

SERMON UPON ECCLESIASTES XII. 7.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it.—ECCLES. xii. 7.

IN the beginning of this chapter Solomon presseth us to remember our creator while yet young: many have been too late acquainted with God, but never any too soon. His arguments are—

1. From the wearisome evils of old age, very rhetorically described in ver. 2-6, 'While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease, because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened; and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low; and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird; and all the daughters of music shall be brought low: also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fear shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.' That is a time of expense, and needeth cordials rather than work and service. Therefore, while the prints of God's creating bounty are fresh upon us, it is best to exercise ourselves to godliness.

2. From the certain approach of death, as the final issue of the present life; therefore we should prepare for this change, think of God betimes, and secure a better life before this come to the last period. This argument is in the text, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth,' &c. Man consists of a body and a soul; the text telleth you what shall become of both.

1. Here is represented the state of the body after death.

2. The state of the soul.

1. The state of the body; it shall be resolved into the matter out of which it was made. Dust it was in its composition, and dust it shall be in its dissolution: 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was.'

2. The state of the soul in the other world: 'And the spirit shall return to God that gave it.' Where—

[1.] The nature of it, or what kind of substance the soul is; it is a spirit, or an immaterial substance.

[2.] The author of it, who is God ; he gave it ; he gave us the body too, but the soul in a more especial manner.

[3.] The disposal of it, or in what state it remaineth after death ; it returneth to God. It is not extinguished when the body is dissolved into dust, nor doth it vanish into the air, but returneth to God.

All true wisdom consisteth in the knowledge of God and ourselves ; we cannot know ourselves unless we know the parts of which we do consist. This text giveth you a right notion of them both ; for it telleth you what they are, and what shall become of them. They are conjoined, but distinct ; and therefore, when the union betwixt them is dissolved, they go several ways. We are concerned in them both, but more in the soul, which hath the pre-eminence above the body. The one is visible, and therefore its changes are known ; but the other is invisible, and therefore more unknown ; but the state of both is equally certain, for as certainly as the body returneth to the dust, so doth the soul return to God.

First, For the first branch, ' Then shall the body return to the earth as it was,' I shall not stay upon it.

1. It giveth you the right notion of the body ; it is but dust moulded up into a comely shape, which is an effect of God's wisdom and power, to make such a curious frame out of the dust of the ground. We read in the history of the plagues of Egypt, that the magicians were not able so much as to bring forth lice out of the dust of the ground, Exod. viii. 18, 19 ; but God could raise such a beautiful structure as man's body is. But though it speaketh God's power, yet it showeth our frailty. Our body is here called ' dust ;' it is not brass, or iron, or stone, or stiff clay, but dust, and shall return to the earth as it was. Dust hath no coherencè or consistence, but is easily scattered with every puff of wind ; so is our earthly or dusty tabernacle with every blast of God's displeasure : Gen. xviii. 27, ' Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes ;' Isa. xl. 15, ' Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and they are counted as the small dust of the balance.'

2. What shall become of it ? ' It shall return to the earth as it was ;' Gen. iii. 19, ' Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return ;' Ps. civ. 29, ' Thou takest away their breath ; they die and return to their dust ;' Ps. cxlvi. 4, ' He returneth to his earth.' Which should teach us to take care for a better estate : 2 Cor. v. 1, ' For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' The soul dwelleth now in an earthly house ; it should look out for a more glorious mansion.

Secondly, Of the soul three things are spoken, which are so many arguments to prove its immortality, which is the subject I mainly intend—

1. The kind of it ; it is a spirit. The matter of which the body is made is the earth, and so it is still maintained : ' He bringeth forth food for them out of the earth,' Ps. civ. 14 ; and so breedeth and casteth out corruption every day ; but the soul is a simple substance, not compounded of corruptible principles, and therefore cannot be resolved into any. The body liveth by the soul and from the soul, but the soul de-

pendeth upon nothing but God. The argument is good ; it is incorporeal and immaterial, therefore immortal ; for mortality hath reference to some compounded substance, which hath in itself some principle and cause of motion, as well as a material and passive part, that may be moved by that principle, and signifieth no more but a capacity of the material and passive part to be deprived of the inward and active principle of its motion. In short, if the soul die, it must be from the violence of some external power, or some principles of corruption within ; not by violence without : Mat. x. 28, ' And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.' And it hath no principles of corruption, whereby it should destroy itself, for it is a spirit.

2. The author ; ' God gave it.' Our bodies are also his workmanship, but the soul is immediately framed by God, both in the first creation and the continual propagation of mankind. At the first creation, we read the body was created out of the earth or the dust of the ground, but the soul out of nothing, but immediately breathed into Adam by God : Gen. ii. 7, ' And the Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' And still the soul is immediately created by God : Zech. xii. 1, ' He stretcheth forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.' The creating of the soul is reckoned among the works of his omnipotency : Heb. xii. 9, ' Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits ?' The fathers of our flesh are distinguished from the Father of spirits. Our natural parents under God are the instruments of our natural and earthly being, as they procured the matter out of which our bodies were derived ; they are *τῆς σαρκὸς πατέρας*, ' the fathers of our flesh,' but God is *πάτηρ πνευμάτων*, ' The Father of our spirits.' The spirit of man runneth not in the material channel of fleshly descent ; it is not educed out of the power of the matter, but immediately made by God.

