

SERMON UPON 2 CORINTHIANS IV. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.—2 COR. iv. 18.

IN the context the apostle is giving an account why he fainted not under the labours and afflictions of the gospel. There is a threefold reason given—

1. The present benefit of afflictions, ver. 16. As much as these labours and afflictions did diminish and infringe the comforts of the animal life, so much the state of the spiritual life was advanced and increased. Oh! it is a blessed thing when the inward man groweth more fresh and lively.

2. Because those afflictions did increase the hope of the life of glory, and were a blessed means to make it more sure and nearer; where there is a perfect opposition between the present and future state. Here 'an affliction for a moment;' there 'an eternal weight of glory.' Here afflictions are light; there it is *βάρος δόξης*, a state that will bear weight, *ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν*, an excellently excellent: 'A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

3. The third reason is taken from the subject, as the former respected the object. His mind was wholly intent upon better things; not upon temporal and visible, but upon heavenly and eternal: 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

Wherein you may observe—

1. A distinction between two sorts of things; some seen, some not seen.

2. A suitable respect to either. There is an overlooking of the one, a looking to the other.

3. The reason of this different respect: 'For the things that are seen are temporal;' and 'the things that are not seen are eternal.'

1. The distinction may be explained thus—(1.) The things seen are such as are liable to present sense; and they are of two sorts—either comfortable to the present life, or uncomfortable. Comfortable, as riches, pleasure, and honours; uncomfortable, as poverty, disgrace, pain, torment, persecution. In short, either the allurements or affrightments of sense. (2.) There are things unseen. Some things are invisible by reason of their nature, some by reason of their distance.

Some by reason of their nature, as God and all spiritual things ; some by reason of their distance, as the recompense of reward or eternal life ; these latter chiefly. God, who maketh the promise, is unseen, and the time when the promise of eternal life shall be made good is to come ; and there are many difficulties between hoping and having ; yet these things, the joys of the other world, were the objects of the apostle's faith and hope.

2. The different respect to either. The respect is denied to things seen, ' We look not,' &c., but strongly asserted as to things unseen, ' We look at things that are not seen.' There is a despising or not thinking of the world and the comforts thereof, the losses and sufferings thereof, but an earnest thinking of the world to come. The word is *σκοπούντων*, which implieth not only a looking, or minding of them, but a making of them our scope, our last end, and the mark which we aim at. Only note, that the act is not simply denied as to things seen, but comparatively, in comparison of that heavenly joy and glory which is promised. So we look not at these things ; the world's honour or dishonour, the commodities or discommodities of this life, which we daily see before our eyes, have little influence upon us, 1 Cor. vii. 29–31. So all our acts are non-acts. To mourn for sin as if we mourned not, to rejoice in Christ as if we rejoiced not, to use ordinances as if we used them not, is a great fault ; for these are the things we should look to, as the way to heaven. But to mourn¹ for worldly losses, or rejoice in worldly comforts, to use this life as not over-using it, that is a great duty and a blessed frame of spirit. Open the eye of faith, but shut that of sense.

3. The reason of this different respect—the one temporal, the other eternal, *τὰ βλεπόμενα, πρόσκαιρα* ; as Heb. xi. 25, *πρόσκαιρον ἀπόλαυσιν*, ' The pleasures of sin for a season.' The good things of the world are temporal, both as to their continuance and their use. To their continuance ; the good and evil of the world is soon over, and therefore should have little influence upon us. The evil : ' This light affliction, which is but for a moment.' The good, Heb. xi. 25, they are but for a season, and nothing that is but for a season can satisfy a gracious heart. They are temporary as to their use. The use of all the good things in this world is only to be serviceable to a man in his passage to eternity : Deut. xxiii. 24, ' When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleasure ; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel ;' 1 Tim. vi. 7, ' We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out ;' Eccles. v. 15, ' He shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry away in his hand.' And on the other side, *τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια*, ' The things which are not seen are eternal ;' and so, so much as eternity exceedeth time, these blessed things exceed temporal trifles, and therefore should be more valued by us. The greatness of heavenly things is expressed in the former verse ; here, the duration of them. We can part with nothing here equal to what we expect hereafter.

Doct. A man can easily do and suffer anything for God who hath made things unseen and eternal his great scope and aim.

Here I shall inquire—(1.) What it is to make these eternal things our scope and aim ; (2.) Give you the reasons why such an one hath

¹ Qu. ' not to mourn ' ?—Ed.

an advantage above other men, and can more easily do and suffer great things for God.

First, Let us open this looking.

First, It implieth faith, or a believing the reality of these invisible things, that there are eternal and glorious things to be enjoyed after this life. Certainly an object, though never so glorious, cannot be seen without eyes. Now faith is the eye of the soul, without which we can have no prospect of the world to come. Therefore faith is defined to be, Heb. xi. 1, 'The substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' Without faith, reason is shortsighted, and there is a deep mist upon eternity, 2 Peter i. 9. Reason is acute enough in discerning what is noxious and comfortable to the present life, good for back and belly; but it seeth little of anything beyond this present world, so as to quicken us to make any preparation for death and eternity. The mind hath no eyes to look beyond the mists and clouds of this lower world, but such as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation is pleased to give us, and cannot believe the reality of the unseen glory until in his light we see light, Eph. i. 17, 18. Alas! the wisest part of mankind are taken up with toys and childish trifles in comparison of these invisible things. The sweetness of honour, wealth, and pleasure is known easily by feeling, and therefore known easily, and known by all; but few can see the reality and worth of these unseen things. Though heaven and glory be talked of in their hearing, yet they know it not. It is quite another thing when it is represented to us in the light of the Spirit. None discern the worth of these things but those that have the eagle eye of faith, that can pierce above the clouds to the seat of the blessed. Faith is like a prospective-glass, by which we see things at a distance. Others only mind things at hand, things that may be seen and felt. Compare *lumen fidei*, the light of faith, with the light of sense. That one degree of light, the light of sense, can only discern things near us, present with us, and before our eyes. Those things which lie out of the view of sense make no impression upon them. They see nothing but these corporal things, which even dogs and horses see as well as they; as, for instance, that it is good to eat well, and drink well, and sleep well, to be at liberty and enjoy our pleasure, or mind our business here in the world, and thrive and prosper, and do well according to heart's desire; but the light of faith will discover that there is no such danger as perishing for ever, no such worth in anything as there is in salvation by Christ, no such business of importance as seeking after eternal life; that all the gay things of sense are but as so many May-games to this happiness, all the terrible things in the world but as a flea-biting, all the business of the world but as a little childish sport at push-pin in comparison of working out our salvation with fear and trembling. Much of christianity lieth in opening the eye of faith and shutting that of sense. Faith can look through all the clouds and changes of this world to those eternal, perpetual, solid good things which God hath prepared for them that love him, and so can the better contemn all those perishing vanities which the world doteth upon. This is that which is called in the text looking and not looking, &c. The next degree of light is *lumen rationis*. Reason can only guess

