

dantly I love you, the less I am beloved.' Shall we lessen our respects to him?

Use 2. Is to persuade us to give all diligence to this, that we be assured that Christ loveth us. This is known, partly by an external partly by an internal demonstration.

1. The external demonstration is in redemption; surely there is no doubt of that, that Christ came to show the loveliness and goodness of God to the forlorn world. This only needeth consideration and improvement. He that loved us at so costly a rate, will he desert us if we choose his ways, and resolve to adhere to him?

2. The internal demonstration is in conversion, or our receiving the atonement; entering into peace with God, and adopted as children of the family. Sure if you get this one evidence, you shall be brought to glory. When he hath pardoned thy follies and the frailties of thy youth, and called thee when he passed by others, and left them in their sins, what will he not do for thee?

SERMON XLVII.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—ROM. viii. 38, 39.

THESE words render a reason why believers are more than conquerors in their sorest trials, and do further carry on the apostle's triumph to a fit conclusion of such an excellent discourse.

In the text observe—

1. The assailants—*Death, life, angels.*

2. The attempt and design—*To separate us from the love of God.*

3. The fruitlessness of it—*No creature shall be able to do this.*

4. His confidence—*For I am persuaded.*

1. The aggressors and assailants are set forth, either by a particular distribution, or wrapt up in a general expression.

[1.] The particular distribution is made by four pairs or couples.

(1.) Neither death nor life; that is, neither the fears of death nor the hopes of life; this pair is mentioned because death is the 'king of terrors,' Job xviii. 14. And among all desirable good things life is the chiefest, and that which maketh a man capable of enjoying all other good things; expressed Job ii. 4, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life.' Now all assaults from this first pair are in vain, as they tend to separate us from the love of God in Christ. Will you hope to do it by threats of death? A believer will tell you that Christ threateneth eternal death; and this temporal one, be it natural or violent, is but a passage into life eternal. Will you entice him by the baits of life? They have learned to prefer everlasting life

before it : Heb. xi. 35, 'Not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.'

(2.) Second pair—'Nor angels, nor principalities and powers;' that is, the powers of the visible and invisible world; so these two powers are elsewhere coupled: Eph. i. 21, 'Far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also that which is to come.' So that by principalities and powers worldly powers are intended. Angels is a common word, that implieth good and evil spirits. If you apply it to the good angels, then it is spoken only by way of supposition, if it were possible they could concur in such a design. Such a supposition there is: Gal. i. 8, 'Though an angel from heaven preach any other doctrine to you, let him be accursed.' It is a supposition of an impossible case; but such as conduceth much to heighten the sense of the truth represented. As for evil angels, they make it their work and business to steal away souls from Christ; and if they could, would wrest them out of Christ's own arms. Well then, the good angels seek not to separate us from Christ; the good will not, and the bad cannot. Were it possible for a good angel to dissuade me from my Lord Jesus Christ, I would hold him accursed. Evil angels assault us, but we are preserved by a stronger than they. By the other branch, 'principalities and powers,' he understandeth the potentates of the world, by what title soever distinguished. No powers can overtop the divine and sovereign Lord of the redeemed. The glory of kings and emperors, compared to his glory, is less than the light of a candle compared with the sun in his brightness.

(3.) Third couple—'Nor things present, nor things to come.' Thereby he meaneth all things that had happened, or might hereafter happen to them before their departure out of the world. As we bear up under present pressures, so we need not fear those which are to come. We often forecast what shall become of us if the Lord permit great troubles, trials, and calamities to befall us. A christian is as sure of things to come as things present. The present hopes, fears, and enjoyments are transitory and contemptible; and future evils will sooner be passed over, for our salvation will be much nearer than when we first believed, Rom. xiii. 11.

(4.) 'Neither height nor depth.' The creatures above us or below us; neither sublimity of honours, nor depth of ignominy; dignities do not entice, nor disgraces discourage us. No power, from the highest to the lowest of the creatures; no estate or condition of life, from the highest honour to the lowest beggary, can prevail with us to quit Christ.

