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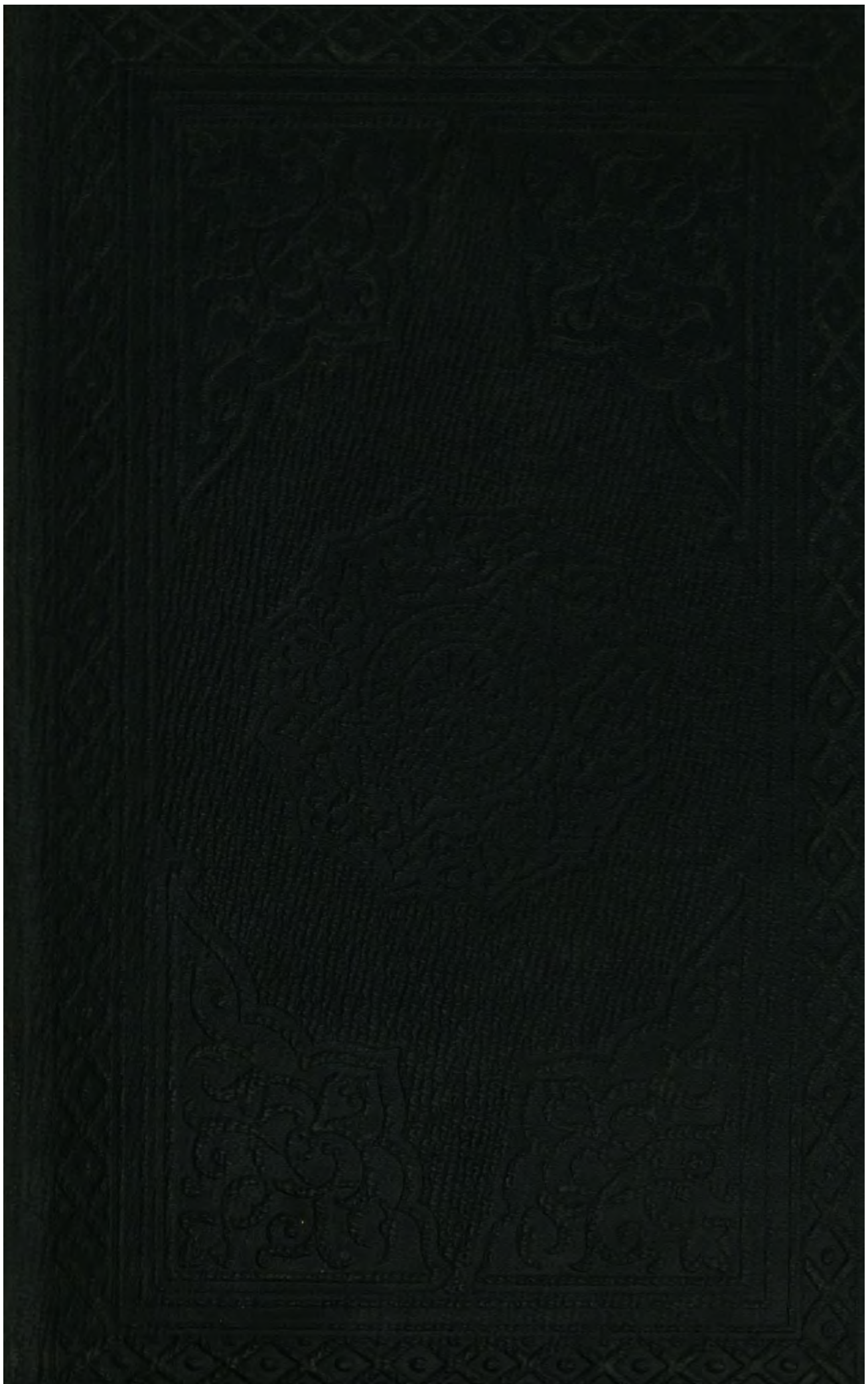
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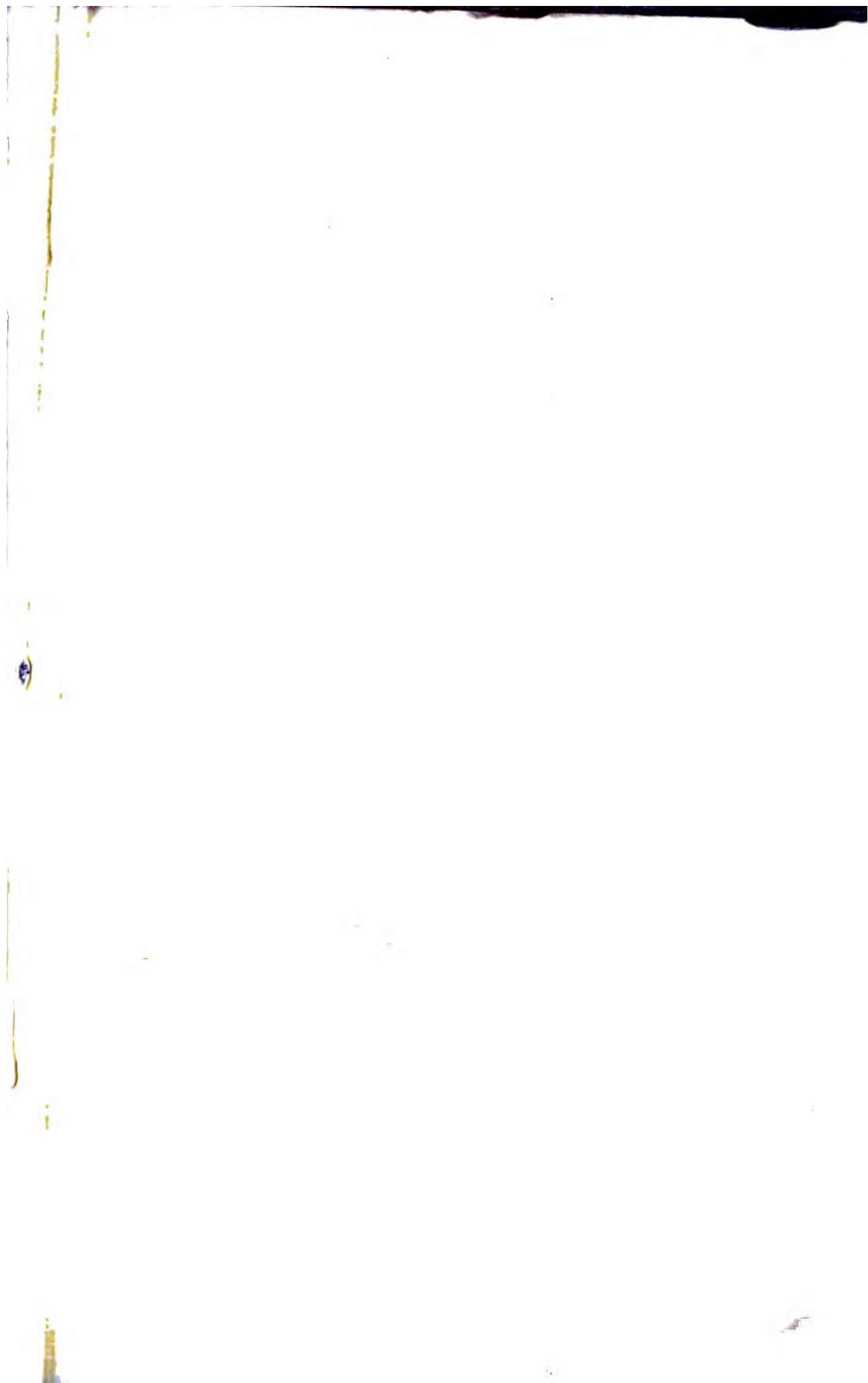
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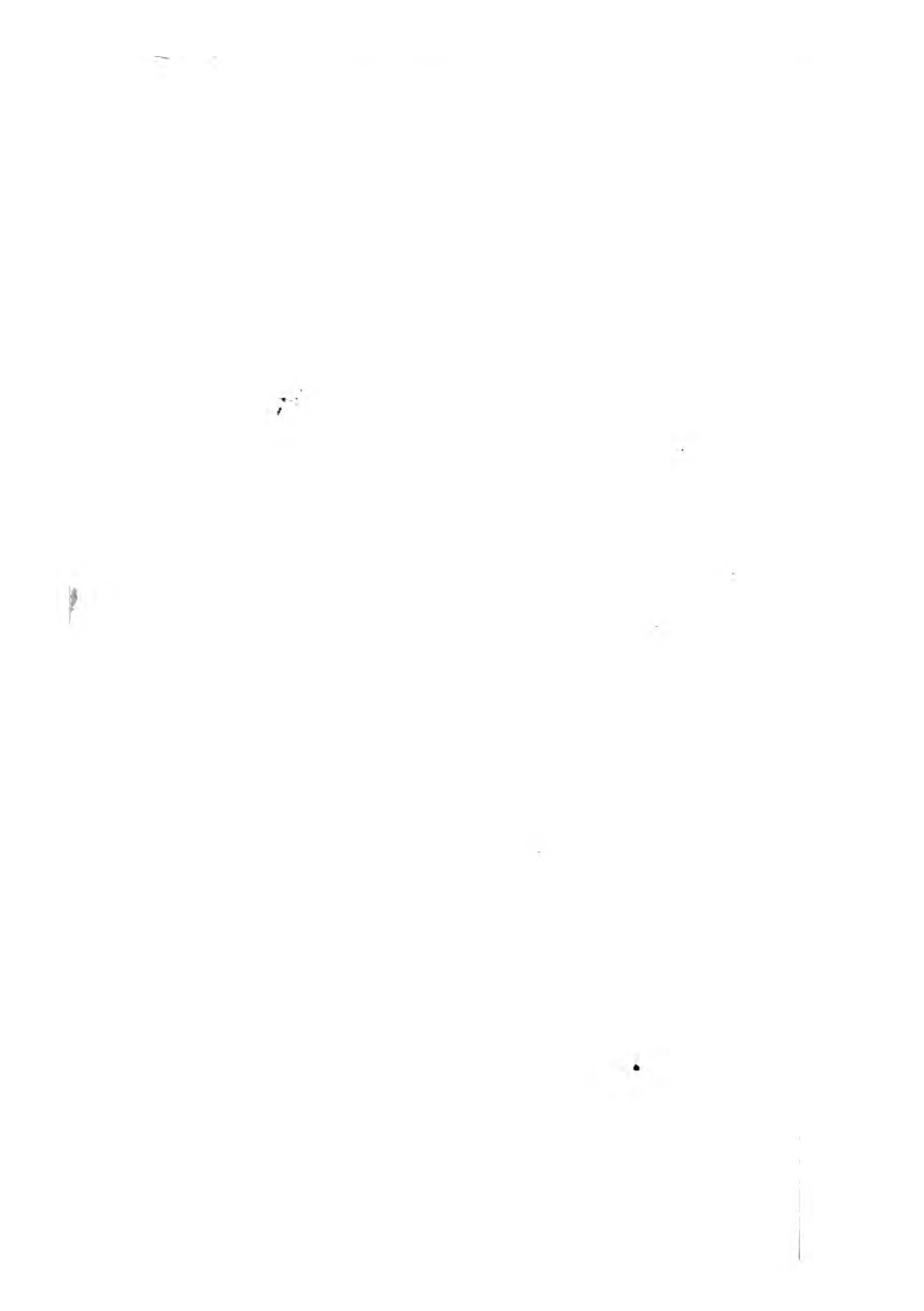