at future contingencies, or at best see things in their causes, and that it is probable, if nothing letteth, that such and such things will fall out; but faith can look through all distance both of time and place, and the mist of contrary appearances, to things promised, with such certainty and sure persuasion as if the things we are persuaded of were at hand: Heb. xi. 13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;' John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.' Still it can believe in hope against hope, and see sunshine at the back of the storm, and heaven and happiness in the midst of deep afflictions. Compare the *lumen fidei* with the *lumen prophetiæ*, Rev. xx. 12. They agree in the common object, such things as are revealed by God; they agree in the same common nature, that they see things future and to come with such clearness and certainty as if they were in being; they differ, because faith goeth upon the common revelation which God hath made to all the saints in scripture; the other, some special revelation, made to certain chosen persons. The light of faith affects the heart with great joy and comfort; the other is usually accompanied with rapture and ecstasy. Yea, let us compare it with *lumen gloriæ*, the beatifical vision, that worketh a change in body and soul, 1 John iii. 2. This in soul, 2 Cor. iii. 18. There we see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; here as in a glass. Though we are not so highly affected with the light of faith, yet as truly: that nullifieth all sin and misery; this exasperateth the heart against sin, and fortifieth it against misery. Though the light of faith giveth not as full an enjoyment of God, yet as sure, and proportionably affecteth the heart, as if we saw Christ in the midst of his holy ones, and Paul with his crown of righteousness. It puts the believer's head above the clouds, in the midst of the glory of the world to come. Once more, this *lumen fidei* is somewhat like that sight which God hath of things—*scientia visionis et simplicis intelligentiæ*. God seeth all things that may be in his own all-sufficiency, all things that shall be in his own decree. Faith acts proportionably; it showeth all things that may be in the all-sufficiency of God, and though it be not sure of the event, yet 'our God is able,' Dan. iii. 17, 18. It seeth all things that shall be in the promises of the gospel, wherein his decree is manifested; it realiseth them as if they were already; they have a pledge of the blessing when they have the promise. Now, if we had such a faith, could thus look to things unseen, it would produce notable effects; a man would be another manner of christian.

Secondly, It implieth an earnest hope as well as a lively faith. Hope implieth two things—(1.) A frequent meditation; (2.) A desirous expectation.

1. Frequent meditation; for faith is acted by serious thoughts. Carnal men are described to be those 'who mind earthly things,' Phil. iii. 19; and again, 'Who mind the things of the flesh,' Rom. viii. 5. As a man is in the constitution of his heart, so are his musings and meditations; for thoughts, being the genuine birth and immediate offspring of the soul, do discover the temper of it. But those that are of

an heavenly temper and frame do often exercise their minds in heavenly things. Their happiness lieth there, and their business tendeth thither. Our Lord telleth us, 'That where the treasure is; there the heart will be,' Mat. vi. 21. A man's treasure draweth his heart after it; and therefore if his treasure be laid up in him, his heart will be there also. The mind is wholly taken up by these great things, that other things are little minded by them. But alas! it is otherwise with the generality of men. Our thoughts of heavenly blessedness are few and cold. Oh! that we should through our hearts with all manner of vanity, when we have eternity to think upon; that all the day long we should be regarding this perplexing business, that carnal vanity and delight, and thoughts of heavenly things should be such strangers to us! Is this looking to things not seen? We are continually thinking of what we love; worldly men, of gathering and increasing wealth, Luke xii. 17, 18; ambitious men, of preferment and applause; voluptuaries, of sports and pastimes. Philopœmen, wherever he walked, was thinking of battles: if he should be assaulted on such a piece of ground, how he would model and dispose his army for his defence. A christian should be thinking of heaven, how he may get thither, and what he shall enjoy there. They who do not think often, earnestly, and warmly of heaven and heavenly things, surely have little expectation this way. They are transported with pleasing sensualities, and have cold thoughts of the hope of the glory of God.

2. A desirous expectation. Looking is often made the act of hope in scripture; as Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope;' and Phil. iii. 20, 'Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' And so to look to things unseen noteth an affectionate and desirous expectation of them. A man may believe things terrible, and yet he cannot be said to look to them; that is, longingly to wait for them. Therefore this looking hath the earnestness of hope in it, as well as the firm persuasion of faith. There is a vehement longing and desire after the actual possession of these things, without which faith is a dead opinion or a speculative assent; our hope is but a few cold ineffectual thoughts, or an hasty wish or a slight desire, not that earnest looking which the scripture calleth for: Col. iii. 2, 'Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth.' There must be lively affections; there must be groaning earnestly, 2 Cor. v. 2; longing, and desiring to be with Christ, Phil. i. 23. Affections add a strong bent and poise to the will.

Thirdly, This looking argueth a fixing of the mind upon these things as our aim and scope, *σκοπούμενων*; that is the word used. That is our scope which influences all our actions; when we do all things to eternal ends, either nextly or ultimately. That we may obtain eternal life, that is the great drift, purpose, and business of a christian. This is the end of our faith, 1 Peter i. 9; the end of our diligence, and of all our service and waiting upon God, and that which sets us a-work in our general and particular calling: Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, serving God day and night, hope to come.' This is our great ambition, the end of all our labours, 2 Cor. v. 9; still to drive on a trade for heaven, this is the end of our sufferings: 1 Tim. iv. 12, 'Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust

in the living God.' He had spoken of godliness having the promise of this life and that which is to come ; therefore this is our aim and scope. I now come to show you—

Secondly, Why such have an advantage above other men, and can more easily do and suffer great things for God. This appeareth—

1. From the object. They that look to things unseen and eternal are acquainted with greater things than those are whose thoughts, and projects, and designs, are confined within the narrow bounds of time. Every one hath a choiceness, greatness, and excellency of spirit, according to the objects he most converseth withal. We count them children of mean spirit who converse only with pins and points, and toys and rattles ; we count those of a meaner spirit that have only a cow to milk, or a field to till, or a lute to play upon, than those that have a commonwealth to manage, or to make a little city great. So those that are gotten upon the mount of eternity can look upon the most serious business of the world as a mere May-game in comparison of enjoying God, and living for ever in delightful communion with him. They that have made eternal things their choice and scope have this advantage above other men, that they are acquainted with such excellent things as will darken the glory of all worldly things, and lessen them in their opinion, estimation, and affection (as a man that hath looked upon the sun in its brightness, for a while can look upon nothing else, as being dazzled with the splendour and brightness of it) ; things invisible, whether present or future, either because of nature or distance. They can set God against the creature, the terrors of God against all the terrors of sense, and the everlasting enjoyment of God against all the delights of sense.

