# THE STATE AND CHARACTER OF BELIEVERS



THOMAS BOSTON

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THEY ARE OF GOD, WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE THEREOF, ILLUSTRATED; AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE UNREGENERATE WORLD LYING IN WICKEDNESS

## by Thomas Boston

Several sermons preached at Ettrick, in the end of the year 1728, and beginning of 1729

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# THEY ARE OF GOD, WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE THEREOF,

Several sermons preached at Ettrick, in the end of the year 1728, and beginning of 1729

1 JOHN 5:19

> And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

As it was said to Rebekah, Gen. 25:23. Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels—and the elder shall serve the younger; so it may be said in the text. Two manner of people are here, to one of which all of us do belong, viz. those that are of God, and those that are of the world. The latter is the elder, and shall serve the younger, Psal. 49:14. The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.

1. There is a people, that though they are in the world, are not of it, but separated from it: And we know that we are of God. Here consider, (1.) The original of that people: They are of God; that is, begotten and born of God, regenerate persons, born again. They are a heavenly people in respect of their extract, born from above, 2 Pet. 1:4. (2.) Who they are in particular, We are they, we believers in Christ. Those that having received the call of the gospel to come out of the world lying in wickedness, have by faith embraced the call and come away, John 1:12, 13, 2 Cor. 5:17. (3.) The knowledge they have of their original: We know that we are of God. We are not only regenerate, but we know that we are so. Not that all of them know so much, but some of them do: there may be children so young, that they know not their father's and mother's names; but the elder children know them very well. This comes in here for the comfort of believers against the sin unto death, ver. 16. which the regenerate cannot fall into, ver. 18.

2. There is another people, who are not of God, but are quite distinct from those that are so. Here consider, (1.) Who they are, the world, that is, the unregenerate; these are the people distinct from, yea, in an opposite interest to, the people of God. It is plain, the world is taken here, not for the place, but for the men of the place, and these not the strangers and pilgrims in it, but the natives who have no other but a worldly birth, and who are in it as at home in their own country. The phrase is taken from the Old Testament, where the church is called the sons of God, Gen. 6:4. those without the church, the earth, Gen. 11:1. in opposition to heaven; being the earthly men in opposition to the heavenly men; men whose birth, temper, and manner of life are all worldly. (2.) The character of this people: they are lying in wickedness, or in the wicked one, viz. the devil. They are lying in sin, in the guilt and filth, and under the reigning power of it, and so under the power of the devil. They are not rising and wrestling out of it, but they are lying in it, sleeping, dead, and buried in it. (3.) The extent of this character; it belongs to them all, the whole world. There are many differences among those of the unregenerate world; some of them are professors, some profane, but the former as well as the latter are lying in wickedness.

That I may give you some view of this text, in its different branches, I shall essay to open up the three following points of doctrine therefrom, viz.

DOCT. I. All true believers are of God, and so separated from the world lying in wickedness.

DOCT. II. People's being of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness, is what may be known by themselves.

DOCT. III. The whole unregenerate world lieth in wickedness.

DOCT. I. All true believers are of God, and so separated from the world lying in wickedness.

In handling this point, I shall shew,

I. How true believers are of God.

II. How, as they are of God, regenerate persons, they are separated from the world lying in wickedness.

III. Make improvement.

I. I am to shew how true believers are of God. One is said to be of God two ways:

1. By creation; and so all things are of God, Rom. 11:36. Thus the devils themselves are of God as their Creator, and so is the world. But this is not the being of God here meant. They may be God's creatures, who nevertheless are the children of the devil.

2. By generation, as a son is of a father. And this is twofold.

1st, Eternal generation: so Christ alone is of God, John 6:46, Psal. 2:7. He is the Son of God by generation of the person of the Father, having the same numerical divine essence eternally and necessarily communicated to him from the Father. Hence he is self-existent, independent, and equal with the Father, John 5:26, Phil. 2:6. Neither is this meant here.

2dly, Temporal generation, called regeneration, which is a work of God's grace on the souls of men, resembling natural generation. And thus believers, and none else, are of God, John 1:12, 13. and 8:47. We are all born from below naturally; but we must be born from above spiritually, if we see heaven, John 3:3. Except a man be born again

[marg. from above] he cannot see the kingdom of God. All the elect are born so, sooner or later. They naturally lie in the foul womb of the world with others, but the power of divine grace separates them therefrom.

The work of regeneration is held forth under a double notion, shewing the regenerate to be of God.

(1.) It is a being begotten of God, 1 John 5:18. He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. God himself is the Father of the new creature: it is of no lower original. The incorruptible word of the gospel is the seed of it, Jam. 1:18, 1 Pet. 1:23, 25. A word is cast into the heart, which by the efficacy of the Spirit changes one into a new nature. It is done by means of the resurrection of Christ, ver. 3. Christ lay in this womb of the earth in the grave, as a public person having satisfied justice, he was raised, came forth of the grave, as the first-born from the dead; and in virtue thereof the dead elect are raised out of their grave of sin, as the next born from the dead.

And this notion of regeneration speaks the parties themselves to have no hand in it, more than a child hath in its own generation. So that as regenerate, they are wholly of God; and owe their being in grace to him purely, not to their own free will.

(2.) It is a being born of God, 1 John 5:18. Whosoever is born of God sinneth not. By his Spirit alone the new creature is formed in all its parts, and brought forth into the new world of grace, John 3:5. And this notion of it speaks the parties to receive life by the Spirit, and to be brought forth to act that life; and none other but the Spirit to be the cause thereof, John 1:13.

Now by this means, viz. regeneration, believers are of God.

1. As partaking of the divine nature, as the child doth of the nature of the parent, 2 Pet. 1:4. There is a fulness of grace lodged in the man Christ, out of which they receive grace for grace, and so with him partake of the divine nature, being made one spirit, or of one spiritual and divine nature with him. Even as they received a corrupt nature derived to them from Adam, by which they were originally of the wicked one.

2. As bearing the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. By regeneration they are like him; and if it were perfect, they would be perfectly like him. For in regeneration Christ is formed in them, Gal. 4:19. that is, they are the image of the man Christ, who is the image of the invisible God.

3. As being of his family, Eph. 3:14, 15. and that not as servants only, but as children, 2 Cor. 6:17, 18. The new birth is a high birth; by it the sinner is a member of the family of heaven; God is his Father, Christ is his elder brother, and the angels and saints are his brethren.

4. As owing their new being to him only in the efficacy of his grace, Eph. 2:10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Our natural being we owe in part to our parents, Heb. 12:9. but our gracious being to God only. That we are men, we owe it to him, in the efficacy of his creating power; and that we are saints, we owe it to him, in the efficacy of his quickening and renewing grace, Gal. 4:28. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

II. I shall shew how believers, as they are of God, regenerate persons, are separated from the world lying in wickedness. Negatively,

1. Not in respect of place, 1 Cor. 5:9, 10. They are still in the world, and must be till the Lord call them home; though they are not of the

world. God could, in the moment of conversion, have transported converts into heaven, taken them out of the world for good and all; but he has seen meet for their trial, and the glory of the power of his grace, to keep them in the world a while; and yet to keep them separate from it,

2. Not in respect of gathering them into pure unmixed societies for worship. There are no such visible church-societies in the world, Matth. 13:28–30. Separating from the world lying in wickedness is not such an easy thing, as visible church separating; they may be forward enough to that, who are yet with the world lying in wickedness, Jude, 19. and may go from party to party in the visible church, who are still of the world's party, not of God. But positively, the regenerate as such are separated from the world.

1. In respect of their being broken off from that corrupt mass, and become a part of a new lump. Adam falling left all mankind earthly men, bearing his corrupt image; Christ is become a second Adam, the head of heavenly men, bearing his image, 1 Cor. 15:47, 48. Now the regenerate are separated from the former society, and become members of the latter, through regenerating grace. They are become members of Christ's mystical body, of the invisible church, a distinct though invisible society.

2. Their being delivered from under the power of the god of this world, viz. Satan, Acts 26:18. Satan is the god of this world; the wicked are led by him at his will; he works effectually in them, and blinds their minds, 2 Cor. 4:3, 4. But the regenerate are got out from under his subjection, delivered from his kingdom, Col. 1:13. He is indeed an enemy to molest them, but not their king that reigns over them; his involuntary prisoners they may be for a time, but they are no more his willing subjects.

3. Their having a Spirit, even the Spirit of God dwelling in them, which the world have not, Rom. 8:9; Jude, 19. When Lazarus's spirit entered again into his body, he was separated from the congregation of the dead; and when a dead sinner gets the Spirit of Christ breathed into him, he is separated from the world, as much as the living from the dead.

4. Lastly, Their having a disposition, frame, bent, and cast of heart and soul, opposite to that of the world; so that they are as much separated from the world, as enemies are one from another, Gen. 3:15. Hence they are in their great designs, affections, course and manner of life, non-conformists, and opposites to the world: as opposite as Caleb and Joshua were to their unbelieving countrymen, Numb. 14:24.

From this doctrine, we may learn the following things.

1. This speaks the dignity of believers. They are the truly honourable ones, as being of God; they are the excellent of the earth. What avails it that men can boast of their honourable extract in the world, while it still remains true, that they are of their father the devil? The beggar on the dunghill being of God, is more honourable than the wicked king sitting on his throne, attended with all the majesty of a kingdom.

2. It speaks the privilege of believers. Every one will care and provide for his own: be sure God will then take special concern about believers, Matth. 6:31, 32. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But many such, ye may say, are sorrily provided for. Ans. Ye are too hasty in such a judgment, Heb. 11:16. God is not ashamed to be called their

God; for he hath prepared for them a city. Every one will protect his own too; God will then protect believers, and be will avenge all their quarrels. There is never an unkindness done to them, but he will resent it, as ye will see from Christ's procedure with the wicked at the last day, Matth. 25. There is not a hard word spoken to them, nor a wrong look given them, but he will cause their enemies to pay for it.

3. It speaks the duty of believers. Carry yourselves as becomes your dignity and privilege, as those that are of God. Trust him with all your concerns, in all your straits; walk tenderly before him, remembering that your follies reflect dishonour on him ye belong to; and that ye are to evidence your being of God, by your steering another course than the world lying in wickedness.

4. Lastly, It shews the self deceit of unbelievers, pretenders to a saving interest in God, while in the mean time they are lying together with the world in wickedness. How can they be of God, who are not separated from the world, but walking according to the course thereof, in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

But I proceed to the second doctrine from the text.

DOCT. II. People's being of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness, is what may be known by themselves. We know that we are of God, says the apostle. There is a people in the world, yet not of the world, but separated from it; and they may see that they are such.

In treating this subject, I shall shew,

I. What knowledge may be had of this.

II. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to shew what knowledge may be had of this, That one is of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness.

There are three ways of coming to the knowledge of a thing.

1. By our senses, as we know fire to be hot, and ice to be cold. But this matter cannot be known that way. The grace of God, and the spiritual privileges of believers, are not the objects of sense. Indeed, if separation from the world were just a separating from one party and joining with another in church-society; we might know it by sense; but it is not so.

2. By extraordinary revelation, visions, voices, or impressions. Such things have been, as in Abraham's case, Gen. 17:1, 2. But that dispensation is ceased, the canon of the scripture being completed, and we referred to it, as unto a more sure word of prophecy, 2 Pet. 1:19. It was never known to all, though all are required to know this, ver. 10. Assurance then of one's being in a state of grace, may be attained without extraordinary revelation.

3. By rational evidence, as seeing a house, we know it has been built by some one; seeing the world, we know that it has been created of God; because they could not make themselves. So men may know themselves to be of God, by giving diligence to make their calling and election sure, 2 Pet. 1:10. Two things concur here.

1st, Spiritual discerning, a spiritual sight, taste, or feeling of the things of God, in ourselves or others, 1 Cor. 2:14. It is the total want of this in some, that makes them deceive themselves; they have no spiritual discerning, to distinguish between God's people and the world; so they are like men in the dark, that know not where they

are, nor whither they are going. And the weakness of this discerning in many of God's people, robs them of the comfort they might have.

2dly, Spiritual reasoning on scripture grounds, 1 John 5:13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. The word is the rule, which pronounces of men's state in the general; by spiritual discerning believers see in themselves or others, those things concerning which the scripture pronounces; and by spiritual reasoning they come to know by these means that they are of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness. Now, by way of rational evidence, one may know this of a two-fold object.

1. Of others. One may know that others are of God, and separated from the world, discerning the image of God shining forth in them, and hence gathering that they are of God, and not of the world. So the apostle in the text speaks of others as well as himself. There is a spiritual discerning in that case, as Barnabas saw the grace of God in the converts at Antioch, Acts 11:23. And this knowledge is supposed in the command of loving one another, given to God's people; for how can men love others as of God, if they cannot know them to be so?

2. Of themselves. A true believer may know himself to belong to God, and not to the world. So the apostle says in the text, We know that we are of God. There are such marks of distinction betwixt the two societies fixed in the word, that, by spiritual discerning and reasoning, one that is of God may be satisfied, that he is really of God, and needs not be always in the dark in that point.

But betwixt that knowledge concerning one's self and others, there is this remarkable difference.

1st, In the case of others, we can have, by rational evidence, only a judgment of charity, not of certainty, without extraordinary revelation, such as Ananias had with respect to Paul, Acts 9:15. This is founded upon probable appearance of the grace of God in them, which yet may be but an appearance. Hence the best of men may be deceived in their opinion of others, as Philip was with Simon Magus. The devil's goats may be taken for Christ's sheep, by very discerning Christians. Of this I would say,

(1.) We should not be rash in giving or refusing that judgment, but hold pace with the appearance or non-appearance of the grace of God in them. We are bid to beware of men; for we are told all men are liars: and many a fair outside there is, where there is a foul inside, that a little trial discovers; therefore we ought not to have the persons of any in admiration. On the other side, the grace of God may dwell with much dross; therefore we are to beware lest we trample the jewel under foot, because it lies in a dunghill.

(2.) The love bestowed on hypocrites is not all lost, and therefore it is safest erring on the charitable side. A man may love Christ in a hypocrite; not that Christ dwells in any such, but that what we bestow on any for Christ's sake, whether they really deserve it or not, will not lose its reward, Mark 9:41. And by the rule of charity, we are obliged to put the best construction on our neighbour's state and way that they can reasonably bear, 1 Cor. 13:7. One had better judge ten hypocrites sincere, for that may be duty, than one sincere person a hypocrite.

(3.) Let us carry our judgment of others no farther than that of charity, and not pretend to a certainty, which is not competent to us in that case, but to God only. He alone is the searcher of hearts, without the knowledge of which an absolute certainty cannot be

attained. Keeping within our own bounds, the deceit discovered in the world would brangle us the less, as being not inconsistent with the judgment that we formed.

2dly, In our own case, we may have by rational evidence a judgment of certainty, without extraordinary revelation. We may in an ordinary way, if we really belong to God, be infallibly assured of it. The reason of the difference is plain; we see the open actions and carriages of others, but we cannot know the secret springs of them, the principles, ends, and manner of them, upon which the main stress lies; but we may know these things in ourselves. What moves ourselves so to walk, we can assuredly know; but what moves others, we cannot know that.

This is clear from the following grounds.

(1.) A true child of God may assuredly know his relative state in the favour of God. Though he cannot open the sealed books of the decrees, and read his name at first hand in the decree of election; yet by comparing the word of God in the Bible, and the work of God in his own soul; he may know himself to be one of the elect, 2 Pet. 1:10, Heb. 6:11. to be one of those for whom Christ died, and of the family of God, Rom. 8:16, 17.

(2.) He may discern in himself real grace, and know that he believes in Christ, as sure as he breathes, 2 Tim. 1:12. and loves him, so that he can appeal to Omniscience for the truth thereof, as Peter did, John 21:15. And knowing that all who believe in Christ, and love the Lord, are of God, separated from the world, and shall never be suffered to mix with them again, he may conclude so of himself with the greatest certainty.

(3.) All the saints have the Spirit of Christ, Rom. 8:9. And it is the office of the Spirit to lead them into all truth, and particularly to shine upon his own work in the soul, 1 Cor. 2:12; and so to be a joint witness with their own spirits to their adoption into the family of God, Rom. 8:16; to be a seal, which is designed to ensure, Eph. 4:30; and an earnest too, which is both a part of the price, and a pledge of the whole, 2 Cor. 5:5.

(4.) The effects of faith sometimes produced by it in the saints confirm this. Such is the boldness and confidence they sometimes have with God, Eph. 3:12. rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, Rom. 5:2. which is sometimes unspeakable, 1 Pet. 1:8. So that they can cheerfully undergo sufferings, Heb. 10:34. All which necessarily presupposeth their knowing themselves to be of God.

(5.) Lastly, The examples of the saints make it plain, as Job 19:25–27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Psal. 23 ult. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." 2 Tim. 4:8. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." This knowledge is what has been reached, and therefore yet may be so.

II. For practical improvement of this point, I exhort you to be concerned to know, whether ye are of God, separated from the world, or not. Take that matter under serious consideration. To press you thereto, consider,

1. We are all of us naturally, and by our first birth, of the world lying in wickedness, Eph. 2:2, 3. No question but we were once joined to the wicked world, as kindly members thereof; all the question is, Whether we be separated from them, or not? It is by a second birth that we are of God, if at all. What experience have we of that?

2. The world lying in wickedness is the society appointed to destruction, as in a state and course of enmity against God, Eph. 2:3. Therefore all that are to be saved, are delivered and gathered out of it, Gal. 1:4. Wo to them that are left in it, for they will perish in the ruins of it. David prays, "Gather not my soul with the wicked." But they that are not gathered out of them in life, cannot miss to be gathered with them in death; being eternally left in the guilt and filth of their wickedness, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

3. Many deceive themselves in this matter, as the foolish virgins, Matth. 25. Christ's flock is certainly a little flock, Luke 12:32, Matth. 5:13, 14. Yet there are but very few who do not hope to share with them; for a ruining principle obtains, That if we be not notoriously profane, it will be well with us in the end; as if the devil could dwell in none, whose name is not Legion. They that have a form of religion, build on that; and others build on the mercy of God. They consider not, how very unlikely it is, that they shall leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom; and therefore they trouble not themselves with separating from the world lying in wickedness.

4. Death is approaching; and if it were come, there will be no separating more from the world. There are two parts of that world, the one within, the other without the line of mercy. The latter lies on the other side of death. And death separates the unregenerate from

the former part indeed, but it fixes them for ever among the other part that is quite hopeless.

5. It is uncertain when death comes to us, and how, Matth. 24:42. People of all ages and sizes die, and death fixes all in an unalterable state. A death-bed is not to be trusted to; for death may surprise you without getting one; and though ye get it, it may be very useless for soul business, whether through raving or extreme tossing. At best it is hardly the fit time of being new born, when a-dying.

6. Lastly, It is an excellent and useful thing to know our state in this point. For if we find that we are not of God, but of the world, we are awakened to see to it in time. If we find that we are, it is what makes both a comfortable life, in the midst of troubles from the world; and a fruitful life, inflaming the heart with love, humbling the soul, and strengthening it, and fitting both to live and to die.

For your help in this inquiry, consider the following signs, marks, and characters of those that are of God, separated from the world.

## CHARACTERS OF THOSE THAT ARE OF GOD

First, They are such as have fled from the world to Jesus Christ as a refuge, Heb. 6:18. They have seen danger in it, in a work of conviction; and safety from it in Christ, in a work of saving illumination. Such are of God, and none other, as is manifested from that gospel-call, 2 Cor. 6:17, 18, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The secure, and strangers to Christ, are yet in the world lying in wickedness.

1. Seen danger in the world has made them flee from it. They have come out of it, as Lot out of Sodom, under conviction that destruction from the Lord was waiting it. They have heard and believed the report of the word about it, saying, as Rev. 18:4. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." They have got an awakening that has frightened them from staying longer with them, notwithstanding of the multitude abiding at ease therein, the discerning of which makes many easy in their stay in it.

2. Seen safety in Christ has brought them to him, in a way of believing, Acts 15:11, "But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." They have seen him to be the Christ, in whom the fulness of happiness is lodged in opposition to the world, 1 John 5:1. They have discovered in him a glory darkening all the world's glory, and so have made the exchange as of husks for bread, Matth. 13:45, 46.

Secondly, They are coming away with Christ from the world in their daily walk, answering his call, Can. 4:8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon." After Israel came out of Egypt, they went not back to it, to the brick kilns, and the flesh-pots; but they marched through the wilderness. Those that are separated from the world in regeneration, are still separating from it, in progressive sanctification, labouring to keep themselves unspotted from the world. They are not of God then, who having once had something like conversion, make that stand for all, and never endeavour to be separating more and more from the world.

There are three things that make them still to be coming away from the world.

1. It grows no better in their eyes, in any of its shapes, whatever it grows worse; so they continue their separation and march, coming up from the wilderness, Cant. 8:5. Some people get a fright of the world some time; and the ways of the world appear to them dangerous ways. But that fright goes off, and the ways of the world look more gay to them; and they being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, even go back again, and settle down in the world lying in wickedness in one shape or another, that be like them.

2. There are two contrary principles in them, an earthly one and a heavenly one, grace and corruption, Gal. 5:17. If they had only the earthly principle, they would settle still with the world, they could not come away at all. If they had only the heavenly principle, they would be quite separated from the world, and their march from it would be at an end. But having both, the one puts them in continual hazard of the unclean thing, and the other prompts them to be making away from it.

3. They have peremptorily left their old rest, and are not yet come to their new rest, therefore they must be moving. They have left the city of destruction, but they are not come yet to the city of God, the New Jerusalem, Heb. 4:9, 11. They are come out of Egypt, but they are not yet come to Canaan; but they are on their wilderness march, minded to hold on, while apostates are for returning to Egypt again.

Thirdly, They are non-conformists to the world, Rom. 12:2. They do not conform themselves to the course of the world, Eph. 2:2. Hence they are indeed the world's wonder, and at length the object of their reproach and spite, 1 Pet. 4:4. Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. They dare not do what the world makes no bones of; they hate the courses that the world is fond of; and take pleasure in those things

that are tasteless and sapless to the world. Being of God, it must be so; for,

1. They are of another country than the world, being heavenly men, born from above. They are pilgrims and strangers here; how then can they miss not to be conformed to the natives? Indeed if they were to settle among them, and to be naturalized, forgetting the heavenly country, they would fall in with their ways and courses, as apostates do. But they are only travelling through the world, and therefore it is not strange they quite differ in their language, habit, and manners, from the natives of the world.

2. They are of another nature than the men of the world, being partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1:4. Some men differ in their natural constitutions so, that what is one man's meat is another's poison. But the new nature in the regenerate differs farther from the old corrupt nature in the world. Grace gives the hearts of men a new set, hangs a new bias on them, so that they dearly love what themselves before hated, and hate what before they loved. The new nature and the old course are inconsistent. One must quit the latter, or all pretence to the former.

This non-conformity lies not only in not doing what the world does, but in doing another way than the world does in that which they both do. So in those things which they both do, there is still a non-conformity to the world, which is seen in these three things.

1. In natural actions, as eating and drinking, &c. They that are of God must do these as well as they that are of the world; yet the former do not conform to the latter in the way of doing them. The way of the world in these things is merely selfish and carnal, to gratify a lust or appetite, without any eye to God in them, to his command, his glory, or to the fitting of them to serve God in their station, Zech. 7:6.

"When ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did ye not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?" (Matth. 24:38.) Hence conscience has with them nothing to do in the getting, or in the using of these things.

But they that are of God will take their religion to their bed and to their board, and regulate themselves therein according to the dictates, not of carnality, but conscience, 1 Cor. 10:31. The satisfying the necessities of the body, will not be to them the ends of their living, but the means of living, their end being to live to God; and therefore these things will be cut and carved as they may best contribute to that end, 1 Thess. 4:4, 5.

2. In civil actions, as working, bargaining, guiding a family, serving, &c. The way of the world in these things, is to have no respect to the command or honour of God in them, to shuffle out the directions in their Bible from them, as a thing having no concern in these matters, Luke 17:28; to have no single eye to seek the good of those they have to do with, but to please themselves; or at best to be men-pleasers, not God pleasers in these things: to count exact truth and uprightness needless nicety.

But those that are of God dare not, will not, nay abhor to conform themselves to that way of the world. They will carry their religion into their callings, worldly business, and relations, 1 Cor. 7:23, 24. They will look on God as the principle, whoever is the less principle party they have to do with, Prov. 3:6. The end of regeneration is the restoring of sinners to conformity unto the rule of righteousness, whereof the sum is love to God and our neighbour, shewing itself in sincere endeavours to honour God, and to be beneficial to mankind, 1 John 3:10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the

children of the devil; whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

3. In religious actions. It is not bare praying, hearing, &c. that will distinguish one from the world lying in wickedness; for all that religion is found among them too. But they have a way of their own in it, holding with the form, but denying the power, 2 Tim. 3:5. contenting themselves with bodily exercise, while strangers to the spirituality of duties, Matth. 15:8. seeking themselves in them, not God, Matth. 6:2. making a shelter of them wherein to sin more at ease, Prov. 7:14, 15; and putting them in Christ's room, by confidence in them, Rom. 10:3.

But those that are of God conform not to that way of religion. For to the regenerate it is not a piece of art, but of new nature; religion is a thing that their new nature leads them to. And what is natural people will still aim at the perfection of, and so they will study the power of godliness. And being of God, they will natively seek the enjoyment of God, as the infant seeks to suck the breasts of the mother that bare it; and they will seek the destruction of sin by their religion, as being a contrary principle thereto; and it will natively carry them out of themselves to Christ for all, since he is the life of the new creature. See their character, Phil. 3:3. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Fourthly, They are in a state of opposition to the world lying in wickedness. This is plain from Gen. 3:15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Jam. 4:4. The two parties are like the company of two armies engaged against one another. When by regenerating grace one comes

out from among them, he is not only separated from them, but set up in opposition to them. This says negatively,

1. Those that are of God are not the friends of the world, taking part with them against those that are of God. There are some not without pretences to religion, but as to matters of practice they are still upon the loose side; they will plead for Baal, and give squint strokes at tender holy walking. They will declaim against hypocrisy, being tongue tacked against profaneness; they have a vail to throw over the gross abominations of the licentious, but they will rip up the infirmities of the weak; they have a tongue soft as wool for the credit of the scandalous and profane, but piercing like a sword into the serious. Let these read the sentence of the Spirit of God, excommunicating them out of the communion of saints, James 4:4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

2. They are not neuters in the quarrel with the world lying in wickedness. There are some who think that they do very well, if they do nothing against the cause of religion; but to act against the cause of wickedness in the world, is none of their business, it belongs not to them, not considering what Solomon says, Prov. 28:4. "They that forsake the law, praise the wicked; but such as keep the law, contend with them." They think to keep peace with God, and with the world lying in wickedness too; but they are mistaken, it will not do. Whoever they be that are not content to list themselves under Christ's banner, to oppose and act against the world lying in wickedness, Christ denounces them enemies to him, Matth. 12:30. "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."

How can it be but that those who are of God are in a state of opposition to the world lying in wickedness?

(1.) The object of their love is the object of the world's hatred, which cannot miss to produce this. God in Christ is the principal object of the love of the regenerate, and him the world hates, John 15:18. and they shew it in their hatred of his image, in his ordinances, his people, and especially in his law, because there it is most lively expressed. And can any thing be more natural, than for a son to be in a state of opposition to his Father's haters and enemies? Psal. 139:21. namely, to oppose them in their opposition, that is, their sin, not their persons.

(2.) They are under opposite heads, betwixt whom there is an irreconcilable war, Christ and the devil, Michael and the dragon. This war was proclaimed in paradise, Gen. 3:15. and will never end, but in the destruction of the one party. Nobody can be neuter in such a case, but do make opposition. The arms of the parties are indeed very different. The world acts against those that are of God, by persecutions, reproaches, mockings, contempt and hatred of their persons, looseness of life, trampling on the laws and honour of God; the regenerate act against the world lying in wickedness: by hatred of their ways, loving their persons, testifying against them, endeavouring to reclaim them, rowing against the stream in a tender walk, mourning and praying for them. They that are not so engaged against the world, are not of God.

(3.) The interest of the two societies is downright opposite; so opposite that the one cannot be advanced but on the ruin of the other. The spreading of holiness is the interest that the one is pursuing, the promoting of sin is the interest pursued by the other; these are as opposite as light and darkness. And it is as sure that

every man and woman is acting in this life to the promoting of one of these two in the world, as that every person and thing will act agreeable to its own nature, Micah 4:5. For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever. And therefore those that are of God are in a state of opposition to the world lying in wickedness.

Fifthly, There is a bond of brotherly love, whereby they are knit together among themselves, as children of one family. By this one may know himself to belong to the family of God, 1 John 3:14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" and by it as a badge on-lookers may know they belong to it, John 13:35. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." So that it is a sign that casts its light both inward and outward. The certainty hereof appears from several considerations.

1. They all love God their common Father, love his image, pressing to be like him as their main aim. Hence, since all the regenerate do bear God's image as begotten of him, they must love them also, 1 John 5:1. "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." The love of God natively draws after it the Christian love of those that are of God.

They have forsaken the world for the society of the saints; and as the married woman forsakes her father's house, and joins herself into the house of her husband, thenceforth to look upon the interest thereof as her interest; so in the spiritual marriage with Christ and regeneration, the soul comes home to the society of the saints for good and all, in opposition to the world, cordially falling in with the call given, Psal. 45:10. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and

incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house."

3. The natural enmity against the seed of the woman that is inseparable from the seed of the serpent, evinceth this, Gen. 3:15. In every unregenerate man there is a natural enmity against a holy God, his holy Christ, and his holy seed; their natures being as contrary as fire and water, that it is impossible ever they should be, as such, lovely in one another's eyes. And in regeneration, the serpentine nature is changed, the enmity removed, and consequently this love to the saints is fixed in its room, as a necessary consequent of the new nature.

4. As God is love, the devil is a mass of hatred and malice against God and man, so the two parties partake of their natures respectively. God bears a common love to his creatures, so as to do them good, and a special love to the saints; and those that are of God, accordingly have implanted in them a principle of love, of good will and beneficence to mankind, Luke 6:35. but a special love of delight in the saints, Psal. 16:3, Gal. 6:10. Satan bears a hatred against men, especially holy men; but most of all he hates God; so his seed hate one another, Tit. 3:3. and more keenly hate the heavenly seed, and that because of their hatred wherewith most of all they are irreconcileable to God, John 15:18.

Object. Where are there greater heats and oppositions, than among the different parties in the church? where then is the brotherly love by which all are pretended to be knit? Answ. There is a difference betwixt the visible church, and those that are of God. In the visible church are many who are still of the world lying in wickedness, and they bring with them into the church, their natural enmity, hatred, and unchristian spirit, and exercise it in the things of God, to the

marring of the purity, beauty, and peace of it. But this hellish fire belongs to the spirit of the world, and the blame of kindling it lies at the door of the world. And if the church, though imperfect were freely separated from the world lying in wickedness, it would be a lovely and loving society far beyond what it is. I own that these things are incident to those that are of God, as in the contention between Paul and Barnabas, Acts 15:39. and the reason is, the remains of the spirit of the world in them are not yet purged away; but the cause of the quarrel is not what they conceive to be likeness, but unlikeness to God; and notwithstanding all their jarrings, they will still love them as they appear to have the image of God on them; for whatever they differ in, they agree in that. Wherefore we may lay down these conclusions,

1. They that are of God love the society of the regenerate, considered as a holy society, separated from the world lying in wickedness, Heb. 12:22. The picture of that society drawn in the Bible, is beautiful in their eyes, more alluring to them than the richest, most powerful, and most gay and splended society in the world; and therefore they desire more to be of it, than of any other whatsoever. The grace in it glisters more in their eyes than gold in the world; and so it is not with others, 1 John 2:15, Cant. 1:7.

2. They love particular saints of their acquaintance for what likeness to God appears in them, 2 John 2:2. There are many things about the children of God, that may move love to them in a child of the devil, their relation, usefulness, and agreeableness in several things to them! but their spiritual beauty in conformity to the holy Jesus, is a motive and ground of love to them, not in the unregenerate, but in the regenerate partakers of the same divine nature. Upon that score the serpentine enmity rises in the one, and love in the other.

3. They love all the saints without exception, so far as they can take them up to be so, Eph. 1:15. They will never confine their love to a party, to whom God has not confined his grace, nor to such as are attended with worldly advantages, despising the rest on whom the world particularly frowns, Psal. 119:63. If they should do so, they would evidence that it is not God they love in them, but themselves; that it is not the advantages they have as the darlings of heaven, but, of the world. But whatever defects are about them, the appearance of God's grace in them will supply them all, to the rendering them lovely in the eyes of those that are of God, though not to others, whereby they are tried and cast.

4. The more gracious and holy any are, the more will they be loved of them. For the more of the cause there is in any, the more there must be of the effect. And hence it is, that the most tender and holy Christians are at once the objects of the greatest love of the regenerate, and the world's greatest hatred. Many can endure holiness while it remains dim and obscure in men, that spit venom against it, where it shines clear; so formal hypocrites are like the owl that can come abroad in the twilight, but cannot endure the light of the sun: an eminent instance were the Pharisees to Christ.

5. Lastly, The more any have of the world's hatred for their opposition to it, they will love them the more. As fire burns keenest in the sharpest frost, so it has always been observed, that the love of the godly to one another was strongest, when the world's hatred of them was most keen. So dangerous it is to be found joining the torrent of the world against serious godly ones.

Sixthly, Their hearts are kindly disposed towards the holy law. As the old corrupt nature reigning in the unregenerate fills them with enmity against it, Rom. 8:7. so the new nature in them kindly plies

and bends towards it, Psal. 119:97. The reason is, the image of God expressed in the law is begun to be drawn on their souls, so that their new nature and the holy law point both one way, Heb. 8:10. It is true, there is a resistance and aversion of the unrenewed part; but that is not total, and there is a gracious principle that condemns it, Rom. 7:22, 23. Hence,

1. They willingly take on the yoke of obedience, and go under it, because it is agreeable to their new nature, 1 John 5:3. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." Christ's yoke is a galling yoke to the necks of the men of the world, because their is no suitablenes of their nature to it: they spurn it, their hearts rise against it; fain would they be quit of it, that they might take their swing according to their lust. But it is not so to those who are of God, Matth. 11:29, 30. Fain would they be rid of their lusts, but not of the law, Rom. 7:24.

2. they are universal in their obedience to their knowledge, Psal. 119:6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." When there is an artificial bending towards the law, upon a particular design, there is a picking and choosing of the parts thereof most agreeable to one's circumstances; hence some fall in with duty to God, but make no conscience of their duty to men; others fall in with personal duty, but make no conscience of relative duties; they comply with duties of commanding, but make no conscience of duties of subjection: for the one they can digest, but not the other. But where the bent is new and natural, there will be a falling in with the whole, since the whole is agreeable to the new nature, and is of a piece, and laid on by the same authority, James 2:10, 11.

Lastly, They overcome the world, 1 John 5:4. "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Having separated from the world, it will pursue them, as the Egyptians did Israel, and it will have a war with them, encountering them with its smiles and frowns; but whatever way it attacks them they overcome; though they may lose in particular battles, yet they are the overcomers in the main. And,

1. They overcome its smiles, holding fast by their God, religion, and duty, in the face of a smiling world, Job 1:1–5. Many a man that sometimes seemed to be separated from the world, is brought by the warm sun of worldly prosperity to drop off his garments of religion and a tender walk, and plunge himself into the way of the world lying in wickedness. And there is no question but worldly prosperity is given to men for their trial, as well as adversity; and many come foul off in it, Prov. 1:32. But those who are once truly separate will overcome.

2. They overcome its frowns, holding fast by their God, religion, and duty, as sweet, though the world turn never so sour, Hab. 3:17, 18. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." The sour world gets the day of many, by sucking the sap out of religion to them, rendering the word of promise and spiritual comforts tasteless to them; so that though when the world gave them comfort, they had some comfort in religion too; yet when the world's comforts are dried up, the comforts of religion are gone too, Exod. 6:9. That says the world was the main pillar on which their comfort stood. But though the world may prevail to brangle thus with them that are of God, yet they will not be quite overcome,

but will be overcomers in the case; shewing that they are in hope of something better than what they have lost, that there is something for which they can part with all to obtain it, and that there is a fountain running while the world's cisterns are dry.

I proceed now to consider the last doctrine, namely,

DOCT. III. The whole unregenerate world lieth in wickedness.

In handling this subject, we shall,

I. Shew why the society of the unregenerate is called the world.

II. Offer some description of the unregenerate world.

III. Make improvement.

I. I am to shew why the society of the unregenerate is called the world. It is plain here, that though the regenerate really are in this world, as well as the unregenerate; yet the unregenerate are by the Spirit of God called the world, in contradistinction to the regenerate, as if they possessed the earth alone, and no other were mixed with them in it. The reasons are,

1. They are the main body of the world; and so few of the other sort are mixed with them, that they alter not the denomination, John 1:10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. The regenerate are but here one and there one, but the unregenerate appear in multitudes; the former are but as gleanings, the latter as the harvest. What safety can men propose then in the way of the multitude, the course of the world?

The scripture is plain in this, Matth. 7:13, 14. "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to

destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Luke 13:24. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Christ's flock is a very little flock, in comparison of the devil's herd, Luke 12:32. And it is, alas! demonstrable beyond contradiction. Dividing the world into thirty parts, nineteen of them are possessed by Pagan idolaters, who know not the true God; six by Jews, Turks, and Saracens; so five only remain which profess Christianity. Thus Christians by profession are but five to twenty-five. Of these five two are reckoned to be of the Greek church, much sunk in ignorance, and the other three idolatrous Papists and Protestants. And among Protestants, how many are openly profane or grossly ignorant, having no tolerable shew of piety? how many are mere formalists, strangers to the work of grace, and exercises of godliness?

2. They are the natives, others are but strangers among them, and such are not counted in a general denomination of a society. They are in the scripture-style, the inhabitants of the world, Isa. 26:18. of the earth and sea, Rev. 12:12. as being the natives of it, having their birth and breeding only of the world. The regenerate are sojourners among them, pilgrims and strangers among them, Heb. 11:13.

3. Their spirit, temper, and disposition, chief aims and designs, are all worldly, there is nothing heavenly in them, Psal. 17:14. Their souls are indeed of heavenly original; but they are sunk, like a pearl in a mire, in the profits, pleasures, vanities, and cares of the world. Hence they are called flesh, as if they had no spirit in them, John 3:6. and are said to be in the flesh, Rom. 8:8. For they can relish nothing but what is fleshly or worldly; their views are confined within the compass of the present world; on these things they value themselves; and in effect their souls have resigned themselves slaves to their

bodies, and their consciences to their senses; being an effect in their bodies as salt only to keep them from rotting.

4. They are the lower part of the rational kind, the dreggy part of the creation. Therefore, whereas the church is called heaven, and the regenerate sons of God, heavenly men; they are called the earth, children of men, earthly men, Gen. 11:1. and 6:2, 1 Cor. 15:48. For as when the Spirit moved, and the divine word passed upon the shapeless mass at the beginning, the finer parts went upward, or off from the dreggy gross part, which remaining lowest was called earth; so the word and Spirit passing on the mass of mankind, that part thereof which is thereby regenerate gets a new nature, ascends in their designs and aims, and at length become equal with the angels, Luke 20:36; and the unregenerate part that is left below, being earthly, sensual, devilish; for the time are like the beasts, following their fleshly appetite, as dogs and swine the grossest of them; and in the end are thrust down into the place of devils.

5. Lastly, Because all in the world without exception are originally of their kind, unregenerate, John 3:6. Even the elect themselves are once unregenerate; they who are now of God, were sometime of the unregenerate world, Tit. 3:3. So that irregeneracy is the state of all the world originally, in which state all lie in wickedness, Psal. 14:3. Only those that are of God have heard Heaven's voice, as saying, Come up hither, and so have been separated from the world. But the society they come from is still the world lying in wickedness.

## A DESCRIPTION OF THE UNREGENERATE WORLD

II. The second head proposed was, to offer some description of the unregenerate world. We have seen some of the characters of those that are of God, I shall now lay before you a view of the world lying in wickedness. That world is (as it were two hemispheres) twofold.

1. The lower world lying in wickedness. That is the region of death, eternal death; the lake of fire; the pit, the abyss of hell. The inhabitants thereof are the devils, and the souls of the damned, who have lived and died in their unregenerate state, and will continue for ever in it.

2. The upper world lying in wickedness. That is the land of the living, this present evil world, made up of all those who are living in their unregenerate state, the black state of nature, strangers to Christ and the power of godliness. It is the upper unregenerate world we are to speak of, not the lower, when we have observed that they are but one world in different circumstances.

1st, The lower and upper unregenerate world are indeed one world, one kingdom of Satan, one family of his. As it is but one family of saints that is in heaven and earth, Eph. 3:15; so it is but one family of sinners that is in hell and on earth. Therefore those here are declared children of hell, as well as those that are there, Matth. 23:15. of the devil, John 8:44. So men dying unregenerate, go to their own place, Acts 1:25; and though they change their place, they change not their society, being gathered with those in death, in society with whom they lived.

2dly, But only they are in different circumstances.

(1.) The state of the one is alterable, as of those who are upon a trial; of the other unalterable, as those on whom a definitive sentence is passed; this is held forth in the case of the rich man and his five brethren, Luke 16:25–28. Those of them here are upon their way in their travel, and may change their route, and go heaven-ward; the other are at their journey's end, and can move no more from their place.

(2.) So the case of the one is not without hope, but that of the other absolutely hopeless. They are both prisoners; but the one are prisoners of hope, Zech. 9:12; but the earth with her bars is about the other for ever. There is a gulf fixed between heaven and them, impassable. Here they are in darkness indeed, but it is not outer darkness, as in the case of the damned. Here the voice of the turtle is heard, but there nothing but yelling.

(3.) And lastly, Here they lie in wickedness with some ease and pleasure: there they lie in it with none at all. Their pleasurable sins are there at an end, Rev. 18:14. Nothing of them remains with them, but the guilt of them, and cutting remorse for them; the sweet of their cup is drunk out, and nothing remains but the bitter dregs. One encourages another here, and men please themselves with the multitudes going their way; but there the throng is far greater; for whereas there are some constantly dropping off here, the wicked of all generations are there, and none return; yet the more the worse, Luke 16:28.

But now as to the upper unregenerate world, we shall first consider the parts, and then the state thereof.

I. The Parts of the Unregenerate World

First, The religious part of it, that is as the heavens in that world. Wonder not that we speak of the religious part of the world lying in wickedness; for there is some religion, but of the wrong stamp, in that world, and one part of it is exalted above another, as the heaven above the earth, Matth. 11:23. This makes them appear like the regenerate, in the outward man, having a form of godliness, and imitating the saints in their outward actions and behaviour, 2 Tim. 3:5.; being formalists, hypocrites, tares among the wheat, but still strangers to a work of grace; and so much the farther that they have a

shew of it, Matth. 21:31. Two things bring religion into the world lying in wickedness, where there is no regeneration.

1. A natural conscience, which dictates that there is a God, a difference betwixt good and evil, rewards and punishments after this life, Rom. 2:15. Though this is wrestled down in some of that world, that it has very little power with them; yet with others that are no more regenerate than they, it is improved, by the light of the gospel in the word, by good education, consideration, and thought; so that they prove morally serious, regular in their lives, embracing the external parts of religion, though unregenerate.

2. Interest, which sways the men of the world to it several ways. In some times and places religion is fashionable, gains men credit and reputation; so they embrace it for their credit, as the Pharisees did, Matth. 6:2. In some cases worldly advantages and profits attend it, and that bait draws many worldly men to it, as it did the multitude to Christ for the loaves, John 6:26, 27. And then its declared eternal advantages follow it, salvation from the wrath of God, and heaven's happiness; and a carnal sight of these things draws many, who are merely selfish in their pursuit, as was the case of that multitude, who said, ver. 34. "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

Secondly, The moral part of it, who are like the air in that world, not rising so high as the former, nor sunk so low as the other in immorality and profaneness. These are they who keep off from religion and the profession of it and from gross profanity too. They are civil and neighbourly men; just, honest, and upright in their dealings between man and man; and despise religion from the fraud and deceit of some whom they see profess it, Matth. 18:7. Some such there have been among Heathens, and some among Christians. Two

things, besides natural conscience and interest, bring in morality into the world lying in wickedness.

1. Civil society, by which means men may live at peace in the world, and be protected from injuries; for this cause men combine together in societies, appoint government, governors, and laws over themselves, which must establish morality, without which society cannot consist. And for this cause government is a great mercy, external order being kept among men by that means. Without it there would be no living in the world, but the weak would be swallowed up, and all filled with violence, rapine, and outrage.

2. Natural modesty and temper, in respect of which there is a great difference among even worldly men. Whatever internal or external cast it be owing to, it is evident, there is a certain simplicity, candour, integrity, and benevolence in some, whereby they differ, from others that have a cast of a spirit to fraud, disingenuousness, pride, imperiousness, and violence, and yet the former are of the world, as well as the latter; and so in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Thirdly and lastly. The immoral part of it. These are the earth and sea in that world, the grossest part of it all, whose conversation is neither bounded with religion or morality, but is just vile, irreligious, and immoral as occasion serves. This is the far greatest part of that world, and in it abound gross abominations, which bring God's wrath on lands and churches. The abominations, therein appearing are innumerable. See 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19–21; Tit. 3:3. Two things concur to fill the world with immorality.

1. The corruption of human nature, the natural bent of which lies to all enormities. This was the spring of the flood of wickedness, and of water, that overflowed the old world, Gen. 6:5. The heart of man is a

depth of wickedness, that casts it forth as a fountain doth its waters; and then it gets leave to run freely without restraint, it sends forth plentifully, Mark 7:21, 22. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

2. Occasions of sin and temptations thereto, which offer themselves thick in this evil world; because the multitude is of that sort, Matth. 18:7. Snares are strowed every where, and every temptation going in the world has a lust in the heart akin to it, that tends so natively to unite, that it is hard to keep them at meeting from closest embraces.

And there are two sorts that are most exposed to temptations, the rich and the poor, which make them generally speaking to be of the immoral part of the world, though there want not some of both sorts that are not so. This Agur observed long ago, Prov. 30:8, 9. "Remove far from me (says he) vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

1st, The wealth of the rich makes immorality abound among them. It swells the heart in pride, and fills them with admiration of themselves; it ministers much fuel to their lusts, and affords them occasions of fulfilling them. The natural vanity of the heart and mind, has a broad field to rove about in, so that they are apt to forget themselves and think their circumstances give them an allowance to make themselves vile, and that the laws of God and man are not made but for to bold the poorer sort, Prov. 30:9. Hence our Lord says, Matth. 19:23, 24. "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." "And again I say unto you,

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And says the apostle, 1 Cor. 1:26. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." They are to be pitied for their snares and temptations.

2dly, The poor, those who are in extreme poverty. Among them also immorality remarkably abounds. Their condition deprives them of many advantages others have. They are generally neglected in their education, all their care being to get to put in their mouths. They have rarely the advantage of good company. Their pinching circumstances embitter their spirits, that they relish not the things of God, and afford many snares and temptations to dishonesty, lying, falsehood, and all manner of wickedness, whereby they may think to better their outward circumstances. And when they turn idle, and vague up and down, their case readily turns most hopeless, Prov. 30:9. forecited, Jer. 5:4. "Therefore have I said, Surely these are poor, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God."

Hence may be seen the reason why the greatest regularity of life is found among those of the middle sort, though some of them are immoral too. They want the snares and temptations of the rich on the one hand, and of the poor on the other. They have neither the full idleness of the one, nor the poverty and idleness of the other.

If we compare the immoral part of the world lying in wickedness with the other two, though it is true they are all of the same world, and will perish if they be not separated from it; yet the religious and moral have the advantage of the immoral.

1. In this life, in many respects. They walk more agreeable to the dignity of human nature, than the immoral, who are more akin to the

brutes, being led by their brutal passions and affections even as they. They are more useful and beneficial to mankind; whereas the immoral are the pests of human society, working mischief to one or other. They have more inward quiet, and are not put on the rack that immorality brings on men, to compass their mischievous designs, to cover their deeds, and defend them. And so they have more outward safety, their regular lives being a fence to them, both from danger without and within.

2. In the life to come. Though the world, the unregenerate world's religion and morality will not bring them to heaven, yet it will make them a softer hell than the immoral shall have, Rev. 20:12, 13. And no man can doubt but works of morality are not so ill as works of immorality; unsanctified soberness is not so bad as reveiling and open profaneness. It is true, hypocrites shall have a hot part in hell; but can one imagine that their throwing off the mask, and giving themselves the swing, will make an easier part? No; Rev. 21:8. "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." No doubt the more light men sin against, their condemnation will be the more aggravated; but certainly it will be sorer for immoral Pagans than moral ones, for immoral Christians than moral ones, where the worm never dieth, and the fire is not quenched. Conscience will have less guilt, and not so deep, to charge on the one as on the other.

## II. The State of the Unregenerate World

Having seen the parts of that world, we are next to view the state of these parts; and that is, the whole world lieth in wickedness, the moral as well as immoral part, and the religious as well as the other.

It is the common state of the whole unregenerate world; whatever differences are among them, they all agree in this, they are lying in wickedness. In speaking to this, I shall,

1. Confirm and evince the truth of it in the general.

2. Explain this state of the unregenerate world, their lying in wickedness.

FIRST, I am to confirm and evince the truth of the doctrine in the general.

First, Satan is the god of the whole unregenerate world; how can it miss then to be wholly lying in wickedness? 2 Cor. 4:4. It is the honour and advantage of the regenerate, that God is their God, Heb. 8:10; but the unregenerate world is apostate from God, and have taken Satan in his room, giving him the homage they owe to God. Now Satan is the god of the unregenerate world lying in wickedness,

1. In respect of his god-like power over them; which we may take up in these particulars.

(1.) The sovereignty of it. The unregenerate world is Satan's dominion, whereof he is prince, John 12:31. and 14:30. Though he is under check and control of heaven, and the most fearful vengeance is abiding him from the Lord, yet he is a sovereign prince among them, ruling more absolutely than any prince in this world doth his subjects, 2 Tim. 2:26. None of them all have their subjects so much at their beck, as he has the men of the world.

(2.) The rivalship of it, being set up and managed just to confront the kingdom of God among men. Though Satan is the most miserable thing of the whole creation; yet, by a peculiar pride and spite against

God, he sets up directly, and immediately against God and his Son Jesus Christ, whose kingdom the regenerate are. And his rival kingdom is the unregenerate world. Between these is the lasting enmity, Gen. 3:15. and these are the opposite kingdoms that can never mix, Psal. 12:7; and the design of the gospel is to pull down Satan's kingdom, Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13.

(3.) The extent of it, reaching over the whole world, from one end of the earth to the other. All the power that ever the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchs had, never reached but over a part of the world; but the power of the devil reaches over all countries, wherever unregenerate men are.

(4.) The nature of it. He receives external worship from many in the world, having many whole nations at his devotion. But from the whole unregenerate world he receives the subjection, homage, and obedience of the inner man; and that is peculiarly due to God; Eph. 2:2. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Men of greatest eminency over others can only pretend to rule their outward man; the soul, the inner man, must be left to God; and that Satan usurps in the unregenerate world. He entered into Judas moving him to betray Christ, filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghost, &c.

2. In respect of his prime origination of their corruption. As from God men have their nature, whereby they are men, and their new nature whereby they are regenerate men; so from the devil men have all the corruption and sin of their nature, whereby they are unregenerate men; wherefore as men owe themselves to God, as men and Christians; so they are owing to the devil, as they are

unregenerate men lying in wickedness, See John 14:30. He hath of his own in them. Hence,

(1.) The devil is the common father of the unregenerate world as such. It is owing to him as the procreating cause thereof. It was the spawn of the old serpent conveyed by the first sin into human nature, that corrupted all mankind. Hence men are said to be of him, 1 John 3:12. and of him as a child is of a father, John 8:44. So the world lying in wickedness is called our father's house or family, Psal. 45:10. And not only are notoriously wicked persons, but all the unregenerate called children of the devil, 1 John 3:10; as bearing his image, John 8:44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

(2.) Their continuation in that their state, they have from him also. God preserves by his providence all that his own hands made, and the divine preservation is in effect a continued creation. But since the corruption of the world is originally from the devil, not from God; the maintenance of it comes the same way. So Satan upholds that world by his power, and he is incessant in his working for that end.

This gives a very dismal view of the unregenerate world; it is not God's world, but the devil's world, deriving its original from him, and over which he has the power of a god. Whence we must see, that it is surely,

(1.) The mire of sin, in which the miserable inhabitants must be continually wallowing; for nothing doth so much please the god of that world. He is an enemy to all good, and as far as his power reaches, no good can have place. The dust is his meat, and so a life of sin is a wallowing in the mire.

(2.) The region of death and destruction, which God will certainly destroy, if once he had his own out of it. For Christ came to destroy the works of the devil.

Secondly, Spiritual darkness, thick darkness, is over the whole of that world, Eph. 5:8. how can any thing but works of darkness be found in it? The Egyptian darkness was an emblem of this, they had a thick darkness, only in Goshen there was light; so the Egyptians rose not from their place to do business, Exod. 20:22, 23. Consider,

1. The sun went down on all mankind in Adam's transgressing the covenant; the light of God's countenance was then withdrawn, and so there was a terrible eclipse, witness Adam's hiding himself from the presence of God, and all men naturally following his footsteps in that.

2. The unregenerate world remains as Adam left them, the Sun of righteousness Jesus Christ is not yet arisen to them, Mal. 4:2, 3. Though he has spread abroad his light in the world, it is not yet come into their hearts. They know him not, they have not yet received the saving illumination of his Spirit.

Their state in point of darkness concludes them under sin, far from all good.

(1.) They are in darkness, Acts 26:18. Every unregenerate man sits in darkness, Matth. 4:16. He is like a captive or prisoner in a dark dungeon, where no light comes. The smoke of the opened pit that was let into the world by sin, makes thick darkness there, and that is round about every man till converting grace scatter it.

(2.) They are under the power of darkness, Col. 1:13. They are not like those that are in the dark, but can come out when they please

into the light; but they are under the power of it, as in chains of darkness. No human art can remove the darkness of a natural state, nay it retains its power over them in the midst of gospel light. God alone can dispel it, 2 Cor. 4:6.

(3.) The powers of hell rule in that darkness, Eph. 6:12. When the night comes on, the wild beasts come out of their dens, and range abroad; and so the dark world is Satan's walk, where he goes about like a roaring lion. Hence it comes to pass, that if any light begin to peep in, Satan presently stops it, 2 Cor. 4:3, 4. Thus convictions are stifled, and resolves of reformation fly up as dust.

(4.) It is a darkness of blindness; they really have not eyes to see with, Deut. 29:4. A child of God may be in the dark at a time, but then he will come forth at length into the light, and will see; but every unregenerate man is spiritually blind, Rev. 3:17. the darkness has blinded him, 1 John 2:11. He wants a faculty of discerning spiritual things in their true natures, 1 Cor. 2:14. Their understanding is darkened.

(5.) The light in the unregenerate world is darkness, Matth. 6:23. That is, it is a false light which quite misrepresents things, so they call good evil, and evil good. Hence to them the vanities of a present world are substantial, and the treasure hid in the field of the gospel is but a trifle. And because they think they see, their case is more hopeless, as Christ said to the Pharisees, John 9:41, "If ye were blind ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

(6.) Lastly, There is a continual night in the unregenerate world, 1 Thess. 5:5. There is an eternal day in heaven, no night there; with the regenerate the day is broken; but with the unregenerate the black and dark night still remains, Isa. 8:20. From all which it appears,

that they lie in sin, as prisoners in a dungeon; and that an unconverted state is the suburbs of hell, where there is outer darkness.

Thirdly, They are all lying under the curse, Gal. 3:10. For not being in Christ, they are under the law as a Covenant of works, Rom. 3:19. It is the regenerate only that are delivered from it, Rom. 8:1. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Hence all the unregenerate are declared out of Christ, 2 Cor. 5:17. and debarred out of heaven, John 3:3. And whatever differences may be among them as to their way and walk, the curse goes over their whole world. Now this proves that they are lying in wickedness two ways.

1. In that the curse always implies wickedness. A holy God will lay none under the curse of the law, but such as are lying under sin. It is wickedness that draws the curse after it; and the latter could have had no place in the world, till once the former made way for it. So being children of wrath by nature, proves us to be in a state of corruption by nature.

2. While it lies on, sin and wickedness retain their strength, 1 Cor. 15:56. "The strength of sin is the law." The reason is, the curse on a sinner effectually bars all sanctifying influences from heaven; so that it is not possible that the sinner can rise up from his state of sin, while in that case. When the fig-tree was cursed, it withered away; and so does the world in wickedness under the curse. Therefore faith is the only way to holiness; for by it alone the sinner is united to Christ, and justified, whereby the curse is removed; and then he is sanctified, or brought out of his state of wickedness.

Fourthly, They are all dead in sin, Eph. 2:1. There was a great cry in Egypt, when there was one dead in every family; but the unregenerate world is all dead together. God, the life of the soul, is

departed from them; they are alienated from the life of God, their speech is laid, and their spiritual senses are bound up. So that world is the region of the shadow of death. There is this difference indeed,

1. Some are dead and rotten; these are the immoral part of the world, who by their profane lives are as intolerable to sober men, as a stinking carcase; whose conversation, by reason of their profanity, is like the opening of an unripe grave, Rom. 3:13. therefore compared to dogs and swine.

2. Some are embalmed dead; these are the moral and religious part of the world. A form of godliness, the study and practice of moral virtue, is to them as the embalming of the dead corpse, though they cannot put spiritual life in a soul. So that these also are dead still, and lying dead in sin, though they smell not so rank as the profane and immoral.

Lastly, They are all destitute of every principle of holiness, and there cannot be an effect without a cause of it; there can be no acts of holiness without a principle to proceed from. They are destitute,

1. Of the Spirit of God; he dwells not in them, Jude, 19. compare 1 Cor. 2:14. All true sanctification according to the scripture is by the Spirit; it is his taking possession of the soul that looses the bands of sin and death, Rom. 8:2. and he dwells in all that are Christ's, ver. 9. But they are possessed by the spirit of the world, which is opposite to the Spirit of God, and has contrary effects, 1 John 4:5. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

2. They are destitute of the new nature; it is by regeneration the new man is framed; in the unregenerate is the old man alone, which is corrupt with his deeds, Eph. 4:22. Since then the tree is not good,

how can the fruit be good? If the new nature is totally wanting, how can there be the actions, life, and conversation of the new frame?

3. They are destitute of faith. And without that there can be nothing acceptable to God, Heb. 11:6. Feigned faith they may have; but true faith they have not; for that unites with Christ, and makes a new creature.

4. Lastly, Love, the immediate principle of all acceptable obedience, is wanting in them; for that proceeds from faith, and faith works by it. They cannot love God, they have not believed in him, for these go together. And where no love is, there can be no holy obedience.

SECONDLY, I come now to explain this state of the unregenerate world, there lying in wickedness. And we shall consider,

1. What of wickedness they lie in.

2. How they lie in it.

1. I am to consider what of wickedness they lie in. All the unregenerate world lies,

FIRST, In a state of sin and wickedness, Acts 8:23. I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Their state before the Lord is a sinful and wicked state; they have never been washed, nor purged from their sin. They are all over sinful and wicked, as over head and ears in the mire, Rev. 3:17. This we take up in two things.

First, Their nature is wholly corrupted with sin and wickedness, Matth. 7:18. Some of them may have a fair shew outwardly, but inwardly they are all overspread with the leprosy of sin, wholly corrupt, John 3:6. The infection by the first sin has gone over the

whole man, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. And the cure has never yet been begun in them, as having never been touched with regenerating grace. Even the saints' nature is corrupt, but they are renewed in part; but the unregenerate are wholly corrupted in the whole man, Isa. 8:10; there is not the least stroke of purity in them, Tit. 1:15.

I. Their souls in all their faculties are overspread with sin, and wholly corrupted.

(1.) Their mind and understanding is wretchedly vitiated. It is overwhelmed with gross darkness as to spiritual things, Eph. 4:17, 18. Darkness is over all that region; it is the land of darkness and shadow of death, where the very light is darkness; so that they cannot receive the things of God, more than a blind man the light of the sun, 1 Cor. 2:14. So unbelief reigns there, they cannot believe, for they cannot see, Eph. 2:2.

(2.) Their will is wholly perverse and rebellious against God, neither plying nor able to ply to the will of God, Rom. 8:7. The wrong set it got by the fall, it keeps; and nothing less than creating power can give it a new set. What God wills not, that they will, and what he wills, they will not; so that the holy law has an irritating effect on them. It is called a stony heart; break it may, but bow it cannot, till melted down by regenerating grace.

(3.) Their affections are all in disorder, Jer. 17:9. There is no moderating of them, by religion and reason, but they are turbulent and unmanageable, Jer. 2:23, 24. They are wretchedly misplaced; they love what they should loath, and loath what they should love. They can keep no measure, they run to evil, and what is good is against the grain with them. They are monsters in spiritual things;

their hearts are where their feet should be, on the world, and their heels lifted up against heaven.

(4.) Their conscience is in miserable plight. Tit. 1:15. It is unfit to do its office truly for want of saving illumination. Hence it is a lax conscience, that lets many evils pass without any check at all, being silent and senseless; but as to gross sins, in checking which it becomes through custom in them very remiss and easy. And if at any time it be awakened, it is easily bribed or boasted to silence.

2. The body partakes of that corruption, by communication with the sinful soul. It incites to sin; is a house wherein the soul finds many a snare spread for it; so that many, to gratify their senses and bodily appetites, make shipwreck of their souls. Therefore the apostle says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," 1 Cor. 9:27. It serves the soul in much sin, with the members thereof instruments of unrighteousness, Rom. 6:13. The eyes and ears are windows whereat death comes into the soul; the tongue an unruly evil; the lips unclean, the throat an open sepulchre; the feet swift to mischief; and the belly made a god, not only by them that feed delicately, but those that live on coarse fair, Zech. 7:6.

Secondly, Their lives and conversations are wholly corrupted. Psal. 14:3. For the fountain being poisoned, no pure streams can come forth from thence, Matth. 12:34. The conversation of unregenerate men is one continued course of error, and wandering out of the way of God's commandments. Some of them are nearer the way than others of them, but all of them are quite off it, Psal. 14:3. Whether they move slow or fast, they are out of course, Eccl. 10:15. For many of their actions are ill in themselves, in the very matter of them condemned by the law of God, and which they never truly repent of.

All of them are wrong in the manner, the best, of them are marred in the making, through the want of right principles, motives, and ends.

SECONDLY, The whole unregenerate world lies under the dominion and reigning power of sin and wickedness, Rom. 6:17. Even in the regenerate sin dwells, as a troublesome guest; but it has lost the throne in the heart. But in the unregenerate, it has full sway, and is the sovereign commanding principle in them. There are two things that evidence this.

1. Sin is in them in its full strength and vigour, and therefore rules and commands all. The strength of sin is the law, 1 Cor. 15:56. and they are under the law, under it as a covenant of works, and therefore under the curse. And wherever the curse lies, there sin remains in its strength and power; and there is no cutting off the locks of sin, and breaking the power of it, but by removing the curse, and delivering from the law as a covenant, Rom. 6:14.

2. It possesses them alone without an opposite principle. The old man of sin has not only the possession of every part, but of the whole of every part, there being no principle of grace brought in upon it to counteract it. In the regenerate there is a corrupt principle indeed, called the flesh; but it reigns not, because there is an opposite principle brought in upon it to resist it, Gal. 5:17. But the unregenerate are wholly flesh, John 3:6. So they are like the dead man, where death bears full sway; in the other death and disease are struggling for the mastery.

THIRDLY, They lie in the habitual practice of sin and wickedness, Psal. 14:1. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God; they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." Where sin reigns in the heart, one's course of life cannot be otherwise; if the eye be evil, the whole body must be full of darkness.

Where the old corrupt nature remains in its vigour, it is impossible but the life and conversation must be corrupt too. It is true, there is a great difference of life and practice among the men of the world; but that all the unregenerate lie in the practice of sin and wickedness, however they differ in the kinds of it, is clear from the following considerations.

First, The bent, strain, and course of their life is quite wrong, Eph, 2:1, 2. They are off from the mark; Adam led us all off the road, and they are not brought to it again. However quickly they move at any time, they are always like an arrow shot beside the mark, a traveller that is off his road, Eccl. 10:15. They are a company of wanderers, straying sheep, wandering on the mountains of vanity, 1 Pet. 2 ult. though they go their sundry ways, Isa. 53:6; some wandering in the wilderness of formality, others in the mires and bogs of profanity. But all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, Rom. 3:23.

Secondly, Any good they do is accidental, even as a wanderer in his course of wandering may stumble sometimes on the road; but it is not the product of their main scope and aim. So the Danites consulted God as to their way, not that they were seeking an occasion of it, but an occasion met them, Judges 18:5. So some expound that passage, Lev. 26:23. If ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary to me, &c. Unregenerate men may do good; but it is by the by only, as it happens to suit with their particular humours and interests; for self is the dead sea with them, wherein all is swallowed up; and they are unconverted.

Thirdly, The best things they do are sin, unapproved, unaccepted of God, Prov. 15:8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, Isa. 66:3. "He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he out off a dog's neck; he that offereth an

oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." They reckon wrong, dividing their actions into good works and ill works; they are entirely divided into glistering sins, and black and dark sins; and what they call their good works, are but glistering sins. For they are not done in faith; and whatsoever is not of faith, is sin, Rom. 14 ult. Their sinful unregenerate state corrupts all, as a tainted vessel doth the liquor poured into it, Hag. 2:11–14. Their actions materially good, are really evil, as wrong in the principles, manner, and end.

Lastly, Whatever good an unregenerate man does, he still lives in the allowed practice of some sin without repenting or forsaking it. Let him have never so many good things about him, there is still one thing lacking, that mars all, Mark 10:21. This will be evident, if ye consider,

1. That an universal and impartial respect to the commands of God, is a mark of the regenerate, Psal. 119:9. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." This bears that in the case of others there is always some exception, they never go along with the holy law without reserve. There is always something in Christ that offends them, that they stick at, and cannot go down with them, Matth. 11:6.

2. Sin's reign being still entire in them, it must have some lust or other for its sceptre to command by, Rom. 6:12. The current or channel of a water may be altered; but as long as the fountain is not dried up, it will have some channel to run in. A man's particular predominant may alter; but while unregenerate, he will always have some predominant, that shall command all.

3. The heart of man must needs hang on at one door or other for rest to itself. Faith carries the soul to take up its rest in God, Heb. 4:3. But

the unregenerate being unbelievers, do not make God their rest: therefore without controversy they will be found about the creature's door, seeking their rest there. So the heart has still some secret haunt of lust or other, that it can never be driven away from.

That haunt of the heart will be found in one of two.

1st, In the desires of the flesh, Eph. 2:3. There the grosser part of the world do nestle, who live as if they were nothing but flesh, and had nothing but the body, and a present life, to care for. And here one of two things will readily be found the reigning sin of the unregenerate.

1. Covetousness and worldly mindedness. There is in the world the lust of the eye, the gains and profits of a present world; and there many an unsanctified heart has its secret haunt, ever minding earthly things, Phil. 3:19. Here is the bait for the rich and the poor, the main stream of their cares runs there, the one for increasing, the other for getting: some by lawful means, but immoderately used, others right or wrong. But that is instead of God to them, 1 John 2:15; and therefore it is called idolatry, Col. 3:5.

2. Sensuality. There is in the world the lust of the flesh, the pleasures of sense, and carnal appetite; and there many an unrenewed heart has its secret haunt, that it can by no means be kept out of. There may be many good things about them; but their running issue there can never be stopt. The pleasures of sense are better to them, than all the pleasures of communion with God; and they are instead of it to them, 2 Tim. 3:4, 5. Hence some are voluptuous epicures, whose belly is their god; some fleshly slaves, abandoned to, and wholly in the power of their fleshly lusts.

2dly, Or in the desires of the mind, Eph. 2:3. There is in the world the pride of life too; and there the more refined part of the

unregenerate world do nestle. And here are several things that will be found reigning sins of the unregenerate, the haunts of their unrenewed hearts.

1. Reigning pride and self-conceit, 2 Tim. 3:2. Having never had a kindly work of humiliation wrought on them, the natural height of their spirit is unbroken. If they have any natural or acquired excellencies about them, they admire themselves in these, and take it very ill if others do not do so too. If they happen to obtain any religious or moral excellences, their case then becomes most hopeless, that publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before them: for their unrenewed hearts have no ballast for that sail.

2. Bitterness of spirit, showing itself in malice and revenge against those they think have injured them. The unregenerate world is the region of malice and bitterness, as peopled by the seed of the serpent, Tit. 3:3, "For we ourselves also, (saith the apostle Paul,) were sometimes foolish,—living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." This temper of spirit is more the nature of the unregenerate than generally we are aware of. The contrary disposition is the badge of the family of God, Matt. 5:44, 45. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." An unforgiving disposition is a sign of an unforgiven state, Matth. 6:14, 15. Therefore there were none more spiteful and malicious than the Pharisees, because there were none farther from a state of pardon with God. When grace comes, it turns lions into lambs, Isa. 11:6; and has a benign influence to the good of mankind, Rom. 13:10.

3. Reigning vanity of mind, Eph. 4:17. All the unregenerate world having left God, follow after vanity; for there is no mids, 1 Sam. 12:21. They are all in the dark, groping here and there for rest to their hearts among the creatures; they find it not, but a thousand disappointments cause them not to give over. They are like a sick man on his bed, turning every where for ease, and tossing; only never turning to God in Christ. The sick heart has this and the other fair promise made to it, to give it ease; for that end the world makes a mighty stir about meat, clothes, building, planting, doing and undoing again, turning upside down, changing and tacking about; and all in vain, without finding rest.

4. Natural enmity against God, Rom. 8:7. The unregenerate world is, in the language of the Holy Ghost, a generation of vipers, Matth. 3:7. And the seed of the serpent have all their venomous nature unchanged in them, whatever shapes or form of religion, or morality has cast them into. And this their natural enmity against God appears in two things.

(1.) A reigning enmity against the power of godliness, wherever it appears, Acts 13:10. Unrenewed professors of religion may very well like religion of the stamp of their own, and may have as much zeal as could burn up others that are not of their way; but to heaven shall hell be as soon reconciled, as they to real godliness in the power thereof, as it expresseth the image of Christ. And therefore there are none more virulent against the most serious godly than they, against those whose life is likest Christ's on earth.

(2.) An irreconcilable enmity to the law, and the holiness it requires, Rom. 8:7. The image of God was most lively expressed on the man Christ, and in his holy life when on earth the world saw it; and it no sooner appeared, than the natural enmity of the unregenerate world

appeared against God, in the treatment they gave to him, until they had him persecuted to the death. Now the most lively expression of the image of God, to be seen on earth, is in the holy law; but darkness and light may as soon be reconciled, as the unregenerate heart to the law. This appears, if ye consider,

(1.) There is never an unrenewed heart for the whole law, but at most to pick and chuse in it. Their shoulders can never away with the whole yoke of Christ. Seek all the unregenerate world, ye shall no sooner find one that is for fulfilling all God's will, than one after God's own heart, Acts 13:22. Some or other of his commands are always grievous to them, and that they can by no means bear.

(2.) The law brought close home to the unregenerate has an irritating power on them, Rom. 8:9. The more they are girded with the holy commandment, the more they sting against it; the closer it is applied to them, the farther they flee from it. It is like the stirring of the ant's nest, and the fretting of the serpent, that causes it spit its venom. Hence the more means of grace many have, they are the more vile; as the more the sun beats on the dunghill, its stench is the greater.

(3.) Akin to this is the enmity of the world against the ministers of Christ, which all ages and places have given pregnant instances of. The true reason of it is their office, an office ungrateful to the world, to declare the laws of Heaven, John 15:20, 21. "Remember that word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." Hence the current of spite against them, as against stewards who are to execute in a family the orders of the head thereof which are very unacceptable. Thus men being touched in their sore places,

are irritated; yea, if providence frown upon men, their ill nature is ready to appear against them; because the unhumbled heart frets against the Lord, and so it rebounds on his servants standing in that relation to him.

5. Selfishness, 2 Tim. 3:2. Men shall be lovers of their own selves. It is among the first lessons Christ puts in the hands of his scholars, to deny themselves; importing that all unregenerate men are overgrown with selfishness. Man falling off from God, set up himself as his chief end; and hence comes no due concern for the honour of God, nor for the good of others; but all swallowed up in concern for themselves; driving forward to that end over both the one and the other. Now grace corrects this disposition, bringing men out of the circle of self in which they were confined. This selfishness appears.

(1.) In their worldly management, where it swallows up neighbour-love, as in a devouring gulf, Phil. 2:20, 21. Hence no due sympathy with the afflicted, their sorrows no allay to their joys; yea a secret satisfaction in the crosses, losses, and afflictions of others, that the sorrows of others are matter of joy and triumph to them, Prov. 24:17, 18. Envying and grudging at the prosperity of others, undermining them in their affairs, not standing to drive on their own interest on the ruin of their neighbours; a scandalous cruel practice, which God is this day visibly contending for.

(2.) In their religious management, where it swallows up the love of God in Christ, like a devouring gulf, Phil. 2:21. Hence no due concern for the honour of God in the world, no mourning for the sins of others, but a careless Gallio-like temper whether the interests of religion sink or swim. No rejoicing in the glorifying of God, where they themselves cannot pretend to a share; an ill eye on the good of others, and hardly a good word to spare for it, but a readiness to

detract from it and sully it, unless they be of their party and way; in that case they find room for it, because there is room for self there, Phil. 1:15–18.

6. Lastly, Unbelief. This is the common sin of all the unregenerate world (John 3:18, 19.) that hear the gospel. They may escape a mire of pollution, that others fall into, who are yet sunk over head and ears here. It is a sin that is the need-nail to all others, John 7:24. and yet such a spiritual sin, that it is hardly discerned; it not being of the nature of those sins that a natural conscience boggles at. But all the unregenerate live in it.

(1.) They do not truly believe the gospel, Isa. 53:1. There is a report sent from another world, of life and salvation for sinners through Christ; they do not contradict, they say they believe it, nay they think they believe it; but in reality they believe it not. For to quit the enjoyment of their lusts, and the pursuit of the vain world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is in their eyes to quit certainty for uncertain hope. Any faith they have of it is but superficial; for it is risen without the root of saving illumination, and the demonstration of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 2:4, 5, Matth. 16:17.

(2.) They have never been brought freely away to Christ, in the way of believing, for all, John 1:12, 13. All the proposals of the gospel made to them, have never prevailed farther than to make them almost Christians, they have not felt the day of power to make them willing, Psal. 110:3. Men have drawn them, conscience has pressed them; but they have not felt the Father's drawing yet. Two things evince this.

(1.) They are not yet come freely away out of themselves, to Christ, for a rest to their consciences, Phil. 3:3. They have never yet died to the law, and therefore cannot be married to Christ, Rom. 7:4. They are not poor in spirit, Matth. 5:3. There is something left them still of

their own, which though they cannot trust to before God for altogether, yet they can in part. They are never brought freely out of their own righteousness, Rom. 10:3.

(2.) They are not come freely away from the creature into Christ, for a rest to their hearts, Heb. 4:3. They have never seen the fulness in Christ, that he should be the one thing desired by them; but in their way Christ may bear the weight somewhat for a rest to their consciences, but the heart can have no rest but in the creature; for they say, as Isa. 4:1, "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." He is not the one pearl to than, for which all is to be sold.

(3.) They do not live by faith, which is the only true Christian life, Gal. 2:20. So far from it, that,

(1.) Sense, and not faith, is their guide in their way, quite contrary to the Christian course, 2 Cor. 5:7. "We walk by faith, not by sight" The constant cry of the unregenerate world is, "Who will shew us any good?" Psal. 4:6. and nothing is good in their eyes but sensible good. So the things that are seen, and present, are valued and pursued; things that are not seen, and future, are slighted as uncertain.

(2.) Self, and not Christ, is what they lean to for carrying them on their way. The life of faith is a leaning on Christ, Cant. 8:5. But instead of that, the unregenerate lean on their own stock, their self-wisdom for management, their self-strength for performance, and their self-worth for acceptance.

Thus it appears, that they still live in the allowed practice of some sin or other. Now,

1. The effect thereof is, that that one thing mars all to them, in point of acceptance; and keeps them in a state of death, Mark 10:21. While one sin is allowedly kept, no good they do can be accepted of God, Psal. 66:18. It is as poison poured into a cup, which goes through all. And it effectually concludes them in a state of death; for an offending right eye or right hand puts the whole body in hazard of perishing, Matth. 5:29, 30. One leak may sink the ship. Abimelech the son of Gideon's concubine, slew his seventy brethren the sons of the wives.

2. The reason hereof is, that one sin is kept in the allowed practice thereof, evidenceth that any good done by such a one, is not done out of love to God, and regard to his holy law, but from some self end. For if the authority of God upon any command were sufficient to recommend the obedience of it to a man, it would recommend all the commands to him, because all bear the same impress of divine authority, James 2:10, 11.

FOURTHLY, The whole unregenerate world lies under the guilt of sin, the guilt of revenging wrath, Rom. 3:19. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. By the sanction of the law, guilt follows sin; the creature sinning becomes liable to wrath; there is a bond wreathed about their neck, by which they may be drawn to suffer. Hence sin is called a debt, because as it is the taking away of obedience due, it binds to suffer punishment accordingly. That we may have a view of their state under the guilt of sin, consider,

1. It is the guilt of eternal wrath they lie under, being bound over thereto by the curse, Gal. 3:10. The regenerate may be under guilt too; but it is only the guilt of fatherly anger; there is no curse, no revenging wrath in their case, Rom. 8:1. But the unregenerate are

under a bond of guilt binding them to suffer in hell to the complete satisfaction of justice.