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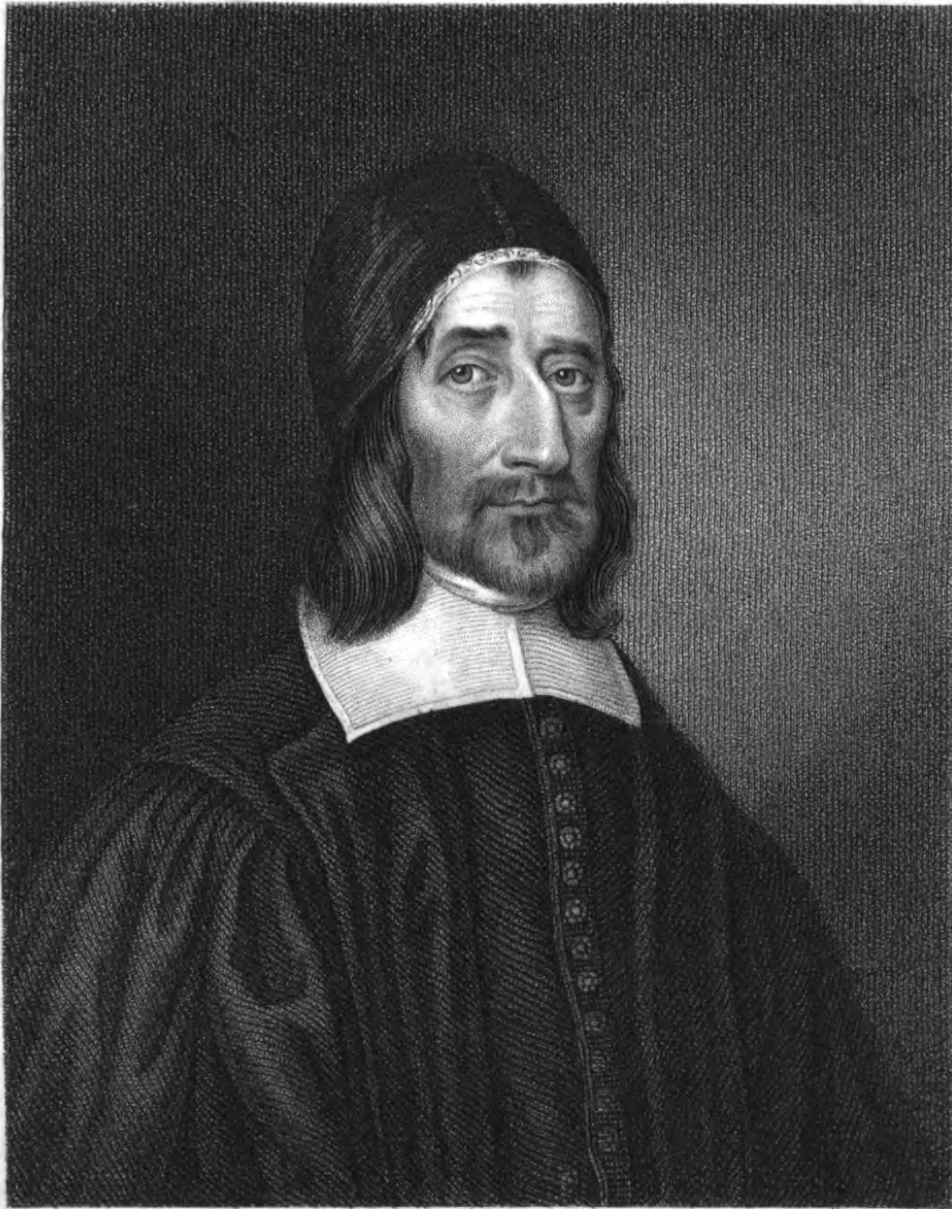
BY

DR. CUMMING, DR. STEBBING, DR. CROLY,

DR. PYE SMITH,

ETC. ETC.





Engraved by J. Mollison

RICHARD BAXTER.

DYING THOUGHTS

UPON

PHILIPPIANS I. 23.

“FOR I AM IN A STRAIT BETWIXT TWO, HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART,
AND TO BE WITH CHRIST, WHICH IS FAR BETTER.”

BY RICHARD BAXTER.

*Written for his own use in the latter times of his corporal pains
and weakness.*

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY THE

REV. H. STEBBING, D.D.

LONDON:

HALL, VIRTUE & CO. 25, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1850



INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

DEATH is a theme of universal interest! The lightest heart, the least thoughtful mind has no disbelief of death. The distance of the dark cloud on which he comes, sailing through the bosom of futurity, may be miscalculated; but the world unhesitatingly owns he is coming, and will at last be here. In almost every other particular of existence, the fortunes of men differ: but to die is common to all. The stream of life runs in a thousand various channels; but run where it will—brightly or darkly, smoothly or languidly—it is stopped by death. Though invisible, he is always abroad on the earth. The trees drop their leaves at the approach of the winter's frost: man falls at the presence of death. Every successive generation he claims for his own, and his claim is never denied. To die is the condition on which we hold life: rebellion sickens with hopelessness at the thought of resisting death: the very hope of the most desperate is not that death may be escaped, but that he is eternal; and all that either the young, the careless, or the dissipated can do, is to think of him as seldom as they

can. No man, therefore, will deny that whatever can be said of death is applicable to himself. The bell which he hears tolled may never toll for him; there may be no friend or children left to lament him; he may not have to lie through long and anxious days, looking for the coming of the expected terror: but he knows he must die: he knows that in whatever quarter of the world he abides—whatever may be his circumstances—however strong his present hold of life—however unlike the prey of death he looks—that it is his doom, beyond reverse, to die. But if it be thus certain that death is the common lot of all—the great result of life—it must surely be the part of a rational creature like man to inquire, what is death? and having answered this question, to consider what kind of preparation should be made for his approach, and by what considerations his terrors are most likely to be diminished. These inquiries I take for the subject of the present Essay, and may the Almighty Spirit of the Lord so assist both the reader and me, that our hearts may gain wisdom in this matter; and that, having laid the foundation of sober thought, we may in our subsequent reflections, be enabled to rise gradually to the contemplation of those mysteries by which death himself shall be conquered, and the grave deprived of its strength.

What then is death? We will consider it first

in its simplest and most obvious character; that is, as the contrary of animal life. To breathe, to move, to communicate with the outward world, to receive impressions from the various objects it contains, is to live; to cease to breathe, to move, to manifest any consciousness of outward things, is to die. Now, if we suppose for the moment that we have no other principle of life but this of the animal, its destruction is the termination of our being; and when we cease to breathe, the plan and measure of our existence are complete. But if death were really the termination of existence, would it thence follow that no thought is necessary to prepare for meeting it? I think not; and for these reasons:—Every creature that exists, has its being for some particular end; and a conscious, rational being, is superior to those of all other classes, because he has the ability of discerning several of the purposes of his existence, and the relation in which he stands to the world at large. But since death completes the measurement of life—since it terminates the course in which the manifold objects and purposes of rational existence are to be accomplished, it is manifestly the duty of every man to take care that it catches him not unprepared; that when it arrives he has no work of importance left undone, which could have been done by prudence and reflection. For conscience tells us, independently of any other tribunal, that our being, our

hearts and minds, should be continually advancing towards maturity ; that they should manifest the ripening effects of experience and thought ; that the work of each day should be complete when the day closes, and that the sum of our finished duties should equal the sum of our years, when death comes and says, the account is closed. To deny this principle—to suppose that man is not responsible to himself, to the world, to nature, for the completion of the purposes of existence—would be to do away with the foundation of many noble qualities in our constitution : it would be to contradict the maxims from which sprung some of the finest examples of human virtue, sublime, though imperfect, in the unenlightened days of antiquity. Confidently, therefore, may we state, that even supposing death to be the utter extinction of our being, a preparation for it is demanded of every rational creature,—a preparation consisting in such continual observations on the purposes of life, in such careful comparisons of the progress of time with the completions of duty, that it may not surprise us when the heart is unfurnished with the principles which should mark its maturity, or while objects are left unattained, which should form the possession of our spirits in each successive portion of existence.

