true, death is the ordinary refuge for embittered spirits, and the back-door we seek to get out at in our discontent. In passion men will desire to die; when beaten out of the world, heaven is their retreat; but no serious groans, and desires of heaven.

[3.] That we must so groan under the present misery, that we may wait for deliverance with patience. Hope is not only made up of looking and longing, but waiting also: Heb. vi. 12, 'Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise.'

[4.] That one great means to support our faith and patience is the hope of the redemption of our bodies. (1.) Because the man cannot be happy till the body be raised again; for the soul alone doth not consummate the man, neither was it made to live eternally apart from the body, but is in a state of widowhood till it be united to it again, and live with its old mate and companion. The man is not happy till then. (2.) It is the body is most pained in obedience, and endured all the troubles and labours of christianity; there it hath part in the reward as well as the work; Heb. xi. 35, 'Not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.' (3.) It is the body which seemed to be lost. Some of the bodies of the faithful were devoured by wild beasts, others consumed in the fire; some swallowed up in the sea; all resolved in dust. Therefore because here the temptation lays the smart or destruction and torture of the body, the cordial is suited; christians do not only desire the blessed immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body. The body is weak, frail, subject to

aches and diseases, stone, gout, strangury, death itself, tumbled up and down, and tossed from prison to prison; but then redeemed from all evil and misery.

Use 2. Is exhortation. To rouse up our languid and cold affections, that we may more earnestly groan and long for heavenly things. If we look to this world, the pleasures of it are dreams and shadows; the miseries of it many and real; we find corruption within, temptations without, grievous afflictions, oppressing the bodily life; but above all, we do too often displease and dishonour God. If to the other world, the pleasures of it are full, glorious, and eternal. God is fain to drive us out of this world, as he did Lot out of Sodom, yet loath to depart. Have we not smarted enough for our love to a vain world? sinned enough to make us weary of the present state? If heaven be not worth our desires and groans, it is little worth. There is the best estate, the best work, and the best company.

Question. But how shall we do to get up our hearts from this world to a better? These things are necessary:

[1.] The illumination of the Spirit, that the mind be soundly persuaded: 2. Cor. v. 1, 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

[2.] Strong inclination, or an heart fixed on heavenly things: Mat. vi. 21, 'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' Col. iii. 1, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections upon things above, and not upon the earth.'

[3.] Love to Christ: Phil. i. 23, 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' They that love Christ will desire to be with him; they delight in his presence, count it their honour to be miserable with him, rather than happy without him.

[4.] Some competent assurance of our own interest: 2. Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day, and not unto me only, but unto all that love his appearing.'

[5.] Some mortification, that the heart should be dead to the world, weaned from the pleasures and honour thereof: Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' While our hearts are set upon worldly profits and pleasures, and gratify the vices and lusts of the body, we are loath to depart: 'They have their portion in this life,' Ps. xvii. 14.

Use 3. Do we groan and wait? If so—

[1.] There will be serious waiting, and diligent preparing: 2 Pet. iii. 14, 'Wherefore, beloved, if ye look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

[2.] It will frame our lives: Phil. iii. 20, 'For our conversation is in heaven.'

[3.] It will put us upon self-denial. That maketh the christian labour and suffer trouble and reproach; desire is the vigorous part of the soul: 1 Tim. iv. 10, 'For therefore we labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God.'