2. The guilt of their original sin they were born with, is still lying on them, Eph. 2:3.—And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. They came into the world condemned men; and not being in Christ, the sentence is never reversed, though the execution is delayed. They have not the king's pardon, though they are yet spared, and easy as if there were no quarrel.

3. Every actual transgression, in heart, lip, or life, by omission, or commission, brings on new guilt of that kind on them, Gal. 3:10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." So the guilt of their sins is added to the guilt of their original sin; and as many actual sins as they are chargeable with, so many pliars there are of that cord of death on them. As they repeat their sins, the law repeats its curse.

4. An unregenerate man can do nothing but what is sin, Matth. 7:18. Accordingly God testifies of them that there is none that doeth good, no not one, Rom. 3:12. His nature being wholly corrupt, all his actions are corrupt too; his natural actions, Zech. 7:6. his civil actions, Prov. 21:4. and his religious actions, Prov. 15:8. So that in all they do, they contract new guilt, Hag. 2:14.

5. Man is a busy creature, still doing. And none are more busy than the unregenerate that can do no good, Isa. 57:20. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." The heart of man is like the watch, that may go as fast going wrong, as when going right: it is still employed about vanity or vileness; and every imagination is evil, Gen. 6:5.

6. Lastly, All their guilt sticks with them, nothing of it goes off, being out of Christ, Eph. 2:1. Believers are daily contracting guilt, it is true; but then they are daily getting it removed too, through daily application of the blood of Christ by faith, as the living man is putting off nastiness from him; whereas all abides with the unregenerate world, as the vermin on the dead corpse that can put off none.

Now put all these together, and what a dreadful lair has the unregenerate world in the guilt of sin! Floods of guilt are still rolling in on them, as the waters are running continually into the sea; but whereas the sea lets out of its waters that it receives in, they keep all the floods of guilt that roll in on them. So the longer they live, they are the more miserable, because the more guilty.

LASTLY, The whole unregenerate world lies in the filth and pollution of sin, Tit. 1:15. Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. Sin is a defiling evil, it pollutes the sinner in the sight of God, defacing his image in the soul, and rendering him unlike God. God is glorious in holiness, this holiness he has expressed in his law, and sin is the quite contrary of that holiness. So that God can no more cease to abominate it, than to delight in his own image, Hab. 1:13; Jer. 44:4.

1. Their natural defilement and pollution which they were born in, still remains, Psal. 51:5. for they are not born again of the water and the Spirit. An emblem of their case ye have in Ezek. 16. The whole soul of their frame is unclean, polluted, and unlike God, Tit. 1:15.

2. Every actual transgression, or omission, or commission, leaves a new stroke of pollution on them, rendering them more unlike God, Rom. 3:13. So that their spiritual uncleanness is ever increasing, and the longer they live, they do but contract the more defilement.

3. Lastly, All sticks on them, nothing of their old or new defilement is removed; because they were never washed in the laver of regeneration, Ezek. 22:24. And what a wretched case must that be, where new filth is still coming on the soul, but none going off?

II. I shall now shew how the unregenerate world lies in wickedness. They lie in it in the most hopeless case; which we may take up in three things. They lie,

1. Bound in it, Acts 8 bound in it like prisoners, Isa. 61:1. They are in chains of guilt, which they cannot break off; there are fetters of strong lusts upon them, which hold them fast. Satan has overcome them, and brought them into bondage; and though they see their case is wrong, though a natural conscience witnesseth their hasard; yet they cannot leave it, but go on like an ox to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks.

2. Asleep in it, Eph. 5:14. They have drunk of the intoxicating cup, and are fast asleep, though within the sea mark of vengeance. Though some times they are made to start in their sleep, by passing convictions like a stitch in the side; yet there is no awakening of them, by all the alarms they get from the word, from providence, and their own conscience. If they are at any time moved by these, yet they quickly fall over asleep again.

3. Lastly, Dead in it, Eph. 2:1. A natural life, through the union of a soul with their body, they have; but their spiritual life is gone, the union of their souls with God being quite broken, Eph. 4:18. The image of God on the soul, the principal of vital holy actions, is away from them; so they lie in wickedness, breathless and motionless, ready to be buried out of God's sight.

# The Doctrine of the Unregenerate world lying in Wickedness, applied

USE I. Of information. See here,

First, The spring and fountain of the abounding sin in our day: The whole world lies in wickedness; and wickedness proceedeth from the wicked, 1 Sam. 24:13. What but wickedness can be expected in a wicked world? The unregenerate bear the far greater bulk in the land, as in the world; and they are lying in wickedness. Here then is the opened fountain of the great deep, that has brought on a deluge of wickedness. Hence,

1. The apostacy in principles, men departing from the faith, and bringing in damnable heresies. The infidelity of this generation has gone to a monstrous height; contempt of revealed religion has fearfully spread. The doctrine of the grace of Christ is despised; and the doctrine of the person of Christ is rudely attacked; the foundations that were left in safety in the time of Prelacy, yea under Popery, are now overturned.* So has the wickedness of the world lying in wickedness broke out in our day.

2. Apostacy in practice. There is a deluge of profanity gone over the land; men have loosed the bridle to their lusts, opened the sluice to their wickedness, and there is no stopping of it by men's endeavours, Psal. 119:126. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law." All ranks have corrupted their ways in church and state; that they are like to wear out serious godliness, and the saints of the Most High. And the generation is remarkably worse than their father's, more loose, and regardless of all that is good.

Secondly, The spring of all the miseries that are lying on us, and we are threatened with. The world is lying in wickedness, and therefore lies in misery; for God is a sin-hating and sin-revenging God. It is the sin and wickedness of the generation, that has brought on the decay of trade, and is impoverishing the country, for a witness against the misimprovement of a thriving condition. To that is owing the present straitness, and diminishing of our ordinary food; for the abuse of fulness in luxury, sensuality, and lasciviousness; the desolating of the flocks, for men's oppressing one another; the great sickness and death in families wherewith the Lord is afflicting us. And these look but like the beginning of sorrows, for there is no turning to the hand that smiteth.

Let not men harden themselves in the case, because it seems to fare as ill with saints as sinners. For,

1. It is God's ordinary way in his proceedings against a land, to begin with his own house and family, Ezek. 9:6. For though they are not of, yet they are in the world, and contract infection, so that with them also there are sins against the Lord. And because the Lord has a kindness for them, they get the brim of the cup, Zech. 1:11, 12.

2. But it is a sign for ill to the world lying in wickedness. And of a long time we have had that sign, of particular strokes directed against those that are the most serious, 1 Pet. 4:17, 18. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? and if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? If God's own people drink of the cup of judgment, the world lying in wickedness shall pledge them, and drink after, Jer. 25:27, 29. And the former getting the brim, the dregs will fall to the latter, Psal. 75:8. And thus God's own prophets have

been signs to a people with whom God had a controversy, Ezek. 24. Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign; according to all that he hath done, shall ye do; and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord.

3. Lastly, Though in the outward course of providence all falls alike to all, yet the cross of the saint is better than the crown of the sinner, Isa. 53:10, 11. "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him," Rom. 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Prov. 1:32. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

Thirdly, It is not strange to find men of the world lying in the habitual practice of some abomination; for the whole world lieth in wickedness. Men will carry themselves agreeable to their state of regeneracy or irregeneracy; and to find unregenerate men lying in this and the other wickedness, is no more strange than to find fish swimming in the water, and birds flying in the air; it is their element.

1. Accordingly some lie in open wickedness, declaring their sin as Sodom, Isa. 53:9. For where men cannot restrain them, they are at liberty, because they have no fear of God before their eyes. Their lust is their law in these things, and they go so far in the road as their feet will carry them, doing evil as they may or can.

2. Some lie in some secret wickedness, which they get kept secret from the open view of the world, and for the eye of a jealous God that mars them not, Ezek. 8:12. "Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth." This evil world has a loathsome aspect as it is, for all the covering of abominations in it; but were the secret

abominations in it brought out to men's knowledge, the secret frauds and cheats, whoredoms, adulteries, and lasciviousness, murders, thefts, &c. set in the light, how much more loathsome would the world appear? Eph. 5:12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But two things are certain,

(1.) Where the fountain of sin is not stopt by regenerating grace, it must needs have its main stream running in the practice of some one wickedness or other, Rom. 6:12. An unregenerate man's predominant sin may indeed be changed; but he shall sooner cease to breathe, than to have some one running issue or other. And that will always be his neckbreak here, that will part betwixt Christ and him, Mark 10:21, 22; and that will be the most terrible gnawing worm in the conscience hereafter.

(2.) Whether it be an open or secret wickedness, it will be called at length before a tribunal, where there will be no shifting of compearance, defeating of probation, nor stopping execution, Acts 17:31. "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." Rom. 14:10. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." There the most secret pieces of wickedness shall be discovered before all the world, Eccl. 12 ult. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Prov. 26:26, "Whose hatred is covered with deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation." And the most daring transgressor shall be made to stand trembling, Eccl. 11:9. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Fourthly, The world must be an infectious society; it must be a pestilential air that is breathed in it, and wickedness in it must be of a growing and spreading nature. For the whole world lieth in wickedness. Hence,

1. Unregenerate men, if they get not a cast of saving grace to change their nature, will undoubtedly grow worse and worse, 2 Tim. 3:13. As that which lies in the dunghill, rots the more the longer it lies; so men lying in irregeneracy, in wickedness, the longer they live their case is the more hopeless. How evidently is this seen, in there being some hope of some while they are yet young, yet not being converted then, they grow at length to a pitch that there is no dealing with them?

2. Unregenerate men are snares and neckbreaks one to another, serving to advance the growth of wickedness in one another, Matth. 18:7. As in a dunghill one part serves to rot another, so is it in the world lying in wickedness. The ill example of some encourages others, and so the elder corrupt the younger, especially when they go about to train them up in the ways of wickedness.

3. They are snares even to the godly. It is hard to come near a mire or dunghill and not be defiled. There was a suffocating vapour arose from the high priest's hall, that made Peter fall a denying his Master. This made the Psalmist say, "Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar," Psal. 120:5.

Hence we may learn,

(1.) They have a hard task in hand, whose business it is to deal with the world lying in wickedness, in order to their reformation; for the longer they lie in their wickedness they are the more strengthened in it, their hearts are the more hardened, their consciences more

seared, and the bands of wickedness grow stronger. And then one helps another in an ill course, they unite and combine to strengthen one another in wickedness. So that it is a heavy task.

(2.) The danger of ill company, 1 Cor. 15:32. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The wicked world is a dangerous society, and has been ruining to many. How many have been ruined, by their being educated and living amongst those of the world lying in wickedness, never having an opportunity of good company, where they might see or get good? How many have been ruined by their falling into ill company, after hopeful beginnings? The stream of our nature runs the wrong way, so the world lying in wickedness rows with the stream, and so is successful in working sinners' ruin, Prov. 13:20. "He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Fifthly, This accounts for the uneasy life that the serious-godly have in the world. The whole world lieth in wickedness. Our Lord Jesus had an uneasy life in it, and so will all his followers have to the end. The church in the world is like a lily among thorns; however the world may caress its own, the serious-godly will not get leave to forget that they are from home while in it; strangers and pilgrims; that they are in a wilderness. How can their life in it miss to be uneasy? For unto them,

1. It is a loathsome world, where their eyes must behold abominations that they cannot help, Hab. 1:3. "Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me; and there are that raise up strife and contention." However the swine of this world may delight to wallow in their own mire, and to lie in their own dunghill; yet to heaven-born souls, the steuch arising from that dunghill must needs be

noisesome. Hence says the prophet, Jer. 9:2. "Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them; for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men."

2. It is a vexatious world; the temper of the parties is so different, so opposite, that they can never hit it, but must needs be heavy one to another. As the way of the godly is uneasy to the world, so the way of the world is uneasy to them, makes them many a sorrowful day and heavy heart, and draws many a sigh and groan from them, as in Lot's case, 2 Pet 2:7, 8. And the uneasiness arising from that quarter makes heaven more desirable, as to burdened men groaning.

3. It is an ensnaring world, wherein snares of all sorts are going, and they are many times catched in the trap ere they are aware, 2 Tim. 3:1, 2. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, &c. The world lying in wickedness lays snares for them, that by drawing them into their courses, they may make them like themselves. And at all times they are in hazard by them, either by omission of necessary duty, or commission of sin.

4. It is a world wherein wickedness thrives apace as in its native soil, but any good has much ado to get up its head, Jer. 4:22. "For my people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, and they have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." The ground being cursed, thistles and thorns grow up of their own accord; but after much labour for the seed-corn, the husbandman has but a sorry increase. So the work of wickedness goes on with speed; but O how hard is it to make a good

work take! The most prudent management can hardly carry a good work, but one sinner destroyeth much good, Eccl. 9 ult.

Sixthly, This accounts for the frightful end this visible world will make, by the general conflagration, 2 Pet. 3:10. There is a curse on it, for the wickedness in it, that once deluged it, it will in the end burn it up. It has been a stage of wickedness, and will be pulled down; a sink of abominations, and will be overthrown. The creatures groan in it, under the abuse of them to the serving of the lusts of men; they must be delivered.

Lastly, This shews the dangerous state of the unregenerate world; they lie in wickedness. Therefore,

1. They now lie under wrath, hanging in the threatening and curse which is over their heads, Eph. 2:8. Being in the region of wickedness, it is the region of wrath, John 3 ult. They are in a state of wrath, it is on them and theirs.

2. They will perish under that wrath, whoever continue and come not out from among them. For the world now lying in wickedness, will sink down into the pit, and lie eternally under their guilt and filth, Matth. 25 ult. Rev. 20:14, 15.

USE II. Of exhortation.

1. To all I would say, Search and try what society ye belong to, whether ye are still of, or separated from, the world lying in wickedness. It is certain, we are all naturally of the world; there is no coming out of it, but by regenerating grace; and being come, ye will have taken another route. What has been already said, particularly on the first clause of the verse, touching the marks and characters of

those that are of God, and so separated from the world, may serve to discover your state in this point.

2. To saints separated from the world, I would say,

(1.) Do not much wonder at the harsh entertainment ye meet with in it. Value not the frowns of the world lying in wickedness; and think not strange of frowns of providence on you while ye are in it. For it will never be quite well with the family of God, while they are here in the same place with the world.

(2.) Watch against it while ye are in it, as being in hazard of sins and snares in a world lying in wickedness. Be not secure; knowing that your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. 5:8.

(3.) Look homeward, and long to be with Christ; where you shall be for ever out of the reach of all evil, and enjoy such peace and freedom as your enemies can disturb no more.

3. Lastly, To sinners of the world lying in wickedness, I would say, Come out from among them, and be separated, as ye would not be ruined with them, and perish eternally in their destruction. But of this in the next discourse.

# THE DIVINE CALL TO SINNERS TO COME OUT FROM AMONG THE WORLD

# LYING IN WICKEDNESS, EXPLAINED AND URGED

Several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in 1729

1 JOHN 5:19

The whole world lieth in wickedness

2 Cor. 6:17

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

YE have had a frightful description of the world lying in wickedness. We come now to press the exhortation to come out of it, in the words of this compared text. In which we have,

1. The gospel-call to sinners, Come out from among them. For whereas the words are taken out of Isa. 52:11. it is plain the prophet there speaks of the days and preaching of the gospel, though with an eye to the deliverance from Babylon, ver. 7–10. In it we have,

(1.) The substance of the duty that sinners are called to, Come out from among them, viz. the world lying in wickedness, whereof Babylon was an emblem, as the Jews were of the elect. Babylon was the mother of abominations, and devoted to destruction; so the world lying in wickedness is. To come out from among them, is to come out of your natural state, unto Christ by faith; that is the only way to come out from among them. And that the text aims at no less, is evident,—that adoption into God's family is thereupon promised.

(2.) The touchstone of sincerity in it. Be ye separate. Right coming out from among the world lying in wickedness, is a coming out from among them freely and for altogether. A withdrawing for a time, the relation standing will not do; nor a halting between two; there must be a total separation, by going quite to the other side, and setting up against them. Thus the apostle explains the double call to depart, Isa. 53:11. Depart ye, depart ye, going still farther and farther from them, till the great gulf be fixed betwixt you and them.

(3.) A necessary direction for the right managing of your coming away,—Touch not the unclean thing. They are an unclean society, like a leprous person: consult not with them, but be resolute without tampering with them. Every thing among them is unclean; take up none of it to carry with you, as Rachel did her father's images. Be afraid of every person and thing in the world lying in wickedness, as of fire.

2. The gospel offer and promise, to be accomplished on complying with the call, I will receive you. I the Lord Christ will take you in. Be not afraid that ye shall be at any loss in the case; such refugees shall have the borders of the Lord's land, the gates of his house opened to them.

Now the doctrine of these texts thus compared, is,

DOCT. There is a call from the Lord to sinners, to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, and leave them.

In handling this point, I shall,

I. Shew some things implied in it.

II. Shew what is the sinner's coming out from among the world lying in wickedness.

III. Consider the call from the Lord to come out from among them.

IV. Lastly, Apply the whole.

I. I shall shew some things implied in the doctrine. It implies,

1. The world lying in wickedness is a society hateful to the Lord, else he would not call to come out from among them. They may please themselves, as if they only were the people. The region of a natural state has the cloud of wrath abiding upon it, John 3 ult. They are a society whom God abhors as unclean: a people of God's indignation, as being his enemies; and against whom he will have war for ever that shall end in their destruction, or rather never end.

2. Sinners, ye are all by nature in among them, and of them; else, why is the call, Come out from among them? Whoever has not heard this call, and come out from among them in conversion, is among them yet, John 8:44. I told you there are in the world lying in wickedness, the lower and the upper world; but both these make but one world, the devil is the head of both; and if a few years were gone, they will be both turned into one, and all the inhabitants housed under one roof, Matth. 25:41. Therefore unconverted sinners are as sure among them as the damned.—Sinners, ye are children of hell, a prison-house, a dark house, a miserable house, Matth. 23:15. As long as ye are among them, ye are like the house, and like the father of it: he is a fallen creature, lying in wickedness, his nature is enmity against God; so art thou and thine: and though thou put a fair face on, by a form of godliness: no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, 2 Cor. 11:14.

3. Great is the danger of abiding among them, Isa. 52:11. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing, go ye out of the midst of her. There are three special emblems of the wretched world lying in wickedness, and the danger of abiding among them, to which this call may have reference. One is Babylon doomed to destruction, Psal. 137:8. See the call to leave her, Jer. 51:6. Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not out off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. Rev. 18:4. Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Another is Sodom, which fire from heaven was abiding the call Lot got to get out of it, ye have Gen. 19:15. Arise,—lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. It was set forth for an example Jude, 7. suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. A third is the tents of Dathan and Abiram, which were to be swallowed up of the earth. The call to the congregation to get up from about them, ye have Numb. 16:26. "Depart I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins." Which is applied to gospel-hearers, 2 Tim. 2:19. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Ye can have no more safe staying there than ye could have had in these, believe it or not.

4. It is possible ye may get away from among them. If ye were once down in the lower world lying in wickedness, it will be impossible ever to get out from among them more; this call has nothing ado with that part of them. But ye are yet in the upper world lying in wickedness, where Christ has his lower house, with a commission to fill it out of those of them that are lying there. And for this cause the call Sounds in your ears this day. Psal. 45:10, "Forget thine own people, and thy father's house." Luke 14:23, "Compel them to come

in, that my house may be filled." Come away before your feet slip,—ye may get away though never so far on.

5. God has some amongst them that shall not get leave to stay, for he would never send out such a call altogether in vain. No; there is an elect number among them, on whom the call shall be effectual, sit it who will, 2 Tim. 2:19. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." Satan may get leave to keep a reprobate world, but the sheep of Christ, purchased with his blood, cannot be lost, John 10:16. "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice." There is a secret mark on some of the strayed, and they shall be made to come out from among the rest. Let this encourage you to come away, standing as fair as others to get help from heaven to make your escape.

6. Ye will be very welcome to Christ from among them, Psal. 45:10, 11. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty." They that come uncalled sit unserved; but ye need not fear, the Master calleth you. It is what you have his word on, "I will receive you." Do not say, "Alas, I need never think that Christ will receive me; for I have been a poor, worldly, carnal creature, savouring nothing but the world;" no, the call supposes that, that ye are among them. "But I am deep in wickedness;" yet welcome, if ye have even been among the very worst of them, come from among them, and welcome, 1 Cor. 6:9, 10, 11.

7. Ye will not be carried away from amongst them against your will. No; if ye come not voluntarily upon your own feet, ye will get leave to stay and perish among them; Psal. 110:3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Christ will have none but willing subjects,

such as submit by choice, not by force. Compel them; but how? as men are compelled to a feast, by most earnest entreaties, importunity, &c. but not otherwise. They that will needs lie still in their wickedness with the world, they will get their will with a vengeance; they will not be forced from the society they chuse.

8. Ye will not be carried away sleeping from among them neither; ye must awake, hear the call, and set down your feet to make your escape. Some say, they can do nothing, they cannot convert themselves, and they hope for grace afterward. So they make soft their pillow, sleep securely, and will do nothing. But if ye were willing to come away from among the world lying in wickedness, ye would stretch out the withered hand, ye would try the lame leg, take the help of offered grace, and take no rest till ye were got away.

9. Ye need not expect their good will to the parting. The call is directed to you, without noticing them; for it is certain they will never let you out from among them, as long as they are able to keep you. Therefore ye must be resolute and peremptory, Matth. 11:12. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Hell's flatteries and threatenings will all be plied to keep you among them; but stop your ears, and look not behind you, as the angels enjoined Lot, when they had brought him out of Sodom, Gen. 14:17.

10. Lastly, Ye will be received of the Lord into the society of the clean and holy, Heb. 12:22–24. One part of them is perfectly clean, as to the other their cleansing is begun, John 13:8; but all are but one family; the former the elder children, in the upper rooms; the latter the younger, in the lower rooms; the whole headed by Christ.

II. I come now to shew what is the sinner's coming out from among the world lying in wickedness.

Negatively, 1. It is not a sinner's going out of this world. That is brought about by death, whether we will or not; and they that die in the Lord, they are indeed absolutely separated from the world lying in wickedness. But they that die out of Christ, they are for ever thereby fixed in the world lying in wickedness. Since they are not come out from among them here, they are put in among them there, their souls gathered with the wicked in death, with whom they gathered themselves in life.

2. It is not a coming out from among the immoral part of the world lying in wickedness, and joining in with the professors of religion, in a visible church-state. For there is a moral and religious part too of the world lying in wickedness; and those that are of these parts are as sure among them, as the immoral are. In a word, nothing short of true conversion and a saving change, is a coming out from among them.

Positively, It is a spiritual, gracious motion of the soul unto Jesus Christ, and is the very same with effectual calling, which is the work of the Spirit of Christ on these ordained to eternal life. We may take it up in these four steps,

FIRST, The sinner's coming to a true sense of his own state and case among them; and this he is brought to in a work of conviction, John 16:18. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Those of the world lying in wickedness are under spiritual blindness, they know neither what they are, nor where they are in very deed; and one must be brought to himself, before he come out from among them; otherwise he will not stir. Now the coming sinner,

1. He comes to be fully persuaded, that he is among them, and out of the family of God, Luke 15:17. He gets a dismal view of a natural

state, of the case of the unregenerate world, of the world lying in wickedness; and he sees himself in the midst of them; so he is like one awaking out of a dream, and seeing himself beset about. So there are two things here,

1st, He gets a frightful view of the world lying in wickedness, as a society in most miserable case. The world lying in wickedness, that was in his eyes before like a paradise, a garden of pleasure, a sort of safety, appears in quite other colours, as a Babel of confusion, a wilderness of emptiness, a Sodom of wickedness, and tents of Dathan to be swallowed up. He sees it to be a society,

(1.) Lying in wickedness, under the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin, contrary to God, and hateful unto him, Eph. 2:12; a society abominable in the eyes of a holy God, however pleasant in the eyes of one another; wherein there neither is nor can be any thing good or acceptable in the sight of the great King.

(2.) Laid open to destruction from the presence of the Lord, Eph. 2:12. He sees the curse lying on it, and binding it over to revenging wrath, and in virtue thereof certainly to be destroyed. The flaming sword appears, wherever he turns his eyes, ready to cut off the miserable inhabitants.

2dly, He gets a frightful view of his own case, as being among them, lying in wickedness, and lying open to destruction, Luke 15:17. He sees his own sinfulness, is convinced of the sinfulness of his own life, heart, and nature; and sees his lost and undone case under the wrath of God, and curse of the law, Rom. 7:9.

2. He comes to be fully persuaded, that there is no abiding for him among them, as Peter's hearers were, Acts 2:37. and the Philippian jailor, Acts 16:30. He sees he is ruined for ever, if he get not away

from among them. Time was when he could not think of parting from among them; but could get no rest among them; seeing every moment the city of destruction ready to be overthown, and himself to be swallowed up in the ruins.

This is a new sight, that one gets, not by the sight of the eyes, but from the word, by the Spirit acting as a Spirit of bondage on the soul and conscience; awakening, convincing, and persuading into a firm belief of the report of the law, with application to one's own particular case.

SECONDLY, The sinner's coming to see a better state and case for him, with Christ and his company, Luke 15:17. If the convinced sinner did not see a refuge, where he might be in safety, he would sink in despair; but the Lord timely opens his eyes, as he did Hagar's to see the well, when the child was laid by for dead. And he sees,

1. Full safety for him there, if he could get in among them, Luke 15:17. The soul gets a view of Christ in the transcendent glory of his person and office; sees him an able and sufficient Saviour, Heb. 7:25. having a fulness of merit, for procuring him the pardon of his greatest and most numerous sins; and of Spirit, for sanctifying him, and subduing the strongest lusts.

2. Free access for him to get in among them, Jer. 3:22. He beholds the gates of the city of refuge cast open to receive him, and hears the voice of the Lord crying to him to turn in thither, Zech. 9:12. He believes Christ to be not only an able, but a willing Saviour, willing to receive him; otherwise he would never come away.

This sight is given by the Spirit, demonstrating the word of the gospel to the soul, 1 Cor. 2:4, 5. He shews it convincingly to be the infallible word of the eternal God, and his word to the sinner in

particular. He brightens the glass of the gospel, so that in it they clearly see the glory of the Lord Christ, which they never saw before. And here they discover in him,

(1.) A rest to their consciences, not to be got in the fiery region of the law, Heb. 9:14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" The conscience stung with guilt cannot be quieted with an imperfect righteousness, that comes not up to the law demands of perfect obedience and satisfaction; but the gospel reveals Christ's righteousness, Rom. 1:17. a broad cover, that salve which applied makes a sick conscience hale, Isa. 33 ult.

(2.) A rest to their hearts, not to be got in the barren region of the creation, Psal. 73:25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." The soul being a spiritual substance immortal, can never rest fully in the enjoyment of temporal things; they are neither sufficient for it, nor certain. But in Christ there is a fulness, and that is inexhaustible; and so the man sees him as commensurable to the desires of the soul.

THIRDLY, The sinner's coming to be willing to come out from among the world, and to come in to Christ and his company, Psal. 110:3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Sinners naturally are unwilling to come away out of the world lying in wickedness, and to come to Christ; it is as much against the grain with them, as for the fishes to come out of the water to dry land. They like their master, their work, and their company there; they would never leave them, if they could but see how to put up with them. They have a heart aversion and enmity to Christ, and his company,

his way, and his law. But the Spirit makes them willing, renewing their will, Ezek. 36:26. And they become,

1. Rationally and deliberately willing to come out from among them, the soul being moved thereto with the greatest reason. A drawing there is in the case, but no force, only strong persuasion, Gen. 9:27. It is no blind impulse brings men to Christ; it is no rash and inconsiderate adventure, but the cost is counted ere this building is begun. Where it is otherwise, men soon shew that they are still among them, for all the bustle they seemed to make to be away.

2. They are absolutely willing, content on any terms, as Paul was, Acts 9:6. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Many could be willing on such and such terms, if they could get leave to pick and chuse, if it were that such a particular lust only might be spared, if as to such a duty they might be excused; but they that are willing indeed are absolutely willing, willing at any rate.

3. They are willing for the present, nothing else answers the gospel-call, Heb. 4:7. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Felix was willing, but for an after time, not for the present; so many young sinners are willing to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, if once they were past their youth, and come of age; and the aged, if they were come to a death-bed. But the coming sinner is willing to come out from among them this moment.

4. Lastly, They are peremptorily willing: it is not a thing only they are willing to do, but they are peremptory they will do it. They are not only content to leave them, but they may not, dare not, will not stay longer with them, cost what it will. They are willing, as the slayer, to be in the city of refuge; for, by their conviction and saving illumination, they see there is safety there, and nowhere else.

FOURTHLY, The last step is the sinner's joining himself to the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the society opposite to the world lying in wickedness, Jer. 50:5. which implies two things.

1. An actual renouncing of the world lying in wickedness, and all that is therein, Job 34:32. "That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." He renounces his relation to that society, their work, their way and course, resolute to bid an eternal farewell thereto, and to stay no longer among them, come what will. Though a Red sea be before him, he knows not how to get through, he is peremptory not to return to Egypt.

2. A receiving and resting on Christ for all, John 1:12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." They sell all to buy the field; part with all for the one pearl. Christ is held forth in the gospel as a full and satisfying portion, as a rest to the conscience, and a rest to the heart; and faith closes the eyes to all others, and takes him as such in the word of the gospel-offer, Psal. 72:24.

Hereby the soul is knit to Christ, becomes a member of his mystical body, Eph. 3:17. By this means there is a spiritual marriage betwixt Christ and the soul entered into; Christ becomes the believer's; and the believer his, only, wholly, and for ever, Cant. 2:16. "My beloved is mine, and I am his." So they are one spirit with Christ, 1 Cor. 6:17.

And thus the sinner is effectually out from among them, no more of their number, no more in their state and case; he is brought into another opposite society, whose communion is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Though thereafter he is indeed in the world, yet he is no more of it; and though he is yet out of heaven, he is really of the family there.

III. I proceed to consider the call from the Lord to come out from among them. And,

1. The ground in law that it is founded on, is the eternal agreement of the glorious Trinity for man's salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ having undertaken to do and die for and instead of an elect world, and his merit being sufficient for the redemption of the whole world; the Father was so well pleased with his undertaking and performance, that he made him the ordinance of heaven for salvation to all that would believe; he gave him a kingdom to be raised out of the world lying in wickedness. And thereon the call is founded, Matt. 22:4. All things are ready, come unto the marriage.

2. This call was drawn up and recorded in the Bible, by the Holy Spirit, that it might not be only a call by word of mouth that passeth, but in writing that is permanent, which the called may have occasion to consult when they please, Isa. 55:1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." The whole Bible is a declaration of this call, with promises to those that answer it, and threatenings against them that refuse it. So the truth and reality thereof is sealed by the blood of Christ, the blood of the testament.

3. It is given in the gospel by Jesus Christ, with the consent of his Father and Spirit. The Father has sent him to call sinners to come out from among the world lying in wickedness. The Spirit says, Come. A whole Trinity invites them to come away, not willing that the captive exiles should die in the pit, Ezek. 18:23.

4. It is directed to men, sons of men, Prov. 8:4. "Unto you, O men, I call and my voice is to the sons of men." It is not to fallen angels; they are left to lie still in their wickedness, without remedy, and to reckon

for it at last. But it is addressed to the descendents of fallen Adam in this world, without exception of great, yea the greatest of sinners, Rev. 22:17. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Isa. 1:18. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Though they have continued never so long among them, and be never so signalized among them, they are welcome to come away from among them.

5. It was the Son of God in person, that first proclaimed this call, in paradise, Gen. 3:15. Afterwards taking on our nature, and appearing in the world in our flesh, he spent the time of his public ministry in calling sinners to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, Heb. 2:3. though they were but few that came away upon that his call, Isa. 53:1.

6. He continues to call sinners thereto, by his messengers, the ministers of the gospel, that call them in his name, 2 Cor. 5:20. And this is our work to call you to come away out from among the world lying in wickedness. We are the voice, he is the caller, Luke 10:16. For even now when he is in heaven, he speaketh to you by us, Heb. 12:25.

7. Lastly, It is in this world only the call takes place, Matth. 28:18, 19. As for those who are gone into the other world, the call can reach them no more; they are prisoners without hope. But while ye are here, the call is to you, particularly in the public assemblies, Prov. 1:20, 21. "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief places of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she uttereth her words," &c.

I come now to the improvement of this subject.

USE I. Of information. This lets us see,

1. Where we are all by nature, even in the world lying in wickedness, being real members of that sinful and miserable society. This is our native country, we are all natives of the world lying in wickedness, by our first birth. It is only by conversion and the new birth, that we come out from among them, and are naturalized in the heavenly country. Think on this, ye young, or aged, strangers to a work of conversion; and know where ye are.

2. Ye cannot abide among them, but in rebellion against the call of God. By this gospel ye are summoned in the Lord's name to come out from among them; and if after that, ye take it on you to stay, ye do it upon your peril, incurring the displeasure of Heaven, not only for your being among them, but your refusing to come out from among them.

3. The sin of gospel-hearers abiding among them, is fearfully aggravated, and therefore will be fearfully punished. Every new gospel-call is a new call from the Lord to you to come out from among them. How inexcusable will they then be, that give a deaf ear to them all? Matth. 11:21, 22. "Wo unto thee, Chorazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you."

4. Lastly, Ye will surely be welcome to Christ, coming out from among them; for he will never put away them whom he calls to him, John 6:37. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." His call is not only your warrant to come, but as such it is an ensurance of your welcome, Mark 10:49. "And Jesus stood still, and

commanded him to be called; and they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee."

USE II. Of exhortation. O sinners, seeing it is so, that the whole world lieth in wickedness, and there is a call from the Lord to sinners to come out from among them, hearken ye this day to the call, and come out from among them, all and every one of you.

This is a point of the greatest weight, and therefore I shall,

1. Branch out the exhortation more particularly, that ye may not be in the dark as to what ye are called to.

2. Address it to several sorts of sinners, that it may be the more closely brought home to the conscience.

3. Urge it with some motives, that so it may be pressed upon you.

4. Consider the hinderances or impediments that keep men from coming out from among the world lying in wickedness, that so they may be removed out of the way.

FIRST, To branch out the exhortation more particularly, I lay it before you in these four branches,

First, O sinner, believe it firmly, and consider it seriously, that the unregenerate, unconverted world is a sink of sin and wickedness, and doomed to destruction. This is infallible truth, 1 John 5:19. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." John 3 ult. "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Matth. 18:3. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." John 3:3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." If ye be not let into a view of this, to see that society a most sinful and dangerous

one, we will but beat the air in calling you to come out from among them. Open then the eyes of your minds, and see by the light of God's word, the state of the unconverted world. See,

1. The sinfulness of it, how they lie in their sin, original and actual, in the guilt of all their sins, in the pollution of them, under the dominion of sin, and in the practice of sin, doing nothing but what is sin, incapable to do any thing good or acceptable in God's sight. They are a Sodom for filthiness; they are a company of spiritual lepers, set out without the camp of the saints where the Lord dwelleth and walketh; of dead men, whose beauty, sense, and motion is gone, and on whose souls living lusts are preying, like so many worms on the carcase in the grave.

2. The misery of it; how they lie under the curse, Gal. 3:10. with Rom. 3:19. under the displeasure and wrath of God. A black cloud of wrath hangs over them continually, John 3 ult. It never clears; smiles of common providence they may have, whereby temporal mercies are laid on their hands, as victuals to the condemned man are carried into the prison till his execution: but one smile of special favour and love they never have, Psal. 7:11, "God is angry with the wicked every day." Some drops of wrath still falling on them, sinking though silently into their souls; and the full shower and pouring out of the cloud is abiding them.

Secondly, Be convinced, O sinner, that thou art among them; that their case is thy case, and thy part and lot is among them; that thou art sinful and miserable with them. It is the ruin of many, that they do not see, and will not see, that they are among them; and therefore they cannot come out from among them, Rev. 3:17, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and

poor, and blind, and naked." Matth. 9:12, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Are there not many of you, who have never seen this to this day? But if ye have not seen) it, either ye are sanctified from the womb, or that is a certain sign ye are among them still. And, O how many have seen themselves among them, that yet were never freely brought out from among them, but after some awakening have just lain down where they were among them before? But oh! open your eyes, young sinners, and old sinners, and see yourselves among them, before you see yourselves among them in the lower world, where there is no coming out.

Thirdly, Be convinced that you cannot safely abide one moment longer among them; see the rock hanging over your head, ready to fall every moment, and to crush you to pieces; see the snares, fire, and brimstone, ready to be rained down on you in that state, Psal. 11:6. Many think that it is not safe indeed to die among them, but that yet they may safely live a while longer among them. This ruins many, while delaying from time to time they are surprised into destruction.

Lastly, Make away speedily from among them by conversion into God in Christ, Ezek. 33:11, "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways." That is, believe and repent, so coming unto God by Christ. By faith we unite with Christ, the head of the opposite society, and so return unto God; and by repentance we return unto our duty. This is the coming out from among them we call you to.

SECONDLY, I would address this exhortation and call to several sorts of sinners among you. Come out from among them,

1. Ye that have all your days been at ease in the world lying in wickedness, never considering that ye were there, nor concerned how to get out from among them. Open your eyes at length, know your

natural state; see yourselves children of hell, heirs of wrath; sleep no longer, but look about you, see your danger, and come away, Prov. 6:9, "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?"

2. Ye that having once been awakened, have fallen asleep again, and look on that former fright as a dream. Know that the danger you sometime saw, was most real, and represented your true case; and it was through the slight of Satan, ye were brought to take the armies of heaven advancing against you, for the shadows of the mountains. Wherefore bestir yourselves again, take second thoughts, and come away.

3. Apostates and backsliders, who sometime were on the way coming out from among them, but have now turned back, and fallen afresh to the way of the world lying in wickedness. Your case is very dangerous, Heb. 10:38, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Remember Lot's wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt, for looking back to Sodom, after she had got out of it. But our Lord is giving you a new call, Jer. 3:22, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Hearken to it, or ye are doubly ruined.

4. Ye that are halting betwixt two opinions, in a doubt whether to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, or not yet. Conscience is pressing you forward, corruption is pulling you back; you hear one voice or whisper, saying, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; another saying, Not yet, there will be time enough after. Know this last is the language from hell among them; O heed it not, but come away as from fire that will burn you up.

5. Ye that have been often aiming at coming, but yet have never come away freely. O make a thorough separation from them at last; out with the right eye, off with the offending right hand. Let no beloved lust be spared; leave not a hoof behind you. It is sad to miss of the kingdom of heaven, when one is not far from it; to fall into the pit, from the threshold of heaven.

6. Lastly, All ye that have any mind for heaven, or the favour of God in time or eternity, come out from among the world lying in wickedness. All that have any concern for your own souls, and would not perish for ever. O set away from among them, nearer to Christ.

THIRDLY, Let me now urge the following motives to press the exhortation and call.

General motives. It is a most miserable case to be among the world lying in wickedness; the sight whereof is enough to frighten one. However secure sinners please themselves in being among them, yet never could one that was in a den of lions, inclosed among serpents or other venomous creatures, be more desirous to be from among them; than God's elect to be out of the world lying in wickedness, when once the Spirit has opened their eyes, Luke 15:17, 18. Acts 2:37. I would point out the misery of the case of being among them.

1. There is nothing pure or clean among them. Touch not the unclean thing; i. e. meddle with nothing that belongs to them; for they and all theirs are unclean, Tit. 1:15. There are souls and rational faculties among them, but they are all defiled and loathsome before God; there is no spiritual beauty or likeness to God among them. There are works they call good among them; but they are all vile and loathsome in the sight of God, Psal. 14:1. There are prayers and praises among them, but they are but like the opening an unripe grave, Rom. 3:13. There are among them fair promises and engagements to duty, but

they are but abominable deceit, ib. There is meddling with holy things among them, but see Isa. 66:3. "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck," &c. For they cannot please God till they come out from the world lying in wickedness, Heb. 11:6.

2. There is no spiritual health or soundness among them. We may say of them, as Isa. 1:6. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." However little need they find of the Physician of souls, they are all sick, deadly sick, as unpardoned sinners; though most of them are delirious, and know not their sickness, Matth. 4:12, 13. Isa. 33 ult. Their plague-sores of sin are running on them continually; none of them want a running issue of some predominant lust, that can never be got stopt.

3. There is a deadly infection among them; so that to be among them is to be in a pest-house, where one draws in death with the disease prevailing among them, 1 Cor. 15:33. Every one of them is a root of bitterness, which springing up is ready to defile many, Heb. 12:15. Therefore Solomon observes, that one sinner destroyeth much good, Eccl. 9 ult. The stream of their ungodly example, and corrupt conversation, sickens some, and kills others outright; wounds the godly, and ruins those of their own sort.

4. There is nothing but darkness, gross darkness among them, for the Day-star is not yet arisen into their hearts, Isa. 60:2. They sit in darkness and the shadow of death; they are darkness itself, Eph. 5:1. for they are blind souls, Rev. 3:17. Though the light of the gospel shines about them, it hath not shined into their hearts; they think they see; for though they are void of the light of grace, they have the

light of reason; but that is darkness in them, Matth. 6:23. So they see not where they are, nor whither they go, 1 John 2:11.

5. There is no part with Christ among them, Eph. 2:12. There is a rich purchase made by the Mediator, and he has taken all believers into fellowship with him, 1 John 1:3; but the world has no share with them; no share in the righteousness, peace, pardon, and title to heaven. They share with the society of the first Adam, in their sin and misery; but not with the society of the second Adam. Hence they are unwashen, unjustified, and unsanctified.

6. There is nothing but rank poverty among them. Whatever wealth they may have for their bodies, in respect to their souls they are poor to an extremity, Rev. 3:17. whereof there are three glaring evidences.

(1.) They are poor naked souls, ib. The best raiment among them to cover their spiritual nakedness, is rags, filthy rags, the rags of their own righteousness; they have nothing else to cover their shame before the Lord; and that will never do it, but leave them naked to their shame.

(2.) They are poor starving souls; there is nothing among them to feed on but empty husks, that which is not bread, and satisfieth not. Only Christ is bread for the soul, only a God in Christ can satisfy the cravings thereof. Dust is their meat with the serpent; they feed on the empty husks of the creature, and so do but fill the belly with the east-wind.

(3.) They are drowned in debt to justice, and have nothing wherewith to pay. Sin is that debt, and there is no forgiving the debt, while one is among them, Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." It is a debt that, however long it lie over, will be exacted; it will be pursued for, and that on the

debtor's expence. And they have no saving interest in the great Cautioner.

7. There is no peace with God among them, 2 Cor. 6:14–17. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" &c. Sooner shall light and darkness agree, than a holy God, and the world lying in wickedness. Nay, they are a society with whom God has declared that he will have war for ever, Is. 57 ult. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Those in the lower world lying in wickedness, are roaring under the felt enmity of God against them; while those in the upper world lying in wickedness may be enjoying a profound peace. But the latter as well as the former stands as marks to the arrows of God's wrath, Deut. 29:19, 20. As long as thou art among them, thou art in a state of enmity with God, Rom. 8:7. Luke 19:27.

8. They have no sound bond of peace among themselves, Tit. 3:3. God alone is the centre of true unity, and where men are broke off from God, they will be found at the bottom broke off from one another, as altogether selfish, and having their unruly passions unmortified, which make them uneasy both to themselves and others. And hence faith in Christ is the early restorer of true peace and love among men. That peace and love that is between companions in sin, will without peradventure break out in rage and hatred.

9. There is a curse among them, the curse of God and of his broken law, Gal. 3:10. They are under the law, and it makes its way among them, Rom. 3:19. This makes them a society of cursed children, cursed in their persons, and in all theirs. By this means they are a society separated to evil; and that curse will pull down the roof upon

their heads at length, as it brought on the deluge, bringing in the general conflagration, and will lie a sinking weight on them for ever.

10. There is a cloud of wrath hanging over their head, and the head of every one among them, John 3 ult. While ye are among them, your state is a state of wrath; ye are ever under Heaven's displeasure, Psal. 7:11. Ye dwell under mount Sinai, where the fire of wrath is flashing; and though sleeping there, ye are secure; yet ye will no sooner be awakened, than ye will see the lightnings, hear the thunders, and the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder. Therefore I would say as Deut. 1:6. "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount."

11. Death reigns among them, Matth. 4:16. They are a company of condemned criminals, John 3:18. that know not how soon their sentence may be executed. They are all in a dying condition, they have got their deaths wounds, and are pining away in their iniquity. Nay they are dead already, God is departed from them. O why will ye continue in the congregation of the dead? Come out from among them.

12. There is no good to be found among them, Psal. 14:1. They are corrupt trees, and cannot bring forth good fruit. There is nothing among them but sin: for there is no faith among them. What has the name of good hearts, good works is but so in appearance, not in reality; for what good can be there, where the nature is totally corrupt?

13. All evil is to be found among them. The unrenewed heart is a depth of wickedness; and in the world lying in wickedness all manner of wickedness is to be found. Much of it appears now, yet much is hid; but at length all will be seen.

14. Lastly, They are not to stay here, but will all be down in the lower world at length, Rev. 20:14, 15. There are some dropping down to it daily, yet the rest remain secure; but all will be hurried down together to it at the last judgment. What a fearful cry was there at Dathan and Abiram's down going? Numb. 16:34. What then will the cry be, when the whole world lying in wickedness shall go down together? Therefore I say to you, as Numb. 16:26. "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins."

FOURTHLY, I shall now consider the impediments hindering men to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, and keeping them among them.

First, Want of consideration, Luke 15:17. They ramble through the world, walking at adventures, and are not so just to their own souls as seriously to take under consideration their spiritual state and case. They seek not these thoughts; and if at any time they bear in themselves upon them, they shift them. Hence,

1. They have no just view of the corruption and danger of the world lying in wickedness. Though it is abominable in the eyes of God, it is a beauty in theirs; though it is a Sodom to be destroyed, they see nothing but safety, Mal. 3:15. Why, they view it in a false light, they consider it not, as represented in the word, which alone can give a true notion of it.

2. They discern not themselves as true members of the world lying in wickedness. They form to themselves a notion of the wicked, whereby those only that are monsters of wickedness are reckoned of that sort; not considering, that all the unregenerate are of them in God's account, even though moral, or having a form of godliness. And though they be immoral, vicious, and profane, they think

themselves not of the number, because there are some worse than they.

3. They see not the need of coming out from among the world lying in wickedness, Matth. 9:12, 13. Their eyes being withheld from a sight of their own danger among them, how can they be moved to make an escape? Will a man flee that apprehends no pursuit? No; they will be secure, if not mockers.

Now, to remove this impediment, hearken to the divine call, Hag. 1:7. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways." Stand, sinner, young or old, and consider where you are, what you are doing, where your present course is like to land you in eternity. You can consider of the trifles of a present world, why not consider your soul's case, and the concerns of another world? Want of consideration allows present ease, but it lays a foundation for eternal pain. Careless souls now, will sink themselves into deep consideration through eternity, which makes the worm that never dies. Wherefore I give you three advices.

1. Take some time purposely for consideration of these matters; pray and think in earnest about them, Psal. 119:59. They are too weighty to be successfully managed by fleeting and occasional consideration.

2. Consider them according to the word of God, Psal. 119:9. Lay aside all other rules of judging, as the course of this world, the opinions of the men of this world, &c. and consider purely what the Bible says in the case; for it is not by the former, but the latter, you are to be judged, and sentenced.

3. Pursue this consideration, till you have discovered clearly your state as it is, according to the word. And be not loath to admit conviction; for to see the disease is the first step to the cure. And

then you have gained that sight, when you see an absolute necessity of getting out from among them without delay.

Secondly, The pleasures of the world, Luke 8:14. These are the Syren songs that arrest many, that they cannot come away from the world lying in wickedness. They are the silken cords by which they are tied down among them, as fast as by iron chains. These gripe them by the heart, so that remembering them, their very hearts fail to think of coming away from among them.

The pleasures of sense, seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling, are ruining snares to the souls of most men. The lust of the eye, the Iust of the flesh, and the pride of life, keep many away from God, for men naturally are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, 2 Tim. 3:4. Now the world lying in wickedness, giving up themselves to these, bless themselves in their enjoyment, and men cannot think of coming out from among them.

1. Unlawful pleasures bewitch them, as of drunkenness, gluttony, uncleanness, Prov. 23 ult.; Luke 16:19, 23; Prov. 7:22, 23. There is a particular pleasure corrupt nature has in breaking over the hedge of the divine law, which makes forbidden fruit more pleasing than what is allowed, Prov. 9:17, 18. They will therefore rather venture the eternal ruin of their souls, than come out from among them and forego these.

2. Even lawful pleasures fetter them, and lull them asleep among them, Luke 17:27. One may abide within the boundaries of lawful things, and yet have the heart so bewitched with them, that they may prove effectual snares. There is much of that which is counted innocent mirth and pleasure, and is so in itself, that yet becomes criminal, as taking the place of, and diverting from the main thing.

To break this snare, and remove this impediment, consider,

1. The pleasures of this world are deceitful; and as they are snares to the soul, they end in bitterness, Prov. 14:13. They are Satan's busked hooks, wherewith he first allures, and then ruins many a poor soul. They are his green and soft paths leading to destruction; and the pleasures of sin will be bitterness in the end, come what will.

2. This life is to us, not the time of pleasure, but the time of trial and probation for another world. Brute creatures enjoy the pleasures of sense they are capable of, more than the most voluptuous man doth; for these are the utmost of what they can obtain; and when they are dead, they are done. But God made man for a more refined sort of pleasure, in the enjoyment of himself. Man sinned and forfeited that, and God has proposed a new way for his recovering it, the way of faith. And now we are on our trials for it to be had in another world; and in denying ourselves to the pleasures of sin and sense, lies a great part of that trial, 2 Tim. 2:3. Can ye expect two summers in one year; an easy, soft life of pleasure here, and hereafter too? Such expectation is in vain.

3. Consider the life of Christ and his saints, and the life of the wicked going to destruction. Which of them was it that had the life of worldly pleasure, immersed in the pleasures of sense, living at ease for the flesh? Was it the saints? No; Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after me, says Christ, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Was it Christ? No; Isa. 53:3. "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Was it the wicked that had the life of pleasure? Yes; see Job 21:7–14, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is

the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth and faileth not, their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Psal. 73:4–12. "For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as doth a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches." The decision is plainly made, Luke 16:25. in the case of the rich man and Lazarus; the former received his good things in his life time, and the latter evil things. The way of providence in that matter has been, that the slaughter-oxen have had the greatest ease, and been best fed.

4. The pleasures of sin and the world, put the mouth out of taste to the pleasures of communion with God, 1 Pet. 2:11. By them the Spirit is quenched, and good motions heaven-wards are stifled. Therefore it is the Lord inures his people to hardness, because that makes them value the consolations of God, which the soft and delicious life would make them neglect.

5. Lastly, Were it not better to break these chains of worldly pleasures now and escape, than to remain in them, and lie down in

sorrow for ever? Isa. 50 ult. It was by the pleasures of sense that mankind was ruined at first, Gen. 3:6; and for that the second Adam paid for the elect, in his bitter sufferings, when he was deprived of all that could be grateful to his senses and contrariwise was exposed to the wrath of God, and the rage of men and devils. That life will have a bitter reckoning in the other world, when men are divested of their bodies till the last day, and then raised up for eternal punishment against that day.

Therefore I would advise you to leave these things in time, and to be resolute to break through that bond, Matth. 5:29. If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Thirdly, A prejudice against religion is a very unpleasant thing, Matth. 25:24. "Then he which had received one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not stawed." Mal. 3:13. "Ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts." This is an impediment that stands in the way of many; they think that if they should come out from among the world lying in wickedness, they may for ever after bid farewell to all pleasure, to taste it no more; they must spend their days in sorrow, and never see a joyful hour more. This is what they can by no means do; and therefore come after what will, they must abide among them. But,

1. Suppose that were true of religion, whether is it easier to spend a life-time in a constant cloud of sorrow till death, or to spend an eternity so after death? If men had no view at all beyond death, it would be more tolerable for them to make the most pleasurable they

could of a present life; but since there is a life of pleasure or torment in another world, it is most absurd for eviting of momentary sorrows and hardships, to throw themselves into endless misery.

2. But it is absolutely false, a rash, ill grounded prejudice, wherewith men are possessed against religion; and it is fostered by Satan, and the deluded world. It is contrary to the plain testimony of God in Christ, Prov. 3:17. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Matth. 11:28–30. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." It is contrary to the experience of the saints in all ages, John 8:56. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad." Psal. 4:7. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." 1 John 5:3. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." And it is contrary to the nature of things, which of themselves lead quite otherwise, Isa. 57:20, 21. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace saith my God to the wicked." Compared with 2 Cor. 1:12, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you wards." But here lies your mistake.

(1.) You know and can conceive of no other pleasures, but those of the world, sense, and sin; but there is another kind of pleasure, that is spiritual, which religion affords, that none know but those who have tasted it, Prov. 14:10. There are rivers of pleasure in heaven, but your worldly pleasures are not there; and there are in religion

pleasures of that kind, in the Lord's lifting up the light of his countenance upon his people, and putting gladness in their hearts, Psal. 4:6, 7; in seeing one's name written in heaven, Luke 10:20; and in the approbation of conscience, 2 Cor. 1:12. It is your want of a new nature, that ye cannot relish these new, refined, un-dreggy pleasures.

(2.) You think all pleasures are noisy, like those of the revellers and jovial ones of the earth; but it is not so, Rev. 2:17. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." The deepest waters run most still, and so do the deepest joys; hence even in worldly concerns, deep joy is not expressed by laughter, which is used only on trifling occasions. And of all joys and pleasures, those of religion lie most inward.

(3.) You form your notion of religion, by the outward appearance of some that profess it, who are of a heavy disposition. But you ought to form it by the scripture, and not by the appearance of some of its professors, from whence you may draw the most frightful notion of it; but the art of hell is in this, leading you from the view of cheerful Christians, to settle on those that are not so. But after all, ye may be deceived in them, for the countenance is not always an exact representer of what is within; witness the mirth and jollity of many, whose heart feels stings, and lashes in the time. But what notion have you formed of religion, from the appearance of the man Christ, who was a man of sorrows, of whose weeping you read sometimes, of his rejoicing once, but of his laughing never?

3. Consider, whether the way of religion, or the way of the world, affords the most ground for joy and pleasure? This will be no hard question to an impartial inquirer. The one is the way to a state of

favour with God, peace, &c. here; the other keeps one under his wrath; the one is the way to be eternally happy, the other to be eternally miserable. Wherefore bring ye no sorrow with you into religion, nor spring of it; and ye will find none in religion. But it teaches men to be sorrowful in time for what is just ground of sorrow, and will produce it sooner or later in all.

4. Lastly, The very sorrows that religion puts men to, are better than the world's joys and pleasures. These last are a spring of sorrow, and will end in it, Luke 6:25. "Wo unto you that laugh now; for ye shall mourn and weep." They may end in it here, either in the way of bitter repentance, or in the way of bitter affliction, which will render all the former pleasures of sin tasteless, leaving nothing of them but the sting; or surely in the life to come. Whereas the sorrows of religion, be they never so deep, make way for joy here, and hereafter too, ver. 21. "Blessed are ye that weep now for ye shall laugh."

Fourthly, The cares of the world, Luke 8:14. These are a thicket whereby men are entangled in the world lying in wickedness, till they cannot get away. The clay idol bewitches them, that they have neither heart nor hand for coming out from among them. These cares are a net, wherein the feet of poor and rich are held fast; for the frowning and smiling world are each of them apt to crave inordinate care. They hinder in so far as they enhance the whole man: and so,

1. They fix the heart to the world as the main thing, and so keep it back from God, Matth. 6:24. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Hence covetousness is called idolatry, inasmuch as thereby the world and its good things are put in Christ's room, loved, desired, and followed after more than he.

2. They leave no room for a due concern about spiritual things, Luke 10:41, 42. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful." This and the other worldly thing, one on the back of another, challenges their care and concern, keeps their hearts and hands ever full, that due care for their souls cannot get entered. Hence the lives of many are spent in a continual hurry, never getting leave to think seriously; and it fares with them as with the man in the parable, 1 Kings 20:39, 40. "As the king passed by, he cried unto the king; and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."

3. They leave them no gust nor relish for spiritual things; they make them tasteless to them, so that nothing relishes with them, but carnal worldly things. The smiling world has this effect, Job 21:13, 14. "They spend their days in wealth—Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." And the frowning world has it too, as in the case of the Israelites under their oppression in Egypt, Exod. 6:9. "They hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage."

To remove this hinderance, consider,

1. The shortness of your time, and how in a little ye will be beyond all the things of the present evil world, to have no more use for them for ever, 1 Cor. 7:29, 30, 31. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though

they possessed not; and they that use this world; as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." Death approaches, and the frowus of the world can annoy you no more, and its smiles be in no more stead to you. Why do ye take so great care about what is to last so short while? Why is not your short time better filled up?

2. Consider what will be the issue of the cares of the world hindering you to come out from among the world lying in wickedness. Ye will lose your souls in that throng of care for the present life, and no advantage in the world will quit the cost of that, Matth. 16:26. "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? Ye have eternity challenging your care, of which if ye continue careless, death will bring you into a surprising plunge.

3. You quite mistake your measures for your own interest, taking a burden on yourself, that might be borne without you, Psal. 55:22. Your true way would be to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, to Jesus Christ, and leave it to him to care for you, which would not be in vain, 1 Pet. 5:7. "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you."

Fifthly, Ill company and their influence hinders many. It was Paul's advantage, that when God called him, he conferred not with flesh and blood, Gal. 1:16. For the world lying in wickedness, will never be content that any of their own should leave them; therefore the call is, Psal. 45:10. "Forget thine own people, and thy father's house." Satan has his agents in the world, that will be at all pains to entangle them among them that would be away. And they do it,

1. By their example casting off the fear of God, indulging themselves in sinful liberty, and so cast a stumbling block before others, Matth. 18:7. And,

2. By their influence otherwise, advising, enticing, and encouraging them to sin, Prov. 1:10. Acting Satan's part.

To remove this hinderance, consider,

1. You have God's call to come away; and it will be a sorry excuse for your disobedience, that others by their example and influence hindered you, Acts 4:19. "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto them more than unto God, judge ye." You ought, at the call of your Maker, to come away in spite of all the bad company that beset you.

2. Open your eyes and see their danger as well as your own. Believe, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, Rom. 1:18. and you will be obliged to make away, as the Israelites from the tents of Dathan and Abiram.

3. It will be no comfort to you in the end, to be ruined together with ill company, and by their influence. Their sin is great, but they will leave you to answer for yourselves, and bear your own punishment, Prov. 9:12. And the society of companions in sin, in hell, will be bitter, as appears from Luke 16:27, 28. "I pray thee, father, that thou wouldest 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."

Lastly, Delays are a great hinderance: Prov. 6:9, 10, 11. "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth, and thy want as an armed man." Men deceive themselves with off puts, and the prospect of much time before them. To remove this obstruction, consider,

1. The longer you delay, it will be the harder to get away from among them. Sin gathers strength by delay of repentance; as the waters, the farther they are from the head, the greater do they grow. The heart becomes harder, the mind blinder, the will more perverse, the affections more carnal.

2. Your time is uncertain; you know not if ever you will see the term-day to which you put off. How many are there that drop into eternity ere ever they are aware? The present time only is yours.

3. Suppose you should see the time you put off to, God may withhold grace from you, Luke 14:24. "For I say unto you, that none of these men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper." Take the alarm therefore in time, and strike in with the opportunity ye now have, Isa. 55:6. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."

Lastly, It is a base spirit that puts you on to delay; it bewrays the predominant love of sin, and shews ye have no regard to God for himself; otherwise ye would not hesitate one moment to obey his call. Wherefore we beseech you to consider the matter, and delay no longer; let a regard to the authority of God, and a view of his matchless excellencies in Christ; let a sense of gratitude for the divine patience, and the love ye bear to your own souls; let every consideration, whether from the terrors of God's everlasting wrath, or the comforts of his everlasting love, unite to move you speedily to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, to the Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Head of the society separated from the world. So coming, ye shall find welcome—"I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

And now to conclude, Ye have had the picture of the world lying in wickedness drawn before you, and the call to come away out from among them. It is like these may appear as idle tales to some, and they may be as one that mocked, Gen. 19:14. But if ye come not away out from among them, ye will perish among them, and the more fearfully that ye have been so solemnly warned.

# THE BELIEVER'S HUNDREDFOLD IN THIS LIFE CONSIDERED; AND A VIEW OF THE REALITY, PARTS, INHABITANTS, PASSAGE INTO, AND STATE OF MEN IN THE WORLD TO COME

Several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in 1729

MARK 10:30

> He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life.

YE have heard much of this present evil world, and have been called to come away out from among them. I come now to tell you, that there is another world beyond it, into which we must all go; a view of which may be of use to stir us up to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, and to make us more indifferent about the smiles and frowns of this world.

The text is a part of an encouragement to saints under worldy losses. The remote occasion of it was, a view of a man ruined with worldly prosperity, whose wealth in the world was the neck-break of his soul; and such examples are never rare, ver. 17–22. (1.) He was a young man, Matth. 19:20. and a ruler, Luke 18:18. Worldly wealth and honour are great snares to people, especially to the young, who are raw and of little experience in the vanity of the world. (2.) He was nevertheless in some concern for another world, ver. 17. "Good

master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" For all the temptations hanging about him, he considered that there was a life after this, and that he could not carry his wealth and honour with him thither. Hence though he took Christ but for a good man, he was very respectful to him, he cast himself into his company, he kneeled to him as one desirous to have his blessing; he proposes a weighty question to him about another world. It is a pity that any thing in this world should put that out of one's head and heart.

(3.) But he was a conceited man, unhumbled, unacquainted with his own weakness, and thought he could do well enough, if he knew what. Self conceit mars many good motions, and spoils them all.

Our Lord for his humiliation, sets before him, (1.) The holiness of God, ver. 18. "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good; there is none good but one, that is God." A view of the goodness and holiness of God is fit to humble sinners, and let them into a view of their own badness and unholiness, Isa. 6:5. (2.) The holy law, ver. 19. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. The law in its holy commandments is a looking glass wherein to see our defilement and sinfulness. He pitches on those of the second table, for in these lies the trial of the sincerity of professors of religion. He begins with the command forbidding the lusts of the flesh, then pride, passion, and revenge, covetousness, &c. For the law in these things speaks to all alike, young and old, great and small.

The youth hereupon gives an account of himself, ver. 20. Master, all these have I observed from my youth; in which, though he discovers his ignorance of the spirituality of the law, and his self-justifying temper; yet withal he shews, that, notwithstanding of his

circumstances in the world, he had been kept from the gross pollutions of it. He had been no rambling youth, but kept within the bounds of decency. It seems, though he had not grace, he had education.

Christ brings the trial close to him, in his predominant, the love of the world, ver. 21. "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come take up thy cross, and follow me." He had many good things that were lovely in him, but he wanted a heart weaned from the world, and knit to God in Christ; and that want, he is told, behoved to be made up, if ever he would see heaven. Obs. 1. They may have many things good about them, where one thing lacking mars all. 2. Whoever would have a happy portion in another, must be ready to part with the good things of this world at Christ's call, and submit to its evil things. Though this is hard to flesh and blood, it is a constitution of heaven not to be altered.

The issue of this trial was sad, he parted with Christ and heaven; since he could not have them on easier terms, he behoved to quit them; for these terms he could not digest, ver. 22. "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions." His great possessions were his great snare. The good things of this world part betwixt Christ and many.

The use Christ makes of this sad event, for the disciples' instruction, ver. 23. "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Obs. 1. Though riches make an easy life in this world, they make hard work for the party that has them to get into a better world. 2. The ruining effects saints may see that world's wealth has

on men generally, should make them sit down contented with the small share of it which providence lets come into their hands, q. d. Now see what world's wealth does.

The disciples being surprised herewith, (1.) Christ explains what he had said, ver. 24. "But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God!" Obs. It is hard for men to have world's wealth, and not to trust in it as their portion and happiness, to bring out of it their satisfaction, which they should seek in God. (2.) He confirms it by a proverbial saying of a thing of a difficulty next to impossibility, ver. 25. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The gate of life is narrow, the world's wealth is like the burden on the camel's back.

The disciples are astonished at this; they might observe what a great snare poverty was to many, and if it was so with riches too, they say, Who then can be saved? ver. 26. The consideration of the mischief the world does, on the one hand with its frowns, and on the other with its smiles, makes salvation appear very difficult.

Our Lord tells them, that what is impossible to nature is possible to God. The power of his grace can so loose the heart from the world, that it shall not be able to bewitch a man with all its snares, nor hinder him from the kingdom of heaven. Witness Abraham, Job, Joseph, &c. who, though rich men, were yet truly religious, and attained to heavenly happiness.

Follows the immediate occasion of the words of the text. Peter shews how he and the rest had behaved in such a trial, as proved fatal to that man; they had left all they had in the world at Christ's call, and followed him, ver. 28. See Matth. 4:18–20. It was not much they had

to leave for him; but it was by the power of grace they were brought to part with it, little as it was. That is it that makes the difference. Now he is desirous to know the issue of that, and what they were to expect at his hand; and Christ allows his people to persuade themselves, that they shall not be losers at his hand. And therefore whatever weakness might be in Peter's question, our Lord directly answers it, in a liberal promise to all his followers of a sufficient upmaking of all that they lose for him. In which we have,

1. The losers to whom Christ gives security, for upmaking of their loss. And here consider,

1st, What kind of losers they are. It is not every kind of losers; some lose their worldly good things for their lusts' sake, squandering away the same on their lusts, and by their criminal negligence; or they are justly taken from them in an ill cause for their crimes; these are not they. But they that quit with anything for Christ's sake, and the gospel's; the Lord by his call bids them give up with it, and they at his call quit their grip; they cannot keep it, and keep the road of the gospel too; and therefore that they may not go off the road of the gospel, they quit what they have. These are the losers.

2dly, What kind of loss it is that Christ puts his people to. It is not the loss of spiritual benefits and privileges, and their portion in another world; but only worldly good things. (1.) He may call them to leave house and hold, and they must leave it for his sake, with all the conveniencies they had in their own house before. If they have not left them where to lay their head, he bids them not ride a ford he rode not before them, Matth. 8:20. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." If they be forced to hide in dens and caves of the earth, they fare not worse than the worthies mentioned, Heb. 11:38. (2.)

Their relations, and the comfort they had in them, brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, and children. He may carry away their relations from them by death, or otherwise providentially separate them from them, or deprive them of the comfort of them though they be with them, and make them a cross to them. Or he may carry them away from their relations, that they have not access to the comfort they might otherwise have in them. In all these cases they are losers for Christ that give up with them at his call to follow him. (3.) Their lands, and all the profits and advantages flowing from them. Even the king is served by the field; but Christ must be served with the field itself given up to him, when he calls for it; whether it be theirs in property, or only in the use. They must give up their claim to him at his call.

2. What is secured to these losers for Christ? Double.

1st, Something in hand, a hundredfold now in this time. The term of this upmaking is in this world, now in this time. Our Lord does indeed reserve the greatest upmaking to another world; but he does not put off his people with nothing in the time: No, there is a settlement for the present made upon them, to bear the expence of their journey, and to bear up their hearts till they get their portion. And that is a hundredfold, namely, of what they lost for him, viz. houses, &c. It is plain, it cannot be meant of a hundredfold in kind; that is not possible in the case of father and mother; but in value; i. e. they shall get what will be a hundred times the value of all they lost for him. For instance, do they lose a house for him? they shall get what will be worth a hundred houses, &c. But there is an appurtenance of this hundredfold, that may keep from dreaming of world's ease for all that, with persecutions. All times of the church are not times of public persecution; but this secures them, that go the times as they will, they shall never get the good-will of the world

lying in wickedness. Satan and his agents will always be at them, one way or other.

2dly, Something in hope. Here is, (1.) The term and place of it, in the world to come. (2.) What they will get there, eternal life. This plainly bears, [1.] That there is a world to come, another world than this. The world properly signifies an age, or duration. And being in opposition to the age of this world, or times of its duration, it signifies the age of eternity. It is used also for the world itself, Heb. 1:2. And being to come, it differs from the present world. [2.] That the world to come is the place and time where and when men are to get the full reward of their works; and therefore men go into that world, when they have done with this; and are not done when dead. Lastly, That such losers for Christ shall in that world get eternal life, when others shall get eternal death there; for if in that world were only eternal life, it had been needless to say more than that they should go into that world.

3. The security itself, Christ's own word, "Verily I say unto you," ver. 29. A security that carnal men cannot trust, but all believers take it for good security.

Before I come to the main thing intended, I will speak somewhat to the hundredfold in this life, from the following doctrine, viz.

DOCT. Our Lord Jesus has given security, for a hundredfold with a burden in this life, to them who for his sake and the gospel's, leave and give up with their worldly good things and enjoyments, at his call.

In discoursing from this doctrine, we shall consider,

I. The parties to whom the security is made.

II. The hundredfold secured to such losers.

III. The burden going along with the hundredfold, with persecutions.

IV. The security given for the hundredfold to the losers for Christ's sake and the gospel's.

V. Make application.

I. We shall consider the parties to whom the security is made.

Two things will set this in due light; viz. An inquiry,

1. How Christ calls people to leave and give up with any worldly comforts and enjoyments they have had.

2. What it is at Christ's call to leave and give up with them for his sake and the gospel's.

FIRST, I am to inquire how Christ calls people to leave and give up with any worldly comforts and enjoyments they have had.

First, When we cannot keep them without sin. When we are brought to that, that we must either lose them, or sin against God; must either part with them, or part with a good conscience; be sure then Christ is saying, Give up with them, leave them for ME. And so it is in four cases.

1. In the case of persecution, or the violence of evil men reducing us to that strait. Thus confessors' goods were called for by Christ, Heb. 10:34. and the lives of the martyrs, chap. 11:35. And they parted with them, as Joseph dropt his mantle, when he could not keep it and his chastity too. If there had been a fair way to have preserved the substance and the life, and a good conscience too, they would not

have been required; but as they could not preserve a good conscience with the possession of them, therefore they were called to part with both substance and life.

The same holds in the case of illegal violence, when men are reduced to such a strait by the violence of evil men in common life; that loss is on the one hand, sin on the other; that is a providential call to give up with worldly good things and enjoyments, 1 Cor. 6:6, 7.

2. In the case of justice. It is a divine command, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another," Rom. 13:8. What justice requires us to part with, God requires us to part with; for the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, Psal. 11:7. And to keep it is robbery, because in justice it is not ours, but another's. And therefore no man can reckon any more his own, than what remains to him after payment of his just debts, 2 Kings 4:1, 7. To this belongs,

3. The case of restitution of goods unjustly got. What we have unjustly got, is not ours in the sight of God, and therefore God calls to restore it, Luke 19:8. And the sin of the taking it away, is not forgiven while it is kept. And where it is so, God often forces it out of the hand of them or theirs, taking away more with it, Job 20:10, 15. For a little of that sort is a moth among, and worms one out of much.

4. In the case of charity. It is the divine command to improve our worldly substance for the honour of God, Prov. 3:9. and to relieve the wants of the poor and needy, according to our ability, and their need. God has made us stewards, and the truly poor his receivers, Prov. 19:17. The sturdy beggars are indeed the reproach of our land, and eat the meat out of the mouths of those that are poor indeed; their idleness is their sin, and the sin of the government that suffers them to be idle, 2 Thess. 3:10. and their vagabond life is their sin and punishment, Psal. 109:10. But the truly poor, that fain would, but are

not able, or cannot have access to do for themselves, God obliges others to help them, even though they be straitened themselves, 2 Cor. 8:2, "In a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality." Eph. 4:28, "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." See Prov. 21:13.

Secondly, When he himself is providentially taking them away from us. Sometimes he lays worldly good things to one's hand; at other times he returns and takes them away, and then doubtless he says, Give them up to ME. Job saw this in his own experience, chap. 1:21, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, (says he,) and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And this the Lord does in two cases.

1. In the case of providential losses, when the things themselves are by holy providence taken away. Thus the Lord swept away Job's substance, his children, and his health too. At whatever time God thus is pulling from us, we are called to open our hearts to quit them, and let go our grip of them. In that case God is sending to us as he did to the owner of the ass, Matth. 21:1–3, "The Lord hath need of them;" and we shall entertain his send as that man, who straightway sent the ass and the colt.

2. In the case of providential restraints, when the comfort of the things is taken away, though themselves remain. Thus the Lord took away Job's comfort in his acquaintance, friends, and domestics, there was an embargo laid upon them, that they had not power to be comfortable to him, but on the contrary were a cross to him, Job 19:13–16. Yea, in his own wife, who proved unkind to him, ver. 17. and a snare and a cross to him, chap. 2:9. No person, nothing, can be

to us other than what God makes it to be; and sometimes God, for one's trial, squeezes the sap out of their creature-comforts, and so calls them to quit their comfort in them.

SECONDLY, I come to shew what it is at Christ's call to leave and give up with them for his sake and the gospel's. And thus we will see, who they are to whom this security is made. It lies in three things.

First, Discerning of heaven's call to give up with them, 2 Sam. 16:10. None can leave anything at God's call, when he discerns no call from him for that effect. There is a generation who like the dog snarl at the stone, but look not to the hand above that cast it. In their losses they blame this or that person, this and that unlucky accident: but they consider not God's hand over-ruling them, and by these things taking trial of them, Psal. 28:5. We should see him first mover in all the losses that befal us.

Secondly, Loving of Christ and the gospel more than the world, and all that is in it: for that person or thing for whose sake we leave anything, must needs be more beloved than that thing. This is the habitual temper of soul, from whence that action doth proceed, to be found in all believers, Luke 16:26. and them only, 1 John 2:15. And unless the heart be once moulded into this frame through faith, it is not to be expected that one will truly quit any worldly good for Christ's sake and the gospel's, whatever they may do for their own sake.

Thirdly, Heart and hands quitting grips of them, out of love to Christ and the gospel, Heb. 10:34, "Ye—took joyfully the spoiling of your goods." The call clears to them, that they must part either with Christ or the world in that instance: and laying the two in the balance, Christ and the gospel downweigh the worldly thing, and they quit it to hold them fast; not only giving it up with the hand, which may be

done against one's will, but with the heart. So that this is a religious, holy parting therewith, an act of Christian resignation and self-denial. Hence we may state the character of the losers to whom the hundredfold is secured, in the following particulars.

1. They are true believers, who have taken Christ and the promises of the gospel for their portion, their all, Psal. 119:57, "Thou art my portion, O Lord." In vain is it expected, that the heart will ever quit its grip of the world, till it takes grip of Christ and the promise of the gospel. Therefore faith is called buying, wherein the party gets as good as he gives, Rev. 3:18. Matth. 13:45, 46. And indeed in the day of the soul's closing with Christ, it gives up with all things in the world, and takes Christ for them all, Luke 14:26. And to such the hundredfold is secured.

2. In all their losses they take God for their party, and yield the things to him, as Job did, chap. 1:21. forecited. They say as Eli did, 1 Sam. 3:18. "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good."

They have a faith of the divine providence with application to themselves, knowing that nothing can befal them, but as he orders it; they know that he is just in all his ways, and does them no wrong, whatever wrong may be done them by men: yea, that he is good, and punishes them as they well deserve. Therefore they submit to him, saying as the church, Lam. 3:22. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not;" and as Hezekiah, Isa. 39 ult. "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken." And thus delivering up their comforts to him, he will restore them an hundredfold, as in Job's case.

3. They yield up the things into the hand he directs, be that what it will. Whether he take away immediately by his own hand, or by the hands of men, right or wrong; the intimation of his will is sufficient

to them, as it was to Job, chap. 1:21. though the devil and his agents were instrumental in these losses. They look above second causes, and take their loss out of the hand of the first cause, which employs what second causes he sees meet. If men look not to God in these cases, they cannot expect that he will make up what is not given him.

4. They leave and give up with them, to keep the road of duty in obedience to his command, Heb. 11:25. It is their care to keep their worldly enjoyments as valuable gifts of God, and not to waste them by riot or negligence; but it is their greater care to keep themselves in the love of God, and in the way of holy obedience. And therefore when they cannot do both together, they quit the former, and cleave to the latter. Such losers God will make up, (Heb. 11:25, 26,) that will rather lose their substance, than a pure conscience; that will rather suffer than sin against him.

5. They seek their rest and comfort in him under all their losses, and in the promise of the gospel, Psal. 27:10. By an eye of faith they see a fulness in Christ and the promise; that is sufficient to bear up under all they can lose in the world: they discern a treasure in heaven, which is not liable to be lost. And in the faith thereof they quit their worldly comforts, Heb. 10:34. taking God's promises in the gospel for their heritage, in which they may rejoice in the want of worldly things, Zeph. 3:12. What makes men hold such a greedy grip of the world, is, that they see not, how if they lose it, the want can be made up: but faith looses that difficulty.

6. They are submissive under their losses, maintaining their love to an afflicting God, and their esteem of the gospel under all their losses, 2 Sam. 15:25, 26. They will not cast out with God and the gospel for world's enjoyments, nor think the worse of him, because he takes back his own, or denies them what he is not obliged to give

them. If such thoughts rise in their hearts, they will wrestle against them, mourn over them, condemn themselves for them, and return to their temper. The contrary disposition prevailing in proud hearts, Satan blows the coal, and oft-times it has a desperate and fearful issue; as in Ahithophel and others.