But the notion that death is the extinction of our being is upheld by few ; and these few have the re-

futation of their opinion in their own consciences. Proceeding, therefore, a step further, we come to consider death, not as the negation—not as the mere contrary of life, but as a change in the manner of existing. The animal functions of the body, the breathing, the movement of the limbs, have evidently nothing to do with the essential action of the mind: thought, though affected by them, is not dependent on them. In rest, in action, in ease, and in suffering, we recognize an independent power within us; a power by which we move in a higher element than the atmosphere we breathe—an element by which the animal is kept alive, and consciousness quickened into unexplainable activity. As there are, therefore, two principles in human nature, the animal and the spiritual, that by which we live in common with other breathing things, and that by which we reason, and are raised above whatever else exists below, it is plain that these principles being separated, the man ceases to exist in the same state as before; and that, since the body is necessary to the spirit's manifesting itself, the presence or existence of the spirit can be no longer known when rent asunder from the frame. But it will not at all follow, that because it is not visible by its operations on the body it has ceased to exist, for it was itself never visible; nor is there any reason for supposing that a mere separation from that with

which it had nothing in common, should destroy its consciousness. When to this it is added, that it is found to exercise its power of thought, and all spiritual faculties, even to the moment of its separation from the body, there is the strongest reason for believing that, after it is set free from the corporeal system it still thinks, perceives, and acts. But the body falls to decay, and the soul becomes invisible, and is perfectly cut off from all apparent communication with the world in which it formerly existed; and this is death—death described according to the most obvious characteristics of our nature, and involving no difficulty not easily explainable on the plain laws of reason. With this view however of the subject, we have an increase of arguments on the necessity of a preparation for death. It being understood that the soul retains its consciousness, the same judge which it is to itself in this state, it must at least be in the next: and therefore, if there be a feeling of anxiety and fear in the mind when we sin and have left our duties unperformed, the same must there be in the soul when in a separate state it looks back with unavailing repentance on the past scenes of existence. It matters not what we think of a day of judgment; it matters not what we know either of that or of hell, if we feel but that our spirits will exist in the future, we are then sure of misery, of deep, intense, permanent misery, if one tittle of human duty be

left unfulfilled, if one evil principle be left in action, when the soul enters upon its final and unchanging condition. If a preparation for death, then, would be necessary were we to cease to be when we cease to breathe, incomparably more so is it when, instead of ceasing to exist at the hour of death, we are only cut off from the outward world, are only left naked, perhaps solitary spirits, doomed by even self-condemnation to lament, without end, their folly, and now never-to-be-removed corruption. For we know what recollection is; we know what conscience is: and these are the companions which the soul must ever have, and from whose suggestions it must receive its woe or satisfactions. Suppose, then, that we believe neither in God nor the devil, that we think of neither heaven nor hell, still we should be madmen, it appears, not to prepare for death; which, leaving us more entirely to ourselves, cutting us off from all sources of pleasure, or consolation, or entertainment but those which exist in our innermost hearts, ought at least to find us furnished with all those means of self-satisfaction and delight on which, through the endless future, we shall have to depend.

But we stop not here:—there is a God; himself a mighty, a universal spirit; and whence, seeing that our souls must have had a beginning, whence could they spring but from him? Or is it probable they can ever become independent of him? Is it

likely that he ever loses sight of them? Is it imaginable that when they leave the body they should escape him, that mighty Maker of spirits, with the breath of life? No! it is very plain that our souls, having been watched through their brief period of earthly trial by the Eternal Parent, will, on being separated from this fleshly covering, be drawn by the irresistible might of his will, through immeasurable intervening regions of light, direct before his throne. And this lays the foundation for another argument on the necessity of preparation for death; an argument in which lie centred appeals to all the hopes and fears, to all the generous aspirations, the solemn presentiments, the moral capacities of man's complicated being; an argument which we must deny God to reject, and which we must risk every possibility of happiness to oppose. For we now find that to prepare for death is necessary, not only to complete the object of our being, which the law of rational existence demands, or because our souls being immortal will be otherwise perpetually tormented by the never-blunted sting of conscience, but because we shall be presented as we die before the throne of the almighty Sovereign of the universe.

Still even this is not all, much as it is. There is a vast system of mercy in operation to aid us in our preparation, and to give it efficacy; a system which, fitting itself to every principle in our being,

leaves none at war with nature, with God, or heaven. But so long as we forget death, and the awful change it will produce in our condition, and live in the neglect of those precautions which are needed to prevent its finding us unprepared, we offer despite to that noble evidence of the Almighty's care for us, and are guilty of the monstrous sin and folly of seeing God working for us, and planning systems of grace to prepare us for death, and remaining utterly idle ourselves, utterly careless as to the issue of a business in which we alone are actually concerned. And if death should really find us unprepared, when so much is done by the Almighty to aid us in the matter, great, it will be allowed, must be the penalty we shall have to pay for so entering into the presence of God: there will not only be our sins to confront us, but the Saviour, whose blood we trampled under foot, and the Holy Spirit, who having long striven with our hearts, was at last obliged to leave them, by our dark determinations, to abide in iniquity.

This, I trust, will suffice to establish the principle, that we lie under many obligations to prepare for death. It is known that we cannot escape it; and it is plain, by what has been said, that in whatever way we contemplate it, the certainty of its approach, with the uncertainty of the exact hour of its coming, places us under the necessity of so living, of so numbering and measuring

our days, that our career may not be terminated before our work, nor our souls summoned before the Almighty before they have grown up into the fulness of the stature of immortal spirits. Now there are two main objections to this truth in force among mankind, and by which they justify their delaying the preparation of which the duty and necessity are thus obvious. The one is, that it would interrupt the course of general thought and action; the other, that it is not necessary till a certain period or peculiar circumstances arrive. With regard to the former of these, it may fairly be allowed that, at first sight, there is something sufficiently specious in it to deceive the thoughtless, the ignorant, and the young. But the moment we look at it with the eye of reason, the shadow of truth with which it appeared invested vanishes. For, in the first place, death is so natural an occurrence, that if to think of it be to darken or make sluggish the course of thought, we must never think of ourselves, or of human nature at all; for we can scarcely step beyond the present without finding our reflections stretching into the region of this awful power: and who can imagine that a rational being ought to stop thinking when his mind finds itself on the completion of existence? Again, we know for certain that the loftiest, the most active minds are habitually employed in contemplating this very subject; and that we are indebted to their medi-

tations thereon for some of the sublimest results of human thought; and not only this, but that wherever there is a pure conscience, wherever there is piety, there death is the subject of much and frequent observation; and that so far is this habitual recognition of its power over human nature from rendering the mind gloomy or austere, or unfitting it for the entire duties of life, that minds capable, through the aid of divine grace, of looking steadily on this supposed object of terror, are the most serenely cheerful, the most benign, the most self-possessed, and the most capable of fulfilling, at all times and under every circumstance, the great duties of social existence.

In respect to the next objection to the commencement of a preparation for death, it has not even the semblance of truth to support it, which might be alleged in favour of the former. For at what period but the present ought we to think of commencing a preparation for an event which may happen the next hour? And if we say, there is a natural reason for supposing death will not come without old age or disease, may it not be said in reply, that, with regard to the former, old age comes much quicker than is usually supposed; and with regard to the latter, that disease is guided by such inexplicable laws, and makes its attacks so frequently where it was never expected, that he is little short of being grossly foolish who thinks

his preparation may be deferred because he is not sick.

But, whatever be the number of years intervening between the present hour and that of our dissolution, the space that separates us from death vanishes at a single glance of the immortal soul; and we appear to stand face to face with the enemy. There is nothing in human life out of which we can form a screen against the scorpion eye of death. Our pleasures, our hopes, our pretensions of every kind crowded together, can scarce fill out an hour when death is recollected. The most important considerations, the greatest anxieties, passion and desire vanish before it; and leave the space over which we look a low and naked plain, which we seem to be hastening over with continually accelerated speed, and to the end of which we feel we may perchance arrive long before the night-fall. It is from this plain fact, that death is not only uncertain in its arrival, but that, at the longest calculation, it is not far distant, that we come to the important practical conclusion, that whatever preparation is needed to meet it safely and calmly, must be commenced without delay. In what this preparation should consist we have now to consider.

The terrors of death may be reduced to three main points: first, it is accompanied, in general, with extreme pain;—secondly, it separates the

dearest friends and connexions;—thirdly, it carries the soul to be sentenced by an Almighty Judge, and devotes it to exist thenceforth in an unknown and inconceivable state of being. It is on account of one or other, or of all these things, that death is to be dreaded; and the great object of preparation is, first, to prevent the soul from sinking under the trial to which it will be exposed; and, secondly, to save it from the danger to which death leads after it has wrought its work upon the sinking frame.

To live in fear of death is a species of bondage from which every wise man would wish to free himself. It weakens resolution; it destroys tranquillity; it prevents the growth of hope; it mocks at happiness, and it abases thought. He who shakes at the idea of death, has no mastery over either his feelings or his determinations; and thus, the first step to be taken in the pursuit of wisdom, in the acquisition of virtuous habits, is to overcome the dread of death. And how is this to be done? Can the body learn to despise pain? Are the nerves to be deprived of their susceptibility of agony? Are the limbs, writhing with the anguish of acute suffering, to be told not to ache? No! we must leave death, with its pains and agonies, in possession of the body. The gospel does not teach us to propound idle promises; we must say nothing on this subject which we might have to contradict, when we come to try the value

and the truth of it on the bed of final suffering. Then again, will, it not be hard to feel ourselves sinking from the fond embrace of friends and dear relations? To know that the effort will be soon vain, to keep our eyes open to the watchful glance of love—to the tearful smiles that remind the heart of all past days and scenes of tenderness? Will it not wring from the bosom all its strength, to bid farewell: to press the outstretched hand for the last time; and with thoughts striving at composure, to contemplate those who are dearest to us left in the world, perhaps unfriended, but at all events unloved as by us? What say you to these questions? exclaims human nature—and human nature, in the exercise of its best attributes. Is not death an unbinding of the holiest ties? Does it not separate the parent from the child, the child from its parent? Are not the brightest, the purest hopes, blighted at its approach? And is not the heart which has many affections, to look for its arrival as an evil to which no other can be compared, and which admits of no counteraction—no alleviation? We wish not, as we said before, to give a varnished, or flattering view of the subject we are upon. Death is the blight of human affections: it does separate the dearest friends; and the hour of parting is more trying to the spirit of man than the season of direst suffering.