[2.] The general expression—'Nor any other creature,' comprising thereby all things on this side God, how amiable or terrible soever they seem. What can creatures do when they are in the hands, and under the care of the creator? Well then, the sense is, that no force or fraud shall untwist the bands and cords of this love; no temptation shall blast, or persecution cause that faith to wither which hath taken root in a good and honest heart.

2. Their attempt or design—'To separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord;' that is, from the love wherewith we through Christ love God, and the love wherewith God loved us through Christ; this as the cause, that as the effect, for the embraces are mutual—

‘We apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ,’ Phil. iii. 10. Only he first layeth hold upon us by his effectual grace, and we lay hold upon him; and our standing dependeth upon our love as a means, and his love as the principal conserving cause.

3. The fruitlessness of the attempt—‘Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God.’ Mark, the apostle doth not only say that nothing shall, but nothing can separate us, which is more emphatical.

4. His confidence—*πέπεισμαι*, ‘I am persuaded.’ The apostle doth not go by thinking and guessing, but undoubted knowledge. Elsewhere we have two words: 2 Tim. i. 12, ‘I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him.’ There are two acts of the understanding, apprehension and judication. The first is implied in *οἶδα*; the second in *πέπεισμαι*. We must know the grounds, and assent to them: Heb. xi. 13, ‘*πεισθέντες καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι*, being persuaded of these things, they embraced them.’ The mind acquiesceth in the evidence of truth, the will in the worth of truth evidenced. Once more: Paul doth not speak of his resolution, what he would do, but his persuasion, what God would do; the first included, but the latter more clearly asserted.

Quest. The only question which remaineth for explication is, Whether Paul spake this of himself, and in his own person only, or in the name of all believers?

Ans. My answer is the same with that which Paul giveth in somewhat a like case of Abraham: Rom. iv. 23, 24, ‘Now it was not writ for his sake alone, but for us also who believe in Jesus.’ For he doth not speak this out of any special and personal revelation made to himself, and concerning himself, but that common spirit of faith which falleth upon all believers; and so we may say, as Paul of David: 2 Cor. iv. 13, ‘We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.’ My reasons are, First, Because he afterwards changeth the number, ‘I am persuaded;’ but it is *ἡμᾶς*—separate us. Secondly, The grounds are the same to all, the promise the same, and it is the common interest of all the faithful to be preserved in Jesus Christ. If any be weak, and grow not up to this full persuasion and triumph over all doubts and fears, it is their own fault; for this is not so peculiar to Paul; but they also, if they be not wanting to themselves, may be carried to heaven in Christ’s triumphant chariot with confidence and rejoicing, notwithstanding all impediments and difficulties in the way. All may; and if they do not, it is because they do not improve the common grounds.

Doct. 1. This is matter of triumph to believers, to be persuaded that nothing, be it never so great and powerful, can separate them from the love of God in Christ.

1. I shall inquire what is this love of God in Christ.

2. That as long as God loveth us, the people of God apprehend themselves in good condition.

3. That from this love nothing can separate us.

4. We ought firmly to be persuaded of this.

First, What is this love of God in Christ? Here I take it actively for the love wherewith he loveth us. Love may be considered—

First, As an attribute or a perfection in God; so it is said, 1 John iv. 8, 'God is love.' Which noteth his readiness, self-propension, or inclination to do good.

Secondly, As it relateth and passeth out to the creature; so there is a common love and a special love. His common love is set forth: Ps. cxlv. 4, 'The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.' This love floweth in the channel of common providence. But then there is a special love, which is called his love in Christ: Eph. i. 3, 'Who hath blessed us with spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.' This love may be considered as purposed or expressed. As purposed: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'According to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' His gracious purposes were from everlasting; he determined within himself that we should receive these fruits of his love through Jesus Christ. As expressed, and that two ways; as revealed in the gospel, and as applied to our hearts.