3. The disposal of it. When it flitteth out of the body, ' it returneth to God ;' that is, to God as a judge, to be disposed of by him into its everlasting estate. God challengeth souls as his, or belonging to his government, as universal king and judge of the world : Ezek. xviii. 4, ' All souls are mine.' He will give to every one according to his works, adjudging and sentencing them either to heaven, the mansion of the blessed, or ' spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23, or to hell, the place where damned spirits are kept in prison : 1 Peter iii. 19, ' He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.' The body is not said to return to God, but to return to the earth as it was ; but the soul is said to return to God ; therefore the whole man dieth not, and is not extinguished with the body. All these particulars import the immortality of the soul.

Doct. That the soul of man is immortal, and dieth not when the body dieth, but remaineth in that estate into which it is disposed by God.

First, There is a threefold immortality—

1. An essential immortality, which importeth an absolute necessity of existence ; so it is said, 1 Tim. vi. 16, ' God only hath immortality.'

2. There is a natural immortality, which hath a foundation in the being of the creatures; so the angels and spirits of men are in their nature immortal, so as they cannot be destroyed by any second cause, and have no principle of corruption in themselves, though by the power of God they might be annihilated.

3. A gratuitous immortality, or by gift and courtesy; so the body of Adam in innocency, *non conditione corporis*, but *benefitio conditoris*; not by the condition of his body, but the bounty of his maker: so the bodies of the faithful after the resurrection shall be immortal.

Secondly, Let us prove this, that the soul is immortal, and subsisteth after the separation. The point is necessary to be discussed; for till we are established in the belief of this truth, we shall fear no greater judgments than what do befall us in this world, nor expect greater mercies than what we enjoy here; and so never take care to reconcile ourselves to God, or to deny the profits of the world and the pleasures of sense, that we may attain a better estate. An holy life will never else be endeavoured or produced to any good increase; for such as men's belief is of an immortal or never-dying condition in heaven or hell, such will the bent of their hearts and course of life be; therefore the salvation of our souls is said to be the end of our faith: 1 Peter i. 9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.' There the 'end' signifieth either the scope or the event; if you take it for the scope, the great end of faith is to lead us from all worldly happiness to an estate after this life: Heb. x. 39, 'But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.' Sense saith, Spare the flesh; but faith saith, Save the soul. This is the scope and mark to which it tendeth. If you take it for the event and issue of things, all our believing, praying, enduring suffering, rejoicing, pleasing, and glorifying of God, endeth in this, the saving of our souls. Therefore let us see how it may be proved, both by scripture and by the light of reason.

I. By scripture, which is the proper means to beget faith. Dives desired one to go from the dead to tell his brethren of an everlasting estate of torment and bliss: Luke xvi. 27, 28, 'I pray thee, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment;' intimating thereby that the cause of his own sin and theirs was unbelief, or a not being persuaded of a world to come. Alas! we have but an obscure prospect of an estate after this life, and therefore indulge sensual delights. But what cure and remedy? Dives thought a spectre or apparition would be the best cure of this atheism; but Abraham or Christ thought otherwise: he referreth them to Moses and the prophets; that is, the holy scriptures, for all the books then written and received in the church are comprised in that expression. Since we are sick of the same disease, this will be our best remedy. We are told, 2 Tim. i. 10, that Christ 'hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' It is the privilege of the divine revelation to represent this truth with more clearness and certainty.

1. With more clearness. There is a mist upon eternity, which is only dispelled by the light of the gospel. Reasons from nature may in some measure acquaint us with an everlasting estate, yet what kind

of happiness it is that attendeth the godly, and what misery shall befall the wicked, it telleth us but litle; but the scripture sets down enough to invite our hopes and awaken our fears. Heathens had some conceits of Elysian fields and places of blessedness, and some obscure caverns appointed to be places of torment, fitted to work men into a blind superstition; but the word of God hath given us such clear discoveries of future happiness and misery as that we may know what to hope for and what to fear; and if well improved, will breed in us a true spirit of godliness.

2. In regard of certainty. Nature may give us some dark guesses and uncertain conjectures, so as the heathens, that had no other light, were ready to say, and unsay in a breath what they had spoken concerning our estate to come; but the gospel is a sure word, apt to beget faith, not a wavering opinion. Go to sense, which judgeth by the outside of things: Ecces. iii. 21, 'Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth?' By sense we see mankind, as the beasts, to be conceived, formed in the belly, brought forth, nourished, to grow in strength and stature, wax old, and die; by the eye we can discern no external sensible difference; so that if we consult with mere sense, all religion and hope is gone. Go to reason, and that will tell us indeed that there is a difference between a man and a beast; that man knoweth and desireth things which the beasts do not and cannot; and that the reasonable soul hath operations independent of matter and of the body, and therefore it is probable it can subsist without the body; for the manner of working showeth the manner of being. But there is cold comfort in a bare may-be. The gospel showeth it shall be. As a glass, it doth discover this state to us; as a rule, it guideth us to the enjoyment of it; as a motive, it persuadeth us to seek after it; as a charter and grant, it doth assure our title to it: it is full fraught and thick sown with this kind of seed.

Therefore let us see what the light of scripture saith to this point.