[1.] Things invisible, because of their essence and nature. There is an eternal God against a poor creature whose breath is in his nostrils, a God who is all in all, and a creature who is nothing. Nothing in opposition or contrariety to God or his people : Isa. xli. 11, 'Behold, they that are incensed against thee shall be as nothing.' Nothing in comparison with God : Isa. xl. 17, 'All nations before him are as nothing ; they are accounted less than nothing and vanity ;' Dan. iv. 35, 'The inhabitants of the earth are reputed before him as nothing.' Nothing by way of exclusion of God ; as the sunbeam is nothing when the sun withdraweth, or the sound is nothing when the musician taketh away his mouth from the pipe or instrument : 'Thou takest away their breath, and they die.' The creature beareth a big bulk in the eye of sense, seemeth not only to be something, but all things ; and so long as we look to things visible, what hope or comfort have we to fasten upon ? but to a man that looketh to things invisible, the amiableness and frightfulness of the creature vanisheth into nothing : Heb. xi. 27, 'By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for he endured, as seeing him that is invisible ;' that is, with loss of all attempted to bring the people out of Egypt. He saw him not by the eye of sense, but faith. And then all the princes and powers of the world are as nothing. Alas ! when we see great and most enraged enemies, our hearts fail within us ; but faith, by closing the eye of sense, winketh the creature into nothing. On the other side, if a man had a due sense of God's being, the tempting baits of the world would

scarce be seen ; riches, and honours, and pleasures, would be forgotten, as if they were not, Prov. xxiii. 5 ; all things would be as nothing in comparison of him.

[2.] Things invisible because of their distance, as they are future ; so a believer hath the advantage of other men. They that look to things invisible and eternal see something to outweigh all carnal allectives or terrors, and so have more incitations to piety than the world can afford temptations to the contrary. Take the terrors of sense ; what is a prison to hell ? the fire wherein God's servants are burnt to ashes, to the fire that shall never be quenched and the worm that shall never die ? Luke x. 4. So take the delights and allurements of sense ; what are those to the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore ? A man that looketh to things unseen seeth that the terrors and delights of faith are far greater than the terrors and delights of sense, and are more sure and certain. Alas ! the pleasures of the world are but as dung and dog's-meat to Christ, Phil. iii. 7-9. All the evils are but as a flea-biting in comparison of the promised glory : Rom. viii. 18, ' For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us ; ' and 2 Cor. iv. 17, ' Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; ' Heb. x. 34, ' Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. ' They were liable to violence and rapine, brought before tribunals, &c., yet all this was nothing to these greater things. As it darkens the glory of worldly things, so it lesseneth the evil of them.

2. From the subject. They that make eternal things their scope, they have a new temper of heart. The soul naturally doth run out upon present things, as the greatest and only realities : ' That which is born of flesh is flesh, ' John iii. 6. Yea, all the while the soul dwelleth in flesh, and worketh by the senses, these present things will be a temptation to us. But there is a new bias and bent put upon them by grace ; there is an eternal principle that carrieth them to eternal ends. It is called ' The seed of God, ' 1 John iii. 9 ; ' The divine nature, which maketh us escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, ' 2 Peter i. 4. Such a nature as giveth eternal riches a due value and esteem. It is an immortal seed, 1 Peter i. 22. Eternal life is begun in all that shall be saved ; it is working towards its final perfection. The apostle telleth us, ' That he that hateth his brother hath not eternal life abiding in him, ' 1 John iii. 15 ; implying that he that loveth his brother, or hath any grace, hath eternal life begun in him which is working towards perfection.

3. From the slightness of temptations, when a man once groweth dead to the impressions of sense. The corrupt heart of man is all for present satisfactions, and though the pleasures of sin be short and inconsiderable, yet, because they are near at hand, they take more with us than the joys of heaven, which are future and absent : 2 Tim. iv. 10, ' Demas hath forsaken us, and loved the present world. ' Esau for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, Heb. xii. 16. When lust unfortunately craved a present satisfaction, all future considerations were laid aside. A little ease, honour, gain, and preferment in the world

makes men part with all that is sacred. Surely the presentness of things is a great snare; therefore do afflictions seem too grievous, Heb. xii. 11, and temptations so pressing. We can taste the delights of the creature, and feel the pleasures of the flesh; the happiness of the world to come is unseen and unknown. 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die,' is the language of every carnal heart; therefore it will not venture upon the practice of duties difficult and distasteful to present affections, and forego what we see and enjoy upon the uncertain hopes of what is to come. Present things have more advantage to pervert the mind than good things at a distance to draw it to God. Here lieth the root of all temptations; the inconveniencies of a strict religion are present, and the rewards are future. Well, this advantage is nothing to those that can overlook present things, and have their hearts wholly taken up about things to come. Sense and faith are the two opposite leaders and captains in the spiritual warfare. All the forces of the regenerate part are led up by faith; sense on the other side, marshalleth all the temptations of the world and the flesh. Sense is all for enjoyment and actual possession. To meet it, faith giveth a substance and being to things to come, and maketh the soul seek out other satisfactions and contentments. The strength of the renewed part and success of the spiritual battle lieth in the liveliness of hope and the certainty of faith, which maketh these things present which sense would judge absent. It forestalleth the joys of heaven, that restraints from present delights may seem less irksome; so that a little profit or present pleasure cannot prevail over that deep sense of everlasting joys and pleasures that are to come. Take, for instance, Moses: Heb. xi. 24-26, 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' Faith showeth we shall lose nothing in this world, but we shall have much better in the other world. Looking to these things sweetens the bitterness of all crosses, and weakeneth the strength of all temptations: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'

4. From the nature of the scope and end. It is a measure and a motive.

[1.] It is a measure to direct us how to use all things. When a man hath fixed his end, he will the sooner understand his way. The intention is as the eye of the body: Mat. vii. 22, 'The light of the body is the eye; if a man's eye be single, the whole body is full of light.' Every man is made wise by his end, for the end is the measure of the means. Now, above all other ends, eternity must needs make us wise, because it is the last end, the most noble end which we can propound to ourselves; and so thereby can understand the true measure and value of all things, in things evil or good.