[1.] The love and free grace of God is revealed in the gospel. There is the discovery of God's good-will to sinners, and the rich preparation of grace he hath made for those who are truly willing to receive him, therefore called the unsearchable riches of grace, Eph. iii. 8, or those many blessed advantages that belong to christians.

[2.] As applied to our hearts. The application may be considered as to the effects, or sense—

(1.) As to the effects. When the gospel is made successiul to our conversion, and his eternal love beginneth to take effect: Jer. xxxi. 3, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore in loving-kindness have I drawn thee;' and again, Eph. i. 6, 'He hath made us accepted in the beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace.' The people of God are loved from all eternity by his love of benevolence, whereby he willed good unto them, and decreed to bestow good upon them, even when they were children of wrath in the sentence of the law. But there is besides this, the love of complacency, whereby he accepteth of them as being reconciled to him, and acquiesceth in them as his peculiar people, and will bestow all manner of grace upon them.

(2.) As to sense, or our feeling of this love: Rom. v. 5, 'Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,' when it is evidenced to us that God hath thus sanctified us, and adopted us into his family, taken us for his children, Rom. viii. 16, and we are encouraged to look for the eternal inheritance as our right and portion. The effects we have in our conversion, called therefore effectual calling; the sense we have by the Lord's confirming grace, or the witness of the Spirit, which God giveth as a reward to his faithful and obedient servants. Experienced, seasoned christians usually have it in a large measure.

Secondly, The people of God apprehend it as a very blessed and comfortable condition; for here Paul in their name speaketh, that as long as God loveth them, they are not troubled about other things. Death may separate the soul from the body; depth of poverty may separate them, not only from the preferments of the world, but the enjoyment of their own estates; evil angels may disquiet them with

temptations, worldly powers exile them from their country, and separate them from their dearest friends and acquaintance; but as long as they are not separated from the love of God in Christ, they are well apaid and contented; for the apostle's triumph is not that he did escape the troubles, but that he was not separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Now this cometh, partly from the real worth of the privilege itself, and partly from their esteem and value of it.

1. For the real worth of the privilege itself. Surely God's love can make us more happy than the world can make us miserable. Consider a believer as to his present or future condition; he is a blessed man. For the present, his sins are pardoned: Ps. xxxii. 1, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.' Their natures are healed: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' Their ways are directed and ordered: Ps. cxix. 1, 'Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.' And for the future they have eternal life: 1 John ii. 25, 'And this is the promise he hath promised us, even eternal life.' Now these are blessings the world cannot deprive us of, and they are the fruits of distinguishing love; but worldly things, which are subject to the will and power of our enemies, are not: Eccles. ix. 1, 2, 'Love nor hatred cannot be known by these things: all things come alike to all.' These have escaped the greatest misery, and are entitled to the greatest happiness mankind is capable of.

2. Their value and esteem of it above all worldly felicities: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Many say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased;' yea, above life itself: Ps. lxxiii. 3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' They were willing to renounce all to get it, and therefore they are willing to renounce all to keep it: Phil. iii. 7, 8, 'What things were gain to me I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss.' He had counted, and did count, to show that he had not repented of his choice. Man is changeable and fickle, highly conceited, for one thing to-day, and another to-morrow; but the apostle saw no cause to recede from his choice, he continued still of the same opinion. We often affect novelties; are transported when we first change our profession, and repent at leisure. Now if he were to do it again, he would freely do it, supposing it to be gainful. But now to have the favour of God, and to be like him, how valuable a blessing is it! None are true christians but those that are like-minded, that value his favour above all things; for otherwise God is loved with the respect of an underling, and so cannot have the affection from us that is due to the chiefest good: Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.'