Then, in the next place, death conveys the soul

into the presence of the Almighty Father of spirits, and consigns it to a new, to an untried, and undescribed state of being. This is a source of fear which every hour almost of human existence serves to augment; and when the last arrives, the soul has the whole sum of their evidence against it; the same witnesses, and the same evidence serving the double purpose of proving to it the certain existence and justice of God, and the terrible extent of its own sinfulness. Darkness becomes visible to the eye of death: futurity, with its vast heights and depths, grows into being before it: the despised calls of heaven; the covenant with the world and with hell, subscribed, but forgotten, presses upon the quickening apprehension. A doubt respecting eternity and judgment would be worth an empire now; but doubt never visits the soul conscious of its sin: confidence in the system which satisfied it in life is sought for, but reason and conscience mock the effort: the fine discourse respecting the tolerance of God—the exquisite arguments by which the neglect of Christ's own ordinances and commands were excused, are brought back to the memory, and by whom? Why, by Satan himself, who loves to see the dying man writhe with bitter sorrow at his discovered folly. But dragged by the strength of death to the very brink of eternity; and becoming every moment more conscious that it will soon feel the eye of God—the awful eye of God,

the light of heaven,—in its terror bent upon it, the soul at last finds all its growing apprehensions realized; and before its dreadful plunge into the boundless ocean of futurity, owns to itself the justice of the divine proceedings. It is the possibility that such may be his fate that fills every human being with a deeper dread of death than that derived from any other consideration. The soul left to itself is full of this fear; and were it not for the distractions of the world, it would be constrained, by inward terror, either to seek its final fate at once, or to flee for refuge from its sufferings into the sanctuary of the gospel. But men, aided by Satan, continue to keep down the rising complaints of their souls: they cannot help their beginning the warning; they refuse to hear it out, and thus the inward voice of conscience,—that sense of the soul by which it holds communication with heaven—is habitually despised. With the slightest thought, however, of death, it regains the full sense of its responsibility, and becomes aware, as if by a distinct revelation, of the certainty of judgment, and of the circle within circle of manifold mysteries in which it will be involved.

Such are the causes of the terror of death. Causes great and appalling; and the force or extent of which I do not pretend to lessen by any argument applied to the objects themselves. But, though we cannot strip death of its terrors, so far as he is

himself concerned, we may be so prepared to meet him that he will be unable either to surprise or afflict our soul: we may furnish our heart with an armour, which, though it may not hinder our feeling the shock of his darts, will prevent their piercing it: we may so imbue our souls with the spirit of divine wisdom and righteousness, that they will have an answer and confutation for every suggestion which Satan makes; so that, while looking on futurity, they may look with steadfast hope, and while examining the working of thought, may recognize their immortality and their heavenly destiny.

The preparation which is to effect this great object must embrace these particulars. It must be a preparation of the mind, and a preparation of the heart: it must be carried on without intermission, watchfully, zealously, and with all honesty of purpose: it must be founded on a firm conviction of the value of the soul; must be continued through the perpetually renewed aids of a holy faith; and be rendered legitimate and efficacious by the application to it, in every part, of the merits of Jesus Christ. And first, if we would commence this preparation, we must examine the state of our minds. Are they occupied with many worldly thoughts and wishes? We must get rid of these troublesome inmates, or at least subdue them, or we can never commence the holy and necessary work of prepa-

ration; nor can we free ourselves from their trammels, but by becoming more humble in our notions, and by trusting more to the good providence of God. Do we feel that we have little power of reflection—that our thoughts are not our own—that our principles are unsettled? Let us fall upon our knees incessantly, and obtain the grace of repentance; we shall then be in no want of employment for our minds. Let us seek for a clear and distinct knowledge of the system of divine grace—of the plan of redemption—of the workings of providence—and thoughts will arise as if a new fountain of light had been opened in our hearts. Let us supplicate God, till he give us a lively sanctifying faith—till he make the gospel clearer to us by the operation of his own Spirit; and we shall no longer feel that our principles are unsettled: we shall reason with firmness on the great questions of eternity; and the confidence thence derived will be the seed of still further confidence, and still enlarging hopes.

Then again for the heart. Within it are the issues of the passions; the elements of life in its mere physical capacities and yearnings. If we neglect it, these, its passions and desires, will every day increase in strength, and will at length so possess it, that neither reason nor Scripture will be able to rule its impulses. We shall thus become, what many are, the mere slaves of passion, or what is just the same thing find ourselves unable to

resist any, the slightest desire which enters our minds. But is it not at once evident, that while we are thus in bondage—while we have no command over our feelings—while we do good or ill as the suggestions of an ill-governed mind directs, we are in no condition for commencing the preparation which is so necessary to our safety? And what have we to do to remedy the evil? Again we say, let us appeal at once to God: confess to Him the true state of our dispositions, and in endeavouring to be honest and prudent before Him, we shall become better and better acquainted with ourselves. Grace will assuredly be given us, if we ask it with sincerity; and if we profit by that accorded to our early prayers, we shall receive it more abundantly in answer to supplications, in which we are aided by the grace itself. Sins which we now almost fear are unconquerable, will speedily manifest the strength of this divine assistance, by lessening their hold: habits which have tormented us from youth, and the evil and the burden of which we have felt, without being able to shake them off, will die for want of nourishment; and those wretched sophistries—those dark, crooked, sensual reasonings, by which we have been wont to justify our sins, will be driven from the secret places of our hearts, and leave them to be cleansed by the light and air of heaven.

This is the preparation for death which reason

and the gospel demand of us; and that we have no time to lose is evident from this, that if we live as long as we hope to live, and labour diligently all the time, we can scarcely then perform the task before the hour for ceasing to work arrives. Neither the mind nor the heart is easily cured of its evil dispositions; and divine grace is offered not to save us trouble—not to lessen the necessity of our exertion, but to stimulate us, in the first instance, and to comfort us in the next.

Let us now see what will be the effects of such a preparation as that I have described—that is, of a preparation carried on through the remainder of our lives, and embracing the particulars of repentance, sanctity of disposition, faith and devotion, produced by a careful employment of divine grace. The first effect of such a preparation for death will be, to render us happy in life; for while it will of necessity set us free from tormenting anxieties and passions—while it will occasion the sacrifice of habits which oppress and pervert the mind, and will thereby lead us into a healthier sphere of thought, it will also remove that dreadful weight from our minds—that shadow of the darkness of death—which is perpetually mixing itself with every vision of happiness that momentarily rises before our eyes.

But what can we say sufficiently strong to describe its effects when the hour of departure is arrived? Let us revert to the particulars out of which the terror

of death springs : they were great bodily suffering ; the affliction of parting with fond friends ; and the dread of meeting the Almighty Judge, and entering on an untired state of existence. And how does the preparation bear on the first of these particulars ? In this manner. Bodily suffering, it is universally allowed, is greatly augmented or diminished by the state of mind under which it is borne. So much is this the case, that a very slight disorder may be aggravated into a fatal disease by mental agitation ; and a disease fatal to the generality of men, be supported by the aid of a cheerful, serene spirit. What a vast difference, then, must there be in the sufferings of death, when borne by a Christian full of inward comfort, rejoicing in hope, long accustomed to be patient in tribulation, conscious of the presence of God, conscious of heavenly support ; and when borne by a man who has to struggle with agony of body and anguish of heart at the same time : who has the awful dread upon his mind, that the cloud darkening around him will follow him beyond the gulf he has to pass ; that God—the merciful God—is not now to be appeased ; that a death-bed repentance is altogether a vain notion ; and that the evil power, to which he lived in subjection, is waiting but the unloosing of the soul to claim it as his prey. The pain of dying must, in these opposite cases, be widely different : in the one the body will almost lose the sense of suffering in the deep exci-

tation of a lofty hope, and in the all-subduing influence of a peaceful conscience. In the other, every nerve thrilling with anguish, will seem to enter the soul, and every thought that comes through the heart will come charged with a new agony. Let it not be imagined that this is an exaggerated contrast. We cannot exaggerate in such a case. On the bed of death the penitent, renewed believer, enters upon the enjoyment of the divine promises:—on the bed of death, the terrified, unprepared, because unrenewed sinner, feels the rivetting of the chains which hell has forged for his soul; and the regions of light and darkness are scarcely further apart, than is the state of the dying Christian from that of the dying unpardoned sinner. Reader! will you leave it uncertain in which condition you are to meet death? Shall it be for your fellow-Christians to look upon you with a feeling of awful doubt, as to what will be your state when the last hour arrives? Can you bear to have it a matter of much questioning, whether, if death should now come, you would not be hurled at once into the realms of interminable darkness? You have been accustomed, perhaps, to answer all inquiries of this nature in so light and loose a way, that neither the questions nor the answers have seemed to contain any meaning: for if salvation is to be purchased at the rate at which many imagine it may, truly a man must be mad indeed to despair of gaining it: and if salvation demands

the sacrifice of sin, the possession of divine grace, the renewal of the Spirit, the peace of God, and you are constrained to own you have not these heavenly gifts, what hope can there be that you are in the way of obtaining that highest of all gifts—that prize to be won by the soul in its full vigour,—by the soul which hath God to work with it,—by the soul that hath recovered its health and strength, through the long presence of the divine Sanctifier?

But the difference between the mere suffering of death, when the soul is at peace, and when it has the load of unrepented sin to support, is not greater than the difference between its state as to the second particular I mentioned,—that is, in reference to its separation from beloved friends. Affection, as a part of our nature, is not less under the influence of the Holy Spirit than any other principle of our being. The grace which sanctifies thought sanctifies affection: the light which fills the soul with the knowledge of truth, throws its benignant rays through every winding of the heart. With this sanctification, affection receives the strength of an immortal principle. Love and sacred sympathy become as undying as truth, and the conscious spring of life acts continually within them. When the last hour arrives, this principle, instead of being shaken by the invasion of death, grows stronger, and clings with increased tenacity to every fibre of

the heart. Thus, from the mere influence of pure, sanctified feelings, the Christian is placed in the most advantageous of positions for bidding adieu to those whom he loves. He has an inward assurance—an argument of his own heart—which tells him he shall love and feel with the same intensity of affection when his soul is set free, as he does while his eye rests on the bending forms around him. But to this inward assurance he adds the knowledge, the plain and positive knowledge, which the gospel gives. He has learnt from the words of Christ himself, that he and all who have received justification through the atoning blood, will be received into everlasting mansions; that a common inheritance of joy will be shared among the redeemed; and that where there is a consciousness of peace, there may be an assurance of the re-unions and eternal enjoyments of love. The gloomiest circumstance of death thus wholly vanishes away. The believer, knowing himself to be immortal, knows that those around him are immortal also: life and light fill the whole space before him; and by the strong, the far-piercing vision of faith, he beholds the circles both of his early and his latter home, again assembled in the everlasting dwellings of heaven.