In things evil, it showeth how really evil things really evil are; as sin. The weight and grievousness of sin is best known by those eternal torments which are appointed for the punishment thereof. Present punishments do somewhat discover it: 'Now know that it is an evil

thing, and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God,' Jer. ii. 19. Briars and thorns, and sensible smart, will teach us that which bare contemplation doth not. But if the temporal punishment maketh us know, 'What an evil thing and a bitter it is,' what will eternal do? Go ask the damned in hell whether it be a light thing to sin against God: Mark ix. 44, 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'

Here is the great aggravation of sin, that for temporal trifles they have lost eternal joys, and run the hazard of eternal pains for the ease, mirth, and pleasure of a moment. And then for things evil in opinion, it showeth how falsely we are deluded; as afflictions, sufferings, and losses for Christ, death, &c. It much concerneth us to have a true notion of these things. For afflictions, it showeth that they are not so bad as the world taketh them to be. They are tedious for the present, but it is but for a season: 1 Peter i. 6, 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.' All things are lessened by having eternity in our minds, the delights of the world, and the sorrows of the world, 1 Cor. vii. 29. Since the world passeth away, and the fashion thereof, we should rejoice as if we rejoiced not, mourn as if we mourned not; the good and evil will be soon over. We cry out, How long? but it is not for ever. It is grievous, but it is not eternal, it is not hell; yea, they may be good: Ps. cxix. 71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.' All things are good as they help on a blessed eternity; so afflictions may be good. That part of the world that is led by sense will never endure this, but that part which is led by faith will easily assent to it. The world is led by sense. Say to a covetous man that the loss of an estate is good, to a worldly rich man that poverty is good, to an ambitious man that it is good to be despised and contemned, to a voluptuous man that it is good to be in pain, to afflict the body for the good of the soul, they will never believe you. But go to them that measure all things by eternity, and they will tell you that poverty maketh way for the true riches, mourning for the true glory, want for fulness of pleasure at God's right hand, that misery mortifieth sin: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' Sufferings for Christ: if we win eternity with the loss of all the world, we are no losers; for 'The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever,' 1 John ii. 17. But, on the contrary, it is a sorry bargain to lose eternity for the enjoyment of all the world: Mat. xvi. 26, 'For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' And then death, the king of terrors; yet it is not feared by a christian, because it is an entrance into eternal life; when he dieth, then shall he live: John xi. 25, 26, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?' If we have a sense of this, why should we be troubled to be unclothed, that we may be clothed upon with immortality and glory? It separateth us from our worldly friends and benefits, but bringeth us to God, with whom we shall abide for ever; it puts an

end to time, that we may enter into eternity ; so that death is ours, 1 Cor. iii. 22 ; a friend, not an enemy ; it maketh an end of sin and sorrow, to make way for blessedness and glory.

For things good ; good seeming, or good real. Good seeming : There are many things which the vain deceived world doteth upon, which are impertinencies to our great end ; as foolish sports and recreations : Eccles. ii. 2, ' I said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doeth it ? ' There are other things which are mere inconsistencies ; as many evils which we commit for a little temporal happiness. Then real good things ; duties, ordinances, graces, Christ, the favour of God. We know how to value these things by looking to eternity. The good things of this world are not valuable only upon a natural account, but as they are helps to heaven. If they be diversions from eternity, they are the worst things that can befall us. To be condemned to this kind of felicity is a part of God's curse : Jer. xvii. 13, ' They that forsake thee shall be written in the earth. ' On the contrary, to have our names written in heaven is a great blessing : Luke x. 20, ' Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you ; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven. ' It is better to enjoy a little as a help to heaven than a great deal as a hindrance to it. Oh ! blessed is the man that taketh no further content in the comforts of this life than they may further his soul to eternity ! If an estate increase upon you, it is most valuable as you may be rich in good works, and take hold of eternal life, 1 Tim. vi. 18. When your hearts rest in them without subordination to eternal things, your estate becometh a snare. Whatever the heart is set upon, if it be not in order to this end and scope, it is cursed to thee. The spiritual blessing of all our natural comforts is in order to this last end. But then for duties ; time spent with God in order to eternity is the best part of your lives, Acts xxvi. 7. When we are employed in the world, we make provision but for a few months or days, it may be hours ; but in converse with God you lay up for everlasting : the throne of grace will be the more sweet because it is the porch of heaven : ordinances and public means of grace, a child of God valueth them more than the greatest worldly advantages : Ps. lxxxiv. 12, ' One day in thy courts is better than a thousand : I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. ' But why ? Because there is trading for eternity ; there he gets a prospect into heaven, and heareth news of his long home. And then graces ; they are glorious things, because they are the seed and earnest of eternal glory. It is called ' immortal seed, ' 1 Peter i. 23. When this state is begun, it cannot be dissolved. And it is called the earnest of the Spirit : graces as well as comforts are his earnest. By all these things the Holy Ghost is preparing us for eternity, Rom. ix. 23 ; assuring us of eternity, Eph. i. 13, 14. And then Christ is valued as the author of eternal salvation, Heb. v. 9 ; as the means of coming to God, Phil. iii. 8-10. Things seen are vilified and contemned by them. Lastly, the favour of God, that we enjoy here. It is valuable in itself, and as it is a taste and pledge of our everlasting communion with him : Ps. xvi. 11, ' In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore ; ' Ps. xvii. 15, ' As for me, I will behold thy

face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' Our taste now assureth us of our everlasting satisfaction. Thus you see eternity giveth us the true measure whereby to know the worth and weight of everything.