7. They will take no sinful method to prevent their losses, nor yet to recover them, or shift under them. When life lay at stake with those worthies mentioned, Heb. 11:35. they would not accept deliverance on any sinful terms; when Joseph was sold for a slave, he would not buy his freedom with defiling his conscience. That is losing for Christ's sake and the gospel's, and them that so lose, Christ will make up; when they that go out of God's ways into sinful ways, which honour not God, but the devil, either for preventing or recovering, will find their loss doubled by these means.

8. Lastly, The more that created streams are dried up, the more closely they will seek after the fountain, 1 Tim. 5:5. It is for this very cause the Lord trysts his own people with crosses and losses; as Absalom set Joab's corn-field on fire, the Lord caused a burden to be blown off the back of his people, that they may run their race more speedily; dries up a stream of comfort in a created person or thing, that they may come with greater appetite to the fountain of comfort.

II. The next head is to consider the hundredfold secured to such losers. This is not an hundredfold in kind, but an hundredfold in value. Such as,

First, The peace and pleasurable reflection on the way of losing it, 2 Cor. 1:12. When the losses of untender unholy men leave a sting behind them, in that they find they have lost for their lasts' sake; theirs shall afford them a pleasure, that their losses come not that way, but in a cleanly providential way, by the hand of God taking a

trial of them, what they can lose and part with for him. This is an hundredfold more; for,

1. This peace is a Christian, spiritual benefit, flowing from the Spirit's leading, of a man in the way of God; therefore more valuable than the having of temporal good things, which is a common benefit. He may thus reflect, "Had I been left to the swing of my lusts, I might have sustained all this loss by my sinful hand bringing it on; but O how am I obliged to preventing grace!"

2. Such losing is a piece of honour that God puts on his people, 1 Pet. 4:14. Whatever impossibility there is to reconcile this with the world's false notions of honour; according to the scripture and reason, it is certainly an honour, to have some considerable thing in the world, and a heart to part with for Christ, Heb. 11. And therefore we expect that the greatest sufferings for Christ, will have the richest incomes in the other world.

Secondly, The cordial satisfaction in the way of parting with it. There are two things meeting here, which make an hundredfold more to spring up in the way of satisfaction.

1. The consideration that Christ will condescend to take such a token of our love off our hand, Acts 5:41. It is obligement to the lover, that the beloved party will accept a token of his love; though by that means he has less in his hand than his rival, from whom such a thing is not taken, he has more in hope. All is the Lord's, and that he will take anything off our hand as a token, will be in the eyes of humble souls a great condescension.

2. The consideration of the Lord's giving a heart to part with it to him. Every serious soul will value this a hundred times more than the having of the thing parted with, 1 Chron. 29:14. For the latter is but a

common gift, but the former a gift of special grace, Phil. 1:29. And there is far more of the love of God in the one than in the other; for it argues special love.

Thirdly, Contentment with the low and afflicted lot. All the abundance of the world cannot give contentment; but losers for Christ's sake and the gospel's have their worldly loss made up with a gain in the frame of their spirit. A spirit suited to one's lot, brought down to the afflicted condition, is a hundredfold more than what is lost. That is a valuable lesson, Phil. 4:12, "In all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need;" to have one's thirst abated, as their drink is dried up; to have their desires narrowed as their enjoyments are, Psal. 37:19. This is an hundredfold; for,

1. Contentment with a little is more valuable by far, than even contentment with much. For it is more difficult to reach, and speaks more of the reality and strength of grace, Psal. 37:16. It is a good exchange, when what is taken off our comforts, is made up in adding to the contented frame of spirit.

2. The narrowing of the desires of worldly comforts, is better than the enlarging of one's possessions and enjoyments. For the former is cutting short of our lusts, the other food to them.

Fourthly, A particular care of heaven about them for their supply, 1 Pet. 5:7. Losers for Christ have in all ages been the peculiar objects of heaven's care and concern, to their upbearing and throughbearing, John 14:18. "I will not leave you comfortless." And none have been better seen to than the children of providence, who have been as the lilies clothed better than Solomon in all his glory. Hence an afflicted lot of saints has been the time of greatest experience; and they have

had richest incomes, when living from hand to mouth, Rom. 5:3, 4. This is an hundredfold, for,

1. The suitableness of it to their real needs, Matth. 6:32. They have a promise, Phil. 4:19, "My God shall supply all our need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus;" and God, who is their Father, is a good judge of what these needs are, and will see to suit providential supplies unto them. He has all in hand, and is able; he loves them tenderly, and will give them what is good.

2. The seasonableness of it. Providential favourable casts in this case are double gifts from the timing of them, as being laid in in a nick of time, when they may be most useful, as in Mordecai's case.

3. From both these they bear an impression and character of the divine care and love, so that though for the matter of them they have very small things, yet the image and superscription they bear will make them of much bulk. Thus Esau's countenance was a vast mercy in Jacob's esteem, Gen. 33:10. And many a thing, which some would account a mere trifle, has filled a saint with joy.

Quest. How can that be? Ans. On these reasonable grounds. (1.) The things coming as an answer of prayer. A straitened lot in the world, makes God's children carry even their smaller matters to their prayers; and there are answers of prayer in these cases. (2.) Coming as an accomplishment of a promise depended on by faith. The promise comes as low as to the bread and the water. And the sap of a promise is matter of joy, though it were but a drop.

Fifthly, A particular allowance of communion with God, and access to him in duties, made to these losers; that as their trials are greater than those of others, their supports may be conformable, Cant. 1:7. "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where

thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." Not that they would get these however they carry themselves, but that the Lord has allowed it them being duly exercised by their trials, which was sealed by Paul's experience, 2 Cor. 12:10. "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." This is agreeable to,

1. The goodness of God, that where he closes the door of the creature fastest on his people, he opens his own the wider; and that they who find the world deafest to their cries, find him most ready to answer them.

I. To their exigence. The drying up of created streams of comfort, makes people more sensible of their need of the fountain, and to thirst the more for it. And those that are most pinched with sense of need, will readily come best speed at the throne of grace. Luke 1:53, "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away."

3. To the experience of the saints in all ages. Those who have had or were to get the greatest trials, were they that had the largest portion of spiritual enjoyments falling to their share. And the greatest sufferers and losers have been the greatest gainers in that respect, as in the case of Jacob, Joseph, &c.

Now this is an hundredfold: for,

1. Communion with God is better than the best things the world can afford; one of the kisses of his mouth is preferable to all the treasure the world casts into one's lap, Psal. 4:6, 7. This made confessors take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and made martyrs joyfully meet death, made Paul and Silas sing in the prison, and the three children easy in the fiery furnace.

2. It is heaven on earth, Rev. 2:17, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." The saints carried to glory leave all their worldly enjoyments behind them, as Elijah dropt his mantle; and they miss them not there, getting full, immediate, uninterrupted communion with God instead of all; more than we miss the star-light, when the sun shines in his meridian brightness. And communion with God here is a foretaste of heaven.

3. Access to God in duties, eases God's people of a burden of care, getting it cast over on the Lord, whereby they are sustained under their losses, Psal. 55:22. Many a time the children of God have gone to duty sore bowed down under divers pressures, and have come away with the load taken off their spirits, as in the case of Hannah, 1 Sam. 1:18. So that what was as a mountain before, becomes like a mole-hill. And it is an hundredfold better to be strengthened from above to go lightly under a burden, than to have it taken off.

4. It makes them find the sweetness of the Bible, and suck the sweet of the promises, Psal. 119:49, 50. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction; for thy word hath quickened me." While world's ease makes the heart fat as grease, insensible to the consolations of the word; affliction with access to God under it, causes the word relish with the soul, makes a sweetness to be felt in those parts of the word where it was not felt before.

Lastly, The spiritual good effects whereof worldly losses are the causes and occasion, being sanctified. Such are especially,

1. Weanedness from the world, Psal. 131:3. "My soul is even as a weaned child." The Lord's laying gall and wormwood on the breasts of the creature, is a blessed means to wean them therefrom; his setting fire to their nest in the world, moves them to seek their rest in

God, Cant. 4:8. This makes them long to be home, and to be looking heavenward, and mending their pace.

2. Seeking to get their wants made up in Christ. The world's frowns make them more solicitous for his smiles; while worldly comforts are plucked from them, they endeavour the more to fasten their gripes on him, making a blessed exchange of the world for Christ, Heb. 3:17, 18. This makes them many times to say, "I had perished unless I had believed," being driven to their spiritual good by afflictions.

3. Lastly, Living by faith, Psal. 27:13. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." When created streams are dried up, people must either fetch in their comfort from another quarter, or they must want. For this cause God sweeps away from his people, many times, their comforts of sense, that they may learn to live on the promise by believing.

III. I shall now consider the burden going along with the hundredfold, with persecutions; it implies three things.

1. That in the course of worldly losses and troubles, the hundredfold shall be made forthcoming to them, Heb. 10:34. "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." The Lord will not leave his people comfortless, while matters are on a run against them. But as Satan and an ill world are taking away from them on the one hand, he will be laying in to them on the other. While the world closeth its doors on them, God will open his to them.

2. That the hundredfold in this life, doth not secure the receivers, as to worldly ease thereafter. An end of troubles in this world is not to be expected while we are in it: but though the shower has been great and long, the clouds will return after the rain; and after one loss

another will come, that a new trial may be taken of the Lord's people. However much they have endured, they must expect to meet with more. A change of troubles there may be, but there will be no end till the great change come.

Lastly, However, no worldly losses nor troubles shall be able to stop the course of the hundredfold. Let them be never so weighty, the Lord can let in what will downweigh them all, Hab. 3:17, 18. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom—yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." So that let the cloud be never so thick, the eye of faith may see how to get through it; for God lays no trial on his people, without allowing them sufficient furniture for bearing it.

IV. The security given for the hundredfold to the losers for Christ's sake and the gospel's. Concerning which observe these two things.

1. It is Christ's own security. He has engaged for it to his people. And, (1.) He is able, for he is the great Trustee of the covenant, in whose hands all the benefits of the covenant are lodged, to distribute them to poor sinners, Matth. 11:27. (2.) He is faithful, and cannot break his engagement, for he is truth itself; and it is impossible that he should fail.

2. It is the security of his word; he has given his word on it. And that requires faith in us, viz. That we trust to that security for the hundredfold, so shall it be made forthcoming.

I. I shall now shut up this subject with a word of improvement.

USE I. Of information. This doctrine lets us see,

1. That even an afflicting God is a bountiful God, ready to deal bountifully with us, in our most straitening circumstances. Whatever he calls you to part with for him, he is ready to give you more and better in its stead. Think not then that he is a hard master. For however short by the head he sees meet to hold you, it is your own fault if ye be not gainers by all worldly losses and troubles, 2 Chron. 25:9.

2. Here is the mystery of the sweet peace and joy that martyrs, confessors, and others have had in their trials and afflictions, Heb. 10:34. They enjoyed the hundredfold. And therefore they preferred Christ's Cross to the world's crown; they would not accept of deliverance on sinful terms, because so they would have forfeited the hundredfold. Whatever trouble without their crosses and losses brought on them, the hundredfold gave them a peaceful calm within.

USE II. Labour to manage your losses and crosses in a world, so as you may gain the hundredfold. And,

1. Learn to sit loose to the world, and all things and persons in it, that at Christ's call ye may be ready to part with them, or your comfort in them, Luke 9:23. Let them hang loose about you, that on occasion ye may easily drop them. It is the gluing of our affections to them, that makes it so hard for us to part with them.

2. Whatever way they are taken from you, or withheld from you, make God himself your party, and quit them to him, for his sake and the gospel's, Job 1:21. Thus God will be the party receiver from you, and you may look that he will recompence you. Though you have mismanaged that already, yet there is room to help it, repenting of your unwillingness to part with them, and your not quitting them to him. Let the heart now quit its hankering after them again, for his sake; and all will be set right.

3. Trust him in the promise of the hundredfold; believe that he will make up your losses accordingly, if not in kind, yet in value: and assuredly ye shall not be disappointed, Rom. 9 ult. "Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed."

Lastly, Seek of him the hundredfold according to his promise, and wait for it in the use of means. In the leaving worldly enjoyments for him, ye make an exchange, taking Christ instead of what you lose; now pursue that, that ye may have that comfort from him, and much more, than ye have lost.

I shall proceed to the main point I intend to discourse on from the text, viz.

DOCT. There is another world than this, a world to come, wherein men will receive their part for eternity.

This is an awful subject, and what we know very little about: yet so much is revealed concerning it, as God saw necessary, though not to satisfy our curiosity, yet for our salvation. In speaking to it, I shall,

I. Shew some things imported in this.

II. Confirm the being of another world, a world to come, wherein men shall receive their part for eternity.

III. Essay to give some view of the other world.

IV. Make application of the whole.

I. I am to shew some things imported in this doctrine, That there is another world than this, a world to come, wherein men will receive their part for eternity. It imports,

1. That this world is a place wherein men receive their part only for time. The parts and portions distributed by divine providence in it, are very different; some are high, others low; some rich, others poor; some healthy, others sickly; some in prosperity, others in adversity; some spend their days in pleasure, others eat with pleasure. But all these things are only for a time; these different states are only to last for a certain number of years, which being expired, things shall be set on a quite different footing in the other world. So,

(1.) The smiles, comforts, and advantages of this world that any do enjoy, will in a little time have an end. It is a pity, that any should value themselves upon them. They are but the conveniences they have in the inn, in their way to the other world, and are neither eternal nor pledges of welfare in eternity, Luke 12:19–21.

(2.) The afflictions, crosses, and miseries of this world, will shortly have an end too. As the summer-warmth therefore will not last, neither will its winter-blasts. Both the saint and the sinner will quickly remember them as waters that fail; the one exchanging them in the other world with eternal joys, the other with eternal sorrows.

2. That our main concern lies in the world to come; for there our eternal state is to be settled, there we are to have our portion for eternity. As is the weight of eternity to time, so is the world to come to the present world; and as time will be swallowed up in eternity, so ought our temporal concerns to be engaged in concern about the world to come. It is fearful heedlessness to behave otherwise.

3. Men must pass out of this world into the other world, from out of the world we see, into the world we see not; otherwise there could be no receiving our part in it.

(1.) We must all leave this world, and that passage is by death. That is the way of all flesh, Psal. 89:48. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Death is our going hence, Psal. 39 ult. And our whole life is a journey through the world, to the end of which journey we come at death, Eccl. 9:10. However unwilling men may be to leave the world, no art nor might can alter the statute, Heb. 9:27. "It is appointed unto men once to die."

(2.) We are not done when dead. We do not cease to be, when we cease to breathe in this world; neither do we cease to act, when all bodily motion fails with us. We leave our dead bodies to our friends, for them to lay up in the grave in the lower parts of this earth, but we pass away from among them, for the soul is the man; and they cannot keep us still, nor can we abide; but dropping the mantle of the body, we fly away.

(3.) We enter then into the other world; as at our birth we are born of our mothers into this world, at our death we are born into the world of spirits. That world which we now hear of, we will then see; and that state we are now making forward to, we will then arrive at. When we are lost to our friends we leave behind us weeping, we will be found of others before us, and perceived as new incomers into their world.

4. This world itself passeth away, the other world will abide for ever; the age of the one is but time, that of the other is eternity; so the former gives place to the latter.

(1.) This world is passing, 1 Cor. 7:31, 1 John 2:17. It is long since it began, and it will have an end. Its glass is running, and the last sand thereof will run out at length; the sun and moon are by the appointment of God to make so many rounds, and then time comes to an end, and the fabric of this evil world is dissolved. There was a

curse laid on it for man's sin; that deluged it with water once; and in the end will burn it up with fire. So,

[1.] The weary land to the godly will vanish out of their sight; the waste howling wilderness, wherein they had many a heavy heart, for their own sins and miseries, and those of others, they will see no more forever. It is a world that will not mend, but spurns all means of amendment; it will be destroyed at length, they looking on and seeing the vengeance.

[2.] The land whereon the wicked set their hearts, as the only pleasant land, will sink under their feet, and leave them to drop into the pit of destruction in the other world. It is the stage of their wickedness now; but God will take it down; it is the sink of sin, but it will be burnt up. And they that took it for their portion, will perish, and their portion with them.

(2.) The other world will abide for ever; for there men live eternally, and therefore it must be eternal. The seat of the blessed was never defiled by men's sin, therefore there will be no passing away of it, even when the visible heavens shall be dissolved, which afford light and covering to sinful man; and the seat of the damned will abide for ever; for there the everlasting fire into which they are condemned, will be kept on; and there is the place of everlasting punishment. So in a sort, it will be for evermore the world to come, in the sense that conservation is a continued creation. Hence,

[1.] Entering in the other world, men are at the end of their journey, at their utmost point; they are no more travellers, but at their home, their everlasting home, Rev. 3:12. Luke 16:26. There is no coming back again into this world, and there is no passing out of that world into another, for there is none to succeed to it.

[2.] Whatever men's portion in that world is, it is sure; for it is an abiding world. Men's portion in this world cannot be sure, because the world itself is not so; it is like the foam on the water, which is liable to perishing, because the water itself is still in motion; but that world is not liable to passing away; happy are they who lay up for themselves treasures in heaven.

5. Lastly, Men are to receive, each one at length, his part for eternity. What we get now in hand, is but for time: worldly good things are so, and even the grace given now is the provision given for our journey through time, and is liable to many changes, if not in itself as real inherent grace, yet as to the sense thereof as relative grace; but when we come to the other world, we will receive what falls to our lot for all the ages of eternity. Hence,

(1.) Men's being is to be continued through eternity. God was from eternity, and will be to eternity; we had indeed a beginning of our being, but it will have no end. Our being in this world will soon come to an end; but when we cease to be in this world, we will be in the other. Though the body is mortal, the soul is immortal, and will never cease to be. Death will dissolve the union betwixt soul and body; but it will not touch the soul to put an end to it.

(2.) Our state in the other world will continue for ever, as it is fixed and determined at death, Eccl. 11:3. If we die in the favour of God we will never lose it: if we die out of it, we will never recover it; for our state in the other world will be eternal. Now, if we be wrong, we may yet get right again; but there is no mending of our state.

(3.) Lastly, Our great work now then must be to have a happy part secured for us there. Were it believed, that the moment is abiding us, wherein we shall be set down in an unalterable state; there could not be so little care about it, to have it right. But alas! the din of this

world, will not suffer the report from the other world to take place with us.

II. I shall confirm the being of another world, a world to come, wherein men shall receive their part for eternity. And to establish the notion of that world in the general, consider,

1. There is an invisible world actually in being, namely, the world of spirits, distinct from our visible world, Heb. 1:2; Col. 1:16. Invisible it is, not in respect of the inhabitants thereof, for the saints that are there are in light, and even the rich man in hell is said to see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom; but in respect of us who are in the world, it is invisible. This is that other world, into which, we say, the souls of men do pass, going out of this world by death.

This is the world to come spoken of in the text, of which heaven the seat of the blessed is a part. For it is evident, that it is in heaven the losing saints shall receive eternal life, even in the heaven that now is; and that their heavenly eternal life is not put off till the last day, Phil. 1:23; Luke 24:51; 2 Cor. 5:1.

The only difficulty now is, how that world now in being, can be called the world to come. To which it is answered, that it is so called in respect to us, who have now no part or place in it, as in this world, but at death are to get it. So that though in itself it is come already, yet as to us it is to come. Further,

2. That world will at the end of time be extended, to the comprehending of the new heavens and new earth, which will take place after the conflagration of this world. That there will be a passing away, an end of this world, appears from 1 John 2:17. a perishing of it, Psal. 102:25, 26. and that it will be by fire, 2 Pet. 3:10; and that God will create new heavens and earth upon the back of

that, ver. 13. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." These will be a new world, not belonging to this world, which then will be gone, but to the other world, the world to come.

And in respect of this addition, the other world is the world to come, which is not now in being. And so the world to come will comprehend all, even that space which this world now takes up. And thus the now invisible world will be enlarged, like a house whose rooms are enlarged by taking down the partitions.

3. In that world there will be a quite new state of men and things, 1 John 2:17. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever," Rev. 21:4. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." As is the difference betwixt men and their business on a journey, and when come to their journey's end; so will the difference be of the state of men and things then, from what they are now. The other world brings along with it another state, and so constitutes a change, which is our change by way of eminency, Job 14:14. As all the changes we meet with in this world, fall short of the change we make when we come out of the belly into the light of this world; which would give us the greatest surprise, had we the full use of reason then; so all the changes we are acquainted with now, as from health to sickness, or from sickness to health, &c. must needs fall short of the change that we will undergo, entering the other world.

Now to evince the being of another world, a world to come, consider,

1. The scripture expressly mentions a world to come. So in our text, and Matth. 12:32. "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it

shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Eph. 1:21. "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." What doubt then can they entertain of it, that believe the scriptures to be the word of God? I own, the world to come is sometimes in scripture used for the state of the church under the gospel, as Heb. 2:5. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." But it is not always so used, Eph. 1:21, just cited. And where it is so used, it is borrowed from the prophets of the Old Testament, who spoke of the gospel church under the notion of a new world, Isa. 65:17. to the end. But then it must also be owned, that the prophets in such passages had also the other world in view, and from thence borrowed their expressions for the gospel-church, which still confirms the being of a world to come. Hence Peter, 2 epist. 3:13 forecited, proves it from Isa. 65:17. "For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. And such compound senses of passages are usual with the prophets, as Isa. 26:10. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." Hos. 6:2. "After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." So Rev. 6:12, &c. and 7:9, &c.

2. The scripture so speaks of the world we are in, as it supposes the being of another. The scripture usually calls it, not simply the world, but this world, as Jam. 2:5; 1 John 3:17. and 4:17. this present world, 2 Tim. 4:10; Tit. 2:12. Now why should it be called this world, if there were not another world? and this present world, if there were not a world to come? Yea, this and the other world are expressly opposed, Luke 20:34, 35; Eph. 1:21; this time, and the world to come, in the text; this world, and eternal life, John 12:25. All which plainly declare, that there is another world than this.

3. There are beings who are not inhabitants of our world; therefore there is a world invisible to us, whereof they are inhabitants. The man Christ was in our world for some time, but now is no more in it, John 16:11. But somewhere he must be, and it is plain he is gone out of this world into the other world to his Father, John 13:1. There are angels, good and bad, which belong not to our world, as appears from their appearances and actings recorded in scripture; and the denial of them by the Sadducees is condemned, Acts 23:8. Therefore there is another world they belong to.

4. The nature of death and the immortality of the soul evince this point. Death is going out of this world, Psal. 39 ult. Job 14:2. John 13:1. not in respect of our bodies, which are laid up in it, but in respect of our souls, that then return to God who gave them. There must then be another world into which they go. Death dissolves the union betwixt the soul and the body, and the body into parts of which it is made up; but it cannot dissolve the soul into parts, which is a simple spirit; but being loosed from the body, and leaving this world, there must be another world that it is received into. This is plain from the parable, Luke 16 where Lazarus dying is said to be carried into Abraham's bosom, and the rich man being dead and buried is said to be in hell.

5. It is evident that, in this world, it is generally best with the wicked, and worst with the godly. Look abroad and see into whose hands is the wealth, honour, and ease of this world mostly given? Have not the wicked the greatest share of these by far? And are not adversity and various afflictions in this world, in a special manner the lot of the godly? 1 Cor. 15:19. Do not many wicked ones prosper on to the end, without any remarkable punishment before the world? and many godly go with a bowed down back to the grave, without any remarkable change into prosperity? Now consider withal the justice

and holiness of God, his goodness, wisdom, and love to his people. And thence you will be obliged to conclude, that there is another world, a world to come, wherein all odds shall be made even, wherein it shall be perfectly well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked. It is inconsistent with the divine perfections, that it should be otherwise. What wise or good governor will heap favours on ill men his enemies? and bear hard on good men his friends, always? If he do it at a time, it must be for trial only, but it will not be always so.

6. Conscience within men bears witness to this truth, that there is another world, rewards and punishments after this life. How many good and wise men have suffered death and most exquisite torments here, in the hope of happiness in another world? Heb. 11. How many wicked and ungodly have been under the greatest terrors, in the view and expectation of misery there? These have seized men for crimes the world knew not of, and men who have been in no hazard of punishment from men. And so natural to men is this notion of another world, that there are few or no nations on the earth, however barbarous, that have not had it. What is it men are so afraid of at death, or in the view of death, but their state in another world?

7. Wherefore did God make man? capable of a happiness he never reaches in this world. Surely he made him for his own glory; but how little glory, how much dishonour has he by him here? Surely God made not man in vain; therefore there is another world, where God will have his glory of man, and the lovers of God will reach the happiness they are capable of. Consider,

(1.) All men desire immortality, or an eternal being in a happy state. This is so woven into our very nature, that we can never absolutely put it away from us, but in every state of man it has been with him; therefore it is from God the author of nature. Yet it is evident, this

cannot be obtained here; nevertheless it is not in vain, for that consists not with the goodness of God, that it should be so; therefore there is another world in which it may be satisfied.

(2.) Where the grace of God has touched the heart, there is framed by the Spirit an earnest desire of the perfect enjoyment and glorifying of God, Rom. 8:23. 2 Cor. 5:2. These are not to be obtained in this world; therefore there is another world in which they shall; for it cannot be that God would create such an appetite after perfection in his saints never to be satisfied. The work of grace is carried on in the soul by degrees, through the Spirit; and it cannot be that God will leave his work imperfect. It is not perfected here; therefore there is another world where it will be perfected, where they shall perfectly enjoy and glorify God.

(3.) Where grace reaches not now, men continue till death in a state of sin, dishonouring God; therefore there is another world in which God will have his glory of such men; for God cannot fall short of his end in making them. Now there is no beginning of a work of grace after death, Eccl. 11:3. that these should glorify him actively in a state of happiness there; therefore they shall glorify him there passively in a state of misery.

(4.) The dignity of our nature as made rational souls, quite above the beasts that perish; akin to the angelic tribe, yea made after God's own image at first; must needs bear us in hand, that as we consist of one part not of the nature of the earth, but a spiritual substance; so we are not to perish with the earth, but will at length, since we are not to stay here, be inhabitants of another world.

8. There are not wanting emblems of another world after this, to teach us it by the eye, as well as by the ear. There was a pure and undefiled world that Adam was brought into, wherein was paradise,

by which heaven is expressed in scripture. This quickly went out of sight. And a defiled, sinful, miserable world succeeded, much like what it is now, that lasted long. That old world was destroyed by the waters of the flood, and a new world succeeded to it thereafter. An emblem of the destroying of this by fire, and another world coming in its room. There was the state of the world under the law, and the state thereof under the gospel, that was long prophesied of under the name of the world to come, before it came. And even the constant revolutions of winter and summer, night and day, may serve for memorials of the great change of this world, with another world to come.

Lastly, The world cannot be fulfilled, if there be not a world to come; for sure in many parts thereof it is not fully accomplished in this world. Now it is more sure than heaven and earth, and must be completely fulfilled; and therefore there is a world to come in which it must be so, that the veracity of God may be entire.

(2.) The promises of the word are far from being fully accomplished in this world; and therefore they who by faith betake themselves to them for their portion, must not only live in faith, but die in faith, Heb. 11:13. In this world there is a begun accomplishment of them; but certain it is, that God's people have always vastly more in hope, than in hand, 1 Cor. 2:9. But their faith and hope should be vain, were there not a world to come.

(2.) The threatenings of the word are not fully accomplished in this world neither. Many ungodly men live and die in peace, as far as the world can discern, Job 21:18. Psal. 73:3, 4. Yet most terrible things are denounced against them in the word; and that they are not accomplished in this world, is an infallible proof, that there is another world in which they shall.

## A DESCRIPTION OF THE OTHER WORLD

III. Having evinced the being of another world, a world to come, we shall now essay to give some view of that world. And here we are much in the dark, knowing but very little of the subject; and therefore it is a very scanty view we can pretend to give of it. The reasons hereof are,

1. We are while in this body creatures of sense, and much of the knowledge we have arises from our senses; but thither our senses cannot reach. We see, and hear, and feel much of this world lying in wickedness, whereby we are in a capacity to judge thereof; but in respect of these our senses, and all other, that world is as if it were not at all; so that those who are immersed in sense, void of faith, heed not the world. There are loud songs of joy and praise among the saints in that world, and howlings among the damned there; but listen we as we will, we can hear neither. There is shining glory in one part of it, and darkness and misery in the other; but neither of them can our eyes perceive.

2. The communication betwixt our world and it, is stopt beyond the power of men to open it. Men have opened a communication betwixt us and the most remote parts of this world; they have found means to pass the vast oceans between them and us, to go to them that dwell in the utmost parts, and to return and give us descriptions of their part of the world, and the manner of the inhabitants. But the invisible world remains yet the unknown land to us, and will do so to the end. There is a passage to it, but not at our will neither; but there is no passage back again to us. All of us have friends and acquaintance there before us, but no more communication betwixt them and us, than others.

3. Though there have been apparitions of inhabitants of that world, unto some of our world, both of good angels and of saints, Matth. 27:53, and of evil angels, Matth. 4; yet it is observable, that these were quite extraordinary, and happened but to very few; that men are very unable to bear the sight even of good angels, or to converse with them, Dan. 8:17, 18; and that the accounts they have brought concerned men's duty, or events to befal in this world, and not to give them descriptions of the other world whence they came. And if at any time evil spirits have offered reports of that kind, they cannot be depended on, for the devil is "a liar, and the father of it," John 8:44. And apparitions of the dead are very suspicious; and it is like Satan offers in that kind many illusions, as is thought he did in the case of the apparition of Samuel, 1 Sam. 28.

4. The Lord has made the revelations concerning the other world but sparingly in the word, from whence we get our notices of it. There is as much there discovered about it, as is necessary for us to know for our salvation. The happiness of the inhabitants of one part of it, and the misery of the other, are in the general, plainly laid before us, to stir us up to our duty, to see timely how to be right posted there; but certainly there is a vail drawn over many particulars concerning it, which we will never be able while here to draw by, 1 Kings 10:7. Besides, we are slow of understanding what is revealed about it.

Lastly, There is indeed a disproportion between our present faculties and the clear and distinct notions of the other world. As to heaven's happiness, there is a plain and pointed testimony, 1 Cor. 2:9, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." The eye sees many things that the hands cannot reach, the ear hears more than the eye sees; but the heart conceives more than is either seen or heard, yet cannot reach that. The same may be said of the

misery of hell, it is beyond our conception. When Paul was caught up to the third heaven, he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful [marg. possible] for a man to utter," 2 Cor. 12:4. An evidence hereof is, that the notices given us of the other world, are much in the way of similitudes taken from things we are acquainted with, as heaven a glorious city, hell a burning lake. Our Lord gives the reason, John 3:12, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" So our notions of these things are like those of children of what they never saw, 1 Cor. 13:11, 12.

Wherefore the little I can or will adventure to say on that world, shall be comprised in a few heads.

1. The parts of the other world.

2. The inhabitants of it.

3. The passage into it.

4. The state of men in it.

I. Of the Parts of the Other World

That vast world is, according to the scripture, divided into two, and but two parts, heaven the seat of the blessed, and hell the seat of the damned. A purgatory, or place of a middle state between these, there is none; for scripture mentions but two places, into one of which souls separated from their bodies do pass, Luke 16:22, 23. And accordingly there are but two ways, the one to life, the other to destruction, Matth. 7:13, 14. Besides, the sins of believers are fully purged away by the blood of Christ, and the scripture knows no other purgative of sin, 1 John 1:7. Heb. 10:14, 17. Unbelievers die in their

sins without hope, Prov. 14:13. The saints are happy immediately after death, Rev. 14:13. Therefore Paul desired to be dissolved, Phil. 1:23, "For we know, (says he,) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. 5:1.

I shall speak a word of these two parts.

FIRST, The one part of the other world is heaven, the empyreal heaven, the seat of the blessed. Concerning which, under the guidance of scripture-light, we may consider three things of it as a part of the other world.

FIRST, What it is; for that it is can be refused by none who own the scripture, and the being of another world.

1. It is a real definite place. I think they refine too much on the scripture expression that deny a local heaven, and confine it to the notion of a state. Our Lord expressly calls it a place, John 14:2, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you." And the body of Christ is contained in it, Acts 3:21. and the bodies of some saints, Enoch and Elias, are already in it, and the bodies of all the elect shall be in it; and bodies must needs be circumscribed in a place.

It is a definite place, and not every where, where God is. It is not on earth, for earth and heaven are opposed, Psal. 115:15; Col. 3:1. And betwixt it and hell a gulf is fixed, that it reaches not thither, Luke 16:26. And though finite spirits that are perfect are in it, yet it cannot contain God, who is not only omnipresent, but immense, 1 Kings 8:27. therefore it is a place that hath its bounds. Hence,

2. It is a created thing; for it is the throne of God, Isa. 66:1. his house and dwelling, John 14:2. therefore is not God, but created by him; since whatsoever is, is either the Creator or a creature. The scripture is express, that God made it, Heb. 11:10. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And whereas it is said to be not made with hands, 2 Cor. 5:1. Heb. 9:24. that denies it only to be made by men, as houses here are, and the tabernacle was.

Moreover, it was created within the six days, and therefore is not to be imagined to have been long before this world, much less from everlasting, Exod. 20:11. No; but it was created the first day, and was absolutely the first thing that was created, Gen. 1:1. Accordingly the inhabitants thereof, the angels, created with it, are said to have shouted at laying the foundation of the earth, Job 38:4, 7. Agreeable to all which it is said to have been "prepared from the foundation of the world," Matth. 25:34.

SECONDLY, Where it is. As to this point, the situation thereof, the scripture is plain in two things.

1. That it is upward from us who are in this visible world. For it is the dwelling of God, and where the man Christ hath his seat, and that is on high, Psal. 113:5, "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high?" Heb. 1:3, "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Col. 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Christ coming thence into our world at first, is said to come down from it, John 3:13; and at his second coming, he will descend from it, and be met by the saints in the air, 1 Thess. 4:16, 17. So when he went to it after his resurrection, he is said to have been carried up into it, Luke 24:41.

taken up, gone up, a cloud receiving him out of the disciples' sight, Acts 1:9, 10.

2. That it is above all the visible heavens, sun, moon, and stars. For the heaven which is the seat of the blessed, is the same heaven where the man Christ is, John 7:24, and 14:3. therefore they are said to be with Christ, Phil. 1:23. with the Lord, 1 Thess. 4:17. But the place where Christ is, is above and far above all the visible heavens, Eph. 4:10. Therefore it is above them all. Hence the scripture calls it the third heaven, 2 Cor. 12:2. It speaks of a threefold heaven. (1.) The airy heaven, wherein the clouds are, Gen. 7:11. and the fowls fly, Gen. 1:20. hence called the clouds of heaven, and the fowls of heaven. (2.) The starry heaven, where are the sun, moon, and stars, Gen. 1:14, 16. called therefore the host of heaven, Deut. 17:3. (3.) The third heaven above all these, which is that of the blessed.

THIRDLY, What sort of a place it is, as to the qualities thereof. A particular description thereof is beyond the reach of mortals, 1 Cor. 2:9. It is observable, that Moses does no more but mention it, Gen. 1 and then proceeds to the description of the earth and visible heavens, their parts, and how they were created; thus drawing a vail over the highest heavens, not to be removed till we come there. Only some general notices of it appear through the vail, in the light of the world, which we shall observe. It is,

1. A holy place, Psal. 15:1. the holy of holies, or the holiest of all, Heb. 9:8. in allusion to the place in the tabernacle and temple so called. This lower world is the open court as it were, the starry heaven the holy place; but the third heaven the holy of holies, into which Christ at his ascension as our High Priest is entered, Heb. 9:12. and has opened the country into it for us also, chap. 10:19.

Here this world lies in wickedness, there the other world shines in holiness. Here is no clean thing, there is no unclean thing, Rev. 21:27. It is the holy Jerusalem, ver. 10. There is nothing there but what is holy, perfectly holy; even the spirits of just men must be made perfect, ere they enter there; and for others, they can never breathe the air of that holy land, but are kept without, chap. 22:15.

2. A most lightsome place. It is all light, Col. 1:12. The sun in his brightness makes this world pleasant; but then all looks awful and gloomy again in the night, and there is always night in some place of it. But there is no night, no darkness there, Rev. 21:5. The seat of the blessed enjoys an eternal day; for the light thereof is not made by sun and moon circling about it, as here; they would be as needless there, as the light of a candle in the brightest sunshine here. And such light it is, as mortal eyes cannot behold it, 1 Tim. 6:16.

3. A most glorious place, Psal. 73:25. How glorious would a king's palace on earth, with all its rich furniture, appear to us? But should all the glory of all the palaces on earth be brought together into one, how much more would that appear glorious? and we are allowed that thought to help us to conceive of heaven, Rev. 21:24, "The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." For it is the palace of the King of kings, Psal. 45:15. where he keeps his court. Nay, it is his throne, Isa. 66:1, "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." How glorious must that throne be, that has such a footstool? So glorious that it would absolutely confound us mortals with its dazzling glory and splendour, Job 26:9.

4. A most rich place. We know the riches of far countries, by the rich things brought out of them to our country: now every valuable thing comes from thence, Jam. 1:17, "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." Every

inhabitant there is a king, with a crown on his head, a sceptre in his hand, and royal treasures to support his dignity; for heaven is a crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth, to allude to Isa. 23:8. There the "gates are of pearl, and the street of pure gold," Rev. 21:21. It is rich in its affording all things within itself, ver. 7. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

5. A most pleasing place. How can it be otherwise, considering the light, glory and riches, that must needs make it a most beautiful and lovely place? therefore it is called paradise, 2 Cor. 12:4. There a river of pleasures runs, enough to satisfy all the inhabitants, Psal. 36:8; but no surfeiting, for there are no dreggy pleasures there. These we mortals can have no distinct notions of; the best guess to be made of them is, by the foretastes of heaven in the joy of the Holy Ghost, sometimes afforded believers.

A most spacious place, John 14:2. "In my Father's house are many mansions." It is shown us not only under the notion of a large house, but of a country, yea a kingdom. If the airy heaven is more spacious than our earth, which it surrounds, and the starry heaven than the airy heaven, what can we think of the third heaven that is above them all? Being a real place, it cannot be immense indeed, it is measurable, but we find it is measured by an angel, not by a man, Rev. 21:9, 15. And how can it be otherwise than of a vast place, that is to be the happy abode of all the saints with the angels, containing the bodies of all saints that have been, or shall be to the end of the world?

Lastly, A place liable to no shock or change. The apostle intimates to us, that it is a continuing city, Heb. 13:14. that will stand when all this world is laid in ashes; a city that hath foundations, chap. 11:10. viz. which shall never be overturned; a kingdom that cannot be

moved, Heb. 12:28. even when the visible heavens and earth shall be shaken, so as to be shaken all asunder. Therefore it is eternal, 2 Cor. 5:1.

Inf. 1. Let God's people be put to suffer for him what they will, they can never be losers at his hand, Heb. 11:16. "God is not asshamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Suppose they be turned out of house and hold, pinched with cold, hunger, thirst, and nakedness, loaded with reproach, suffer the most exquisite torments unto death; they are not losers at his hand; he may well put them to all these, and yet maintain and shew his special love to them, having such a place provided for them in the other world, where all will be abundantly made up. And they had need of much here, that are like to have no part there; for have what they will, it is impossible it can make up their loss.

2. Lift your eyes, O sinners, from off all worldy glory, and stay your pursuit of it; there is a glory of heaven, in the view of which it would all disappear, like as the stars do at the rising of the sun. Alas! the glory which takes with most of us, is that which Laban's sons so highly esteemed, Gen. 31:1. a great stock, riches, and wealth; they see no glory so attractive as that. But if ye are the children of God, the glory of the city above will darken it in your eyes. O set your eyes and hearts on that glorious city, Heb. 11:10. The earth in its most beautiful spots is the work of God's hands, but the visible heavens of his fingers, Psal. 8:3. but of the seat of the blessed he is the artist, Heb. 11:10. Gr. as if the Omnipotent had used a peculiar art in making of that.

3. See the necessity of holiness, Heb. 12:14. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Psal. 15:1. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" The unholy may get

room in this world, and the chief rooms; but there is no room for them in the other world, but without the gates of heaven in outer darkness. If there be no holiness here, there will be no happiness hereafter; the dogs and swine come not into that holy place.

4. How inexpressibly happy shall they be that get thither? to enjoy the light there, behold the glory, possess the riches, drink of the refined pleasures, walk at liberty in that spacious place, and enter into happiness there where there is no change? The faith of this could not miss, if lively, to cause them sing the triumph before the victory.

Lastly, What an unspeakable loss must the loss of heaven be? If there were no more for hell, it might be most heavy. So great as heaven's happiness is, so great will their loss be, who come short of it.

SECONDLY, The other part of the other world is Hell, the seat of the damned. Concerning which, considered as a part of the other world, we shall, under the guidance of scripture-light, inquire into three things.

FIRST, What it is? That there is a hell as well as a heaven, one who believes the scripture cannot doubt. As to what it is, we say,

1. It is a real definite place also. There is a local hell, as well as heaven; the scripture expressly calls it a place, Acts 1:25.—"that he (viz. Judas) might go to his own place." And it hath its bounds whereby it is seperated from heaven, Luke 16:26. There the spirits of wicked men separated from their bodies, are detained as in prison, 1 Pet. 3:19, 20; and there their bodies being reunited to their souls at the last day, will be shut up, Matth. 25:41.

2. Hence it is a created thing also, ib. But when it was created, I cannot say, no express mention being made of it by Moses in the history of the creation. Only it is of old, Isa. 30 ult. And whereas it is evident that the angels were fallen very early, and, I think, by the first day of man's creation; they found it ready for them upon their sinning, 2 Pet. 2:4. This concludes it to have been made within the six days.

SECONDLY, Where it is? This question we cannot pretend to satisfy, the scripture not being clear in this point. It is our business to know how to escape it, rather than to dispute where it is. Two things in the general seem plain about it.

1. That it is without the boundaries of the heaven which is the seat of the blessed. Hence it is called outer darkness, Matth. 7:12. It is without the gates of the holy city, Rev. 21:14, 15. the place of his glorious presence, as Cain was cast out from his presence, 2 Thess. 1:9.

2. That it is down or beneath in respect of heaven, the seat of the blessed; for so the scripture still speaks of it as below. Capernaum exalted to heaven, was to be brought down to hell, Matth. 11:23. the fallen angels were cast down into it, 2 Pet. 2:4. "The way of life is above to the wise," says Solomon, "that he may depart from hell beneath," Prov. 15:24. And says God, "A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell," Deut. 32:22. Accordingly it is called the deep, Luke 8:31. the bottomless pit, Rev. 9:1. the motion from which is ascending or coming up, chap. 11:7.

Where it is more particularly, I think, the scripture, doth not clearly shew. It is certain it is, be where it will.

THIRDLY, What sort of a place it is, as to the qualities thereof?

1. It is an unholy and unclean place, as much as any place can be so. There meet together all the dregs of the creation, persons and things, sin and all the effects thereof with the sinners, Rev. 20:14, 15. Now there is much of that uncleanness upon the earth; but the earth will be purged and purified at length, and all gathered together there.

2. It is a place of horrible darkness, called therefore outer darkness, Matth. 8:12. Light is sweet; but it is the land of darkness, as darkness itself; there is the blackness of darkness, Jude, 13. chains of darkness, 2 Pet. 2:4. where I think there is an allusion to the Egyptian darkness, Exod. 10:22, 23. and the mist of darkness, 2 Pet. 2:17. No sun, moon, nor star light appear there, no candle shines there; and whatever fire is there, it is scorching heat without light, for those who having the light chose to walk in darkness.

3. It is a most dismal and melancholy place, a place of "weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth," Luke 13:28. Nothing pleasant is to be found there; no pleasures of the mind, no pleasures of sense are there. It is a lake, yet there is not a drop of water in that lake to cool the tongue; it is a lake of fire and brimstone. It is a pit, a bottomless pit. What heart can conceive the horror of such a place, or what dreary place or dungeon in the world can be a sufficient emblem of it?

4. It is a place of torment, Luke 16:24; it is therefore represented by Tophet, or the valley of Hinnom, from whence it hath its name in the New Testament, in which place the idolaters burnt their children in the fire, and beat drums that they might not hear their shrieks. There the damned find themselves gnawn with the worm that never dies, scorched with the fire that is never quenched. There men pay dear for the pleasures of sin, which they sometimes swam in, being punished from the presence of the Lord.

5. It is a fast and firm place, whence there is no escaping. It is God's prison-house, where he keeps his criminals in chains till the judgment of the great day, 1 Pet. 3:19. and 2 Pet. 2:4. There is a gulf fixed that none can pass, to get out of that place into the seat of the blessed; but when one is once there, no slight nor might can obtain liberty any more.

Lastly, It is an everlasting place. Whether there may be any change of it by the general conflagration, or not, we do not know; but certain it is, that if it be, it will be to the worse, and hell shall be for ever as well as heaven, for the fire there will be everlasting, Matth. 25:41. and the chains of darkness there are everlasting, Jude, 6. There the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; Therefore the place where they shall be or are, is everlasting.

Inf. 1. God is a just God, and a most dreadful hater and avenger of sin, Hab. 1:13. He has given incontestible evidences of it in this world; but in the other world he gives such evidence as carries off all doubt of it from the sinner. As looking up into heaven the seat of the blessed, you may see God's love to holiness; so looking down to hell the seat and place of the damned, you may see what fiery indignation he has against sin. How keen must that hatred of it be in him, who has prepared such a place for the punishment of it?

2. God may well suffer sinners to pass unpunished and prosper for a while, without any the least imputation on his holiness and justice. For he sees the sinner's day is coming, the place is prepared where his holiness and justice will be sufficiently vindicated. Indeed if there were no other world than this, or no hell in the other world for sinners, justice would necessarily require that they should be punished in this life. But since there is a reckoning with them on the

other side, the accounts may lie dormant while they are here, with safety of justice.

3. The pleasures and profits of sin are dear bought, in whatever measure any do enjoy them, Matth. 16:26. "For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It is absolutely impossible that ever any thing gained here should be able to quit the cost of such a lodging after death. If one should be kept in greatest extremity during this life, heaven would make up all; but if all the imaginable pleasures and profits of this world should be heaped together upon one, they could never be sufficient hire for going to such a place.

Lastly, The misery of the damned is inexpressible, but certainly it is little believed. O what must the case of those be, whose unholy lives have now lodged them in that unclean place! how will they take with the blackness of darkness there! How can they bear up in that dismal place! endure the torments there, seeing no way to escape? How must it cut them, to think that there they must be for ever! Yet how unconcerned are we, that we go not into that place of torment!

These are the two parts of the other world, heaven and hell. And between them there is a great gulf impassable fixed, Luke 16:26. The nature of it we know not, further than that thereby all passage betwixt the two parts of the other world is stopt. Betwixt this world and the other there is a passage; but betwixt the parts of the other world there is none, and there never will be any, for it is fixed. So the inhabitants of each part are unalterably seated, that they cannot remove from the one to the other for ever, which makes the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other, eternal.

These are the present parts of the other world. There is another part of it which is future, and will be added thereto after the last judgment, viz. the new heavens and the new earth, to be made by the omnipotent hand after the general conflagration, Is. 65:17. "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth." 2 Pet. 3:12, 13. "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," Rev. 21:1. "And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth." Of the nature and use of these we know very little. Only,

1. They will be an appurtenance of heaven the seat of the blessed, 2 Pet. 3:13. As this world now is an appurtenance of hell, as being a world lying in wickedness; so that will be an appurtenance of heaven, as an inferior world wherein dwelleth righteousness. It will be the court of the temple above, having such a relation to heaven, as the court of Israel and the court of the priests to the temple house, Isa. 66:22. "The new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord." So did the court, Exod. 29:42. "This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord; where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee." 2 Chron. 1:6. "And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the Lord, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it."

2. They will be a very glorious heaven and earth, far more glorious than those that now we have. This is intimated by the newness of them. The heavens and earth that now are, are like an old garment, Psal. 102:26. sullied and rent: but they will be splendid and beautiful as a new one. The day of their creation is the day of restoration of all things, viz. into their primitive glory and splendour, Acts 3:21. and that with such an advantage, the former shall not be remembered, in respect of the surpassing glory, Isa. 65:17.

3. They will be pure and incorrupt, Rom. 8:21. "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into that glorious liberty of the children of God." There will be no noisome vapour there, nothing offensive to the eye, smell, or ear, or touch; but all will be grateful to the senses of glorified bodies, Rev. 21:4, 5, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new." All the effects of sin on the creature shall be purged away, and as it were swept off into the lake of fire, Rev. 20:14. That earth will be holy ground, in a more strict sense than the ground of the temple of Jerusalem was; nothing touching there, that is defiling, and therefore nothing to purge away there. Compare Rev. 16:16–19.

4. They will belong to the saints without any partnership of the wicked in them, 2 Pet. 3:13, "We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The wicked's heaven and earth will then be away, consumed with fire, and those of the godly succeed, wherein they can have no part with them. The dominion over the creatures lost by Adam, and purchased again for the saints by Christ, is not fully restored in this life; but it is promised, and shall then be restored in the other world. Abraham had the promise of being heir of the world, Rom. 4:13. and the meek have the promise of inheriting the earth, Matth. 5:5. and that alone and in profound peace, Psal. 37:9–11. which hath not its full accomplishment but in the new earth.

5. They will be of use for the glory of God, and the delight of the saints. These were the design and end of the first heavens and earth, which were made all very good; but that design of them was marred by sin. Therefore in the restitution of all things, that design shall take, Rom. 8:20, 21. God will set them as monuments of his glory,

looking-glasses of his power, wisdom, and goodness. They are so now, Psal. 19:1. but, by reason of our blindness, the end is not obtained: but then the eyes of the saints shall be cleared, and the looking-glass brightened; and so the Creator shall have his glory. And they will serve for the delight of the saints, Isa. 65:17, 18. "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." God himself will be their chief delight, with the glory of the highest heavens, but the new heavens and earth will be their secondary delight.

And none must think, that upon this there must be an interruption of their heavenly joy and happiness; for suppose them to be sometimes bodily on the new earth, which 2 Pet. 3:13. seems to favour, it will be but as coming to their country seat, and they will still have the glorious presence of God with them, for the new heavens and earth shall stand at his face, Isa. 66:22. Heb. as the court of the temple did. There will be no withholding the face of his throne there, as now, Job 26:9.

Lastly, They will remain for ever, Isa. 66:22. That glorious fabric shall stand for ever: it will never wax old, it shall never be shaken in the least, nor taken down. A beginning it will have, but no end. There will be no deluge, nor conflagration of the new heavens and earth.

Inf. 1. As we go through this world towards the other, there is great need to take heed that we do not mistake our way, taking the way to hell instead of the way to heaven. For wherever our way lands us, there we are fixed. If one instead of going to one city, should mistake his way and go to another, he seeing his mistake might go out of the wrong way to the right one, and so retrieve his error; but when one is

once landed in hell, there is no retrieving of that mistake, there is no getting over the gulf betwixt it and heaven.

2. The unhinging of the creation will be remedied, and the abused creatures will be delivered and restored to their primitive end. Ungodly men abuse these visible heavens and earth to the dishonour of God and service of their lusts; whereby the creation groans under them. But God will put an end to that, destroying this abused and polluted fabric, and rear up a new one, where no abuse can have place for ever, but God shall be glorified.

3. They make more haste than good speed that set their hearts on this earth to inherit it. For whatever speed they come therein, their inheritance will be burnt up, it will not last; the earth that will last, where one may make a sure purchase, belongs to the world to come, and particularly to heaven, and will be the inheritance of the saints only, Psal. 37:9, "For evil doers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." Therefore it is undoubtedly better to wait for our part by faith, than to press for it in hand here.

4. God's people have no reason to grudge and be uneasy, however small a portion they have of this earth; nor yet to despond on the view of the wickedness done upon it. For there is a new heaven and earth coming more glorious than this, in which they shall not be hampered, but enjoy it all with all freedom as the lords of it. And there shall be no sin nor disorder in it, no injustice or oppression, no ill neighbourhood; nothing but righteousness dwelling there.

5. Lastly, Hell will be a close prison, there will be no getting out of it for ever. There is an impassible gulf betwixt heaven and it; the new heavens and earth will be an appurtenance of heaven; and therefore the prisoners there can no more get out to the new earth, than to the

highest heaven. Nay, neither devils nor men will be able to come from thence to set a foot upon that earth, however they range through this. So losing heaven, they will lose the earth too.

Thus far for the parts of the other world.

## II. Of the Inhabitants of the Other World

We have seen the parts of the other world, let us now consider the inhabitants of these parts. And,

FIRST, The inhabitants of the upper part, viz. heaven. These are,

1. God himself, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Matth. 6:9. God is every where present, and immense: but there he is as a king in his palace, on his throne. There he manifests his glory in a manner inconceivable to us mortals: and by his glorious presence makes the happiness of the creatures, who being there see his face. How glorious is a palace when the king is in it with his court! In heaven the great King of the world keeps his court.

2. The man Christ. He was sometime an inhabitant of our world, and when he was in it had not where to lay his head: now he is there, and will be there to the end of the world, Acts 3:21. sitting on the right hand of God, as the heir of all things. And there he will be for evermore, 1 Thess. 4:17. He has there an inconceivable glory, even of his blessed body, Phil. 3:21. In his transfiguration on earth, "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light," Matth. 17:2. How gloriously must it then shine in heaven!

3. The holy angels, Matth. 24:36. These are glorious creatures, natives of the place, pure spirits that never sinned, waiting about the throne, ready to execute the commands of God and Christ their head.

They are of a nature superior to man; but full they are of love and good-will to us, witness their song, Luke 2:14. at our Saviour's birth; and our nature is exalted above theirs in Christ, so that they are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, Heb. 1 ult. Their number we know not, but there must needs be vast numbers of them, considering the scripture-account, Dan. 7:10. even such as is innumerable to us in this state, Heb. 12:22. See Matth. 26:53.

Lastly, The souls of all departed saints are there, now perfected, Heb. 12:23. There are the blessed souls of all the holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and of all the godly that have been in the world since the beginning; thither all the godly that now are in the world, yea and all that shall be to the end of the world, shall certainly go and dwell for ever. Enoch and Elias are there soul and body; and so shall all the saints be after the last judgment, shining in glory, as the stars of the firmament.

SECONDLY, The inhabitants of the lower part of the other world, viz. hell. These are,

1. The devil and his angels, Matth. 25:41. all of them with the prince, called the prince of the devils, chap. 12:24. fallen angels, 2 Pet. 2:4. These are most wicked and unclean spirits, enemies to God and Christ, Matth. 13:39, 2 Cor. 6:15. and to mankind, therefore called Satan or an adversary; subtle as a serpent and mischievous, false and deceiving, malicious and cruel, murderers and roaring lions, desperate without hope for ever. The number of them is without question vast, a legion of them being in one man, Luke 8:30. They are not so fixed to their eternal abode as yet, but that this world is full of them, so as no man wants a tempter carrying his hell about with him; but they will be fixed at length in their place, which they themselves are sure of, Luke 8:31. Jam. 2:19.

2. The souls of the wicked departed, Luke 16:23. There is their habitation as of prisoners in a pit, 1 Pet. 3:19. These also are wicked spirits, having been by death driven away in their wickedness; and now absolutely desperate, without the least gleam of hope; from which must needs issue their arriving there at a height of wickedness agreeable to their state. Their number also is vast, being all that have lived and died in their natural state from the beginning of the world, and will be increased with all that shall so live and die to the end.

Inf. 1. Heaven's happiness must needs be unspeakable, in respect of the society there. The saints going thither shall no more be in a lonely condition, but have the pleasant society of other saints perfected, holy angels, the man Christ, and God himself. The society of saints here is very comfortable, how much more the general assembly of them in heaven? There are the angels, the courtiers of the great King burning with love to God, and warm love to the saints. Yea there is the tabernacle of God with men, Rev. 21:3.

2. Hell's horror must be unspeakable also, in regard of the society there. The appearance of one evil spirit now strikes the children of men with terror; but who can conceive the horror of being cast into one prison, with the damned crew, to hear the hissings of these serpents, the roarings of these devouring lions, the weeping, wailing, and gnashing of the teeth of the wicked sunk in despair? and that for ever!

3. The two parties now wearied of one another, will be fairly parted in the other world, never to come together again. The godly are weary of the society of the wicked. The Psalmist finds himself as dwelling in Mesech and Kedar, Psal. 120:5. "Among lions, among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword," Psal. 57:4; and

therefore wishes for wings to flee away from them, Psal. 55:6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." Death will give these wings to them, that will carry them away quite from among them. Jeremiah desired a lodge in the wilderness, that he might leave his people; but now he has got a lodging in heaven, where he can no more be uneasy from them, Jer. 9:2.

The wicked are weary of the society of the godly; they desire it not, they are hampered with it, it is a burden to them. They will be quit of it in the other world, where they will see their faces no more, but afar off in Abraham's bosom, and at the last day in the air on Christ's right hand. The unpassable gulf will be between the one and the other for ever.

4. True lovers of the saints and holy society will be satisfied at length; and the lovers of the company of the ungodly will get their heart's fill of it. There is great stress laid upon our love of the godly for their godliness, Christians for Christ's sake, 1 John 3:14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Such will never get enough of their society here; but there they shall be led into an unmixed society of saints where is not one wicked person, not one sinner; and herewith they should not comfort themselves, while they dwell in the tents of Kedar. Their is great stress also laid on the love of ill company, Prov. 13:20.—"but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Such will get a fill of it, when they come to the other world, to the society wherein is not one gracious person; when they shall be bundled together in punishment with those, with whom they have been bundled together in sin, Matth. 13:30.

Lastly, As ye would choose your habitation in the other world, choose your way now; for it is impossible that one way can lead to both. The

way of faith and holiness leads to heaven, the way of unbelief, unholiness, and licentiousness leads to hell, Matth. 7:13, 14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," &c. Do not think ye can enter into life by the broad gate; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. 12:14. Ye will join yourselves to those now, with whom ye will be joined for ever; therefore says the apostle to the believing Hebrews, "Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels," &c. Heb. 12:22–24. and says Solomon, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. 13:20.

## III. Of the passage into the other world

As to the passage of unbodied spirits, to wit, angels good or bad, who sometimes are here, and depart again into the other world, we inquire not about it. But the passage into the other world for us mortals, is what we are concerned to know. Paul had a passage into it extraordinary for a visit; how that was, in or out of the body, he himself could not tell. It is for habitation, the passage into it, for our lasting abode, that concerns us. It is twofold.

First, One extraordinary, by a translation of soul and body into it. There have been three unquestionable instances of it, viz. of Enoch before the law, Gen. 5:24. Heb. 11:5. of Elijah carried up by a whirlwind into heaven, 2 Kings 2:11. under the law; and of Christ himself, who is said to have been taken up, Acts 1:9. But these were altogether extraordinary.

Secondly, The ordinary passage is by death, whether in the upper or lower part of the other world, as appears from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16. Hence death is called a going hence, Psal. 39 ult. a departing, Luke 2:29. viz. out of this world, John 13:1. Death

dissolving the union betwixt the soul and the body, the soul, like a bird on the opening of the cage, gets away, and goes into the other world, departing either into heaven or hell, 2 Cor. 5:1. Phil. 1:23. Luke 16:22, 23. Of this passage we know little, and can only say these few things.

1. It is a quick passage, by which the soul is soon wafted over and landed on the other side. Whatever be the distance betwixt us and either part of the other world, as it is certain it is a vast distance betwixt us and the highest heavens, yet the departed soul soon passes it over, and is in its place there, as appears from Christ's saying to the penitent thief, Luke 23:43, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" where the journey was not begun till three o'clock afternoon, ver. 44, 46. but accomplished that day. And there is no question, but it is much the same to the other part, which is the lower part of the other world.

2. The passengers are not left alone in it; but as at our coming forth of the womb into this world, there are some people of this world ready to receive us, and dispose of us; so at our going out of this world into the other, there are some of that world to receive us, and attend us. So that however unknown the road is to us, we will not be alone in it. And,

1st, As to the souls of the godly passing into heaven, it is clear that it is so with them; and that,

(1.) The Lord Jesus himself is with them. The general promise secures this, Heb. 13:5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." David was confident of it, Psal. 23:4, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." This was typified by the ark's going before the people into Jordan, and staying there till they were

all gone safe over. At the birth of the gracious soul into the world, the Lord Jesus himself is the party that receives it, Acts 7:59.

(2.) That good angels are with them for their convoy. They attend them in their life, doing them many good offices unperceived, having a charge over them, Psal. 91:11, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." And can one imagine that they will be wanting to them on such a non-such occasion? If they are to keep them in all their ways, surely they will not leave them alone in their way betwixt the two worlds. They are ministering spirits to the apparent heirs of salvation, Heb. 1 ult. Surely these heirs will not want their ministration, when they are to enter their inheritance.

They will carry them to heaven, Luke 16:22. And this may serve to account for the quickness of their passage, being carried by angels who for their speedy motions are said to fly, Isa. 6:2, 6. Dan. 9:21. Compare Psal. 104:4. Ezek. 1:14.

2dly, As to the souls of the wicked passing into hell, that matter is not so very clear. The scripture speaks not of the rich glutton's attendants into his place in the other world, Luke. 16:22, 23. plainly intimating, that no comfortable or honourable attendance is for them. But yet it gives hints of their attendance by ill angels or devils, Job 33:22. and is positive that they are driven away, Prov. 14:32. And how can it be imagined, but the roaring lion, who is still going about seeking whom he may devour, will be ready to receive the prey when it is coming to his mouth?

3. It will be a strange and surprising passage. How strange will it be to the soul to find itself in a moment unbodied, that its body lies dropt in such a place, and it has no more communication with it! There will be surprises of wonder, at the sudden change in itself, and at the objects about it which it never saw before. The godly soul will

be surprised with joy, in the happy change, the blessed attendants; and the wicked with horror at the unhappy change and the frightful society it now enters into.

Lastly, A passage where there is no repassing. It is without coming back till the great day. The godly would not, and the wicked shall not be able to return. It is a passage we have no access to make trial of, but once entering upon it, go forward for good and all, Heb. 4:2–7.

Now when the soul is passed and gone into the other world, the body still remains in this, being laid up in the grave till the last day. But there it lies dead and motionless, having no more portion in what is done under the sun. But the body also must pass into the other world, and all mankind shall be inhabitants of that world at length in their bodies, as well as their souls. Of this we may note these few things.

1. The time appointed for it is the last day. Then, and not till then shall the bodies of men be transported thither, Matth. 25 ult. They must sleep in the dust, till the end of the world, Job 14:12. and then be removed into the other world, for eternal inhabitants, not to remove any more.

2. Then shall they be raised up out of their graves for that passage, their souls being reunited to their bodies; so shall they awake out of their long sleep, Dan. 12:2. Christ shall come again to judgment, and the trumpet shall sound, at which all the dead shall arise, their souls being by his mighty power returned into and united again to their bodies, John 5:28, 29. Then they shall rise to take their last farewell of this present world.

3. They shall be gathered together by the ministry of angels into two companies, the one to pass into the upper part, the other into the

lower part of the other world, Mark 13:27. Mat. 13:40, 41. Thus every grave shall be emptied then, no place in the earth or sea shall hold back any of its dead, Rev. 20:13. and being brought forth, none of them shall be lost by the way unto the place where the judgment will be, all shall be brought thither, Rom. 14:10. good and bad, from all corners of the earth and sea.

4. The fair company of Christ's sheep shall be caught up from this cursed earth never to set a foot on it more, into the clouds, and there in the air be set on Christ's right hand, 1 Thess. 4:17. Thus they are so far in their way to the other world. And the reprobate goats shall be left standing on their own earth, upon Christ's left hand, Matth. 24:40. the nearer perhaps to their part of the other world. And this will be the last station that ever they will have upon it.

5. Christ will, by a sentence from the throne, adjudge the righteous unto the upper part of the other world, after due cognisance taken of their case, Matth. 25:34. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And by a sentence from the same he will adjudge the wicked into the lower part of it, ver. 41. "Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." So there is no more use for this world, but saints and sinners must leave it now, having got their route for the other world.

Lastly, Immediately the wicked pass away into hell in one company together, there to receive eternal punishment; and then the godly having seen them turn their backs and go away, do go off into heaven with Christ. And then comes the general conflagration, succeeded with the creation of the new heavens and earth.

Inf. 1. Death is a matter of the highest importance to all, as being the passage into the other world. As none of us can miss to die, so none of us can miss to pass out of this world into the other. Ah! why then are we so unmindful of it? Why do we not set ourselves more to prepare ourselves for it? Why are we so much concerned for this world that we must leave, and so little for that world we must depart to? Pass we must, but cannot return: what is but once to be done, had need to be well done.

2. Though dying is in itself an awful thing, yet to the godly it is most safe and comfortable. They have a happy lodging on the other side, and they will get a joyful convoy thither. To look into the waters is frightful; but they have a firm ground to the believers, and they are not so deep as they look to be. It is an awful thought, to think of that moment when the soul drops the body, and passes into the other world; but Christ is ready to receive the believer's soul, and the angels to welcome and attend it into their world of bliss.

3. Death, however dreadful it is in itself, is far more dreadful in its consequences to the ungodly. Were there no more for them but to die, and so to be done, or cease to be, it would be more tolerable. But the horrible place they pass into in the other world, the frightful state abiding them there, is fearful beyond expression. What moment they are expiring, they are waited for of the destroyers, to be driven away in their wickedness.

Lastly, All of us have certainly greater interest and concern in the other world than in this. For here we are but passengers, there we will be eternal inhabitants. And not only is the greatest concern for our souls there, but even our bodies too.

IV. Of the state of men in the other world

I proceed now to the last head I proposed to consider, namely, The state of men in the other world. And in handling of this weighty subject, two things must be inquired into.

1. The state of separate souls in the other world.

2. The state of soul and body reunited.

Of both which in order.

## I. Of the State of separate Souls in the other world

The state of separate souls commences at death, whereby the separation is made, and continues until the resurrection, when the soul and body are reunited. Which state therefore can have no place, where death has not place, as in those whom Christ coming again will find alive on the earth. For clearing of this branch, we shall,

1. Inquire into the state of separate souls in the other world in general.

2. Consider the different states of separate souls in the different parts of that world.

I. We shall inquire into the state of separate souls in the other world in general. And,

1. They are in a state of activity, and not asleep, without life, sense, understanding, and action, as some profane men would have it. That is the state of the body indeed after death, but not of the soul, which is of a spiritual and active nature. The separate souls of the saints are not asleep but with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23. whereby the scripture expresseth a state of happiness, 1 Thess. 4:17. Neither are

the separate souls of the ungodly asleep, as is evident from the case of the rich man in hell, Luke 16:23–25.

2. They are totally and finally removed from the business of this world, Eccl. 9:6. Whatever their activity be, they act no more in those things that are the affairs of this life. Death puts an end to all that with them, Psal. 146:4. and therefore they are said to rest from their labours, being freed from the business and troubles of this life. Accordingly, whatever they possessed while here in life, their interest therein is expired, Luke 12:20. However careful and busy they have been in these, death puts a final stop thereto in a moment.

3. Their activity is wholly intellectual and spiritual, as that of the angels good or bad, Matth. 22:30. They are then divested of their bodies, and so can use them no more than if they had no manner of concern in them. The body furnishes all men with a business, what to eat and drink, wherewith to be clothed, where to lodge, how to provide for themselves and families; and this is the whole business of many. But in the other world all that is scored off. Only the spiritual faculties, of understanding, conscience, will, and memory, last; and those will afford them employment and continual action, Luke 16:25.

4. Their knowledge is exceedingly enlarged, their faculties are cleared beyond what they were in this life, either to their happiness or misery. The clay body being fallen down from about the soul, it will see far more clearly than before. The mist that arose from this vain world unto them, will then be scattered. The other world they only heard of before, they will then see, and know the truth of what was reported from the word, by their own experience. Whatever be the ignorance prevailing in this world, there is none there but will know at another rate than now, what God, Christ, sin, &c. are.

5. They are in a social state, and not solitary, they are in company with other spirits. The other world is doubtless a throng world, thronger than this, whether we view it in the upper or lower part; for there all past generations of men are, here is one generation only. The saints go into a blessed society, Heb. 12:7. and the wicked have their numerous society in the other world too, Luke 16:28.

Lastly, They are in a determinate unalterable state, and can never change seats more, Luke 16:29. Now we are in a state of trial in this world, but in the other world they are at their journey's end. The tree is fallen, and must lie for ever as it has fallen. In heaven there is no need of repentance, and in hell there is no place for it. Death determines our eternal state. If one is well in the other world, he is well for ever; if he is ill there, he is so for ever.

II. Let us now consider the different states of separate souls in the different parts of the other world, viz. heaven and hell.

FIRST, Of the state of separate souls in heaven.

1. They are perfect in holiness there, Heb. 12:23. In death dropping their bodies, they drop also the body of sin and death, that they may enter the new Jerusalem where no unclean thing can enter. Then there is a full application of the blood of Christ to them, which in a moment makes them perfectly clean. So there they shine in the glory of the perfection of the divine image in them. There is no more darkness in their minds, rebellion in their wills, or carnality in their affections. The guilt, power, defilement; and indwelling of sin, are wholly and for ever removed.

2. They are in a state of rest there, 13:14. Their wearisome toil and labour which they had with the troubles of this world, is at an end, never to return; the weary work they had in fighting against sin, their

watching, mourning, groaning, &c. thereby occasioned, are all away. They are got through the weary wilderness and Jordan, and are now seated in Canaan above. The victory is obtained, and the sword is laid by.

3. They are with the Lord there, 2 Cor. 5:8. They have the glorious presence of God and Christ there. That Jesus in whom they believed, and whom their soul loved while unseen, they see now, for they are with him, Phil. 1:23. That God to whom their souls tended in faith and love while here, they are now admitted to see his face, which is the privilege of the inhabitants in heaven, Matth. 18:10. 1 Cor. 13:12. They see all of him necessary to satisfy a soul, and they see him as their own God, and hence arise perfect ease, rest, and satisfaction; and they no more miss the comforts and conveniences of this life than one does a candle when the sun shines in his meridian brightness.

4. They are in a family of love there. Heaven is the place of love, and there it will endure for ever, when faith is turned into sight, and hope to enjoyment, 1 Cor. 13:8. No society can be happy without a bond of love; and there is so little love in this world, that it is a miserable world; but all flames with love in the other world; God lets out his love to the saints there, and they flame in love to him again. They live in love with the angels, and warm is that love which these now ministering spirits bear to the heirs of salvation, and which these heirs have one to another in that world. Hence is Abraham's bosom. For there holiness is perfected, and their love both to God and one another.

5. They are in a state of joy, pleasure, and delight there, Psal. 16 ult. Matth. 25:21. While we are here, there is a difficulty of joy entering into us, we are so beset with causes of sorrow; but there the saints

are entered into joy; there is an ocean of joy there, nothing but joy wheresoever they look. They had their weeping time here, now they are comforted; never a sorrowful thought can take place with them more. The dreggy pleasures of sin and sense so are not there, but spiritual pleasures are there in fulness; and these doubtless, are the far more exquisite, as our souls are mere penetrating than our senses.

6. They are in a state of holy exercise there, Rev. 4:8. Heaven's rest is not a lazy rest of idleness, but it is a sabbath's rest, wherein they are employed in pleasurable and refreshful exercises; therefore they are said to walk with him in white, to be led to living fountains of waters. Their proper work is praise; there they sing the new song, to the glory of God, and their own eternal delight.

7. They know that their happiness shall never be lost or diminished, however it may be enlarged, Rev. 21:5. So they are perfectly secure there, as in a state of unalterable felicity. Thus the view of the endless ages of eternity must give them a new pleasure and satisfaction, upon every reflection thereon: while they know it will spin out their happiness for ever.

8. Lastly, They have the comfortable expectation of the additional happiness waiting them at the last day. Now they have the first fruits of bliss, and they see the full harvest is coming, Rev. 6:11. The separated souls of the saints are in firm expectation of their reunion with their bodies, and the glorious resurrection of the body; their meeting the Lord in the air in their bodies, their standing on his right hand, and receiving the final sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world."

SECONDLY, The state of separate souls in hell.

1. They are in a settled state of sin there, Prov. 14:32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." They are in a state of sin here, it is true; but then it is not such a settled state, but they may get out of it. There are offers of Christ made to them, whereby their guilt may be removed, &c. But then their guilt, defilement, the dominion, and indwelling of sin, are left on them never to be removed. Then is said concerning them, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still," Rev. 22:11. There are no offers of the despised blood and Spirit of Christ there, no voice of a Saviour and salvation. The backsliders are there filled with their own ways.

2. They are in prison there, reserved to the judgment of the great day, 1 Pet. 3:19. There was a time wherein they ran on in a course of crimes against God, who suffered them, some longer, some shorter, while, but death came and arrested them, and the souls of the criminals were committed to the prison in hell, out of which there is no escape. There they are prisoners in the pit, with the filth of their sin as their prison garments on them, never to be changed.

3. They are in a state of torment there, Luke 16:23. They took their rest, while they should have been busy for salvation; and now they have no rest, Rev. 14:11. They slept in seed-time, and they are left in a starving condition now. Wrath from the Lord has seized them, as his enemies, and is let in in floods into their souls. They have a memory, wherewith now they can call to mind what way they passed the time of this life; they have a conscience that is now awake, and is to them a never-dying worm. Nothing now remains with them of their sins, but what is tormenting; all pleasurable passions are now rooted out of them, and tormenting ones only remain.

4. They are in a state of desperation there, Matth. 22:13. "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness:

there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." They had some hopes while here; though they were but false hopes, they made them easy. But now all hope is plucked up by the roots with them, and it is not possible they can hope any more. And O how cutting must the despair be in hell, it being absolute! While men are here, when all hopes of the removal of trouble are cut off, they know that death is coming, and that will end it. But they that are in the other world know that their state is eternal, and despair for ever. This cannot fail to heighten their sin, being no more in circumstances for counterfeiting love to God, or regard to his commandments.

Lastly, They have the fearful expectation of the additional misery waiting them at the last day. It seems to be pretty plain, that the damned are not quite so miserable now, as they will be after the resurrection and last judgment for ever. For,

1st, This may be gathered from scripture testimony. The rich man in the parable, Luke 16 was afraid of further torments, ver. 28. The devils are cast down to hell, 2 Pet. 2:4; but there they are reserved unto judgment, as malefactors reserved in prison till the day of execution; and they are in expectation of a time of further torment, Matth. 8:29. and tremble in view of it, Jam. 2:19. And at the last day, reprobate men must depart with them into the same fiery torments, Matth. 26:41. and consequently into greater than they now have.

2dly, It appears from the very nature of the thing. For whereas their bodies are now at ease in the grave, they also must then be tormented. So they must needs be in fearful expectation of the sounding of the last trumpet, the resurrection of their bodies, their station at the Judge's left hand, and the dreadful final sentence, and the execution thereof. So the difference seems to be betwixt their

present and future state, as betwixt malefactors in chains in the dungeon, and their being led forth to execution.

The reasons hereof are,

(1.) At the end of the world, there is to be a general judgment, wherein they are to receive their final sentence; and there must be something reserved to be the effect thereof, that was not before. Then wrath comes on to the uttermost, as being the time of the last pouring out of the indignation, appearing in the general conflagration, and sweeping away all sin and effects of sin from all other quarters, into hell with the damned themselves, Rev. 20:14. So that these things now scattered through the creation, will be gathered together, and lodged in and with them.

(2.) The cup of the sin of the damned may be yet a filling up to the last day. I mean not this as their personal sinning in hell, but as to their current guilt in this world, when they are away out of it, for which they must then answer; for a man's sin may be living and active, when he is dead and gone; as the observation of all ages testifies, seeing the world much the worse of some that are dead and away out of it. Is not Adam's sin, which has run more than five thousand years in the world already, running still and infecting his posterity, and will to the world's end! for which he needed a pardon and has no doubt got it.

It is a certain truth, that rational agents are accountable for the native consequences of their actions, Exod. 21:33, 34. And it is as certain, that there may be a train of mischievous consequences following men's sin in the world after they are departed; and can one imagine that wicked men shall not be made to answer for these? Should one lay a train for blowing up a house, which yet should not work till he were got many miles off; or one give poison to another,

which yet should not kill till some years after; would not such be held murderers, and punished accordingly? No doubt of it. So is the case here.

There are four cases particularly among others, wherein men's guilt may be increased after they are dead, and their accounts enlarged against the great day.

[1.] Their being authors of any evil, springs of mischief, as Jeroboam was, 2 Kings 17:22, 23. Inventors of evil things are branded with ignominy by the Spirit of God, however they may pride themselves therein. Such are contrivers and makers of wicked laws, whereby multitudes are driven to sin; introducers of ill customs into nations, congregations, or families, whereby a course of sin is set a-going, and the older it grows gathers the more strength, and may last many generations, perhaps to the end of time. But all the sin and misery following on such actions, will be chargeable on the author.

[2.] The case of injustice, whether by stealing, cheating, oppression, or defrauding any manner of way, where restitution is not made, especially where men leave such ill-gotten goods to theirs after them. For this is a continued stream of injustice running from time to time, for right can never rise from wrong in the sight of God. And the loss and misery thereby coming to the children and friends of the injured from generation to generation, is still chargeable on the unjust man, till restitution is made, Job 20:9, 10. This may account for apparitions of persons departed, ordering restitution.