It is not necessary that I should dwell in this place on the third particular. The first conquest of faith subdues the terrors with which the soul

looks for judgment; and in its advance towards perfection, the feeling of sonship and adoption with God becomes so strong, that though the humility with which repentance endowed the soul remains the same, confidence in divine mercy, and assurance following hard upon it, leaves little room for fear; and the Almighty, ever apportioning his gifts of strength to our necessities, when death arrives, the Christian sees nothing in its aspect to shake either his confidence or his hopes.

From the consideration of the necessity of preparation, we now turn to that of the event itself: and what theme can be more full of interest? Who can watch a ship making its way over the broad sea, and gradually vanishing from sight, without a thought respecting its destination? Who even can see a bird wing its flight, and not feel something like a wish to know its aim? Who, still more, can see what seems to be a star dart from its bright place in the heavens into night and vacancy, and not experience a trembling emotion of interest, as to what has been its fate? And what is the ship, perilous though be its course, with its chart and its compass, steering to known lands—what is the bird, guided by instinct through the vast, but to him, well-tracked air—what is the star, wondrous and questionable though its fate be, but a thing that hath no evident claim on human sympathy:—what are these to a human soul setting out

on the journey of eternity; its last hold on the visible sphere giving way,—undefined space, for aught we know, to be henceforth its boundless dwelling, and its happiness or misery produced by the influence of causes and powers of which we can form no conception? Simply looking to the subject as it regards mankind in general, it is one of deep interest: and no object that we can either see or picture has so strong a claim upon the energies of thought as a dying man. But what is the true state of the case? The very being whom we may be contemplating, on the point of passing away into the mysterious regions of eternity, is perhaps bound to us by the cords of love—is a part of our very selves—whom we should look after with longing, tearful eyes, were we only about to be separated by a journey; and of whose state and welfare we should think, during absence, with the most intense interest. In this instance, and whoever has a friend has the application in his own bosom, the consideration becomes one of near importance. But we go further. The state of the soul borne away by the force of death, over the strange realms of futurity, must be our own individual condition. We ourselves must feel the loosening of the silver cord, the trembling of the spirit hovering doubtfully between time and eternity—and then the ceaseless inflooding of light or darkness, and the mighty impulse hurrying us forward to undis-

vered lands. Thus viewed, the subject appeals alike to our reason, our affections, our hopes, and fears; and though it is one on which we must be especially careful not to let the mind wander with a vain curiosity, there is, no doubt, much comfort and encouragement to be derived from its calm and sober consideration.

First, then, what does reason, or natural knowledge teach us respecting the state of the soul after death? We have no means of discovering its condition when actually separated, but we have these two particulars on which to found our inquiry. We can form some judgment respecting its ruling qualities: we can observe it to the very instant of its departure; and some notion may thence be formed as to what will most probably be its state when no longer united to the outward frame. Neither thought, nor any of those faculties by which from things visible we form notions of things invisible—by which we group together the innumerable objects which appeal to our senses, and draw from the promiscuous multitude of beings thoughts distinct and palpable to the mind,—none of those subtle powers which busy themselves when the body is most at rest, by which conscience controuls to its purpose the workings of memory, by which memory itself acts, and hope is seen weaving her tissue of imaginary or expected delights,—none of these can be ascribed to any of the bodily func-

tions : and the portion of our being, therefore, on the powers of which they are dependent, will in all probability be unaffected as to their operation. We find that when once the mind hath imbibed certain ideas, or gained firm possession of any particular kind of knowledge, it not only retains those ideas, and the knowledge so acquired, but has the ability, without any further help, of making out of them, as a workman with his materials, new and ever changing combinations. It is from this very independence of the spirit of man that knowledge becomes so precious a thing—that the activity of reason is so valuable—that the wise and good are superior to the rest of mankind in all the means of happiness, and that genius defies circumstance, and obtains its object, whatever the opposition to its designs. For if the mind were not independent of the body—if it were a part of it, or resulted from any of its functions, a little sickness would not merely lessen its activity, but would positively derange it: the noblest talent would be subject to the changes of the weather: the man who astonished the world by the triumphs of his intellect, would have only a capricious, uncertain, occasional power; and the knowledge and study of truth by which the heart is kept peaceful and steady, would be hourly diminished by the mere accidents of bodily feeling. But we see daily that the contrary of all this is the case. We find that

when men once become good and great they remain so, whatever may happen to their animal frame ; and that though an acute disease may sometimes prevent the mind from operating, because of its very intimate connexion with the body, yet that the body may itself decay, and suffer great violence, without stopping the mind from pursuing its ordinary operations. We have thus the strongest of probabilities, that the spirit of man is distinct in its faculties from the body ; and that, though from the nature of its union with it, it must bear its sufferings, it cannot be affected by them beyond the period of their immediate connexion. Suppose, then, the body in which it resides is destroyed, what effect will this have upon its condition ? Apparently no other than that of separating it from the system of organs through which and by which it performed its work among visible things ; certainly not that of injuring its own powers, any more than you would injure a painter's knowledge of painting by taking away his colours, or a musician's acquaintance with music by removing his instrument. The painter and the musician, though their operations were stopped, would themselves be unharmed : and thus we may reasonably conclude it is with the soul when separated from the body :—its instruments are gone, its work, so far as visible things are concerned, is stopped, but in itself it remains the same as before its separation.

Then, in the second place, we can observe the state and operations of this independent spirit to the very moment of its departure from the body. The bed of death is not a resting-place for the mind; unwonted activity of thought very frequently characterises approaching dissolution; all the faculties are in full play; memory unrolls, with more than usual care, the long folded up record of life, and reason weighs, with seemingly new acquired skill, the good and evil which had till now been mingled confusedly together. Is it natural to suppose that this would be the case were the soul on the point of vanishing into air? Is it to be imagined that it would be the case were it about to sink into lethargy and forgetfulness? Is it not far more rational to believe that the spirit, which has in so many ways asserted its independence, and which now so clearly proves its energy and undiminished strength, will remain in the full possession of its powers, and with the capability of exercising them, whatever may be the fate of the body which it has left? It was on the evident distinctness of the spirit from the mere animal frame; on the powers which it was hourly manifesting; on the capability which it was seen to possess, even to the last, of performing all the functions proper to a free, undying, ever active spirit,—that the wisest of the ancient heathens founded their notion of the immortality of the soul; a notion which many of

them held with an earnestness approaching to the earnestness of faith, and which now appears in their works as the first, faint but beautiful, token of the morning light, before the day really breaks.

Let us now see what intimations Scripture contains on this subject, and whether they confirm the inference to be drawn from the consideration of our nature. They assure us, then, in the most distinct terms, that we shall never die; but the question at present with us is, what will be the state of the soul immediately on its leaving the body. Two answers may be given to this inquiry; the one, that the soul will sleep, or remain unconscious, while separate from the body, till the day of resurrection, when it will be awakened and united to the renewed frame, and with that enter into paradise: the other, that it will not sink into sleep, but will retain all its activity, and pass the period intervening between death and the resurrection of the body in a state answering to that of happiness or misery, to which it will be finally adjudged. That the soul will pass into a state of slumber, there is only one argument which appears to me to have any great force, and that is, that death, in Scripture, is continually represented under the image of sleep. Thus, in the accounts given of the death of the celebrated men of old time, the common phrase is, that they slept with their fathers; the prophets employ it repeatedly:

the same mode of expression is used in the New Testament: Christ says of Lazarus, that he slept, and adds in direct terms, 'I go that I may awake him out of sleep.' In the account given of St. Stephen's martyrdom it is recorded, that while his enemies were stoning him he called with a loud voice, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' that then kneeling down, he added, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,' and that having said this, 'he fell asleep.' St. Paul repeatedly employs the same terms: thus, in speaking of those who witnessed our Lord's ascension, he says that part remained, but that 'some were fallen asleep;' and in describing the resurrection he follows the expression of our Lord, and represents the dead as waking at the sound of the trumpet. The same remark applies to that consolatory passage in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, 'I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.' To this argument, drawn from the language of Scripture, it may be added, that it involves no contradiction to the divine promises of glory; for sleep is a state of perfect repose, and the time expended in such a condition seems but the passing of an hour; so that supposing the soul should sleep till the day of resurrection, it would have nothing

to complain of; and its entering into happiness would be not less glorious than it would have been had it remained conscious all the intervening period. Again: it may be reasonably questioned whether, as man is essentially, by the very plan and character of his nature, a compound of soul and body, he could properly enjoy a conscious existence when these two essentials of his being are widely separated. Though the soul is superior to, and in its nature distinct from the body, it may be doubted whether, without the body, and though it can repeat at will the ideas it has already obtained, it could acquire any new ones,—whether it would not, in the course of an age, exhaust its own unaided resources, and thereby be reduced, before the intervening period was at an end, to a state of torpor, or of restless, anxious expectance.