[2.] It is our motive to quicken us to be more diligent, more exact, and to pursue after those things with greater vigilancy, industry, and self-denial. Industry ; a man that will be rich in the world chooseth apt means, learneth all the ways of thrift, and dexterously pursueth his purpose ; rising early, going to bed late, piercing himself through with many sorrows : he beareth it all patiently, because it is his end. A man given to pleasures chooseth that course of life wherein he may most enjoy them ; sacrificeth his time, credit, estate, to gratify his end. So one addicted to honours and advancement ; he tortureth himself with many carking thoughts and tedious attendances, and projects how to rise, and to be built a story higher. So a man that maketh things unseen his scope taketh God's way to enjoy them, laboureth for these things : John vi. 27, ' Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life ; ' and Phil. ii. 12, ' Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ' And then we must use vigilancy, that our lives may not be filled up with impertinencies and inconsistencies : Eph. v. 15, ' See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise ; ' Heb. iv. 1, ' Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. ' And then we must exercise self-denial, denying ourselves in our interests, comforts, ease, peace, life, and all that is dear and precious to us. The Thessalonians are said to suffer for the kingdom of God, because in the midst of tribulations and troubles they look for a future rest : 2 Thes. i. 5, with 7. And so it is said, Heb. xi. 35, ' They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ' They might have been freed from those cruel pains on certain conditions, but they would rather wait for God's deliverance than accept of man's, though it were invisible, and yet so long to come. They knew in the resurrection God would give them an immortal, glorious, and blessed life, for a short and miserable one, and recompense their cruel pains with eternal pleasures.

Use 1. To press us to get this heavenly frame and temper of spirit ; to look to things invisible as sure and near, and to make them our great scope ; that all which we do may tend thereunto, and be subordinate to eternal life.

I. Remember we were made for eternity ; for God hath given us an immortal spirit, which cannot be content with anything that hath an end. If we had souls that would perish, it would be more justifiable to look after things that perish. No ; they will eternally survive these present things : Eccles. xii. 7, ' Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it. ' Here we fly away as a shadow upon the mountains, come to act our part upon the stage of the world, and are gone ; what is this to endless eternity ? Surely that estate should be most in our eyes. How do you imagine you shall live after this life ? When you die, all the thoughts that concern the present world perish, and if you did perish too, it were no such great matter ; but still you live, and enter eternity, and it is sad

when you have no happiness to enjoy. It is good often to consider what the soul shall do when it shall be turned out of doors: Luke xvi. 9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations;' that it may not be left shiftless and harbourless.

2. Eternity is made known to us christians, and clearly set before us, 2 Tim. i. 10. What is the drift of the religion which you profess but to draw us off to another world, 1 Cor. ii. 12. Wherefore were you baptized but in order to eternity. Then you began your months of purification. Therefore it is said, 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' What is the notion of a christian? Strangers and pilgrims: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' Christ came not here to settle us in a state of prosperity, nor to make the world our rest and portion. No; he came to bring up our hearts first, and then ourselves, to a better world, which he calleth upon us to seek and make sure of. He came to save us from the present evil world, Gal. i. 4; not to fix upon it.

3. We are already involved in an eternal misery, and stand under a sentence binding us over to the curse and wrath of God: John iii. 18, 'Condemned already.' Nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between us and execution. How can we sleep in sin so near eternity, and laugh and dance over the brink of hell, and trifle away our times before we have taken a sure way to escape this misery! The scriptures show us the way of escaping this misery and attaining to eternal blessedness. Oh, flee from wrath to come! Mat. iii. Run for refuge. A man cannot be soon enough out of the state of sin and wrath.

4. You shall be shortly summoned to your account: Luke xvi. 2, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' You have received so much from me, such riches, such honours, such parts, such sufficiencies, what have you done with them? What will the poor carnal wretch answer in that day when the diligent shall be rewarded with everlasting life and the negligent be cast into everlasting fire? In the present time, you either win or lose eternity.

5. Consider what poor deluded souls, that are in the everlasting estate, would give if they might be trusted with a little time again, that they might provide for eternity. How happy would they think themselves if God would but try them once more! Their remembrance of their past folly and evil choice is a part of their perpetual torment, matter for the gnawing worm to feed upon, Mark ix. 44. If carnal, careless creatures would but anticipate the thoughts of another world, they would sooner discern their mistake. How miserably will you bewail yourselves when you have lost eternity for poor temporal things. What comfort will it be to you that you have been merry, lived in pomp and ease? It is better to believe than try, to prevent the misery than experiment it. Now for means to help you—

[1.] Use frequent recollection, for thereby you come to yourselves: Luke xv. 17, 'And when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?' Many are so busy about their vanities, that

they cannot find that they are men, or think what business they have to do in the world, nor where they must dwell for ever. Self-communing would be a hopeful means to undeceive them: Isa. xlii. 8, 'Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.' And elsewhere the prophet showeth what reasonings we should use with ourselves, Isa. lv. 2. Surely this would be one means to wean you from carnal vanities, and to deaden the gust and taste of them to your souls. Most men debase their reason to the service of their appetites and lusts; their pleasure and business is the pleasing and gratifying of the flesh, Rom. xiii. 14. All their care is to eat well and drink well, to be well fed and well clad, and to make a fair show in the flesh, and live in worldly pomp. All their business is to gather in provision for the satisfying of their present lusts. They spend their days and cares for nothing else, which is that living after the flesh, Rom. viii. 13, that sowing to the flesh, Gal. v. 8, which the scripture condemneth. And what is the reason of all this? Because they are inconsiderate; never consider, Whence am I, whither am I going? what shall become of me to all eternity? Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' They are like children hunting after butterflies; and when they have them, their gaudy wings melt away in their hands, and there remaineth nothing but an ugly worm, the worm of conscience, the worm of disappointment. O recollect thyself! is this to make eternal things our scope?

[2.] Let us often compare together the condition of the present and of the future life. All things that are liable to the view of sense soon pass away, whether comforts or crosses. The good and evil of the present world are soon over; accordingly should be our carriage towards them, 1 Cor. vii. 29-31. Now consider how unreasonable it is the soul should be drawn away by transitory things from those which are eternal. The things we doat upon are not worthy to be compared with the greatness and duration of those things to which we are invited by the promises of the gospel. It may be you have health and strength and wealth now, but how long will you have it? We are not sure of the enjoyment of these things the next day. How soon may they be withered! the prosperity of the wicked is cut down as grass, withered as the green herb, Ps. xxxvii. 2; but things unseen will be yours to all eternity. God is an everlasting portion: Ps. lxxiii. 26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' Christ's redemption is an everlasting redemption: Heb. ix. 12, 'He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' God and Christ will be yours to-day, and will be yours to all eternity. Those things which are seen, if they do not perish, may be taken from you, Mat. vi. 19, 20. We are not sure to get it, but you are sure to leave it, Job i. 21, but these other things cannot be taken from you: Luke x. 42, 'One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her.' The devil cannot and God will not take it from you.