Thirdly, That nothing can separate us from the fruition of his love. This will be best seen from the grounds—

1. The immutability of God's love to the elect. His elective love maketh not only our vocation effectual, but our justification and glori-

fication also, Rom. viii. 30. He will not cease to love us, nor cast off the care of our salvation, till he hath brought it to its final period.

2. The infinite merit of Christ. It is in the text, 'The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' His free love is carried on to us in that way, for the fruits of his eternal love we cannot obtain but by Jesus Christ. Now his merit is an everlasting merit: he went not to heaven till he had obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb. ix. 12. A purchase that shall ever stand in force.

3. The unchangeable covenant, and the promises of God, which irreversibly make over this right to us: 2 Cor. i. 20, 'For all the promises of God are in him, yea, and amen;' and Heb. vi. 18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation.' Surely this should give us a strong consolation, that we have the word of the eternal God for it; that if we run for refuge, and stick there, nothing shall defeat our right.

4. The union of a believer with Christ, as a member of his body, and so belonging to his care and protection. For the Lord Christ is a saviour to all those to whom he is truly a head: Eph. v. 23, 'Christ is the head of the church and the saviour of the body.' Therefore every living member of the mystical body is safe; nothing shall dissolve or break that blessed union that is between Christ and believers.

5. The almighty power of God and Christ: 1 Peter i. 5, 'Ye are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation.' Heaven is kept for them, and they are kept for heaven. Christ hath promised his almighty power for the safety of believers. As it was he, and not we, that purchased our salvation; so it is Christ, and not we, that must have the keeping of the purchased benefits; and he saith that none shall pluck them out of his hands, and out of the Father's hands, John x. 28, 29. This is the great security of the fold, that they are under the power of so careful and so able a shepherd. This almighty power of God and Christ doth mightily fortify us against all temptations we meet with in the way to heaven.

6. This right accrueeth to believers by virtue of their interest in Christ: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, 'All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or to come; all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' All things are theirs wherein they are concerned, if not in possession, yet in reduction or final use—friends, enemies, ordinances, providences; all conditions—life, death. If you resolve firmly to obey Christ and adhere to him, you need not fear anything. Now upon these grounds a christian may conclude that nothing shall separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Fourthly, That we ought firmly to be persuaded of this. Here I shall show you how this persuasion is bred in us.

1. By the word of the gospel, discovering to us the whole mystery of our redemption by Christ, with all the consequent benefits. There all God's merciful designs for the justifying, sanctifying, and glorifying the creature are manifested to us as matter of our faith: Acts xix. 8, 'And persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.' The doctrine and end of his ministry was to persuade men of the necessity of coming out of their lapsed estate and the power of the devil, and to

put themselves under the government of the king, whom God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion, that he may defend them against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and at length bring them to everlasting happiness. Again, Acts xxviii. 23, 'And he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus,' &c., assuring them of his sufficiency to save them. Now this they did, partly by showing the danger of the contrary: 2 Cor. v. 11, 'Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;' and partly by showing the grace and readiness of God to own them in all troubles: Acts xiii. 43, 'Persuading them to continue in the grace of God.' And if men do quarrel at this dispensation, they will not be edified by any other, be it never so extraordinary: Luke xvi. 31, 'Neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead.' There is more reason to persuade the scriptures are true, than if a message were brought to us by a vision or apparition; which would not induce us to quit our sinful habits and customs. Now this is the means, when we receive it, and are persuaded of it.

2. By the Spirit: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God.' The Spirit of God is necessary, that we may believe the doctrine of the gospel, and cure our worldly and sensual inclinations; for who else will be brought to forsake the things which he seeth and loveth, for a God and a glory which he never saw?

3. By faith, which is a persuasion of the truth of such things as God hath revealed, because God hath revealed them: 1 John iv. 16, 'And we have known, and believed, the love which God hath to us.' It is matter of faith to believe the love and care of God over his people.