[1.] It discovereth to us everywhere the doctrine of the eternal recompenses, two places, and two estates, wherein souls abide after death, heaven and hell: heaven, the mansion of the just: John xiv. 2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' And hell, the place of torments: Mark ix. 44, 'They are cast into hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' And as soon as the soul passeth out of the body, it is in one of these: Luke xvi. 22, 23, 'And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man died also, and was buried: and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.' He had a pompous funeral here upon earth; for it is said, 'he died, and was buried,' which is not said of Lazarus. These are truths not spoken of once or twice, but everywhere.

[2.] The covenant showeth it, which is God's solemn transaction with his subjects, and consists of precepts or laws, invested with the sanction of promises and threatenings. Christ argues thus: Luke xx. 37, 38, 'Now, that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' He proves the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body.

(1.) His commands ; all of them imply such an estate, and some of them express it. All imply it ; as faith in Christ. We believe in his name to obtain eternal life : John xx. 31, ' But these things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing you might have life through his name ; ' and John v. 24, ' He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.' Repentance : Acts iii. 19, ' Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Therefore it is called ' repentance unto salvation,' 2 Cor. vii. 10 ; and ' repentance to life ; ' Acts xi. 18, ' Then hath God also to the gentiles granted repentance unto life.' So new obedience : Heb. v. 9, ' He became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him ; ' Acts xxvi. 7, ' Unto which promise the twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' And some express it : He hath commanded us ' not to labour for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life,' John vi. 27 ; ' Not to lay up treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven,' Mat. vi. 19, 20 ; and ' Strive to enter in at the strait gate,' Luke xiii. 24. Now, if there were no such thing, all these commands would be in vain. Would God flatter us into a fool's paradise, and command us to look after a thing of nought ?

(2.) The sanction. And there—(1.) The threatening, which is damnation, or the second death : Mark xvi. 16, ' He that believeth not shall be damned.' Is this a vain scarecrow ? and need God govern his subjects by a cheat or a lie ? (2.) The promises ; he promiseth eternal life to them that obey the gospel and seek after this immortality : Rom. ii. 7, ' To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life ; ' Rev. ii. 10, ' Be thou faithful to death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Be faithful in making good your baptismal vow, improving talents, withstanding temptations. So to comfort us against fears, losses, and sorrows : Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not, little flock ; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.' Now, would God overreach us, and lead us with chimeras and vain hopes ?

[3.] The mediator of the new covenant showeth it ; his coming from heaven, the place of souls, the region of spirits, and his going thither again at his ascension.

(1.) His coming from heaven. Wherefore was Christ incarnate, and clothed with our flesh, but that we might be apparelled with his glory ? John x. 10, ' I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' To lay a foundation for our eternal happiness.

(2.) His going to heaven, his entering into that glory he spake of, and so giving a visible demonstration to the world of the reality of it : 1 Peter i. 21, ' Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope may be in God.' There he remaineth at God's right hand, to open heaven to all believers. Christ, when he died, recommended his spirit to the Father : Luke xxiii. 46, ' Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' And so

do believers to Christ: Acts vii. 59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' If the soul did perish with the body, why should we commit it to Christ?

[4.] The Holy Spirit is given to form and prepare us for this estate, therefore by consequence to assure us of it: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Now he that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.'

(1.) Look to the graces of the Spirit. We are made partakers of the divine nature to draw us off from the world to heaven: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' Now will God fit the soul for such a blessed estate when this life is ended; and shall we never enjoy it? If we consider the soul not only as being an inward principle of life and sense, but also of reason, it proveth the immortality of it, much more as sanctified and ennobled by grace: Rom. viii. 10, 'The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.' Believers have a life wrought in them by the Spirit, which is the pledge and beginning of eternal life; for they are sanctified and purified, and fit to be brought into the sight and presence of God. The apostle doth not draw his argument there from the immortality of the soul, for that is common to good and bad; the wicked have a soul that will survive the body, but little to their comfort; their immortality is not an happy immortality; but he taketh his argument from the new life wrought in us by the Spirit, which is the beginning and earnest of a blessed immortality: the new life is an eternal principle of happiness.

(2.) Look to the comforts of the Spirit, from the love of God and the hopes of glory: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' Rom. v. 2, 'And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Now is it a fancy that holy men rejoice in? Look, as the terrors of a wounded conscience are the foretastes of hell-torments, called somewhere the pains of hell, so the comforts of the Spirit are the first-fruits of heavenly joys, to set us a-longing for more: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' Now by all these things let us rouse up a drowsy faith, and triumph over that carnal atheism and unbelief that worketh in our hearts. Is the whole scripture false, and the christian religion a well-devised fable, our Redeemer an impostor, and the covenant of God a dream, and the comforts of the Spirit fanatical illusions? And were they all deceived that embraced the christian religion, that took such pains in subduing the flesh, so freely hazarded their interests, and life itself, on the promises of Christ and the hopes of another world? Are the wisest men the world ever saw fools, and the ordinances of Christ a customary superstition, and these rejoicings and foretastes of the children of God a mere deceit and imposture? Surely it cannot be. Therefore this is true, that the soul dieth not with the body, but is in that estate into which God disposeth it.

II. By the light of reason.

First, I shall urge such arguments as the scripture directeth us to.