[3.] Improve your experience of the vanity of this world: Ps. cxix. 96, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad.' Vain, light hearts pass over these things, and get

no profit by them; they find the creature vanity and vexation of spirit, yet run out as greedily after it as they did before: Ps. xlix. 13, 'This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings.' They are sensible of the folly of their ancestors, but are not mended by it; they have eyes to see, but not an heart to see: Deut. xxix. 2-4, 'Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land: the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.'

[4.] Be sure when you are tempted to revive this meditation upon your hearts, that things seen are temporal, and things unseen are eternal. As (1.) When any temptation cometh to draw your hearts to give contentment to the flesh for a season; as for instance, when you are tempted to please your eye, your taste, your sensual desire, or to wrong your souls, for wealth and honour; remember these are not eternal pleasures, riches, honours; and shall I dare run the hazard of wronging God or my soul for a little present satisfaction? leave my fatness and sweetness to rule over the trees? What! hazard eternal things for temporal trifles? (2.) When tempted by the bitterness of the cross to relent in God's cause, say, as Basil's forty martyrs, that were kept naked in the open air in a cold night, to be burned next day: Sharp is the cold, but sweet is paradise; troublesome is the way, but pleasant is the end of the journey: let us endure a little cold, and the patriarch's bosom will soon warm us. Stephen saw heaven opened, and that fortified him against the showers of stones from the people, Acts vii. 51. It is for such a season.

[5.] Beg the light of the Spirit. It is necessary for us both with respect to things seen and unseen. (1.) Seen, that we may apprehend the vanity of the creature: Ps. xc. 92, 'So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom;' Ps. xlix. 4, 'I will incline mine ear to a parable; I will open my dark saying upon the harp.' David is describing the vanity of worldly prosperity. And also to see things unseen: 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 his inheritance in the saints.' Our wisdom natural is carnal and sensual, James iii. 15. Either for riches, pleasures, or honours: Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom.' Reason catereth for the body, true wisdom is from above.

[6.] Do not only seek the light of the Spirit, but wait for his renewing grace, that you may make things unseen your felicity and portion: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' Naturally there is in us a foolish inordinate desire after the dignities, honours, and pleasures of the world; but we should earnestly desire the new birth: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;' 1 John v. 4, 'Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world;' and 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding

great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.' That we may have a deep sense of and respect to the other world.

[7.] Think often and seriously what a value eternity puts upon things small, much more upon things great in themselves.

(1.) That eternity puts a value upon things in themselves small, whether good or evil: evil, as what a torment would an everlasting toothache be? Though the pain be not very great nor mortal, yet the eternal length and duration maketh it intolerable. So in things good, if a man might have a cottage but for an hundred years, he would prize it more than to have liberty to walk in a glorious palace for one day; so that things which are eternal do much more excel those things which are temporal, though there be otherwise a difference between the things themselves. As the toothache is not a mortal disease, but every man would die presently rather than live under an everlasting toothache. A cottage is not to be compared to a palace, yet the inheritance of a cottage is much better than the liberty of a walk in a palace for an hour or a day. A small thing is greatened by eternity, much more a greater. Well, then, since things unseen do so far exceed things seen, and the one are temporal and the other eternal, why should man be so foolish and perverse as to prefer the one above the other? Whatever hurts is but a flea-biting; whatever delights is but a May-game. The good and evil of the world is not to be compared with the foretaste of the good and evil of the world to come, horrors of conscience or joy in the Holy Ghost. Horrors of conscience: Prov. xviii. 14, 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?' Joy in the Holy Ghost: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Horror of conscience is a greater pain than any pain; and joy in the Holy Ghost is a greater joy than any joy. Now eternity cometh and addeth a greater weight to it, as to the horrors of the wicked or the joys of the blessed. If these horrors be so burdensome, what is it to lie under them for evermore? If we cannot sleep one whole night (as to a man in a fever a night is an year, though he lie in a soft bed), how do we long for day! how tedious is it then to lie under eternal darkness, and to despair of ever seeing day more! so for the joys of the blessed; if a day in God's courts be better than a thousand elsewhere, what is a month? what is an year? what are an hundred years? what is six hundred? what a thousand? what is eternity? everything in the other world, as it is great, so it is eternal; there is an eternity in the evil part of it. The bodies of men are eternal, their souls eternal, the fire never goeth out, for the fuel never ceaseth; the prison in which they are kept is eternal, the torment is eternal, because the judge is eternal, and his sentence shall never be reversed, Heb. x. 31, so the joys, as they are unspeakable and glorious, so eternal. The crown of glory is an incorruptible crown, 1 Peter v. 4, the inheritance an incorruptible inheritance. The vision of God is not by snatches, but everlasting, the fruition of God is uninterrupted; all is great, and all is eternal.

(2.) This must be seriously considered by us, and often and deeply. If we did so, what help should we then have against temptations!

It would make us obey God's commandments more cheerfully, subdue the desires of the flesh, and make us more ready to every good work, to consider that eternity ensueth, that everlasting woe and weal is in the case. Meat well chewed nourisheth the more, but being swallowed whole, breedeth crudities, burdeneth the stomach, and defileth the body; so to hear of eternity, and swallow it without rumination and due consideration, maketh these things lose their force, so that they do not excite our diligence, nor break the force of temptations: 'Oh, that they were wise, and would consider their latter end!' Deut. xxix.; 'And my people do not consider,' Isa. i. 3. It is our carelessness and inconsideration that undoeth us. We read in story (which also hath been repeated in a late instance), but originally it is recorded of Agrippina and Nero, that when a prodigal prince had given away a huge sum, they laid all the money in a heap before him, that he might see and consider what he had given away; to bring him to retract, or in part to lessen the grant. So it is good for us to consider what we lose in losing eternity, what we part with for these vile and perishing things. Invisible things, if they are small, yet they are eternal; but they are great and eternal too; but these other things are small and temporal.

[8.] Consider how certain and sure these invisible things are which lie in the other world. There wanteth nothing but this to strike the temptation dead which ariseth from temporal things; for since these invisible things are greater and more durable, why should they not prevail more with us? The reason is, we see, feel, taste the one; but the other lie out of sight in an unknown world, and so we doubt of them, or our persuasions about them are very weak. But to check this disease, consider what help is offered to you—(1.) By the light of nature, which showeth it may be; (2.) The light of christianity, which showeth it shall be.