[3.] The case of companionship in sin, such as is the case of drunkards, unclean persons, and all social sinners, who ruin others together with themselves: for at their door the ruin of their companions in sin must lie, if they be ruined. Therefore the rich man in hell wished his five brethren might get repentance, Luke 16:27, 28.

knowing that while they did not repent, he was chargeable with their ruin; and that would increase his torment, if he should have the blood of their souls to answer for too, at the last day, Matth. 13:30. for in burning bundles, each stick makes the other burn the more keenly.

[4.] Lastly, The case of ill example, Matth. 18:7. They who in words, actions, or behaviour, set an ill copy to others, they will not readily in a sinful world miss some to write after them, following their criminal example. But the more followers they get, the greater will be their guilt; and the longer they are followed, the longer will their accounts run on, even as long as they are followed, though dead and gone. And it is often seen, that the ill example of parents especially runs in a train of sin from generation to generation.

Thus it is evident, that the cup of the sin of the damned may be increasing or filling up after death; and if so, their torment will be increased accordingly against the day of final reckoning. And they may know their sin to be still going on in the world, while it is not in their power to stop its course; and therefore they cannot miss fearful expectations of additional misery against the last day.

Thus far of the state of separate souls in the other world.

## II. Of the State of Soul and Body reunited, in the other World

Having spoken of the state of separate souls in the other world, we come now to inquire into the state of soul and body reunited. And for clearing of this also, we shall,

1. Inquire into the state of reunited souls and bodies in general.

2. Consider the different states of reunited souls and bodies, in the other world.

I. We are to inquire into the state of reunited souls and bodies, or whole men, in the other world, in general. This state takes place after the resurrection, general judgment, conflagration, and departure of the righteous and wicked, each into the respective places of their eternal abode in the other world, and continues for ever. And we may view it in the following particulars.

1. They shall be in a state of living for ever and ever. As separate souls do not sleep, from death till the resurrection; so the soul and body then reunited shall never be dissolved again; so the whole man shall be in life for ever from the moment of the resurrection; there will be no graves in the other world, but the great one, hell, where all the wicked will be together buried alive. That the saints in heaven will ever live, is evident. That the damned in hell will be eternally alive too, appears from this that their punishment of sense there will be without end, Matth. 25 ult. with ver. 41. Rev. 20:10. It is true, the state of the damned is called a state of death, and eternal destruction; but it is so called only in opposition to a happy life and state of salvation. Their life will be a death; they will be ever dying, but never die out; otherwise their pain of sense could not be eternal. So it is in the other world, where we are to live indeed, to live without dying.

2. We will live there in the same bodies we live in here. The very term resurrection implies this. If there were other bodies that were to be made for us, that would be a creation, but not a resurrection of the body. It is this mortal, this vile body, that will be raised for us to live in there, 1 Cor. 15:53. Phil. 3:21. Besides, it is inconsistent with the divine equity, that the bodies of the saints, the temples of his Spirit,

that were employed in his service, should be left in the dust, and other bodies glorified; and that the bodies that sinned should lie at ease, and other bodies suffer in hell. And surely it is as easy for Omnipotence to raise the old body, as create a new one.

3. But we will live there without the means of life, now in use with us. Now the body that is to die must be daily held up by the appointed means of life; the clay tabernacle needs more mud and earth to patch it up with every now and then. But in the other world our bodies will be supported without them. There will be no use of meat and drink there, 1 Cor. 6:13. The saints in glory shall be satisfied without them, Rev. 7:16. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;" and the damned, even those that had their full tables and fine liquors, whatever need they may have of them, shall not for ever have the favour of a drop of water, Luke 16. Now much time is spent by saints and sinners in sleep; but there will be no sleeping there, Rev. 4:8. and 14:11. They are miserable men who know no other, or better comforts than these.

4. The business and affairs of this life have no place there. Solomon observes, that all the labour of man is for his mouth, Eccl. 6:7. But though we will have our bodies there, there will be no eating and drinking there; and that will cut off that labour there; there will be no ploughing, sowing, and reaping, and other business depending thereon. There will be no business there for clothing, and housing. There is a quite new state of matters there, Rev. 21:5. The affairs of this life are for our trial in the way; but then we will be come to our journey's end; and our entertainment there will be a reward according to our works done here.

5. Earthly relations will be dissolved there, death puts an end to them, Job 3:18, 19. and they will not be made up again at the

resurrection, Matth. 22:30. There will be a general levelling in the other world; no difference left among men, but what piety or wickedness has made. There the servant and the master will be alike in other respects, and every burdened one will bear his own burden alone. There will be no more husband and wife there; for then the mystery of God is finished, and the number is made up to receive no further addition.

6. We will be separated and sorted there into two very different societies, places, and states, Matth. 25 ult. Now persons and things in this world, good and bad, are mixed, as in a corn-field where grow wheat and tares together; but in the other world there will be no such mixture; every one will be disposed of there in the due order, to be with Christ or with the devil, in heaven or hell, perfectly happy or completely miserable. And each part of that world will be stocked with inhabitants vastly more numerous than ever this world was; since all generations of the righteous will be in heaven, and all generations of the wicked will be in hell.

7. There will be no communication or intercourse betwixt the two societies, Luke 16:19. The saints in heaven will know the misery of the damned, and the damned will know the happiness of the saints, as appears from that parable; but there will be no passage from the one place to the other. The impassable gulf between them will bar all communication. The saints will not desire to go into the place and company of the damned: and the pit with her bars will be about the damned for ever, that they cannot get out into the place and society of the saints.

Lastly, Our first state there will be eternal, Matth. 25 ult. There will be no end of the happiness of the saints, and no end of the misery of the damned. The world to come will ever be so; when millions of ages

are past, it will be as far from an end as at its beginning, for it will have no end.

Inf. Let us look forward unto the life we are to have in the other world after the resurrection, and consider that the manner of life we have here is passing, Let them no more be our main questions, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? and, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? for the time will come when these things shall be in eternal disuse. Let us not sink our minds into the affairs of this life; for a little time will put an end to them. Let us improve the relations we stand in for our personal well-being in another world, and beware they be not ruining snares to us. Let us now separate ourselves from this world lying in wickedness, as we would not be eternally separated with them from the society of the saints.

II. We shall now consider the different states of reunited souls and bodies in the other world; namely, in heaven and hell. And,

FIRST, Of the state of men, soul and body, in heaven. In the general, they will be in a state of complete happiness of the whole man there. Betwixt death and the resurrection, they are happy, but incompletely; the one half of the man, the soul, is happy; but the other half of the man, the body, lies in the dust. But the bodies of the saints being raised at the last day, they will be completely happy in the whole man.

1. They will be in an inconceivably-happy place there, Rev. 21:10, 11. We spoke something of the place already; but certainly it is a place happy beyond what we can conceive while here. It is a paradise for pleasure, a kingdom for spaciousness, a palace for splendour and glory, and a Father's house for kindness. The most pleasant places of this world are but a wilderness in comparison with it, a strange country to the saints.

2. They will be in eternal uninterrupted light there. Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but how much more sweet must the light of heaven be, that so far outdoes the light of the sun, that our mortal bodies which bear the one, are not able for the other? 1 Tim. 6:16. And no wonder, for it is not the sun, but the Lamb, not the rays of light from the sun or moon, but the glory of God himself, that lightens heaven, Rev. 21:23. Hence there is no night there, no darkness for ever, but an eternal day. Our sun cannot enlighten our whole globe at once, but when it is day in one hemisphere, it is night in the other. But what can set bounds to the glory of an infinite God, that lightens it?

3. They will be free from, and beyond the reach of all evil there. There will be no hazard from within, and none from without, Rev. 21:25. They will be free of sin there; there will be no body of death to molest them in that place; they will have no inclination to sin more; no temptation can reach them there; nay there is no possibility of their sinning there being confirmed in a state of perfection through the merit of Christ. They will be freed from all their troubles and sufferings there; they are beyond the reach of devils and wicked men, and the time of the Lord's trying them is over and ended.

4. There are no wants to them there, Rev. 7:16. They have a needy life of it here, but there all their wants will be made up. Their long complaints will then be eternally silenced. There will be no wants of the things of this life, more than of a candle in the brightest sunshine; there will be no wants of spiritual enjoyments, no desertions, or hiding of God's face there. There are many things in this world that will not be in heaven; but all that they will or can desire, will be there for them, and therefore they can be in no want there. There would be wants in heaven to the wicked, whose desires

are not regulated; so that they could not be happy there. But there will be none to the saints.

5. All imperfections and badges of imperfection shall be done away there. Whatever denotes the imperfection of our state here, shall be removed there; insomuch that the ordinances of preaching the word, the sacraments, &c. shall be honourably laid aside, even as the scaffolding is taken down when the house is built; the occasional graces of the Spirit, such as patience, &c. duties, such as watching, mourning, for sin, &c. are laid aside, as the sword when the war is over. Faith is turned into sight, and hope into enjoyment.

6. There will be a confluence of all good in their state there, necessary to make them completely happy.

1st, The constitution of their bodies will be heavenly, 1 Cor. 15:43. So that the case of the saints' bodies will in that world be as far preferable to their case now, as heaven is to earth. Their bodies now are a spring of much sin, sorrow, and trouble to them; but then will their bodies be advanced into a state of perfect happiness, as well as their souls.

This will come to pass, through the reforming of their bodies in the likeness of Christ's glorious body, at the resurrection, Phil. 3:21. The bodies of all are now fashioned in the likeness of the first Adam, and of him fallen, 1 Cor. 15:47, 48. for he is the father of us all, the father of our flesh, Acts 17:26. And so our bodies are mortal, inglorious, weak, and earthly, like his. But the bodies of believers are melted down in a grave, till they are reduced to dust again, and every the least lineament of Adam's image is gone; then at the resurrection Christ takes their dust and forms it into a body like unto his own, the body of the second Adam; and in this new fashion and frame it

continues for ever after in the other world. So the bodies of the saints will be,

(1.) Incorruptible there, 1 Cor. 15:42. as the body of Christ is. They will be no more liable to death nor diseases. No pains, nor uneasiness can affect them any more; nothing will be about them for ever that may create loathing to themselves or others; neither will they be liable to be worn with age; but they will be in perfect soundness for ever.

(2.) They will be glorious bodies there, 1 Cor. 15:43. The inhabitants of heaven will all of them be beauties, perfect beauties, without a metaphor. They are now all glorious within, though some of them be hard favoured, and others of them deformed, naturally or accidentally; then they will be all glorious without too; not only beautiful in their faces, but the whole body over, Matth. 13:43, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." There will be a heavenly glory on their whole bodies, making them amiable and lovely, surpassing the most framed beauties now as the light of the sun doth the shining of a candle. This will be their clothing, and other clothing they will need none, 2 Cor. 5:2.

(3.) They will be powerful and strong bodies, 1 Cor. 15:43. All flesh now is grass, weak and withering: but there will be no weakness nor weariness there; nay, the now weak and feeble saint shall be as David, and David as the angel of God. How else would they be fit for the eternal weight of glory, for continual uninterrupted exercise? 1 Cor. 15:50. The strongest man would be unable to bear the heavenly glory; the clay tabernacle in its present state would fly all in pieces; but they will be able to bear it.

(4.) They will be spiritual bodies, 1 Cor. 15:44. They will be true bodies still, but endowed with spirit-like qualities. They will be no

more clogs to the soul, but as ready and fit for the exercise of heaven, as if they were spirits. Naturalists observe, that bodies the more they are raised from the earth towards heaven, the lighter they become; surely then when they are in the highest heaven, their weight and ponderousness must be gone. They are spiritual bodies.

2dly, Their souls in their bodies will shine in their purity and perfection of the divine image, 1 John 3:2, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." At death the souls of the saints are so glorified, however inglorious they were while in the body. But being housed again in their glorified bodies, they will retain their heavenly lustre for ever, shining there as the candle through the lantern. And here,

(1.) Their understanding will be perfect for ever, 1 Cor. 13:12. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." No more scales of ignorance will then be on the eyes of their understanding. Their capacity will be enlarged, to know God and his works.

(2.) Their will, will be perfectly conformed to the will of God, and completely satisfied, having all that they would have, and as they would have it. Then will be said to every saint, without limitation, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." They shall never know more what it is to be balked of their will for ever. Psal. 17 ult. "As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

(3.) Their affections shall all be perfectly heavenly. All uneasy and unpleasant affections will be discarded there; no sorrow shall ever spring up in them more, Rev. 21:4, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." All earthly affections

shall be for ever laid aside; the dregginess of them makes them unmeet for the heavenly state; and they shall no more be able to pick on them, than our dunghills can on the sun, Matth. 22:30, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven." They will be all love, loving God in perfection, and all persons and things else in him only.

(4.) Their memory of things past will be fresh. It will be so with the damned in hell, Luke 16:25, 28. And how can it be doubted as to the saints in heaven, in a state of perfection? No sorrowful reflection indeed can have place in their state, but things sometimes sorrowful will be remembered with joy in the deliverance therefrom. And the looking back into their wilderness-state, their stormy voyage through the sea of this world, will fill them with wonder and praise. They will remember the times, places, means, and instruments of their acquaintance with Christ, and communion with God in the world, by which they have been brought to all that happiness, Luke 16:9. 1 Thess. 2:19.

(5.) Lastly, They will have an executive faculty answering to their will. Now the spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak; so that they cannot do what they fain would; but find themselves like a bird with a stone tied to its foot, that aims to fly, but cannot. But there they shall be able to put in execution whatever they will do or desire to do.

3dly, They will be happy in the glorious society of heaven, being joint inhabitants with them there.

(1.) They will have the society of one another there, being all gathered together into one lovely company, the general assembly of the first born, Heb. 12:21. All the saints that from the beginning to the end of the world shall have lived in any part of the earth, will be altogether there, an innumerable multitude of the redeemed, all

shining ones. And since they are in a state of perfection, I wonder how it can be questioned, but they will know one another, their friends and acquaintance on earth, and get new acquaintance and knowledge of those at least that have been most eminent in the church on earth; or how the use of speech and conversation among them can be doubted.

(2.) They will have the society of the holy angels there, Heb. 12:22. They will be no more afraid of angels, when they themselves are become their equals, Luke 20:36. But they will join them in the heavenly choir, singing their hallelujahs. And whether angels shall assume airy bodies for conversing with the saints or not, there is no reason to think that they will be in a place with the angels, and yet incapable of conversing with them.

(3.) They will have the society of the man Christ there, 1 Thess. 4:17, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." They will see him with their bodily eyes, who loved them, and gave himself for them: they will see that very body that was for them crucified without the gates of Jerusalem. They will see him there shining in inconceivable glory, as their Lord, Saviour, and Redeemer; and compass his throne for ever with songs of salvation.

Lastly, They will have the presence and full enjoyment of God in Christ there, Rev. 21:7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Here is the highest pinnacle of the saints' happiness in heaven; without this they cannot be happy completely, no not in heaven; and in the full enjoyment of him, they will be so happy, that it is impossible they can desire more for the satisfying of them. For he is an ocean of unbounded perfection. It lies in two things.

[1.] They will enjoy God in Christ, by sight of the divine glory, to the complete satisfying of their understanding, Matth. 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The sight they will have of the divine glory is a full and clear knowledge of God, to the utmost of their enlarged capacities, as by seeing face to face, Rev. 22:4. 1 Cor. 13:12. What heart can conceive the happiness of being freely let into the view of the infinite divine perfections! Men have a mighty satisfaction in the sight of taking objects, as a curious garden, a splendid palace; but we are swallowed up when we think of being let into the view of the infinite divine perfections, where there must be something always new.

[2.] They will enjoy God in Christ, by experience of the divine goodness, to the complete satisfying of their will, Rev. 7:16, 17, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;—for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." There is an all-fulness of goodness in God, an inexhaustible fountain of it, and they shall have an unrestrained participation of it, Psal. 36:8, 9, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." Rev. 21:3, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." He will make of his goodness to flow into them for ever, and there shall be nothing to hinder them from all of it they can desire. And it is impossible they can desire any thing beyond it.

4thly, They will have a fulness of joy there, Psal. 16:11. Rivers of pleasures run in Immanuel's land. Joy unspeakable shall fill their hearts for ever, and appear in the countenances, where never again shall the least cloud of sorrows sit down. Now is the sowing time of

tears, but then is the reaping time of joy; and that harvest wherein they bring back their sheaves rejoicing, will never be over.

5thly, All their happiness, joy, and glory, they will have eternally through Christ, as the great means of communication betwixt God and them, Rev. 21:23. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." They will continue for ever members of Christ, and members as members must needs live by communication with the head. So that the immediate enjoyment of God in heaven, is to be understood only in opposition to the intervening of outward means.

6thly, There will be degrees of glory among them, 1 Cor. 15:41, 42. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." The reward will be according to, though not for their works; and they who have glorified God most by suffering or acting for him, will be the more highly advanced in glory by him, Luke 19:17, 19. Howbeit all of them will have what they can hold, the least as well as the greatest, as when bottles of different sizes are filled.

7thly, They shall be perfectly sure, that this their happy state shall last for ever. They know it now by faith in the word, how can they doubt of it then in a state of perfection? Their having any doubt of it could not but breed some anxiety, inconsistent with perfect happiness.

Lastly, Then shall the chief, last, or farthest end of man, be reached. And that is the glory of God, for which end they are made completely happy, in the full enjoyment of God, Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11 ult. So being made perfectly happy, they will answer that end in glorifying God, by

loving, praising, and serving him perfectly, to all eternity, Psal. 86:12, 13. "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." Rev. 7:9, 10. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Ver. 15. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth in the throne shall dwell among them." Chap. 22:3. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

Inf. 1. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. He is the best of masters, whatever hardships his servants be put to here. Heaven will make amends for all.

2. They who are truly godly do best consult not only the welfare of their souls, but of their bodies too. The way of faith and holiness is the way to reach the cure of all maladies at length; it is the way to get a sound body, with all the advantages of strength, comeliness, liveliness, &c.

Lastly, The faith of this should arm believers against the terror of death and the grave. Why not melt down the old crazy vessel, to be new shaped?

SECONDLY, Let us next view the state of men, soul and body in hell. Having viewed the state of men after the resurrection in the happy part of the other world, we must now consider the state of men after

the resurrection in the regions of horror in the other world. An awful subject! but necessary. That part of mankind that shall justly be doomed to that part of the other world, will be absolutely miserable there. Concerning which these following things may be considered.

1. They will be totally and finally separated from God there, excommunicated from his presence, Matth. 25:41. Now they say to God, "Depart from us," while he is following them with mercy and offers of peace; then they will be wholly and for ever put away. And this is the punishment of loss. There are these six things in it.

(1.) They will have no part in the habitation of the just, Matth. 8:11, 12. They will have no footing in the better country, no seat in the mansions of glory. They will lose heaven, the seat of the blessed; and while the godly are taken within the city, they cannot enter the gates, but must lodge without for ever, Rev. 21:15.

(2.) They will be excommunicated from the presence of the saints, and have no share in the happy society. They cared not for their company here, if it was not to serve a turn; and there they shall be freely parted for ever. The company of the righteous being gone into the marriage, the door is bolted against them, that they cannot get in, no not if it were to lie among their feet, Matth. 25:10.

(3.) They will be excluded from the presence of the holy angels. They will have at the resurrection a terrible meeting with them, Matth. 13:49. and a more dreadful parting with them, ver. 50. never to meet again. It is another kind of angels with whom they must eternally lodge.

(4.) They will be locally separated from the man Christ. They shall never come into the place where he shines in his glory. He will effectually order their getting away out of his presence, by a terrible

voice from his throne, Matth. 25:41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And they shall go away one way, and he another with his saints; and they shall never meet again. However he courted them in this world, and they still fled from him, and would have none of him, they will never have a good word for them or to them, from him any more.

(5.) They will be relatively separated from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They cannot be locally separated from him, who is every where present, in hell as well as in heaven, Psal. 139:8. But there will be a relative separation, in an eternal blocking up of all comfortable communication between God and them; as when parties break up a treaty of peace, and part with hostile mind, proclaiming war against one another. Now though God is not their God by covenant, yet he is their Benefactor, and they get much benefit by that relation, Luke 6:35. But then it is broke off for ever.

Lastly, They will be for ever under a total eclipse of all light of comfort and ease spiritual and bodily, Matth. 22:13. "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him away into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Hos. 9:12. "Wo also to them when I depart from them." Whatever good thing in body or mind they now enjoy is from God, as the light is from the sun; and therefore God totally withdrawing from, it is impossible that any thing good or comfortable can remain with them; but even as when there is but one chink in a house to let in the light, and that is stopt, there must needs be a total darkness.

2. They will be miserable both in body and soul there; for they must depart into everlasting fire, Matth. 25:41. How can it be otherwise in the lake of fire and brimstone, as it is called? Rev. 20:10.

As to the state of their bodies there, though they be new-framed of their dust, yet it will be to no advantage but to fit them for a state of eternal misery. And we may take a view of it in these three things.

(1.) Their bodies will be base, inglorious, and loathsome, Dan. 12:2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake—some to shame and everlasting contempt." Isa. 65:24. "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." No beauty can possibly be found in them there, but their countenance will be for ever ghastly and frightful, as in the pangs of the second death. They will be like so many dead carcases there for unsightliness, while death preys on them there buried out of the sight of all, in the pit of destruction.

(2.) There will be no health nor soundness in them there. How can there be in bodies suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? What hale side can one have to turn him to, swimming in a lake of fire? They will be in torments, Luke 16:23.

(3.) Yet will they be of such a constitution as to bear up, and not faint away under their torments there, Matth, 25 ult. They will ever be in the pangs of death, but never die out. The power of God will keep them up in that case, that they shall not have the favour of fainting nor dying out.

As to the state of their souls in their bodies there.

(1.) Their minds or understandings will be fitted to carry on their misery there. They will be impressed there with clear notions of things, that here they either know not, or would not know; but then they will only be so known as to aggravate their misery, Luke 16:23,

"And in hell he lift up his eyes—and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." They will know then what God is, Christ, sin, heaven, hell, and this world then past. Their minds will then be fixed and active; fixed on their misery, and active in turning it about in all its shapes, without possibility of diversion from the thoughts of it. The impressions of wrath will be deep there.

(2.) Their will, as it will for ever continue enmity against God, so it will be crossed for ever by him. What they would, they shall never obtain; and what they would not, shall be eternally bound on them. In the state of trial they would needs have their will, and many times they got it; but they will get it no more, when once there; the will of God will resist it for ever. Hence there is no rest for them, Rev. 14:11.

(3.) Their affections will all be tormenting, Matth. 22:13, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." All pleasant passions, whether of one kind or another, will then be rooted out: no joy nor delight in any object whatsoever will spring up with them any more. But they will be brim-full of sorrow, racked with anxiety, filled with horror, galled with fretfulness, and darted through with despair, Rev. 16:21. Their souls stocked with strong lusts, and sinful habits contracted in their life, will be left to pine on in them for ever; eagerly desiring to have them gratified, but no gratification of them possible. So they will be under an eternal gnawing hunger after something to satisfy the large cravings of their sinful wretched souls; but there will be nothing to be had for ever for that end, Luke 16:25.

(4.) Their consciences will ever be awake there, and witness to their faces that they are justly ruined, and have ruined themselves, Matth. 22:12. It will present to them their sins through the whole course of their life, and cut them with remorse for them. It will upbraid them with their unbelief, witness against them that they were warned, but

would not hearken. And so it will be in them a gnawing worm that dieth not.

(5.) Their memories will be fresh there, Luke 16:25. Sins sometimes buried and out of mind with them, will be called to mind with all their aggravating circumstances. They will have a galling and cutting remembrance of the pleasures of sin, which they sometime thought themselves happy in; of the profits of sin that they sometimes hugged themselves in. Times, places, means, instruments, when, where, and by which they were ruined, or might have been brought into a state of salvation, will all be remembered there.

Lastly, The wrath of God will sink into their souls there, Psal. 109:18. Vindictive justice will make inconceivable impressions on them, that will melt their souls like wax in the midst of their bowels. Some of God's own people have felt some drops of wrath here, that if they had continued but a little longer, they would have fainted away under them. What will the full shower of it be in hell, where every stone of that hail is the weight of a talent? Rev. 16:21.

3. They will be shut up in outer darkness there, Matth. 22:13. Hell is the place of outer darkness. It is so called in opposition to the glorious light that the saints within heaven do enjoy. The Jews had their marriage-suppers by night, and so while the guest-chamber was filled with lights, there was nothing but darkness without. So while the saints are in heaven, in eternal light at the marriage supper of the Lamb, the damned are without in darkness. It must be so; for light is sweet to the eyes, and nothing sweet can be there. When Christ suffered on the cross, there was an eclipse for the same reason. But it went off, for Christ overcame death; but the eclipse in hell can never go off. And the darkness there is a deep darkness, it is the mist of

darkness that never clears, 2 Pet. 2:17. the blackness of darkness, Jude, 13. Hence,

(1.) Dismal and melancholy must the state of the damned be, in that region of horror, where is not the least comfortable gleam of light to their eyes. As there is no night in heaven, but eternal day, so there is no day in hell, but an eternal night, an everlasting gloom. If there were no more in it, it would be terrible never to see the light.

(2.) They will not range up and down as vain men now do in the world, diverting themselves with this and the other object. There is nothing to be seen there to please the eye. The Egyptian darkness was an emblem of it, which gives the reason of the phrase, chains of darkness, as was before observed. And accordingly the damned are said to be bound hand and foot, Matth. 22:13. in which posture one cannot range from place so place, but at most toss and roll himself like a sick man on his bed.

4. They will have the society of devils there, being shut up with them in the same pit of destruction, Matth. 25:41. Rev. 20:10. As the saints in heaven shall be happy in the society of God himself, Christ, and his holy angels; so will the damned be miserable in the society of the devil and his angels. How dreadful would it be to dwell in the pleasantest spot of the earth haunted by the apparitions of devils? how much more than all that to be shut up in the pit of hell, in the Lake of fire with them, when they shall be filled with wrath to the brim!

5. There will be degrees of torment and misery in hell, the torments of some more grievous than others. All there will be unspeakably miserable, and unpitied in their misery; but the misery of some will be screwed up to a greater height than that of others. As sinners classed themselves on earth, in higher or lower forms, in

dishonouring God; so will they be classed in their punishment, Matth. 13:30. "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them." As there are many mansions in heaven, so will there be many bundles in hell; bundles of ignorants, worldlings, swearers, unclean, persecutors, mockers, hypocrites, &c. And the more means of reformation any had, and the greater height of impiety they went to under these means, the more miserable will their case be there, Luke 12:47, 48. Matth. 24 ult.

6. Their misery will be eternal there, and they will know that it will be so, Matth. 25:41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Prov. 14:32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." It will be everlasting, without intermission, Rev. 14:11. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night." No breathing time will be allowed there, but the floods of wrath will be incessantly flowing in upon them. There will be no clearing of the storm that blows there, for ever so short a while. It will be eternal, without ending, Rev. 20:10. "They shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever." There is no end to be for ever expected of the easeless torments there. And the damned knowing this, will be cut for ever with despair, and rage, like wild bulls in a net."

Lastly, And thus God will be glorified passively, in those who now will not actively glorify him, Prov. 16:4. "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." God made man for his glory, capable of enjoying him for ever; he cannot fail short of his end, and therefore he will be glorified upon those who now refuse to answer the end of their creation.

Inf. 1. Sin is a most dreadful evil. Here is a looking-glass wherein you may see it so. How great must the filthiness of it be, that provokes a

gracious holy God, to bury the sinner in such a horrible pit out of his sight! How deep must the guilt be, that cannot be washed out with such fearful punishment, so as to have an end!

2. God is a God of terrible justice, a severe avenger of sin. O correct your mistakes of God by this, Psal. 50:21. He gave a demonstration of his justice, in the burning of Sodom; here he gives an eternal demonstration of it.

Lastly, There is nothing that possibly can make the life of an impenitent sinner in this world desirable which has such a miserable end.

## The Doctrine of the other World applied

And now, after having viewed this present world, we have given you some description of the other world, to let you into a necessary view of it; it remains to shut up that weighty subject with some application of the whole.

FIRST, Believe the report from the word concerning the other world firmly; and let it have deep impression on your souls. Consider of it timely with all earnestness, stretch your views beyond this present world, look into the world to come, with the prospect of the word which has been cleared in some measure unto you. There are two things very prevalent in this world, in reference to the other world.

First, Thoughtlessness about it. Men spend their days as in a dream, going through this world with the other world seldom coming into their view, never entering into any suitable thoughtfulness about it. The reasons hereof are,

1. The reigning vanity of the minds of men, Eph. 4:17, 18. The light and frothy mind cannot find entertainment in any thing that is not like itself, light and vain. Therefore thoughts of the other world are shunned, as a bird delighting to skip from bush to bush, would shun the tying of a stone to its foot. But alas! what avails that, since going into that world cannot be shunned that way?

2. Throng of the cares of this life, Matth. 13:23. Men's hearts are so stuffed and perplexed with these, that the concerns of another world cannot get entrance into their hearts; cumbered about many things, the one thing needful is forgot. Hence death surprises many in such a throng, and hurries them away into another, when they were not at all thinking on it, Psal. 146:4. Luke 12:20.

3. An averseness of heart to the other world. The hearts of most men are so wedded to this world, that for as great a hell as it is, they would desire no better heaven than what they could make here. They are in no case content to leave it, and go into another world. And their aversion to it makes them thoughtless about it, that they really shun the thoughts of it as much as they can, since they can have no pleasure in them.

4. A fond conceit of coming in time enough to think of the concerns of the other world, when they come near the borders of it; though alas! they know not how near they are to it, and their foot may slip, and they pass into it ere ever they are aware.

Lastly, Satan has a great hand in it, who endeavours to hoodwink sinners, and to be continually buzzing into their ears other things, that may keep them from serious thoughts about it; and all to compass their ruin.

Secondly, Unbelief of it. Men are not only thoughtless about it, not turning their thoughts that way; but when the report of it is brought to them, they do not believe it. There is a root of Atheism and infidelity in the minds of men, as to things not seen, so that they hear these things as idle tales. The evidences of this are,

1. The little impression these things make on the minds of men, when they hear them. How many do hear the report of the other world with as little concern as they could hear an idle story, which they had no manner of concern about? The account of the joys of heaven does not move them, and that of the terrors of hell makes no suitable impression.

The supine negligence and carelessness about our part in the other world. If in the time of hearing men are somewhat moved, yet they are like the sieve taken out of the water when they go away, they lose all. They are not effectually stirred up to take some course whereby they may flee from the wrath to come, and may become heirs of heaven. If it were but a cot house they had, in case they were to remove out of it, they would be careful to secure another for themselves. But they know they must die, yet they are quite careless as to where they are to lodge next.

Lastly, The unaccountable misspending of time, either trifling or doing evil; doing nothing or what is worse than nothing. Did men believe, that now they are sowing for eternity, that what they now do in this world, they are to eat the fruit of in the other world; would they be so barren in good works, and so lavish in sinful courses and actions?

Wherefore I beseech you consider seriously of the world to come, and believe the report about it.

I. About the being of it. O to believe firmly, that there is another world, a heaven and a hell; a receptacle of joy for the departed souls of the godly, whereinto their bodies also are to be received after the resurrection; and a receptacle of horror for the souls and bodies of the wicked.

2. About the state of men in it, as held forth in the word; how that there they arrive either at the highest pinnacle of happiness or misery; and to continue unchangeable for ever and ever. To inforce the exhortation I offer the following motives.

1. Consider ye have by the providence of God heard much of it from the word of God. The Lord of the other world has appointed his messengers to speak of it to us in this world, that we may make ready for it in time. When the Lord has been sounding the alarm, let us not be deaf to his call, but know and believe that we are to march into the other world. It will be an aggravated guilt to be thoughtless about it, after hearing so much of it, or to entertain the report as idle tales.

2. The world we have been hearing of, we will all see at length; and see it not afar off, but being in it. We might be the less concerned about it, if we were never to go there; but thither we must all go. And it may well apologize for our insisting so much on it, that we are to be inhabitants there, eternal inhabitants there. It must be infatuation to be thoughtless or unbelieving about it.

3. It will not be long ere we will be there. We have but a handbreadth of days to pass, and then we are there; our age, which is as nothing before the Lord, being once run through, we pass into that other world. Our life here is but a short preface to a long eternity; a skip from the womb to the grave, and we have made considerable progress in it already. And we are not far from the entrance of the passage into the other world, and in a little we will be in one of the

parts of it, join the inhabitants thereof, and be settled in the state of it.

4. We know not how soon we may be there. The journey to the other world is not alike long to all. It is but a short journey the longest of it; but God brings some there by a short cut, and they are at the end when they think there is a great part of the way before them.

Lastly, A happy part there will never be reached without serious thoughts about it, and a firm faith in it.

SECONDLY, Improve the believed report of the other world suitably. If there is really another world, a world to come, and such as from the Lord's word it has been reported of to you; without controversy it is a matter of the greatest concern to us, and ought to influence our whole life. And it is not a true faith of it, that does not influence our conduct accordingly. Now if we would improve it suitably,

First, Improve it to a speedy choice of the way to the happy part of it, and entering upon it without delay. We are all going to the other world; but as there are two very distant parts of it, so there are two as really different ways therein, viz. the broad way, and the narrow way, Matth. 7:13, 14. If you take the broad way, it will have a miserable ending; if the narrow, a happy ending. Therefore choose well speedily, and enter on the happy way without delay. And,

1. Choose and enter speedily into the personal way, the Lord Jesus Christ, John 14:6. Unite with him by faith, Eph. 3:17. He is Lord of the other world, and heir of all things; match with him, and heaven shall be your dowery. The keys of hell and death hang at his girdle; but them that come unto him he will in no wise cast out. Here is the sure bargain for eternity. Enter personally into the covenant of grace, by believing on Christ.

2. Choose and enter speedily on the real way, the way of holiness, Isa. 35:8. For "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. 12:14. If ye mind the holy city in the other world, ye must be holy in all conversation. If ye hold the way of looseness and licentiousness, profanity, or formality, it will undoubtedly land you in the unclean place in the other world. As ye sow ye will reap.

Secondly, Improve it to a lowering of your esteem of this present world, and weaning your hearts from it, 1 John 2:15. A right view of the other world would make this with all its gaudy show little in our eyes.

1. Seek not your portion in it. Leave that to those who have no expectation of the treasure in heaven; make the best of it they can, they will make a sorry portion of it, Psal. 17:14, 15. Take ye that advice, if ye be wise, Matth. 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Let the riches, honours, and pleasures of the other world be the great conquest you are set for; and the things of a present life only a by-hand work.

2. Set not your hearts upon it, but use it passingly, 1 Cor. 7:29–31. Carry yourselves not as natives, but as pilgrims and strangers in it. What a folly would it be for the traveller to let his heart go out on the conveniences of the inn, which he is quickly to leave; on the pleasant places by the way, where he is but passing?

3. Do not value yourselves upon your possessions in it, and your expectations from it. The former are very precarious, which he may soon be deprived of; the latter very uncertain, wherein ye are fair to be disappointed. The world's mountains in expectation, often dwindle into molehills of enjoyment. But value yourselves, according to the possessions and expectations from the other world.

Thirdly, Improve it to a Christian bearing of your afflictions with patience, Luke 21:19. Jam. 5:7. If we observe well, we will see that many times it is a falling into afflicting circumstances in this world, that makes us look first after the other world; and the same is what makes people look to it again, after prosperity has made them forget it. And having believingly looked into the other world, when we look back again to our afflictions, we will be the more able to bear them patiently. For,

1. We will thereby find them to be comparatively light burdens. That which makes our afflictions so very heavy, and us so uneasy under them, is the weighing them in the balance with other things of this world; our sorrow and other's joy, our poverty and other's wealth, our wants and other's enjoyments; that is the devil's rack, which he aims to put the afflicted on, that they may be made to murmur, spurn, rage, and quarrel. But lay them in the balance with the other world's joys and sorrows, they will be light as a feather, 2 Cor. 4:17, 18.

2. We will find them thereby to be short also, ib. The afflicted are ready to cry out, their trouble never ends, they can see no out-gate. Why, but because they look not to the other world, a view of which would soon make them see they are mistaken. Job 3:17, "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest." What are our afflictions here of the longest continuance, but like the inconveniencies a traveller meets with on the road? If he is going to his father's house, he easily digests it, knowing that he will be easy there; if they be carrying him away to prison, he easily digests it, seeing that it will be worse with him. In both cases he bears it, knowing he is not to stay with them.

3. We will thereby see ourselves the more nearly allied to the saints in glory in the other world, by companionship in tribulation. Where are they in the other world, that had their good things in this world, and where are they that had their evil things? Luke 16:25. If ye look through the upper part of that world, there ye will see the man of sorrows, the man of God's right hand there, and all his happy attendants persons that came out of great tribulations, Rev. 7:14; the sore tried Abraham, the burdened man Moses, the afflicted David, the persecuted Paul, the mournful Heman, &c. If ye look to the lower part of it, there ye will see those that spent their days in wealth, and in a moment went down to the grave, Job 21:13. in a merry jovial life; the dancing Herodias, the rich glutton that fared deliciously every day, &c. A serious look of this sort to the other world, would make us embrace our cross, and say, Lord, let me not taste of the dainties of the wicked, nor get my heaven here.

Lastly, We will thereby see ourselves a fitting and squaring for heaven. Stones to be laid in the temple above must be cut and hewed before they come there. Afflictions are God's hewing tools, whereby he smooths people for that building; and rough and hard stones we are, that take much hewing. Instruments of our afflictions are but the hands he employs for smoothing the stones for his building.

Lastly, Improve it to suitable endeavours to prepare for that other world. If ye prepare not for it, ye do not believe the report of it. And,

1. Labour to be habitually prepared for it. Get out of your natural state, into the state of grace; live no longer without the bond of the covenant, but personally enter into it, by believing on Christ. Ye must be converted, ye must be born again, and become new creatures.

2. Labour to reach actual preparation for the other world, being always ready to go into it at the call. Let your thoughts dwell much

upon it; carry yourselves as strangers in this world, let there be no standing controversy betwixt God and you; and timely dispatch your generation work, and watch and wait till your change come. Consider what you have heard of the other world, and lay it to heart.

# THE GREAT CARE AND CONCERN NOW, THAT OUR SOULS BE NOT GATHERED WITH SINNERS IN THE OTHER WORLD, CONSIDERED AND IMPROVED

The substance of some Sermons preached at Ettrick, in the year 1729

PSALM 26:9

Gather not my soul with sinners.

WHOEVER believes and considers the doctrine of the other world, must needs improve it to a horror of the state of the ungodly there, on the one hand, and a desire of the state of the godly on the other. He cannot miss to join the Psalmist in this text, saying, Gather not my soul with sinners. In which words we have to observe,

1. Something taken for granted, or supposed, namely, that the souls of men are to be gathered, each to those of their own sort, which is at death, Gen. 25:8. Now there is a promiscuous multitude in this world, good and bad together, like corn and chaff in a barn-floor, or fishes in a net; but they are gathered in the other world, some into the happy, others into the miserable company, every one to those of their own sort.

2. Something expressed, namely, a horror of the congregation of sinners in the other world. "Lord, (says he,) gather not my soul

among their souls; when I remove hence, let me not take up my lodging among them; let me not drop into their company, state and condition in the other world."

3. The connection. This request comes in natively on a reflection the Psalmist makes on the disposition of his soul, and his way, in this world. His conscience witnesseth his dislike of associating with the ungodly, ver. 4, 5, "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers; I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked; "his love and liking to the presence of God and the congregation of the saints, ver. 8, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." So he prays with hope, Gather not my soul with sinners: q. d. Lord, I have no liking of the company of ungodly sinners here; it is a burden to me in this world; let me not be shut up with them in the other world. My soul loves thy house; let me not be with sinners excluded eternally from thy presence.

The text plainly affords the following doctrine, viz.

DOCT. Now is the time that people should be in care and concern, that their souls be not gathered with sinners in the other world.

In discoursing from this doctrine, we shall,

I. Consider some things implied in it.

II. Shew who are the sinners, that we are to have a horror of our souls being gathered with in the other world.

III. What it is for one's soul to be gathered with sinners in the other world.

IV. Consider his care and concern; or shew, what is implied in this earnest request, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

V. Give the reasons, why we should be in such care and concern.

VI. Make application.

I. We shall consider some things implied in the doctrine. It implies,

1. The souls of men in their bodies in this world, are in a scattered and disorderly condition, saints and sinners in one place, one outward condition, all mixed through other; the tares and the wheat are in one field; corn and chaff in one floor; fish good and bad in one net; sheep and goats in one flock; Ham in the ark, Judas in Christ's family, and profane hypocrites with sincere Christians, in one visible church. This mixture has a threefold effect.

(1.) It keeps both parties uneasy, Gen. 3:15. The saints are uneasy with the conversation of sinners, 2 Pet. 2:7. and sinners with that of saints, who are an eye-sore to them, Gen. 19:9. The one wearies to have the other out of their world, the other many a time to be away from among them. Their principles, aims, and manner of life are opposite; and they cannot unite more than the iron and clay.

(2.) They are an embargo upon one another, so that this world is neither so good nor yet so bad, as otherwise it would be. It is with the world in this case, as with the believer in whom there is a mixture of flesh and spirit, Gal. 5:17. The conversation of sinners often infects saints, leads them into snares and temptations; handling of pitch they are defiled, and are often made to come mourning out of her company, as Peter in the high priest's hall. Sometimes again saints win on sinners, to turn them from the evil of their ways, 1 Cor. 7:12, 13, 16. 1 Pet. 3:1. And even where that is not gained, yet it does

something to keep the world in external order, beyond what it would be if all were alike, no mixture of saints in the society, Matth. 5:13. like salt that keeps it from rotting and stinking, as otherwise it would do.

(3.) There is a mixed dispensation of providence in the world; sometimes fair weather, sometimes foul; sometimes public mercies dispensed, sometimes public calamities; for God has his friends and his enemies both in one company; and the society meets with tokens of God's good-will for the sake of the one, and tokens of anger for the sake of the other.

2. The souls of men in the other world will be orderly ranged into different congregations, according to their different natures and dispositions, saints and sinners, who will make two unmixed societies. This implies two things.

(1.) A separation of the disagreeing parties now mixed, Matth. 3:12. The good and bad mixed in this world will be separated there; they will not make but one society more, as they did here; and the separation will be a thorough one, not one goat left among the sheep, nor one sheep among the goats, Psal. 1:5. Matth. 13:41. For all the mixture that is here, there will be a cleanly separation there, whatever were the ties of political, ecclesiastical, or domestical relations among them. Matth. 24:40, 41, "Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left."

(2.) A gathering of their separate parties into their respective societies they belonged to, whereby they will be ranged according to their kind and sort; saints with saints, and sinners with sinners. For there will be two, and but two congregations in the other world, Christ's and the devil's, Psal. 1:5; the bundle of life, 1 Sam. 25:29, and

the bundle of death, Matth. 13:33. Many are misplaced here, and get wrong names; some of the devil's goats appear in sheep's clothing, and are mistaken for such as belong to Christ; some of Christ's sheep are busked up by the malicious world in wolves' skins, as if they belonged to the devil. But nothing of that will be there.

3. Death is the gathering time, which the Psalmist has in view in the text. Ye have a time here that ye call the gathering time, about the term, when the servants are going away, wherein ye gather your strayed sheep that every one may get their own again. Death is God's gathering time wherein he gets the souls belonging to him, and the devil those belonging to him. They did go long together, but then they are parted; and saints are taken home to the congregation of saints, and sinners to the congregation of sinners. And it concerns us to say, "Gather not my soul with sinners." Whoever be our people here, God's people, or the devil's, death will gather our souls to them.

Lastly, It is a horrible thing to be gathered with sinners in the other world. To think of our souls being gathered with them there, may make the hair of one's head stand up. Many now like no gathering like the gathering with sinners; it is the very delight of their hearts, it makes a brave jovial life in their eyes. And it is a pain to them, to be gathered with saints, to be detained before the Lord on a sabbath day. But to be gathered with them in the other world, is a horror to all sorts.

(1.) The saints have a horror of it, as in the text. To think to be staked down in their company in the other world, would be a hell of itself to the godly. David never had such a horror of the society of the poor, the diseased, the persecuted, &c. as of sinners. He is content to be gathered with saints of whatever condition; but, Lord, says he, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

(2.) The wicked themselves have a horror of it, Numb. 21:10. "Let me die the death of the righteous," said the wicked Balaam, "and let my last end be like his." Though they would be content to live with them, or be with them in life, their consciences bear witness that they have a horror of being with them in death. They would live with sinners, but they would die with saints. A poor unreasonable self-condemning thought. I believe, that if drunkards, unclean persons, mockers of religion, embracing and rejoicing in one another, should as Belshazzar see the form of a hand writing on the wall, that it is the purpose of God, their souls should be gathered with one another in the other world, they would be struck and ready to faint away with horror, thinking, "Ah! shall my soul be gathered with drunkards, harlots, mockers?" &c.

Wherefore since all have a horror of their souls being gathered with sinners in the other world, have a horror of being gathered with them now in their way. For it is an absurd thing to think, that you shall live with sinners, and yet die with saints. Balaam wished to reconcile these contradictions, but found it would not do, Numb. 31:8.

II. I come to shew who are the sinners, that we are to have a horror of our souls to be gathered with in the other world. All men in this world are sinners absolutely considered, and so was David himself; Eccl. 7:22. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not." But some are sinners comparatively, in comparison with others that are righteous; they are grievous sinners, as the word properly signifies; hence they are classed with publicans, a most odious sort of people among the Jews, Matth. 9:10.

Now sinners, grievous sinners, in the scripture use of the word, are all unrighteous persons, as appears from the opposition of these terms, Psal. 1:5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the

judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Prov. 13:21. "Evil pursueth sinners; but to the righteous good shall be repaid." Matth. 9:13. He that is not righteous, is in the scripture-sense a sinner, a grievous sinner. Hence,

1. All unjustified persons are sinners; for they are unrighteous before God, as being without an imputed righteousness on them, Rom. 5:19. And since all unbelievers are unjustified, whatever is their manner of life, they are such sinners; they walk naked before God, and their shame is not covered.

2. All unconverted, unsanctified, unregenerate persons are sinners; for they are unrighteous as being without an implanted righteousness, Psal. 51:13. Rom. 5:8. They are not brought back to God, but are in a course of straying from him; their unholy set of spirit remains, their nature is not changed.

Thus all natural men are sinners, whose state in the other world is horrible, whatever their appearance and way may be here. There are four sorts of them.

1. The grossly ignorant, who neither know nor care for knowing the foundation points of religion. These cannot be but sinners; for however harmless they may be among men, they are grievous sinners before God as being in darkness, 1 John 2:11. Matth. 6:23. And miserable will they be whose souls are gathered with them in the other world, Isa. 27:11. "It is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour."

2. The profane, who give the loose to their lusts, in the pollutions of the outward man. Such as profane swearers, who set their mouths against the heavens, whom God will not hold guiltless; unclean

persons, whom God will judge; scoffers of piety, maligners, and mockers of seriousness, whose hands shall be made strong; in a word, all those who are loose and licentious in their lives. These are sinners with a witness; and wo to them whose souls shall be gathered with them in the other world, Gal. 5:19–21. "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Luke 19:27. "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

3. Mere moralists, who satisfy themselves with moral virtue, in obedience to the letter of the second table of the moral law, but neglect the duties of religion towards God. They are just and honest in their dealings with men, but neglect their duty to God. These also are sinners, and miserable will be the case of those whose souls are gathered with them in the other world, Matth. 5:20. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." They seek not God's face, and they will be hid from it.

4. Formalists, who have a form of godliness in a profession of religion, and performance of acts of devotion; but are strangers to real religion, 2 Tim. 3:5. Some of them are gross hypocrites, who stain their profession of religion with their untender walk in matters of the second table, Matth. 23:23. Others are close hypocrites, whose outward conversation is blameless, but they are strangers to heartwork, the secret part of the Christian life, and entertain always some beloved lust or other. These also are sinners, Mark 10:21; and wo will be to those whose souls are gathered with them in the other world, Psal. 125 ult. "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." Matth. 24 ult. "And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his

portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Now all these are sinners, grievous sinners, who, if they continue so, will undoubtedly perish. They are justly called and reputed sinners, in opposition to saints. For,

(1.) They all miss the mark totally that men should aim at. The word by which the Holy Ghost expresseth sin, is properly to miss the mark, Judg. 20:16. The mark that all men are obliged to aim at and hit, is the glory of God, the chief end of man, 1 Cor. 10:31. The saints brought to the enjoyment of God in Christ, do all hit it, though not perfectly, Phil. 1:21. Rom. 14:7, 8. They live to the glory of God their Creator and Redeemer. But all natural men miss it totally, Rom. 3:23. They are conjured within the circle of self; they live to themselves, not to God; their lusts, morality, and religion meet all in the dead sea of self. They are a company of self-lovers, self-seekers, self-pleasers, Phil. 2:21. So they and their way, not being directed to God, shall perish from his presence, Psal. 1 ult; and their straying will end in their falling into the pit.

(2.) They are all guilty of death before the Lord, 1 Kings 1:21; with Rom. 3:19. The sentence of death is in force against them, and they are sons of death. The curse of the broken law lies on them, binding them over to avenging wrath. But the saints are not so; though they are not without sin, yet they are without guilt of eternal wrath. Rom. 8:1. They are absolved in their justification; but natural men, whatever be the difference of their crimes, are all sinners, law condemned criminals.

(3.) They can do nothing but sin, Psal. 14:3. It is true, the saints sin in every thing they do; but yet they do things truly good, and accepted of God, Isa. 56:7; the imperfections attending their duties do not

quite mar them, 2 Cor. 8:12. But natural men's actions are all sins, their natural, civil, and religious actions, only evil. Their whole life is woven into one web of sin from the beginning to the end, without one thread of purity in it: so they are sinners in a most proper sense.

Quest. How can that be, since they do things that are unquestionably good? Ans. It cannot be otherwise. For,

[1.] The principle of action in them is quite wrong. They themselves are wholly corrupt and loathsome, and so is all they do. Put the best of liquor in a vessel used to filthy uses, and one cannot look on it, Tit. 1:15. "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Their filthy state defiles their duties, but their duties cannot purify them, Hag. 2.

[2.] The end of their actions is quite wrong. They are like a servant very busy, but in the mean time he is working to himself, not to his master, Zech. 7:5. "When ye fasted and mourned—did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?"

(4.) They all sin with true whole heart and good-will, to it. The saints do not so, 1 John 3:9. They have a contrary principle in them that contradicts the inclination to sin, so that at most it is but with a half-will, Gal. 5:17. But natural men are all flesh, wholly corrupt, therefore the heart goes with a bent-sail to sin. It is true, there may be something opposing sin in the unregenerate; but then that struggle of theirs is but betwixt the flesh in one part lusting, and in another fearing.

(5.) All their sins that ever came on them through the whole course of their lives, are still abiding on them, in the guilt, filth, and dominion of them. It is not so with the saints; guilt contradicted is done away, the filth is in part removed, the reigning power of sin is broken. Sin

in them is like mud in a spring, but in natural men like mud in a pool. Sin is ever coming on, never going off; but all sticks, original and actual; for there is no remission of sin to them, and no sanctification by the Spirit. Unbelief is a need-nail to all their sins, John 8:24.

Lastly, They continue sinners in the other world, Prov. 14:32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." In the moment of death the saints are perfected, they are no more sinners; but natural men have sin left on them, when they die; then the sentence takes place, Rev. 22:11. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still," and they are cast out as unclean into the unclean place.

III. I proceed to shew what it is for one's soul to be gathered with sinners in the other world. It implies,

1. All men's souls are to be gathered out of their bodies by death, Job 34:14, 15. "If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." Man consists of a soul and a body; the body was originally dust lying here and there scattered on the earth; and at death it must be reduced to the same condition again; the soul came immediately from God, and at death must return to him, Eccl. 12:7. And no man can have power to retain it in the body, but it must be separated from it, and so the man dies.

2. There are very different receptacles of separate souls; there is a blessed receptacle of the souls of saints, wherein they shall all be together in the other world; and a miserable receptacle for the souls of sinners, where they also shall be together in that world. Though the receptacle of the bodies of saints and sinners is common to both

in this world, both lying in the same church-yard, yet that of their souls is not so.

3. A separation of the soul from the society of saints, Matth. 13:41. At death, sinners that were mixed with the saints in this world are gathered out from among them, like weeds from among the corn, and tares from among the wheat. And we should be concerned now, that that be not our lot. For it will be a most terrible excommunication, Psal. 1:5. "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

Lastly, A placing of the soul in the society of sinners in the other world, putting them in the same place with them, and in the same state. This is to be deprecated, "Gather not my soul with sinners." To be gathered to sinners as our people, shut up with them in the same receptacle of spirits, to have our lot with them in the other world, and fare as they fare for eternity, is what we should be in the greatest care and concern, that it be not our lot.

IV. I shall consider this care and concern; or shew what is implied in this earnest request, "Gather not my soul with sinners." It implies,

1. A sure and certain expectation, that our souls must he gathered into the other world by death. The Psalmist prays not against the gathering simply, for in that case neither prayers nor tears can prevail, force nor fraud, Psal. 89:48. "What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?" But since they must be gathered, they pray that they be not gathered with sinners. There is no may-be here, but it must be, as it is "appointed unto men once to die," Heb. 9:27. We must lay our account with it, as an event inevitable.

2. A belief of the miserable state of sinners in the other world, and the happiness of saints. If one is not persuaded of these, he will be in

no concern about the matter. But we must look beyond this world into the other, and in the glass of the word take a view of the state of sinners and saints there, to raise us to due concern in it. Often do men look into the state of sinners here, and behold the easy life they have of it, and they wish in effect to be among them; but if we look to them in the other world, we will wish to be far from them, to have nothing ado with them.

3. A horror of the state of sinners there. The man looking to it shrinks back, saying, Save me from it! Their state there duly apprehended, is apt to breed such a horror, as not only cures the envy at their present prosperous state, but makes the man that he would not for a thousand worlds, his soul were in their souls' stead, Psal. 73:18–20.

4. An earnest concern to be delivered from it. The man takes a view of it seriously, and he is not indifferent in the matter. He is not negligent as to the future state of his soul in the other world: but timely lays down measures for eternity, knowing that to miscarry in that point is a loss that can never be made up.

5. An acknowledgment that God may in justice gather one's soul with sinners. The best have as much sin as deserves it, and all are by nature liable to it, Rom. 3:19. And every one that sees the ill of sin, and its just demerit, will see that if justice take place against them, they will be gathered with sinners in the other world.

Lastly, A betaking one's self to the mercy of the Judge, in his own way, for the pardon of sin, and the removal of the just punishment, Job 9:15. And that is to confess sin, flee to lay hold on the altar Jesus Christ by faith, separating from the society and way of sinners in time.

V. I come now to give reasons, why we should be in such care and concern, that our souls be not gathered with sinners in the other world.

1. Because to be gathered with them is to be separated for ever from God, and the holy and happy society whereof Christ is the head, Matth. 7:23, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." The whole herd of sinners in the other world will be in a state of excommunication, banished from the comfortable presence of God, the place of his glory, Psal. 5:4, 5, kept out of the society of Christ, the holy angels, and saints, Matth. 13:41. And to be gathered with them must needs then be horrible.

2. They will be gathered into a most doleful place, Isa. 24:22, "They shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison." At death sinners are gathered into the prison of hell, shut up there to the judgment of the great day; and from the tribunal they will be driven away thither again all together, there to be shut up for ever, Matth. 25:41. The horror of the place they are gathered into, the eternal gloom there, the chains of darkness that will hold them there, the mist of darkness that never clears there, may all move to say, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

3. Because they will be gathered unto the most frightful society there, with the devil and his angels, Matth. 25:41. They will be cast into the lake of fire with the devil that deceived them; and that will be more terrible than to be gathered with dragons, serpents, and vipers here, which would quickly make an end of one. O that men would consider how the service of the devil in sin here, will bring them into the society of him and his angels hereafter, that they might have a horror of being joined with sinners!

4. Because sinners will be in a state of punishment there, heavy beyond expression; being "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," 2 Thess. 1:9. Now is the time wherein sinners take leave to commit their crimes, trampling on God's laws, despising his Son, and grieving his Spirit; then will be the time that they must suffer and pay for all to the satisfaction of injured justice. And the view of that terrible reckoning may cause one say, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

5. Because they will be left in their sin there, Prov. 14:32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." John 8:24, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." At the moment of death, it is said to the sinner, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still;" and he is cast away as an unclean person into the unclean place, with all the guilt, filth, and power of his sins upon him, never to be removed. And here consider, (1.) The perverse frame of spirit, which is natural to man, being enmity against God, will remain with them there; for there is no sanctification of the Spirit begun on the other side of death. And it will be undisguised there, the peace being blocked up, and the war for ever betwixt God and them proclaimed. It will be irritated by their hopeless miserable state, Rev. 16 ult.

(2.) Their sin will be their punishment there; a just revenge of cleaving to it over the belly of all reproofs, warnings, and entreaties? So they will be filled with their own ways. And,

[1.] They will be cut with tormenting passions, envy at the happiness of the saints, fretting under their own misery, and despairing for ever of relief, Matth. 22:13, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

[2.] As for their pleasurable sins that their hearts were set on here, the desire of them will continue, but the satisfying of them in any measure will be impossible. So they will be for ever racked between the desire and the denial of satisfaction to their lusts. Who then would not say, "Gather not my soul with sinners?"

Lastly, Because being once gathered with them, they will never more be separated from among them. As the tree falls it must lie. They that are gathered with sinners at death, must be gathered with them at the resurrection, and shut up with them in the pit of destruction for ever.

I shall now make some application of this subject.

USE I. Of information. We may learn from it,

1. That the state and condition of sinners, whatever advantages of ease, wealth, &c. it be attended with, is a miserable one, to be pitied, lamented and avoided, not to be envied or desired. For it is impossible that all the wealth of this world should counterbalance the wo in the other world that is abiding them. Who would desire his lot with a condemned malefactor, though he fared deliciously every day; or quietly enjoy the best covered table, while a sword was hanging by a hair over his head?

2. That the great business of our life is to learn to die, and the great business which we have to do in this world is to prepare for the other, Job 14:14 "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." Here we do but sojourn, there we are to abide: here we are on our journey, there we come to our dwelling-place: and it is of the utmost consequence which part of that world we arrive in, Matth. 16:26. And they who do not see to that in the first and chief place, are fools with a witness.

3. That we are in hazard of miscarrying with reference to our abode in the other world; and carelessness about it will have a fatal issue. If all were to be gathered there into the happy receptacle without destinction, we might be easy; but it is not so; there will be a gathering into the region of horror, as well as into the region of bliss. And we will be sure to miscarry, if we do not in time secure our happy reception, in the way appointed.

Lastly, That the hazard of miscarrying in it should quicken us to suitable endeavours for securing our happiness in the other world. Our eternal state is our greatest concern, and every thing being to be plied according to its weight, it should be seen to with the greatest care, and nothing laid in the balance with it, neither cares, profits, nor pleasures.

USE II. Of reproof to several sorts of sinners. It reproves,

1. The careless sinner, who is careless about the other world, and his future state. How many are there, who never once seriously consider, where they are like to take up their abode in the other world? But they live as if there were no other life but this. O what do you think, that you will get away in a dream to the region of bliss, that you will stumble into heaven which you are not looking out for? No; you may drop into the pit that way, but not get up into the holy hill, Isa. 32:9, 10. The foolish virgins that were careless about oil to their lamps, got their head and heart full of care out of time, Matth. 25 and so will ye, if ye continue in that careless temper.

2. The slothful sinner, who cannot bestir himself to be at due pains in this matter. Though such are not quite unconcerned about the other world, yet they do nothing to purpose in it. If lazy wishes and faint endeavours would do it, they would be happy; but they cannot stir up themselves to take hold of an offered Christ, covenant, and salvation,

Isa. 64:7. to cut off offending right hands, and pluck out offending right eyes; to take the kingdom of heaven by force, and press into it. Alas! this is not a business to be managed on the bed of sloth, Eccl. 5:18. Remember the doom of the slothful servant, who was cast into outer darkness, Matth. 25:26, 30.

3. The delaying sinner, who puts off the business from time to time, till it be out of time, and he is ruined. The young put it off till they should become aged, the aged to a sick-bed, and the sick often find they have enough ado otherwise. So the proper time of securing happiness in the other world is lost, as in the case of Felix, Acts 24:25. But why will men delay what must needs be done, or else they are ruined, especially when time is uncertain?

Lastly, The malignant sinner, who hates the society of saints, and seriousness, a religions life and religious exercises; making the society and way of sinners his choice. O what confidence can ye have to cry to God, not to gather your soul with sinners in the other world, who are those in whom is all your delight in this? How can ye think to be gathered with saints in heaven, to whom with their way and exercises you have so great aversion on earth? Nay, that malignity against God's people shews you to be none of them; and you must be gathered to your people, your own people.

USE III. Of comfort to those who are in due care and concern now, that they be not gathered with sinners in the other world. This is a weighty concern to them that have it, and they will need comfort. And there are four things comfortable in it. It is comfortable,

1. That you are in the way of duty with reference to the other world, Matth. 24:46, "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." While others are going on fearlessly, you are looking about you, concerned how it may be with you in the end.

It is a piece of wisdom, and hopeful, thus to be exercised in considering your latter end, Deut, 32:29. God's word speaks comfort to such, Isa. 35:3, 4. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense, he will come and save you."

2. That you take your work in time, while yet there is hope; and so your care and concern may come to issue well, Isa. 32:20. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters." There is no son nor daughter of Adam but will be in that care and concern one time or other; so that there will not be two of the whole herd of sinners that will desire to be gathered together; but alas! with the most part it will be out of time, Matth. 25:11, 12. Now I say it is comfortable in your case, that you timely entertain concern about it, while the judge is on a throne of grace to receive such applications. I may allude to that, 1 Sam. 25:8. "Ye come in a good day;" with 2 Cor, 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

3. This care and concern is wrought in all God's elect, by the Spirit of Christ. The word calls for it, Acts 2:40. "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." The Spirit works it accordingly, Rom. 8:26; 2 Cor. 7:11. He it was that breathed that desire in the Psalmist; and those appetites and desires that are from the Spirit cannot be in vain. So that the care and concern is common to you with all the children of God, who all join you in that spiritual breathing, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

Lastly, You have to do with a good and gracious God, that has no pleasure to the ruin of sinners, Ezek. 23:11, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." No tender man will give

his oath without necessity, or where there is no controversy to be decided by it. So here there is one, namely, the devil allegeth to sinners against God, that there is no pleasing of him, otherwise than in the sinner's ruin, and therefore all care and concern that way is needless. The slothful servant licketh up his vomit, Matth. 25:24, 25. "Lord, (said he) I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth." And God purgeth himself by an oath of it; believe it then no more. Encourage yourself from the goodness of his nature in Christ, be that your care and concern.

(1.) Have you already got your heart's fill of the state and way of sinners out of Christ, so that you desire no more of it, but would fain be out of the reach thereof? The goodness of God's nature in Christ will not suffer the gathering of such a one with sinners in the other world, Psal. 26:4–9. Will a good God take a sinner already groaning under, burdened and wearied with the state and way of sinners out of Christ in this world, and stake him down with them for ever in the other world? No; be it far from him.

(2.) Have you got a longing after holiness, perfect holiness, and a liking of the purity of the shining ones there, that your soul cries, "Gather not my soul with sinners," but with saints in the other world? Truly that is the work of the Spirit of Christ in you; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. 8:7. Hence is the promise, Heb. 8:10. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." And it is the society of sinners, not as sinners, but as miserable, the hypocrite is frightened at; and the society of saints in the other world, not as saints or holy, but as happy ones, that they desire it. It is inconsistent with the goodness of God then to create

such longing and liking, and yet never satisfy it; so to open the month of the soul, and then to put an empty spoon in it.

Object. But a concern not to be gathered with sinners in the other world is a common thing, which Balaam and the foolish virgins had, as well as the godly; what comfort then can be in it, since one may have it, and yet be gathered with them in the end? Ans. There is a very great difference betwixt this concern in sincere Christians and others. There are four things, which, if you find in your concern in this point, you may conclude that you shall not be gathered with sinners in the other world.

1. If their separation from Christ as the chief object of your soul's love, makes you averse to be gathered with them, Psal. 26:8, 9. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth: Gather not my soul with sinners." The ungodly, if all were right to that with them in the other world, could digest that; for Christ is not the chief object of their love. But this argues your esteem of Christ above all, 1 Pet. 2:7. and your desire of communion with him as your chief happiness, Phil. 1:23. You look upon sinners as seated in the other world, and you see Christ is not among them; and since he is not with them, your soul cries, Then, Lord, let not me be with them neither, for the chief object of my love is not among them. If this is the case, truly your soul shall not be gathered with them, John 6:7. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Psal. 73:24, 25. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.

2. If you have a horror of their being left in sin in the other world, as well as of their being laid under punishment there, Rom. 7:24, 25. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this

death! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Nobody believing the unspeakable torment of the damned in the other world, but must have a horror of it, because they love themselves. But laying aside the consideration of that, soberly ask yourselves, what think you of that part of the sentence, "Let him that is filthy, be filthy still," in itself? Abstracting from the torment joined with it, that would be no hard thing to most men, their hearts being wedded to their lusts, and not knowing how to shift without them. If then you find that thought of itself to be killing to you, and sufficient to make a hell; that argues you partakers of the new nature, that hath a horror of sin as its opposite, and desires to be holy and without sin, which is its perfection. And certainly God will not deprive the new nature of its desired perfection, and consequently will not gather a soul thus disposed with sinners in the other world, Psal. 138 ult. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Matth. 5:6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

3. If you are with purpose of heart coming out from among them, out of their society, way, and manner of life in this world. Many would be content to live with them, though not to die with them, Numb. 23:10. But are ye not content to live with them neither, no more than to die with them? Have ye conceived an aversion to the life as well as the death, not only of the grossly wicked, but of all that are out of Christ, strangers to the power of godliness, being drawn to the love and choice of the fellowship of the saints by the lustre of the divine image on them? Fear not, God will never gather you with them in the other world, Psal. 26:4, 5, 9; 1 John 3:14; 2 Cor. 6:17, 18. Their company will not be made your punishment in the other world, that you would not make your choice here.

Lastly, If the hope of not being gathered with sinners in the other world, puts you on the study of universal purity, 1 John 3:3. The hope that ungodly sinners and hypocrites have of this tends to make them secure in sin, and leaves them at ease in the embraces of some one lust or other; the reason is because their concern that way is only to be freed from misery, not from sin. But the hope of the sincere is a lively one, a hope to be freed from sin, 1 Pet. 1:3. and this makes them bestir themselves against it in time impartially, Psal. 119:6.

USE ult. Let me exhort all of you now to be in due care and concern, that your souls be not gathered with sinners in the other world. This due care and concern is very extensive, and therefore I will branch out this exhortation in several particulars. And,

1. Lay the matter of the other world to heart, and be no longer careless about what shall be your lot in it, Rom. 13:11, 12. A careless unconcerned life about the other world, will make a frightful awakening at death, Luke 12:20. If you were to be removed out of a farm or a cot-house, you would look out for another before hand: and since you are to remove out of this world, look out for a comfortable settlement in the other, and shew yourselves men, wise men, and not fools.

2. Delay it no longer; for it is no due concern that admits of one day's delay; the reason is ere to-morrow come, your soul may be gathered with sinners, and staked down with them for eternity, Heb. 3:15. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." No doubt there are many in hell, who once hoped never to come there, and to have set all to rights before gathering time; but the misery was, it came ere they were aware, and swept them away with sinners. They have been carried off in childhood, that hoped to be religious youths; and they have died in their youth who hoped to make all right by the time they

should enter in age. The little sleep, the little slumber they indulged themselves in, proved their ruin; for their poverty came upon them as one that travelleth, and their want as an armed man.

3. Let your souls be now gathered unto Christ by faith in the bond of the covenant, Gen. 49:10. He is the Captain of salvation, and none come to heaven but at his back, John 14:6. as the members of his mystical body, Eph. 5:23. Whosoever are not united to him, and brought personally within the bond of his covenant, will be left to be gathered with sinners. Therefore consider the covenant offered to you in the gospel, and sincerely take hold of it, as you would not so be gathered.

4. Give up with the society of sinners here, I mean not absolutely; but make them no more your choice, your familiar companions; for death will gather every one to his own people; and therefore "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. 13:20. The blessed man is known by the company he chuses, and most delights in, Psal. 1:1. And he that is not concerned to separate from the company of sinners here, is in no due concern not to be gathered with them in the other world; for it is vain to think to live with sinners, and die with saints.

5. Lay by your malignity against professors of religion, against seriousness, and godly exercises. Calmly consider what ye would be at. Are you really not able to endure any appearance of religion, seriousness, and godly exercises? Then there is nothing for you, but to be gathered with sinners in the other world, where you will see nothing like it for ever. But if you have any the least thoughts or hopes of heaven, you are quite unreasonable to think to get there, while you bear such a grudge against the very first draughts of that which is carried to perfection there. I wonder what sort of a heaven

they imagine to themselves, that have a heart rising at holiness; what kind of men and women they expect to see there, that are always sure to have a thrust at any serious person here, however they have a vail to cast over the godless and profane.

6. Associate yourselves with the godly; gather together with those that you would be gathered with in the other world, Psal. 119:63, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee," says David, "and of them that keep thy precepts." If you mind to lodge with them at the journey's end, it is reasonable to travel on the way with them too, and not with those that are holding a quite contrary route. Let not the faults you espy about them make you despise their society; there are no faultless companions to be had in this world; but it must be a dreadful cast of spirit, that makes every body's faults tolerable but theirs. That must spring from a deep-rooted enmity. But a lover of the King will reverence his children, though in rags; and God tries your love to him by the faults he has left in his people, 1 John 5:1, Psal. 16:2, 3.

7. Do not make light of withdrawing or absenting from the congregation of the Lord's people in public ordinances. The Sabbath congregations are the thing that in all the earth is likest to heaven; and therefore they are that which has most of the saint's heart, Psal. 26:8, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." Let the thoughts of the gathering with the one great congregation in the upper house, recommend the gathering together with the congregations in the lower. From whatever principles or motives people forsake the congregations of the saints here in public ordinances, they must either be gathered with them in the other world, or with sinners; there will be no separate heaven for them there.

Lastly, Carefully keep off the way of sinners here, and let your whole life be a going forth by the footsteps of the flock, Cant. 1:7, 8, Heb. 6:12. As is your course now, so must your end be. If you go the way of sinners, in this world, ye will be gathered with them in the other; if ye go the way of saints, ye will be gathered with them there.

To enforce this exhortation,

(1.) Consider the importance of your gathering in the other world, than which nothing can be greater. You have had the other world described to you in both its parts; and I may obtest you by all the joys and glories of heaven, that you lay this matter to heart; and by the dismalness of the place, the horrors of the society, and the dreadfulness of the state of sinners in hell, that you be in concern that your souls be not gathered there with them.

(2.) Make of your other concerns what you will, if you see not to this in the first place, ye are ruined to all intents and purposes, Matth. 16:26. "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?" Nothing will compensate this loss.

(3.) This is the only proper time for that concern, wherein it may be effectual; 2 Cor. 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." If you miss it, in vain will ye cry; for a deaf ear will be given to all your cries, Prov. 1:24, and downwards.

Lastly, The gathering there will be eternal, and unalterable for ever; and therefore it highly concerns you now, that your souls be not gathered with sinners then.

Wherefore, upon the whole, let me obtain of you, (1.) That you will take some serious thoughts of the other world in both parts of it. (2.)

That you will inquire what case you are in for it. And, (3.) That you will lay down measures timely, that your souls be not gathered with sinners there. May the Lord persuade and incline your hearts unto this course.

# THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE IN THIS WORLD TO THE RAISING A GOOD NAME, THE BEST BALANCE FOR THE PRESENT, FOR THE VANITY AND MISERY OF HUMAN LIFE: AND THE GOOD MAN'S DYING-DAY BETTER THAN HIS BIRTH-DAY

The substance of several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in the year 1730

ECCL. 7:1

> A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death, than the day of one's birth.

NEVER man more livelily represented the vanity of this world and human life, than Solomon did, whose wisdom and wealth gave him the fairest occasion to discover the best that could he made of it. He represents it in its best shapes, as a very heap of vanity and vexation, in the preceding part of this book. And indeed the vanity of human life is undeniable. Man, as to this world, is born crying, lives complaining, and after all, dies disappointed. But is there no remedy, no solid consolation in this case? Yes, but it must be brought from the consideration of the other world, and this life improved for reaching a happy life there. "A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

The scope of these words is, to point men away from the vanities of this life, and from this life itself, unto something that is better and

will give rest. Is any man affected with the vanity of human life, and would fain know what is best for him? Then let him know,

1. A good name is best, "better than precious ointment," which was a thing highly prized in the eastern countries. A good name is that savoury character among good men which riseth from a good life, casting forth its savour like good ointment. It is said of Christ, Cant. 1:3, that "his name is as ointment poured forth;" but all the saints partake of that anointing, Psal. 45:7, "God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Wherever grace is, it exerts itself in the course of a gracious conversation, holy actions, which procure a good name to the party, in spite of all that the malice of the world can do. It is not a mere name, which a hypocrite may have; but a name raised on a solid foundation of grace and true piety.

Now that is "better than precious ointment," i. e. the best things of this present world, that carnal men set their hearts on.

(1.) It is better than all the world's wealth, that goes under the name of oil, Deut, 33:24, "And of Asher he said,—Let him dip his foot in oil." To do a good action, is better than to gain a worldly advantage. A course of piety, and the just character of a holy life, is preferable to riches, Prov. 22:1. So the name of poor Lazarus remains savoury, while the name of the rich glutton stinks.

(2.) It is better than all worldly pleasures and delights of sense, expressed by ointment and perfume, Prov. 27:9, "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart." The testimony of one's own conscience for godly sincerity will rejoice the heart more, 2 Cor. 1:12. Lay the perfumed fool on a sick-bed or death-bed, these things avail nothing, while he is galled with the remembrance of an ill-spent life; but conscience of integrity will bear up a man in the face of death, 1 John 3:21. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence

toward God." 2 Sam. 23:5, "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

(5.) It is better than all worldly honours, for kings were anointed to testify the conferring of that dignity on them. Men cannot carry their worldly honours into the other world with them; death treats the king and the peasant alike; but the character of piety outlives death, and will be owned and regarded in the other world, Rev. 3:12. When wicked men shall be condemned in their actions in which they applauded themselves, and others flattered them; the saints will receive Heaven's approbation of their holy actions, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

Wherefore the best thing to balance the misery of human life for the present, is to be good, and do good. That is the great lesson that Solomon gives us here. Look on human life in all the periods of it, childhood, youth, middle age, and old age; and ye will find it is but just so many stages of vanity, whereof some are past, and others passing. Look on it in the various circumstances of it, prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, wealth and penury; and you shall find it but vanity cast in different shapes. Turn up what side of it you will, the young or the old, the single or married state, it is larded with vanity on every side. Only consider it as an opportunity of being and doing good, and so it is a substantial thing; and so very substantial in that respect, that it may well balance all the miseries that attend it. But take away that, and it is at best but an useless burden, Psal. 89:47.

2. Death, the passing into the other world, is best; the dying-day is best, "better than the birth-day." It is hard to believe that; and if men

frame their sentiments according to the prevailing opinion of this world, they will never believe it; but if they frame it according to the doctrine of the other world, they must needs believe it as it is represented in this text.

Ye have heard that there is another world; a lower part of it, the region of horror; to which death is the passage for sinners, whose dying day must therefore be their most doleful day, in the view of which ye have been exhorted to cry, "Gather not my soul with sinners." But ye have heard also, that there is a higher part of that world, a region of perfect bliss and happiness, to which death is also the passage for saints or persons that have got the good name; now if you believe that doctrine, you must needs conclude from it, that the day of such a one's death is better than the day of his birth, which is the thing here meant. And since we have offered a view of the dark side of the cloud, the gathering with sinners in the other world; it is just we offer a view too of the bright side of the cloud, the gathering with saints there.

There is a comparison here of two of the days of human life, both of them specially remarkable. The one is the first day of our life here, the birth-day, wherein we come into this world out of the womb. The other is the last day of our life here, the death-day, wherein we go out of this into the other world. The question is, Which of the two is the best day, the most desirable in itself? The subject is determined in the first clause, to be the man with the good name, who has been savoury in his life, being and doing good. And Solomon decides the question with respect to such a one, roundly telling us, The day of death is better than the day of his birth, Heb. namely, the man with the good name. When he came into the world at his birth, his friends rejoiced, they thought it a good day; when he goes out of this world into the other, they mourn, thinking it a sad day. But think they as

they will, it is the best day of the two; and were it not the partition betwixt the two worlds, we would see it to our conviction.

Wherefore the best thing to balance the misery of human life for the future to a good man, is to die, and leave this world and the life in it. That is the lesson we are taught here. The weight of glory that death will bring him to in the other world, will absolutely downweigh all the misery of life here. The bliss of the lodging he comes to there, will more than compensate all the hardships of the way; that he shall say, "O that happy life in the lower world, that made way for my entrance hither into this upper world! Who would not gladly have embraced Methuselah's tack of that life, for to get this!"

From the text thus explained, ariseth the two following points of doctrine, viz.

DOCT. I. The improving of our life in this world to the raising up a well grounded good name and savoury character in it, is the best balance for the present for the vanity and misery attending our life, better than the most savoury earthly things.

DOCT. II. To one who has so lived, as to obtain the good name, his dying-day will be better than his birth-day, quite downweighing all the vanity and misery of life in this world.

I shall speak to each of these in order.

DOCT. I. The improving of our life in this world to the raising up a well grounded good name and savoury character in it, is the best balance for the present for the vanity and misery attending our life, better than the most savoury earthly things.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Lay before you some things supposed in it.