4. Experience. The persuasion, with application, increaseth our confidence. His love to us in particular is known by what he hath wrought in us and for us; and this increaseth our persuasion, and breedeth in us a holy confidence: 2 Cor. i. 10, 'Who hath delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;' 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18, 'Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work.' In this persuasion, confirmed, seasoned, experienced christians do continue, who have not only a true faith in Christ, and a settled love to him, but such as maketh up an evidence in their conscience of their sincerity, and giveth an undoubted persuasion of his love to them.

[1.] They are such as are rooted and grounded in faith. The full comfort of christianity is reserved for such as are described by the apostle: Col. i. 23, 'If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.' There is an initial faith which may wither, as the grace of the second and third ground; and there is a rooted faith, which will be supported and maintained in the good and honest heart. Therefore it is not sufficient once to assent to the truth of the gospel in our understandings, or embrace the good things offered to us by our will and affections; but we must be rooted and grounded in the faith. Fluctuating opinion,

without a well-grounded persuasion, will not serve the turn. Some slight desires and affections to blessedness to come will not maintain us against the several blasts of so many temptations as we meet with; but we must get a faith that will make us indifferent to all worldly things, 'height or depth, life or death.' The sound, world-conquering faith, will only give us safety, and, I am sure, will only give us comfort: 1 John v. 4, 'For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' Such a sound belief of blessedness to come maketh us dead to the present world.

[2.] Such as are rooted and grounded in love. A taste may fail, Heb. vi. 3, 4, A slender, insufficient touch of the love of God upon the soul will not break the force of opposite inclinations and temptations: Eph. iii. 17, 18, 19, 'That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able with all saints to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' A sincere love doth so fasten us to Christ, that no temptation is able to shake us or unloose us, for they are acquainted more and more with Christ's love, and admire it, are ravished by it, feel the effects of it. The 'breadth' noteth the great blessings we have by it, or the ample privileges of the new covenant; the 'length,' the duration of it, from one eternity to another; the 'depth' of it, his profound condescension, fetching us out of hell itself by a painful, cursed, and ignominious death; the 'height,' as it raised us up to the glory of heaven, and that everlasting blessedness. Now none are said to comprehend this but those that are rooted and grounded in love; that is, to comprehend them to their comfort and joy, to comprehend it to their conquest and victory over temptations, to comprehend it as their triumph and confidence; none but those whose hearts are filled with the love of God, and deep experience of his grace in Christ, that have not taken up some light thoughts about it, but are deeply overcome and possessed with a sense of his love, whose heart and soul is towards God; and his wonderful love in Christ is the root and foundation of all their religion. Now these thorough christians, who are rooted and grounded in faith and love, they are not so much believers in conflict as believers in triumph; and whereas others make a hard shift to get to heaven with much labour, both of flesh and spirit, and many doubts and fears, they keep up a continual rejoicing in God, and find little or no trouble or disturbance in the spiritual life. Lusts are more mortified, and Satan is discouraged, and they are assisted with a larger experience of grace than others receive.

Use 1. Is information.

1. To show what cause they have to be ashamed, that are discouraged by smaller temptations; that cannot 'run with the footmen,' Jer. xii. 5. The smallest things separate them from the love of God in Christ, or darken the comfort of it in their souls.

2. The great privileges of a christian. Turn him to what condition you will, raise him or cast him down, kill him or spare his life, you cannot harm him; enrich him, or beggar him, his happiness is not at your command; he is not at the disposal of any creature in the world, devils or men. Crosses and contrary winds blow him to

heaven, Cant. iv. 16; and here, death, life, height, depth. If God hath good to do by his life, he will preserve him; if his work is ended, he will take him away by death. All doth better his heart, or hasten his glory.