We will now look at the other side of the question, and see what Scripture light we possess to lead us to believe that the soul will retain its activity, and not fall into a state of slumber. And first, an answer may be given to the argument derived from the description of death as a sleep, in this manner:—Things are frequently described in Scripture according to their outward effects, and as they present themselves to the eye of general observation. Now, when death is contemplated in this manner, certainly no expression can so fitly describe it as that employed by the Holy Spirit in the divine

Word; for death has all the signs of sleep—its stillness, its motionless repose, its forgetfulness of outward things: and supposing the expression we are considering to have been only used by Christ, and the inspired writers, in reference to these its outward effects and appearances, the ‘falling asleep’ would only mean that they to whom it was applied had ceased from labour, had entered into rest; and would not in any way apply to the soul, which, leaving the body extended in its deep silence and tranquillity, might wing its invisible flight to its destined home. That it could not multiply its ideas without receiving them through the organs of the body is but a supposition, and may be met with others equally specious and feasible. To come, therefore, to what Scripture says, we find that, though but dimly and obscurely, it does hint at the conscious existence of departed souls in a separate state. In the remarkable and, especially in respect to this subject, deeply interesting account given of Saul’s application to the witch of Endor, it is related, that the king having desired the woman to bring up whom he would, she asked him, ‘Whom shall I bring up unto thee?’ and he said, ‘Bring me up Samuel.’ And when (to continue the narrative) the woman said Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, ‘Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul.’ And the king said unto her, ‘Be not afraid: for

what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed. Then said Samuel, Wherefore dost thou ask of me? And he then delivers that awful prophecy which struck the king of Israel with dismay to the earth. Here is the plain and open return of a departed spirit to perform the part allotted it by divine Providence; and that it was not a mere vision accompanying the words, is evident from the circumstance that the disembodied prophet declared distinctly that he had been disquieted; and that this disquieting was from a state of wakeful consciousness, and not from the sleep of the soul, appears from the further consideration that it is not at all probable, if his spirit had been laid asleep to await through ages for the resurrection, God would have allowed it to be broken at the words of the witch. On turning to the gospel, we meet with another incident tending to the same conclusion. In the account given of the transfiguration, one of the mysterious incidents of that wonderful event is, that when the divine glory in-

vested the form of Christ, his face shining as the sun, and his vesture becoming white as the light, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem! Whence did these venerable teachers of the law come, but from the great home of spirits? Another of the most remarkable points which demand attention, in the New Testament, is the parable which Christ himself delivered, respecting the rich man and Lazarus. We know that a parable is a narrative invented for the purpose of conveying some truth to the mind which could not be in any other way so forcibly or strikingly expressed; but it is evident that no wise or prudent teacher would run into the danger of conveying an erroneous notion with the truth he endeavours to implant, and we may, therefore, be very sure that our Lord, when delivering the parable in question, stated no circumstance that could give a false idea of our future condition. But the parable in question represents Lazarus as conveyed by angels, immediately after death, into a state of happiness, and the wealthy sinner as being buried, but immediately after as lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torments. It further represents them as conscious of every particular in their condition, as contemplating both the past and the future; and, one of them, at least, as reasoning with all the en-

ergy of a new-born but miserable spirit, on the terrible consequence of a life like his. Now it cannot but seem probable, in the highest degree, from this, that the state of the soul after death is so far from being one of sleep and lethargy, that it receives a large portion of the joy or suffering which will be its final inheritance; and that conscience, instead of being lulled as it would be did the soul of the wicked sleep, then redoubles its activity, and wounds with a sharper sting. Of a different nature, and yet more direct to the point, is the circumstance which took place when our Lord, hanging upon the cross, gave efficacy to the penitence of the dying malefactor. 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,' was the sinner's last and earnest cry: and to this the answer was, 'Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' Scarcely can it be supposed that our Lord would thus have spoken to the suffering man, had he known that while he himself was about to enter a state of perfect glory, he to whom he gave such a comforting promise, would have no other happiness but that of sinking into sleep and forgetfulness of his sorrows. Jesus was on the point of trampling upon death; and the triumph which the penitent gained through faith in him, and in the efficacy of his blood, was, it appears, to be a triumph as immediate, and in proportion to their different conditions, as complete as his own. The undelayed reception of the soul into

a state of happiness, indicated by Christ's expression of 'To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise,' is further shown by the manner in which Saint Paul speaks of the separation of the soul. 'We know,' says he, 2 Cor. v. 'that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' He says still more distinctly to the Philippians: 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For 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.' It is not at all to be supposed that these expressions would have been used by the apostle, had it been ordained that the human soul, before passing to its Saviour was to exist a long intervening period in unconsciousness; nor could he consistently have so yearned for death, had it not been that he knew it would immediately enlarge his vision of divine things, as well as free him from toil; or in other words, had he supposed that, instead of its giving him a greater share of delight in the knowledge of God, in the contemplation of his glory, in the power of communing with his saints, it would lull his free, noble, active spirit into dull repose.

We now come to an incident which exceeds all

those hitherto mentioned, both in mystery and awful dignity, and bearing with proportionable weight upon the object of our inquiry. I allude to the consequences of death upon our Lord himself. In the simple account of his burial and resurrection, it is only stated, that having been laid in the tomb of the rock, he rose the third day. We naturally ask, since death is the separation of the soul from the body, and Christ was in all things like unto us, sin only except, what became, or what was the state, of his soul in the interval between his death and resurrection? Saint Peter has enabled us, in some degree, to answer this question. The manner in which he speaks is, as it must needs be on such a subject, short and mysterious, but his statement opens to us a new view of the argument, and strongly confirms what has been already brought forward. 'Christ,' says he, 'hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.'¹ We have nothing at present to do with the precise interpretation of Christ's preaching unto the spirits which were in prison; but no doubt can be entertained, after the explicit declaration of the apostle, that the soul of Christ, while his body lay in the tomb, retained its full consciousness, and was still intent on the sublime

¹ 1 Pet. iii.

purpose for which, as the Son of God, he became incarnate. It is on this passage of Saint Peter, that the article of our creed is established, 'he descended into hell;' the word hell, in old English, meaning simply the separate abode of departed spirits, as well as a place of torment; and the former application of the term being the common one when the creed was translated, it was employed to give the meaning of the original word '*hades*,' which is never used to signify a place of punishment. Manifest, however, it is that the soul of Christ suffered not sleep to invade its energies, even for an hour. The spirit that had lingered in his bleeding body, till all was fulfilled, lost not its consciousness at the moment of triumph; the vanquished powers of darkness were not left uncertain as to their defeat, by seeing the pure enlightened spirit which had vanquished them, rendered dark and insensible at the touch of death:—they beheld him wandering unharmed through the mysterious passages of a region midway between time and eternity; they still heard his voice, still felt his power; and the thousands of departed souls, who from before the flood, and downwards, had there awaited his coming, now beheld him, a spirit like themselves, returned from the conflict long prophesied in heaven and in hell, and proclaiming his glory through their own dimly lighted habitation.

These are the more direct and positive arguments which Scripture affords us in favour of the

opinion, that the soul passes the intermediate period between death and the resurrection in a quick and conscious state. I will add to these one or two considerations, drawn from the nature of its present condition. In the first place, then, with respect to those who have been brought to repentance through divine grace, they enjoy communion with God and their Saviour, and the constant tendency of their souls is upwards; and urged forward in their course of righteousness by the impulses of an ever-wakeful spirit, they yearn with few intermissions for a fuller and clearer vision of the heavenly kingdom. In all these aspirations they are encouraged by the word of God himself: he tells them that he is ever with them; that his Spirit shall lead them into all truth, enlighten and elevate them, till sin and darkness become strangers to their paths; and that thus renewed, death shall have no power over them. Now, there can be no good reason to imagine, that a soul which has once been admitted into communion with the heavenly Father, which has been allowed to rejoice in the evidence of his great mercy and wisdom, should be cut off from that privilege, and at the moment when it is expecting a nearer view of divine mysteries, be weighed down with profound sleep. Moreover, the worst death which the spirit can suffer, the only torpor to which it is subject, are overcome when it is regenerated through the operation of the Holy Ghost. St. Paul says, in the sixth chapter of the

Romans, 'If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Again, in the epistle to the Ephesians: 'God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' 'God hath delivered us,' he tells the Colossians, 'from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' 'We are risen with Christ,' he again tells the same people; 'and having put off the old man,' that is, the body of sin against which the condemnation wholly lay, 'have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.' St. John says, in his first epistle, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life.' Now, all these expressions indicate that the great struggle with darkness is over when the soul becomes renewed; that it will henceforth have no interruption to its free and happy communion with heaven; and that it has only to put off the body to behold all its hopes and desires approaching confirmation.

Again : the life, the energy which the soul possesses in its regenerated state, are the same as those which belonged to it before the entrance of sin ; and certainly in his pure, unfallen nature, it would have never been subjected to the endurance of a long unconscious torpor. Yet further, the life and activity of the regenerated soul are derived from the presence and power of the Holy Spirit : and what reason is there to suppose that this gracious Being having filled every channel of the soul with light, having purified it from every spot, and rendered it a spirit bright and strong, and clothed it in the ethereal armour of salvation, leading it from conquest to conquest, over legions of devils, till it at last beats down the monarch demon himself ;—what reason is there to suppose, that having thus given it power and victory in the flesh, it should leave it, at the putting off of the mere earthly veil, to sink into a dark lethargic slumber ?

Nor stop we here : the renewed and sanctified people of God are members of his everlasting church, which consists not merely of present and visible worshippers, but of the saints of all ages : and little is it to be supposed, that they who have completed their course, who have fully proved the might of the heavenly Spirit, and the worth of the Redeemer's intercession ; that they who form the most glorious portion of the universal church,—should be now passing the first ages of their glory in unconscious rest. In the same manner, the re-

deemed are members of that mystical body of which Christ is himself the head; for the church is his body, the fulness of him that filleth 'all in all.' And this is of itself almost sufficient to prove that no soul which hath been converted, and made partaker of the heavenly calling, can ever cease to be conscious; for how should any member of that body lose its quickening, which hath the fountain of eternal life to replenish it? Would Christ be fittingly clothed with glory on his throne in the heavens, did the living stream stop short, and leave the forms with which he has surrounded himself slumbering for want of its revivifying power? No! the life and energy which Christ derives from his eternal Father descend in never-ceasing currents to the humblest members of his body: the life, the inconceivable, essential life, which, finding the frame even of glorified humanity too narrow a vessel for its fulness, beams forth, and mingling with the celestial light around him, mantles his form with all the splendour of deity; that life, thus glorious in Christ, envelops the pardoned and renewed souls of his people, diffuses itself with inexhaustible plenteousness through all the issues of rational being, and keeps the whole kingdom of heaven,—both of saints still battling with Satan, and of saints that have gone to their reward,—in the full spring of activity and hope,

I have now stated the reasons which Scripture, and some collateral views of the subject, suggest

for believing that the soul in its separate state remains awake and conscious, losing none of its activity, none of its powers, none of its susceptibilities. The observations I have made in respect to the righteous and happy, may be applied reversely with regard to those who die in their sins: for in the same manner that it is highly improbable a pure and holy spirit should be, even for a time, deprived of the joy of its triumph, so is it that one evil and corrupt should be allowed in slumber to forget its wickedness and its fate. I confess that, when I began to look at this subject, several startling considerations suggested themselves to me, both from the language of Scripture, in certain passages, and the view of the soul in such constant connexion with the body; and I did not feel at all certain to what conclusion I should come. But I have found, in looking through the Bible, and in considering the relation of the soul to Christ, such powerful reasons to believe that it never loses its consciousness, that I am no longer doubtful on the subject; and am convinced that we may with great safety feel assured, that when our spirits are set free they will know and perceive all the mighty effects to be looked for from that awful change.