(1.) The light of nature will offer proof enough to make us more serious than ever we have been; for—

(1st.) If there be not a world to come, and a state of invisible happiness and unseen glory, why is it that such a conceit hath been rooted in the minds of men of all nations and religions? not only Greeks and Romans, but barbarians and people least civilised. Herodotus telleth us that the ancient Getes thought their souls perished not when they died, but went to Tamolxis; and Diodorus Siculus, of the Egyptians, that their parents and friends went to some eternal habitation; and the modern heathens, but newly discovered, hold the condition of men and beasts different; that they subsist after life, and have a being, is their firm persuasion; and therefore are wont to assign to the dead part of the goods which they possessed. And Acosta telleth us that in Peru they are wont to kill some of their slaves to attend the dead in the world to come. Thus in a manner all nations have received this tradition from hand to hand, from their ancestors; and the nearer to the first original of mankind, the more clear and pressing hath been the conceit hereof. Lapse of time, which decayeth all things, hath not been able to deface it out of the minds of men, who though they have been gradually depraved and degenerated, according to the distance by which they have been removed from their first

originals, yet they could never blot out the sense of an estate after this life. An universal tradition is some argument, when there can be no solid and indubitable reasons brought to convince it of falsity. Now such is this, spread throughout the universe, and with extreme forwardness received of all nations, and hath borne up against all the encounters of time, and constantly maintained itself in the midst of so many revolutions of human affairs, by which many other things were lost.

(2*d.*) All men have believed that there is a God, and very few doubted but that he is a rewarder of virtue and punisher of vice. Now neither the one nor the other is fully accomplished in this world, even in the judgment of those who have no great knowledge of the nature of sin, nor what punishment is competent thereunto. Therefore there must be some state after this life, in which this retributive justice of punishing the bad and rewarding the good shall be manifested; for here providence seemeth to be darkened, and the world is offended with the calamities of the good and prosperity of the wicked: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ Jesus, we are of all men most miserable.'

(3*d.*) If there be an end of man when he dieth, why is man afraid of torments after death? Heb. ii. 15, 'Deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Men fear death, not as a natural evil, as it terminateth our present comforts, but as a penal evil, as it is an entrance to unknown sorrows: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.' What is the reason of these stings of conscience, which are never so sensible and quick as when they approach near death, or behold themselves in some imminent danger? What are these but presaging fears, which anticipate miseries after this life? If there were an utter end of men, these troubles should in reason then vanish; but this is the time when these alarms are redoubled and those tempests increase their violence.

(2.) The light of christianity doth much more discover it. That is properly a doctrine of things unseen; that telleth us of a prison where are the spirits of wicked men, 1 Peter iii. 19; of a palace or mansions in our Father's house, where are the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. On the one hand it telleth us of a worm that never dieth, of a fire that shall never be quenched, Mark ix. 44; on the other side, of joys that are at the right hand of God for evermore, Ps. xvi. 11; that Christ died to free us from the wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10, and purchased heaven for us, 1 Thes. v. 10, and is gone to heaven to seize upon it in our name, John xiv. 2, 3, having first left a sure promise of eternal life to all that believe in him, 1 John ii. 25; which promise was outwardly confirmed by divers miracles accompanying them that went abroad to make this offer in his name, Heb. ii. 3, 4. Inwardly in the hearts of his people, by giving them the first-fruits of this everlasting estate in their union with himself, Col. i. 27, and the joys of his Spirit, which are therefore said to be full of glory, 1 Peter i. 8. These are truths interweaved throughout the whole body of christianity. Now discourse but with yourselves—(1.) Partly concerning the thing itself; (2.) Partly concerning the certainty of your hope.

(1st.) Concerning the certainty of the thing itself. Is the whole scripture false, the gospel a fable? Are all the oracles of the prophets, the doctrine of Christ, his miracles, resurrection, ascension, but a dream? Were they all deceived that followed Christ upon these hopes, that took such pains in subduing the flesh, and hazarding their interests freely upon the hopes of another world? Are the wisest sort of men the world ever saw such fools? all the ordinances of Christ a customary superstition? Is grace a fancy, the joys of the Spirit delusions or fantastical impressions? these rejoicings and foretastes of the children of God, a mere deceit and imposture? Surely it cannot be that all this solemnity should be used to establish a vain conceit.

(2d.) Excite and work up your own faith and hope. Is there not a state of blessedness reserved for me in the heavens? invisible and glorious things, which I am bound to seek after? Thou hast not possession, but thou hast the grant, the deed of gift sealed; thou hast the conveyance to show; God's own word and promise to assure thee. Yea, it is not *nudum pactum*. God hath given thee the earnest of a greater sum: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' What should I do, then, but look for it, long for it, and earnestly seek after it?

Use 2. Is for reproof—

1. To the incredulous and unbelieving, to whom all invisible things seem a fancy. Scoffing atheists, they will not believe there is an heaven or an hell till they see them. In the face of the visible church there may be such, and in the latter times there shall be many such, 2 Peter iii. 4; but in hell there are none such, because then matters of faith are matters of feeling, and to their bitter cost they find the truth of what they doubted of. To these I shall say, God hath always tried his people, and distinguished them from others, by respect to things not seen: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' By this he condemned the world, by his costly industry and care to frame an ark; but whilst he provided for his safety, they perished in their sins. Must everything be seen before we fear it or hope for it? Why then do men provide for time to come so long beforehand? Why for old age in youth? why for winter in summer? As the industry of the ant is recommended for our imitation, Prov. vi. 6-8, 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise, which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.' It is uncertain we shall live to old age or see another winter, but it is certain we shall live for ever in heaven or hell. Reason and conscience and scripture assureth us of that. Atheists think the people of God are a sort of credulous fools, as Celsus objected that faith and credulity brought in error. None so credulous as the atheists, who hearken to every foolish fancy, and cavil against the light of the universal tradition of mankind and the evidence of scripture, which God hath so often owned and confirmed.