II. Shew what is the well-grounded good name, that is the balance of the vanity and misery of this life.

III. What is the improvement of life, whereby that good name may be raised.

IV. Confirm the point, That this improvement of life is the best balance for the present for the vanity and misery attending our life, better than the most savoury earthly things.

V. Make some improvement.

I. I shall lay before you some things supposed in the doctrine.

1. It supposeth that there is a vanity and misery that is the inseparable attendant of human life in this world. No man in life is free of it, nor can be, Psal. 39:6, "Surely every man walketh in a vain shew." No circumstances of life can avail to the shifting it off; it accompanies the crown and sceptre, as well as the beggar's seat on the dunghill, Eccl. 1:2. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher vanity of vanites, all is vanity." Psal. 39:5. "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Men may change their wilderness-station, but while here will still be in a wilderness. They may get out of one vanity and misery, but it will always be but a falling into another.

2. Every man will find himself obliged to seek for some allay of that vanity and misery of life, that he may be enabled to comport with it, Psal. 6:6. This makes a busy world, every one seeking something to make his hard seat soft. For the whole world is in a sickly condition of spirit, witness their need of the great Physician, Matth. 9:12.

Hence there is a mighty restlessness, turning and shifting from one thing to another, for some allay of the present uneasiness.

3. It is natural for men to seek an allay to the vanity and misery of life, in earthly things, Psal. 6:6. "There may be many that say, Who will shew us any good?" They seek precious ointment, as it were, to master the rank savour that is about human life. For this cause the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world are sought after, and employed as plasters for that sore; that, by means of them, they may be enabled to comfort with the vanity and misery of life.

4. But the best of earthly things will make but a sorry plaster for that sore; they will not be able to balance the vanity and misery of life, but with them all life may be rendered sapless, through the predominant vanity and misery of it. All Haman's honours were not able to season life to him, while Mordecai bowed not; neither could Ahab's kingdom, in the want of Naboth's vineyard; nor Belshazzar's festival joys and pleasures, while the hand-writing was seen on the wall. That way it but seeking to allay one vanity with another; a dead fly will make the ointment itself stink; a day's pleasure will not balance an hour's pain; nor honour for years, blot out the disgrace that a moment fixes.

Lastly, Howbeit, the improving of life to the raising a well-grounded good name, will balance the vanity and misery of life effectually; so that he who has reached that kind of living, has what is well worth the enduring all the miseries of life for. There is an excellency and good in it, that downweigh all the evils attending life.

II. I shall shew what is the well-grounded good name, that is the balance of the vanity and misery of human life. It is the name of religion, raised from the reality thereof in the person that has the name. And it is, I say,

1. The name of religion, and no less; for there is nothing truly good separate from religion, Matth. 7:18. Men have attempted to raise themselves a name from other things, some from their wealth, some from their wit, valour, buildings, beauty, &c. But these may make a vain name, which at death will go out with a stink without religion. Only religion can make a good name, being the only thing of value with a good God, and among good men; without which all things else will be but cyphers, the name of nothing.

2. It is raised on the reality of religion, and no less; for a mere shew of religion is but a vain and empty thing, which will dwindle to nothing with other vanities. That will make but a name before men, not before God; "I know you not," said the Bridegroom to the foolish virgins, Matth. 25:12. They come under the name of virgins, but Christ will not know them by that name.

We may take up that good name in three parts.

1. Friend of God, Jam. 2:23. That is the part of the good name, that designs the man's state of peace and reconciliation with God through Christ. There is no good name without this, Jam. 4:4. And this is the name put on all endowed with true religion, John 15:14. a name better than sons and daughters, in whom men's name is preserved, Isa. 56:5.

2. Faithful to the Lord, Acts 16:15. That designs the man's temper and way towards God. He is a sincere and upright Christian, endeavouring to approve himself to God in all things. He makes the will of God his rule, the word of God his oracle, the love of God his principle, and the glory of God his chief end in life. A noble name, that God will know him by, in the other world, Matth. 25:21. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," &c.

3. Useful to men, serving his generation, Acts 13:35. That designs the man's temper and way towards his neighbour. He is not a common nuisance of society, ensnaring and mischievons to those about him, whereby some make themselves a name that will rot, Eccl. 9 ult. Nor yet an useless member of society, concerned for none but himself. But a profitable member, laying out himself to do good to others as he has access, Esth. 10 ult.

This is that good name that is the best balance for the present, for the vanity and misery of human life.

III. We come next to shew what is the improvement of life, whereby that good name may be raised. This is a weighty point that nearly concerns us all, to know those things that will make our life savoury before God and men. I shall unfold it in the following particulars. If you would raise up to yourselves that good name in life,

First, Improve your life by a personal and saving entering into the covenant of grace, and uniting with Christ, by believing on his name. Here are three things which we have access to in this life, as vain and miserable as it is, and in it only; and if we so improve it, we will be called friends of God.

1. Personally entering into his covenant, Isa. 56:4, 5. "For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." The name of your father Adam's house, given you at your birth into this world, is stranger and enemy to God, Eph. 2:12; Rom. 8:7. In the gospel God's covenant of peace is offered to you; consider while you are in life, what you are doing, and take hold of that covenant, with all the seriousness and awful

solemnity ye are capable of in life. So shall ye get the good name, the new name, friend of God, as confederate with Heaven, Eph. 2:12, 13. If ye ask how ye shall do that? the answer is,

2. Unite with Christ. He is the head of the covenant, and we enter into it by uniting with him, John 10:9. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Isa. 49:8. "I will give thee for a covenant of the people." Uniting with Christ, thy soul shall be wrapt up in the bond of the covenant of grace, made with him, for him and his; even as thy relation to Adam wraps thee up in the bond of the covenant of works, made with him for him and his. Come then, thou art now in life, improve it to thy union with Christ; so shalt thou have a ground whence the good name must infallibly rise, Col. 1:27. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Make this the business of your life in the first place, to get Christ in you. Live and travail for this, Gal. 4:19. It alone is able to balance all the misery of life. If ye ask, how ye shall unite with Christ, the answer is,

3. Believe on his name; that is the way to unite with him, Eph. 3:17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Believing on him, thou shalt be in a state of union with him, as the branches with the vine, and the superstructure with the foundation; so shalt thou be called by a new name, the good name. John 1:12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Ques. But what is it to believe on his name?

Ans. 1. To believe the gospel-report; namely, That Christ is by his Father's appointment the Saviour of the world, and your Saviour to save you from sin and wrath, Isa. 53:1. "Who hath believed our report?" compared with 1 John 4:14. "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world."

and 5:11. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son." Set yourself to believe this; ye will not find it so easy, as you imagine perhaps. But it is impossible to receive Christ, or believe on him, without believing this first, John 3:27. "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."

2. To trust on him accordingly, that he will save you from sin and wrath, freely by his grace, through his righteousness, blood, and Spirit, Acts 15:11. "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved. Rom. 1:17. "Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Set yourself to this; for herein the uniting nature of faith lies, inasmuch as in this act of trusting on him, the soul is, (1.) Divorced from sin, as well as careful to escape wrath; the heart being alienated from sin, set to be rid of it and made holy, which is the immediate effect of saving illumination, the discovery of Christ made to the soul in the gospel by the Spirit working faith, 1 Cor. 2:4, 5; Matth. 13:45, 46. (2.) Carried wholly off its own bottom for these ends, self-confidence, creature-confidence, law-confidence; i. e. confidence in any work or good qualification of our own, are all undetermined together by a touch of heaven's hand; so that the soul has not one foot left to stand on, not a twig without or within him to grip to before the Lord but Christ alone, and what is in Christ, his free grace, righteousness, blood and Spirit, Phil. 3:3. (3.) Laid wholly on Christ for these ends, as the stones of the building on the foundation, cleaving and clinging to him, relying on him, who if he should fail it, all would come down together. But it is impossible that such an event should take place, since Christ is the foundation stone laid by his Father, to bear all the weight of sinners laid on him; and therefore knits with the soul laid on him, and secures it for ever, 1 Pet. 2:6.

Improve your life then to a personal and saving entering into the covenant of grace, and uniting with Christ by believing on his name. So you shall have the good name which ye shall never lose, that will balance all the vanity and misery of life, and make your dying day better than your birth-day.

Secondly, Improve your life to a living a life of faith in this world; so shall ye get the good name, "Faithful to the Lord;" Gal. 2:20, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Rev. 17:14. "They that are with him, are called, and chosen and faithful." All the improvement most men make of life, is to live a life of sense, eat, drink, do worldly business, sport, play, &c. So all that they make of life, is the life of a beast, which have the delights of sense in greater perfection than what they for their hearts can reach. And so their name shall be written, in the earth, an ill name, a disgraceful name, Luke 12:20, Jam. 4:3, 4. But live ye a life of faith, and so ye will make of your life the life of a Christian, a saint, a child of God, an heir of glory, a faithful servant to the Lord.

Now to raise up the good name, "Faithful to the Lord," by a life of faith, your faith must cast your life into the following mould, which will be impracticable but by faith.

1. Let it be a life of believing and dependance on God in Christ for all. Live believing his word in all parts of it, 2 Chron. 20:20.; believing the divine authority, equity, and goodness of his commands, Psal. 119:128. the faithfulness and certainty of his promises, Rom. 4:20, 21. the justice and truth of his threatening, Isa. 56:2. Depend entirely and trust on him at all times, Isa. 24:4. for all things you need, Prov. 3:5, 6. for happiness, light, strength, and success in temporals and spirituals. Depend on him alone while ye live.

(1.) For your happiness and soul's rest, Heb. 4:3. Never expect it from the most promising creature, but look for it firmly from a God in Christ, Psal. 17 ult.

(2.) For light to know your duty in all the steps of your way. Never venture yourself to your own management, be the way never so plain, Jer. 10:23. for at that rate ye stumble in an even road. But let your hope be in the promise, Psal. 32:8. "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eyes."

(3.) For strength to perform every duty in life to God or man. Lean not to your own stock of strength and resolutions. The good name is that of a branch, not of a root, 2 Tim. 2; 1 John 15:5. And so no duty whatsoever that God calls you to, shall be above your reach as to acceptable performance, Phil. 4:13. "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me."

(4.) For your success in all ye set yourselves to in your temporal and spiritual concerns, Josh. 1:8, 9. Remember always that Heaven keeps the negative over us in all our attempts, Lam. 3:37. Hence it is said, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," &c. Eccl. 9:11.

2. Let it be a life of devotion, Psal. 119:38. That makes a part of the good name in the Bible, despise and scoff at it who will, Luke 2:25. of Simeon it is said, he was just and devout. And the name of devout Christians will be in honour, when the memory of the profane shall rot. Let it be a life of devotion.

(1.) In respect of the truths of God made known to you, reckoning every truth sacred, and cleaving thereto against all hazards and opposition, Prov. 23:23. I do not advise you to break with every one

that is not of your mind, but only to quit no truth to any. This the apostle directs, Phil. 3:15, 16, "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let as walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." And devotion leads to it. It is a part of the comfort at death; hence Paul says, 2 Tim. 4:7. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

(2.) In respect of the worship of God, Phil. 3:3. If you have a father, you must honour him; if a master, you must regard him; otherwise you will have a very ill name, and you will smart for it. Ye have a God that made you, if ye live regardless of him, where is your good name, what kind of a day can ye imagine the day of death will be to you? But be devout worshippers of him, in secret, private, and public, shewing reverence in the frame of your heart and outward gestures; so shall ye have the good name.

3. Let it be a life of heavenly-mindedness, and contempt of the world, Phil. 3:20. So Enoch got the good name of walking with God, Gen. 5:24. and the worthies, Heb. 11:13–16. Covetousness and worldly-mindedness in professors of religion mar their good name, Phil. 3:19. It was a noble testimony that Luther had from his enemies, Germanica illa bestia non curat aurum. Friends of the world cannot be faithful to God.

4. Let it be a life of Christian deportment under trials and afflictions in life. Every body will have something laid before them for their trials, wherein they must stand candidates for the other world, to be disposed of there as they acquit themselves in their trials for it here, Rev. 3:21. So patience, resignation, holy cheerfulness under the cross, are necessary to raise the good name, Jam. 1:4. And by an

unbecoming carriage under the cross, people may lose all the good name they had before, Mark 10:21, 22. Wherefore the exhortation is, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him," Heb. 12:5.

Lastly, Let it be a life of uprightness, the same where no eye sees you but God's, as where the eyes of men are upon you. The faith of God's omniscience leads to this; hence Joseph said when tempted to sin by his lewd mistress, Gen. 39:9, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" O what name do the practisers of secret wickedness think they will have with God, who are at liberty to sin if they can do it unseen of men? God will read out their name with disgrace before all the world at length, Prov. 26:26, "Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be showed before the whole congregation."

Thirdly, Improve your life to the living of a life beneficial to mankind, profitable to your fellow-creatures, diffusing a benign influence through the world, as ye have access; so that when you are gone, the world may be convinced they have lost a useful member that sought their good; so shall ye have the good name, "Useful to men," Acts 13:36. But there is a fourfold life that will raise this name.

1st, The noxious life, that some live in the world like foxes in the mountains, biting, devouring, and worrying others; they cause their terror in the land of the living, but will leave their name for a curse. Better one had never been in the world, than to be in it for mischief; to be in it, as mice and rats are in it, destroying much good.

2dly, The trifling life, that some live in the world, like the leviathan in the sea, Psal. 106:29; laughing, sporting, playing, idling, and trifling away a lifetime, without doing any substantial good for themselves or

others. Such make their life a dream, and their death will be a terrible awakening.

3dly, The selfish life, that some live in the world, like the oyster within its own shell, careful for nothing but their own sweet self, Phil. 2:21. The world will be at no loss for the want of them, reaping no advantage by the having of them. If they were to go out of the world, there is none before them in heaven that ever they helped a step forward to it, to receive them into everlasting habitations, Luke 16:9.

4thly, The carnal earthly life, that some live in the world, like the mole ever digging in the earth, never looking upward. These are busy in life, but doing nothing, nothing to the purpose of a better world. They may indeed be some way useful to others, but then it is only as the brutes are useful in things of this world. But that will never raise to men the name of Christian usefulness.

But there is an edifying life that will raise it, 1 Cor. 8:1, "Charity edifleth." The love of our neighbour springing from the love of God, will set men to seek the good of their neighbours, and so edify or build up the world, in which live so many to destroy and pull down. If we live to ourselves, we will die to ourselves too. But let us know that we are to live in this world for the honour of God, and for the good of mankind our fellows in it; and we miss the most noble end of human life, so far as we miss of these.

There is reason that every one ask himself, For what use am I in the world? How do I fill up my room in it for the common good? And if we mind for happiness in the other world, we must set ourselves to be useful to men in this world, and live to be useful in it, Rom. 14:19, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Chap. 15:2, "Let every one

of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." We are members one of another; and that member that is not useful for the rest, is a rotten member, to be cut off.

Object. Magistrates and ministers may, but what access have we to be useful to the world, or to raise up that good name to ourselves? Ans. Follow these rules of life, and ye shall raise to yourselves the good name, how private soever ye be.

1. Cast the world a copy by your good example, Matth. 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Many an ill example is set before them for their destruction, Matth. 18:7. Give them your good example yet for their edification; and live as meanly and privately as ye will, ye shall be as useful in the world, as a beacon is at sea letting shipmen see the rocks they are to hold off, Phil. 2:15, 16, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." And give them a good example,

(1.) Of devotion and piety towards God, in a strict and religious observance of your duty towards him. This will be a practical testimony for him, a light that will condemn the world's profane contempt of him, Prov. 28:4.

(2.) Of exact justice and truth, in all your doings and sayings with men, Zech. 8:16, "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates." The world is sunk in a gulph of injustice and falsehood, and the multitude of those that make no conscience of justice in their deeds and truth in their words, is so great, that they are thought nothing of. Come, row against this stream.

(3.) Of sobriety in moderating your own passions, with a spirit of peacefulness, meekness, and forbearance, Matth. 11:29. This is necessary for the good name, and without it it will be marred, Prov. 25 ult.

This is a life-preaching of the gospel to the world, to which every one of you has access, Tit. 2:11, 12, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly righteously, and godly in this present world." And that is an useful man in the world, that on good grounds can say, when he is to leave it, with the apostle, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe," 1 Thess. 2:10.

2. Be of a beneficent disposition, disposed to do good to mankind as you have access, Gal. 6:10. Some are of the household of faith, have a special concern to do good to them; others are not, ye must have a concern for them too; though they are not saints, they are men of the same common nature with yourselves, Luke 6:35. We should greedily embrace an opportunity of doing good to others, thinking with ourselves, That is the proper business of our life. And be disposed to do good,

(1.) In temporals as ye have access, Heb. 13:16. "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." There is nobody but some one time or way or other may be profitable to others. The duties of humanity are of great usefulness in the world, being kind, merciful, and compassionate to them that are in distress, or need, Col. 3:12. It has a great encouragement by promise, Prov. 3:9, 10; Psal. 41:1, &c.

(2.) In spirituals. There are none of the children of Adam, but have immortal souls that must live for ever. And true grace is natively communicative, as one candle serves to light another, Gen. 18:19. "I know him," says God of Abraham, "that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." And says the woman of Samaria to the men of the city, John 4:29. "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" So ye should be ready to be useful to others, according to their spiritual exigence, instructing the ignorant, warning the secure, encouraging good motions, bearing down bad ones, &c.

3. Lay out yourselves to forward the usefulness of others, 1 Cor. 16:10, 11. Whomsoever ye see disposed and employed to be useful, help them forward, facilitate their work, strengthen their hands what you can, so shall ye be useful to the greatest purposes at second hand. The water cannot grind the corn, but it can turn about the wheel, and the wheel the millstone, and so the millstone will grind it, and so the water is useful for grinding, in such sort that when it fails there is no doing it. So the meanest of the Colossians could be useful for declaring the mystery of Christ, Col. 4:3. "Withal, praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds." People generally think little of weakening the hands of those that are useful; but I have often thought that it is one of the most miserable uses of being in the world, to be in it for a weight hung upon them that would be useful, Matth. 13:13.

Lastly, Be conscientious in the performance of the duties of your station and relations, 1 Cor. 7:24. "Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God." That is the sphere of usefulness that God has allotted to you; every one may be useful that way; and

no body can be useful otherwise, whatever they may vainly imagine. It is exemplified in the case of the priests, Mal. 2:6; of wives, 1 Pet. 3:1; and of servants, Tit. 2:9, 10. To pretend to usefulness without our sphere, is the effect of pride and presumption, and is the same absurdity in moral conduct, as it would be in nature for the moon and stars to set up for the rule of the day, the sun contenting himself with the rule of the night.

Thus ye have the improvement of life, by which the good name may be raised.

IV. I proceed to confirm the point, That this improvement of life is the best balance for the present, for the vanity and misery attending our life, better than the most savoury earthly things. And here I shall shew,

1. That it is the best balance for the present, for the vanity and misery of life.

2. That it is better than the best and most savoury earthly things.

First, I am to shew, that this improvement of life is the best balance for the present, for the vanity and misery of life.

1. Hereby a man answers the end of his creation, for which he was sent into the world; and surely the reaching of such a noble end is the best balance for all the hardships in the way of it. The merchant toils in travelling, the husbandman in plowing and sowing; but the gaining of their end downweighs all that toil to them. The chief end of man's life in the world is to enjoy God as our friend, to be dutiful and faithful to him as our Benefactor, and useful to men our fellow-creatures; if we reach that noble end, what matter what hardships we

made through unto it? If we miss it, we have nothing that will counterbalance them.

2. It brings such a substantial and valuable good out of our life, as will downweigh all the inconveniences that attend our life in the world. Gather the vanities and miseries of human life together, its frailties, weaknesses, disappointments, crosses, &c., they will make a great heap; and put them in the balance with bare life itself, with mere worldly comforts and conveniences, they would downweigh it, Psalm 89:47. One may say, these comforts are not worth the living for, at the rate of that vanity and misery that attend them. But here are three things, namely, our own happiness in God's favour, the honour of God, and the good of mankind; any one of these, and much more all of them together, is worth living for under all the inconveniences of life, and will downweigh all the misery of life in this world; there being more good in the one, than there is evil in the other.

3. It brings such valuable good into our life, as more than counterbalanceth all the vanity and misery of it. And that is, (1.) A present comfort and satisfaction, within one's self, 2 Cor. 1:12. The soul-satisfaction there is in the reflection, that God is one's friend, that they have got something done for the honour of God, and for the good of their fellow-creatures, is enough to counterbalance the vanity and misery of life, Prov. 14:14. (2.) A future prospect, namely, of complete happiness, which must needs turn the scales entirely, be the miseries of life what they will, Rom. 8:35–39.

Lastly, That good name well grounded is a thing that may cost much indeed, but it cannot be too dear bought, Prov. 23:23. Whatever it cost you, you will be gainers, if ye get it, Phil. 3:8. Let men and devils raise the market to the highest pitch they can to increase the

difficulty of your obtaining it, they can never raise it so high as to give you ground to stop bidding for it. This has been the concurring testimony of all the saints, confessors, and martyrs from the beginning, Heb. 11:1–39.

Secondly, I shall show that this improvement of life is better than the best and most savoury earthly things.

1. It will give a greater pleasure to the mind, than any earthly thing can do, Prov. 3:17; Psalm 4:7; 2 Cor. 1:17. This appears in its bearing up the heart, under the greatest trials and hardships. What can all the delights of sense, profits, and pleasures of the world, avail a dying man? But this good name rejoiceth the heart in the face of death. This made confessors joyful under the loss of their substance, and martyrs cheerfully embrace flames and gibbets.

2. It will last longer than they will all do, Psalm 112:6. Abraham was rich in silver and gold, and Job in stocking: but these things of theirs are all gone now, but their good name they raised to themselves is yet to the fore. All earthly things have a principle of corruption in them, rust eats the silver, moths eat the fine clothes, and our bodies themselves will rot; only the good name is incorruptible, and will not be eaten up either by the teeth of malice or time, Is. 56:5.

3. It is the only thing we can keep to ourselves in the world to our advantage, when we leave the world. We must all leave the world, and then whatever riches, wealth, honours we have in it, we must leave them to others; only what name we leave behind us, we will keep to ourselves when we are gone, we will be our own heirs in that, Matt. 6:19, 20. If it be an ill name, there is our disadvantage; we leave nothing to ourselves in the world, but what stinks in it. It it be the good name, it will be savoury after us, when we are away. So,

4. The good name will, after we are away, be savoury in the world, when the things that others set their hearts on will make them stink when they are gone. How savoury is the name of Lazarus, Luke 16 at this day, notwithstanding all his poverty and sores? How is the name of the rich man buried with himself, known only by his being a sensual gluttonous man, a name that every one abhors? Days have been, wherein some have been rigid oppressors, and raised wealth to themselves that way; while others were patient under their oppressions. There have been great and honourable men in the world, some of them sitting on a throne, who lived in whoredom, persecution, blood, and murder; while others have Christianly submitted to be pent up in prisons, shot, hanged on gibbets by their orders; they are all gone now, the oppressors and persecutors, as well as the oppressed and persecuted. I appeal to the conscience of every one, which of their names is most savoury now, and which of the two would ye choose for yourselves if ye could?

Lastly, The good name will go farther than the best and most savoury things of the earth. Mary pours a box of precious ointment on Christ, which no doubt sent its savour through the whole house; but Christ paid her for it with the good name, that should send its savour through the whole world, Matt. 26:13. "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." But ye may think, we can have no hope that ever our good name will go that wide. That is a mistake; for if we raise ourselves the good name, it will certainly be published before all the world at the last day, Rev. 3:5, and we will carry it over the march betwixt the two worlds into the other world, ver. 12. The name of kings, princes, nobles, gentlemen, &c. will go no further with people than this world: there will be an absolute levelling of mankind in the other world;

these great names will not take place there, but the good name will, and make the only difference.

I come now to the improvement of this subject.

USE I. Of information. This doctrine informs us that,

1. There is a way to get the vanity and misery of this life balanced even for the present; so that one may get a sufficient sweetening to all the bitterness of it, that they may not quite weary of life, but patiently wait their change. This discovery should be very acceptable, because it is seasonable, to all; and all should set themselves to the improving of it, as needing it.

2. That way is the only way of a religious life, in faith and holiness. By such a course, and no other, can the good name be raised. It is not being great, but good; not being high, but useful, that will raise it. In vain do men think to make themselves a name by their wealth and honour, while they are not careful to improve these to the glory of God and the good of others; for all they will get thereby will be but a blaze of a name, that will soon go out with a stink; or to balance the miseries of life, by the chase of worldly profits and pleasures; but these they will find attended with vanity and misery. But faith and holiness will make a lasting good name.

3. People ought to be concerned for a good name as a most precious thing; and therefore both to be and to appear good, both to have a holy practice and a holy profession; the latter as well as the former being necessary to raise it, and the former as well as the latter. A holy practice without a holy profession is a contradiction; for the one is a necessary part of the other, which is a light that must needs discover itself, Matt. 5:16; Psalm 2, 15, 16. A holy profession without a holy practice is pharisaical and hypocritical; and the name it will raise

being without a root, will be but for a moment, and that before men only.

4. The right improving of life is the way to the good name. It is the way to obtain it, and secure it. Thus every one has access to it, Isa. 56:4, 5. "For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant," &c. Sons and daughters must die themselves, and their name be extinct; flourishing families may soon be rooted out. But a life rightly improved will leave a savoury name when it is at an end; and will keep up the name of those that have neither son nor daughter, and that for ever.

USE II. Of reproof to,

1. Those who are in no concern for a good name. It is pitiful trifling indeed for men to hunt for an empty name before the world, in the way of vain-glory, Matth. 6:2. But they that live careless of a well-grounded good name, being careless of their name, are careless of their souls too. They value not what he thought or said of them never so truly, so that they can but please themselves, and satisfy their own lusts for the present; that is the life of brutes concerned only for the present times, not for the time after death. It is a sad life, to live a life of sin, and afterward to leave our name for a curse.

2. Those who set up for a name, but are in no concern to improve their life for the honour of God and good of mankind. They will never get the good name that way; they may get a vain name, or an ill name. Faith and holiness are the only pillars to rear up the good name upon.

2. Those who, under the vanity and misery of life, seek for this and the other comfort of the world to support them, but never set

themselves to a Christian improvement of life to balance their afflictions and hardships. That is to be solicitous for cure, and yet to stand off from the soverign never-failing remedy.

USE ult. Of exhortation. Let the vanities and miseries attending this present life move and engage you to improve life for raising up to yourselves the good name, as the best thing to balance them for the present. Seriously consider the vanity and misery of life, and let the view of them spur to a Christian improvement. And for this cause consider,

1. What a vain and miserable thing your life on earth is, if you make not something of it for an after life, Psal. 39:6. It is a fleeting, passing vanity, a vapour, a puff of wind that will soon be away. The bloom of youth soon fades, its vigour decays, and man goes as fast down as ever he rose up, and sometimes is pulled down suddenly. Every age and condition is attended with so many miseries thereto allied, that there is no rest in any part of it.

2. There is no cure for the vanity and misery of life to drive them away. Men are still working at that indeed; but in vain, Eccl. 1:15. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered." Ye may as well think to turn the winter into summer, and clear the air of midges flying about in a warm summer-day. The removal thereof is reserved for the other life in the other world; but while men live in this world, there will be vanity and misery attending them.

3. The only thing valuable in this life, is, that it is an opportunity for raising a good name, that may pass with us in the other world. That is an advantage of this life that is not in the other, Eccl. 9:10. Isa. 38:19. Take it by this handle, and you have it as a valuable good

among your hands; a seed-time for eternity, an apprenticeship for heaven, a tide for Immanuel's land.

4. Every piece of the vanity and misery of this life, that comes on you, is a providential call to you to improve it as such an opportunity. The language thereof is, "Arise, depart, this is not your rest;" Cant. 4:8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the Leapords." Every thorn of uneasiness you find in life, is a warning to you to leave seeking your satisfaction in the empty creation, and to take up your soul's rest in God.

5. To improve it so will give a present ease and relief under the burden; though it will not take it off your back, it will strengthen you, and make you go more lightly under it, 2 Cor. 4:17, 18. It will give you more effectual consolation under them, than all the comforts of the world can. Though ye will still be in life but as pilgrims, yet it will give you a song in the house of your pilgrimage.

It will secure you a happy life in the other world, where none of these vanities and miseries shall ever have place any more for ever. Thus ye will lay up treasure in heaven which cannot be lost, Mat. 6:19, 20. Now is the seed time, then will be the eternal reaping of what is now sown, Gal. 6:8.

Lastly, If ye do not so improve it, you will never taste the happiness of life. You will lose the present life as to any true happiness therein, though you may deceive yourselves with the shadow of happiness therein; yet the truth is, you have no sufficient balance for the vanity and misery of life, which you cannot miss. And then your life in the other world will be a life of unmixed misery, a thousand times worse.

To help you to this improvement,

(1.) Take some time to consider, what name you bear, and how your name savours, in heaven and earth. It will be of little value, to be savoury on earth, if it be not so in heaven too, Rev. 3:1. But if it be savoury in heaven, it will in spite of malice be savoury on earth too, in the consciences of men, 2 Cor. 4:2. Now this will be according to your soul's state before the Lord, and the habitual bent and course of your life and actions, 2 Cor. 2:15, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved." John 15:14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

(2.) Address yourselves to the living a life of faith and holiness, as the proper work of this life while it lasts, Isa. 38:19, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth." Dream away life no longer, trifling away precious time; but open your eyes, rouse up yourselves to mind and ply the end of your creation, 1 Cor. 15:34, "Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame."

Lastly, Keep in view the approach of death, as what shuts up and cuts off working time, John 9:4. Remember it is now or never you must raise the good name. For this present state only is the state of trial; the future state is the state of retribution, wherein each will be rewarded according to his work. As the child born dead into this world, cannot be brought to life by the light thereof; so he that enters spiritually dead, and without the good name, into the other world, will never have life nor good name there.

I shall now proceed to the consideration of the other doctrine from the text, viz.

DOCT. II. To one who has so lived as to obtain the good name, his dying-day will be better than his birth-day, quite down weighing all the vanity and misery of life in this world. This is a parodox, a truth though unlikely. In handling it, I shall,

I. Discover some truths contained in it.

II. Show in what latitude this doctrine is to be understood.

III. Demonstrate the truth of this paradox, this unlikely tale, That the saint's dying-day is better than his birth-day.

IV. Apply the subject.

I. I shall discover some truths contained in this doctrine.

1. However men live, they must die. He that has had a birth-day, whatever he makes of his life, must have a dying day too, Heb. 9:6, "It is appointed unto men once to die." The careless graceless life of the fool will not ward off death, neither will the well-improved life of the wise do it, Psal. 49:10. Both must lay their account with it; they that look and prepare for it will not be disappointed, and those that never mind it, it will certainly overtake.

2. The birth-day is a good day, notwithstanding all the vanity and misery of human life. This is the common sense of mankind about it. And though some have cursed it as the worst of days, that alters not the case, being the effect of a transport of passion. But it is a good day to the relations, notwithstanding the bitterness mixed with it, as our Saviour observes, John 16:21, "A woman when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." And so it is to the party too, as an

entrance on the stage of life whereby God is glorified, and one may be prepared for a better life, Isa. 38:19, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day," &c.

3. The dying-day is not always so frightful as it looks; it may be a good day too. There may be a kind heart, where there is a stern countenance on occasions. As in scouring a vessel, sand and ashes first defiling it makes it to glister; so grim death brings in a perfect comeliness. The waters may be red and frightful, where yet the ground is good, and they are but shallow, passable with all safety.

4. Where the dying-day follows a well-improved life, it is better than the birth-day, however it may appear. There is this difference betwixt them, the birth-day has its fair side outmost, the dying-day has its fair side inmost; hence the former begins with joy; but opens out in much sorrow; the latter begins with sorrow, but opens out in treasures of endless joy. And certainly it is better to step through sorrow into joy, than through joy into sorrow.

5. The dying-day in that case is so very far better than the birth-day, that it quite downweighs all the former vanity and misery of life. The angelic guard conveying Lazarus into Abraham's bosom, left not his sometime sore and pinching straits the weight of a feather, being compared with the honour and glory of it, 2 Cor. 4:17. However heavy their case has been, they remember it then as waters that fail.

Lastly, But it will not be so in the case of an ill spent life. In that case the birth-day will still keep the preference, it will be better than the dying-day, though in the mean time it would have been best of all that such had never been born, Mat. 26:24. For whatever joy or sorrow they have been born to in this world, they will never taste of joy more, but be overwhelmed with floods of sorrow, when once their dying-day is come and over.

II. I shall shew in what latitude this doctrine is to be understood.

1. As to the parties, those who have so lived as to obtain the good name. It is to be understood of them,

(1.) Universally, whatever different degrees be among them in the lustre of the good name. There are children, young men, and and fathers of that name: it is more illustrious with some of them than others; for though all are alike friends of God, yet all are not alike faithful to God, and useful to men, 1 John 2:12. But if they obtain that name at all, the day of their death will be better than that of their birth; for the lowest saint in the other world will be in better case than the greatest of men in this world.

(2.) Inclusively, of elect infants dying in their infancy, before they are capable of being faithful to God, or useful to men; because having the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, whereby they are united to Christ, they are the friends of God, and if their organs were disposed, they would be faithful and useful. The seed of faithfulness and usefulness is in them, 1 John 3:9. Only they lack opportunity, not being arrived at the use of reason, Mat. 19:14.

Let godly parents who have sometimes laid their infants in the grave, for whom they took hold of God's covenant, know for their comfort, that though the names of these babes are forgotten in this world by all but them, because they were so short while in it; they have the good name, a shining name in the other world, that will never be forgotten there. And the day of their death, however heavy it was to you, it was really better than the day of their birth; much sin and misery being hid from their eyes that you have felt.

(3.) Exclusively of all others. They that have not so lived as to obtain the good name, have neither part nor lot in this matter, Prov. 14:32.

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." When men's passions are raised through the miseries of this life fretting them, death appears desirable. So it did to the murmurers, Num. 14:2. So to Judas, under horror for an ill spent life. But they are too hasty and inconsiderate there; for be this life as bad as it will, it is the best they can look for.

2. As to the points in comparison, the birth-day and the dying-day, it is to be understood of them,

(1.) In their formal notion as days of passing into a new world. Consider the day of the saint's birth, as a coming out of his mother's womb into our world, and the light thereof that he never saw before; and the day of his death, as a passing into the other world, which he never saw before neither. And the latter is better than the former, it is the preferable passage; it is better for him when he has got the good name to leave his body a corpse, than it was to leave the womb of his mother when he was a ripe infant.

(2.) In all circumstances whatsoever. The saint's dying-day compared with his birth-day, does so preponderate, that no circumstances whatsoever can cast the balance; suppose him born healthy and vigorous, dying in the most languishing manner, or in the greatest agonies; born heir to an estate or a crown, dying poor at a dyke-side, neglected of all; yet the day of his death, in spite of all these advantages of his birth, is better than the day of his birth.

3. As to the preference, it stands in two points.

(1.) The advantages of the saint's dying-day are preferable to the advantages of his birth-day. Cast up the sums of both in any way you can imagine, and the former will far surmount the latter, as the heavens are above the earth.

(2.) The advantages of the saint's dying-day downweigh all the disadvantages of his birth-day. This is more than the former. A man sows his seed, and he gets a crop better than what he sowed; yet perhaps when he has counted all cost and pains, these overgo the profit. But it is not so in this case. Let all the disadvantages of the saint's birth-day be considered, as a continued chain of numberless links from his birth to his death; and his dying-day will downweigh them all. It will remain an eternal truth, That such a dying day was well worth wading through all these miseries of life unto it, let them appear in their most frightful shapes, that ever they appeared in unto mortals.

III. We are next to demonstrate the truth of this paradox, this unlikely tale, That the saint's dying-day is better than his birth-day. It appears most firm truth from the following considerations.

First, The day of the saint's birth clothed him with a body of weak and frail flesh, and so clogged him; the day of his death looses the clog, and sets him free, clothing him with a house that will never clog him, 2 Cor. 5:1–3. Do not think your bodies are you; they are something belonging to you, but not you; for you will be to the fore, thinking, moving, acting, when they will be lying rotting in the church-yard. It is the soul that is you, which being housed in the earthly tabernacle, is clogged thereby. Indeed the souls of the wicked are clogged far heavier at death, with anguish and despair. But the dying-day sets the saint perfectly free, like a prisoner out of the prison, or a bird out of the cage, Luke 2:29. Consider,

1. In the day of his birth he was an helpless infant, that could do nothing but weep and sprawl; the soul being in a sort sunk in a mass of flesh and blood; but in the day of his death, the soul being divested of that body, will immediately show itself intelligent and active, a

companion of angels, Heb. 12:23; Luke 20:36. And he that could not creep out of harm's way in his birth, will in the day of his death be able to mount upward as on eagle's wings to the highest heavens, like the bird when the stone tied to its foot is taken away, Luke 23:43; for then comes the more full accomplishment of that promise, Isa. 40:31, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

2. In the day of his birth there were many little things necessary to be done about him; he behoved to be washed, and dressed, and swaddled up in clouts; laid to the breast, because he could not lay himself to it; fed, because he could not put the meat in his own mouth. In the day of his death he will need none of these things but flee away dropping his mantle of the mortal body, leaving it to his friends to dispose of it at their will.

3. In the day of his birth he knew not where he was, whither he was going, or to whom; and so he could have neither joy nor grief upon the event, till feeling the change of his condition ungrateful to the present sense he fell a crying. In the day of death he knows very well where away he is going, and that he is going to Christ which is best of all; and so understanding the happy change, rejoiceth in it, 2 Tim. 1:12. It is true, in the way to death, through the weakness of faith, it may be dark with him; but death having done its work, all the shadows will flee away in an instant.

4. In the day of his birth he had long to wait, ere he should ripen, to be of any use for himself, for others, or for God; several days ere he should be capable to smile, weeks ere he should know his mother, months ere he could speak or go, years ere he could know any thing, but about meat and clothes; so many years in infancy, in childhood,

ripening far more leisurely and slowly than young brutes; but in the day of his death he will ripen all of a sudden, he will be at his pitch of glory and happiness in an instant, as when the sun instantly breaks through a cloud, and scatters his beams all over the horizon. There is no infancy nor childhood in the other world, because there is no old age there; but as Adam was created in his perfection, at his full stature; so will the souls of the saints be advanced to their natural perfection as they drop their bodies.

5. In the day of his birth he was exposed to danger, could not miss to catch skaith if all the better care was not taken to prevent it; many a poor child has been stifled in the birth, and careless management of them after their coming into the world has had fatal effects. But in the day of his death he is set beyond the reach of danger; never a gracious soul perished in death, but as soon as the ship of the body was broken in pieces, the passengers were safe ashore; and whatever danger they are in here by Satan and his instruments, they are out of danger when on the other side of death in the other world, Rev. 21:25.

Lastly, In the day of his birth he was born to die, and in the day of his death he dies to live. There is a certain affinity betwixt our birth and death, so that there were never any born that did not also die, except two persons Enoch and Elias; and to make that odds even, Adam and Eve both died, that were never born. So our birth is but the preamble of death, Eccl. 3:2. and when dying comes to an end, being born is at an end too, Luke 20:35, 36. But there is a certain connection between the saint's death and his life, made by virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ, Eph. 2:6. And who can doubt but it is better to die to live, than to be born to die? to put off, than to put on the clog of morality? Now in our birth we put it on, but in our death put it off.

Therefore, the day of the saint's death is better than the day of his birth.

Secondly, The day of his birth clogged him with a body of sin; the day of his death sets him quite free from it, and brings him into a state morally perfect, Heb. 12:23. There was never man born into the world except the man Christ, but be brought a body of sin with him into it, Psal. 51:5, John 3:9. In the day of our birth, we are born with fallen Adam's own image on us; therefore it is particularly marked of Seth the father of the holy seed, Gen. 5:3. Insomuch that even those who are sanctified from the womb, are not to be excepted; for they are sanctified but in part, and still have ground for that cry, Rom. 7:24, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" till death. But then in the day of the saint's death, that body of sin is destroyed and razed quite and clean; and therefore the day of his death is better than the day of his birth.

We may view his case in these particulars.

1. The day of his birth fixed the disease in him, he was born a sinner, Psal. 51:5. Hence it is not as accidental ailments to be removed by human art; but being owing to his birth, it is natural, not to be cured without a miracle, John 9:32. Job 14:4. And coming in by his birth, according to the dispensation and settled order of grace, it is not to be quite removed but by death.

2. The day of his conversion began the cure, loosed sin at the root, though it did not root it up. Thus was the day of his new birth, better than the day of his first birth, 1 Pet. 1:23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." On good grounds is this day preferred to the birth-day, Ezek. 16:4, 8. "As for thy nativity in the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to

supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine." Here the man mismade in his birth-day was new made; mismade after the image of fallen Adam, new made after the image of the second Adam, 2 Cor. 5:17.

3. The intervening days between the day of conversion and the dying-day, the cure is a carrying on. There is a struggle with the disease in order to its removal, which in a measure prevails, though not altogether, Gal. 5:17. And as it is better, there is something to struggle with the disease than that it should bear full sway; so these days, however troublous they are, are better than the birth-day, as it is more hopeful to be groaning on a sick bed, than to be silent in the grave.

Lastly, But the day of his death roots up the disease for good and all, and perfects the cure, leaving not the least remains of it in the soul, Heb. 12:23. The leprosy was in the walls of the house, no scraping nor plastering would remove it, but still it broke out and spread again; but in the day of death, when the walls of the body are taken down and carried out, then there are no more vestiges of the leprosy left to remain. The seventh day of the compassing of the accursed walls of Jericho was the best day of the seven, and the seventh time that day the best time; for then the wall that had stood so long unmoved, fell all down together.

Thirdly, The day of the saint's death carries him into a better world, than the day of his birth did. The other world where Christ is, is a better world than that where we are; in the faith thereof Paul desired

to die, that he might enter into it, Phil. 1:23. The day of his birth brought him into this world, a wilderness; the day of his death takes him into the other world, a Canaan, a better country, a paradise. What was the wilderness to the Israelites in comparison of the promised land? Such is this world to the saints in comparison with the other. Take a swatch of the difference.

1. The day of his birth brought him into a world of uncertainty, set him down on slippery ground; the day of his death takes him into a world of certainty, sets his feet on a rock. When he was born, whatever he was born to, he was born to uncertainties. His health, wealth, ease, yea his life itself, hung always at an uncertainty; he might have been this moment in health, but sick at heart the next. His reputation and character was at an uncertainty; while a man is on this side of the grave, his character in the world is not so established, but by some wrong step or other it may yet be blemished, that he may set in a cloud, that has shone bright. But when the man with the good name dies, he is set beyond all uncertainties more. He is so well that he can never be ill again; the kingdom he receives cannot be moved, Heb. 12:28. However tossed his life was here, he is established there, Rev. 3:12. Death comes up the last of the train of all his uncertainties, establishes his welfare, and seals his good name and character, as no more liable to be blemished.

2. The day of his birth brought him into a world of sin and defilement; but the day of his death brings him into a world of purity, Heb. 12:23. From the time he was born into this world, till he dies out of it, he breathes in and out an infectious air; his own plague sores are running on him; and sees those of others running too; and wherever he is, and with whomsoever, he is in hazard of snares and defilement. But from the moment of death he breathes the pure air of

Immanuel's land, where there are no clouds nor vapours; where all diseases are healed, and no unclean thing can enter. Spotless purity reigns there; there is no hazard more of ensnarement or defilement, Rev. 21:25.

3. The day of his birth brought him into a world of toil and labour; but the day of his death brings him into a world of rest, Rev. 14:13. Much toil there is for the back and belly, and some have more of it than others. But nobody wants it altogether, no not those who go with an even-up back, Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 1:8. They are liable to weariness as well as others, an evidence that their very pleasures, ease, and recreations are a labour. But the other world is a world of rest to the people of God, Heb. 4:9. and of refreshing, Acts 3:19. As God did the works of creation in the six days, and rested the seventh day, so they having improved life laboriously to the obtaining of the good name, shall there have eternal rest. They will rest from all the business this world is now throng about. There will be neither labouring the ground, nor tending cattle in the other world; nor any servile work whatsoever there. There will be no labour of the mind, nor painful study there; but as Solomon lay down and slept, and awakened a wiser man than ever one was by study; so they sleeping the sleep of death, will awake with a pitch of knowledge as far above that which they have at their best now, as the knowledge of a man is above that of a child. The toilsome and laborious duties of religion will have no place there; there will be no watching, no combat, &c. Act they will for ever, but never know weariness more; their work will be their reward, their eternal recreation.

4. The day of his birth brought him into a world of care and sorrow; but the day of his death brings him into a world of ease and joy, Matth. 25:21. Though a man be born to a crown, he will find himself born to cares and sorrows; for as the fairest rose wants not its

prickles, so the most plentiful enjoyments of the world want not their thorny cares, sorrows, and vexations attending them. And often does the most piercing and racking vexation rise from what was taken for the spring of the greatest comfort. But death puts an end to all these in the case of the man with the good name. A drink of the well of life at death extinguishes all care and sorrow for ever, fills with joy unspeakable. Those of them that sighed most here, will sing eternally there; they will sing for ever the song of Moses and the Lamb on the other side of death, though they groaned on this side.

5. The day of his birth brought him into a world of disappointment; but the day of his death brings him into a world surmounting expectation, 1 Cor. 2:9, "Eye hath not seen. nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Man is born to disappointments in this world, especially good men, for whom the Lord minds better things in the other world. All worldly things are greater in expectation than in fruition.

Hence it is the young and unexperienced that have the greatest expectations from them, and fondness for them; because they are not yet cut with so many disappointments, as the aged. This holds in the very brutes, where the young ones are the most lightsome in their kind, the old being as it were cut with disappointments, and cloyed with finding the same thing over and over. But death brings the good man to heavenly things, that will be greater in the fruition than in expectation; as the queen of Sheba said to Solomon of his magnificence, 1 Kings 10:7. "Behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard." But a greater than Solomon will be found there. And death will bring them to a happiness in that world, that has neither brim nor bottom beyond what they could either hear or conceive.

Lastly, The day of his birth brought him into a world of death; but the day of his death takes him into a world of life, Matth. 10:30. This is a dying world we are born into, where some are still coming in, and others going out to make room for them; the children coming in as with a warning away in their hands to the parents, as their children will do to them in their turn. But in the world that death carries him to, there are no marriages, births, nor burials. There the father lives as long as the child, and there is no difference betwixt them more, both living eternally.

Fourthly, The day of his death settles him among better company, than the day of his birth did, Heb. 12:22. and downwards. The comfort of one's being in a place depends much on the society there; unpleasant society or neighbourhood will make the most pleasant place disagreeable. Great is the difference betwixt the society the man was in, in this world, and that which death carries him to in the other world. Let us consider the odds a little,

1. The day of his birth landed him in the arms and embraces of his mother, if she died not in bringing him forth, in which case he behoved to want that kindly reception into the arms of a mother. But in the day of his death he is received into Abraham's bosom, more kindly and warmly than that of any mother, and which death never makes cold and stiff, Luke 16:22.

2. The day of his birth brought him into the arms of his glad father, if he was not dead before he was born; but in the day of his death he is presented to, and received by his heavenly Father into his embraces, whose love and affection to his children is above that of earthly parents, as the heaven is above the earth. God in Christ is an affectionate Father, even love itself, 1 John 4:16. Christ will then receive the soul he died for with a satisfaction surpassing that of the

most tender mother, Is. 53:11. and the Father of our Lord Jesus will behold it as bearing the image of his own Son, and his own image.

3. The father and mother that lovingly embraced him in the day of his birth, may yet come afterward to frown on him, beat him, be bitter against him, they having little comfort in him, or he in them; but when the day of death is once come and over, the child of God shall see no more frowns, beating, nor bitterness. His minority will then be overpast, even the discipline of the covenant, the rod will be for ever laid by. He shall be eternally indulged and comforted. Isa. 66:13.

4. The day of his birth brought him at most into but a small company of brothers and sisters; perhaps he was an eldest child, or an only one; but the day of his death lands him in a numerous family, whereof each one with him calls God in Christ Father, Rev. 14:1. The saints are divided in many families on earth, but in heaven they make but one family, from Adam to the last saint that shall come there, Eph. 3:15. They may look on every saint there as a brother, which will be a comfortable sight of the heavenly multitude, Rev. 6:11.

6. Brothers and sisters afforded him perhaps but a coldrife welcome in the day of his birth, either through a defect of wit to set natural affection astir, or through ill nature, that on the score of interest made them look on him with a grudge; or however they embraced him affectionately in the day of his birth, there were not wanting animosities and heart-burnings in their after-life now and then. But in the day of his death there will be a kindly welcome from all. The parent's affection on earth, and his substance is limited to a certain measure, and the more there are to part them among, the less every one gets; but the love of God, and the treasure in heaven, is infinite

and boundless, fills all to the brim, and yet they cannot exhaust it. So that if there were ten thousand more worlds of saints created, it would rather add to, than diminish from the happiness of every one that is now there. There love is perfected; and as no seeds of hatred are left within or without they will live together in eternal uninterrupted love.

6. In the day of his birth he had the welcome of a few neighbours present at the birth; in the day of his death he will have the welcome of angels, whereof not one only, but several shall carry him into Abraham's bosom, Luke 16:22. with a warmer affection than any woman can receive the new born infant, as the love of angels is more glowing than our earthly love. They will carry him into an innumerable company of them, Heb. 12:22. in whose presence there was joy at his repentance, and much more must there be at his coming home to stray no more, Luke 15:10.

7. Whatever welcome he had in the day of his birth from neighbours or relations, the joy was but on one side; though they rejoiced in him, he could not rejoice in them, for he knew them not; but in the day of his death the joy will be mutual; he that in the day of his birth was not equal to imperfect men, will in the day of his death be equal to the angels. He will know God and Christ, the saints, and angels, and will rejoice in them, as they will rejoice in him.

Lastly, Whatever welcome he had into the world in the day of his birth, he had much uncomfortable society there in the days of his after life, that made him often see himself in his neighbourhood in the world, as in Mesech and Kedar, Psal. 120:5. yea dwelling among lions' dens and mountains of leopards, Cant. 4:8. But in the day of his death he will bid an eternal farewell to all uncomfortable society,

and never see more any in whom he will not be comforted to be with them.

(1.) He was born into a world, where there was a seed of the serpent to turn against him as heart enemies, whenever he turned to God, John 15:19. His living with them, and dealing with them, wove many a snare to his soul, made him many a weary day; and often did he find deep wounds from them, Psal. 58:4. But he will die into a world of profound peace and love, where none of that seed can have access; a world peopled entirely with the seed of the woman, all united to Christ the head by the same Spirit, and among themselves by the firmest bands of love.

(2.) He was born into a world, where even saints had their blemishes, their faults which made their society uncomfortable, and hardly tolerable; so that he had much ado to dwell even with some in whom the grace of God dwelt. But he will die into a world, where saints have no blemish left in them, where there will be no unkindly, peevish, or touchy saints to mar the comforts of society; but all will be perfect in knowledge and love.

(3.) He was born into a world where men have their particular interests to drive, and selfishness causes them to over-drive their neighbours, over all bounds of justice, equity, and love; the greater swallowing up the lesser, till they be planted alone in the earth. But he dies into a world, where there is no divided interest more, but all centre in the glorifying that God, who allows them all a perfect happiness in the enjoyment of him, furnishing all as the sun does this world, without withholding from one what is afforded to another.

(4.) He was born into an ensnaring world, brought into society where he received infection, and did infect again; where he was a

temptation to others, and others were a temptation to him; the consideration whereof made him often weary of the world. But he dies into a world where there is no more of that: were he once past that step, he will be no more a snare to any, nor will any be a snare to him. The leaves of the tree of life are for healing, but there is no more sin nor death.

Fifthly, The day of his death brings him into a better state than the day of his birth did. As the state of glory is better than the state of this life, so is death to one who has well improved life, better than his birth. Great is the odds on the part of the day of death in this case, however advantageous the birth may be.

1. The day of his birth sets him down in a state of imperfection, natural and moral; the day of his death advances him to a state of perfection of both kinds, Heb. 12:23. There is a natural imperfection in us in respect of our very frame, more than in the young of brutes according to their kind; a great imperfection in the necessity of meat, drink, clothing, education, and teaching; the which continues with us all our life long. A moral imperfection much more wretched, in respect of the guilt and corruption of nature we bring into the world with us; the which last also continues with us all our life, though the reigning power of it be broken.

But in the day of his death both these are done away. He arrives at a natural perfection; the soul will be perfected in all its faculties, no more darkness and confusion in its apprehension, no more error or mistake in judging, and therefore no false reasonings. There will be no need of human teaching there; every saint will be a profound philosopher, and an infallible divine, the image of God in them in knowledge of the works and will of God being brought to perfection. The dunghill-work of eating and drinking, the childish work of

busking and decking, they will have no more use for. The saint arrives at a moral perfection that day, grace is perfected, the love of God planted now in the heart, and preserved as a spark of sacred fire in the midst of an ocean of corruption, will dry up that ocean; and they shall be as pure as if they had never sinned, being set beyond the possibility of sin.

2. The day of his birth brought him into a state of probation and trial; but the day of his death brings him into a state of retribution and recompense, 2 Cor. 5:10. The day of his birth set him down on the ice, where he was to have a hit or a miss for eternity; he was brought into this world, to undergo his trials for the other world, in which most men come foul off. There he had Christ and his salvation offered him, to be embraced by faith, which was to be evidenced by steering a course of holiness maugre all opposition. But then he was baited with temptations from the devil, the world, and the flesh; he was brought on a stage of afflictions, crosses, and various hardships, to see if he could bear them for Christ. This made his life a fight, a continued scene of trial.

But in the day of his death he is taken off his trials, with the Judge's approbation, and the full reward is appointed him, and given him. The Lord Christ, who looked on all the time of his trials, observing how he carried, seeing how he got many a fall, yet rose again, then passes a merciful verdict upon him, Matt. 25:21, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And then he is to fight no more, but triumph for ever; he has wrought his work, and he gets his reward of grace. The trials were perhaps long, but the retribution will be longer; the former was but temporal, the latter will be eternal.

3. The day of his birth brought him into a state of changes, but the day of his death brings him into an unalterable state, Rev. 3:12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." The state of man from his birth is like that of the moon, ever waxing or waning, never appearing with its former face; he is still lying open to ungrateful alterations, so that though he be never so well to-day, he cannot boast of to-morrow, but he is in hazard of exposing himself as rash, Prov. 27:1. But in the day of death the last change comes, and brings him into an unalterable state of happiness; he is fixed for ever in endless joy and peace. For though there be clouds to overcast in the lower, there are none in the upper regions.

Lastly, The day of the saint's death brings him to, and settles him in better exercise and employment than the day of his birth did. He will spend his eternity in the other world, better than he did his time in this world, how well soever he spent it, Rev. 4:8, "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." There is a great variety of men's exercises and employments here, and few or none are so exercised, but they would be content to be better: well, the day of death will make it far better with the saints. The odds will be great.

1. He was born to earthly exercise and employment, but he dies to heavenly. When he is born, he falls a sacking his mother's breast, that is all he can do; when he dies, he falls a sacking in abundantly the divine consolations. As he grows up, he is put to learn; when he dies, he is irradiated in a moment with a light that dispels all his darkness. When he is come to years of action, he is employed in some labour of the hand, or of the mind, when he dies he is beyond all labour, but is active in the glorifying and enjoying of God, which was the great end of his creation.

2. He is born to wearisome, sorrowful, and heavy exercises; he dies to joyful, comfortable, and eternally refreshing exercise. As he was much employed in sighing here, he will be employed in singing there. Many a time he laboured in vain here, but there will be no labour in vain there; he will always reach his end, being arrived at the state of perfection.

Lastly, He was born to such exercise, as he was not able to continue with, but needed rest; and so a great part of his time was spent in doing nothing, but taking the necessary rest; but he dies to such exercise, as he shall endure with continually, needing no rest by sleep or the like, Rev. 4:8. There is no night there, for it is not needed there.

I shall now shut up this subject, with some application of what has been said.

USE I. Of information. This shows us,

1. That whatever good things the saints have in hand, they have more in hope. If they were born to never so great things, as Solomon was to a crown, yet they die to greater things. Whatever they enjoy in this world, as men, or as Christians, they will enjoy more in the other world; their best things come last.

2. Whatever afflictions, trials, and crosses in life they have been born to, there is a time coming wherein all their losses will be made up, and their heaviest weights will be downweighed with comforts, Isa. 66:13. Sometimes when the waves of trouble are over flowing, they are apt to look back on the day of their birth with a grudge, that brought them into such a troubleous sea, Job 3:3; Jer. 20:14, 18. But that is their infirmity, their impatience. Let them wait a little, and they will see there is a better day coming.

3. Sense is no good judge of what is best or worst. Of all things death is the most terrible to sense; therefore in the day of death there is nothing but groaning, sighing, and mourning; whereas in the day of one's birth, there is feasting and rejoicing. Yet to a good man the day of his death is better than the day of his birth. Such is the doctrine of faith, quite opposite to that of sense. They must be ill guided then that walk by sense.

4. There must be another life besides this, and a far more happy one; otherwise the day of death that takes us away from all the comforts of this life, which the day of our birth brings us into, could not be better than the day of our birth. The day of a good man's birth ushers in a holy and happy life, though imperfect; which must certainly be better than no life at all.

Lastly, There is a way to take off the terror of death, and to make the dying-day our best day, better than the day of our birth. That matter depends on the improving of life. Our life time is our seed time for the other world, and death is the harvest; according as we live now, so will the crop be that we will have to reap then, Gal. 6:8.

USE II. Of exhortation. 1. To saints. 2. To sinners, and all.

FIRST, Saints, whose chief business in life has been, and is, to improve life to the raising of the good name, let this serve to bring you into good terms with death. Death will not be to you, what it will be to others, the storm is changed into a calm; and it will be your best day, better than the day of your birth. And that you may know to whom this belongs, it is designed for those of a threefold character, agreeable to what was said before. This comfortable message is,

1. For you who have made it your business to obtain the favour and friendship of God, by taking hold of God's covenant of free grace,

uniting with Christ the head of it, through faith; and whose main concern in life is to be found in him, Phil. 3:8–11. Have you been awakened to see your lost state by nature, illuminated in the knowledge of Christ as the only remedy, and brought to embrace him in the free covenant as the sufficient and only way to the Father? Why truly being thus implanted in Christ, the day of your death will be better than the day of your birth.

2. Ye whose main care it is in the course of your life to please God, Col. 1:10, as a wife is to please her husband, and a servant his master, and one his friend and benefactor, 1 Pet. 2:9. Are you so disposed, that you dare not please men, at the expense of his displeasure? Gal. 1:10. Have you renounced your own will, as to your duty, and as to your lot? Have you laid aside the pleasing of yourselves, and your own lusts, that that is no more the scope of your life, but to please God, Rom. 15:1, 3. Is the scope of your life, to please him in doing and in bearing? And wherein ye see you have displeased him, are ye displeased with yourselves, confess, mourn over it, apply to the blood of Christ, and long for the day when ye shall displease him no more? If so, the day of your death will be better than the day of your birth; you will be pleased for ever.

3. Ye whose business in the world is to serve your generation in real usefulness to others, as ye have access in your several stations and relations, Acts 13:36. Are you so disposed, as that, out of regard to the God above, you dare not be mischievous and hurtful to others, even when it is in the power of your hand? Job 31:21–23. Do ye look upon uselessness for God or men in the world, with a horror; and upon yourselves but as stewards of your time, gifts, substance, opportunities of usefulness, for which we must give an account to God, and therefore lay out yourselves to improve your talents, and do good thereby? Has the warm influence of divine grace opened your

shell of selfishness, wherein ye sometime lay snug, careful for nothing but your own sweet self; and brought you out with a public spirit to be useful in God's word as ye have access? with a benevolent disposition to do good to mankind? If so, the day of your death will be better than the day of your birth. And therefore I exhort you to the following duties.

First, Be mortified to life, and abate of your fondness for it. There is nothing in the world we naturally stick to more closely than life, Job 2:4. But certainly there is a necessity of being mortified to it, to have our desires after it deadened in a regular way, Luke 14:26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother,—yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Without question, there may be a too great eagerness for life, which is sinful in all, and most unbecoming saints.

Ques. How far should we be mortified to life?

Ans. 1. So far as not to quarrel the unalterable statute of death, Heb. 9:27. Sin brought in death; by it mankind forfeited life. Many ills it brought into the world, but a short life in this world was really the least ill that it brought in. We see this statute was just, that it has been exactly observed from generation to generation. Our hearts should comply with it, saying, Even so be it, and should have no grudge against it: Why should the rocks be removed for us?

2. So far as not to desire, though it were at our option, to stay always in this world, Job 7:16. That is certainly an unmortified desire of life, to wish this life were eternal to us; and a habit of it argues a graceless state. It was a profane tale of a cardinal of Paris, that he would be content to forfeit his part of the happiness of heaven, if he might live here for ever. Grace in the heart certainly mortifies men to this life; they that are born from above will certainly desire to be above; they

that are united to Christ, will certainly desire to be with him; and therefore the Christian course is a coming up out of the wilderness, where, though they must sojourn for a while, they will not desire to fix their abode, Cant. 8:3.

So far as to be content to part with it at God's call, Luke 14:26. God is Lord of our life, he has set each of us in our post in life, to stand till he give order to relieve us. As we quarrelled not his setting us on the stage of life by our birth; so we should be content to come off again when he calls us by death. The time, way, and manner of our leaving it, we should leave contentedly to his disposal.

Lastly, So far as never to desire to live just for living's sake, but for the solid advantage of life. This life is such a mass of vanity, that it is not desirable for itself, but some circumstances that attend it. So we may desire to live to honour God in the world, and to be useful, Isa. 38:19. And if we should be laid by from usefulness in the way of doing, we may be content to live for usefulness in the way of suffering. But life is not to be desired stript of all manner of usefulness; for that is to make ourselves, not God, our chief end. Now to mortify you to life, consider,

(1.) The uncertainty of it; it is but a shadow, you know not how soon it may be gone; a vapour, that may vanish ere you are aware. I may say then, as Prov. 23:5. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" What folly is it to let the heart too fondly out on that which in a moment one may loose, and every moment hangs at uncertainty? It is surely wisdom to sit loose to that which we are never sure of.

(2.) The unsatisfactoriness of it. Every period of life, however promising it may be at the entry on it, will leave you disappointed in your progress in it, and coming off from it, Eccl. 1:8. There is nothing in it or about it, that belongs not to the other life, wherein the heart

of man can find a rest. Still the bed is shorter, stretch it as ye will, than that ye can lie on it.

(3.) The sinfulness of it. There is none liveth, and sinneth not. That indeed makes life desirable to sinners, that since they cannot part with their sins, they cannot think to part with life neither; for that then all occasion of satisfying their lusts is cut off for ever. But certainly it must mortify saints to life, that they cannot have it, but there is sinning with it, 2 Cor. 5:4, Rom. 7:24.

(4.) The troubles of it, the many afflictions and trials that attend it. These indeed should not make us impatient to be away, like Jonah, chap. 4:8. For they are our trials we are put upon for the other world, which we are resolutely to bear with patience and resignation, and so discover the reality of the grace of God in us. But they may well be allowed to mortify us to this life; for that is one of the ends they are sent for, to be as gall and wormwood laid on the breast to wean us. And the wisdom of providence is to be adored in that, ordinarily towards the end of life, troubles come on thicker than they were wont, as in the case of our Saviour.

(5.) There is a better life than it abiding you in the other world, Heb. 11:16. The faith of the palace in heaven would mortify one to the cottage of clay here; for why should they be fondly addicted to their present state, whom a better state is awaiting? It is our conversing so little with heaven that makes us so fond of the earth. Were we viewing the promised land more, with faith's prospect, we would be more disengaged from this wilderness-world.

Lastly, The state of imperfection inseparably attends this life; that there is no getting beyond the former, till ye get beyond the latter. You may struggle as you will towards perfection, and if you be real saints, you will do it, Phil. 3:14. from an inward principle not

managed by the prospect of the event; but you will never reach it, till this life be at an end. Rise up as oft as ye will, wash and watch; ye will fall again and defile yourselves, till the day of death put an end to that weary work.

Secondly, Be not frightened at death, nor afraid with any amazement, Is. 35:4. To make a jest of dying argues contempt of God, and secret desperation; to be careless and unconcerned about it, a carnal security that will have a frightful awakening. To be in deep concern about it becomes all; but to be frightened and put into disorder by the view of it, is unbecoming saints. To allay that terror.

1. Consider, that in the day you embraced Christ in the covenant, you certainly did it in view of your dying, to lay down measures for eternity. Why then should ye be frightened at that which ye have been thinking of and preparing for before? Leave that to them who have been carelessly dreaming away their life time.

2. Death, though a grim messenger, is Christ's messenger of good to you, to carry you away in peace, Luke 2:29. It is like the waggons that Joseph sent to bring Jacob into Egypt to him. And faith's ear opened, would hear the voice to the dying Christian, saying, as Gen. 46:3, 4. "I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down into Egypt.—I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again." It is such a call as Peter had from Christ to come to him upon the water. And however boisterous the wind and black the water may be, there is no fear of sinking to the ground: only believe.

3. In your struggles against sin, and wrestling with temptations, have ye not sometimes looked wistly for death's relief? Rom. 7:24; Cant. 8:5. Have ye not comforted yourself in the prospect of cold death's drowning out those passions and lusts, that have so often taken fire again after a flood of godly sorrow going over them? Why then

should you be put in a fright and disorder at the view of its approach?

4. It were inconsistent with God's honour, and the glory and dignity of Christ, to put off his friends and followers, with that kind of life he gives them here, Heb. 11:16. One may be confirmed in this, considering 1 Cor. 15:19, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Therefore of necessity all their losses must be made up in the other life. Why then should saints be angry at their blessings, and be frighted at the Lord's coming to accomplish all his promises?

5. The upper world is the world of peace and love, Abraham's bosom. There are gone thither before us our godly acquaintances, whom we once looked on as the excellent of the earth, the loss of whose society was heavy; we will get it there again. The holy angels will be loving and lovely companions. He who on earth died for us while enemies, how loving and lovely will he appear there, where we shall be perfect? God is love itself, and there his infinite love will be displayed in an inconceivable manner.

Lastly, Christ passed the ford before you, has altered the nature of the waters, Rom. 8:34, and caused them to abate; and now he bids you follow, for that there is no fear, Cant. 2:10, 11. Keep the eye of faith on Christ, who forded the waters of death before you, and that will be a mean to abate the terror.

Thirdly, Familiarize death to yourself, Job 17:13, 14. Do not keep at a distance from it in your thoughts. I would not have the terror of death rob you of the comfort of life; but it is the greatest folly for a man to wind up himself so in the comforts and amusements of life, as to debar the serious thoughts of death; and can serve no end, but to bring sudden and remediless ruin; for whether men will think of

death, and prepare for it, or not; it will be in on them at length. And what we must meet with, it is best to acquaint ourselves with before. Therefore,

1. Be frequent in your taking a view of the other world, with the help of the prospect of the word, to be looked through by the eye of faith. Be often as it were getting up to the top of Pisgah, thence to view the promised land. You cannot get thither for a trial, to come back again, Job 14:14. but there is a map of it drawn in the Bible, by considering of which you may be brought acquainted with it.

2. Be often viewing the passage thereto. The Jordan of death runs betwixt it and this our wilderness, and by it is the passage we must all take. We will not get an essay made of it, that we may mend at one time what we marred at another; there is the more need then to look well and often to it before we enter in, which we know not how soon we may be obliged to.

Lastly, Let your hearts be habitually disposed to these views, to notice the many memorials of them that Providence has furnished. There are still some dropping off into that world, some young, some aged. What is every winter, but an emblem of death; and every spring, but an emblem of the other world and the resurrection? Yea every night is the grave of the former day, as the following day empties the grave again.

Fourthly, Raise comfortable expectations from death. View the day of death in the light wherein our text sets it, and behold it is a good day, the best day.

1. Expect it as the day that will better your condition, however heavy that is now, Ps. 16:9. Though ye have many heavy days in your life, partly from your own corruption, partly from the corruption of

others; partly from the holy hand of God for trial, partly from the devil seeking your destruction; look to the day of death, as what will set all to rights, and bring in to you what heart can wish. The day of death to a child of God is his marriage day, Mat. 25 the day wherein the traveller comes home from abroad to his father's house, the day wherein he is past his minority, and enters to his inheritance.

2. Expect it as the day that will establish your condition, Rev. 3:12. Your condition is wavering and uncertain now, Psal, 30:6, 7. Sometimes your soul's case is prosperous, but ere you are aware it is all wrong again; sometimes washed fair and clean in the fountain, anon ye are lying in the mire again; sometimes ye have your feet on the neck of your corruptions, anon they trample you under foot; sometimes ye can raise one of the songs of Zion, anon the harps are quite out of tune, hanged on the willows. Sometimes your outward condition is smiling; but that lasts not, it turns gloomy, and troubles break in perhaps from all quarters together, the springs of your comfort run bitterness, and your worldly comforts are dried up one after another. But look forward to the day of death, as what will end all ungrateful changes.

Fifthly, Work your heart to, and entertain a regular desire of death. The day of death is certainly to a child of God an object of desire; the apostle professeth it, Phil. 1:23. "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ;" and that in the name of all the saints, 2 Cor. 5:2. "For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." And it is a piece of good preperation for death.

Ques. What is the regular desire of death?

Ans. I. For the matter of it, it lies in these three things.

(1.) A desire of it as the passage to uninterrupted communion with God in Christ, Phil. 1:25. Sometimes it ariseth from the saints' want of communion with God, which being uneasy does rightly make death desirable, as that which would make up that want, and secure against it any more for ever; sometimes from the sense of the sweetness of that communion, Cant. 8:6. But the enjoyment of God being a part of man's chief end, death is desirable as a means to it.

(2.) A desire of it as the passage to perfection in holiness, Phil. 3:14. Thus the man desireth it that he may be free of sin, and put beyond the possibility of sinning more, Rom. 7:24, that he may be in capacity to serve the Lord without marring or wearying of the work. This is the main part of man's chief end, and therefore death must be desirable as a means thereto.

(3.) A desire of it as an entrance into rest. The rest of death is promised to the saints for their comfort in all their heavy and restless circumstances, Isa. 57:2. And therefore it must be desirable under that consideration. It is very natural for the tossed in a storm, to be desirous to be ashore, for the weary labourer to desire to have ease, and for the Christian to desire his eternal and perfect rest, Job 7:2.

2. For the quality regulating it, it must be accompanied with entire resignation to the will of God, Matt. 6:10. We must in our desire of it even on these accounts be resigned to the will of God.

(1.) As to the time, we must never be peremptory as to that, but wait the time prefixed of God, Job 14:14. He will keep us no longer in life, than he has use for us either in the way of doing or suffering; and we must be content to wait his time for our admittance into uninterrupted communion to perfection of holiness, and into rest; and to be peremptory for rest at our time, and resolved to suffer no more, while yet God dischargeth us not as devilish, and exposeth to

eternal suffering, as the sentry deserting his post is deservedly put to death.

(2.) As to the way and manner. There are many ways of going out of the world, we must leave it to the Lord, which will be the way for us; whether the way of lingering sickness or sudden death, natural, or violent by the hand of man. I think, if God should refer it to us, we should refer it back to him.

SECONDLY, Sinners, and all whosoever would have the day of death better to you than the day of your birth, improve life for that end. To sum up your duty in a word, as you have already heard, (1.) Let it be your great care and concern to get the favour and friendship of God through Christ, by taking hold of God's covenant of free grace, uniting with Christ the head of it, through faith in his name. (2.) Lead your life a life to the honour of God, studying to please him in all things. Renounce your own will, and your own corrupt affections, and wholly give up yourselves to him, to be ruled by him, and governed by his laws. (3.) Live usefully for men. Lay out yourselves to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of all ye have access to in your station. By these means, and no other way, ye will obtain the good name, by which your dying-day will be better to you than your birth-day.

# CHRIST'S SPECIAL ORDER FOR GATHERING HIS SAINTS TO HIM AT THE LAST DAY; WITH THEIR DISTINGUISHING CHARACTER, AS ENTERING INTO HIS COVENANT NOW, CONSIDERED

The substance of several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in May, 1730

PSALM 50:5

Gather my saints together unto me: those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

LOOKING forward to the other world, we will see a great gathering to come, a gathering of saints, and a gathering of sinners; what part we shall have in these, depends on the entertainment we now give to the gathering unto Christ, in the covenant; they that will not now be gathered to Christ in the bond of the covenant, will then be driven from him, and gathered with sinners into the pit; they that gather now to him in that bond, will be gathered to him in glory then. Gather my saints together unto me: those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

This psalm certainly relates to the coming of Christ for judgment, ver. 3. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him." But whether to his first coming, to abolish the ceremonial law, set up the simple gospel-worship, and to judge, condemn, and take vengeance on the formal superstitious Jews, destroying their temple, and ruining their kingdom; or to his second coming to judge the world, is a question. I think it is plain it relates to both, the former as an emblem, pledge, and type of the other: and thus we find them stated by our Saviour himself, Matt. 24. Only the coming of the Judge is expressed in terms, directly and immediately looking to his second coming, as the procedure and issue in terms directly and immediately looking to his first coming. So our text falling within the former part, we have all ground to consider it as relating to the other world. In this psalm,

1. We have the party in whose name the court is called and held. It is in the name of the Holy Trinity, Heb. "God! God! Jehovah; he hath spoken," &c. God will judge the world by the man Christ.

2. The issuing out of the summons to the whole world, called the earth from the rising of the sun, unto the going down thereof; from east to west, from the one end to the other. All nations must come to it, Asian, European, African, American, Christian nations, and Jews, Mahommedan, and Pagan nations.

3. From whence the Judge sets forth, making his glorious appearance. At the giving of the law he came from Sinai with terrible majesty, Deut. 33:2. At this his appearance he will come from Zion, the city of the living God, namely, from heaven, the church being so called as a heaven on earth. Thence he will come shining in power and great glory. He comes out of Zion, because he comes as a Saviour to his own, and that now men having heard the gospel, are judged according to it.

4. His awful coming to the judgment. He is God, as well as man. Devouring fire shall be his harbinger, 2 Thess. 1:8. But will any then bid him welcome? Yes, his people will, Heb. "Let our God come; and let him not be silent," q. d. Come, Lord Jesus! Be not as one deaf, to the cries and sighs of thy friends, and the tumult of thine enemies. Sometime his people, doubting and fearing, trembled at the thoughts of his coming; but then they will be beyond all these, seeing the day their own.

5. Whither the summons shall be directed. To the heavens, where the souls of the blessed are that are dead; to the earth, where the living are, good and bad, and where the bodies of the dead are, under which is comprehended hell, where the souls of the wicked are, Rev. 20:13.

6. A special gracious order in favour of his people, in the words of the text. Now comes the time of setting all to rights with them, completing their desires, and full answering of all their expectations from him.

1st, We have the order in itself, "Gather my saints together unto me;" wherein consider,

(1.) The parties in favour of whom it is issued out. It is the saints, holy ones, Heaven's favourites, beneficent ones that were useful in their generation. These were sometimes little regarded in this world; but then they will be the only persons that will be regarded. Christ the Judge will acknowledge them as his own, Mal. 3:17. "They are my saints; the world disowned them, and contemned them; and I was silent, and many time seemed not to own them neither. But now I will speak out in their favour, I own them to be mine whoever are saints." Then farewell all other marks of distinction among men, rich and poor, healthy and sickly, learned or unlearned; saints and sinners is the only remaining distinction then.

(2.) What is ordered about them, "Gather them together unto ME." Gather them to me; not before me only, among themselves; such a gathering there will be of sinners there, as well as saints, Matth. 25:32. But gather them close to me, says Christ the Judge, that they may be where I am, sit with me on my throne, be ever with me. They have been scattered here and there in the cloudy and dark day; now gather them together, and that to me, as my members, Gen. 49 ult.

(3.) To whom the order is directed. It is plain from the original, that it is to others than them, and to a plurality; and that as plainly shews it is to the Judge's attendants, the holy augels, Mark 13:27. These are they that gather the tares in bundles for the fire, and the wheat to the Master into his barn.

2dly, The parties to be gathered to him characterised, "Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Their names not being expressed in the order, how shall they be known from others? Why, here is their distinguishing character. Christ the Judge sometime set up his standard in the world, as being an appointed head for sinners to gather to, Gen. 49:10. He published in the gospel sinners' welcome, and invited them to come to him in the bond of his covenant. While some slighted him and the covenant, they came into it and so were gathered to him by faith, while others staid away. Now, says Christ, all those that gathered to me, embracing the covenant offered to them in the gospel, gather them now to me, that they may receive their crown, and the benefits of that covenant in full tale. But the further explication of this part of the text shall be deferred till afterwards.

From the first clause I observe the following doctrine, viz.

DOCT. When Christ comes again to put an end to this world, and complete the state of the other world, he will publicly own the saints as his own, and they shall be honourably gathered to him by his order.

In treating of this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider the time of these great events, when this order for gathering the saints to Christ shall be given.

II. Christ's public owning the saints as his own.

III. The gathering of them to him.

IV. The order for this gathering.

V. Lastly, Conclude with an use of exhortation.

I. I shall consider the time of these great events, when this order for gathering the saints to Christ shall be given. It will be at his second coming, his coming to the general judgment. What number of years must run out before that, we know not; only we know that it will be, and it is drawing on. And to set the purpose of the text in due light, it is fit here to consider.