1. From the nature of the soul. It is a spirit, and such a principle of life as hath light in it : John i. 4, ' In him was life, and the life was the light of men.' The soul of man differeth from the soul of a beast, for that hath only life and sense in it ; but this hath light, and therefore was designed to more noble and glorious ends than merely to quicken and enliven the body. The soul of the beast is mortal, because it is created only to serve the body, and knoweth nothing, desireth nothing, delighteth in nothing but what belongeth to the pleasure and welfare of the body ; but now the soul of man apprehendeth things past, present, and to come, is capable of tongues, arts, and sciences, and things abstract from bodily sense ; it can discourse about God, angels, and all kind of spiritual beings, about eternity and immortality, and propound and debate questions and doubts concerning the world to come. The beasts look only to their food and the propagation of their kind ; they know nothing, and can conceive nothing, of man's affairs ; but now man's soul is not only capable of being ennobled and improved by moral virtues, and such things as fit us for human society, but is capable also of conformity to God, by being made holy and upright, and of communion with him in holy duties and acts of grace : 1 John i. 3, ' And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' The beasts desire not the company of men, as we do of God and of the blessed spirits. In short, there is a greater affinity between the souls of men and angels than between the souls of beasts and men : Ps. viii. 5, ' Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.' Well, then, can it be imagined the souls of men, furnished with such capacities of understanding, are nothing but a little puff of air, that is dissipated in dying, or a little vital heat, that is extinguished with the corporeal matter, or only the vigour of the blood ? That soul that can so much soar aloft above the interests and concernments of the body, and take such a marvellous delight and contentment in spiritual things as the view of all manner of truths, must that follow the state of the body ? Shall that creature that cometh so near the angels die like the beasts ? or rather, become like the angels of God that always behold his face ? Yea, that creature that draweth so near to God in the majesty of his person and the abilities of his mind, that was created after God's own image, and for the worship and service and enjoyment of God, shall he die as the beasts that perish ? It cannot be imagined.

2. The scripture mentions words that imply its independence of the body, or that it doth not so wholly depend on the body that it cannot subsist and act without it ; they go several ways, as in the text : 3 John 2, ' I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, as thy soul prospereth ;' 2 Cor. iv. 16, ' For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' And experience teacheth the truth of these things, that the body and soul seem sometimes to have no communion with one another, so different are their functions and offices. You shall often see men decrepit in all the members of the body, who yet have the motions of their minds as strong and as nimble as when in perfect health ; and when they are upon the borders of death, without

vigour and pulse, their understandings are more sublime than before, and their thoughts more refined. It is true the indispositions of the body clog the soul in things that are to be acted by the body; but in what the soul acteth apart, in the midst of aches and pains their strength of mind is entire, and their comforts never more raised than in bodily weakness. Therefore it lives and acts apart from the body.

3. The scripture directs us to this argument, that this is the general persuasion of all mankind, that there is a life after death; and it instanceth in that that is most sensible, and of every day's experience, our desires and fears.

[1.] Desires. The soul hath a natural desire of immortality, which, if it should not enjoy, that desire were in vain; but God doth nothing in vain. The apostle intimateth this, how men feel about for something eternal and infinite: Acts xvii. 27, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him.' Every man would be happy, and eternally happy; for otherwise he would be tormented with a fear of losing that which he counteth his happiness. See Ps. iv. 6, 'Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us;' Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it;' John vi. 34, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread;' Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous.' Other creatures besides man are satisfied with what they have here; but the soul of man is satisfied with nothing but the eternal enjoyment of what is good, an immortal estate, an infinite good. Every one that loveth himself would be happy, and, if he could, everlastingly happy. The saints, and those that are taught of God, pitch upon the right way: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' But this is the universal inclination of all mankind. Whence cometh this desire to be so universal, if there be nothing to satisfy it? Every natural appetite was given us for some purpose, and have things designed for their satisfaction; and therefore there is that immortality we all seek after, not in our bodies, they must return to their earth; not in fancy, that is a shadow; this is like the pleasure which those take that want children in playing with little dogs: it lieth in the soul, in the eternal enjoyment of God.

[2.] Fears, which presage and foretell such an estate to our great disquiet. Conscience fears a judgment after this life: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' And a state of misery to come: Heb. ii. 15, 'Who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' At death these fears are more active and pungent: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin;' and surprise the guilty soul with greater horror and distraction; then they are summoned to their great account. If the soul were mortal, why should men be afraid of torments after death? They anticipate the miseries of the life to come, not as it puts a period unto their natural comforts, but as it is an entrance into everlasting miseries.

4. The scripture directs to this argument, the justice of God for the comfort of the faithful: 2 Thes. i. 5, 'Which is a manifest token

of the righteous judgment of God.' The sufferings of the faithful are a demonstration of a future estate. There is a God: if there be not a first and fountain-being, how did we come to be? for nothing can make itself; or how did the world fall into this order? This God is just, for all perfections are in the first being. If we deny him to be just, we deny him to be God and the governor of the world: Rom. iii. 5, 6, 'Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?' Now it is agreeable to the justice of his government that it should be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil, or that he should make a difference by rewards and punishments between the wicked and obedient. It seemeth uncomely when it is otherwise: Prov. xxvi. 1, 'As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest; so honour is not seemly for a fool.' When the wicked are exalted, men look on it as an uncouth thing. Now this reward and punishment is not fully dispensed in this world, even in the judgment of them that have no great knowledge of the heinous nature of sin, and the judgment competent thereunto. Yea, rather, the best are exercised with poverty, disgrace, scorn, and all manner of troubles, their persons molested, their names cast out as odious, when the wicked live in pomp and ease, and oppress them at their pleasure. Therefore, since God's justice doth not make such a difference here, there is another life wherein he will do it; otherwise we must deny all providence, and that God doth not concern himself in human affairs, and that a man may break his laws, oppress his people, and no great harm will come of it: Zeph. i. 12, 'The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil;' and God would seem indifferent to good and evil; yea, rather partial to the evil, and to favour the wicked more than the righteous, which is blasphemy, and a diminution of God's goodness and holiness: Ps. xi. 6, 7, 'Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup. But the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his countenance doth behold the upright.' Obedience would be man's loss and ruin, and so God would be the worst master: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' They that forsake the sinful pleasures of this life, hazard all their natural interests, row against the stream of flesh and blood, would be ill provided for by their religion. Therefore there is another life wherein God will reward his people.