2. The inconsiderate and brutish part of mankind, who come into

the world they know not why, and then go out of the world they know not whither ; these live in the world as in an house of smoke ; as they see nothing out of it, so scarce see the things they converse with in it. These mistake their banishment for their country, the sea for their haven, and themselves for beasts instead of men Oh ! let these consider—

[1.] Why they came into the world. Not to eat, and drink, and sleep, and sport. We were made for eternal things, not for temporal. Not for the world, nor for ourselves, nor for anything less than God, to glorify him and enjoy him ; and all other things to serve as helps to heaven. Surely we were not made in vain, nor by chance brought forth into light. The least things have their appointed ends ; and surely man, that hath an immortal spirit, was never made for a mortal happiness. Oh ! then, that men should be so senseless as never to regard whether there be an eternity, yea or no ; that they should suffer the beast to ride the man, should live merely to live, use their bodies only as a strainer or a channel for meat and drink to pass through ; that they should only employ their souls about trifles and carnal satisfactions : John xviii. 37, ‘ To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.’ All is for some end.

[2.] The next thing to be considered is, what will be their state when they go out of the world. We daily draw near to our long home, but we little think of it till we come to our journey’s end, fear not the pit till we are plunged into it, prize not our time till it be lost and gone : Eccles. ix. 12, ‘ Man knoweth not his time ; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.’ Death and calamity befalleth a man when he little dreameth of it, as the fish and the bird go with much hope and promise of good to themselves to the bait and the snare. Hence the beasts are more excusable than we ; they cannot foresee the end, but are guided by instinct and appetite to present things that are good for them. Oh, that men are entering upon eternity, and yet never think of it ! Oh, excite yourselves ; consider what will become of you when you die. You die but once, and there is no mending of your errors when you awake in flames. A merchant may lose in one ship, but the next venture may repair him, and make him amends again ; an orator may lose fame and reputation in one speech and action, and the next may restore it, and recover it again with advantage ; but if a man die ill, the loss is irrevocable ; but if well, the gain is immortal : therefore surely we should prepare more for an entrance upon our eternal estate.

3. To negligent and sensual worldlings, who wholly busy themselves about the matters of this life, and are hurried hither and thither : Ps. xxxix. 6, ‘ Surely every man walketh in a vain show ; they are disquieted in vain.’ Our life is but a picture, image, shadow, or dream of life ; it vanisheth in a trice. All must be suddenly parted with here, all the riches and honours ; and yet we cark and labour and turmoil to get these transitory things, as if they would continue with us to all eternity, and had some durable satisfaction in them. Present pleasures

and profits cloud our minds, and till we can get this veil drawn aside, this cloud scattered, we do not discern our mistake. Oh, consider who would redeem the short pleasure of a dream with the torment of many days ! Our days upon earth are as a shadow, and yet this shadow do we cleave to instead of the substance, and though earthly things be short in their continuance, and uncomfortable in their end, yet these take up our life, and love, and care, and thoughts. Just as those that want children take pleasure in keeping little dogs and cats, so do they embrace the shadow for the substance, vainglory for eternal glory, a little pelf for the true riches, a little paltry business for the great work and end of our lives; and when all is done, it is but a spider's web, Job viii. 14. The trust of the carnal man shall be but as the spider's web. As the spider out of his own bowels weaveth a web to catch flies, and frameth it with a great deal of art, but it is gone with the turn of the besom, so is the fruit of all their plots, and cares, and labours, and running up and down, when in the meantime we are unmindful of eternity. Oh, when will these distracting worldlings find a time for God and everlasting happiness? Childhood is not serious enough, youth must take their pleasure, manly age is too full of business, and old age is too feeble.

4. It reproveth God's children, who are too lazy, and have not that life and seriousness in a spiritual business which they have in an earthly. If eternity be your aim, why are you so dead and dull in a course of holiness? The apostle biddeth Timothy to follow after holiness: 'To fight the good fight, to lay hold on eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12; implying if the one were his aim, he would do the other. If we press towards the mark, why are we so frozen and cold in our zeal for God, so inclinable to every motion of sin, so easily overcome by temptations? Alas! making eternal things our scope is but a notion, unless we provide forthwith with greater care, exactness, and diligence. There should be a suitableness and proportion between the exactness of our conversation and the greatness of our hopes: 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' That worthiness is the worthiness of condignity, congruity, and decency. But alas! do we labour as for eternity? so follow after righteousness, so fight the good fight of faith, so despise the world, deny ourselves, run through all straits, triumph over all difficulties, mortify and subdue our own carnal inclinations? Alas! we are so bold in sinning, so cold in holy things, and do so little exercise ourselves unto godliness, as if we had no such great matters in view and chase; and carry it so as if our hopes were only in this world, and not as if the eternal God had promised these eternal things to us. Surely if our belief of them were stronger we should be other persons than we are, in all holy conversation and godliness, 2 Peter iii. 11.

5. The sottish despairing carnal person. As there is a raging despair, so a sottish despair: Jer. xviii. 12, 'And they said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart;' and Jer. ii. 25, 'Thou saidst there is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go.' Give over all endeavours. If I be saved, I shall be saved; if damned, who can help it? I will bear it as well as I can. Bear it!

What wilt thou bear? What! endure the loss of heaven? endure the wrath of almighty God? Poor wretch! thou knowest not what eternity meaneth. For the loss, thou wilt apprehend it to be another thing when thy soul cometh to see but a glimpse of what heaven is, and shall see others sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and thyself shut out. They are admitted, and thou art excluded; this will cause weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth for evermore, Mat. viii. 12. If Rachel could not endure the loss of her children, nor Jacob the supposed loss of Joseph, when all his sons and daughters rose up to comfort him, 'I will go to the grave to my son mourning,' Gen. xxxvii. 35; if Achitophel could not endure the rejectment of his counsel, and Haman could not endure to be slighted by Mordecai, and many cannot endure the loss of a beloved child; how wilt thou endure the loss of eternity? The disciples wept bitterly when Paul said, 'Ye shall see my face no more,' Acts xxviii. 38. What will you do when God shall say, See my face no more? Thou carest not for the fruition of God now, because thou believest not the reality of this blessedness, hast other comforts and affairs to divert thee; but when thou shalt be set apart from all thy comforts, and hast nothing to divert thee, thou shalt know what eternal life is.

For the other: how canst thou endure the wrath of God, thou that canst not endure to be scorched a day or two in feverish flames, thou that canst not endure the acute pains of stone or gout, when God armeth the humours of thine own body against thee? that canst not endure the scalding of a little gunpowder casually blown up, the pain of a broken arm or leg; how wilt thou endure when God himself shall fall upon thee? God himself puts the question, Ezek. xxii. 14. In the other world, God is all in all.