1. That Christ will certainly come again, in the character of the Judge of the world. As sure as he came the first time, and was judged, condemned, and crucified by sinners; so sure will he come the second time in power and great glory, and judge the world, Acts 1:11. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you unto heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." It is a piece of his exaltation, and reward of his sufferings, for which he has yet trusted his Father, and has not yet got: but it is impossible, by reason of the divine faithfulness, that it should fail, Phil. 2:9, 10. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." It is the joint desire of the saints' wrought in them by the Spirit, that he should come, Rev. 22:17. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come;" to which he echoes back, ver. 20. "Surely I come quickly." And he has appointed the sacrament of the supper, not only as a memorial of his first coming, but as a pledge of his second coming, 1 Cor. 11:26.

2. When Christ comes again, this earth will be very throng, and a wonderful mixture will be in it more than ever at any time before; he having called to heaven, and the other receptacle of departed souls, and brought them all back to their bodies which are in the earth. Then surely,

(1.) The earth will be thronger than ever, though there will be no striving then for more room in it, as now; the now strivers would

then be content to be lost in the crowd. But, I say, it will then be a thronger earth than ever. For not only will there he a generation alive on it as now, but those of all generations before them from the beginning of the world will rise up among them too. And what a throng world will that make?

(2.) There will be a wonderful mixture then in it, at a pitch there never was before. For there will be a mixture of saints and sinners in the generations then alive; and besides, all the saints and sinners of former generations will rise up among them. There will be a mixture of Pagans and Christians, Papists and Protestants, good and bad, sincere Christians, profane and formal hypocrites. For instance, in our own land, there have been generations that lived and died pagans or heathens, others that lived and died Papists besides those that have been since the Reformation. Now all these lie buried in our land, and therefore all of them must rise there. What a mixture will this make in Scotland? What a throng is in our churchyards, though there is no want of room there? but the mixture cannot be discerned; there is no discerning the difference of the dust of the body that was for fornication, and that which was for the Lord, there. But when they are raised, the mixture will be visible.

(3.) Only that will be a throng that will soon be separated, a mixture that will not last, but quickly be done away. The gathering of the saints will put an end to it, which being done by the ministry of angels, we may be sure will be quickly dispatched.

3. When Christ comes again, he will put an end to this world ere he go. His very first appearance will put an end to the business of it. All trades, employments, and diversions in this world, will be dropt that moment for ever. The shepherd will not give a cry or a look more to his sheep; nor will the ploughman make out his furrow, nor the

huntsman pursue his game a step further. And ere he leave it, he will put an end to itself by setting it on fire; by the general conflagration, cities and villages, mountains and valleys will be consumed to ashes; so that it shall no more be capable of affording a habitation to man or beast; while withal the heavens that cover it shall pass away, 2 Pet. 3:10.

Lastly, When Christ comes again, he will complete and settle for ever the state of the other world, Rev. 21:5. The state of this world is fitted for men's probation and trial, and is very variable; the state of the other world, of men, and affairs in it, will be quite new, suited for reward of men's deeds done in the flesh; and it will be made unalterable for ever. It is begun already in the case of separate souls, godly and wicked; but then it will be brought to a pitch—the godly made happy, the wicked miserable, completely, and settled for ever, there no more to change.

II. I proceed to consider Christ's public owning the saints as his own. At that time when Christ comes again for these great purposes, what will be the lot of believers? Why, he will own them as his saints. We may take up this in the following things.

1. Saintship will be the only mark of distinction among men then. The persons of distinction now are those descended of honourable families, the rich and wealthy, able to make a figure in a vain world, that appear in their gay clothing; they must gather by themselves now, others must know and keep their distance. But then all that kind of distinction is razed for ever, and there is an absolute levelling. The only persons of distinction remaining are the saints, to be honourably gathered to the great King, while others are all to be cast away out of his presence, as the vile trash of this world.

2. Saintship will then be declared Christ's badge. In all ages of the world, while hypocrites have falsely pretented to it, it has been the object of the ridicule of the profane, and an eyesore to both, Isa. 59:15. Saints is a name of mockery with many; but they will see it then a name of honour. The faith that is without works of a holy tender life, whereby people pretend to be believers in Christ, but show not holiness in their life, will leave them without the mark, Rev. 14:1. Only a faith that sanctifies the heart and life will avail.

3. Those that have borne this badge, Christ will not forget nor misken. Though they have been long buried and out of mind in the world, he will remember them; though they have lain among the pots, under various afflictions, reproaches, and ill names, he will not misken them. He was himself once in a very low condition, but then he will appear in glory; and so shall they with them, Luke 22:28, 29. All the filth cast on them will then be wiped off.

4. He will own them as his before his Father and the holy angels, Rev. 3:5. "He that overcometh, I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." He is to bring them into his Father's house there to dwell for ever; and therefore he owns them before his Father, because they can come thither only in his right. They are to be the companions of the angels for ever, and this is their recommendation to them—they are my saints.

Lastly, The grounds of his special propriety in them shall then be opened and appear, Mal. 3:17. "They shall be mine," i. e. appear to be mine, "saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." He will own them as his Father's gift to him, his own purchase, his own conquest by his grace, his by his own consent, participation of his Spirit, and spiritual marriage; his people, his brethren, his spouse, his own members mystical.

III. I shall next consider the gathering of them to him. This gathering,

1. Pre-supposes the resurrection of the dead saints, and the changing of those found alive. Of the ministry of the angels in these we find no mention; the voice of Christ himself raiseth the dead, John 5:28. whether the archangel that sounds the alarm, 1 Thess. 4:16. be a created angel or not. And the changing of those alive appears to be performed in the same manner, 1 Cor, 15:52. That they may be gathered to Christ, they are raised up out of their graves, and soul and body reunited.

2. It lies in these three things.

(1.) In severing and separating them from among the wicked. Those found alive will be found mixed with wicked ones, and those in the graves will be found lying among the wicked too. But the angels will make a separation, a cleanly separation, that they shall never mix more, Mat. 13:48, 49. Sometimes they sighed, and said, "Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace," Ps. 120:5, 6. But the beginning of that gathering will put a full end to that.

(2.) In bringing them together from all corners of the earth into one company, Matth. 24:31. By the gospel efficacy on them, they were separated from the world in respect of their state and manner of life; and were gathered together in one spiritual bond; but in respect of their bodily presence they were still mixed with unbelievers, and at a distance from other saints. They were scattered far abroad over the face of the earth, and few places could show any considerable number of them together; but then the eastern and western saints, the northern and southern, shall all be gathered into one glorious

company. The evening of the world is come, and Christ's flock is brought together.

(3.) In bringing them altogether unto Jesus Christ, in the place where he will be in the air, 1 Thess. 4:17. Thither the Judge will come, and there will he set his throne; and where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Thither will the raised and changed saints ascend to him in one glorious company, and be set on his right hand as his friends, while the wicked are left standing as criminals on his left hand on the earth. And thus the happy gathering is completed.

3. For the kind of it, this gathering will be,

(1.) A great gathering, greater than any now to be seen in this world. It is true, the saints appear few now in comparison of others; but when the saints of all generations, in all places of the world, shall be gathered together, it must needs be a great gathering; they will be numerous like the stars of heaven, which no man can number, Gen. 15:5. Accordingly John saw "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," Rev. 7:9.

(2.) A speedy gathering, being performed by the ministry of angels which move like a flame of fire, Psal. 104:4. The bodies of the saints will then no more be heavy and lumpish, but spiritual bodies, light, nimble, and active-like spirits, being new fashioned after the likeness of the second Adam's body. So that it must needs be soon dispatched. Yet,

(3.) An exact and accurate gathering, so as there shall neither be one goat brought away with the sheep, nor one sheep left among the

goats. But all saints that ever lived from the beginning to the end of the world, shall be gathered together to Christ, and they only, without the least mixture of another sort.

(4.) A gathering never to part. The gatherings in this world, good as well as bad, continue only for a little; they soon break up and disperse; but this gathering being once assembled, shall never break up nor be dissolved, but continue through all the ages of eternity.

IV. I shall drop a word to the order for gathering them to him.

1. It speaks them his favourites, whom he has a special regard for. Now he is coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on his enemies; but as the angels were dispatched to Sodom to bring away Lot, before the overthrow of that city; so are they ordered to gather Christ's saint's to him before the final overthrow of the world, and the wicked therein. Others had common favours in life heaped on them, but now these are at an end; and the saints appear the only favourites of heaven.

2. A design to honour them before the world, as when one is by a great man called to him in the sight of others. God's people have their time of trial, and living by faith on heaven's promises; the world therefore reckons them fools, and because their course and way is opposite to theirs, they hate them and are hard on them. Now Christ comes to end the dispute, and declare and decide at length, who were the wise, who the fools; and decides it by their gathering to him, while others stand trembling before him awaiting their fearful sentence.

3. A design to complete their desires and happiness. It was their desire to be with Christ, as best of all, and now says he, "Gather them to me." They were wearied of Mesech and Kedar; they longed for the

society of saints that would be comfortable; and to be at the highest pinnacle of their happiness. This gathering them to him answers all these ends.

I shall conclude this doctrine with an use of exhortation. I exhort you,

1. To be in greatest concern of all things, to be Christ's saints now. Despise it not; if so, you will see yourselves fools at last. Neglect it not, lest ye be neglected and passed by when this gathering comes. It is better to have your name enrolled by Jesus among his saints, than by men among the great and honourable of the earth.

2. Gather to Christ now as your head, by faith. He has his Father's commission for this purpose to take out of the world lying in wickedness, a people for himself, Gen. 49:10, "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." He has visited our ends of the earth for that purpose, set up his standard among us, and now we have, as we have often had, a solemn call to come in; gather then to him, as ever you would be gathered to him in the end of the world.

Lastly, Having gathered to him by faith in the bond of his covenant, publicly own him as yours, your Head, your Priest, Prophet, King, and Lord. The sacrament of the supper is appointed for that end, as a public owning ourselves to be his, before the world, angels, and men. And those that are indifferent of doing that honour to Christ, would do well to consider what expectations they have of his owning them.

We proceed now to the character of the parties to be gathered to Christ at his coming, "Those that have made a covenant with me, by sacrifice;" Heb. "Cutters off of my covenant upon a sacrifice." Their character is taken, not from worldly advantages that attended them, for these will then be perished; but from the covenant, for that will

be then lasting, Isa. 54:10. So their character is true covenanters, they that have been gathered into the bond of the covenant unto him. Where observe,

1. The covenant from which their character is taken; it is not a covenant of their own devising; nor the covenant of the first Adam; but it is Christ's covenant, "my covenant," says the Judge of the world, who gives order to the angels to gather them to him. It is the covenant the Father made with Christ as second Adam, called commonly the covenant of grace.

2. The nature of that covenant; it is a covenant upon a sacrifice namely, the sacrifice of Christ, that expiatory sacrifice. The covenant of works was not upon a sacrifice, for God was not then offended; but this covenant being made with an offended just God, behoved to be upon a sacrifice, and could not be without it.

3. Their coming into that covenant, every one personally for himself. This is expressed by their being cutters off of it, a phrase taken from the cutting a beast asunder at parties entering into a covenant, Jer. 34:18, which had a reference to the curse of the covenant to fall on the breakers. And the cutting off of the one part, so as they were never to come together again, imported the inviolableness of the covenant, Gen. 15:10, 18. Hence the phrase is used for entering into a covenant, the sign for the thing signified. To this their action also the words upon a sacrifice do relate, q. d. That cut off upon a sacrifice my covenant made upon a sacrifice. Now the sacrifice being the sacrifice of Christ, it is plain our cutting off in that case must be by laying as it were our band on the head of the sacrifice cut off by divine justice; and so it denotes our entering into the covenant by believing on Christ. And it presupposes the offer of the covenant made to us.

From this part of the text, we observe the two following doctrines, viz.,

DOCT. I. There is a covenant with God, which is Christ the second Adam's covenant, made upon the sacrifice of himself, and offered to sinners.

DOCT. II. Those who now gather unto Christ, personally and sincerely entering into his covenant of grace offered to them in the gospel, while others slight him and his covenant, shall at the last day be joyfully gathered to him in the air, to receive their welcome to the kingdom of heaven, while others shall be left on the earth to receive their doom from him, to be driven to the pit.

DOCT. I. There is a covenant with God, which is Christ, the second Adam's covenant, made upon the sacrifice of himself, and offered to sinners.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider the nature of this covenant in the general.

II. Shew in what respects it is Christ's covenant.

III. Consider its being a covenant upon a sacrifice, and that of himself.

IV. Make application.

I. I shall consider the nature of this covenant in the general. It is a covenant of peace and reconciliation betwixt God and sinners, Isa. 54:10, whereby an offended God and offended sinners may become friends for ever, and they re-instated in his favour, and established therein. And hence ye may perceive, that,

1. Not the necessities of Christ the Maker of it, but of sinners whom it was made for, required it. He was infinitely happy in himself and in his Father's love, and stood in need of nothing without himself; but they needed it, and he made it for them, Cant. 3:10. It is a covenant of grace, for his making it was an act of pure grace to us.

2. It is the new covenant, brought in to repair the ruins of mankind by the ruins of the first. God and Adam, were friends when they entered into the covenant of works; but that being broken, sinners fell under the curse; and to recover them out of that ruinous state, this covenant was made.

3. It is the covenant by which sinners may have life and salvation, Mal. 2:5. By it all their sores may be healed. In it there is righteousness secured for the unrighteous, a pardon for the guilty, sanctification for the unholy, and eternal happiness in the other world for heirs of hell and wrath. There is as much in it as may make one easy and joyful in the face of death; hence David in his last words says, 2 Sam. 22:5. "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

O blessed covenant, which, by what is said, you may see is just the covenant of grace! O happy device! Do not your hearts say within you, Whom is it owing to? Whose covenant is it? Surely it never came out of our forge. Christ claims it as his. It is my covenant, says he. Therefore we shall shew,

II. In what respects it is Christ's covenant.

1. He devised it; it never bred in our breast, and never would. He was with his Father and Spirit the offended party; but the devising of the

covenant of peace is not owing to the offenders, but the offended. For it was devised before the offenders were in being, Prov. 7, 29, 30, 31; 1 John 4:19.

2. He made it with his Father without us, in all its articles and clauses, Psal. 89:3; Cant. 3:9. The bargain was concluded from eternity between the Father and the Son, in our favour, while we were not yet any of us in being. So that the remedy for us was kindly provided, before we fell under our disease; that so it might be ready for us, and we might not die of it.

3. He was the head of it, the sole undertaker in it, on the side of sinners. There was in this covenant a burden to be undertaken for sinners, and Christ took burden on himself alone for them, to pay their debt, and to bear their punishment; and accordingly he bare the burden alone, Isa. 63:3. He gave it as his bond of suretiship for the elect, which the Father accepted, no more to look to them, but to him for satisfaction, Heb. 7:22. The condition of it lay on him solely, viz. that he should fulfil all righteousness. Sinners could do nothing in this, but he undertook to do it, by his being born perfectly holy, living perfectly righteous, and making satisfaction by his death.

4. The promises of it were made to him, not only that of a glorious reward to himself, but of eternal life to all his, Gal. 3:16; Tit. 1:2. As when a father covenants with a surgeon to heal his son's broken leg; the promise is made to the father, and he also pays the surgeon's fees, though the benefit redounds to the son.

5. He receives sinners into it, the administration thereof being wholly committed to him, so that coming to him by faith is our coming into the covenant, John 10:9. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Justly is it reckoned his covenant, since the Father

has left it with him, to take in whom he will into it; and none are instated in it, but by, in, and through him.

6. All the benefits of it are in his hand. They are now purchased by him, and the Father has lodged them with him, intrusted him with them all from the least to the greatest, Matth. 11:27. So that he has the dispensing of them all; if the sinner would have the pardon of the covenant, he must go to Christ for it; if he would have the sanctifying influences of the covenant, he must apply to Christ for them, for he is our Joseph, who has all the stores of grace and glory in his hand.

7. Lastly, It is in his right alone that sinners can get the benefits of it, or claim them, Phil. 3:9. They can claim them no otherwise than as they are his members, his spouse, his children. Hence at the last day, when they are to get the complete enjoyment of the covenant-benefits all together, the order is given by him, "Gather them to me;" q. d. for they cannot go into heaven, but at my back; they cannot have the benefits but as they are in me, Rom. 5:17.

III. I come to consider this covenant's being a covenant upon a sacrifice, and that of himself. And here consider,

1. Why this covenant behoved to be upon a sacrifice.

2. Why on the sacrifice of Christ himself.

3. The import of its being a covenant on a sacrifice.

First, Consider, why this covenant behoved to be upon a sacrifice. The reason is, the honour of God injured by man's sin required, that if there was to be another covenant for life and salvation to man now a sinner, it behoved to proceed on a sacrifice making atonement for the breach of the first by sin. Man could not break the first covenant

unpunished, else where were the honour of the holiness, justice, and law of God, Isa. 42:21. Rom. 3:25.? Therefore is that caution added, Exod. 34:6, 7. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and aboundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." At the proposal of a covenant of peace for sinners, justice stands up and pleads, There shall be no peace unless I be satisfied, Heb. 9:22; therefore a sacrifice is provided, that the covenant of peace may upon it go on, and the broken first covenant is ingrossed in the second, that all it demands shall be answered.

Secondly, But why is it a covenant on the sacriflice of Christ himself! The reason is, because no other sacrifice could avail in the case, Heb. 10:5, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me." One can hardly think, that if the covenant could have been made on a less costly sacrifice, that the only begotten Son of God would have been made the sacrifice, John 3:16. There was a necessity for Christ's death, if sinners were to have life, Luke 24:26.

1. The Levitical sacrifice of beasts could never avail in this case. For they were not of equal value with the guilty heads, beasts being in value far below men. Therefore by them indeed the debt might be acknowledged, and the way of paying it typified; but not paid.

2. Men could not be sacrifices for themselves in this case to procure a covenant of peace; for if once the sacrificing knife had come to their throat, they would never have recovered; if they had been once laid on the altar, they would have been consuming but never have sent forth a savour of rest to incensed justice.

3. Angels could not have been a sacrifice; for neither could they have ever overcome the weight of wrath that was due, but would have

sunk under it. And their sufferings not being of infinite value, could not have been accepted for recompense of the wrong done to an infinite God. Wherefore Christ only could be a sacrifice to procure the covenant of peace. For,

(1.) He only could bear the curse, and overcome it. The curse of the first covenant behoved to be executed, in order to the establishing of the second for peace to sinners; and he only could bear it, so as to bear it out, and bear it off, Gen. 15:10, 17, 18, Gal. 3:13. The wicked in the other world will bear the curse indeed for themselves, and so will be made sacrifices for themselves, according to that, Psal. 94 ult. "He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut then off." But they will never be able to drink this cup up, and overcome it; so they shall have no peace for ever.

(2.) He only was of infinite dignity, and so his sufferings only could equal the offence of an infinite God by the sins of the world. Christ's sacrifice was of "a sweet smelling savour unto God," Eph. 5:2. It is an Old Testament expression used, Gen. 8:21, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour," Heb. a savour of full rest, namely, "quieting his Spirit," as the expression is, Zech. 6:8. The sins of the elect world, most abominable to God, sent up as it were a most rank smell into his nostrils: no sufferings of the creature could master it, but the sufferings of Christ did it fully.

Thirdly, Let us consider the import of this covenant's being a covenant on a sacrifice.

1. This says, that wrath is appeased, justice has got satisfaction for sin; the bar which the broken first covenant laid in the way of sinners' peace with God, is removed; for the new covenant is made on a sacrifice, whereby atonement is made for the breach of the first

covenant, and justice has got of the Surety, for the sinner, what it could demand, 2. Cor 5 ult.

2. It is consistent with the honour of God, to take sinners into this covenant, and receive them into favour as his confederates; for now the holiness, justice, and truth of God, have the wrong done them repaired by this sacrifice; and his mercy and grace have a free vent thereby, Psal. 69:4.

3. Sinners have free access into it. Solomon observes, Prov. 18:16. "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men." And what will Christ's gift of himself as a sacrifice not do? Surely now the sinner may come forward under the covert of that precious blood; the sword that guarded the tree of life was sheathed in the sacrifice of Christ, and laid by, Cant. 2:10, 11.

4. There is a feast for them, a feast on the sacrifice, the parties covenanting feasting together. Upon the covenant made betwixt Jacob and Laban there was a feast kept, Gen. 31:54. So upon this covenant made on the sacrifice of Christ, there is a feast, 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast." The flesh and blood of Christ crucified is meat indeed and drink indeed, and we are to feed and feast thereon by faith.

Lastly, It is a sure covenant, as made on that sacrifice, the virtue and efficacy whereof being eternal, one can never be shaken out of it. The mercy and grace of God to sinners have a sure foundation here, Psal. 89:14. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face." What can shake a sinner out of this covenant when he is once really in it? Nothing can be supposed to do it but sin. But then it is a covenant on a sacrifice whereby sin is expiated, and therefore it cannot have that malignant effect. Accordingly the promise of the covenant runs, Jer. 32:40. "I will

make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

I shall now make some improvement of this doctrine.

1. Then see how Christ loved us! When the Jews saw Christ come weeping to Lazarus's grave, they said, "Behold how he loved him!" John 11:36. How much more may we say so, when we consider him making a covenant with his Father for the salvation of lost sinners of mankind, and that on the sacrifice of himself? It was much that he took any notice of our just ruin, being enemies to him as well as to his Father; more than he made a covenant for our recovery; most of all, that in order to establish it, he made his soul an offering for sin, and consented to shed his precious blood for it.

2. Then let us take this his covenant, and rest in it, as made by him. Let us leave to him the glory.

(2.) Of sole Maker of it with his Father, Zech. 6:13. Let us not pretend to frame, make, and devise a covenant of our own, distinct from his, in our accepting of it. Let us not quarrel his covenant, nor go about to model it anew, agreeable to our corrupt minds. Let us make no exceptions against it, no exception in favour of any beloved lust, no exception against any of the duties of the covenant, nor against the discipline thereof, which is the cross. Let us desire nothing out that he has put in, nor anything in that he has left out, Acts 9:6. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" So sincere covenanters look upon it as well ordered in all things, 2 Sam. 23:5.

(2.) Of sole undertaker in it. He was so when it was made, and when it was fulfilled, Isa. 63:3. "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me." Let none now then put in for a

share in the undertaking. Some, in their pretended covenanting with God, undertake for their part, that if God will save them for Christ's sake from hell and wrath, they will be good servants to God as long as they live, and keep his commands, and so do their part; and so they would share the glory with Christ, Rom. 4:4. They consider not that they are without strength, and can do nothing; that they have as much need of the grace of Christ to sanctify, as to justify them. But come ye to Christ in his covenant, to get your nature changed, the power of sin broken, and to be caused by him to walk in new obedience.

(3.) Of the sole immediate right to the promises of it, Gal. 3:16. You are welcome to claim the promises, according to your need; but ye must claim them only in his right, and be content to come in at his back to get them made out to you. This has been the way of the saints, as Daniel, chap. 9:17, 18 and Paul, Phil. 3:9. There is no standing of a sinner before God, but under the covert of the Mediator's blood; and no plea for sinners, but in his name.

And to move you hereto, to acquiesce in the covenant as his, leaving him the glory, consider,

(1.) It is best for us as he has made it, Eccl. 3:14. If we should offer to mend it, by adding to or taking away anything from it, we would be sure to mar it. Infinite wisdom knew best what was for our good, and infinite love set him on it. As Christ saw better than we, what was our true interest; for he loved us more than we loved ourselves, for he loved us infinitely, Eph. 3:19.

(2.) Only he is able enough for that undertaking, Psal. 89:19. And the work can be put in no other hand, but it will be marred. Why should we desire to take burden on ourselves, when he is content to be the great Burden-bearer, to bear our weight, and all the weights that

hang at us, whether of duty, guilt, or affliction? He is sure, and can never stumble under our weight, nor fall; but we are ready to fall at every turn, Psal. 55:22; Isa. 42:4.

(3.) The promise is sure in his right, and the claim that way cannot miss, Ps. 89:33. When pleading the benefit of the promise, we consider ourselves, we see nothing but guilt, sinfulness, unworthiness, sickliness, and inconstancy, to cut off our hopes: but looking to Christ, we see perfect holiness and righteousness, infinite dignity and excellency; so that we may say, "Lord, I am unworthy, yet my Saviour Christ is worthy for whom thou shouldest do this for me."

Lastly, Let poor trembling sinners be encouraged to come into this covenant, since it is a covenant on a sacrifice. It is an awful thought for a sensible guilty creature to enter into a covenant with a holy jealous God. Our God is a consuming fire; how then can we stand before him, and not be consumed? The sacrifice being interposed we are safe, Christ going between mediating the peace with his atoning blood, wrath is turned away, and the sinner received into favour and friendship. I proceed now to,

DOCT. II. Those who now gather unto Christ, personally and sincerely entering into his covenant of grace offered to them in the gospel, while others slight him and his covenant, shall at the last day be joyfully gathered to him in the air, to receive their welcome to the kingdom of heaven, while others shall be left on the earth to receive their doom from him, to be driven to the pit.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Premise some things on this point in the general.

II. Consider sinners' sincere personal entering into Christ's covenant of grace now, that will secure their joyful gathering to him at the last day.

III. Lastly, Make improvement.

I. I shall premise some things on this point in the general.

1. All mankind were by Adam's fall separated and scattered from God, as sheep gone astray, 1 Pet. 2 ult. Mankind was at first joined to God in the bond of the first covenant, and so they were his family about his hand, headed by him, and enjoying his favour. But by sin they broke away from him, and being gone from him the centre of unity, they were separated in affection one from another, Tit. 3:3. And in this state they remain while out of Christ, scattered and wandering on the mountains of vanity.

2. To bring scattered sinners to God again, Christ was appointed the head to whom their gathering should be, 1 Pet. 2 ult. "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." Chap. 3:18. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." The first Adam was the head under whom they went away, and he left them wandering, a ready prey for the devourer; the second Adam is the head for their return, by whom they may be brought back unto God, and put up in safety with him for ever, John 11:52. He is the great Shepherd, intrusted by his Father for gathering the strays of mankind, into one stock and fold.

3. There is a double gathering of scattered sinners to Christ The one is now a doing, has been from the beginning, and will be to the end of the world; and that is a gathering of sinners by the gospel to him into the bond of the covenant of grace, Gen. 49:10. The other is to come

certainly at the world's end, and that is a gathering of them by the angels to meet him in the air, never to set their foot more on the cursed earth, but to go away with him to heaven. And that will be a gathering quickly dispatched, as appears from the text.

4. There are many who will not be gathered to Christ now, whatever pains he is at to gather them, Mat. 23:37.—"How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" He sets up his standard among them, he calls to them to come to him; but they get away from him. They love better to wander on, than to return; they prefer a vain world, and their deceitful lusts, to Christ; and they love rather to be at their liberty, than to be brought into the bond of his covenant. They cannot endure to be so hedged up, Ps. 2:3. So they refuse to gather to him.

5. Yet there are still some who with heart and good will gather to him, and willingly come into the bond of his covenant. Efficacious grace makes them willing, Ps. 110:3. They are weary of their distance from God, and their wandering life, seeing how in that case they are exposed to the utmost danger, and are in no safety from the roaring lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour; and so they willingly gather to Christ, and come into the bond of his covenant, as their only safety.

Lastly, At the end of the world, whatever separation there is between these parties now, the wanderers and those within the bond of the covenant, there will be a greater then. The wanderers and the gathered being both raised out of their graves at the sound of the last trumpet; all those gathered within the bond of the covenant, shall be gathered together to Christ in the air, to go with him, and be ever with the Lord; and the wanderers will be brought together on the

earth before him, receive their dreadful sentence to depart from him; and then they going away, the earth will be set on fire.

I shall consider sinners' sincere personal entering into Christ's covenant of grace now, that will secure their joyful gathering to him at the last day. And here three things are to be distinguished.

1. The proposal of the covenant.

2. The sinner's entering into it in a saving manner, so as to secure his gathering to Christ at the last day.

3. The profession and declaration of that entering into it, by some fit sign.

FIRST, The proposal of the covenant. It must be proposed to us, before we can enter into it; and so it is indeed proposed to us to be entered into.

First, Consider how it can be proposed or offered to us. The covenant of grace being determined to be Christ's covenant, made and concluded from eternity betwixt his Father and him, and its conditions perfectly fulfilled already by Christ, and all its promises made to him; it is a difficulty with some, how that covenant already concluded can be proposed or offered to us to be entered into. But,

1. Suppose one in a town makes a bargain with the master in his own name, and the name of his neighbours there, fulfils the condition, and the benefit only remains to be received; and all this is done without advising with them, or their knowledge of it; may not that man when he comes home offer that covenant to his neighbours, and they enter into it just by acquiescing in it? If any of them will not, it will not be forced on them; but if they acquiesce and accept it is as

good and valid as if they had been at the making of it. So it is in this case.

2. Adam's covenant was also made without us in the name of mankind, and broken too while we were not; yet by our very descending from him by natural generation, we are personally instated in it to our condemnation; and this without waiting our acquiescing or consent to that covenant. How much more may the second Adam's covenant be offered to us, and we instated in it to our salvation, by our express approbation and acceptance?

Secondly, Consider how it is actually proposed and offered to us. It is proposed and offered to us in the gospel, by Jesus Christ in his own and his Father's name; therefore he is called, "the Messenger of the covenant," Mal. 3:1. who came from heaven, and proclaims and offers the covenant to sinners. Now it is offered to us in the gospel.

1. At large, in its several articles and clauses, both the conditionary part as fulfilled, Rom. 1:17. and the promissory part to be fulfilled, Heb. 8:10, 11, 12, Ezek. 36:25. and downwards, and so the rest of it promises to be found through the whole Bible. All are proposed and offered under the name of the covenant at large, Isa. 60:3. "Here and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you," which takes in all the promises.

2. In compend, in the offer of Christ himself the head of the covenant. Say not, How shall we take up the covenant that such a large and ample transaction, and withal the parts thereof scattered through the whole Bible! It is set before you abridged, viz. in Jesus Christ, to be taken up with one glance of your eye, Isa. 49:8. "I will give thee for a covenant of the people." The offer of Christ to you is the offer of the covenant; even as if a father who has made a beneficial bargain for his family, should offer to adopt you; that offer

of himself for a father to you, would be the offer of that bargain. Now you have this offer of the covenant.

(1.) Under Christ's hand in his written word, which ye have in the scripture. A wise man will make no offer in writing to one, but what he minds to perform; his hand-writing will bind him, if it is accepted. And may not the offer of the covenant made you in writing, under the hand of the great God our Saviour, satisfy you in that point? Take heed then, lest when "God has written to you the great things of his law, ye count them as a strange thing," Hos. 8:12.

(2.) By public proclamation in his name, by the voice of the ministers of the gospel, his criers appointed for that effect, Prov. 9:3. If a prince proclaims an offer of indemnity to rebel-subjects, may not that satisfy them as to the reality of the offer! And should not this offer actually proclaimed to you sinners, in the gospel, by Christ's ambassadors, fully satisfy you as to the reality thereof? Object. Ministers are but fallible men. Answ. True; but their commission is infallible; and so far as they stick by that, which they do in offering the covenant to sinners, you have an infallible ground of faith in what they say. And as the crier's voice in a proclamation is in effect the king's, so is theirs in this case. Hence the apostle says, Heb. 12:25. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refuseth him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." And says our Lord, Luke 10:16. "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."

Thirdly, To whom it is offered? Christ's covenant of grace is offered to sinners of mankind indefinitely; that is, it is offered to them, and any of them whosoever without distinction. So the offer stands in the

written word, and so the ministerial offer is to be made. This is clear from many testimonies, Prov. 8:4. "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men," Mark 16:15. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." John 3:16. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Isa. 55:1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." Rev. 22:17. "Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." Therefore it is offered to you, and every one of you, and you are warranted to enter into it.

Object. But it may be I was not elected, and Christ did not represent me in that covenant. Ans. Your warrant to enter into Christ's covenant does not at all depend on your election, or non-election, but on the revealed will of God making a real offer of it to you, Deut. 29 ult. and that you have, and that you believe it not, you disbelieve the gospel, Isa. 53:1. make God a liar, 1 John 5:10. and so must perish, Mark 16:16. Where do you find that ever a person's election was the ground of his believing or entering into the covenant? It is not revealed to the elect to bring them to believe in Christ; but they first believe, and then by that means they see they were elected.

Moreover, the promises are proposed indefinitely. So was the first promise, Gen 3:15. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." So are other promises of the covenant, Isa. 55:3. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Heb. 8:10, 11, 12. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man

his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Ezek. 36:25, 26, 27. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Where is there any limitation or distinction of persons there?

Object. The conditional promises are indeed to all, but not the absolute ones. Ans. There is a connection of duty and privilege in some promises; but I know no promises properly conditional, but to Christ, who has fulfilled the conditions of them already; Rom. 4:4, 5. "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The promises of the covenant, call them as ye will, are to all indefinitely; for non est distinguendum ubi lex non distinguit. Therefore the apostle lays it for a ground of faith to the murderers of the Lord of glory, Acts 2:38, 39. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Chost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Inst. If these promises be to all, then they must be fulfilled to all. Ans. That is false; according to the apostle's reasoning, Heb. 4:1. "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." It follows indeed that

that must be fulfilled to all who accept them by believing; and so they shall, John 3:26. But not to them who will not accept them, believe, nor apply them to themselves. No promise binds the promiser, if it is not accepted by the party. It is no imputation on God's faithfulness, that they are not fulfilled to unbelievers of them.

SECONDLY, The next thing is the sinner's entering into the covenant in a saving manner, so as to secure his gathering to Christ at the last day. This the text expresseth by "cutting off his covenant on a sacrifice," that is, by cutting off the sacrifice to enter into the covenant. And this being the sacrifice of Christ himself, can be no other but the laying the hand on the head of the sacrifice which then was to be cut off by divine justice. And this in gospel language is just believing on Jesus Christ sacrificed for us. So it is by believing on Christ crucified, that we are personally and savingly entered into the covenant.

It is agreeable to the nature of the covenant, that this should be the way of entering into it. For whereas the covenant is not made with us immediately, as parties, contractors for ourselves, in which case we would enter into it by promising to do something on our part as the condition thereof; but mediately through Jesus, who mediated therein as a representative, undertook the fulfilling the condition thereof, and had the promises thereof made to him; it is evident there can be no way of our personal entering into it in a saving manner, but by uniting with him, which the scripture determines to be by faith alone, Eph. 3:17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Accordingly it is determined, John 10:9. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

Now this believing on Christ crucified or sacrificed for us, whereby we are entered into the covenant, formally lies in three things.

1. Believing the absolute sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of sinners, and, your salvation in particular, and the complete security of the covenant for that effect to all within the bond of it, Jer. 3:22, 23. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings; behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." The soul seeing the infinite ill that is in sin, as an offence and abomination to an infinite God, must see also the infinite dignity of the sacrifice of Christ, arising from the infinite dignity of his person, ere it can believe this; and must also see the immoveable faithfulness of God, as the ground of believing the complete security of the covenant.

2. Believing that this covenant, in the condition thereof fulfilled by Christ's sacrifice of himself, and the promises thereof made thereupon and bearing salvation, is offered really and truly to you in particular, by Jesus Christ, with the good will of his Father; so that it is lawful for you to come forward into it, and use it as your own. This is the report of the gospel, Isa. 55:3, cited above, 1 John 5:11, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." And it is demonstrated by the Spirit inwardly to the elect, whereby they see the door of the covenant open to them, Isa. 53:1; and whoso believeth it not, can never enter into the covenant, but make God a liar by their unbelief of it.

3. Trusting on the sacrifice of Christ for your salvation from sin and wrath, upon the ground of God's faithfulness in the covenant, Acts 15:11, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." The soul renounceth all confidence in itself, or in any other, and relies wholly on the sacrifice of Christ, the fulfilled condition of the covenant, for the promises of the covenant being

fulfilled to itself, because God has so engaged in his proclaimed covenant, and he cannot but be faithful in his covenant.

Thus the soul is formally entered into the covenant, receiving Christ in his priestly office, and so uniting with him.

And this necessarily brings along with it the covenanter's,

1. Receiving Christ as his Prophet, renouncing his own wisdom and the wisdom of the world, giving up himself to be guided by his word and Spirit, Matth. 16:24; Acts 13:22. Uniting with him, he must needs be our head for direction and guidance.

2. Receiving him as his King and Lord, renouncing the dominion of sin, the devil, and the world, and wholly giving up himself to be ruled by him as his head for government, Psal. 2 ult.; Isa. 26:13.

And thus the soul entering into the covenant, taking Christ in all his offices, takes God in Christ for his God, and gives up himself to be one of his people for ever, consenting to the offer made, Heb. 8:10, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Whoso thus enters into the covenant now, shall be joyfully gathered to him at the last day, as those that have entered into his covenant on a sacrifice.

THIRDLY, The last thing on this head is the profession and declaration of that entering into Christ's covenant, by some fit sign. This is a solemn declared entering into the covenant, in which one may be either sincere or hypocritical, Deut. 29:10, 12, "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God;—that thou shouldst enter into evenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day." And so it will not of itself, if it be separate from the former, secure our gathering to him at the last

day. Meanwhile it is a duty required of us now for God's honour, and requisite for our comfort, Deut. 26:17. It is done three ways.

1. By words spoken, Psal. 16:2, either in prayer to God, wherein a person solemnly and in express words declares unto God in secret his acceptance of and entering into the covenant; or before men, where the thing being proposed by one, others signify their acquiescing by some fit gesture, or bowing of the head, Exod. 4:30, 31.

2. By writing under their hand, declaring their accepting of the covenant, Isa. 44:5, "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and sirname himself by the name of Israel." This has been an useful practice of many in their life, and comfortable to their relations when they were gone, when they found their written acceptance of God's covenant of grace.

3. By instituted significant actions. Such is the partaking of the Lord's table. The very taking of the bread and wine at the Lord's table, and eating and drinking the same, being a solemn declaration before the world, angels, and men, that we enter into Christ's covenant. So in case it be separate from believing, though it cannot savingly enter us, we will be treated as covenant-breakers.

USE. To conclude, I beseech you by your gathering together to Christ at the last day, that you now gather to him in his covenant. For this cause I recommend to your consideration,

1. That this is a special gathering time, wherein the great trumpet of the gospel is sounding, and double sounding, a gathering; a time wherein the Lord is sending out the angels of the churches, ministers, to gather you. Let not the trumpet of the gospel sound in

vain for you, nor the angels of the churches attempt in vain to gather you. They bring Christ's voice and the offer of the covenant to you.

2. As sure as the trumpet of the gospel is sounding now in your ears, and the angels of the churches are at work to gather you to Christ now, whose attempts you may render vain; so sure will the last trumpet sound in the same ears, and the angels of heaven gather them joyfully to Christ who now come unto him, to meet him in the air, while they will leave the rest on the earth.

3. What will you think to see at that day, others taken as within the bond of the covenant, and yourselves left as without it? With what pale faces, and trembling hearts, will ye look up to the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven, and to your neighbours, Christ's covenant people, carried by angels, and flying above you, away to meet the Lord in the air, with a shining glory on them?

Lastly, How will ye brook your last sight of them, when they having in the first place received their welcome to their kingdom from the Judge on the throne, ye shall get your sentence to depart from him into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and so must turn your backs, and make away to your place, they being then the spectators of your begun misery, and your beloved world being set on fire?

Think on these things in time, and whatever ye are, or have been, know that you are allowed free access into the covenant; and therefore enter into it sincerely. Go alone by yourselves, think on your lost state by nature, examine yourselves as to your liking of the covenant, and if you find your heart pleased with it, go to your knees, and solemnly declare before God, you accepting and entering into it, taking Christ in all his offices, and God in Christ for your God and portion for ever. And so be persuaded, that on this your gathering to

Christ in the bond of his covenant now, depends your being gathered to him in glory at the last day.

# THE SAINT'S LIFETIME IN THIS WORLD A NIGHT-TIME; THEIR EXPECTATION OF THE DAY'S BREAKING IN THE OTHER WORLD, AND THE SHADOWS FLEEING AWAY; AND THEIR GREAT CONCERN FOR CHRIST'S PRESENCE TILL THAT HAPPY SEASON COME

The substance of several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in the year 1730

SONG 2:17

> Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

IN these words you have the breathing of a gracious soul, with respect to the time that may pass in this world, before one comes to enter into the other world; it is to have his countenance and the communications of his grace by the way, until they come there, where there will be nothing to intercept it. And it would be a good sign of meeting with a kindly reception from Christ into that world at last, that we were now saying from the heart, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." Where observe,

1. The connection of these words with the preceding verse, whereby they appear to be the breathing of a soul really married to Christ, having a sense of the marriage bond, and not ashamed of it, but

resolutely owning it. "My Beloved is mine, and I am his.—Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved," &c. The spouse of Christ looks on herself as one that is married to a husband whom she dearly loves, but is not yet ready to take her home; she desires therefore, that until the time come of his taking her home, he will not be a stranger to her, but give her the comfort of his presence with her, that the present situation will allow; thereby intimating, that she is not to look for the comfort of her life from any other, but him, whether he be absent from her or present with her.

2. The words themselves: in which consider,

1st, The happy term that Christ's spouse lives in expectation of, which is expressed by two things, the latter consequential on the former, the "breaking of the day," and the "fleeing away of the shadows." By the day here is meant the day of eternity, that will break in the other world, in the light of glory arising to those that are married to Christ here. That is the or that day by way of eminency, 2 Tim. 1:18. This implies two things.

(1.) That she looked on her lifetime in this world as a night-time; else why should she have expected the day breaking? and that in that night-time there were many shadows, darkening things to her, and allowing her but obscure views of them; else why should she expect their fleeing away? as one travelling by night, in a mountainous or woody country, if the night were never so clear, it is no wise comparable to broad daylight; and besides there are many dark and gloomy steps caused by the shadows that the hills and woods cast; which though they amount not to a total darkness, yet the light by their means is but a very faint one. Such is the believer's travelling through this to the other world.

(2.) That she believed and expected, that that night would not last, and that the shadows would vanish at length. She looks for the breaking, Heb. blowing of the day, because however dead a calm there may be through the night, ordinarily at break of day a gale of wind rises; and that break or blowing of the day will quickly chase away all the shadows, that they shall not be to be seen more. That blowing will be of the Spirit of Christ, in a full communication of influences to the believer, at the day's breaking to him in the other world; whereby all the shadows now intercepting the light from him, will in a moment evanish.

2dly, The great thing her soul desires, and she breathes after, till that happy term come.—It is communion with Christ her Lord and Husband, in such sort and measure as the state of this life by divine regulation will allow. She is not for turning back to, and solacing herself with her former lovers, till her Husband take her home; no, being married to him, her eyes are shut now on all others, and they are towards him alone. "Turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." It consists of two parts.

(1.) A desire of his countenance towards her, "Turn, my Beloved," &c. Heb. "Come round about it." It intimates, [1.] His turning his back on her, shewing some sign of dipleasure with her; the frequent lot of God's children in this world. [2.] That even in that case her heart was upon him as her beloved, and her eyes going after him, that she would have him turn his face. [3.] That she would fain have his countenance again when lost: q. d. Turn about to me, that I may behold thee with joy.

(2.) A desire of nearness to him, and the embraces of his love: "Be thou like a roe, or a young heart," &c. Come to me speedily. She lays not the stress of the speedy meeting on her motion to him; but as of

free grace, on his motion to her; by his grace coming over mountains betwixt them, and that speedily; even as a roe comes to its mate, or a young hart to its dam, upon the mountains of Bether, 2 Sam. 2:29. The word signifies a half part.

From the text thus explained, may be deduced the three following points of doctrine, viz.

DOCT. I. A soul once truly married to Christ, will from thenceforth look on the lifetime in this world, as a night-time, a shadowy one, as indeed it is.

DOCT. II. To those that are truly married to Christ, the day will break in the other world, and the shadows flee away; and they should live in the constant expectation of it.

DOCT. III. It will be the great concern of those married to Christ during their night-journey in this world, that he may turn and come to them, till the day-breaking and the shadows fleeing away, they get to him in the other world.

I shall speak to each of these in order.

DOCT I. A soul once truly married to Christ, will from thenceforth look on the lifetime in this world, as a night-time, a shadowy one, as indeed it is.

In touching a little on this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew in what respect the saint's lifetime in this world is a night-time.

II. How the soul once married to Christ comes to look on its lifetime in this world as a night-time.

III. On what grounds such a soul justly looks on it as a night-time, a shadowy one.

IV. Improve the point.

I. In what respect the saint's lifetime in this world is a night-time. To clear this, consider,

1. The life of a child of God in this world, from the moment of the marriage with Christ, is a day-time, in comparison with the time he lived in his natural state, 1 Thess. 5:5. Therefore says the apostle, Eph. 5:8. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." While they are in their natural state, they are in midnight darkness, it is black and dark night with them. But being united to Christ, the night of their natural state is at an end, and the day of grace is come with them. And this is such a day, as will never be succeeded by another night.

2. But in comparison with his state in the other world, it is but a night-time. When he enters there, a day of glory shall break to him, that will so far surpass all he has seen, that he shall be made to think, he never saw day before, Rom. 13:12. The natural man is in black and dark night, and the saints in this world are in a cloudy moon-light night; only the saints in the other world are in broad day-light, Col. 1:12.

II. We shall consider how the soul once married to Christ comes to look on its lifetime in this world as a night-time. There are four things concur to it.

1. They then have some new and precious light, however faint, that they had not before. They can say with the blind man cured by Christ, John 9:25. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I

see." They see that in sin, Christ, and in the other world, that they did not before perceive. Strangers to Christ are like blind men, to whom the night and the day are alike; but being once married to Christ they are like him who said, "I see men as trees walking," Mark 8:24. They see, but find they do not see clearly, and so conclude, that it is night with them.

2. Being once married to Christ indeed, the sun of the world sets upon them. The world's love to them is turned to hatred, it conceives an antipathy against them, John 15:19. And looks as when the darkness of the night follows the lightsome day, and sits down on the beautiful cities, the green hills, the pleasant meadows and gardens, all these lose their lustre and beauty, and become black and gloomy; so when once a soul is married to Christ, the world loseth its former beauty to the man; it is quite another thing in his eyes than it was before; the vain world is turned out of its gaudy day-dress, into its night-dress, where its former beautiful appearance is gone, Gal. 6:14. —"The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

3. Yet the son of righteousness is still hid to their eye sight, however he lets out some rays of light to them, and they discern him by faith, 1 Pet. 1:8. In some northern parts belonging to this kingdom, the body of the sun, about this time of the year, does indeed go out of their sight about the middle of the night; yet still certain rays appear all along; so it is with the believer. Therefore he must look on it it as night; though it is but a short one. That Jesus to whom they are joined in spiritual marriage, is gone to heaven, and there he abides hid from their eyes, though manifest to their faith, Cant. 4:6. As Jacob married to Leah, got not a broad view of her till the morning; so the believing soul married to Christ, will not get a broad view of its Husband, till the day of eternity break.

4. Lastly, The beauty of the light let into them natively causes a longing for the perfection of it, Phil. 3:13, 14. As one with a dim light discerning a beautiful object, presently calls for a clear light whereby to discern it fully; so the soul that has seen as much of Christ's excellency; as to engage the heart to him, longs for a full sight of his glory; and while the light will not serve that purpose, it natively concludes, that it is night still.

III. I shall next shew on what grounds they justly look on it as a night-time, a shadowy one.

1. They justly look on it as a night-time. For,

(1.) It is a time of much darkness with them, 1 Cor. 13:12. darkness of ignorance, and of uncomfortableness. However vain men may pride themselves in the knowledge they have reached, puffed up therewith as empty bladders; serious Christians will still be bewailing their ignorance and weakness in the divine mysteries, Psal. 73:22. Prov. 30:2, 3. And however lightsome a life the native vanity of mind may make some; it is not possible, but the imperfections, infirmities, and struggles attending the Christian life here, must make much uncomfortableness in it, Psal. 97:11. How then can they but count it night?

(2.) It is a time, wherein the wild beasts are got out of their dens ranging about, Psal. 104:20, 21. In the darkness of this life, what howling and yelling of the infernal crew, the devils and wicked men acted by them, do reach the Christian's ears and make his heart to shiver? So that to travel through the world is often as unpleasant, as through an howling wilderness in the night. And not only so, but they are often in hazard of being devoured by them, and swallowed up, 1 Pet. 5:8. No wonder they long for day-brake, when these wild beasts will go into their dens and be silenced, Psal. 104:22.

(3.) It is a time inclining to sleep and inactivity, 1 Thess. 5:7. All the unregenerate world is fast asleep about them, and will not awake; and they themselves have a constant struggle to hold up their head. If it were day with them, they could bestir themselves, and apply to their proper business; but it is night, and with difficulty they watch one hour.

2. They justly look on it as a shadowy night.

(1.) Because there are many things intercepting the light from them; by such means shadows are made in the night, as when a house or a hill intercepts the light of the moon or stars by night. Thus it is with God's people in the world; there are many things to mar the light of their Lord's countenance shining on them, Isa. 49:2; Psal. 30:7. And by means of these interposing hindrances, they cannot have now that light of knowledge and comfort, that they would desire.

(2.) It is a time wherein they had some precious light, yet but faint, and mixed with much darkness. Where there is no light at all, there cannot be shadows, all is but one shadow; and so it is with natural men, "there is no light in them," Isa. 8:20. But souls married to Christ have the light of grace, which however is but a dim and mixed one in comparison of the light of glory, 1 Cor. 13:12.

(3.) It is a time, wherein the very means of their light and knowledge give but small and dark representations of the knowledge of the other world, and the riches of his kingdom. So does the shadow of a house in the night represent it but very darkly and imperfectly; so the shadow of a man by a looking-glass is but an imperfect representation of the man, not comparable to seeing face to face. Thus we have a shadow of Christ in the gospel, in the word, in the sacraments; but it is but a shadowy darkly representing him and the happiness of his kingdom, 2 Cor. 3:18. So that the half is not seen.

But as one taken with a beautiful picture, natively longs to see the original; so does a sight of Christ by these shadows, cause one to long for the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away, that they may see him face to face.

We shall now make some improvement of this point, in the following uses.

USE I. Of information. Is the time of this life indeed a night, a shadowy one, to those married to Christ, and do they look on it so? Then,

1. They to whom this life in this world makes such a pleasant day, that they desire no better, are in bad ease. If it is so with you habitually, ye are not truly married to Christ, Cant. 8:5. Ye are yet in your natural blindness, that night and day are alike to you; and the day of grace is not yet risen on you. And if it be so with you only occasionally, you may be sure that while it is so, your souls are out of frame, and the grace of God in you is under a cloud.

2. Then the time of this life is a dangerous time, even to those that are espoused to Christ, and they have no need to watch, "every man having his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night," Cant. 3:8. They are in danger of sins, snares, and temptations; for it is a time wherein the roaring lion is ranging about, who will be bound down in his den, if once the day were broken. This made the apostle jealous over the Corinthians "with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband," says he, "that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtility, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, 2 Cor. 11:2, 3. They are in danger of various troubles, which are incident to them in this

night-season. But it is but to watch a while, if the day were broke, the danger is over.

3. The Christian's life in this world is a lonely and wearisome life; for the travellers to Zion have a night of it, a shadowy one. If one travel by day, he will readily get company, for then every body is astir; and this makes the way to destruction a throng way, the carnal world going at ease in it, because the sun of this world is up on them, and their night is coming in the other world. But if one travels by night, he will readily have a lonely journey of it; and therefore there are but few in the way to life. So it is told us, Matth. 7:14. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Micah therefore laments the loneliness of it with him, Micah 7:1. "Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat," and the Psalmist, Psal. 102:6, 7. "I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top." For it is night with them; but in the other world the day will break to them. This makes it wearisome travelling. It is so ordered, as the march through the wilderness for their trial.

There is a fourfold allowable weariness in the Christian life, which our Lord will not be displeased with in his people, that it make them often to propose that question, Isa. 21:11. "Watchman, what of the night?"

(1.) Wearying of an ill world, a world lying in wickedness, Psal. 120:5. "Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar." Surely God himself is weary of them, of their obstinate impenitency, carnality, profanity, and formality, Isa. 65:2–5; and 1:14. It is but kindly that his people weary of their society, who thus

weary their God; and that they long for the day when they will be by themselves.

(2.) Wearying of an ill heart, the body of sin and death, Rom. 7:24. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" God has left it in them for their exercise and trial, as he did the Canaanites in the land; but surely they are to make no league with it, but to war against it; and it is acceptable to him to weary and long for the day that they will be rid of it. And there is never a weary look they give for it, but he kindly noticeth it.

(3.) Wearying to be at home in Immanuel's land, where there is no more night, but an eternal day, 2 Cor. 5:4. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Rom. 8:23. "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." Indeed the Lord makes their travelling in this world difficult to his people, for that very end, that they may long to be home.

(4.) Wearying for our Lord's gracious visits to their souls, while they are abroad, Psal. 130:6. "My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning." How passionately does the spouse cry for them in the text? It is a sign it is very ill with the Christian, when his Lord is away, and he cares not; when his communion with God is stopt, and yet he is at ease, Cant. 5:3. See Psal. 30:7.

4. That a Christian's life in this world has many ups and downs in it, is not at all strange; nay, nor that the alteration comes very suddenly; for he is travelling in a night, a shadowy night. There is nothing more stable than a Christian's state, but nothing more alterable than his

frame, Ps. 89:36, 37. He may be going on cheerfully in the moonshine, singing his song in the night; anon he enters some black and shadowy valley in his way, or a cloud overcasts, and strikes a damp on him; he gets through the valley, the cloud passes off, and he recovers; and so one after another, till the day break, and the shadows flee away.

USE II. Hereby ye may try, whether ye are truly married to Christ, or not? If it is so, ye will look on your life in this world henceforth as a night-time. And,

1. Your former value for this world will be sunk, and your love to it turned into a holy contempt and neglect of it, in comparison with Christ your husband, and his kingdom in the other world, Matth. 13:46. The blackness of the night will be sitten down on it, in its most gaudy dress, of profits, pleasures, and honours in it, 1 John 2:15. You will look on it as a shadow, hiding much of the Bridegroom's glory from you; and so will keep up a struggle against it, as that which getting in betwixt the Sun of righteousness and you, will cause an eclipse of the light of his countenance.

2. Your esteem of Christ will be raised above all, 1 Pet. 2:7. Your love to him will be a superlative love, above all persons and things, Luke 14:26. She that without consideration runs into a marriage with a man, is ready to discover something in him afterwards, that makes her despise him, and, when it is out of time, to prefer some other of her suitors; so they that are rash and indeliberate in their pretended closing with Christ, that were never blessed with a saving discovery of him to their souls by the Spirit, will be ready to rue the match, and to return to the flesh pots of Egypt. But the soul once truly married to Christ, will find him a covering of its eyes; they will charge their eyes henceforth to be closed on all his rivals, as never to see another so

fair, Psal. 73:25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

Lastly, Ye will count it day only in the other world, however bright the sunshine in this world may be; "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away," &c. Therefore your main concern will be to reach eternal light there, Phil. 3:14. to be prepared and made meet for it, Rev. 19:7. And you will aim at the purity of it, 1 John 3:3. So you will be going through this world, as in a night journey, with the eye fixed on the other world before, desiring and expecting the break of day that will be there.

USE III. Of caution. This gives a watchword to all that profess their soul's marriage with Christ. It is night-time; therefore,

1. Beware ye fall not asleep, 1 Thess. 5:7. Take heed of carnal security, which is the bed of the devil's making for us; a dangerous bed, how soft soever; and the softer the more dangerous. Satan got David into it, and there he polluted himself with adultery and murder; and Peter also, where he defiled himself with denying his Lord and Master. But it is but few that get the cast of grace to raise and cleanse them in such a case, that these two eminent saints got. People are ready to fall asleep after a full meal, Cant. 5:1, 5, and wise virgins may be overtaken with sleep, as well as foolish virgins, Mat. 25:5.

2. Beware ye fall not a-dreaming. The whole life of some is one continued dream or delusion, which they awake not out of till they are past hope and help, Is. 44:20. He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Chap. 29:8. God's children also are in hazard of dreaming too in this their night-time, when they fall asleep. David fell a-dreaming of golden mountains in this world, Ps. 30:6. Peter of perfect safety, when Satan was laying a snare for him

and seeking to winnow him. O Sirs, open your eyes, stand on your watch, know ye are here among the lions' dens, and the mountains of the leopards. Do not dream of world's ease, but lay your account with trials; nor of safety from snares, but lay you account with temptations.

3. Beware of mistakes and misapprehensions of things, to which people are liable in the night. Live by faith, and trust not your own understanding, Prov. 3:5. Judge not of things in your way by sense, but by the rule of God's word. Our eyes in the night are apt to deceive us. A step will appear much more difficult by reason of the darkness, then really it is; so there will be stones of difficulty appearing in the way, of a duty not to be rolled away, which, yet when ye come up to, will be found rolled away to your hand. A bush will appear a house to the traveller, and disappoint him turning to it for shelter; so does this and the other created comfort to us in this night-journey. In the night we are ready to take our friends for our foes, as did the disicples on the sea; so we are apt to do with our crosses and trials.

4. Beware of stumbling, John 11:10. and walk circumspectly, Eph. 5:15. Keep up a holy jealousy over yourselves, Prov. 28:14. "Happy is the man that feareth alway." Where the darkness of the night trysts with snares and stumbling blocks in one's way, it is hard for one to keep his feet; so it is in your way to heaven. Peter found a snare in the mount, as well as in the high-priest's hall; and Lot in the cave with his own children, as well as in Sodom. Take then that caution, 1 Cor. 10:12. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Lastly, Beware of wearying in a way of languishing, fretfulness, and impatience; the which is incident to people in the night not asleep. Whatever be your troubles in the world, yea your struggles with the body of sin and temptations do not weary so as to fall a languishing,

unfitting yourselves for bearing and doing; so as to fret and be impatient, and say, it will never be day. For though it is night, the morning cometh.

USE ult. Evidence yourselves truly married to Christ, by your looking on the time of this life, as a night-time, a shadowy one. And this,

1. By stretching your view habitually beyond it, "looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," 2 Cor. 4 ult. A soul married to Christ will not terminate its desires and expectations within the narrow limits of time; nor would they, if it were in their offer, sit down contented with this life perpetuated, more than they would be content of an eternal night here that would never have a day, Job 7:16. "I loathe it, I would not live alway." But live ye in expectation of this night's passing, and of the morning's coming in the other world.

2. By watchfulness and circumspect walking, as not insensible of your hazard. Travellers by night look well to their feet, however carelessly men walk that travel by day, Prov. 4:26. Many professing to be espoused to Christ, discover their hypocrisy by the looseness and carelessness of their after-walk.

3. By continual eying and use-making of the pillar of fire that gives light in the night in this wilderness. Christ is that pillar of fire, that enlightens the believer's darkness in this world; as he is a husband, he is the soul's guide. Keep the eye of faith on him, while the night lasts, that all your motions, removes, and rests may be directed by him, Col. 2:6. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." John 8:12. "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Lastly, By learning and using the song in the night. Our Lord has allowed the travellers to Zion, such a song, as may refresh and cheer them in their night-journey through the wilderness, Isa. 30:29. "Ye shall have a song as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel." They learn it out of their bible, Psal. 119:54. "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." They sing it by faith, believing the promises, and crediting and applying the blessed report concerning the other world, the day's breaking and the shadows fleeing away. And this cheers them in the melancholy night they have. Slight it not, Job 35:10. "But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" Isa. 64:5." Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways." Neh. 8:10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

DOCT. II. To those that are truly married to Christ, the day will break in the other world, and the shadows flee away; and they should live in the comfortable expectation of it.

In handling this point, I shall,

I. Consider the day's breaking, and the shadows fleeing away thereupon.

II. Believers living in the comfortable expectation of the day's breaking to them in the other world, and the shadows fleeing away thereupon.

III. Lastly, Apply the doctrine.

I. I shall consider the day's breaking, and the shadows fleeing away thereupon. And on this head I shall speak of,

1. The day's breaking in the other world to those that are married to Christ.

2. The shadows upon this breaking of the day, fleeing away.

3. Confirm the point, that the day will break, and the shadows flee away, as to those that are married to Christ.

FIRST, I am to speak of the day's breaking in the other world to those that are married to Christ. And here I shall show,

1. What a day will break to them there.

2. How this day will break to them there.

FIRST, I shall shew what a day will break in the other world to those who are married to Christ.

1. A clear and bright day, Isa. 60:1, 2. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Whatever gloomy, dark and melancholy times the spouse of Christ has here, she will have a bright day of it in the other world. There will be no clouds in it; the dark and cloudy day will then be at an end. The glory of God lightens the upper hemisphere there, whither they go; and in him there is no darkness at all.

2. A fair day and calm. There are no storms nor tempests, no blustering winds nor rains in Immanuel's land, Rev. 21:4. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." It will be one continued tempest in the lower part of the other world; there the great rain of his strength will be falling continually on his adversaries; but there will be an absolute

calm there, as Ex. 9:24–26. where we are told, "There was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation.—Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail." O what a pity is it, that the faith thereof should not make us bear better the clouds returning after the rain now!

3. A glad and joyful day, Psal. 126:5. "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." Their wo days will then be at an end, Rev. 21:4. The light and gladness now under the clod, will be fairly sprung up to them then. It will be the day of the heir of glory's home-coming from his travels in the foreign land, unto his own country, his Father's house, and his Father's embraces. It will be the spouse of Christ's marriage-day, when the marriage with the spiritual bridegroom shall be joyfully solemnized.

Lastly, An eternal day. Some places of our world have a long day, but they have a night too, and that a long one. But there will be an everlasting day in Immanuel's land, Rev. 21:25. There is a night too in the other world, as well as a day; but they are in different regions, and never change. It will be a day in the upper hemisphere, an eternal day; and night in the lower, an eternal night.

SECONDLY, Let us next see how this day will break there to those who are married to Christ.

1. As coming near their night-journey's end, they enter the passage betwixt the two worlds, the darkness and shadowiness of the night will come to a pitch. For as the darkest hour ordinarily goes before day-break, so is it here, the hour of death is so in a signal manner, "the valley of the shadow of death," Psal. 23:4. When they go down to that valley, there is a gloominess there which they have not had the like of before; they may have much ado to keep their heart from

failing, because of the black and dismal aspect. But their Lord and Husband will not leave them, but guide them through it, ib. and 48 ult.

2. As soon as they are got over to the other side, immediately the day breaks, and it is fair day-light to them. Then the welcome day ariseth, never to go down; their hearts are cheered, their eyes enlightened, and there is no fear of stumbling any more.

(1.) A heavenly gale ariseth, such as never before blew on them; they get a full measure of the Spirit of Christ, which in a moment brings them to a state of perfection, Heb. 12:23. This is that blowing of the day in the text. The Spirit blows upon them here, and conveys grace from Christ to them, excites and strengthens it, Cant. 4:16. But then he blows on them so as to perfect it.

(2.) The light of glory appears, and spreads over all to them, Is. 60:1. The shinning ones receive them, to carry them home to Abraham's bosom. While they pass into the upper regions, the day then is broken, and goes on to the perfect day there, growing more and more lightsome, and filling them with new and unseen delights.

(3.) Getting in to the highest heavens, the Sun of righteousness is up on them; and there they are in inconceivable light and splendour, which we can have no notion of, but what is childish, Col. 1:12. There shines the glory of God, and of the Lamb; and such is the splendour, that there is no need of the sun nor of the moon.

SECONDLY, I proceed to consider the shadows, upon this breaking of the day, fleeing away. And here I shall shew,

1. What is that fleeing away of the shadows.

2. What are the shadows that will flee away, when that day breaks.

FIRST, I shall shew what is that fleeing away of the shadows. We may take it up in three things.

1. The utter removal of every thing interposing betwixt God and them, and intercepting the light of his countenance, Rev. 21:3. Now there are many things of that nature; but when the day breaks, there shall be none of them. The day of grace breaking, removed all interposing hindrances in respect of their state of peace and friendship; but the day of glory breaking, will remove all interposing hinderances in respect of their full enjoyment.

2. The removal of all dark, gloomy, and melancholy things out of their condition, Mat. 25:23. They shall then put off their blacks, and be clothed in white raiment; no sigh will be heard more, nor the least vestige remain of a sorrowful spirit. There shall be nothing from without them, nor within them, to cause the least down-look. After all the frights they have been in, they shall be perfectly composed, and enjoy an inconceivable serenity.

3. The removal of all imperfection of light, and whatsoever gives but a faint and shadowy representation of Christ and the glories of the other world, 1 Cor. 13:12. Rev. 22:4. By nature we are blind, and cannot see them, though they are to be seen in the looking-glass of the gospel. The day of grace breaking to a man, he beholds them in the glass; but in the day of glory the glass is removed, and he sees face to face. There fleeing away imports,

(1.) The suddenness of their removal. Though the moment before the shadows were at their longest, blackest, and darkest pitch, the next moment they shall be gone. As if the sun should in a moment break from under a cloud, and enlighten all that was dark before.

(2.) The completeness of their removal; they shall evanish, without leaving any mark behind them, where they had been. So does a shadow flee away turning to nothing. The light of glory extinguishes them quite.

SECONDLY, We are to enquire, what are the shadows that will flee away when that day breaks. They may be comprehended under the following particulars.

1. The shadow of this world will then flee away, 1 Cor. 7:31. The night comes on by the interposing of the earth betwixt us and the sun; and this cursed earth getting in betwixt Christ the sun of righteousness and us, makes a black and dark shadow, it hides the the face of the lovely Jesus from natural men wholly, as the sun is hidden in the night; from the saints it hides his face in great measure, as a cloud interposing betwixt us and the sun, so making them sometimes go mourning without the sun.

But the day of eternity breaking, the believer will see it fled away. At death they will go from it, they will be quite above it, it will be under their feet. It will not be able to cast any more shadow to them, than a hill in a sunny day when one is on the top of it, whatever it may do to those below in the valley. And at the resurrection, the world itself will flee away, being suddenly destroyed, Rev. 20:11. It was often taken for a substantial good, but then it will flee away as a shadow, 1 John 2:17. "The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof."

2. The shadow of sin, Heb. 12:23. The sun shone fair and bright on mankind in the state of innocency, and made this a pleasant world, the very suburbs of heaven, where every thing smiled on man and his condition was altogether lightsome; but no sooner had sin entered, but the darkness of the night was spread over all in one shadow. The day of grace dawning in conversion, a new light arises, sin being

removed in its guilt of eternal wrath, and its dominion; but alas! it still remains in its indwelling power, occasioning a continual struggle, ofttimes prevailing; hence are many long and black shadows in the believer's way, extending as far as it reaches, so that, by reason of guilt and defilement contracted, they often find themselves as in the shadow of death, Isa. 59:2. They keep right a while, and then they walk in the light of the Lord's countenance; they are overtaken again with sin, and then they are under a cloud again, and walk in darkness.

But the day breaking, sin will flee away. There will be no more unbelief, ill heart, or corruption of nature; though it is fixed now with bonds of iron and brass, these will in a moment give way like tow touched with fire; and sin will pass away, leaving no mark behind it, more than a shadow. The believer's wounds will all be healed, and all his now running sores, so as there shall not appear the least scar where they were.

3. The shadow of temptations, Rom. 16:20. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." This was the first shadow that was in the world. The command, promise, and threatening were shining clear to our first parents; but in came the subtile serpent with his temptations, which cast a shadow over them that darkened them all to Eve, so that they appeared to her in other colours, Gen. 3:6. She carried the temptation to Adam, and he also was overshadowed ere he was aware, and he sinned, and then the shadow spread over all the world. Now the light of the word shines, and represents sin as ugly and destructive; temptation arises, and with its shadow mars the light, and sin appears lovely and beneficial. Thus the believer is often by this means left in the dark, robbed and spoiled; and takes poison to himself with his own hands, being blinded with the shadow of temptation.

But when the day breaks, that shadow will flee away. The tempter who got into the earthly paradise, will have no access into the heavenly. All the mist he raised before the eyes of believers here, will be suddenly dispelled, and never gather again more; but there they will have an eternal sunshine, where every thing will appear in its native colours; and they shall not be capable of being deceived any more. There will be no more need of watching, fighting, &c., the hazard being over.

3. The shadow of outward troubles will flee away, of troubles on your bodies, relations, names, affairs, &c., Job 3:17. Sometimes the sun of prosperity shines on the believer, and there is silence as it were half an hour; anon trouble ariseth, spreads and continues, till it cast such a shadow, as hides prosperity quite out of his sight, and causes him to forget it, Lam. 3:17; yea, as hides the face of God from him, that he cannot behold his countenance with joy, his weak eyes being unable so to master the shadow as to behold it. Things appear frightful in it, that believers are apt to think he has forgot them, Isa. 49:14. that he treats them as his enemies, Job 13:24. and can hardly think that they have any more room with him, Job 9:16, 17.

But when the day breaks and the shadows flee away, they will have a profound peace, an eternal calm, in Immanuel's land. Though the storm blow never so long and hard on them, in this their night; when once the day is broken and Christ has them home, he will never let an air blow on them more. They may then look back on the tossed and troublous life they have had, but they will remember them all as waters that fail.

5. The shadow of inward spiritual troubles, through desertions, and hidings of the Lord's face. These are sometimes so black and gloomy, that they are apt to cry out, that their hope is perished from the Lord.

Such a damp may seize them, as that they begin to think that all they have had, has been but delusions; and they may be at razing foundations. They may have much ado to keep up hope, saying as Psal. 77:7, 8, 9. "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Their spirits may be wounded, the arrows of God sticking in them. Then it is dark night.

But if the day were broken, and the shadows fled away, they will be comforted fully with the greatest tenderness, when brought into Abraham's bosom, Isa. 66:13. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." And readily they that have had the sharpest conflicts, will have the greatest comfort; sure, bitter entertainment here, will make sweet sauce to the entertainment there.

6. The shadow of ordinances will flee away, Rev. 21:23. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The word and sacraments give but faint representations of the Bridegroom's glory, they show him but as it were in his night dress; they are but the looking-glass wherein they see his shadow, 2 Cor. 3 ult. Though they show more glory in him than in the whole creation, yet the half is not discovered thereby.

But when the day breaks, and the shadows flee away, they will get an immediate sight of him, as he is, 1 John 3:2, see him face to face, 1 Cor. 13:12. The ordinances that served them in their night-travelling through the wilderness, will be honourably laid aside when the day is broken to them in the promised land, as was the tabernacle when the temple was reared up. There will be no need of the lower table, when

they are set down with the King at the higher. So preaching, prayers, sacraments, &c. shall flee away.

7. Lastly, The shadow of all manner of imperfections, 1 Cor. 13:12. There are many imperfections attending the believer here, natural and moral. He must eat, drink, sleep, &c. for his body; his soul is compassed about with many spiritual infirmities, there is a weakness in all his faculties. These cast a broad shadow, and hide much of the King's glory to him.

But when the day breaks and the shadows flee away, the body shall no more be a clog to him; all the faculties of his soul shall be brought to their perfection. The mind shall arrive at a perfection of knowledge, the will of conformity to the will of God, and the affections of regularity and order. Their enjoyment of God shall be full; they shall be put off no more with sips and tastes, but drink of the rivers of his pleasures for evermore. Faith shall be turned to sight, and desire and hope into full and unhampered possession.

THIRDLY, I shall now confirm this point, That the day will break and the shadows flee away, as to those who are married to Christ. Consider for this purpose the following things,

1. It was so with their Head and Husband, and the procedure with them must be conformable to that with him, Heb. 12:2. "Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." 2 Tim. 2:11, 12. "It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer we shall also reign with him." Our Lord Christ had a dark shadowy night of it in this world; the sun of this world's prosperity hid itself from him all along, and the farther on in the night it was with him, it grew still the darker, till it came to the utmost pitch in the valley of the shadow of death. And

then the day brake to him, and all shadows fled away; and now he is for ever in the light.

2. The nature of God's work of grace in them; it cannot be left unperfected; Psal. 138 ult. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Time was when they were in a state of blindness, no light being in them, Isa. 8:20. God has brought them out of that state, and there is a light arisen to them, a light of grace, the nature of which is to go on to perfection, Prov. 4:18. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Grace and corruption are like the house of David and Saul; struggle they may for a while, but the latter must be extinct, and the former enjoy all.

3. The bounty and goodness of God to his people. God is essentially good, and he is good to them in Christ his Son. It is inconsistent with the goodness of his nature to keep them always in the darkness of the night, and horror of shadows. Surely, looking to his good and gracious nature, we may conclude that the day will break and the shadows flee away, especially considering, that there is a longing for it in them created by his own Spirit.

4. Lastly, The nature of the covenant, which is everlasting, and cannot be broken. It secures by promise the perfecting of the happiness of his people; it was made for that end; the promises are not accomplished here perfectly; nay it is an earnest only of their accomplishment that is given. Therefore there must be a time, when the day shall break, and the shadows flee away.

II. I proceed to consider believers living in the comfortable expectation of the day's breaking to them in the other world and the shadows fleeing away. It implies these following things,

1. Their looking on themselves as travellers only through this world, who are not to stay in it, Heb. 11:13. As soon as the soul is married to Christ, it begins to be a pilgrim on earth, in its own account, reckoning heaven the home, and earth the house of its pilgrimage. Men in their natural state are like the Egyptians in their darkness, who moved not from their place; but being touched with converting grace, they are like the Israelites travelling through the wilderness to Canaan.

2. Their laying their account with the continuance of the night and gloomy shades, while they are here. Our Lord has told them, that it must be so, John 16 ult. "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" and though sometimes they fall a dreaming of light and ease, Psal. 30:6. yet their habitual course is not so, being persuaded that "they must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," Acts 14:22. They are resolved to trust their portion, and rest till they come to the other side, and, in the mean time, to bear their trials till they are safely arrived there.

3. A contentedness to leave this world, and go to the other, Luke 2:29. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word." Every body sincerely joining themselves to the Lord Christ as their Head and Husband, are thus contented, Cant. 8:5. They may indeed have a natural horror of death, but they are reconciled to the pleasant land on the other side of it; as one is unto health, while yet they have a horror of the bitter potion, whereby it must be compassed. Sometimes again they are unclear as to their interest, and this may make them unwilling to remove; but this is consistent with that contentedness, since it makes not an absolute unwillingness, but only in such circumstances; as one may be willing to go to a place, yet not willing to take the journey blindfolded.

4. A faith of the day, the clear and bright day that is in the other world, Heb. 9:13. "Those all died in faith." The report of it is no more to them as idle tales, but they are persuaded of it, and look on it as the land of light and comfort; as far preferable to this world as the day is to night. If they were not persuaded of the other's being a better world than this, they could not be content to part with this for it.

5. A desire to be there in the other world, where the day breaks and the shadows flee away, Phil. 1:23. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." As it is natural for the walking traveller to desire the breaking of the day, and to be there where it is daylight; so it is natural for the walking Christian, to desire to be there where it is eternal day in the other world. And this desire is at the root of the believer's desire of a total deliverance from sin, and of a full uninterrupted communion with God; these they desire, and these they know are not to be reached, but in the other world.

6. A hope and expectation of the day's breaking to them there, and the shadows fleeing away, Rom. 8:23, 24. "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. For we are saved by hope." There is a lively hope of the glory to be revealed, so that they hope, however dark it is for the time, it will not be always so; the morning will come. Hope has its struggles as well as faith; but the hope of believers is never totally overthrown, more than their faith.

Lastly, A comforting themselves in this world with the prospect of the other world, 2 Cor. 4:17, 18. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal

weight of glory; 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." If the night be gloomy here, they should comfort themselves with the prospect of the day's breaking there, and the shadows fleeing away, and sing in the house of their pilgrimage, in hope of the joy abiding them at the end of their journey.

I shall now make some practical improvement of this doctrine.

USE I. Of information. This informs us,

1. That whatever be the trials of believers in this world, there is a happy state abiding them in the other world, wherein they will be beyond them all, Heb. 4:9. "Their remaineth a rest to the people of God." The wicked may have a fair and calm day here, but there will be an everlasting night for them there. But it is better to have our night here, and an eternal day there, than to have our day here, and eternal night there.

2. The report of unbelief to the people of God in their dark hours, whereby it is said to them, It will never be better, is false, and not to be credited, Lam. 3:17, 18. It is the work of faith to contradict these evil surmisings tending to cut off hope; and to believe the promise, when one does not see. Satan ruined the world at first by working a misbelief of the threatening; now he carries it on by a misbelief of the promise.

3. This is the time wherein we are called to walk by faith, 2 Cor. 5:7. In the other world we will walk by sight, for there the day will be broken, and there will be no shadows to interpose; but till we come there, we must be content to live by faith, trusting our good things to

come after we have patiently received our evil things, and made our way through the gloomy shades here.

4. That there will be a vast difference betwixt the state of believers here and in the other world. What a difference is there between a dark shadowy night, and a fair bright day? such will there be between the state of grace and glory. Their knowledge will be exceedingly extensive, beyond what it is now; and their comfort and joy exceedingly great, beyond what any time they now are.

Lastly, It is the Christian's own fault, if he wants comfort in the hardest pieces of his lot, John 14:18. They were never ill dined, we say, that know of a good supper. Whatever be the entertainment of a child of God here, there is a blessed entertainment awaiting him there, and as the workman works cheerfully in prospect of his wages, and the traveller goes cheerfully knowing he is going home? so the Christian should comfort himself in this world, with the prospect of the other world.