Secondly, I shall urge other arguments for the immortality of the soul.

1. The capacity of the soul argueth the immortality of it. Now it is capable—(1.) Of civil arts; (2.) Of owning the distinction between good and evil; (3.) Of knowing immortality and matters of everlasting consequence; (4.) Of knowing God and his attributes; (5.) Of the divine nature, which consists in the knowledge and love of God; (6.) Of a sweet familiar communion with him. Let us see how all these capacities will prove the matter in hand.

[1.] The being capable of civil arts will prove the soul's spiritual substance, far excelling the beasts in dignity; for it is capable of all kind of learning and witty inventions; as grammar, and the knowledge of tongues and rhetoric, to form and polish our speech; logic, to refine

our reason ; ethics, to order our manners ; medicine, to cure the distempers of our bodies ; by physics, or by natural philosophy, it knoweth all kind of things, all ranks of beings, from God and angels to the smallest worm ; yea, it acquireth such skill as to make use of all creatures for its own benefit : James iii. 7, 'For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind.' The power and skill of man is large, and reacheth through the whole creation ; by one means or other man mastereth them. Now what doth this signify but that man hath a soul different from the souls of the beasts ? Job xxxv. 11, 'He teacheth us more than the beasts of the field, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.' And that will contribute much to the matter in hand. Solomon puts the question, Ecces. iii. 21, 'Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth ?' Mark, there he asserts that the spirit of the man goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast goeth downward ; there is an ascent ascribed to the one, and a descent to the other ; upward implieth heaven and heavenly things ; downward, the earth and earthly things. The human soul ascendeth to God, the universal judge of all the world, whose throne is in heaven ; but the soul of the beasts taketh its lot among all earthly things, which are at length resolved into earth, water, and air. In the creation, God is said to breathe into man the spirit of life ; not so of the beast. So in the dissolution ; the one returneth to God, the other leaveth off to exist, and when they die, they are no more.

[2.] It is capable of owning the distinction between moral good and evil. He that doth not acknowledge it is unworthy the name of man ; for to love or hate God is not indifferent ; nor to kill a neighbour, or hunt an hare in the woods ; to use lawful matrimony, or for a man to pollute himself either with promiscuous or incestuous embraces. Now, if our souls differed not from the soul of a beast, they could have no such apprehension or conception. The beasts know pain and pleasure, but they have no knowledge of virtue and vice, as is sensible to every one that considereth them ; but man hath : Rom. ii. 14, 15, 'For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts.' Well, then, man hath a life beyond this, a further end of his actions than a beast, which is to approve himself to God, to whom he must give an account, whether he hath done good or evil ; for a conscience supposeth a law, and a law supposeth a sanction both of reward and punishment, and a sanction a judge, to whom a man is accountable. And if man were but an higher and wiser sort of beast, he would but differ gradually from a dog or a swine. Now no man would be used as a beast, and made a slave to any one that can master and tame him, and sold in the market as a beast ; if this be his lot by his infelicity in the world, he would look upon it as an uncount thing, and that it would be to sin before God to use him so. Therefore there is a distinction between men and beasts ; men die not as the beasts die.

[3.] They are capable of the knowledge of immortality, and can frame curious disputes and accurate debates thereof, which showeth they are

not altogether incapable of the thing itself ; for the beasts know no other life beyond what they enjoy, and mind no other, and care for no other ; and therefore the estate of man will be different from theirs.

[4.] Man is capable of knowing God and his attributes, which the beasts are not, because they were never made to enjoy him : ' He hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true,' 1 John v. 20. They are capable of knowing their relation to God as his creatures and subjects, and so are obnoxious to his judgment, and that nothing here can make them happy, and that God alone can do it : Ps. iv. 6, 7, ' There be many that say, Who will show us any good ? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.' That happiness lieth not in what men ordinarily seek it in, riches, honours, and pleasures, but in the favour of God ; that here we do not enjoy him to the full, and that therefore we must seek after another life ; here we seek God, in the world to come we find him, and therefore cannot rest in this partial enjoyment. Man is ever seeking after an immortal blessedness. Now this capacity is not in vain ; the soul is restless till it find him.

[5.] Man is capable of a divine nature, which consists not only in the bare knowledge, but love of God : 2 Peter i. 4, ' Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature.' He is capable of the image of God : Eph. iv. 24, ' And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.'

[6.] Man is capable of a sweet familiar communion with God and friendship with him : 1 John i. 3, ' And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' Therefore the state of man dying must needs be different from that of a beast, who hath no knowledge, no desire, no love to God, no capacity of communion with him, unless it be in respect of receiving the effects and bounty of his common providence.