A few years at most—perhaps a much shorter time—will make us and our cotemporaries members of the wide, invisible realm of disembodied spirits. We shall then see the gathered generations of the penitent and redeemed—we shall behold the glorious

'company of the apostles,' 'the goodly fellowship of the prophets,' 'the noble army of martyrs,' saints from the four quarters of the world, the patriarchs of the ancient east, the soldiers of the cross, that fell beneath the swords of the heathen, the bold heroic preachers of truth that, in later days, came forth and hurled down the old enthroned superstitions of papal Rome:—these will in this short time be revealed to us; and amid that sublime assembly, it may be, through the mercy of God, that we shall behold those with whom in heart we still hold communion—the dear friends of our youth and of our homes, who are even now awaiting, with trembling hope, our arrival in that kingdom of the redeemed.

Let the thought of this destined habitation of the spirits of men temper our minds with seriousness: let it strive with our sloth and our worldliness: let it help to raise us above that gross and narrow sphere of mere present and sensual existence to which we have hitherto lived confined. Want of reflection is the great curse of weak, uncultivated minds. But while it in some instances only deprives the understanding of much high delight, in others it endangers salvation itself. We may, if we will, forget how, by the invisible operation of its laws, the kingdom of nature sends forth its voice of harmony, and its manifestations of power. We may forget to admire the day-replenishing sun, or the still luminous orbs that crown the night with

beauty, the firmament of waters in the under-caves of the earth, or those which the blue veil of heaven keeps suspended in mid-air. We may forget these, and such like things, if we will—we shall only suffer from it the common penalty of thoughtlessness:—but if we forget that world of spirits to which we are journeying, we forget the necessity of repentance and sanctification; we shall lose sight of Christ; we shall live in contented slavery to the world; Satan will exercise an uncontradicted influence over us, and death will come upon us like an unexpected enemy.

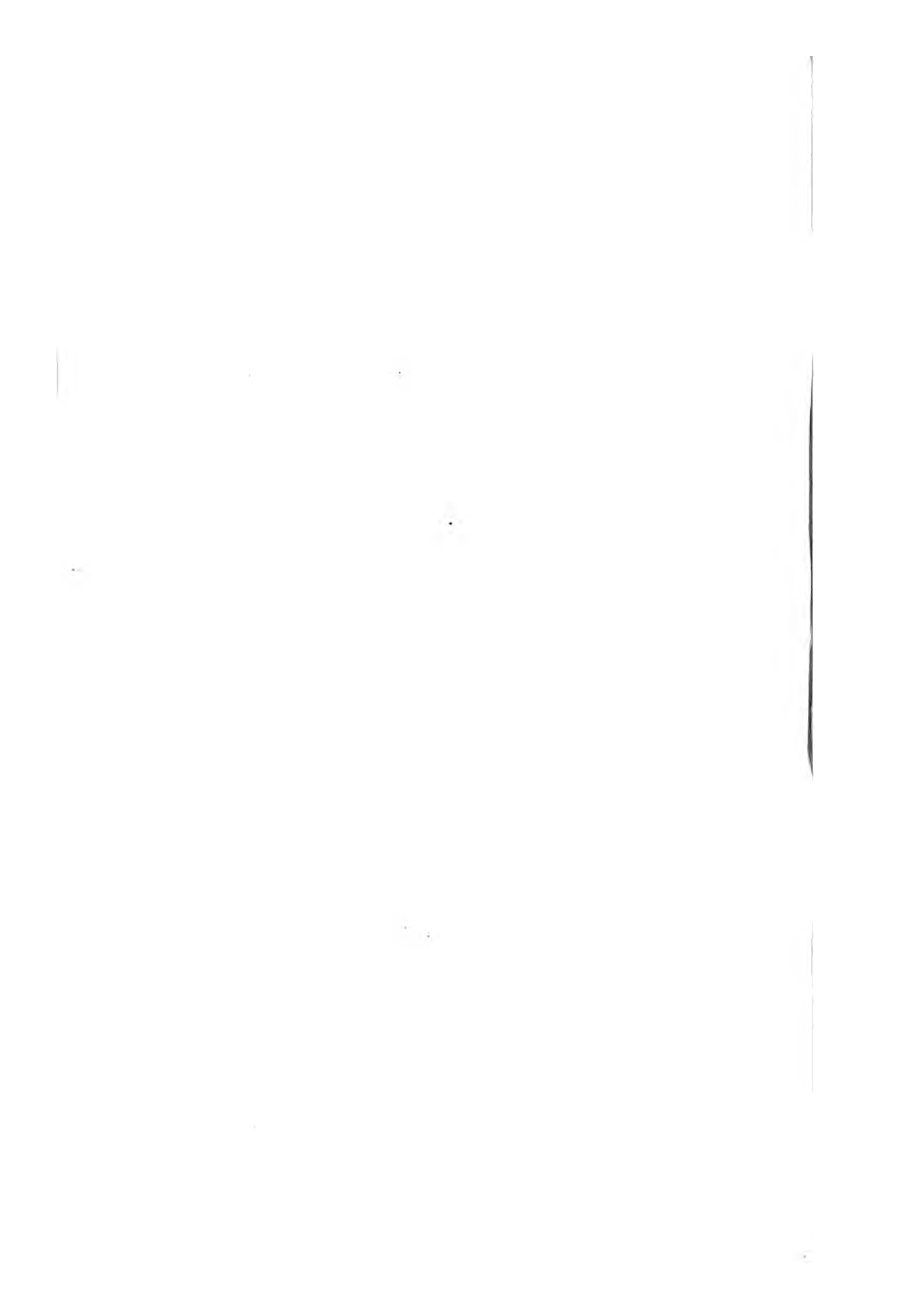
The contents of the volume to which we now direct the reader's attention, will furnish him with instruction on the most weighty points, which, if rightly pondered on, will render him wiser, happier, and holier, for the rest of his existence. Baxter's mind was furnished with every species of knowledge that could render a treatise on death from his pen valuable to Christians. He had passed a life of unremitting labour in the service of God. Naturally thoughtful and energetic, his understanding carefully gathered together whatever human learning could teach him, and laying it up in the rich garner where he stored the fruits of his spiritual experience, whenever he needed or employed any portion of the one, he used the other with it. At the period when this invaluable

work was produced, he was suffering under the iniquitous decrees, which had, again and again, doomed him to the hardships and solitude of a prison. Some future opportunity will be sought to lay before the readers of the SACRED CLASSICS an account of his sufferings, and of the circumstances in which they originated. The thoughts which occupies his mind during confinement, and when he appeared on the eve of departure from these scenes of trouble, have a weight and pathos in them which cannot fail of deeply impressing a heart open to conviction. They are equally marked by profound inquiry after truth; by a love of God, active, intense, and universal; and by a tenderness of feeling that is not less calculated to convince us of their practical importance, than to inspire us with sympathy for the writer. The preceding Essay is intended to afford a general view of the subject; and may form, it is hoped, a not unuseful introduction to the occasionally abstruser reasonings of Baxter. The ideas and sentiments which it contains were set down long before the writer had seen the 'DYING THOUGHTS' of that great man; and he has ventured to prefix them to this work, because they render a separate testimony to the same sublime, but not generally received truths.

H. S.

London, May 26, 1834.

DYING THOUGHTS.



THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

READER,

I HAVE no other use for a preface to this book, but to give you a true excuse for its publication. I wrote it for myself, unresolved whether any one should ever see it, but at last inclined to leave that to the will of my executors, to publish or suppress it when I am dead, as they saw cause. But my person being seized on, and my library and all my goods distrained on by constables and sold, and I constrained to relinquish my house, (for preaching and being in London,) I knew not what to do with multitudes of manuscripts that had long lain by me, having no house to go to, but a narrow hired lodging with strangers; wherefore I cast away whole volumes, which I could not carry away, both controversies and letters practical, and cases of conscience; but having newly lain divers weeks, night and day, in waking torments, nephritic and colic, after other long pains and languor, I took this book with me in my removal, for my own use in my further sickness. Three weeks after, falling into another extreme fit, and expecting death, where I had no friend with me to commit my papers to, merely lest it should be lost, I thought best to give it to the

printer. I think it is so much of the work of all men's lives to prepare to die with safety and comfort, that the same thoughts may be needful for others that are so far me: if any mislike the title, as if it imported that the author is dead, let him know that I die daily; and that which quickly will be, almost is. It is suited to my own use; they that it is unsuitable to, may pass it by. If those men's lives were spent in serious preparing thoughts of death, who are now studying to destroy each other, and tear in pieces a distressed land, they would prevent much dolorous repentance.

R. B.

THE exercise of three sorts of love to God, to others, and to myself, afford me a threefold satisfaction, (conjunct) to be willing to depart.

I. I am sure my departure will be the fulfilling of that will which is love itself, which I am bound above all things to love and please, and which is the beginning, rule, and end of all. Antonine could hence fetch good thoughts of death.

II. The world dieth not with me when I die; nor the church, nor the praise and glory of God, which he will have in and from this world unto the end; and if I love others as myself, their lives and comforts will now be to my thoughts as if I were to live myself in them. God will be praised and honoured by posterity when I am dead and gone. Were I to be annihilated, this would comfort me now, if I lived and died in perfect love.

III. But a better and glorious world is before me, into which I hope by death to be translated, whither all these three sorts of love should rap up the desires of my ascending soul; even the love of myself, that I may be fully happy; the love of the triumphant church, Christ, angels, and glorified man, and the glory of all the universe, which I shall see; and above all, the love of the most glorious God, infinite life, and light, and love, the ulti-

mate amiable object of man's love; in whom to be perfectly pleased and delighted, and to whom to be perfectly pleasing for ever, is the chief and ultimate end of me, and of the highest, wisest, and best of creatures.—Amen.

THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

PHILIPPIANS, I. 23.

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better ; (or, for this is much rather to be preferred, or better.)

I WRITE for myself, and therefore supposing the sense of the text, shall only observe what is useful to my heart and practice.