USE II. Of exhortation. Let such as are married to Christ, having received him in his covenant, and given themselves to him, learn to comfort themselves with the prospect of the other world, where the day will break, and the shadows flee away. To move unto this, consider these things,

1. You will certainly need comfort in this world. Take what way ye will, ye will meet with sorrows, difficulties, and hardships, that ye will be in need of some cordials to keep you from fainting; and being married to Christ, ye will need them in a special manner; for then your God will have you exercised with various trials, the world will withdraw its countenance from you, and Satan will set himself against you with a pecular spite.

2. The comforts of this world are deceitful, and will never be found able to balance the sorrows of it, being but "broken cisterns that can hold no water," Jer. 2:13. Some of them they can do nothing at all to, as in Belshazzar's case under the terror of God; at best they can but amuse for a while, but the grief recurs. So that in the end one must say to them, "Miserable comforters are ye all:" They are a weak dyke that will be carried away with the flood in a little.

3. The other world is a fountain of comfort in all cases ye can be in, temporal or spiritual.

Here the man in outward trouble may find a salve for his sore. If he is oppressed with poverty, he may comfort himself prospect of the treasure there, and the inheriting all things; if he is under contempt of the proud, he may comfort himself with the prospect of the glory there; if he is under sickness of body, the leaves of the trees there are for the healing of the nations. If he weary, there is rest there; has he no certain abode? there they go no more out, &c.

Here the man in spiritual distress may comfort himself. Is the body of sin heavy? in the other world there will be a freedom from it. Is he dogged with temptations? there the tempter cannot enter. Is he under desertion? there is uninterrupted communion with God there. There is nothing one can meet with heavy here, but a believing view of the other world may afford suitable consolation against it.

Lastly, The comforting of yourselves with the prospect of the other world, is a duty wherein ye will at once singularly honour God, and consult your own interest.

(1.) Hereby ye will honour God's testimony, trusting him for things unseen, Heb. 11:1. So ye will give him the glory of his faithfulness. He

has magnified his word above all his name, and you will magnify it by believing it indeed.

(2.) It will strengthen you notably in your Christian walk, Neh. 8:10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." It will carry you above the world's smiles, and make the world's great things little in your eyes, Phil. 3:8. It will strengthen against its frowns, and bear you up under the greatest trials, 2 Cor. 4:17, 18.

I shall close with the following directions.

1. Keep Christ the Lord of the other world in your view as your Lord and Husband, looking to "be found in him, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. 3:9. We can draw no comfort from the other world, but in that blessed channel; in him are all our hopes, for by him only we have a title to heaven.

2. Inure yourselves to an habitual looking to the other world, 2 Cor. 4:18. When the habitual frame of the heart is carnal, no wonder that a glance with the eye to the other world be not comfortable; but when the habitual bent is upward, occasional glances that way will have a good effect.

Lastly, Frame the whole course of your life in a suitableness, not to this, but the other world, Rom. 12:2. Carry as travellers to Zion, going through this wilderness to the promised land. Let your conversation be suitable to an expectant of that better world, namely, in heaven, Phil. 3:20.

I now go on to the last doctrine I observed from the text, namely,

DOCT. III. It will be the great concern of those married to Christ during their night-journey in this world, that he may turn and come to them, till the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away, they get to him in the other world.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what is Christ's turning and coming to them, that will be their great concern to have.

II. Give the import of this concern, that he may turn and come to them, till the day break and the shadows flee away.

III. Give the reasons of this concern.

IV. Confirm this point, that this will be the great concern of those married to Christ.

V. Lastly, Apply the doctrine.

I. I am to shew what is Christ's turning and coming to those married to him, that will be their great concern to have. We may take it up in two things.

1. His affording them his presence. That will be their great concern to enjoy during their night-journey; that if they must have a dark and shadowy night-journey of it through the world, he would not leave them, but be with them in it, Exod. 33:15. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." No body can want God's essential presence, whereby he is every where present, Psalm 139:7. and downwards. He is not far from any, Acts 17:27. But where is his gracious presence, whereby he is present with the children of men by his Spirit of holiness working in them; in which respect he is far from the wicked, Prov. 15:29. and sometimes withdraws from his own in

part, Cant. 5:6. though never totally, Heb. 13:5. Their concern then will be for,

(1.) His seen or sensible presence with them, of the want of which Job complains, Job 23:8, 9. and in the enjoyment of which the Psalmist triumphs, Ps. 23:4. As the Israelites had the pillar of fire by night present with them, discovering itself by its own light; so would they have the presence of God with them, discovering itself to them by its own light. For though they have it, if they perceive it not, they cannot have the comfort of it, as in Mary's case, John 20:14, 15.

(2.) His operative or efficacious presence in them, Phil 3:8, 10. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." As the Israelites' concern was for the pillar of fire to enlighten their darkness, to guide them in their night-marches, &c. so will believers be concerned for Christ's presence to enlighten them, quicken, strengthen, and purify them; to work in them mightily. And unless they find it operative, they will not reckon they have it.

2. His affording them his countenance, the shining of his face, and the manifestation of his favour, Ps. 6:6. "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." The unbelievers never have, Ps. 7:11; there is always a cloud on it to them; they are not pleased with him, and he is never pleased with them, Heb. 11:6. And this believers sometimes want, Isa. 57:17. "I hid me, and was wroth;" though they are never cast out of his favour, they may fall to be deprived of the manifestations of it for a time. Their concern then will be for,

(1.) The turning away of his anger, and removal of any ground of controversy he has with them, Ps. 85:4. "Turn us, O God of our

salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease." Herein the church rejoiceth, Isa. 12:1. "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." They will be concerned, that while the shades are thick and gloomy about them below, heaven may not be lowering on them too; but that it may be clear above, though it be dark and shadowy below.

(2.) The manifestations of his love, Cant. 8:6. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm," and 1:2. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine." The carnal world knows none of these things, and therefore cannot be concerned for them. Proud scornful sinners deride them as vain imaginations of fantastic fools. But in the experience of the saints, they are more powerful and efficacious, than all the pleasurable enjoyments earth can afford, Psal. 4:6, 7. They will carry them through the dark and difficult steps, where all the world's cordials will leave its votaries to faint.

II. I shall give the import of this concern of those married to Christ, that he may turn and come to them, till the day's breaking and the shadows' fleeing away, they get to him in the other world. It imports,

1. That during the night-journey in this world, Christ sometimes turns away and withdraws from his people; so that seeking him they cannot find him, Cant. 3:1. "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him but I found him not." Even as Moses who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, was withdrawn from them in the wilderness, and they knew not what was become of him. Christ seems sometimes to look up himself from his people, for his own holy ends, that they cannot have that access to him as sometime before. So he puts a difference betwixt earth and heaven, the house

of their pilgrimage and their home, that they may like home the better.

2. The travellers to Zion, when Christ is away, though it be night, they readily miss him, Cant. 3:3. "The watchmen that go about the city, found me, to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" Indeed it may at times be with them as with Samson, Judg. 16:20, who "wist not that the Lord was departed from him." But that is through the inadvertancy; if they once begin to look about them, they will be sure to miss him, as the spouse did, Cant. 5:6. It is a property of a gracious soul, to be capable to tell Christ's visits, his goings and comings. It is not every one can do that: worldly men reign as kings without him, they miss him not; the blind man cannot tell when the day comes in, or when the night; but the seeing can do both. The wife can readily tell when her husband goes abroad, and when he comes home; though the servants being without about their work, may know neither the one nor the other.

3. A holy dissatisfaction with all things, while he is away. An angel's presence could not please Moses in the wilderness, Ex. 35:2, 15. nor dry Mary's cheeks in the garden, while she knew not where her Lord was, John 20:12, 13. The house though thronged with servants is empty to the wife, while her beloved husband is not there. The gracious soul would make stepping-stones of all, to carry it to Christ the best beloved.

4. A holy resolution to give him a welcome reception, if he will turn and come again; then the doors should be cast wide open to receive him, Cant. 8:1, 2. "O that thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother!" &c. And this is joined with self-loathing, for giving him occasion to depart. "What a madman," says one in this

concern, "was I, that I could not keep his presence when I had it? But O! if I had it again, I should not so easily quit it."

5. Earnest outgoings of the heart after him in desires for his return, Isa. 64:1. "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence." Job 23:3. "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!" While the soul is in this concern, one messenger will be sent to heaven after another, in solemn prayer, and frequent ejaculations, with that message, Cant. 5:8. "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love." And when they can do no more, they will send greedy looks after him, to the place where his honour dwells, as did David, Ps. 5:3. and the church, Lam. 3:49, 50.

Lastly, A holy restlessness in the soul, till he turn and come again, Cant. 3:1. and downwards. In this concern how restless was Job, going backward and forward, looking on the right and left hand? chap. 22:8, 9. As the needle in the seaman's compass touched with a good loadstone, rests not till it turn about to the north; so the soul touched by the Spirit of Christ, presently moves towards him, Cant. 5:4. or as the dove sent out of the ark could not rest till it was taken in again.

III. Let us next give the reasons of this concern in those married to Christ, that he may turn and come to them. I offer you the following,

1. Their superlative love to Christ, Cant. 1:3, 4. "Because of the savour of thy good ointment, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee—The upright love thee." Love natively tends to union and communion; hence the soul is more where it loves than where it lives; it exerts itself in desire after the presence of its object, when at a distance; and has much ado to bear

absence. But alas! Christ may tell most of us, as Delilah did Samson, Judg. 16:15. "How cans't thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?"

2. Their comfort in their night journey depends on it; without it they must go drooping, for nothing will make up the want thereof. It is Christ's turning to them in it, that makes all they meet with by the way savoury to them, and the want of it is a worm at the root of their enjoyments. The dove could find nothing out of the ark, but carrion, that it could not feed on; and therefore returns; but the raven could feed on it very well, and therefore comes not in again. Hypocrites will bestow a few faint wishes on Christ; but if he answers them not, they are not sore slain therewith; they have more doors than his to go to; if they come not speed at his, they know how to shift for themselves otherwise. But sincere souls must either be served or die at his door, John 6:68. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

3. Their experience of the desirableness of his presence and countenance in their night-journey, Ps. 63:1–3. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life; my lips shall praise thee." It is natural to be in concern for that which one still needs, and remembers himself to have been the better of formerly. They know his presence has made them safely pass many a dangerous step, and easily get over many a difficult one; that his countenance has often enlightened the darkness of their night, and made them confidently pass many a gloomy shade.

Lastly, Their felt need of it; they know not how they will ever make out the night-journey without it, Ex. 33:15. "And he said unto him, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." It was in the faith of his presence and countenance, that ever they ventured on it; and in the faith of the same, that ever they look to get fair to the journey's end. And felt need of it must produce a concern for it, Mark 7:24, 25. rising from,

(1.) The sense of their liableness to mistake their way, that they need him for their direction and guidance, Jer. 10:23. If he should leave them, they will reckon themselves left in a wilderness, and that in the night; no wonder then they be in such concern for his presence and countenance.

(2.) The sense of their weakness for the journey, that they need to go leaning on him, as a weak woman on her husband, Cant. 8:5. Sense of weakness in themselves, and of the fulness of strengthening grace in him, prompt them to this concern.

(3.) The sense of the great opposition and difficulty to be met with in the way, Eph. 6:12, 13. Christian soldiers have no brow for battle, if Christ their Captain be not on their head, 2 Cor. 3:5. and they will stick at nothing howsoever hard, if he be, Phil. 4:13. "I can do all things," says Paul, "through Christ which strengthened me."

IV. We shall now confirm this point, That it will be the great concern of those married to Christ, during their night-journey in this world, that he may turn and come to them till the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away, they get to him in the other world. To evince this, we offer the following things:

1. Christ their Lord and Husband has got their heart above all other, and it rests in him. They have answered the call, Prov. 23:26. "My

son, give me thine heart." They have said, he is their rest, Heb. 4:3. as in the state of marriage; they close their eyes on all others, never thinking to see an object so desirable, Ps. 73:25. Now, "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also," Mat. 6:21. Wherefore it cannot miss to be their concern, that he may turn and come to them; even as when a woman has fixed her heart on and accepted one for her husband, it is natural to desire frequent visits, till he take her home for altogether.

2. They are partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1:4. partakers of Christ, of his Spirit, his grace, his image; and like draws to like; the carnal worldling to the world, and the Christian to Christ. As the water exhaled from the sea by the influence of the sun, is gathered into clouds, which dissolved it falls down on the earth again, where cast up by springs it empties itself by rivers, and brooks into the sea again whence it came, Eccl. 1:7.; so grace comes down from above, from the fulness thereof in the man Christ, into his Christians, and watering them does in the exercise thereof mount up again towards him in such breathings after him, and concern that he may turn and come to them.

3. All believers may be observed to be great miscounters of time, when Christ is turned away from them in their night-journey, Is. 54:7. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee," &c. compare Psal. 13:1. "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" As the time wherein the moon hides her head to the traveller by night seems long, in comparison of the time of her shinning bright; so the time of Christ's withdrawing and hiding his face from a gracious soul is a weary time, a kind of petit eternity. Which speaks a mighty concern.

Lastly, When they are themselves, they are resolute for his presence and countenance, Eph. 6:15. Grace gives men an edge for holy violence, Matt. 11:11. It will make men very peremptory for Christ, that they will not take a refusal, Gen. 32:26, to threap kindness on him, and special interest in him, Is. 63:16. to make an argument of their unworthiness and misery, mustered up against them to mar their confidence, Mat. 15:27. and to stick at nothing standing betwixt Christ and them, so as they may get to him, Phil. 3:8.

I shall now conclude this subject with some application of what has been said.

USE I. Of information. This shews that,

1. The grace of God ennobles the heart, makes it to aspire to the highest things, and gives it a bent of desire beyond others. (1.) It carries the heart off this world and sets it on the other world, as the place of their great hopes, Col. 3:1. Others may desire their portion in this life, and eagerly pursue it there; but they will certainly carry their views quite beyond it to the other world, Phil. 3:13, 14. (2.) It gives them a new notion of heaven, and refined desires thereof, as the place where they may be with Christ, Phil. 1:23. Carnal men have carnal desires of heaven, as a place of rest, welfare, and happiness, abstracted from the enjoyment of God in Christ; but it is Christ's being there, and full communion with him to be enjoyed there, that is the main spring of the gracious soul's desire to be there, Col. 3:3, 4.

2. That the soul once truly married to Christ is fixed as to its choice, never to alter it, on any terms; neither to be boasted from him by the world's frowns, nor bribed from him by its smiles, Heb. 4:3. Cant. 8:6, 7. Be the night never so dark, the journey never so hard, they are resolute to go on, till the day-breaking they get to him in the other world.

3. The travellers to Zion desire and look for their furniture for the way from Christ, as well as their entertainment at the journey's end, Cant. 8:5. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" There are many who discover their hypocrisy, by desiring no more of him, than that he will take them into his covenant at the beginning of their way, and into his heaven at the end of it; having little concern for his presence and countenance during their progress. They would have a rest to their consciences from him at their setting off, and a rest to their souls from him at the end; but the rest to their hearts, while they are going on their way, they look for in the world and in their lusts. Such will be miserably disappointed; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. 12:14.

USE II. Of trial. Hereby ye may try your state. If ye be really joined to the Lord Christ as your Head and Husband, to be with him in the other world, it will be your great concern to enjoy such communion with him here, as is allowed his people by the way, till ye come to get full communion with him there. There is a two-fold communion with Christ allowed to his people by the way to the other world.

1. Habitual communion, which is a commonness of interest with him, 1 John 1:3. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." This is a necessary result of the spiritual marriage-tie, and believers never want it from the moment of their union with Christ. They may set their names on what is his, as having a joint interest therein with him;—"all are yours; and ye are Christ's," 1 Cor. 3:22, 23. They have with him a common interest in his righteousness, what he did, what he suffered, in his Spirit, purchase, graces wherewith he is filled, &c.

2. Actual communion, which consists in a certain friendly intercourse betwixt Christ and the soul, he letting down the influences of his grace on them, and they moving towards him in the exercise of grace, Cant. 1:4. "Draw me, we will run after thee; the King hath brought me into his chambers," &c. This a believer may want for a time; and this is the thing desired in the text, under the name of Christ's "turning, and being like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." And the desire of this communion with him is the touchstone of a gracious state. There are several degrees of it.

(1.) Communion with Christ by desires awake after him, Isa. 26:9. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early;" when the spiritual hunger and thirst after him is created in the soul, and the soul longs, thirsts, and pants after him, Ps. 63:1. This cannot be but by influences from him, whereby the soul is set in motion after him, Cant. 5:4. It is a step to more, Mat. 5:6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

(2.) Communion with Christ in the exercise of a faith of adherence to him, Ps. 22:1. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Though the soul cannot sing, yet it will resolutely say to him, "My God." Though his dispensations are black and drumly, and seeming to go against the promise, yet the soul will hold by the grip of the promise, saying as Job 13:15. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." It is a power from on high that teacheth one's hands so to war.

(3.) Communion with Christ in the exercise of hope, Ps. 42:5. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." Though sensible enjoyment is wanting, and there is no

present feeling; yet the soul, believing the promise, hopes for the accomplishment of it in due time. So it waits on about his hand, in the diligent use of the means; expecting a good issue at length. This is the product of divine influences, according to the apostle's prayer, Rom. 15:13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

(4.) Communion with Christ in sensible enjoyment; when they are admitted to see his face by a faith of assurance, hear his voice so as to know it, taste of his goodness, smell the savour of his name, Cant. 1:3, and to feel the workings of his grace on their souls. This fills the soul with solid comfort, refined delight, and sometimes with heavenly rapture, 1 Pet. 1:8.

Now what gust have ye for these things? Is it indeed your great concern to reach them the habitual course of your life, and so to have communion with Christ while in this world, till ye get full communion with him in the other? If the enjoyment of such communion with Christ while here, is your great concern, then,

[1.] Ye will desire it above all things else ye can reach in this world, preferring it to the best things that earth affords, Psal. 4:6, 7. Ye will value it more than the profits and pleasures of the world, counting them but dung in comparison thereof.

[2.] Ye will highly prize holy ordinances, public, private, and secret, as the means of communion with Christ; and yet not be satisfied with them without communion with him in them. They to whom these are a burden or tasteless, plainly discover they value not communion with Christ, these being the galleries wherein the King is held, Cant. 7:5.; they are not of the Psalmist's mind, who say, Psal. 84:10. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper

in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Those that rest in them, and are pleased when the task is got done, shew they value not the true use of them, represented to us in the spouse's practice, Cant. 3:2. "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth."

[3.] It will be your great concern to guard against whatever may mar it, or keep you back from it; and to keep the way wherein you may obtain it. That is you will beware of living in the allowed practice of sin, but be tender and holy in your lives, Psal. 66:18. John 14:21.

USE III. Evidence yourselves truly married to Christ, by making it your great concern to have actual communion with Christ here, till ye come to the full enjoyment of him in the other world, To press this, I offer these motives very briefly.

1. This is necessary to evidence your sincerity in the marriage covenant, 1 John 2:19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." Being careless of communion with Christ, speaks that the heart is not with him, but with other lovers.

2. It is necessary to your getting safe through an ensnaring world; therefore says Christ to his people, Cant. 4:8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir, and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards," if ye are left alone, ye will fall in the wilderness.

Lastly, Without communion with Christ here, there will be no communion with him in the other world, according to what the Psalmist says, Psal. 73:24, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,

and afterwards receive me to glory." Communion with Christ in grace here, is the foundation of communion with him in glory hereafter.

I close with these few directions.

1. Look for communion with Christ in the way of free grace and unhired lore; that he may come over mountains to you, mountains of guilt and unworthiness, as undeserving such a high privilege.

2. Seek it resolutely in all means of his appointment, going from one mean and ordinance to another till ye find him, as the spouse did, Cant. 3:1. and downwards. So may ye, persevering, succeed, whatever difficulties be in your way.

3. Be diligent observers of providences, and make a due improvement of them as means of communion with him, Psal. 92:4. and 107 ult.

Lastly, Be habitually tender in your walk; keeping off from every thing that may grieve his Spirit, and provoke him to depart; acting in this case as the spouse did, Cant. 3:5. "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please."

# READINESS FOR OUR REMOVAL INTO THE OTHER WORLD OPENED UP, URGED, AND ENFORCED

The substance of several Sermons preached at Ettrick in the year 1730

Luke 12:40

> Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

AFTER all we have heard of the other world, what will it avail, if it issue not in preparing for our removal into it? That is certainly the use which all of us are to make of it, which we have in the words of the text. In which we have two things:

1. An alarm to be ready for the removal into the other world, "Be therefore ready also," In the parable of the rich man, ver. 16–21. our Saviour had shown the dreadful surprising removal of secure sinners into it, when they are not at all ready for it, but dreaming of a long continuance at ease here, which puts preparation for it out of their heads. And thence he proceeds to caution against inordinate care for this uncertain life, and to stir up to be ready, to be on the wing, for the other life, ver. 35.; and to be always ready, as those that are at an uncertainty as to the time of their removal. This is to be ready also, as well as the goodman of the house would be if he knew what hour the thief would come.

2. The reason why we should be ready, always ready, never unprepared: "For the son of man cometh at an hour when we think not." Because we know not when we may be called off, more than one knows what time of the night the thief will break in on his house. Now Christ the son of man comes as a thief, at a time uncertain to us. There is a twofold coming of the Son of man. (1.) At the general judgment. (2.) At death. Both are to remove us into the other world; the word is general, agreeing to both; and in point of our making

ready they come to one, because whatever readiness they can be in for the general judgment, must be made before death, there being no access after that to make ready any more, but as the tree falls it lies. So we shall consider it as his coming at death, to carry us off hence. There are two things here:

1st, The certainty of our removal into the other world,—"The Son of man cometh;" he will certainly come, how long soever he may delay his coming. That is a tryst that cannot be broken.

2dly, The uncertainty of the time of it, as to us, however precisely it is appointed in the divine decree; he has not told us when it shall be, more than the thief tells the good-man when he is to make an attempt on his house. So that if there be any time when we are not ready, he may for any thing we know, as readily come then, as at any time.—From the text ariseth this weighty point of doctrine, viz.

DOCT. Such is the certainty of our removal into the other world, and the uncertainty of the time of that removal, that we ought always to be ready for it.

IN discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Premise some things imported in it.

II. Consider the certainty of our removal into the other world.

III. The uncertainty of the time of it.

IV. The readiness for that removal.

Lastly, Apply in some practical uses.

I. I shall premise some things imported in this doctrine.

1. Great is the weight that depends on our being ready for a removal into the other world. Eternal well or woe depends on it; for according to the situation we are found in at our removal, so will we be received and lodged there; in the upper part, the region of bliss, or the lower part, the region of horror, to remove no more. And this makes carelessness to prepare for it absolutely unaccountable.

2. We are naturally unfit, and unready for that removal. Were it a matter indifferent which part of that world we should land in, we could at no time be reckoned unfit and unready for it; for they that are not ready for eternal light above, are ready for eternal fire below. But it can never be indifferent to a rational creature, which of these shall be its portion. And therefore they that are not ready to be inhabitants of heaven, are not ready for their removal; and such are we all naturally, having no title to it, Eph. 2:3, 12, and no meetness for it, till we get it anew by grace, Col. 1:12.

3. Now is the time, and here is the place, of getting ready, 2 Cor. 6:3. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." We are set into this world, to make ready for the other; and time is given us to prepare for eternity. If time be once over, and we be turned out of this world, we have no more access to make ready for the other, Eccl. 9:10. "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." So it is with us, now or never.

Lastly, We ought always to keep ourselves in readiness, that we be not surprised and taken at a disadvantage; hence says our Lord, Luke 21:34–36. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye

therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." One may be ready at one time, who is not ready at another as he ought to be; falling carnally secure, after he has bestirred himself to prepare. But at that time when he is least looking for the removal, it may be nearest; and whatever unreadiness it trysts him with, so great will the loss be.

II. We shall consider the certainty of our removal into the other world.

1. It was the other world, and not this, that man was chiefly and in the first place designed for, as to his settled abode. When God made this world, he made it but as a thoroughfare to the other, a place through which man should pass into the other, Matth. 25:34. The other world was always the home, this was but the place of the pilgrimage, where at no time man was to stay for good at all, but only to sojourn. For consider,

(1.) This world was ordained to be the place of trial, the other the place of retribution, according to men's works. The trial cannot always last, otherwise it would be no trial; but the retribution may very well last for ever, and really will do so. Therefore we must necessarily remove out of this world as the place of trial, into the other as the place of retribution, which therefore must be looked on as our settled abode, Matth. 25 ult. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

(2.) This world never had in it, that perfection of either happiness or misery, that was designed for man according to his behaviour in it. Even in paradise there was a want, and in the deluge there was an ark. But God will perfect his work of whatever kind. Therefore the settled abode is there, not here.

Wherefore it is a fatal mistake ever to look on this world as our home, whether we be saints or sinners; that is the use of the other world only.

2. The man Christ is removed into the other world, never to come back to dwell in this; and to that world where he is we must needs go. The happiness secured for his own people, who must be taken to the place where he is, John 14:3. and the misery ensured for his enemies, who must be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," 2 Thess. 1:2. brought thither and slain before him, Luke 19:27. make this necessary. Therefore, as sure as Christ hath removed into that world, we must follow.

3. Men must be for ever, but this world will have an end; therefore our removal out of it into the other world is most certain. "This is not your rest, because it is polluted;" and because of its pollution, it must be burned up, 2 Pet. 3:10. Now the soul is immortal, and the body shall have a resurrection, and so the man must be for ever; he must be in some world, and since this will be destroyed, he must certainly remove to the other.

4. Our life in this world is a journey through it, ending in a. going out of it, and therefore into the other world, Psal. 39 ult. We enter upon it at our birth, make progress therein in our life, and come to the end of it at death, which is the passage into the other world. All things are in motion here, and every thing undergoes changes; but none does more so than man, who springs up, and quickly goes down again; and at length his place knows him no more.

4. Death, the passage into the other world, is appointed to all, Heb. 9:27. "It is appointed unto men once to die." All must pass through that dark and shady vale, and then they are in the other world; and have no more concern in what is done under the sun. And the

certainty of our dying, we may not only read in our bibles; but in our very bodies themselves, where every gripe, pain, and weakness we feel overtaking us, are tokens of death approaching.

Lastly, The experience of all ages since the beginning confirms the certainty of this removal. Where are the generations that have been before us? They are no more to be seen in this world, more than if they had never been in it. Yet God's word assures us that they are in being, the godly ones of them happy, and the ungodly miserable. They are gone then into the other world. And do we not see by daily observation, that the course of dying is continuing as before? And are there any of us all, who have not some that were our acquaintance in this world, already removed into the other before us? And are we to expect the rocks to be removed for us?

III. The next head is to consider the uncertainty of the time of this removal. And here I shall shew,

1. How this uncertainty of the time of our removal is to be understood.

2. How it appears.

3. Why the Lord has kept men at this uncertainty.

FIRST, I am to shew how this uncertainty of the time of our removal is to be understood.

1. It is not to be understood, as if the time of our removal were absolutely uncertain, and undetermined with God. No; it is determined exactly and precisely to the least moment, at what time each of us shall make our removal into the other world, how much time we shall pass in this life, and beyond which we shall not go, Job

14:4. "His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." However uncertain it is as to us, it is as certain before the Lord as anything can be. This is evident; for,

The decree of God reacheth the least of things, even to the very numbering of the hairs of our head, Matt. 10:30. And can we think that he who numbers the hairs of our head, numbers not the days of our life that we shall fulfil? Truly they are soon numbered to him, being "as an handbreadth, and as nothing before him," Psal. 39:5. and he knows them exactly, Job 14:5. How else could he foreshew certainly men's death, as he did Moses's, Deut. 31:14. and that of Jeroboam's child? 1 Kings 14:12, 17.

It is certain, that man cannot subsist a moment, but as God holds him in life; so the withdrawing of his support must put an end to it, Psal. 90:3. And he knows certainly what he will do, Acts 15:18. And who can doubt, but he certainly knows when he is to receive his own people into glory, and when the day of his enemies will come? Fifteen years were added to the years that Hezekiah had lived, but not to the term of life appointed of God. But,

2. This uncertainty is to be understood, with reference to us. Though it is certain in respect of the decree of God, yet it is uncertain in respect of our knowledge of it. Men may conjecture about it by signs; and no doubt God may as he sees meet discover the time of one's removal, either to himself or to others. But otherwise, it is most uncertain to us.

SECONDLY, I shall shew how this uncertainty of the time of our removal appears.

1. Our removal depends entirely on the will of another, quite concealed from us, Luke 12:36. It is so with us, that we cannot go when we please, were we never so fond of the other world, or weary of this. It is the will of his command revealed, that we wait the will of his providence for the removing, in all cases without exception, Ex. 20:13. It was the peculiar prerogative of the man Christ, to be Lord of his own life, John 10:18. And though desperate proud sinners invade it, he can by his providence draw a bar before them, that either in mercy or in wrath shall oblige them to wait his time, of both which there have been instances; howbeit sometimes in wrath, the will of his providence attends their will, and gives them their swing. But however, our removal depends not on our own but his will, not to be discovered but by the event; which therefore makes it utterly uncertain to us.

2. We plainly perceive that God does not keep one time for the removal of men into the other world. Had he appointed one certain term of years and days, to which every one should come, and nobody fall short of; then we would have had no more ado to know our time, but to have counted what we were short of that common term of life; but there is no such common term appointed, but some are removed sooner, others later; and there is no stage of life whatsoever, infancy, childhood, youth, middle age, old age, but some are removed therein. And which of them we have not seen shall be ours, we know not. So we are kept uncertain.

3. As there is no period of life, so there is no state of health, that may not be brangled by sickness, and overthrown by death. When men are in a fixed state of health, strong, lively, and vigorous, they seem to be farthest removed from death; but how often do we see death at the heels of such a state? How many strong and lusty go off as soon as these that are weak, groaning under various infirmities? Job

21:23–26. We have an instance, in the rich man that fared sumptuously every day, as well as the beggar which was laid at his gate full of sores, Luke 16:22. Nay, often the weak and sickly prolong their life, while the strong are moved down and carried off one after another, Job 3:20, 21. "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul? which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures?" Compared with Luke 12:19, 20. "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." What uncertainty appears there?

4. Oft-times when death is least minded, and farthest out of one's thoughts, it is at the door; the removal into the other world comes when men are thinking of nothing, but fixing themselves and enjoying the pleasure of this, 1 Thess. 5:3. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape," Luke 12:20. just cited. How many have revelled away into the other world, going down to the sides of the pit, as with tabret and pipe! how many drunkards and debauchees have never come to themselves, till they were removed out of this world! going into that world without a capacity for a previous thought of it! So utterly uncertain are men.

5. Man's life is liable to various accidents, for taking it away, Eccl. 9:12. "For man also 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." What though you are in perfect health, and no cause of death appears from within? There are so many things from without, that may beat up your quarters in this world, and hurry you into the other, that ye are still at an uncertainty; "as when a man goeth into

the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die, Deut. 19:5; Luke 13:1, 4. Fire, water, stones falling or lying in the way, beasts of the field, fowls of the air, &c. a thousand unforeseen accidents may be instruments of our removal, blowing out life.

6. How often do men seeking life find death; and labouring for their stay, hasten their removal; Such uncertainty are we kept at. Sensual men pamper the body, with design to keep it up; and by their intemperance in eating and drinking, destroy it; laying on so much fuel that they put out the fire. And where that is not the case, how often is death found in physic, and in necessary food, taken with a design to preserve life? 2 Kings 4:40. A morsel at a meal has choked some, and removed them from their covered table into the other world. A hair in milk, and a stone in a raisin, it is said, has done the business.

Lastly, Where there has been no visible cause from without, nor sensible cause from within, how many have suddenly dropt down dead, to the perfect surprise of their relations and neighbours aware of no cause thereof! Our life is in the hand of the Giver always, as a ball in the hand of him that holds it up; there needs no more but to withdraw that hand, and that moment we fall, Psal. 90:3. "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men, and 104:29.

THIRDLY, It remains on this head to shew why the Lord has kept men at this uncertainty. No doubt God could have made the time of our removal into the other world as open as the time of the setting of the sun, &c. But he has concealed it from us. It is meet to consider why. We pretend not to give a reason moving the divine will; but the

reasonableness of it, or for what causes the Lord has willed the concealment of that time from us, we may consider. The reasons are these,

I. It is best for his own glory and honour, the chief end of all things. Hereby he shows,

(1.) His mastership over mankind, who of right are his servants, however refractory most of them are. Every master thinks it his right to have his servants at his call, without a previous tryst, Matt. 8:9. How much more is God's right over us, to call us off when he will, from the place where he has set us, to the place he has appointed us for after? Our Lord teacheth us this, that he claims this as a Master to come when he will, and that his servants be ready waiting on, Luke 12:36, 38. "that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."

(2.) The efficacy of his authority, Eccl. 8:8. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war, neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it." He has revealed the will of his command to men, in his laws; and that is disregarded in great part by all, and wholly by some, in life. How necessary then is it, that the authority so often trampled on by mortals in life, should be vigorously executed at length, in obliging them to obey the will of his providence, without knowing aforehand when? He sets trysts with men for duty, which they regard not; the vindicating of his authority requires their removal to give account, upon sight of his summons.

(3.) His sovereignty. It is a sign of his sovereign dominion over us. Solomon observes, Prov. 25:3. that "the heart of kings is

unsearchable." Kings of the earth have their secrets of government, which their subjects are not to pry into, but obey orders: God has a sealed book of decrees, which none but the Lamb is worthy to open the seals of. It proclaims his sovereign dominion over mankind, that he keeps such a momentous point concerning them concealed, ver. 20. And it is apt to strike an awe of him on those who consider it, as of an absolute Lord, whom we are to obey without disputing and upon the first call; with the depths of whose counsel concerning us, we are not to meddle, Deut. 29 ult.

2. It is best for the good of mankind that it is concealed. Were the book of the decrees laid open before the world, and a liberty given to every one that would, to turn it up, and look out the time of mortals' removal; fools would readily run to it, but wise men, I think, would start back. That the time of our removal into the other world is kept a secret with God, closely concealed, is of good use. If ye ask what use is it for? It is of use,

(1.) For a badge of our dependence on God, every moment. Hereby we are taught, that we are his debtors for every other breath we draw, and pulse that beats; we see we are mere precarious beings in the world, tenants-at-will, not knowing when we may be charged to remove. By this means great and small, old and young, are obliged to see how they wholly depend on the will of God as to their continuance here; a lesson we need to have inculcated on us, we are so apt to forget it.

(2.) For a token to remember the other world. It is natural for them that must remove, and know not how soon, to be often thinking on the place they must remove to; so our uncertainty as to the time of our removal out of this world to the other, natively leads us to think of that world. How ready are we to spend our days in a forgetfulness

of the world we are going to, as matters now stand! And how much more would it be so, if we were sure that death were at so many years distance as sometimes it is!

(3.) For a curb to our lusts, to check and bridle our unruly affections. This concealing is of good use to keep us from indulging ourselves in sloth, to still our anxiety, and repress all carnal earthly affections. He that considers the uncertainty of the time of his death, is furnished with an useful means to cool his affections in the pursuit of this world, which otherwise be would be apt to give the loose unto.

(4.) For to be a balance between the rising and standing generations, the young and the aged. While both are kept at an uncertainty, that is not known, which of them shall bury the other, and bury their heirs, this is a mean to keep both in due affection to, and concern for one another. While there is so much unnaturalness in the world, as matters now stand, what would it be if that were certain, that is now but probable?

(5.) For encouragement to people's regular pursuit of their worldly affairs, tending to the good of society. If men were certain as to the time of their removal, it would no doubt make them very slack in their business, and at length cause them quite to give it over, unless pure necessity obliged them thereto; and this would tend to their family's disadvantage, and the prejudice of the public. But God has in wisdom concealed that matter so that to hope of enjoyment, causeth men to be doing till God bid them stop.

(6.) For a seasoning to the comforts of life, that men may get the allowable comfort in them, and the sap may not be from the beginning squeezed out of them. If when the child is born, it were certainly known it were to live but so many days, weeks, or months; or that the parent must leave it at such a certain time; where would

the comfort of the relation be? How often would the view of the day of the parting extinguish it? But God, by keeping it out of sight, prevents these sorrows.

(7.) For a band to oblige men to act, not according to future events, but the present call of providence, and so to make them subservient to the designs thereof. Had Jacob known beforehand that Joseph's brethren would have cast him into the pit, and sold him for a slave, he would not have let him go. Who would ever entertain the thought of putting that comfort to their mouth, which they certainly knew would be presently snatched from them, and leave them pierced with many sorrows, which yet often falls out? But God will have men's acting to be regulated, not by events, but the present call of providence. And men may have peace in that, which providence pointed them to, though the event be heavy.

Lastly, For a memorial to be always ready and on our watch. It is reasonable we should be so, and that at no time we should give ourselves to carnal security; but did we certainly know the time of our removal, we would be apt to fall asleep for the time it were at a distance, and think it would be enough to watch and be on our guard when the time were at hand.

Learn we from all this to be well satisfied in the divine conduct as wise and good, in concealing from us the time of our removal; and answer the ends of that dispensation, in acknowledging our continual dependence on God, taking it as a token to remember the other world, &c.

IV. We are next to consider the readiness for that removal. And there is a twofold readiness for it, habitual and actual.

First, Habitual, in respect of our state. In the state we are in by nature, we are by no means ready for that removal; if we die in that state, we perish. We must be out of it in the state of grace, if ye would be ready, 1 Thess. 5:4. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day shall overtake you as a thief." Col. 1:12, 13. "Giving thanks unto the father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." This is necessary for our safe passage and arrival in the other world. There is no getting into the state of glory, if we are not first brought into the state of grace. To die in the state we were born in, will bury us in the pit. This readiness consists,

1. In being brought into a relative state of grace, whereby the relation we stand in to God by nature, which is a reasonable one, may be changed into a saving relation to him. And this lies epecially in four things.

(1.) A state of justification, pardon and absolution. By nature we are God's criminals, under his curse, Eph 2:3. How can we be ready in that case, for the other world? What can we expect going into it in that condition, but the sentance, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Matth. 25:41. Therefore, if we would be ready, we must see to be justified persons, Rom. 5:1, 2. We must sue out a pardon in God's way, and not rest till we be accepted of him, as righteous; for it is such only can have access to heaven, from whom the curse of the broken law is removed. Then, and not till then, is the bar in our way removed.

(2.) A state of reconciliation and peace with God, Amos 3:3. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" There can be no walking with him here nor hereafter without it. We are born in a state of enmity

with God; there is a legal enmity on the part of heaven against us, a real one in our part; should we remove to the other world in that condition, what could be the issue, but that, Luke 19:27. "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me?" Therefore to be ready for the other world, we must be in a state of peace and friendship with the Lord of it. If we be for Abraham's bosom, we must be as he was, "the friends of God," Jam. 2:23. This is the design of the gospel, that we he "reconciled to God," 2 Cor. 5:20.

(3.) A state of adoption into the family of God, 1 John 3:2. by nature we are children of the devil, John 8:44. If we remove in that state to the other world, what can we expect but to go home into our father's house? Therefore if we would be ready, that relation must be dissolved; and we must be adopted into the family of God, that when we fail, we may be received into everlasting habitations with his family. If we are not of God's family in the lower house, we will never be of it in the upper; for they are all but one family, Eph. 2:15.

(4.) A state of peculiar interest in God as our own God. When the man Christ was going to heaven, he says, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God," John 20:17. God himself is the reward of his people, who therefore must be theirs ere they can be ready to remove into the other world, Gen. 15:1. In our natural state we are without God, Eph. 2:12. And should we die without him, where can we expect to land in the other world, but without where are the dogs, &c. in outer darkness? Wherefore, to be ready, we must before removing have our Maker to be our Husband, God our Creator to be our God in covenant, according to Heb. 8:10. "I will be to them a God." For there lies heaven's happiness, Rev. 21:3.—"God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

This relative state of grace is necessary to found our right and title to heaven, Matt. 25:34. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom," &c. And certainly we can never remove into the other world, till once it is expected. No body can expect to invade it by force, to get into that part of the other world which they have no right to. No man could judge himself ready to remove into a farm or heritage here, or settle there, till once he had got a right to it; and shall one imagine himself ready for the other world, while he has no right to heaven?

2. This readiness consists in being brought into a real state of grace, whereby the temper and disposition our souls are in by nature, quite unfit for heaven, may be changed into a heavenly one, 2 Cor. 5:5. This lies in two things: (1.) The quickening of our dead souls, Eph. 2:1. We are by nature spiritually dead; God the soul of our souls is departed from us; so we are lifeless and moveless; dead to God, as really as our departed friends are dead to us. Should we remove in that case to the other world, what issue could be looked for, but that he should bury us out of his sight, as we do our dead friends? Therefore to be ready, we must be quickened by the return of the Spirit of Christ into us, Rom. 8:2.

This is called the first regeneration, whereby there is a new principle of action put into the soul, by which the soul believes on Christ, and actively unites with him, John 1:12, 13. and is thereby brought into the relative state foresaid.

(2.) The sanctifying of our natures throughout, 1 Thess. 5:23. By nature we are unholy all over, Tit. 1:15. The soul in all its faculties is wholly defiled; and consequently the body in all its members. Sin reigns in the natural man, living lusts have the mastery of him. What a removal can one have in this case, where the image of God is

defaced, Satan's image set up, and sin bears full sway, but that in Prov. 14:32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness?" To be ready then for the other world, we must be sanctified all over; the mind must be enlightened, the will turned towards the will of God, the affections regulated, and we renewed in the whole man.

This is called the second regeneration, whereby the soul being in Christ by faith is changed into his image, and so made a new creature, 2 Cor. 5:17. Receiving grace for grace in Christ; it has new habits implanted in it, fitting for the doing of good works, Eph. 2:10.

This real state of grace is necessary to our being meet or fit for heaven, Col. 1:12. 2 Cor. 5:5. forecited. Without it we are no more meet for it, than fishes for meadows, an idiot for an estate, or a dead man for a feast. Men look on heaven as a place of ease and rest; without considering it as a holy rest from sin, and an eternal exercise of holinesss in heart and life; if they so considered it they would soon see their unmeetness for it, and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. 12:14.

Lastly, This readiness consists in persevering in that state, relative and real unto the end. Mat. 24:13. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Rev. 2:10. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Apostates cannot be ready for the other world; if one removes in apostacy, what can be expected, but as Heb. 10:38. God's "soul shall have no pleasure in him?" Therefore the perseverance of the saints is insured by the strongest security, John 10:28, 29. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." So that whosoever do make

never so fair an appearance, but afterward fall away, they discover that they never were in a state of grace, relative nor real, 1 John 2:19.

Secondly, There is actual readiness in respect of our frame and circumstances, Luke 12:35, 36. The former gives us a safe, this an abundant entrance into the better world, 2 Pet. 1:10, 11. Now one may be habitually ready, who is not actually so; though not contrariwise. But we are called, both by God's word and our own necessity, to actual readiness for that removal. This lies in two things.

1. Putting our house in order, Isa. 33:1. It is a piece of necessary preparation for the other world, to have our affairs in this world, in such a state, as we may fitly leave them; and no man of business can be excused in a slothful leaving his affairs in confusion, while he is not sure at what time he may be called off. For thereby others may be wronged; and if it be sinful to wrong others in life, it cannot be blameless to wrong then at death, when there is no more access to right them.

2. Keeping our soul's case in order, Luke 7:35. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." Though in conversion the gracious state of our souls is secured; yet it will require much diligence to keep our soul's case right for our removal, and slothfulness may put us out of case for it, Eccl. 10:18. The being of grace is sufficient for the one, but the exercise of grace is necessary for the other. Now an orderly case, fit for one's removing to the other world, lies in these seven things.

(1.) Keeping up actual communion with God, in the course of our life, Cant. 2 ult. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn my Beloved, and be thou like a roe," &c. Thus was Enoch ready for his removal, Gen. 5:24. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for

God took him." He who would be actually ready must walk with God in ordinances, in providences, and the whole tenor of his life; being spiritual in religious duties, an observer of providences, accommodating himself thereto, and setting God before him in the course of his actions. Thus he will serve an apprenticeship for the better world, and will be in a case for a removal, since that will only be to him a change of his place, not of his company.

(2.) A heart weaned from this world. Col. 3:3, 4. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." David was in case for removing, when he said, Ps. 131:2. "My soul is even as a weaned child;" and Paul, when he said, Gal. 6:14. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." When one is quick and lively in his affection to this world, easily and feelingly touched with its smiles and frowns, he will be at death like unripe fruit, that takes a sore pull to pluck it off the tree; but the weaned believer will, like ripe fruit, drop off easily. So God's blasting men's worldly comforts, exercising them with infirmities, pains, and sickness, are kindly designed for this end.

(3.) Purity of conscience, Acts 24:15, 16. "And have hope towards God,—that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man." Hereby it is provided, that there is no standing controversy betwixt God and the soul; in which case one is not fit for removal. This is obtained by a strict and tender walk in every thing, whereby the conscience is so far kept from defilement, Psal. 66:18. 1 John 3:20, 21. And by a daily use-making of the blood of Christ, whereby defilements, which we will inevitably contract, are wiped away, John 13:10. A thorn of

unpardoned guilt in a believer's conscience, renders him in ill case for the great journey.

(3.) Diligence in our generation work, Luke 12:43. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find him so doing." David had a kindly removal upon this, Acts 13:36. "After he had served his own generation by the will of God he fell on sleep." That man has lived long enough, who has got his generation work allotted him expediated, though he do not live to any great age; and they that through sloth neglect it, will find themselves carried off ere they are ready, though they become very old. Happy is the man, that is found so doing, doing still on, as one that sees death at his back; and it is kindly, if the Master soonest loose the sorest wrought servant.

(5.) Willingness to remove and be gone at the Master's call, Luke 2:29, 30. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." They who are mortified to life in a Christian manner, resigned to the divine disposal as to their staying and going, leaving to him the time and manner, are in case for removal. In the soul's closing with Christ, there is a dead stroke given to the love of this life, Luke 14:26. But there is a need of repeating the stroke, till the soul be in case to come freely away.

(6.) A well-grounded expectation of a better life in the other world, 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." For men to pretend willingness to remove without that, argues either a brutish stupidity, or a delusive security, or a desperate impatience; in all which cases, men are not ready for the

removal, however willing. But where there is a Christian assurance or well-grounded hope of a safe landing, that is a piece of the readiness required, 2 Pet. 1:10, 11.

Lastly, Watchfulness and waiting, Luke 12:37. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching." Our Lord has told us, that he will come, but has not told us when; this requires us at all times to guard against spiritual sleep and carnal security; and follow Job's resolve, chap. 14:14. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." They are not ready who are catched unawares.

Now these things make an actual readiness, which is necessary.

[1.] To fit us for what kind of death it pleases the Lord to remove us by. Hereby we will be in case to remove by sudden death, as good old Eli did, by a raving sickness, as well as by a composed one; or by a violent toss of sickness, or lethargy. For then our work is done, all is ready; we have nothing ado but to go.

[2.] To prevent a hurry, when death is come to the door. Though one is habitually ready, if they are not thus actually ready, the heart in that case is put in confusion with the alarm; and then there are many things to do, and little time to do them in. And that makes a sad hurry, whereas there might be much composure obtained by this method.

[3.] For our comfortable passage, 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, above cited. The neglect hereof occasions even God's children sometimes either to go off in a cloud and set in a mist, or else to have a sore struggle about their case, ere they get their ravelled case righted. We are not to limit sovereignty, which may leave at any time the most watchful Christian

in a damp, as the sun sometimes in a moment gets under a cloud; but surely this is the ordinary means for a comfortable removal.

Lastly, For our greater glorifying God in our removal, as the worthies, Heb. 11 of whom it is said, ver. 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises," &c. We should study not only to live, but to die to his glory. That is our last opportunity of acting for God in the world; and it is pity we should be out of case for it. Now when we are thus actually ready beforehand.

(1.) We will have the more time to act for God's honour, our own safety being already secured, as in Stephen's case, whose last breath was spent in praying for his murderers, Acts 7 ult. They that have much to do for their own case on a death-bed, will have little time to spare for the behoof of others to be left behind.

(2.) We will have the more heart, and be in better capacity for consulting God's honour and the good of others; as good old Jacob, while blessing his sons, lifts up his soul in that devout ejaculation, Gen. 49:18. "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." A clear and comfortable state of our own soul's case, will be oil to the wheels in that matter. I shall now make some practical improvement of this subject.

USE I. For instruction and information. Learn hence,

1. That this world is not our home, but the place of our sojourning; but our home is in the other world, Heb. 13:14. We are here as strangers in an inn by the road; but the grave is our long home, and the other world our everlasting home. When men go abroad in this world as travellers, they lay their account not to stay abroad; but sometimes they settle abroad for good and all, so that their return

home is uncertain; but our removal from this to the other world is absolutely certain, without all peradventure, it cannot fail.

2. It concerns us nearly, to keep loose grips of this world, and not to dip too deep in it; but to use it passingly as those who are not to stay with it, 1 Cor. 7:29, 31. The comforts and conveniences of life, are like servants in an inn, who wait on us to the door, but return to wait on other strangers when we are away. It would be folly for the traveller to set his heart on the inn; for that would make his removal from it but the greater grief.

3. It will be our wisdom to acquaint ourselves, as much as may be, with the other world, Job 17:13, 14. Were one but to remove into another farm, he would surely acquaint himself with it beforehand; and shall we, who are to remove into the other world, live strangers to it? Nay, let us often visit it, by thinking of it. Though we cannot see it beforehand with the eye, we may by faith; though we cannot go thither for trial, we have the map of it in the Scriptures.

4. It concerns us carefully to acquaint ourselves with the passage to it, 1 Cor. 15:31. Death is that passage which we must certainly all take. And our happy or wretched landing on the other side, depends entirely on the course we steer through it. What need have we then to be taking instructions about it, fixing them on our hearts timeously, that when we come to pass it, we may take the passage right, where so many are shipwrecked? It is indeed the business of life to learn to die.

5. It is in vain for us to be carnally secure, and to promise on time to come; for our removal is uncertain. In all our projects, hopes, and expectations of things of this life, we should balance them with the view of the uncertainty of our time, Jam. 4:13–15. It is folly to boast of what we are not sure of, Prov. 22:1. How many a beautiful web of

contrivance in the fancies of carnal men has been suddenly cut off, perishing in the thought without ever going further? Ps. 146; Luke 12.

6. It is folly to be lifted up with prosperity in the world; for it is certain it will not last, and so uncertain when it will come to an end, that it may end ere we are aware, Prov. 23:5. If we begin to nestle in a well feathered nest, we may quickly be tumbled down out of it; and we will get nothing of it with us to the other world. Worldly prosperity makes indeed easy living here; but it is so ensnaring, that it is hard to make the way through it to the happy part of the other world, Mark 10:23.

7. It is needless to be cast down with adversity in the world; for that will not last neither. The world's smiles and frowns, both of them pass away like the foam on the water, Eccl. 9:6. If one meets with sorry entertainment in an inn by the road, he comforts himself, that he is not to stay with it. In your adversity, your relief may be nearer than ye are aware; your removal is uncertain. Lazarus was cured of his sores, and his hard lair at the rich man's gate, when carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.

Lastly, We can at no time be safe, unprepared for the other world; for what may come at any time, we must be ready at all times, if we would be safe indeed; because whatever time we are not ready, it may come and surprise us unprepared.

USE II. Of reproof, and that to three sorts of persons.

1. Atheists and unbelievers of a future state, who pretend that when men die they are done; and that there are no future rewards and punishments. Such were the Sadducees of old, who judging the soul nothing different from the temperament of the body, held the soul's

perishing with the body, and that there was no resurrection, and consequently no removal into another world, Acts 23:8. The whole divine revelation witnesseth against this, so that our Lord proved the resurrection from the Pentateuch, Matt. 22:31, 32. The being and nature of God as holy and just, and Governor of the world, overthrows it; since it is evident, that it is not consistent therewith, that evil men should be always the most prosperous, and the good the most afflicted; yet so it must be, if there is not a removal into the other world, where the scales will be turned; "for if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," 1 Cor. 15:19. Besides, this has a witness against it in every man's breast; that it is not to be doubted if any man can reach to be fully satisfied in this principle, Rom. 2:15. conscience accusing even for what they are in no hazard for in this world.

There is a lamentable growth of such principles at this day, that the foundations of Christianity were perhaps never in the time of the greatest darkness so much struck at. Of which I shall say only these three things.

(1.) The prevalence of a spirit of profaneness and enmity against serious godliness and practical religion, has turned the bent that way, 2 Thess. 2:11, 12. When men are set on their lusts, to follow them at any rate, they must seek a shelter under which they may most peaceably enjoy them; hence these principles are greedily drunk up in the generation. The inundation of profaneness makes such a flood, as throws down before it the foundation principles of religion standing in their way.

(2.) The obscuring of, and flinching from the doctrine of Christ crucified, his righteousness and grace, has made the progress of such principles more easy. The manifestation of the mystery of Christ to

the world, is the great divine ordinance for its reformation. This the apostles used among Jews and Pagans, and therewith succeeded, 1 Cor. 1:23, 24; Eph. 3:8; Acts 17:18. The Pagan moralists advanced fine reasonings without this; but they could not prevail. Yet at this day, not the former, but the latter method is most insisted on; as if men were more apt to be made religious by force of reason, than by discovering to them the righteousness and grace of Christ. But that method will be found but a betraying of the cause of religion; as lamentable experience this day declares.

(3.) The growth of such principles is a sad prognosticate of some uncommon stroke abiding the generation. There is no mention of Sadducees in the Old Testament; but they swarmed among the Jews in the time of our Saviour and his apostles. And on the back of that, that nation got such a ruinating stroke, as they never before met with. And the Sadduceism of this day, and daring strokes at the root of Christianity, are terrible signs foreboding some uncommon stroke.

2. The bold and curious intruders into the divine secrets, to reach a certainty of that, which God will have uncertain as to us. God will have us uncertain, whether we shall live long, or short while, when we shall remove. How dangerous must it be then to use unlawful arts for the discovery of these; and consult fortune-tellers on these or the like future events? Deut. 29 ult. What good use can be made of such pretended discoveries? If one is answered according to his wish, he is ready to be turned secure, and carried off depending on providence, and disappointed at length. If otherwise, what a snare and rack do people bring themselves into by that means.

3. The secure and careless, who are at no pains to make ready; but live as if they were never to remove hence. This is the prevailing temper of the world, Matt. 24:38, 39. "For as in the days that were

before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." It is a world of sloth, wherein most men consider little of the world to come. Solomon sends such to the ant, to learn a lesson of foresight and provident care, Prov. 6:6–11. "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 gathered her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep?" &c. Men make ready for tomorrow in this world, for days and years to come in it, which oft-times they never see; but slight the most necessary preparation for the other world.

USE ult. Of exhortation. Let us then be exhorted and stirred up so to prepare for our removal into the other world, as to be always roady for it. I shall branch out this into three particulars natively arising from the text, viz.

1. Make ready for our removal.

2. Delay not to make ready.

3. Having made ready, keep ready.

FIRST, Make ready for your removal into the other world. Since it is so certain that we must all remove, and uncertain when, we must sound the alarm to all to make ready for it. Therefore awake and bestir yourselves to put matters in order for the removal. Here I shall,

1. Suggest some motives to press you to make ready.

2. Consider the impediments of people's making ready, to be removed out of the way.

3. Give directions or advices for making ready.

First, I am to offer some motives to press you to make ready. Consider,

1. Our removal is certain, there is no escaping of it, Psal. 89:48. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" There is a time appointed for our removal precisely; and when that time comes, ready or unready, we must go; the grim messenger will not wait, Eccl. 8:8. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit," &c. Sometimes people sit at home, because they are not ready to go away when they are called, or the caller will wait till they make themselves ready. But when the hour appointed for our removal comes, the messenger death will neither wait till we be ready, nor go away without us.

2. We are all naturally unready for that removal, quite unready and unfit for it. For, (1.) We want a title to heaven, the place of happiness in the other world, and are bound over to hell the place of misery there, by the curse of the broken law, Gal. 3:10, Eph. 2:3. How can we venture into that world in this case? We have the breaking of that bond of wrath to seek, and getting of that title to heaven constituted. Till this be done, we are utterly unready. (2.) We are nowise meet for heaven, but meet for the pit of destruction, being yet in our sins. How can the natural man, that is yet under the guilt, dominion, and pollution of his sin, be ready for the King's palace, but his prison, in the other world?

3. Our eternal state in the other world depends on what readiness we are in for removing to it, Eccl. 11:3. "If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north; in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be." They that are made ready for heaven, will be received into it; they that are not, will find the gates thereof shut on them, Mat. 25:10. And without there is outer darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth, chap. 22:13. Since such a weight hangs on our being ready, what unaccountable folly is it not to make ready?

4. There is no making ready there, Eccl. 9:10. "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Men may go from home in no fit condition to appear and shew themselves in a strange place; but they may get themselves fitted out there where they are going; but it is not so in this case. There is no buying of oil more for the lamps, when once the Bridegroom is come. If death strip us not of the body of the sins of the flesh, which it certainly will not do, if we are not begun before to put off the old man; it will go with us into the other world, and hang about us for ever, Prov. 14:32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness."

5. There is no coming back again, when once we are removed, Job 14:14, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Could we expect a return into this world, to mend what was amiss in our former removal; that if we were not ready the first time we went away, we should be sure to make ready the next time; the matter would be the less. But it is not so. The removal out of this world that we must make, is never to return. Sure that is a loud call to make ready for it.

6. The nature of the removal requires a making ready for it. We make many removes in this world that are so insignificant, that they require no preperation for them; but in the meantime, we make

some, that it would be unaccountable not to make ready for them. Much more is it so in this case: for it is,

(1.) A going a great journey, Psal. 39 ult. "O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more." Eccl. 9:10. What rational man going out of the country or kingdom, though but for a time, will not be making ready for it beforehand? But what is going over the seas, in comparison of going through the valley of the shadow of death? What is going into other countries, compared with going into the other world? It is a long and dangerous journey; and nothing the less weighty, that it is common, being the way of all flesh, since it is a journey we will never come back over again. Wherefore make ready for this journey, make timely provision for it, take your way marks right, and secure a comfortable lodging there.

(2.) A going to a marriage, which you have been invited to, whether ye be wise or foolish virgins, Mat. 25. The marriage is betwixt Christ and believers. In the gospel sinners are invited to it, and called to make ready for it in this world. In the other world that marriage is solemnized, and there is the eternal marriage-feast, beginning with the night of death's coming on; it is held in Christ's Father's house there, full of glorious light. But without is nothing but darkness. Death is the going away to it; what time they that are ready are taken into the marriage-house, they that are not ready are barred out in outer darkness. Wherefore make ready for this marriage, on which depends your making or undoing for ever more, Rev. 19:7.

(3.) A going to a judgment-seat, even the tribunal of the Judge of all, Heb. 9:27. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." We are debtors to the divine justice, and must answer it. We cannot deny the debt, we are unable to pay, the longer it runs on, the more it increaseth; we must make ready, by employing the

Advocate, making the Judge our friend now, procuring the discharge of the debt to be produced there; or we must go to the prison, Mat. 5:25. We are criminals, and there must receive the sentence of death, if we get not now a remission to produce against the indictment, and so be ready.

7. The pains of making ready will be fully compensated with the fruit of it, Mat. 25:10. "They that were ready, went in with him to the marriage." ver. 21. "His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord." The joys of the heavenly marriage-feast will more than compensate all the painful work of making ready for it. To make sinners meet for heaven, they are to be wrought and hewed with various trials and struggles; right eyes to be plucked out, and right hands to be cut off; but there is no reason to stick at that, 1 Cor. 15 ult. "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Lastly, It will be dear bought ease, that is got by shifting to make ready, Prov. 6:10, 11. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." That spiritual sleep and carnal ease will make way for everlasting disquiet and unrest. They who will needs rest now when they should wake and act for eternity, must be deprived of the eternal rest in the other world, Prov. 20:4. "The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."

Secondly, I come to consider the impediments of people's making ready for the other world, to be removed out of the way. These I take to be these four chiefly.

1. A vanity of mind, by means whereof men can never be brought from fleeting in the vain things of a present life, to serious thoughts of their removal into the other world. They see others about them carried off, time after time; but it can make no solid lasting impression on them, more than if they were immortal; the vanity of their minds suffers them not to bring it home to themselves, but still they look on the other world as a thing foreign to them.

O lay aside this, if ever ye would be ready, Eph. 4:17. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." And act like rational men, seriously laying your account with a certain removal of yourselves into the other world, uncertain at what time, Prov. 23:3. "A prudent man forseeth the evil, and hideth himself."

2. A heart throng of business of this life, whereby no room is left for thoughts of a removal into the other world; as was the case of the old world before the deluge, and of the sinners in Sodom before their utter overthrow, Luke 17:26–29. Martha's business hinders Mary's; they are so plunged into the many things, that the one thing needful is justled out. While this and the other thing is to be done for the body, the soul's case is left a bleeding, and neglected.

But O! why not the main care for the main thing? Ye may see to your necessary business, and your business for the other world too; but why should the former enhance your whole time? Nay, the latter ye ought to do, in the first place, though not leave the other undone.

2. An averseness to think of the other world and a removal thereto, whereby it comes to pass that these thoughts are shifted, till they force in themselves by death at the door. This averseness riseth from conscience of guilt, and prevailing carnality; and staves off serious thoughts.

But to what purpose is it to stave off thoughts of that which will ceriainly be in on us at length? were it not our wisdom to do like that king, Luke 14:31, 32, who "going to make war against another king, sitteth down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace." Set yourselves then to conquer that averseness, and drive over the belly of it; getting your hearts, by application of the Redeemer's blood, sprinkled from an evil conscience; and that will break your carnality.

4. Slight thoughts of what is necessary in order to preparation for the other world, whereby men imagine that they may do that time enough when there is any appearance of their removal. By this means it comes to be put off from time to time, till often in the issue it is out of time.

But did men seriously consider the matter, what necessity there is of a change of their state, for habitual readiness; what necessity of a gracious orderly frame, for their actual readiness; they would not look on it so slightly; but see it a matter of the greatest weight, not to be easily compassed, and therefore to be set to timely.

Thirdly, I shall now give you some directions or advices for making ready.

1. While you are yet in health, set yourselves solemnly to take hold of Christ Jesus in the covenant, for death and eternity. In this lies your security for the other world, whereof he is Lord; and it is little enough to do it with an express view to the other world and your removal. And it is best preparing for sickness and death, when one is in health; for it is hard to say, what one may he capable of doing that way, when he comes to a death-bed. But let men toss and wrestle as

they will with their sickness unto death; it will always be well with them that saw to their soul's concern while they were in health, and have not their main business to do, when death is come to the door; while it would be too much rashness to venture our souls in their soul's stead, who after having spent the time of health carelessly and irregiously, begin in their sickness unto death to shew a mighty seriousness and concern about the other world.

For the right managing of this work, be advised,

(1.) To set apart some time for it, more or less by day or by night, as your circumstances will allow; so will ye get the business for the other world done in health in your chamber, out-house, or field, with more case and deliberation than in sickness upon a bed. Tenants will take some time off their ordinary business to go and take their land for another year; servants, to go and hire themselves into another family; and so others in other cases; and will people not go a little off their ordinary course of devotion, to make ready for the other world?

(1.) Begin the work with prayer to God, and then sit down and consider and open out your whole life, in its several periods, before the Lord; beginning with your conception and birth in sin, proceeding to take a view of the sins of your childhood, youth, &c. And deal impartially with yourselves, in searching out your sins. And when ye have searched out and reproached yourself with all that you can find, know that there are multitudes which have escaped your notice, Psalm 19:12. "Who can understand his errors?" And then view the curse of the law justly due to you on these accounts, and thereupon take a view of the remedy in Christ.

(3.) Then go to God in prayer, and confess before him accordingly, what you were in your birth, what you have been in your life, and what you deserve to be made in the other world. Go through the

several periods of your life in your confession, and lay out before him the particulars, wherewith conscience charges you. This is the way to vomit up the sweet moral; and why should we hide, or stick to confess our sins particularly, since we must all answer before the tribunal of God? Having thus confessed your sins, confess your desert of hell and wrath for them, and condemn yourselves; yet looking to God in Christ for mercy and pardon, 1 Cor. 11:31. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not he judged."

(4.) This done, consider the covenant offered you in Christ in the gospel, with the perfect righteousness, full remission, and right to eternal life, held out to you therein. Examine yourselves as to your believing it, and your willingness to enter personally into it, and to venture your salvation on that bottom; and to take Christ in all his offices; to resign yourselves to him as your Head and Husband, to be his only, wholly, and for ever.

(5.) Then go to prayer, and solemnly in express words from the heart, take hold of the covenant, believing, and resting your souls on Christ in it, with an express view to death and eternity; give consent to him in the gospel-offer; taking him in all his offices; resigning yourselves to him for time and eternity. And ye that can write, may, for your comfort and establishment, write this your acceptance of the covenant, and subscribe it with your hand, Isa. 44:5. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel*."

Lastly, After that you may address yourselves to God as your covenanted God, laying before him particular petitions relative to your removal into the other world, your reception into heaven, and the happy resurrection of your body at the last day.

Such a time well spent, would be the best spent time of all your life; and this course sincerely followed, ye would be ready for the other world, come the removal when, and in what manner it will, so that ye might say with David, 2 Sam. 23:5. "Although my bouse be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," &c.

2. Put your worldly affairs in order, for your removal; such of you as have any occasion that way. Be precisely just and upright in the course of your dealings with men, that you may have nothing to leave that is not well come, as ye would not leave a moth or a curse in it. Accommodate your way of living unto your ability, and go not beyond it. One had better live scrimply upon what is his own, than plentifully on what is another's. Keep your business as far as possible from a state of perplexity and confusion, by stating and keeping your accounts clear. And one's testament lying by him, would not in the least make him either sick or sore; but it would be a great ease when sickness or death comes, to think, that part of one's work is done already. And it would be no great toil, for them that can write, to alter it from time to time, as there is any notable alteration in their affairs.

SECONDLY, The next particular branch of exhortation, which I offer you as native from the text, is, Do not put off or delay to make ready for your removal into the other world; but immediately set about it, since it is quite uncertain at what time you may remove. To enforce this I offer the following motives:

1. God has allowed you time to make ready, but not one moment to delay it, 2 Cor. 6:3. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." Heb. 3:15. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." All the time you have had, since you came to

the years of discretion, has been allowed you to make ready; so that if you should now be removed unready for it, ye will not have it to say, that ye had no time for it. Perhaps it did not come in your head to make ready for the other world, having been so short while in this. But whose fault is that? However, should you put it off but till to-morrow, ye do it at your peril without God's allowance.

2. One hour's delay may be an eternal loss, yea one minute's: for this hour, this minute, you may be removed into the other world. And where then is the next hour, or minute, which you put it off to? Why will men thus let slip the time they have, and trust to a time they have not, and perhaps never shall have? What a venture on eternity upon an uncertainty? Should one cast away in a water, put off till the next minute his taking hold of the rope; we would reckon him a self-destroyer, because ere the next minute he may be in the bottom.

3. Though ye get the time ye put off unto, how are ye sure of grace to help you to improve it? Though the ship be not gone off, the wind may be fallen, and the tide gone; that is an awful word, that may justly strike with trembling, Luke 14:24. "I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper." Indeed delayers to make ready seem to imagine, that it is in their own hand to put themselves in readiness, when they think good. But, alas! they deceive themselves, 2 Cor. 3:5. Common experience shews, that when sucha time comes, men are as ready for a new delay as ever.

4. The longer ye delay, ye make the work of making ready the more hard, Jer. 13:23. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." It is like the mending of a dam: take it in time, it will be the easier; but to put it off, the breach grows wider, and will cost far more labour. Alas! it often fares with our souls in this case as with bodily

diseases, which if taken timely might be carried off; but at length they grow so inveterate, being neglected that they spurn all remedy.

Lastly, So far as ye delay, ye are unfaithful and cruel to your own souls, leaving them for the time in hazard of perishing. If ye had a child fallen into the fire or the water, would you delay to pull him out? Thy soul is fallen into a gulf of sin and misery under the curse, and is every moment in hazard, of falling down to the bottom; why do ye put off? why do ye not presently set yourselves to make ready?

Here I am aware of several objections, which I must answer.

Object. 1. I am but young yet; what needs so soon making ready for the other world?

Ans. 1. And may ye not die young? Are there not in the churchyard, such as have died in childhood? are there not boys and girls in their graves there, young men and maids, men and women in their prime? I suspect, that, on a just calculation, there would be found far more such than those of grey hairs. Therefore delay not to make ready though young.

2. To whom should your youth and strength be devoted, to God your Maker, or the vain world? Whatever extravagant notions obtain among the young with respect to this, I defy them to get a footing for them, but in their vain imaginations, not to be supported but by overlooking God and their Bibles, which lay them under a necessity of solid seriousness, strict walking, and making ready, as well as others. Are they excepted in the divine precepts, and calls to these things; or in the threatenings, in case of neglect? No; Psal. 148:12, 13. "Both young men and maidens, old men and children, Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven." i. e. Let them praise and serve him with

the vigour of youth, and not spend it on the vain world; it is God's gift, let them not sacrilegicusly rob him of the use, of it, but seriously consider that caution, Eccl. 11:9, 10. "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God shall bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; for childhood and youth are vanity."

3. It is a rare thing to find such as are bred up under the gospel, and spend their youth without making ready, to get grace to make ready after, Job 20:11. "His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust." It is an ordinary thing in a vain world, for the young to think with great reason to stave off the seriousness of religion, till once they be married at least. But it is a just and awful observe, that they who living under the gospel vainly and carelessly before, are rarely converted after they are married, but are a step farther back from Christ. It is founded on Luke 14:20. "Another said, I have married a wife; and therefore I cannot come." And to confirm it do but observe how many there are who in their youth and single life rave" hopeful signs, wither away when once dipt in the cares of a family. But in case that grace do reach you after that time, ye will readily find it a saving so as by fire, being broken and braised in your entry to it, at another rate than you might have been before.

Lastly, After all it is a base and disingenuous thing, to put off the answering of the gospel call and serious religion, till once ye are past your best. How think ye God will take that off year hand? Mal. 1:8. You will reserve the dregs of your time for God, and give the flower and cream of your days to the vain world I beseech you imagine yourselves in these circumstances applying to God, and beginning to

make ready; and Jet conscience guess what is likely to be your answer and success.

Object. 2. My hands are now so full of business that I cannot get opportunity to make ready; but if I were at the end of such and such a business, and freed from such entangling circumstances as I am now in, I would set myself to make ready.

Ans. 1. Is not your business for the other world your main business? Though your other business should go never so well, if that be marred ye are ruined, so as nothing will make up your loss, Matth. 16:26. If that were once right, let your affairs in the world be never so unsuccessful, it cannot make you unhappy. How then can ye reasonably put it off longer?

2. Take heed that the business that mars you to-day from your great work, be not succeeded to-morrow with a business that will mar you more. It is ordinary, that he who puts off his great work, to a fitter time than the present, when the time comes he set, it is found less fit than the former. The case of Felix may be a warning here, Acts 24:25.

Lastly, That is at best a great and hazardous venture. Death comes in on men in the midst of business without ceremony, however lothe they may be to break it off to prepare for death, Ps. 146:4. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish," Luke 12:20. Wherefore let no circumstances, however perplexed and entangled, move you to delay.

Object. ult. It is time enough to make ready when one comes to a death-bed.

Ans. 1. That is a manifest contempt of God, and of the other world. What? Is the matter of the other world such a trifling thing, as to

delay making ready for it, till ye be able no more to pursue the things of this life? Is it so small a matter in your eyes, to obtain the favour of God, and a reception into his family above? You will certainly change these thoughts.

2. Ye may possibly get no death-bed, but may in an instant drop out of this, into the other world. Death sends not always messengers before, to warn of its approach; many a man in health has by some providential incident been suddenly dispatched into the other world. And delayers have ground to fear it will be their lot in a special manner, as ye may see, Matt. 24:48–51.

3. Though ye get a death-bed, ye may be rendered incapable of making ready, by the nature of your disease. Though ye be capable, you may get enough ado even to die, through a vehement toss of sickness. If there was one thief on the cross that got repentance, there was another that died hardened; and this is most likely to be your case who so delay.

Lastly, Death-bed repentance is seldom sincere. "What is recorded of the Israelites in the wilderness may well have weight here, Ps. 78:34–36. "When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues." The terrors of death may make a mighty concern about the other world in a graceless heart; but what sincerity there is for the most part in these things, may be learned from the case of such brought to the gates of death, who after all turn just back to their old bias.

THIRDLY and LASTLY, The last thing upon this use of exhortation is, Having made ready, keep ready. Tour interest as well as duty is

concerned in this. Therefore take the following directions.

1. Keep grace in exercise, Luke 12:36. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning. Slumbering virgins, though wise, are not ready to meet the Bridegroom. Let faith be awake, love kept warm, desires astir, &c. And labour to be spiritual in all religions performances.

2. Beware of dipping deep again in this once forsaken world; of being drowned in its pleasures, racked with its cares, glued to its profits, lifted up with its smiles, or sunk with its frowns, 1 Cor. 7:29–31. "This I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not." &c.

3. Be careful to keep a clean conscience, as Paul, Acts 24:16. "Herein," says he, "do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." Have you got on your wedding garment? keep it unstained as far as may be; and what spots are daily contracted, be daily washing out, John 13:10.

4. Be always busy in your generation work, for the honour of God, and the good of others, as ye hare access; that the Master coming find you not idle, Luke 12:43. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh, shall find so doing."

Lastly, Live in expectation of the better world, and your removal into it Job, 14:14. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give at that day; and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing." Look for the day of your removal, as a day that

will be your redemption-day, your marriage-day, your home going day, the day bettter than that of your birth.

Upon the whole that has been said touching the other world, I make these two concluding reflections,

1. We will all at length be in that world, of which we have so long had the report; and we will see in it what we have heard about it, however foreign it appears to us now. Some of our brethren and sisters have been carried off into it in the time that we have been on this subject; and certainly it is not for nought that it has so long sounded in our ears.

2. However we may now lightly pass, and make very little reflection on what has been said thereon: I doubt not, we will all have our reflections upon it, when we come there; particularly, whether we land in the upper or lower part of it, looking back on what we have heard of it, we will have this reflection, That the half has not been told. What others we will there have, the day will declare.

# THE PECULIAR ADVANTAGE AND BUSINESS OF LIFE OPENED UP, AND APPLIED

Several Sermons, preached at Ettrick, in the year 1727

ISAIAH 38:19

> The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

IT is much to be desired, that men would consider the great business of their life: but few do it, till it is just going or gone out of their hands. Hezekiah had been at the brink of the grave, and learned those just thoughts of life, which he gives us with much concern in the text. Wherein we have,

1. The mercy of life: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee," &c. Ver. 18. He had been speaking of the dead, the inhabitants of the gloomy mansions of the grave; and in opposition to these he here speaks of the living, and in a triumphant manner proposeth to speak of them, as seeing the mercy of life. A serious view of death is the way to get just thoughts of the mercy of life.

2. Wherein the mercy of life, the peculiar mercy of it, consists. And the decision of this is in a vein of thought peculiar to the spiritual man, in a spiritual frame.

1st, Ask the carnal man, where lies the mercy of life? And,

(1.) If he is in prosperity, with health and wealth, he reckons the mercy of life lies, in that the living man may enjoy the pleasures of sense, mirth, and jollity, and may lay up wealth for him and his; all which stern death robs a man of. But there is not one word of this here.

(2.) If he is in adversity, poverty, and sore sickness, he either cannot see the mercy of life at all, but thinks they are well that are away, that are out of poverty and pain, and lie at ease in the dust; So crosses

make him wish to be away. At best, he reckons it the mercy of life, that he is not there where it may be he would be worse, viz. in hell. But there is not a word of all this neither, in the text.

2dly, Ask the renewed man in an ill frame of spirit, where lies the mercy of life? If he is in outward prosperity, he will be ready to reckon it lies in the comforts of this life. If he is in adversity, the troubles of life are so great, that the mercy of it is small in his view; only heaven bulks in his eyes, and that as a place of rest from trouble. But there is nothing of this neither in the text.

The decision is, The mercy of life lies in the business of life, to wit, being serviceable for God in the world: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee," &c. Hezekiah counts that the great mercy of life, to have access to be useful for God in the world. Which speaks, (1.) A high esteem of God and his service, as men count it a favour to be allowed to serve their prince. (2.) An ardent love to him, as men delight to serve the interests of those they dearly love. This will be to a spiritual man in a spiritual frame the most desirable thing in life: Philip. 1:20, 21. "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." This is a just endearment of life. Now, the business of life, for which it is desirable, is twofold.

1. To praise or glorify God in the world; to speak of the perfections of his nature, and shew forth the praises of him who hath called us, among men, to the advancement of his kingdom here; the sun to strike up beams of his glory in a dark world, and commend him and his way before and to others. Now, here consider,

1st, Whose is this privilege: "The living, the living;" i. e. the living all along in a succession of generations to the end of the world. That is the import of the doubling of this word. This access to the praising of God in the world, is peculiar to the living. And,

(1.) It is not those that are now dead, but those that are now living, that have access to shew forth his praise and glorify him, in a world where he is so much dishonoured; to side with him, and take his part against his enemies. It is true, the souls of dead saints are praising God in heaven in the holiest strains: but what the better is the world of these praises? No more than they that are sitting in the dark room down stairs, are the better of a glorious lamp shinning in the upper room. Is there ever a poor sinner brought acquainted and to fall in love with Christ by their means? No; their praises of God are to sinners here as if they were not; they hear them not. Is the kingdom of Christ in the world advanced by these praises? No. It is the living, the living only, that have access to those pieces of service to God. The living man that sits in a cote-house, has the access to glorify God in the world that no saint in heaven has.