2. The dignity of man : ' God made him a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour,' Ps. viii. 5. Now if he were not immortal, he would be of all creatures most miserable ; his reason only would serve to make him capable and apprehensive of the greater calamity and trouble. Sure it is that man is the masterpiece of this visible world, in respect of the majesty of his person, the abilities of his mind, and his sovereignty over all the works of God's hands, all which are marks of special favour of the creator to man above other creatures. Now, if God hath given to man the next place in order of dignity to the angels above his other creatures, what would his love signify if he be in a worse condition than the beasts, and liable to so many cares, encumbrances, grief, and remorse of conscience, which the beasts are freed from ? Alas ! considering the calamities of his life, infirmities of his body, perplexities of his mind, his reason is a sad privilege to him, and his torment rather than his blessedness, whilst it only giveth him a doleful remembrance of what is past, a care about what is present, and awakens fears of what is to come. The beasts indeed have a sense of what is present, but no remorse for what is past, no presage of what is to come ; but man hath all these, a bitter remem-

brance of sins past; and for present evils, they are more than those of the beasts, such as poverty, banishment, imprisonment, slavery, loss of estate, sundry sicknesses and diseases, and man hath a more bitter sense and apprehension of them. And for time to come, he hath a foresight of the end, which the beasts have not: so that we have twenty-fold more cares and labours than they have, who live in tranquillity and liberty, and free from those disquiets which vex mankind, and have no remorse to sour their pleasures, either from the afflictive remembrance of what is past, or solicitude about what is to come. Therefore if our happiness were here only, man would be less happy than the beasts, many of whose lives are longer and sweeter, who have a more sincere use of bodily pleasures. But here is their happiness; God had provided some better thing for them to be enjoyed in the other world. It cannot be imagined that he hath made his noblest creature in the world with a nature that should be a necessary misery and vexation to itself, above the calamities incident to the rest of the creatures. The very apprehensions and desires that a man hath of an higher good would be a torment and burden to him if there were no calamity else, for he seeth a better estate which he cannot enjoy; as an horse tied up from the provender which is near unto him and cannot reach it. Our nature inclineth us to know and love that we cannot obtain: we can think aforehand of our death and abode in darkness, which beasts cannot, for they are not troubled with these thoughts: yea, we fear miseries after death, and know not how to be exempted from them. Now it is incredible that God should make his noblest creature most miserable, by setting before his eyes a certain death, and possible torments and miseries after death, and provide no remedy against these things.

3. God governeth men by the hopes and fears of another life, and therefore such a life there is, and so the souls of men are immortal. The reason is, because God needeth not to govern the world by deceit and lying: this would be against his holiness and benignity, and would destroy the very government he would establish; for it would tempt us to insincerity, and to cheating and deceiving others; for men are no better than their religion, it were well if they were as good. The foolish, bad, and ignorant may use such arts; but the wise, holy, and good would not. In ludicrous things we fright our children with bugbears and names; but in such a serious thing as the government of the world, it cannot be imagined that God should use such an artifice.

[1.] That God governeth the world by the hopes and fears of another life is evident, not only by the tenor of the christian religion, where the covenant between God and men is established by such threatenings and promises, but by the consent of all nations where government is secured and upheld by such a persuasion. Now if the soul be not immortal, and there be not firm reasons to induce us to believe that it is so, why hath such a conceit been rooted in the minds of men of all nations and all religions, not only Greeks and Romans, but barbarians, and people least civilised? They all received this opinion from hand to hand, from their ancestors; and the nearer men trace it to the original of mankind, the more clear and pressing hath been the conceit thereof. Lapse of time, which ordinarily decayeth all things, hath not been able

to deface it out of the minds of men ; the sense of an immortal condition after this life hath ever been accounted the great bridle upon the world ; and being spread throughout the universe, hath with all forwardness been received among all nations, and hath borne up against all encounters of sin, and hath maintained itself in the midst of those revolutions of human affairs wherein other truths are lost.

[2.] There is a necessity of this government, as suiting best with the nature of man, which is much moved by the hopes and fears of good and evil after death. That man is governed by hopes and fears, common sense teacheth us ; that the hopes and fears of the present life are not sufficient to bridle carnal nature, and withstand temptations, and keep us in the true obedience and love to God to the end, experience also showeth, because for the satisfaction of our lusts we can dispense with temporal evils, as the lecher in the Proverbs, chap. v. 11, 'And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed.' Besides, if it were so that these motives of temporal good and evil were sufficient, man were more to be feared than God, which killeth and stabbeth all religion at the heart ; for man useth this engine of temporal punishments and inconvenience ; they do execution on those that break their laws. Now Christ teacheth us : Luke xii. 4, 5, 'I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear : Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.'