3. What an advantage those christians have above others, that make it their business to love God, and count it their happiness to be beloved by him. Take either; first, that make it their business to love God. Love God once, and all that he doth will be acceptable to you, and all that you do will be acceptable to him: for if we love him, nothing will be grievous; not commands grievous, nor trials grievous: 1 John v. 3; Heb. xii. 6, 'Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.' It is from a father; and all that you do is acceptable to God. The lover's mite is better taken, than the vast treasures of enforced service. If you love him, you may be sure he loveth you, John xiv. 21. Secondly, they count it their happiness to be beloved by him; and then under the sorest temptations, it is enough that God loveth them. If he will not take away his loving-kindness from them, it is enough, though he visit them with scourges. Other things will not satisfy them without this, but this satisfieth them in the want of all other things, Ps. cvi. 7.

Use 2. Is to exhort us to several duties.

1. To the great duties of christianity, which give us an interest in this unchangeable love. I shall instance in faith and love.

[1.] By faith to put our souls in Christ's hands, for there alone we are safe against temptations: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, τὴν παρακαταθήκην μου;' and 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Commit the keeping of your souls to him;' so Ps. xxxvii. 3, 4, 'Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land; verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee thy heart's desire.' It is not a devout sloth or careless negligence, but a resolution to take his way, and adhere to it, trusting him with all events. We may do it upon the confidence of his willingness, fidelity, and sufficiency. His office showeth his willingness; it is his office to save souls, which he cannot possibly neglect: Luke xix. 10, 'The Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost.' His covenant showeth his fidelity: 1 Cor. x. 13, 'But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able.' His nature or his divine power showeth his sufficiency. He is God, Phil. iii. 21, and he is with God, Heb. vii. 25.

[2.] The next great duty is love; for love is the mutual bond between us and Christ, as Christ is the bond of union between God and us. We must not intermit our own love; the love of God keepeth us, and we are bidden to 'keep ourselves in the love of God,' Jude 21; 1 John ii. 27, 28, 'Ye shall abide in him,' and then presently, 'Abide in him;' and John xv. 5, 'Abide in me, and I in you.' The greatest danger of breaking is on our part; there is no fear on Christ's part. Now we must use the means, possess the heart with the love of God in Christ. We must believe the love of God, think of it often, not by light thoughts, but let it be radicated in our hearts, and let us rouse up ourselves to love God again, who hath showed so much love to us.

2. Let us forecast all visible dangers, and not fix too peremptorily on temporal happiness. There are a world of vicissitudes in our pilgrimage, but all are ordered for good to a christian. Let us not too peremptorily fix on life or death, height or depth, but beg of God to sanctify every condition: Phil. iv. 12, 'I know how to be abased, and how to abound; to be full, and to be hungry; to abound, and to suffer need.' We are subject to changes; sometimes in credit and sometimes in disgrace, sometimes in sickness and sometimes in health, sometimes rich and sometimes poor; there needeth wisdom to carry ourselves in prosperity, as well as adversity.

3. Let us get our hearts confirmed against these temptations that may assault our confidence—life, death. If God prolong life, there is occasion for service; if death cometh, that is our comfort: Rev. xiv. 8, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord;' Phil. i. 20, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is much better.' Death is a passage to glory; it shall not separate us from Christ, but join us to him, Phil. i. 23. Lay up this comfort against the hour of death. It is a separation that causeth a nearer conjunction. Then angels. The evil angels are under Christ, Col. i. 16. You are never in Satan's hand, but Satan is in God's hands. Then for principalities and powers. No potentates have any power but what is given them from above: John xix. 11, 'Thou couldest have no power at all against me, were it not given thee from above;' and Christ promiseth, Mat. xvi. 18, 'Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!' Things present, and things to come. Whatsoever is present is either good or evil; the good things are for our comfort in our pilgrimage, the evil fit us for a happier estate; but we have no assurance of things to come: Mat. vi. 34, 'Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.' And then height and depth. We are acquainted with the height and depth of the love of God; we know a more glorious height, which is heaven; and there is a dismal depth, which is hell. God can provide a harbour for his people; turneth the devil's design quite contrary to his intention.