(2.) If those that are now living were once dead, they will have no more access to praise him in the world; but those that will be then living: and so on to the end. Men will go off the stage one after another, but they will not carry that work with them; but it will still be left in the hands of the living, and no other, whatever they make of it. There are heads, tongues, and hands of ministers and Christians lying in the grave, that have contrived, spoken, and acted well for God in the world: but now, if the cause of God and religion, which is very low, were at the last gasp, there is no more help to be had from those heads, tongues, and hands. The living only must speak and act for it, or it must lie.

2dly, An instance of it: "As I do this day." Hezekiah was recovered from sickness, and he gives God the praise of it. He looked on it as his bounden duty to fall closely again to that business of life, which was likely to have been taken out of his hands by death. What time of life the Lord lengthens out to us, after threatening a removal, we should be careful to use for the honour of God.

2. To propagate his name and praise: "The father to the children shall make known thy truth." It is the special business of life, to endeavour that the name of God may live and be glorified in the world, when we are dead. It is a black mark for persons not to care what come of the world if they were out of it. A child of God will be concerned, that religion may be kept up and propagated in it: and while he is living, he has access to contribute to it. And here consider,

1st, What he has access to do for that end; namely, to praise God to the younger sort, that are likely to live after he is gone; especially to his own family, and particularly his own children. Heb. "The father to the children;" q. d. The father [shall praise thee] to the children. They may shew to them how lovely God is, and how desirable his way: and when they have children, they may do the same to them; and so on, God's praise will be kept up in the world.

Now observe, he is still speaking of the living, for these are the the subject expressly proposed to be spoken of. q. d. As for the living, the living father may praise thee to the living sons. It imports,

(1.) If the father die, though the children live, he can do God no more honour, and them no more service, that way. If he has neglected his duty to his family in his life, he cannot come back again to mend the matter. If he left them ignorant of God, and strangers to him, though one word from him again could save their souls from the pit, he has no more access to give them it.

(2.) If the children die, though the father live, he can do God no more honour, and them no more service, that way. He may take care of their dust, to bury it; but he can do no more for their souls: "As the tree falls it must lie." While they are both standing and living together, he has access to serve their souls: but when one of them falls, that work is at an end.

2dly, How he may do it, how he may commend him to them; namely, by making him known to them, as an object worthy of their faith, trust, and confidence: "Shall make known thy truth." The expression in the Hebrew is concise, He may make known, unto thy truth. The word rendered to hope, ver. 18. properly signifying intensely to look, Neh. 2:13, 15. is understood, q. d. That they may look unto thy truth or faithfulness. So in it are two things to be consdered,

(1.) The proper method of praising or commending God to the rising generation; and that is, by making him known. The more he is known, the more lovely will he appear. "God is light." The best way to commend the sun to one sitting in a dark room, is to open the windows, and let in its light, and bid him look to it with his eyes: The best way to commend God and religion to the generation rising, is to labour that they may know and understand them, by teaching.

(2.) The great thing we are to have in view in that work. It is, that they may look intensely unto his truth; that they may look away from the lies and vanities the world is holding out to them, to be embraced as their portion: and that they may look unto the truth of God in Christ, in the promise of the gospel, by an eye of faith, trust and confidence, fixed on it, and hold by that as their portion, their sure portion.

This is what men do for the rising generation, and the view they should do it on: but God only can give it efficacy. No doubt Hezekiah

did as he said, commended God, and made him known to Manasseh his son: but how unsuccessful all he did that way was, is notour from the wicked life his son led. Yet Hezekiah's work was accepted, and his prayers heard in the end: and perhaps his words were minded too, in Manasseh's conversion at long-run.

Three doctrines are deducible from the words.

DOCT. I. It is the peculiar mercy of life, that the living only are, and all along will be, those that have access to praise and glorify God in the world.

DOCT. II. It is the special buisness and privilege of life, to propagate religion, God's name and praise, the standing generation to the rising generation, the fathers to the children, all along.

DOCT. III. The true way of propagating religion, the standing to the rising generation, is, That the former made God known to the latter, so as they may betake themselves unto him, his truth and faithfulness, by faith and trust.

We shall handle each of these doctrines in order.

DOCT. I. It is the peculiar mercy of life, that the living only are, and all along will be, those that have access to praise and glorify God in the world.

In prosecuting this doctrine, we shall,

I. Consider the praising or glorifying God in the world.

II. Shew how it is a valuable mercy and privilege of the living, that they have access to praise God in the world.

III. How this access to praise God in the world, is and will be the peculiar mercy of the living.

IV. Lastly, Apply.

I. We shall consider "the praising or glorifying God in the world." And here we shall shew,

1. What praising of God is.

2. What are the peculiarities of the praises of the living.

First, What praising of God is. It is the acknowledging and declaring of the glorious excellencies of God, as he has manifested himself in his word and works; and imports,

1. The belief of the being of God, Heb. 9:6. "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is." Atheism wholly cuts off the praises of God; for who can praise that which he does not believe to be? The works of creation and providence proclaim his being; but such is the natural enmity of man against God, and his addictedness to his lusts, that he secretly wisheth there were not a God, and so is disposed to believe so, if he could get any footing for it: Psalm 14:1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:" and that is at the root of men's living to a contrary end to his praise, Tit. 1 ult. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

2. The knowledge of God. To whom he is an unknown God, he will be an unpraised God. Hence ignorance is ruining: Hos. 4:6. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Is. 27:11. "It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on

them, and he that formed them will show them no favour." To live to the praising of God, requires,

1st, The knowledge of who he is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one. God, 1 John 5:7. In the name of the three persons we are baptized by divine appointment: if we know him not so, we know not the God to whom we are engaged in baptism; and so cannot praise him.

2dly, The knowledge of what he is; the discerning of his glorious perfections, which are the matter of his praise. We must know him to be the greatest and best of beings, infinite eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; more excellent than any Creatures, or all of them together, as being the fountain of all excellency in them.

3dly, The knowledge of what he has done. His works are glorious, creation, providence, and redemption. By them he shows what he is, Psal. 19:1. "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth his handiwork," and affords us matter of praise: and we are to think on them for that end, that we may from thence praise him, Psal. 111:2. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." And it is highly offensive not to regard them: Psal. 27:5. "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up." That is to deny him his praise.

3. The love of God. Love is the mother of praise, and natively brings it forth. They that do not love God, can never kindly or acceptably praise him. 1 John 4:16. "God is love," not only subjectively, infinitely loving; but objectively, wholly lovely. And so he is in the eyes of all who live to his praise. To them the Father is lovely, the Son lovely, the Holy Spirit lovely. Every attribute of God is lovely. The holiness and purity of his nature, the great eyesore of carnal men, is most

lovely to them: Exod. 15:11. "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Psal. 30:4. "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." His works are lovely. The creation of the world is a lovely work, the guiding of it by providence a lovely work; but the most lovely is the redemption of the world by the blood of Christ.

4. The admiration of God; which is, love and esteem raised to a high pitch. This is the nearest cause of praise; for it is the heart swelling with the admiration of the object, that bursts forth in praises, Exod. 15:11. above cited. They that live to God's praise, are admirers of him: they see all excellencies in him to be transcendant, nothing comparable to them in the whole creation, and believe there are infinite treasures of excellency in him, which they cannot comprehend. So their heart saith, with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee, Psal. 73:25. Launching into the ocean of the glories of his nature and works, they see it shoreless: Psal. 106:2. "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?

5. Lastly, The expressing that love to, and admiration of him: Exod. 15:11. forecited. Micah. 7:18. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." This is it in which the essence of praising God consists, and is the great end for which man was made: and it is the native becoming return the creature is to make to its Creator, from whom it has received all, and to whom it can give nothing, but only commend him, and set forth his glory. And this not being confined to words, is twofold.

1st, Vocal, by words. It is called "the calves of our lips," Hos. 13:15. Man's tongue is called his glory, Psal. 16:9. as being a prime instrument wherewith he is furnished for praising and glorifying God. And thus we are to praise him, solemnly and statedly, in the duties of worship, singing his praises; and occasionally, in speaking to his praise, as we have occasion offered.

2dly, Real, by deeds or actions, though it be not accompanied with words: for as there is a practical atheism, Tit. 1 ult.; so there is a practical praising or glorifying God. And this is the main thing in that praise which is the end of life, without which vocal praise avails not. It is twofold.

(1.) In the heart: 1 Cor. 6:20. "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God—in your spirit, which is God's." Men's praise of men from the teeth outward may pass, but God knows the heart; and if the heart harmonize not with the tongue, it cannot be accepted of him, Is. 29:13. He must be praised in our understanding, thinking and esteeming him above all, Psal. 73:25.; in our will, chusing him above all, for our portion, Psal. 142:5.; and in our affections, loving, rejoicing, and delighting in him above all, Psal. 37:4.

(2.) In life and conversation: Matth. 5:16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven." A holy life is a shining light, to let a blind world see the glory of God: for as God has expressed his nature in his word, so his word is expressed again in a holy life, Philip. 2:15, 16. The study of holiness says "God is holy;" mourning for every sin proclaims him spotless; and horror of secret, as well as of open sins, is a testimony to his omnipresence and omniscience.

Secondly, What are the peculiarities of the praises of the living? The praises of the living saints have these peculiarities, which the dead

have no access to.

1. They are the praises of the whole man, in soul and body too: 1 Cor. 6:20. "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Those of the dead are of their souls only; but the living have access to praise God, soul and body in concert. Even the clay body hath, for the time of life, access to join in this honourable work: but death breaks it in pieces, that it can no more bear a part in God's praise.

2. They are praises which may spread among the living, as in their land, from whence the dead are cut off, Col. 3:16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The voice of the praise of living saints, may be heard under this vault of the heaven but the praises above, as high a strain as they are in, reach not hither, to this our native earth.

3. They are praises raised by the way to the heavenly kingdom, which the dead have no more access to join in. The living are upon the road, the dead are at their journey's end. There is a song of praise raised in the house of our pilgrimage, Psalm 119:54; but there is a deep silence in the grave. The wilderness song is peculiar to the living.

4. They are praises of faith, not of sight; 2 Cor. 5:7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." The saints in glory raise a song of praise to God, upon their seeing and enjoying; the living saints, upon their believing what their eye hath not seen, 1 Pet. 1:8. Praising of God on what one sees of him, is more comfortable to the party himself; but praising him, upon what one believes of him, if other circumstances be alike, is more to the honour of God; John 20:29, "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are

they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Rom. 4:20, 21, "Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

5. Lastly, They are praises to God amidst a deal of dishonours done to him. David takes notice of God's covering a table to him in the midst of his enemies, Psalm 23:5; and God will take notice of praises given him in the midst of those that dishonour him; Rev. 2:13, "I know thy works [written to the angel of the church in Pergamos], and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou boldest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. The saints in glory praise him, there being none to open a mouth to his dishonour: but living saints praise him, in the face of contradiction by a wicked world: Prov. 28:4, "Such as keep the law, contend with the wicked."

II. The second general head is, to shew, How it is a valuable mercy and privilege of the living, that they have access to praise God in the world. The living should value this as their privilege,

1. In regard they might justly ere now have been put beyond all possibility of praising God at all; but might have been blaspheming in hell, through extreme anguish and despair; Lam. 3:22, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." The rich man in hell, tormented in the flame, had no access to praise God; the burden of wrath lying on the damned there, will hold down for ever their praises, and change them to howlings.

2. In regard of the honour thereby to be brought to God in the world; which in itself is most valuable, and therefore is man's chief end; 1 Cor. 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do,

do all to the glory of God." Compared with Psalm 50:23, "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me," He lives to good purpose, that lives to the honour of God; and he that doth not so live, doth at best but trifle away a life, never reaching the main end of it. Nothing should be so dear to us as God's honour; and therefore our all must be laid out on it as he calls for it, Luke 14:26. And it is the mercy of life, that we have access to honour him in the world.

3. In regard of the good to be thereby done to others. The view of this made Paul content to abide out of heaven for some time; as you may see, Philip. 1:23, 24. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you." O what a satisfying thought must it be, to be instrumental towards the saving of a soul from hell, and bringing it to acquaintance with Christ! Nobody knows what a good word, or a good example, at a time may do: and to this the living have access only; but once dead, men can be no more serviceable to the world of mankind: Eccl. 9:10.—"For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

4. It is an honour to serve and honour God in the world. This makes a man truly worthy and honourable. The dignity of the master, and the work, reflects an honour on the servant that does it. Therefore says the Psalmist, Psal. 84:10. "A 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." And since no master is so honourable as God is, it must be then a peculiar honour to be serviceable to him, Heb. 11.

5. This is the only true balance of that meanness, misery, and trouble, that attends this life. Considering the spiritual original,

make, and vast capacity of the soul of man; it will appear but a very mean thing to be taken up in eating, drinking, decking; yea, in building, planting, working, &c. on this cursed earth. From the seat of the blessed could we take our prospect, men so employed here would appear but as a company of emmets busy in a hillock. The troubles that attend this life are innumerable; and they fly about us, as the midges do on a hot summer-day. All which viewed by the soul, are apt to make a noble mind sick of this life, in its best appearances; as a bird would be of the cage. The only balance for all this is, that in it there is access to praise God in the world. Hereby the meanest things are ennobled, and the hardest things softened, that God is to be honoured in these.

6. As men have access to praise God in this world, they have access to raise their reward in another world. Men think it a great matter to have access to raise an estate for themselves and theirs: but we have access, by our honouring of God in this world, to raise our reward in the other. For though the Lord doth not give eternal glory for our works, he gives it according to them: 2 Cor. 9:6. "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." And they that have shined here in usefulness most, will shine there in glory most: Dan. 12:3. "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Compared with 1 Cor. 15:41. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory."

7. Lastly, The praising of God carries a reward in its bosom, to be enjoyed in time: Psal. 19:11. "In keeping of them, [the judgments of the Lord] there is great reward." It is good, pleasant, and comely, Psal. 147:1. There is a secret satisfaction in one's having done his

duty, endeavouring to live to the honour of God, 2 Cor. 1:12. And particularly it makes a pleasant reflection, when one is come to the end of his course: as in the case of Paul, 2 Tim. 4:7. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Compared with what our Lord says, John 17:4. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And he that praiseth God to others, is himself partaker of the fruits.

III. The third general head is, to shew, How this access to praise God in the world, is, and will be the peculiar mercy of the living.

1. It is the peculiar mercy of us who are now living on the face of the earth; it is peculiar, I say, to us at this time. They who are yet unborn, can do nothing, since as yet they are not: they who are now dead, though yet they are in being, have no access more to praise God in this world, Psal. 115:17. There have been many generations on earth before us; and millions of men and women are gone by death from hence into another world, who sometimes had their turn of access to this praise: but now, though they are, yet not one of them all has access to join us in praising God.

2. In all time to come, to the end of the world, this privilege will be confined to those who for the time shall be on the stage. There will be generations after us, as there have been before us; and the work will be devolved on the next generation for their time; with whom we, being gone off the stage, will have no more access to join, than those already dead have to join with us. And then they will go, and another rise up in their stead, and get the work put into their hands, none of the former to meddle with it: and so on to the end. The reasons are,

1st, There is no returning to this world when once gone. Death is a flitting for good and all, never to come back, Job 7:9, 10. Job was sensible of this, Chap. 10:21. when he said,—"I go whence I shall not

return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death. We must praise him before we lie down in the grave, or never; for there is no rising out of it to that work, Psal. 88:10. We cannot come back, and God will not bring us back.

2dly, The state and business of the two worlds are, by an unalterable purpose, made quite different. Here men are in a state of trial; there in a settled state for ever, according to their management in the trial. Here is the place of working at the command and for the honour of the master; there is the place of the reward of their works. If the sun should come back over from west to east, and so make night day too, the ordinance of heaven would be quite altered; so nobody expects it. As little is the access of any but the living, to praise God in the world, to be expected or looked for.

3dly, This world is under a peculiar mark of divine indignation, as defiled by sin, Gen. 3:17; and should have been destroyed when it was first defiled, had not the Mediator interposed to keep up the tottering fabric for some time for the elect's sake, Is. 49:8. So men are hastened through it, as through a defiled place, and have an opportunity of praising God by the way. And therefore it cannot be expected, that ever that opportunity shall be repeated.

Lastly, When the dead shall live again, this world shall be destroyed, and be no more. As long as we shall lie in our graves, incapable to praise, this world will last: but when we shall live again at the resurrection, it shall be consumed by the general conflagration, and be no more. So there is no access to praise God in the world, but for those that now live, and those that shall live, to the end: Rev. 20:12. —"The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Chap. 21:1. "And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were

passed away: and there was no more sea." In the new heavens and earth, no doubt God will be praised, 2 Pet. 3:13. but he will have no more praises here from the hand of any, when once they are gone off the stage, which will fall down under the last generation to be on it.

USE I. Of Information. Hence learn,

1. That the business of life is to honour God in the world. And if that be so, many have been many years in it, that have never yet fallen to their business, nay nor once seriously laid to heart what their business is. O hear the great Master saying to you, Matth. 20:6. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" and see how ye will answer that question. Ye are busy doing nothing, worse that nothing: but what have ye done, what are you doing, and what will ye do, for God? Ye are living; but what praise, what honour comes to God by your living? What more honour comes to God by your living, than ye would do him if ye were in the grave? I beseech you consider this, as ye will answer it to God, who hath said, Mal. 1:6. "A son hononreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?

Object. 1. Some I fear will think, though not say, that they have other business to fill their heads and hands with, how to get a throughbearing in the world for them and theirs. Ans. Ah, is another world not worth your consideration? Or can ye think that ever ye shall enjoy God in that world, who are not careful to honour him here? Consider what the Lord says, 1 Sam. 2:30.—"Them that honour me, I will honour: and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." To spend all the time you live in wrestling with this world for a throughbearing, and after ye are dead to wrestle with the wrath of God for ever, is a sad tryst; better ye had never been born. Be

concerned to honour God while ye live; and God will see to your provision while ye live, and make you happy after.

Object. 2. But I have no access to do any thing for the honour of God, in respect of my circumstances in the world: worldly business is by Providence laid to my hand for the business of my life.

Ans. 1. It is a common mistake in point of practice, that there are any who have no access to honour God in the world. Though some are placed in higher and more extensive spheres of activity for God, yet there is no station so low in the world, but it is a sphere wherein people may honour God, if they have a heart for it. This you may see verified in the parable of the talents, Matth. 25:14, 15. "The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods: and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his several ability, and straightway took his journey." If one is in life, though never so low, according to the text, he may honour God. If one is a magistrate, or a church-officer, he has access to honour God among those over whom he is set. Though he be neither, if he is a person of weight and consideration in the place where he lives; as far as that weight goes, so far goes the sphere of his activity for God, which he is to fill up by honouring God. If he is a master of a family, there is a sphere of activity for God he is put in. If he is a single member of a family, he has a sphere of activity among other single members of it. To this purpose speaks the Apostle, 1 Cor. 7:24. "Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

2. It is the honouring of God in our several stations that is the true honouring of him, 1 Cor. 7:24. just now citied. That we cannot do for the honour of God what does not belong to our station, is so far from

being our sin, that it would be a dishonouring of him to attempt it. The moon is useful to the world, though it shines not by day; the stars too, though they shine not so bright as the moon. The hands are useful to the body, though one does not walk on them; the feet, though one does not see with them, &c. Are you a child of a family? your business of life as such is to be an obedient, dutiful, pliable child: are you a servant? yours is to be a faithful, honest, dutiful servant. Whateverrelation you stand in, ye are to honour God by a conscientious practise of the duties of your relation.

3. Whatever business God has laid to your hand, follow it as duty from God laid upon you; so ye will live to his honour. Hence is that exhortation of the apostle, Col. 3:17. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the father by him." And ver. 23, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord." Set about your business as commanded you of God, acting in it as under the eye of God, and looking to his word as your rule, and to the merit of Christ for God's acceptance of it. Whatever trials and sufferings the Lord lays on you, bear them patiently, because it is his will; and bear them for the sake of Christ that bear greater for us; and look for the acceptance of your bearing them through Christ. So shall the honouring of God be the business of your life whatever your circumstances are, high or low.

2. The business of honouring God in the world, formerly in the hands of the former generation, is now devolved on you. See what ye will do with it. To this purpose prophesies the Psalmist David, Psal. 145:4. "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." The former generation of the righteous, by keeping the law contended with the wicked, and maintained the honour of God in the world; they rowed against the stream of an ungodly crew, in the face of persecution, sinning, confining, banishment, violent

death, till they fell by death holding up the standard for the honour of God: and then they gave it to you, saying, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth." On this I would say,

1st, Ye must answer for the standard now. If it go now while ye live, your life shall go for ever for it, though ye were left alone to hold it up: Psal. 60:1. "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee: that it may be displayed because of the truth." Mark 8. ult. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when be cometh in the glory of hit Father, with the holy angels." Take heed then, there is a sacred trust committed into your hands; the generations of martyrs all along have conveyed it to you at the expence of their blood, it having been set up first at the expence of the blood of Christ.

2dly, Ye must either hold it up, or treacherously desert into the enemies camp, formed to dishonour God. Hence says our Lord, Matth. 12:30. "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." Many set up for neutralists; they go not into all excess with the openly profane, but they are as far from making it the business of their life to honour God. God will rank such with his enemies: Psal. 125 ult. "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity."

3dly, The saints of former generations will condemn you, as a spurious brood of treacherous men, that made so little account of what they wared their all on to transmit to you: 1 Cor. 6:2. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Ye do by your ungodly lives, dishonouring God, declare them fools: the day will come, that

they will declare you fools, worthy to perish for ever, though ye have come out of their loins: Rev. 19:3. "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

3. The business of honouring God in the world ye are to transmit to the succeeding generation, since it is the living, all along in a succession of generations to the end of the world, that have access to the praising of God. Hence says the Psalmist, Psal. 78:2, 3, 4 "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which wo have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord; and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." As ye have received the standard from the former, ye are to hand it down to the succeeding generation; that when ye are gone, instead of the fathers, there may be the children. See to it then, what ye do, that God may be honoured when ye are in the dust.

1st, It lies on every one of you to do for it something: Rom. 14:7. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Love to God and your neighbours binds it on you; and none of you can want occasion for it, while ye live among persons, some of whom may live after you; and have a tongue to speak, and hands to act.

2dly, If ye do it not, the honour of God is far from your heart. They that have nothing of God to communicate to others succeeding them, have nothing of God within themselves. Grace is a fire, and fire will go about to set on fire whatever is next it; so that if it do not burn, it is because it is not combustible. In the creation of plants, every tree was made with its seed in itself: so it is in the new creation of the trees of righteousness, John 4:29.

3dly, If ye do it not, ye lay a stumbling block before the succeeding generation, which they may be ruined by. The generation of Jews in Christ's time rejecting the gospel, as they murdered Christ, they have murdered sixteen or seventeen generations of their offspring since. What will come of the succeeding generation that looks to you, that live not to the honour of God? When God calls for the standard for his honour at their hand, they will say, they never saw it; though that will not excuse them, it will aggravate your condemnation.

4. Know, that ye must honour God in the world now or never: Eccl. 9:10. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Now is the accepted time, wherein ye may act for your own salvation; miss this time, and the door will be shut on you never to be opened again, Prov. 1:24, &c. Now is the working time for the honour of God, wherein ye may do something for God; miss it, and the occasion you will never more have. I would ask you,

1st, Does it concern you to honour God? or is it none of your business? If the Father created you, certainly ye are bound to live for his honour, Rom. 11. ult. If the Son redeemed you, there is a double tie on you to live for him who died for you, Philip. 1:21. If the Holy Ghost has sanctified you, he has dedicated, fitted, and disposed you for it.

2dly, When will ye lay out yourself for it then? It is not a work to be done at any time, but confined to one time, the time of life. Hence said our Saviour, John 9:4. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Now the glass is set up to you: there is much of it run, as ye may see by looking to the lower end, the time ye have lived: the upper end ye cannot see, what time ye have yet to live; how soon it may run out

then, ye know not. But it will never be turned for you. When the last sand runs out, the word is given, The master allows no more time for his work to you, Give account of your stewardship.

5. Lastly, Life is valuable, as giving access to honour God in the world. Hence says Hezekiah in the text and context, Is. 38:18, 19. "The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth." There are many impressions of vanity on life. In itself by sin it is become a puff of wind, that passeth away; a vapour suddenly vanishing: it is like a post for swift passage, a dream for vanity, and a dunghill for vileness. It is the place of rendezvous for innumerable troubles and afflictions; and is a low station for an immortal soul, with much meanness about it. There are only two things which it is valuable for, viz. that there is access in it,

1st, To act for eternal salvation to ourselves, which the dead can no more do: 2 Cor. 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." And in this respect an hour's life may be worth a thousand worlds, because eternity may depend on it, and heaven be secured.

2dly, To act for the honour of God in the world, John 9:4, forecited, which the dead have no more access to. To a good man an opportunity of doing good is valuable, as to an ill man to do mischief. What folk love, they will value access to serve; so the sinner values access to serve his lusts; and the saint to serve his Lord, and his neighbour. So, on this consideration,

(1.) Life is carefully and honourably to be preserved, as a valuable thing; and not to be thrown away, by neglect of the means of its

preservation, or exposing it wilfully to means of destruction; Exod. 20:13, "Thou shalt not kill."

(2.) The access to honour God in life, is to be laid in balance with the troubles of life, that the former may downweigh the latter, by that overweight that God's honour bears to our case; Phil. 1:20, "According to my earnest expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

(3.) It is nicely to be improven to its proper ends, as a precious none-such, passing opportunity; every filing of it is to be gathered up as gold sparkling. Hence Paul exhorts to "redeem the time, because the days are evil," Eph. 5:16.

USE 2. Of Reproof to several sorts of persons.

1. To those who look on the business of praising and honouring God in the world as a burden. In itself it is the mercy of life; but they treat it as the plague of life. They are as Doeg, detained before the Lord; and any holy exercise is a weariness to them; as was the case with Israel; Amos 8:5, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" The Lord takes notice of this temper of spirit, Mal. 1:13, "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts." O how would ye take with heaven? but be sure that ye will never get there in that case, as not being "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. 1:12. Ye will be eased of that burden, but for a heavier one, Rev. 16 ult.

2. To those who look on it as none of their business, whoever else be concerned in it. They make no profession of living to the honour of

God, and their practice is conform. This speaks you neither to look on God as your Master, nor yet as your Father, Mal. 1:6. And if so, doubtless ye cannot look for his reward; nor for the eternal inheritance of his children; where then will lie the gain of this liberty, which you take to yourselves?

3. To those who spend their life without consideration of the chief business of life. They "spend their years as a tale that is told," Psal. 90:9. O how many are dreaming away a lifetime, out of which they are not like to awake till death awake them! They can consider any thing but their soul's state; but the thought of that they cannot dwell on. They that cannot consider the great business of life, will certainly lose the opportunity of that business, and it will sit to them in the end: Prov. 20:4. "The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

4. To those who delay the business of honouring God, till they shall be near death. Many such off-putters are there, who can never find the time to begin their work, though they do not want thoughts of it; as was the case with Felix, Acts 24:25. who said to Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." When they are young, they put off till they be old; then, till they be going to die; when sickness takes them, they put off still in hopes of recovery; when they past hopes, they are not capable for it; and so the soul is lost Meanwhile, all they are concerned for at best, is but their own safety, not God's hononr; and being regardless of this latter, no wonder they fall short of the former.

5. Lastly, To those whose life is a life of dishonouring God, by secret and open wickedness and untenderness. And this seems to be the general case of this generation, by which we appear to be a "generation of God's wrath:" Micah 7:2, 4. "The good man is perished

out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man his brother with a net. The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn-hedge: the day of thy watchmen, and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity." Corruption of life and manners is become universal, so that people are become shameless in their sin, and proof against conviction from the word, being so hardened under the softening means of grace, that the case is grown hopeless; all which cannot miss soon or late to bring down some rousing stroke, Jer. 6:15. "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord."

USE 3. Of exhortation. Make it the business of your life to live to the honour of God.

Quest. How shall we do that?

Ans. 1. Honour him by faith; Rom. 4:20. "Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Faith gives God the honour of all his glorious perfections as manifested in the word; and without faith there is no acceptable honouring of him. Therefore the Christian life is a "life of faith," Gal. 2:20. And honour him,

1st, By believing on his Son for salvation, receiving and resting on him as your Saviour, to save you from sin and wrath: 1 John 3:23. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." If ye honour not God this way, ye honour him not at all, John 5:23. God has sent his Son in the character of Saviour of the world, 1 John 4:14: put your case in his hand, that ye may be saved from your sin, and sanctified by him, and saved from wrath

through him. If ye live in your sins, and will not be healed; if ye do not believe him able and willing to save you, ye dishonour God egregriously in a most tender point; 1 John 5:10, 11. "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.

2dly, By trusting God in Christ in all times and cases: Isa. 26:4. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever." The established way of communication with heaven, is by trust in God: and faith is productive of hope, which is the anchor of the soul, keeping the soul safe and spiritually at rest, in all storms public or private, Psalm 37:7. Trusting in the creature, is a putting it in God's place; and hence bearing such a weight, it bows under it, and fails. But God is honoured by trusting him.

3dly, By believing his word in all the parts of it. Hence is that exhortation of Jehosaphat's, 2 Chron. 20:20. "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." God is to be honoured by faith's acting on every part of the word; on the commands, believing the divine authority, equity, and goodness of them, as a transcript of the divine nature, Psal. 119:128; on the promises, believing the certain accomplishment of them, however unlikely, Rom. 4:20, 21; on the threatenings, believing the justice and truth of them, Is. 39 ult. and 66:2.

2. Hononr him by the practice of holiness: 1 Pet. 2:9. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar, people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. To lead a holy tender life is the way to honour God, conforming to him, and labouring to be like him in all conversation, 1 Pet. 1:15, 16. If ye be not uniform and

universal in your obedience, that part ye are deficient in, may bring a blot on all the rest; as Judas' covetousness and treachery wiped out all his good deeds. And if ye would live to the honour of God, I would recommend to you particularly,

1st, Diligent and reverent worshipping of God: Matt. 4:10—"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Psal. 89:7. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints: and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." Worship him in your families, morning and evening; worship him in secret by yourselves; worship him in the public assemblies; set up for his honour in the world; make conscience of joining therein for the honour of God. And be reverent in the frame of your heart, and in your outward gesture, as knowing that he is a great God with whom ye have to do: and there can be no reverence in their hearts, who behave irreverently.

2dly, Be nice and exact in point of justice in your dealings; shaking your hands of all gain of unrighteousness, as in the sight of a holy just God: Isa. 33:15, 16. "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil, he shall dwell on high," &c. That baseness of spirit, disposing to pick and steal, cheat, and catch any little advantage they can get of their neighbour without being discovered, that one can trust them no farther than they see, is most dishonouring to God, as if either he did not see, or else did approve of their wicked practices, Psal. 50:21, 22.

3dly, Be readily disposed to the dutiess of humanity, doing good to your neighbour, being kind, merciful, and compassionate to them that are in distress and need: Col. 3:12. "Put on therefore, (as the

elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." This honours God in a very particular manner: Luke 6:35, 36. "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." And it has much encouragement by promise: Prov. 3:9, 10. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Psal. 41:1, 2, 3. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. A selfish, unkind, unsympathizing, narrow spirit, is a great stain on an otherwise fair character.

4thly, Be the same in secret when no eye sees you, that you would be in public. This will much honour God, when the conscience of his eye being on you, is as forcible to restrain you from evil, as the eyes of the world would be; as was the case with Joseph, Gen. 39:9. when he said to his lewd mistress, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" O what do the practisers of secret mischief think of God! They can do a mischief unseen, and then cover it with a lie. But alas! is there not a God in heaven, that sees himself dishonoured by such practices? See Prov. 26:26. Open shame, or else a secret stroke, will be the consequence, Job 20:26.

5thly, Shew yourselves on God's side, in the midst of the dishonours done to him in the world. For ye must either join issue with the dishonourers of his name, or else testify against them: hence says our

Saviour, Matt. 12:30. "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." If you have no heart nor brow to appear for God, while ye see him dishonoured, remember what God accounts of that, and how he will treat it: Mark 8 ult. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Beware of being partakers with other men's sins; but set yourselves to be a check upon sin in others, and witnesses against it, else ye honour not God.

6thly, Commend the way of and religion to others, and encourage good motions where ye can perceive them. Grace is communicative for the honour of God; and every gracious person is disposed to propagate religion. Hence said the Lord of Abraham, Gen. 18:19. "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, &c. The wearing out of that so much now, from what it was in former years, is one of the black symptoms of the decay of religion at this day.

7thly, Learn to bear troubles in the world with a Christian patience, meekness, resignation, and holy cheerfulness. This doth exceedingly tend to the honour of God; as you see exemplified in the worthies mentioned Heb. 11. There is a despising of the chastening of the Lord, wherein the proud and foolish scorn to be lowered by the rebukes of Providence, wherein the atheism of the heart, and contempt of God appears. There is a fainting under the rebukes of Providence, wherein unbelief appears. Both are dishonourable to God, and to be guarded against, Heb. 12:5. The middle course is to God's honour.

Lastly, Walk with God in a conscientious performance of the duties of your station. Hence is that exhortation of the Apostle's, 1 Cor. 7:24. "Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God." That is the sphere wherein ye are set to honour God: and God is much honoured that way. It is exemplified in the case of the priests, Mal. 2:6. in that of wives, 1 Pet. 3:5. and in that of servants, Tit. 2:10. No man can live to the honour of God, who does not carefully notice, and diligently pursue the duties of his station, to the honour of God.

I shall give you a few motives to live to the honour of God.

Mot. I. God is the author of thy life. The life and being thou hast, thou hast from God: Rom. 11 ult. "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Therefore "remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," Ecel. 12:1. And since he is your first cause, is it not reasonable that be be your chief end? The life which you all had from him, will ye not improve for him?

Mot. 2. God is the preserver of thy life. Hence says David, Psal. 36:6. "O Lord, thou preservest man and beast." For every moment's life thou hast had, thou art his debtor. Thy life is continually in his hand, to prolong it, or take it away, as seems good in his sight. If he should but withdraw his upholding hand, thy life would presently go. Every moment there must be a new outletting of influence from him for preservation of thy life. How unaccountable must it be then not to live to his honour? This was a grievous charge against Belshazzar, Dan. 5:23. "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified."

Mot 3. God is the giver of all thou hast whereby thou mayst honour him. Hast thou a tongue whereby thou art capable to speak for God,

and hands to act for him? he gave them to thee. Hast thou any health, strength, wealth, and reputation, whereby thou art in capacity to honour him? all is from him: and shall not his own be used for him? Hence saith David, 1 Chron. 29:14. "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." Is it not sacrilegious to do otherwise?

Mot. 4. God puts opportunities in thine hand for honouring him. As he has given thee means whereby thou mayst honour him, so his providence lays to thy hand opportunities calling thee to use them, Luke 19:13. Every opportunity is a providential call, to lay out what the Lord has put in thy hand for his service. And it will be found dangerous to hide one's talents in the earth, and not lay them out for God.

Mot. 5. There are some who are deprived of those abilities or occasions ye have to honour God. So the whole Pagan world is deprived of gospel-light, which we all have; the sick of those which the healthy have. The not improving of them then will aggravate your condemnation, Matth. 11:21. It is sad to be cumberers of the ground in God's vineyard, taking up room in it uselessly, which others might improve to good advantage.

Mot. 6. Ye have forfeited by sin all your abilities, opportunities, and your very life. God might justly have taken them all from us, and made us as incapable to speak or act for his honour, as we have been unwilling to it. But his patience has suffered us long, and he has done us good though unthankful and evil, if peradventure these might lead us to repentance. Shall not this engage us to live to his honour?

Mot. 7. This was the design of the redemption purchased by Christ, Tit. 2:14. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good

works." Man was made at first for the honour of God: sin entering rendered him unfit for that his great work. Therefore Christ died that they might be again brought to live to God's honour, Eph. 5:25, 26, 27. If then ye are not so living, it is an evidence Christ's redemption is not applied to you as yet: and if ye continue so, it will evidence that ye are none of the redeemed ones.

Mot. 8. It is the design of the sanctification of the Spirit. Hence says the Apostle, 1 Pet. 2:9. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." When God puts his Spirit into a man, it is that he may walk in his way, Ezek. 36:27. So that if ye live not to the honour of God, it is an evidence that ye have not the Spirit, but are dead while ye live.

Mot. 9. Lastly, It is a lost life that is not lived to the honour of God, lost in death, eternal death. Hence says our Lord, Matth. 16:25, 26. "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. 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?" Consider, this life is short, it is soon away; it is uncertain, none knows how soon: but such as it is, eternity depends on it; Eccl. 9:10.—"For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." If ye live not to the honour of God here, never expect to live with him hereafter in heaven. Remember the end of the slothful servant, Matth. 25:30. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth." For your help to live to the honour of God, take these following directions.

1. Allow yourselves the justice once seriously to consider, now that ye are living, and must die, what will be the best way for you to spend that bit of life. It is pity that people should not propose to themselves a design of living, and consider what is that design of life that will come to the best account at length. Surely if ye do, ye will find no design so reasonable and advantageous as this.

2. Then take him for your God in Christ, that ye may live to his honour; and do not think that it is by your living to his honour, that he must become your God. Faith must go before obedience, if ever the obedience be kindly. Faith first embracing salvation in the free offer of the gospel, natively engages the heart to honour God, as a son doth his father.

3. Labour to keep up the love of God in the heart, by believing his love; and that will be a strong band. Hence says the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Lastly, Firmly believe that there is a reward of grace for the righteous; and that not a good word or good work, spoke or done for God, shall want a reward. Hence is that exhortation of the Apostle's, 1 Cor. 15 ult. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

DOCT. II. It is the special business and privilege of life, to propagate religion, God's name and praise; the standing generation to the rising generation, the fathers to the children, all along.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What it is to propagate religion, God's name and praise, to the rising generation.

II. Who are the standing and rising generation, the fathers and the children, among whom this propagation of religion is to pass.

III. In what respects it is the special business of life.

IV. In what respect it is the special privilege of life.

V. Lastly, Apply,

I. I shall shew what it is to propagate religion, God's name and praise, to the rising generation. It implies these four things.

1. The having of religion ourselves. None can propagate what they have not. If men have not the knowledge and love of God themselves, how can they praise him to others? Men are sensible, that if they gain not a competent portion of the world to themselves, they can leave none to their children: so if they be idle or wasters, they are unjust to their families, 1 Tim. 5:8. Even so if ye are not religions, ye not only dishonour God, and destroy your own souls, but ye are unjust to the rising generations, and destructive to their souls too.

2. The profession of religion. Hence says the Apostle, Rom. 10:10. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Men have may a profession without the practise of religion; but the practise requires the profession of it. And no man will ever propagate religion that is not himself a professor of it And the profession must be such as is not visibly contradicted by the practise: for if example destroy what precept builds up, there is no propagating religion to others by that

means. So a credible profession of religion is a debt owing to the rising generation.

3. A desire to continue and spread religion in the world. Without this none will propagate it; for what men have no desire of the continuance or spreading of, they will be lothe to propagate. And it is the want of concern for the continuance and spreading of religion, that makes men so careless about the propagating thereof. They have no due concern for their own souls; therefore they have none either for God's honour, or the good of those that come after them.

4. Lastly, Contributing our endeavours to bring others, and particularly the rising generation, to the knowledge and practice of religion. Hence, says the Psalmist, Psalm 78:2–4, "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord; and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." Man is born like a wild ass's colt, wanting both knowledge and experience. We see such as come into our world, come in naked among us; and we judge ourselves obliged to clothe them, feed them, and teach them how to do for themselves. But withal they have and can do as little for their souls as for their bodies; and shall we leave them destitute in that point? How will we answer that to God? Now, to contribute endeavours to bring them to religion, lies in endeavouring,

1st, To bring them to faith in Jesus Christ, which is the foundation of all religion: Psalm 78:7, "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments." They come into the world lost sons and daughters of Adam, under God's wrath and curse. There is a Saviour provided; but they know it not,

till the standing generation tell them of it. They are averse naturally to come to that Saviour, and are not aware of the danger of slighting him: it is justice and charity then to deal with them, in order to convince and bring them in.

2dly, To bring them to holiness of life; as did Abraham, Gen. 18:19, "I know him, (says the Lord), that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." When they come into our world, they bring a corrupt nature with them, which begins early to sprout. Satan will begin his temptations with them as soon as they are capable, losing no time. The longer sin continues in them uncurbed, the stronger does it grow. It nearly concerns the standing generation then to contribute their endeavours to quench the hellish flame, and to turn the stream and course of their life from sin to holiness. And this,

(1.) By precept and counsel, Gen. 18:19, forecited. Thus we are to praise God to them, by word of mouth. We should shew them what we have to say in God's behalf, commend religion to them, disparage the way of sin and of the world to them; bind duty on their conscience, by shewing them the tie of the word, and oblige them thereto by any authority we have over them.

(2.) By example. Let us write out religion in our own walk before them, that they may be brought to copy after us. Those precepts that are illuminated with example, are most ready to take. Beware of casting an ill example before their eyes; for the corruption of nature lies that way; and he that sins before a child, sins twice; for his sin lies fair to be repeated by the young spectator.

(3.) By dependence on the Lord for a blessing on the means used for their good. Hence says the apostle, 2 Cor. 10:4. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down

of strong holds." Whoever he be that plants, if God give not the increase there will be none, 1 Cor. 3:6. That is a great truth in all cases, in spiritual as well as worldly things, 1 Sam. 2:9. "By strength shall no man prevail." If a man should use the best arguments, the strongest motives, the most feasible measures, for bringing others into the way of religion; and upon the suitableness of the means promise himself success, he takes the way most likely to render them ineffectual. The word spoken needs to be mixed with faith in the speaker. And he is most likely to succeed that uses the means of God's appointment for doing good, with entire dependence on the Lord for success.

(4.) Lastly, By prayer for them. Thus it is promised concerning Christ, Psal. 72:15. that "prayer shall be made for him continually," viz. that his kingdom may come, by the daily coming in of new subjects to him. Since the success of all that we can do for the good of the rising generation depends on the Lord's blessing, it is necessary that we plead for them at the throne of grace, quickening ourselves thereto, by consideration of the honour of God, and their eternal welfare, that depend on it.

The second general head was to shew, Who are the standing and rising generation, the fathers and the children, among whom this propagation of religiou is to pass. And this must be stated according to the language of the Holy Ghost, and the analogy of other parts of Scripture, if we would rightly see whose is this duty. In general I shall premise,

1. All superiors and inferiors are, in Scripture-style, comprehended under fathers and children. This is plain from the fifth commandment, which, under the name of father and mother, whose

relatives children are, prescribes the mutual duties of superiors and inferiors. Therefore every one is to propagate religion to his inferiors.

2. Forasmuch as there is no perfect and absolute equality among men, but some who are inferior in one respect to others, may be superior to them in another respect; it is the duty of equals and inferiors to propagate religion among themselves, and to their superiors, mutually communicating their light and warmth.

3. Some may belong to the standing generation in one respect, who belong to the rising one in another; as a person who is inferior to some, and superior to others. So they are to have it propagated to them, and they are to propagate it to others again.

4. Lastly, The same command of God that binds the standing generation and fathers to propagate religion, binds the rising generation and children to receive it. God, by binding parents to instruct, binds the children to receive instruction. And they that are the rising generation now will be the standing in a little. But more particularly,

1. Fathers of the state; magistrates, supreme or subordinate, are to propagate religion to their political children, their subjects. They are God's vicegerents on earth, clothed with dominion and authority over others, to be employed for God in whose name they act. Hence is that promise, Is. 49:23. "Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers." And it is one of the blackest symptoms of the corruption of the world, that ofttimes they are found set to extirpate religion.

2. Fathers in the church, ministers, and other ruling church-officers, to their ecclesiastical children, the people whom they are set over, 2 Kings. 2:12. It is for this very end they are put in office. Hence, says

the Apostle, Heb. 13:17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Jesus Christ brought this religion from heaven, employed his apostles to propagate it; to them they succeed in the office of propagating religion; and must see to make it their business, as they will be answerable.

3. Fathers of families to their children. For every family ought to be a church, wherein holy worship, doctrine, discipline, and government ought to be maintained, by the heads thereof. And particularly,

1st, Fathers and mothers to the children procreated of their bodies. This is the chief thing in the text, "The father to the children shall make known thy truth. Compared with Gen. 18:19. "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." It is but an inferior part of your charge to provide meat and clothes for your children, and to put them in a way of living; the chief part is to see to their souls, that they may be recovered out of the lost state they are in by nature. It will be but a sorry kindness, to be concerned for their provision in time, if ye neglect them as to their eternal concerns. It is by them your name is to be propagated, and you are to propagate God's name to them, in point of gratitude to God, justice and natural affection to them.

2dly, They are to do it also to all others in their family, whether they be servants, or whatever they be, if they be members of the family for shorter or longer time. Being in your family, ye are instead of fathers and mothers to them, and owe them that benefit. Hence masters are called fathers, 2 Kings 5:13; and the duty of propagating religion is expressly extended to one's household, Gen. 18:19, forecited. And

whosoever have the chief authority in a family, though they be servants themselves, are the fathers of it in this sense.

4. Fathers in gifts or grace, to those who are children in these respects in comparison of them, 1 John 2:12, 13. So Joseph was a father to Pharaoh, Gen. 45:8. If God has bestowed on you more gifts or grace than on others, mind ye are thereby made fathers to those that are weaker than you, and are obliged to communicate your light to them, 1 Cor. 12:7. So teachers are called fathers, Gen. 4:20; and the Spirit of God the common Father, 1 Sam. 10:12. It will then make a dreadful reckoning, for men to have gifts, and not lay them out for the benefit of others; to use their gifts just for ostentation, and instead of helping, to braugle, and confound, and perplex the weaker with them.

5. Fathers in years, to those who are children in respect of age to them, 1 Tim. 5:1, 2. It is Elihu's observe, Job. 32:7. that "days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." The more days the more experience, the more access to improve in knowledge; and so to be the more useful to the younger. Mind, then, that your superiority in years constitutes you fathers to those younger than you. Ye will not forget it in point of the regard ye expect from them, and God allows you it, 1 Pet. 5:5; but then ye should make conscience of the duty too, propagating religion to them.

Thus ye see the standing and rising generation. And if these fathers would set themselves to the propagating of religion to their respective children, the work would go on.

III. The third general head was to shew, In what respects it is the special business of life. The business of life appointed by the great Master is manifold; but the sum of it is to honour God, Rom. 11 ult; and the chief branch thereof, the special business of life, is to

propagate religion, the standing to the rising generation. This will appear in the following particulars.

1. It is the business of life, that would have been the business of it though sin had never entered into the world. The business of the lawyer, and physician, and many handicrafts now in the world, owe their original and necessity to sin's entrance. Nay, the very business of our own salvation does so too; for if Adam had stood the time of trial, all his posterity's eternal happiness would have been thereby secured to their hand. But God having settled the manner of the propagation of mankind, as Gen. 1:28. it was an evidence that the succeeding generations were not to be created in their prime as Adam was; but to be born infants, and grow up by degrees, in knowledge of religion and other things, as appears from Luke 2 ult. And this would have afforded this business.

2. It is the business of life, that most singly looks to the honour of God. God is honoured by our working out our own salvation; but then our own advantage bears great stroke in it allowably, as well as his honour; but this is a business carried on not for ourselves, but for God allenarly; and in that respect is the more noble. Hence we find the Apostle willing, for the great end of the propagation of religion, either to live or die, to put off his own eternal happiness for a time, Phil. 1:26, downwards. And he prefers one's edifying the church, to his own comfort, 1 Cor. 14:4, 5. He edifies the church that edifies his house, Neh. 3:28, 30.

3. It is the business of life, that is the end of life and salvation given to the elect, and all their comforts and enjoyments. Hence said our Lord to Peter, Luke 22:32. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." We get life and salvation by believing in Christ; and are as really possessed

of eternal life that we can never lose, upon our first believing, as the saints in heaven are, though not in that measure, 1 John 5:11, 12. When the Lord had a mind to honour Paul to propagate religion, he reached his own heart first by his grace; and then, having so furnished him, he set him to work. Is not that the special business of life for which God brings people into a state of salvation?

4. It is the business of life that the new creature as natively falls to as the new-born infant falls a-breathing. Hence it is said, Psal. 22:30, 31. "A seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this." So the woman of Samaria, John 4:29. "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Paul, as soon he was converted, fell a-propagating the religion that before he persecuted. Grace makes people communicative; and there is never a soul in which the leaven of grace is received, but would, if it could, leaven the whole world with the same.

5. It is the business of life that is most useful to mankind. And we should remember, that both conscience and interest require us to live so as to be useful to our fellow-creatures; Rom. 14:7. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Some have been great blessings to mankind by their usefulness, in propagating arts and sciences, in relieving the oppressed, and helping the needy; but none so useful as those who have propagated religion among them; as extending not only to their good in this, but the other world, Is. 19:24, 25. And a disposition to be useful to mankind would prompt men to this duty.

6. It is the business of life of the most diffusive usefulness. It brings honour to God, comfort to one's self, and advantage to others; it

brings advantage to their souls, tends to make them holy here, and happy hereafter. It reaches not only to the present generation, but to the generations yet unborn; in so far as, you propagating religion to your children, they will propagate it again to theirs, and theirs to theirs, and so on. It is to be lamented, that some children follow not the steps of their religious parents. But everybody may observe, that there are some families wherein one generation after another appears for God; others, wherein, generation after generation, religion can never get place among them. Trace these back, and ye may come to one that was careful to propagate religion to his children, and his children propagated it again to theirs, and so on; and to another that had no care that way about his children, and his children had as little again about theirs, and so on.

7. Lastly, It is the business of life that is the most valuable, most worthy of the dignity of an immortal soul, and likest the life that Christ led in the world. The business of most men is nothing but laborious trifling; their thoughts, cares, and time, are wholly spent on things pertaining to this life, as if they had souls of no other constitution than their bodies. It is nothing like the life of Christ, who went about doing good, propagating religion: 1 Pet. 2:21. "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." Compared with 1 John 2:6. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

IV. The fourth thing proposed was, to shew In what respect it is the special privilege of life.

1. It is that whereby we may honour God most, and so answer the end of our creation most. In our own embracing religion, we receive the light, in propagating it we diffuse the light received to the greater glory of God: 1 Pet. 2:9. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal

priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Hence among those who turn from sin unto righteousnes, those who turn most of others to it will have the greatest glory: Dan. 12:3. "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

2. It is that whereby we may be most useful in the world to others. No benefit done to our fellow-creatures is comparable to it. We have indeed access to do for their temporal advantage, but this is for their eternal. And when the opportunity of life is over, there is no more doing that way, Luke 16:27, downwards.

USE. I. Of reproof to several sorts of persons. And,

1. To those who make no conscience of propagating religion to their families, among their children and servants. Every man is, by divine appointment, the prophet of his own family to teach them, the priest to worship God with them, and the king to rule them. Each will maintain his own authority to his power; but family worship, with many, is not so closely stuck to, but family teaching least of all, which is yet commanded of God: Deut. 6:6, 7. "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up." The want of this makes ministerial teaching in preaching and examination so unsuccessful. How will men answer this neglect of the special business of life?

2. To those who are backward and averse to receive family instruction, or submit to family discipline, checks and reproofs for

their miscarriages. They will get away from family catechising on Sabbath nights, shift family exercise, and cannot endure to be checked for their miscarriages; and therefore they like best to be in those families where least of these is to be found. But if it is the duty of others to propagate religion to you, it is on the peril of your souls ye refuse to receive it. It will aggravate your condemnation, John 3:10.

3. To those who set an ill example before those that are younger than they. Much of the corruption of children, is owing to the ill examples set them by parents, servants, and others whom they are near. This lets them see much ill which they would otherwise be ignorant of; and the bias of their nature lying that way, they are, by that means, carried down the stream. So a woe is is brought on themselves, and them that set them the copy: Matt, 18:7. "Woe unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. Oh that men would consider, that they do in effect teach that which they do or say before the younger sort; for childhood is the imitating age.

4. To those who do not check the outbreaking of corrupt nature in those of the younger sort, especially parents in their children. O the cruelty of some parents, who, by their ceasing to nip sin in the bud in their children, betray them into such habits of sin as afterwards it is too late to correct. They will neglect prayer, profane the Sabbath, swear, lie, and meet with no check; they will steal little things, and the parents will make them welcome. And thus, by their parent's means, some are so accustomed to sin, that, as they grow, it grows, till it brings some to an ill end. Remember the children of Bethel, 2 Kings 2:23, 24.

5. To those who propagate irreligion to the rising generation; who teach a young generation to despise serious godliness, to contemn the ordinances of God, and to lead loose and licentious lives, impatient of restraint. Do they not propagate irreligion who keep up their minced oaths, "haith," "faith," &c. which would die out of our language, were it not that they were propagated from father to son, from the old to the young; who keep up the observation of superstitions times and customs, Yule, Fastens-even, &c. the relics of Popery and Paganism, which might be razed out of memory, were it not that they are carefully propagated from one generation to another?

6. To those that go about to debauch a young generation, by instilling into them loose and licentious principles, which youth is ready to fall in with; by taking a liberty with them in obscene filthy speaking, making youthful lasts the subject of their mirth and sport; leading them in to drunkenness, an inlet to all other vices; tempting them to the commission of the sin of uncleanness with them, which will be bitterness in the end to the seducer and the seduced; encouraging them to acts of dishonesty, cheating and stealing from their parents or masters. These are factors for hell, who do what in them lies to destroy souls Christ died for.

7. To those that are ready to hide and cloak the scandalous sins of others, working that they may not be brought to light. How many poor souls of the younger sort, whom Satan has got led aside into the ways of sin, might have been recovered out of the snare of the devil, if it had not been the cruel kindness of some, who bestirred themselves to cover their sins? But thereby they have been hardened in their sin, and have gone from evil to worse, till at length they have been ruined for altogether. See what an awful threatening there is pronounced against such, Lev. 5:1, "If a soul sin, and hear the voice

of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity."

8. Lastly, To those who cannot see themselves under any obligation to propagate religion, and concern themselves as little about it. They think that may be the business of ministers, and possibly of fathers to their own children; but not theirs. As soon as the Spirit of God touches your hearts in earnest about your own salvation ye will change your mind; ye will find a natural concern for the advancing of the kingdom of Christ: John 4:29. "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" The love of God, and of your neighbour, planted in the heart, will create a concern this way: and not daring to be against him, and scatter, ye will be for Christ, and gather with him. The leaven will seek.

USE 2. Of Exhortation. Make it the special business of your lives to propagate religion to the rising generation.

Motive 1. There is the strongest obligations on you for it. Ye are in that point under the title of,

1st. Divine authority. God commands you to do it, requires it of you. It is commanded to all "edify one another," 1 Thess. 5:11; yea, all things must be done for that end, 1 Cor. 14:26. And the reason is plain, that God has placed men in society, and in Christian society, for that end, Rom. 14:7. And the elder sort are made tutors and teachers to the younger for that end, Deut. 4:10, and 11:19.

2dly, Gratitude to God. Is not God your Creator, Preserver," and Sustainer? And what can ye do for him, for all the goodness bestowed on you, if ye do not propagate his name and praise, and strive to stir up the love and fear of him in the rising generation? If ye have any share in the redemption of Christ, ye cannot but find yourselves

under the strongest ties of gratitude for redeeming love, to labour that his name may be transmitted from generation to generation. Hence says the Psalmist, Psal. 72:17. "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed."

3dly, Justice to former generations, who have propagated religion to us. What case had we been in this day if it had not been for the sufferings of confessors, and the blood of martyrs, which they underwent, that religion might be transmitted to us, and by us, to succeeding generations? Had they given up with it, it had been lost as to us. Now, they have an interest in succeeding generations; and if we propagate it not to them, we betray our trust, and are unjust to them, and denude the succeeding generation of the inheritance of their fathers. We should, like those of Psal. 78:3, 4. "Utter the things which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us; not hiding them from our children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done."

4thly, Our own interest. That maxim, Prov. 11:24. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty, holds in this, as much as in anything. Religion is a fire, which, being smothered, goes out; but getting a vent, increaseth. It is like the widow's oil, that increased in the pouring out; and like the bread that increased in the breaking. Were men more set on propagating religion to others, they would have more to themselves.

5thly, Charity to the rising generation. Their eternal state, as to well or woe, depends on their embracing or continuing strangers to religion. They need your help; for the bias of their nature lies the

wrong way; the devil and an evil world cease not to ply them to walk according to that bias; and if their spiritual enemies gain their point, they are ruined.

Mot. 2. This is the chief part of your generation-work. The work of our own salvation must be seen to, Philip. 2:12; but that is not all we have to do. We are to do that for ourselves; but, then, for the honour of God, and the good of our fellow-creatures, we are to ply our generation-work, Acts 13:36; and that mainly lies here: Psal. 145:4. "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." Ye are all doing; but what are ye doing for the honour of God, for the service of your generation? Ye have a room in this generation; and God who set you in it, will call you to account how ye fill it up.

Mot. 3. As ye carry yourselves in this matter, your sin or your good works will be going on, after ye are dead and gone, in this world. The last judgment we must undergo is not without reason delayed to the end of the world; for the sins of wicked men, and the good works of the godly, will then be hugely increased beyond what they are at their death. Good Abel is useful to this day; Heb. 11:4. "He being dead, yet speaketh." Haman in his life set a mischief a-going, which continued after he was gone, Esth. 8:3; and the sin of Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, continued till that kingdom was at an end, 2 Kings 17:22, 23. If ye propagate religion to the rising generation, that good work will survive you; and if ye neglect it, your criminal omission may live and destroy souls long after ye are gone, which will be laid to your charge at the great day.

Mot. 4. It is a noble and beneficial work. Hence says the Apostle James, chap. 5:19, 20. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the

sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." To save a soul from perishing is such noble work that it is an honourable working to be aiming at it, and using means to compass it.

Mot. 5. Lastly, The doom of unprofitable servants is dreadful; Matth. 25:30. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." No man can profit God, but every man may and ought to profit others, Job 35:7, 8, laying out their talents for the good of others; and, if they do it not, they will be cast into outer darkness, as those who would not work when they had the light.

Object. But they are froward, and will not receive instruction, nor take advice. Ans. That is a part of their natural disease, Job 11:12. Men take pains to break young beasts, till they make them tractable: and shall they not be at pains with those of their own kind? The waters wear the stones; and what has often slipped off, may at length come to stick. And a word spoken to them for their good, may lie long under the clod, but spring up at length. But our success is not the rule of our duty; we must do our part.

But more particularly, let heads of families be exhorted to propagate religion to their children and families.

Mot. 1. Consider ye have a charge of their souls, from God who has committed them to you. Hence the fourth commandment, the bond of all religion, is directed to heads of families. And in Abraham's example their duty is laid before them, Gen. 18:19. "I know him," says the Lord, "that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."

Mot. 2. They are born like wild asses' colts, and have a natural bent to the way of sin and destruction; Psal. 58:3. "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." It is too fond and blind a love to your children, that makes you take no notice of the corruption of their nature. And if they are naturally corrupt, what can ye expect but that they will run to their own ruin, if ye are not at pains with them for their souls' good? Hence says Solomon, Prov. 29:15. "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself, bringeth his mother to shame."

Mot. 3. Parents propagate that corruption of nature to them, by natural generation. The sinful nature of children is a glass wherein the parents may get a humbling view of their own: Gen. 5:3. "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." Compared with Job 14:4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Have ye been instrumental in conveying the poison to them, and will ye not be thereby stirred up to minister the antidote to them?

Mot. 4. They are in the midst of many snares, entered into a world wherein offences abound, Matt. 18:7. Their youth makes them raw and unexperienced, and disposes them to be rash and heedless. They have need of a monitor, and instructor, and guide. How shall they learn, if they are not taught?

Mot. 5. Ye must die; and it is like will die before them, and leave them in this evil world. Will ye not be concerned for them, that it may be well with them when ye are away? Your concern for their temporal provision will not make it well with them, while ye are not concerned to sow the seeds of religion in their hearts. That will be but to give much sail to an empty ship without ballast, that may sink her in the deep sea, as is seen in the sad experience of many.

Mot. 6. They must die; and it may be they may die before you, and leave you; and then they will have no use for all the temporal provision ye have laboured for, for them. But religion propagated by you to them, will then appear a precious treasure. But if ye have neglected that duty to them, that will then appear a criminal neglect which ye will never more be capable to mend; and it will leave a galling sting in your conscience, if ye be not quite stupid.

Mot. 7. Lastly, What comfort can ye have in their case, while ye can have no comfortable prospect of their eternal happiness? If they were to be lords and ladies in this world, but to perish eternally in another world, what comfort can be there? The barren womb and dry breasts are preferable to the bringing forth children to the murderers; much more to the bringing forth children for hell-fire.

Let these things work upon your consciences, and on your natural affection, to bestir yourselves towards the propagating of religion to the rising generation. If ye have any conscience of duty towards God, any humanity towards your fellow-creatures, neglect it no more. For particular directions, I propose,

DOCT. III. ult. The true way of propagating religion, the standing to the rising generation, is, that the former makes God known to the latter, so as they may betake themselves unto him, his truth and faithfulness, by faith and trust. This is the sense of the words of the text, and agreeable to the matter, Hezekiah's life being prolouged in virtue of that promise, 1 Kings 8:25. "There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me." So this notification is not of the matter as a speculation, but as a practical thing, that the rising generation may be brought to God.

In discoursing this doctrine, we shall consider,

I. The end to be aimed at in our teaching the rising generation.

II. The means to be used with them for that end.

III. Give the reasons why this is the true way of propagating religion, the standing to the rising generation.

IV. Lastly, Apply.

I. We shall consider the end to aimed at in our teaching the rising generation. And that is, that they may be brought to betake themselves unto the truth of God by faith and hope. This is expressly taught, Psal. 78:6, 7. "That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise, and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments." Now, here we are to consider,

1. What is this truth of God we are to endeavour to bring the rising generation to. 2. How one betakes himself unto God's truth, which is that we should aim to bring the rising generation to.

First, What is this truth of God we are to endeavour to bring the rising generation to? The truth of God may be considered three ways.

1. In the divine doctrine in general. And thus whatever the Lord teaches in his word is true to a title. Hence says David, Psal. 119:160. "Thy word is true." All the discoveries made to us therein are to be relied on as most firm truth. But that truth of doctrine is not here meant; for it belongs to the means, the object to be made known.

2. In the divine threatenings. They are not mere scarecrows, as the wicked world looks on them, and disregards them, Deut. 29:19; but shall have a certain accomplishment in their true meaning and

intention; for which cause believers of God's word tremble at them, Is. 66:2. But neither is this here meant; since it is not the object of hope, but of fear.

3. In the divine promises. These are of two sorts. (1.) Law promises; as, "He that doth them, shall live in them." This cannot be here meant neither; for no man can be happy that way, Rom. 8:3. (2.) The gospel-promises; such as, John 3:16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Heb. 8:10. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." The belief of those is more difficult; but it is by them a soul can only be made happy, 2 Pet. 1:4. Therefore it is the truth or faithfulness of God in the promise of the gospel that is here meant, That is it we are to endeavour to bring the rising generation to.

Now, the promise of the gospel is held forth under the notion of God's truth, on these accounts.

1. In respect of the weight of the things promised therein. They are so great and weighty, that, were not the infallible truth of God impawned for them, they could not be believed by sensible guilty creatures; 2 Pet. 1:4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature." Compared with Luke 24:25, 26, "Then Jesus said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" That the eternal Son of God should take on man's nature, and suffer the most ignominious death therein, for sinners, who could have believed on another than God's own testimony? That

God freely gives eternal life in him to sinners, as 1 John 5:11, who otherwise could believe?

2. The foundation of believing it is in God only. A true believer "receives the kingdom of God as a little child," Mark 10:15, on the mere testimony of his Father. There is nothing in nature's light to bring us to the belief of the gospel. So faith is called "the evidence of things not seen," Heb. 11:1. The threatening of death in the law, a natural conscience prompts men to believe, Rom. 1 ult. and 2:15. But the promise of life in the gospel, depending allenary on revelation, the belief of it rests on the truth of God only; yea, nature rises up against it. The corrupt mind looks on it as foolishness; the corrupt will rejects it; the corrupt affections muster themselves up against it; and the natural conscience, the more it is awakened, the more hard it makes the belief of it. So the truth of God has all these to drive over and pull down. Hence, says the apostle, 2 Cor. 10:4, 5, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

3. In opposition to the falsehood, vanity, and lies of the world, which sinners naturally betake themselves to.

1st, The world swarms with lies, and has always since Satan hatched the first lie in it. The things of the world are lies, 1 John 2:16; the men of the world are liars, Rom. 3:4; yea, the best of them a lie, Psal. 62:9. There is no trusting of them, Jer. 17:5, 6.

2dly, The world itself is one great lie, Eccl. 1:2. Its appearances are unfair and deceitful; it appears to vain man quite another thing than it is; its shadows appear substantial, and so catch the unwary heart, Hos. 12:1, 8. Yet it is "that which is not," Prov. 23:5. It is not what it

seems to be. Its promises are false, it never performs them; the good things of it are always greater in expectation than fruition; they disappoint, which is lying in scripture-style, Hab. 3:17.

Secondly, How one betakes himself unto God's truth, which is that we should aim to bring the rising generation to. It lies in these five things.

1. In the conviction of the vanity of the world, and its deceitful lusts. Hence says David, Psal. 119:96, "I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad." The false and vain world offers itself as a satisfying portion to the rising generation, as soon as reason begins to dawn in them. To the infant it makes its court by the lust of the flesh in meat and drink; to the child by that, and the pride of life in clothing; and it is longere they know there is any thing better than these. To the youth it spreads out its all, "the Iust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" and whatever notions of religion they may have in their heads, till grace open their eyes, they will never truly see any thing to be better. Now, we should labour to convince them of the vanity of the world, that it will never satisfy, nor afford a rest to the heart; that its lusts are deceitful, and there in a ruining hook hid under that bait.

2. In renouncing of the world for a portion, and its lusts for our way, as being a broken reed, that will not only not bear our weight, but run through the hand that leans on it. Hence it is said, Jer. 16:19, "The Gentiles shall come unto the Lord from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." It is natural to man, and therefore to the rising generation, to stick by it, and not to give over the pursuit; but after a thousand disappointments still to hope for better from it, Is. 57:10. And the little experience youth has, makes them

the more ready to do so. But we should endeavour to bring them to part with it, as a hopeless thing they will never mend themselves of, Psal. 4:2.

3. In believing that there is an upmaking portion held forth in the promise of the gospel. This is the finding of the treasure hid in the field, Matth. 13:44. The carnal mind looks on the promise of the gospel but as idle tales; it is a treasure hid in a field, which men go over without noticing what is in it, because they see it not. But Christ is there, and in him the fulness of the Godhead, and with him all things enough to satisfy the boundless desires of a soul. And could we bring the rising generation really to believe this, we would do a great thing.

4. In trusting to the promise of the gospel allenary for life and happiness, and a rest to the heart, upon the ground of God's faithfulness. Here is the nature of faith, a betaking one's self unto God's truth, by trusting to him in his word of promise for all, Ruth 2:12. It implies these three things. The soul seeing there is in the promise what is not in all the creation, enough to answer all its needs, and to make it completely happy,

1st, Believes its own common interest in the promise, that itself, as well as others, has access to claim it with all that is in it, and to rely on it as held out to him in particular to trust upon for his upmaking in time and eternity, Heb. 4:1, 2. For no man can embrace the promise of the gospel, that does not first see himself warranted so to do. And the nature of the promise warrants all, John 3:16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

2dly, The man thereupon lays the weight of his happiness wholly on it, trusting that it shall be made out to him, and expecting all

happiness from it. Thus he buys the field, takes possession of it, and the treasure hid therein, Matth. 13:44. This is the embracing of the promise, Heb. 11:13. as one takes an honest man's word for his security, rests there, and looks no further. So what trust was before placed in a vain world, is now placed in the promise.

3dly, The ground on which he bottoms this his trust in the promise is not any thing in himself, but the truth and faithfulness of God, Tit. 1:2. The man sees the promise is not yea and nay, as the promises of fickle men are; but that it is the word of God which is surer than heaven and earth, Heb. 11:11, and "yea in Christ," 2 Cor. 1:20. And to this trust we should labour to bring the rising generation, which is to bring them unto a rest for their restless hearts, by bringing them to Christ, and by him to God. When we see hungry infants moving about with their mouths for something to suck, natural affection teaches to set them on the breast; but as they grow up, ye might observe their hungry souls moving up and down among the creatures for a fill, and still restless because they cannot get it. It would be as great charity in that case, to endeavour to bring them to the breasts of divine consolations in the promise of the gospel.

5. Lastly, In hoping and waiting for their happiness from the promise of the gospel. Hence says the apostle, Rom. 8:24, 25, "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." There is much got out of the promise, for the present, in hand; but still there is more in hope, to be got on the other side of death. The natural cry is, "Who will show us any good?" It is hard to make children wait even for temporal good things; they would aye have all presently, whenever they take it in their head: but it is harder to get them to wait in the matter of a portion for their

hearts. So they greedily embrace the present world. But we should labour to get them off that, and wait for happiness in another world.

II. The means to be used with them for that end. That is, to make God known to them. He is to many of the aged among men an unknown God, as to any saving acquaintance with him: but to young ones, he is an unknown God, so much as by report or hearsay, till the aged do tell them of him. The saving knowledge of himself God only can give: but there is a doctrinal making of him known to the rising generation: and that is our duty, Psal. 22 ult. "They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this."

Now, ye are to make him known to the rising generation as a God in Christ, John 14:9: for as such only he is the object of a guilty creature's trust for salvation, 2 Cor. 5:19. The blind world pretend to trust in God as an absolute God, not eyeing him as in Christ: but so he is "a consuming fire," Heb. 12 ult. And he is not honoured, but dishonoured by such a trust, John 5:23. In Christ he appears,

1. As a God of majesty and glory, 2 Cor. 4:6. There is no glass in which ye can represent to the rising generation the glory and majesty of God so lively as in Christ. The creating a world of nothing, the deluge, destruction of Sodom, are but dim glasses, in comparison of the mystery of Christ. Here the glory of his infinite holiness, and infinite hatred of sin, his exact justice, his precise and unalterable truth, his unsearchable wisdom, most fully appear.

2. As the God of grace, 1 Pet. 5:10. The former view of God is apt to fill the soul with the honour, awe, and reverence of him, fit ballast for the vain heart: this view of God is apt to fill the soul with faith and love, whereby the heart may be disengaged from the vain world, and knit to him as the alone upmaking portion of the soul. In Christ ye

can let them see majesty vailed with mercy, righteousness and peace kissing mutually, a crystal wall to go between them and the consuming fire.

III. The third thing is, To give the reasons why this is the true way of propagating religion, the standing to the rising generation.

1. Because all true religion begins with the knowledge of God in Christ. Hence our Lord says, John 17:3, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." As long as ignorance of God continues in the soul, the prince of darkness rules there, the works of darkness go on there, and the party is on the way to everlasting darkness, Hos. 4:6; Isa. 27:11. Therefore cruel are they that bring up young ones, whether children or servants, in ignorance; especially considering, that it is the learning age, which season missed, the loss is seldom retrieved.

2. Because vain is that religion and knowledge that brings not the soul to betake itself to God's truth for a portion, and to renounce the world and its way, 1 Cor. 8:1. Our aim in all our teaching should be to affect the heart, to bring sinners to God, to be his only, wholly, and for ever. To satisfy ourselves with filling their heads with notions of religion, while we are careless of getting their hearts to Christ, is sorry service.

3. Because the right discerning of the glory of God in Christ, is the true way to bring a sinner to faith in him: Psal. 9:10. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." John. 4:10. Jesus answered and said unto her, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." All who are brought acquainted with him, cannot choose but take up their soul's rest in him: and whoever do not betake themselves to him, it is because they

know him not. For his glorious excellency truly discerned, cannot miss to captivate the heart.

USE. Make God known to the rising generation, so as they may be stirred up to give up with the vain and false world, and to betake themselves to the promise of the gospel, therein to take God for their portion. I have given motives already, I will now give directions how to manage the work.

1. A general direction. Aim at that particularly, and keep it always in your view, to teach them to know God in Christ. Never satisfy yourselves with letting them know, what God is in himself out of Christ; for that may strike them with terror, but it will never bring them to him in faith and love. But labour to discover to them the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Shew them Christ, and ye shew them the Father: for in him the fulness of the Godhead dwells. In his person, you may let them see God's willingness to take mankind into union and communion with himself; in his offices, how willing he is to teach them, justify them, and sanctify them; in his holy birth, what a nature is pleasing to him; in his righteous life, what a conversation he requires; in his satisfactory death, how dreadful his wrath is against sin; and in a word, how they may be made holy and happy for ever. Therefore inculcate on them the knowledge of Christ. I urge this for three reasons.

1st, Do this, and ye do all to them. Hence says the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2:2. "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." When the darkness of the night sits down on the face of the earth, as many candles as are burning abroad, so many spots of the earth, will be enlightened: but let the sun arise, and there will be light over all; for the one sun will do more than millions of lighted candles. So whenever Christ the Sun of righteousness ariseth,

that gross darkness which covers the mind, will suddenly be dispelled. There is more of the glory of God to be seen in the face of Jesus, than throughout the whole compass of the heavens and the earth, which yet were made to declare the glory of God. Life, eternal life, is in the knowledge of him, John 17:3.

2dly, Neglect this, and ye do nothing to them to purpose. Hence says Christ," John 8:24.—If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." That light that is without him is but darkness, and the sparks of knowledge and religion that is without illumination in the knowledge of Christ, will leave those that walk in the light of them, to lie down in sorrow at length, John 1:9. Not one truth is rightly learned as it centres in Jesus, Eph. 4:20, 21.

3dly, Because the rising generation is in extreme hazard in this point at this time, beyond what they have been for many years. A religion is like to come in among them, that has no relation to Christ and his Spirit, which is in effect but refined Paganism. With some Christ is almost dropt out of their practical divinity, and morality in doctrine is justling out the gospel of the grace of God; and hence immorality in practice comes in like a flood. And principles are vented highly injurious to his glorious Godhead.

2. Particular directions are these.

1st, Acquant them with God's word. Let your children be learned to read; and your servants that cannot read, be so charitable as to teach them. And ye such servants secure that in your hiring of yourselves. And press them, and stir them up to read the scriptures ordinarily when they can do it. It is recorded of Timothy, to his honour, that "from a child he had known the holy scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. 3:15.

2dly, Neglect not family-catechising. Oblige them to get the Shorter Catechism, and labour to make them understand it by examining them. For which cause ye have many good helps laid to your hand.

3dly, Often inculcate on them their sinful and miserable state by nature, and the salvation for them in Jesus Christ.

4thly, Join a practical exhortation with your catechising. It might be profitable to close the catechising on every question of the Catechism upon a particular heed, with a short admonition to them by way of use. Ex. gr. on the first, Well, mind that the great thing ye have to do in the world, is to glorify God; and that the great thing ye have to seek, is the enjoyment of him.

5thly, Inculcate upon them, and train them up in a reverence and esteem of the ministry of the gospel, as an ordinance of Christ for the salvation of sinners. And oblige your family to a conscientious attendance; none of them to sit at home that are capable of profiting by the word, without a reason that will bear weight before God, 1 Cor. 1:21. I urge this the rather that some are trained up in a neglect, or in a contempt of it, to the ensnaring of their poor souls. Mind the poor children of Bethel.

6thly, Inculcate and labour to impress them with the belief of the vanity of the world, and the impossibility of finding a rest to their heart in any creature. Tell it them from the word, your own and their experience.

7thly, Inculcate and labour to impress them with the belief of the full happiness to be found in a God in Christ, held forth to them in the promise of the gospel. Solemnly assure them, that there they may find a rest to their heart; and that God is offering himself to them as such.

8thly, Make it known to them, how good a master God is; how pleasant the way of holiness is; what an ill master Satan is; how contrary and odious sin is to God; how dear it stood Christ; how bitter it will be to the sinner here or hereafter.

9thly, Put them on praying by any means, and teach them to pray, and inculcate on them the necessity of it.

10thly, Make known to them how God is a God of exact justice, and purest truth: and from thence, as ye love their souls, endeavour often to inculcate on them, and impress them with a horror of injustice in the least things, and of lying in any case. The sad way some are brought up in those points, leave them without any conscience of common honesty or truth.

And mind that "precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little," Is. 28:10.

And be not discouraged though ye see not the fruit. The fruit may come when ye are in your grave. Mind Manasseh's conversion, when his godly father was dead and gone.

Now, ye young folk, and young ones, for whose cause so much has been said, I will leave this text, with three words to you, and a great offer.

1. Christ and the devil is striving about you. Christ is striving for you by his ministers, your parents, and masters, that show a concern for your soul, and by your own consciences. The devil is striving to hold you, by his temptations, a vain and wicked world, and your own lusts. But the devil is a murderer, the world is false and your lusts are deceitful, which ye will find if ye trust in them.

2 Ye are between the losing and the winning now. If Christ get you when ye are young, ye will serve him with life and spirit: if the devil prevail, the older ye grow, ye will go the farther from God. For youth goes with a great swing right or wrong.

3. Eternity is at stake with you; eternal well or eternal woe, according to the side ye shall choose.

I offer Christ to you, and declare that he is willing to be yours, and make you happy for ever, and be a rest to your hearts: Matth. 22:4. "Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. Prov. 8:17. "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find mo." Remember this, and say, Amen.

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