[3.] The necessity to it appeareth to meet with secret sins, such as fornication, privy atheism, malice, adultery, murder, perjury, hypocrisy, treachery, theft, deceit. He that believeth not a life after this may secretly carry on these sins without impunity. Man cannot see the heart, or make laws to govern it, therefore no man can know or punish these secret sins ; therefore, if men can but hide their sins, they are safe. So for the sins of men powerful in the world ; for who can call them to an account here for their filthiness or cruelty ? Job xxxiv. 18, 'Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked ? and to princes, Ye are ungodly ?' There is no restraint to those who have none above them ; and all secret wickedness would be committed without fear. So that to deny the immortality of the soul, or a life after this, would take away all honesty, and open the flood-gates to all villany and evil practices. Who would make conscience of entire obedience to God, enter in by the strait gate, walk in the narrow way, row against the stream of flesh and blood, work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and consecrate their time to God, if there were no other life after this nor happiness to be there expected ? Alas ! we plainly see the contrary. Who are so lewd and hardened in their sensualities as they that are tainted with this conceit ? That not only the denial, but the forgetfulness of this estate worketh this effect. They make the best of the present life : 1 Cor. xv. 32, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' Such atheistical thoughts are very common : ver. 33, 'Be not deceived ; evil communications corrupt good manners.' But a deep sense of this immortal estate is the fountain of all sobriety, righteousness, and godliness ; and all that is virtuous and praiseworthy hath been done in the world upon this account. There-

fore, who are the better men, those that believe the immortality of the soul, or those that believe it not? And who are likely to be in the right, wicked wretches, or holy, serious, and considering men?

[4.] The duties which God requireth of us show it. Man is obliged to divers duties which are difficult and displeasing to the flesh, and which we should never perform without a serious belief of the soul's immortality; such as these, to forsake the sinful pleasures of the world, to mortify and tame the flesh, diligently to exercise ourselves to godliness, to suffer the loss of all outward comforts, yea, of life itself. All these are commanded; the mortification and keeping down the body, Col. iii. 5; diligence in the heavenly life, Phil. iii. 13, 14; fortitude and patience under the greatest trials, as Moses is propounded for an example, Heb. xi. 24-26; not to faint in the greatest tribulations, 2 Cor. iv. 16-18; yea, to expose life itself, Luke xiv. 26. Now would God, who is so loving to mankind, bind us to displease the flesh, and enjoin us so many duties which are harsh and troublesome, yea, some of them hurtful and detrimental to the body, if he had not provided some better thing for us? Would he, all whose precepts are for our good, and who hath made self-love so great an help to our duty, be so hard to us, but that he knoweth how to recompense this diligence and self-denial? He saith, 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on,' Mat. vi. 25; but he saith, 'Keep the soul with all diligence,' Deut. iv. 9. Would he be so earnest in pressing us to look after the soul, and strengthening and adorning the inward man, if the soul were to perish with the body? Surely, if all depended upon the body, the body should be more cared for; but it is quite otherwise. Scripture and reason show the body is only to be cared for in subordination to the soul, and that our chiefest work should be to furnish our souls with knowledge and grace. And they are the worthiest men who do most busy themselves about divine and heavenly things; whereas they are the basest who care so much for the body, and make a business of those things which they should do only by the by. Certainly if there were an end of us when the body faileth, we should abhor nothing so much as death, desire nothing so much as the good of the body; nothing would be so dear to us, but we would part with it to keep off the death of the body, for then there would be an end of us. Death would be the chiefest evil we could suffer, and that which would deprive us of all other good; nothing should be feared and abhorred like death, and we should lie, forswear, or do anything to avoid it. But this principle would not only destroy all generous actions, but introduce all dishonesty and sin into the world; for as we should never venture our lives upon any reason and inducement, though never so just, so we should stick at no evil to preserve life, and the conveniencies which belong thereunto.

[5.] The desires wrought in us by the Spirit of God, to see and enjoy God, argue the immortality of the soul: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies;' 2 Cor. v. 2, 'For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which

is from heaven.' We prove another life, not only by the inclination, instinct, and disposition of nature towards happiness in general; the universal desire of all mankind is to be everlastingly happy, this proveth it; for this desire being universal and natural, is not frustrate; nature doth nothing in vain: but the desires and groans of the sanctified do much more prove it, for they do more forcibly direct and carry our hearts to a certain scope and end; and they are excited by the Holy Spirit, for he imprinteth a firm persuasion of this happiness, and stirreth up these desires after it; and that in our sober and severest moods, when we are solemnly conversing with God in his holy worship, in the word, prayer, meditation, and the Lord's supper, and all other holy duties, then he most raiseth these affections towards heavenly things; and also he leaveth this heavenly relish upon our hearts at other times, as the reward of our eminent obedience to God; and the more serious and holy any are, the more do they feel of this. Now these desires being of God's own infusing, they will not be disappointed; therefore those who make the hopes of the world to come their happiness, desire, and joy, will one day be partakers of the blessedness of it; their groaning, seeking, and longing, will not be in vain, for God will give the satisfaction where he giveth the desire.

Use 1. Is terror to the wicked and ungodly. Your souls die not with the body, but must enter into endless torments. The body perisheth, but the immortal substance will for ever subsist in a state of woe or weal. Now how brutishly and much beneath a man do they live who wholly give up themselves to carnal pleasures and worldly pursuits, that live as if their souls did die with their bodies, and they should never hear of them more! They make no provision for their everlasting estate. Three evils I charge upon these men—

1. These men do not believe that which scripture and reason showeth to be certainly true, and so do not show themselves either christians or men. The great design of scripture is to give them a prospect of another world, and to assure them of a life after death. And will you not receive God's testimony? Are God's threatenings a vain scarecrow; are the promises a golden dream? Go and reason, if the soul abideth not after it flitteth out of the body, it is either because it cannot be or act, or because God will not suffer it to be or act, or hath not clearly declared it shall be so, so that no certainty can be had thereof or hath declared or expressed himself to the contrary. Now none of these things are true.

[1.] Not the first. The nature of the soul is such that it showeth plainly that it can live without the body. A spirit can subsist by itself; that which God hath fitted to endure for ever, he hath designed it to endure for ever. Now the soul as a spirit is fitted to live for ever, and it can live without the body, for it is *αυτοκίνητος*, it doth of itself move itself. Is it the body that supports the soul, or the soul that supports the body? Heathens have thought so upon this argument, and will not you? *Cum venerit ille dies, qui mixtum hoc divini humanique, secernat, corpus hic ubi inveni relinquam, ipse me diis redeam*—When that day shall come, when the divine spirit shall be severed from the human body, I shall leave the body where I found it, and yield up my spirit to the gods.

[2.] Is it because God will not permit it to be, or act without the body? Whence doth that appear? To us christians he hath appointed a mediator to receive our souls.

[3.] Or is it because he hath doubtfully expressed his mind? You are not sure there is no such life; it is impossible you should know or prove the contrary. The question between the infidel and the christian is not whether there be a world to come? but whether he can prove there is none? You cannot prove the falsity of the christian hope by any sound argument that there is no heaven nor hell; for aught you can say or know there are both, and it were best to take the surer side. In a lottery, men will venture some small matter. Some of the heathens that disputed against it or doubted of it, yet acknowledged it to be a supposition conducing to virtue and goodness.

[4.] God hath not declared his mind to the contrary, but plainly told us that it is so. It is easy to presume that a thousand to one but it is so. Natural reason, consent of nations, fears of a guilty conscience, or presages of eternal punishment, the whole drift of the christian religion, the example of Christ, all prove it. Those wretches that outface religion accuse Christ of a lie, and the wisest men of the world of folly, their own consciences of imposing a cheat upon them to check their vain pleasures, and, in defiance of light within and without, smother all conceits of a world to come.

2. They do not consider these things, and weigh them, that they may come to understand what is their end and business here. Alas! are we so near everlasting joy or misery, and yet neglect it; yea, it may be, scorn and oppose those that make it their chiefest care and labour to prepare for it? How long have you lived in the world, and scarce ever asked the question or thought seriously, What shall I do to be saved? You are desirous to give full and ample satisfaction to your dying part, yea, have pampered it, and over-clogged it; but your business is not to pamper the body, but to save your souls. Now you should show yourselves men: Isa. xlv. 8, 'Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors!' Think aforehand, What would poor deluded souls, that are in their everlasting estate, give if they might be trusted with a little time again, if God would but try them once more, that they might mend their past folly? They have lost their souls for poor temporal trifles. But alas! now, though we are daily drawing near to our long home, yet we little think of it; we are almost come to our journey's end, and we never consider whither we are going.

3. They do not improve these things, nor live answerably, which is a further degree of brutishness: Ps. xlix. 12, 'Man being in honour, abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish;' Jude 10, 'What they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.' They are strangers to the heavenly mind, and wholly governed by carnal sense; they live as if the soul did serve for no other use but to keep the body from stinking. Their principles have no influence upon their practice; they talk of the immortality of the soul, yet spend all their care upon the body.

Use 2. Is caution.

1. Do not hazard your souls for things that perish. Let nothing

entice us to forfeit or hinder our endless happiness: Heb. x. 39, 'We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul;' Mat. xvi. 26, '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?'

2. Do not betray the souls of others for a little pelf, as ignorant and careless ministers do, so they have the maintenance. Love to souls is the great thing we learn of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself 'a ransom for them,' Mat. xx. 28. Ministers should have the bowels of Christ: Phil. i. 8, 'For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Christ; pity those that are going to hell, and ready to perish everlastingly.'

Use 3. Is exhortation, to persuade you to make it your mark and scope to look after this immortal state of blessedness. Let us leave things that perish to men that perish: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life.' Surely this argument should persuade us to heavenly-mindedness. Earthly things are of short duration, and shall quickly leave us, and when they are gone, they are to us as if they had never been, a shadow, a dream, or something that is next to nothing; but the fruit of godliness abideth for ever: 1 John ii. 17, 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'

Motives.

1. You know more of the dignity of man, who is created after the most perfect pattern, the image of God himself: Gen. i. 26, 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.' Redeemed at the dearest rate, the blood of the Son of God: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye are redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, &c., but with the precious blood of Christ,' and designed and ordained to the highest end, the glorifying and enjoying of God: Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' Surely they should be more sensible of their immortality, and serve God more than the rest of his creatures.

2. You profess that religion which hath brought life and immortality to light, and the end of which is the saving of the soul. Now, though you have the profession of christians, you have not the spirit of christians if this be not your daily business and scope. What have you done for the saving of your souls? if all your business, cares, and fears are about the body and the interests of the bodily life, you have the spirit of the world, not of God. Are not your souls worth the looking after? that which is the scope of your religion should be the business of your lives and actions, that a christian may correspond and answer to his christianity, as the impress doth to the seal.

3. You are God's witnesses: Isa. xliii. 10, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.' What proof do we give of a reasonable immortal soul? 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 which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' Do we propagate carelessness and atheism, or a mindfulness of the world to come?

4. If we are satisfied with present things, we have no more to look for : Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men of the world, which have their portion in this life ;' Mat. vi. 2, 'They have their reward ;' Luke vi. 24, 'Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation ;' Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' It is sad to be put off with these things, with riches, honours, favour of men, and a little temporal greatness.