It was a happy state into which grace had brought the apostle, who saw so much not only tolerable but greatly desirable both in living and dying. To live to him was Christ, that is Christ's interest or work ; to die would be gain, that is, his own interest and reward : his strait was not whether it would be good to live, or good to depart ; both were good, but which was more desirable was the doubt.

But was there any doubt to be made between Christ's interest and his own ? No, if it had been a full and fixed competition ; but by Christ, or Christ's interest, he meaneth his work for his

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church's interest in this world ; but he knew that Christ also had an interest in his saints above, and that he could raise up more to serve him here ; yet because he was to judge by what appeared, and he saw a defect of such on earth, this did turn the scales in his choice ; and for the work of Christ and his church's good, he more inclined to the delay of his reward by self-denial ; yet knowing that the delay would tend to its increase. It is useful to me here to note :

That even in this world, short of death, there is some good so much to be regarded, as may justly prevail with believers to prefer it before the present hastening of their reward.

I rather note this, that no temptation carry me into that extreme of taking nothing but heaven to be worthy of our minding or regard ; and so to cast off the world in a sinful sort, on pretence of mortification, and a heavenly mind and life.

As to the sense, the meaning is not that any thing on earth is better than heaven, or simply and in itself to be preferred before it : the end is better than the means as such ; and perfection better than imperfection.

But the present use of the means may be preferred sometimes before the present possession of the end ; and the use of means for a higher end, may be preferred before the present possession of a lower end. And every thing hath its season ; planting, and sowing, and building, are not so good as reaping, and fruit-gathering, and dwelling ; but in their season they must be first done.

But what is there so desirable in this life? While it continueth it is the fulfilling of the will of God, who will have us here; and that is best which God willeth.

The life to come dependeth upon this; as the life of man in the world upon his generation in the womb, or as the reward upon the work, or the runner's or soldier's prize upon his race or fighting, or as the merchant's gain upon his voyage. Heaven is won or lost on earth. The possession is there, but the preparation is here. Christ will judge all men according to their works on earth. 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' must go before 'enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;' 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,' goeth before 'the crown of righteousness which God, the righteous judge, will give.' All that ever must be done for salvation by us must here be done. It was on earth that Christ himself wrought the work of our redemption, fulfilled all righteousness, became our ransom, and paid the price of our salvation; and it is here that our part is to be done.

And the bestowing of the reward is God's work, who we are sure will never fail. There is no place for the least suspicion or fear of his misdoing or failing in any of his undertaken work; but the danger and fear is of our own miscarrying, lest we be not found capable of receiving what God will certainly give to all that are disposed receivers. To distrust God is heinous sin and folly; but to distrust ourselves we have great cause. So that if we will make sure of heaven, it must be by giving

all diligence to make firm our title, our calling, and our election here on earth : if we fear hell, we must fear being prepared for it.

And it is great and difficult work that must be here done. It is here that we must be cured of all damning sin, that we must be regenerate and new born, that we must be pardoned and justified by faith ; it is here that we must be united to Christ, made wise to salvation, renewed by his spirit, and conformed to his likeness. It is here that we must overcome all the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, and perform all the duties towards God and man, that must be rewarded. It is here that Christ must be believed in with the heart to righteousness, and with the mouth confessed to salvation. It is here that we must suffer with him, that we may reign with him, and be faithful to the death, that we may receive the crown of life. Here we must so run that we may obtain.

Yea, we have greater work here to do than mere securing our own salvation. We are members of the world and church, and we must labour to do good to many. We are trusted with our master's talents for his service, in our places to do our best to propagate his truth, and grace, and church, and to bring home souls, and honour his cause, and edify his flock, and further the salvation of as many as we can. All this is to be done on earth if we will secure the end of all in heaven.

It is then an error (though it is but few I think that are guilty of it) to think that all religion lieth

in minding only the life to come, and disregarding all things in this present life. All true Christians must seriously mind both the *end* and the *means*, or way; if they mind not believingly the end they will never be faithful in the use of means; if they mind not and use not diligently the means they will never obtain the end. None can use earth well that prefer not heaven; and none come to heaven (at age) that are not prepared by well using earth. Heaven must have the deepest esteem and habituated love, and desire, and joy; but earth must have more of our daily thoughts for present practice. A man that travelleth to the most desirable home, hath a habit of desire to it all the way; but his present business is his travel; and horse, and company, and inns, and ways, and weariness, &c. may take up more of his sensible thoughts, and of his talk and action, than his home.

I have often marvelled to find David, in the Psalms, and other saints, before Christ's coming, to have expressed so great a sense of the things of this present life, and to have said so little of another—to have made so great a matter of prosperity, dominions, and victories on one hand, and of enemies' success and persecution on the other; but I consider that it was not for mere personal, carnal interest, but for the church of God, and for his honour, word, and worship; and they knew that if things go well with us on earth, they will be sure to go well in heaven. If the militant church prosper in holiness, there is no doubt but it will triumph in glory: God will be sure to do his part in

receiving souls, if they be here prepared for his receipt. And satan doth much of his damning work by men; if we escape their temptations we escape much of our danger. If idolaters prospered, Israel was tempted to idolatry. The Greek church is almost swallowed up by Turkish prosperity and dominion. Most follow the powerful and prosperous side; and therefore for God's cause, and for heavenly everlasting interest, our own state, but much more the church's, must be greatly regarded here on earth.

Indeed, if earth be desired only for earth, and prosperity loved but for the present welfare of the flesh, it is the certain mark of damning carnality and an earthly mind. But to desire peace and prosperity and power to be in the hands of wise and faithful men, for the sake of souls, and the increase of the church, and the honour of God, that his name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will done on earth, as it is in heaven, this is to be the chief of our prayers to God.

Be not unthankful then, O my soul, for the mercies of this present life, for those to thy body, to thy friends, to the land of thy nativity, and specially to the church of God.

This body is so nearly united to thee that it must needs be a great help or hinderance. Had it been more afflicted it might have been a discouraging clog, like a tired horse in a journey, or an ill tool to a workman, or an untuned instrument in music. A sick or bad servant in a house is a great trouble, and a bad wife much more; but thy body

is nearer thee than either, and will be more of thy concern.

And yet, if it had been more strong and healthful, sense and appetite would have been strong, and lust would have been strong; and therefore danger would have been greater, and victory and salvation much more difficult. Even weak senses and temptations have too oft prevailed; how knowest thou then what stronger might have done? When I see a thirsty man in a fever or dropsy, and specially when I see strong and healthful youths bred up in fulness and among temptations, how mad they are in sin, and how violently they are carried to it, bearing down God's rebukes, and conscience, and parents, and friends, and all regard to their salvation, it tells me how great a mercy I had even in a body not liable to their case.

And many a bodily deliverance hath been of great use to my soul, renewing my time, and opportunity, and strength for service, and bringing frequent and fresh reports of the love of God.

If bodily mercies were not of great use to the soul, Christ would not so much have showed his saving love, by healing all manner of diseases as he did. Nor would God promise us a resurrection of the body if a congruous body did not further the welfare of the soul.

And I am obliged to great thankfulness to God for the mercies of this life which he hath showed to my friends, that which furthers their joy should increase mine. I ought to rejoice with them that rejoice; nature and grace teach us to be glad when

our friends are well and prosper, though all in order to better things than bodily welfare.

And such mercies of this life to the land of our habitation must not be undervalued. The want of them are parts of God's threatened curse; and godliness hath the promise of this life and of that which is to come, and so is profitable to all things. And when God sends on a land the plagues of famine, pestilence, war, persecution, especially a famine of the word of God, it is a great sin to be insensible of it; if any shall say, while heaven is sure we have no cause to accuse God, or to cast away comfort, hope, or duty, they say well; but if they say, because heaven is all, we must make light of all that befallerh us on earth, they say amiss.

Good princes, magistrates, and public-spirited men that promote the safety, peace, and true prosperity of the commonwealth, do thereby very much befriend religion, and men's salvation, and are greatly to be loved and honoured by all. If the civil state, called the commonwealth, do miscarry or fall into ruin and calamity, the church will fare the worse for it, as the soul doth by the ruins of the body. The Turkish Muscovite, and such other empires tell us, how the church consumeth and dwindles away into contempt, or withered ceremony and formality, where tyranny brings slavery, beggary, or long persecution on the subjects. Doubtless divers passages in the Revelations contain the church's glorifying of God, for their power and prosperity on earth, when emperors became Christians. What else can be meant well

by *Rev. ix. 10*: 'Hath made us kings and priests to God, and we shall reign on the earth;' but that Christians shall be brought from under heathen persecution, and have rule and sacred honour in the world, some of them being princes, some honoured church guides, and all a peculiar honoured people? And had not Satan found out that cursed way of getting wicked men, that hate true godliness and peace, into the sacred places of princes and pastors, to do his work against Christ as in Christ's name, surely no good Christians would have grudged at the power of rulers of state or church. Sure I am, that many called fifth monarchy men, seem to make this their great hope, that rule shall be in the hands of righteous men; and I think most religious parties would rejoice if those had very great power whom they take to be the best and trustiest men, which shows that it is not the greatness of power in most princes or sound bishops that they dislike, but the badness (real or supposed) of those whose power they dislike. Who will blame power to do good?

Sure the three first and great petitions of the Lord's Prayer include some temporal welfare of the world and church, without which the spiritual rarely prospereth extensively (though intensively in a few it may) since miracles ceased.

Be thankful therefore for all the church's mercies here on earth, for all the protection of magistracy, the plenty of preachers, the preservation from enemies, the restraint of persecution, the concord of Christians, and increase of godliness, which in this

land it hath had in our ages, notwithstanding all Satan's malignant rage, and all the bloody wars that have interrupted our tranquillity. How many psalms of joyful thanksgiving be there for Israel's deliverances, and the preservation of Zion, and God's worship in his sanctuary? Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love it; specially that the gospel is continued, while so many rage against it, is a mercy not to be made light of.

Be specially thankful, O my soul, that God hath made any use of thee for the service of his church on earth. My God, my soul for this doth magnify thee, and my spirit rejoiceth in the review of thy great undeserved mercy. Oh, what am I whom thou tookest up from the dunghill, or low obscurity, that I should live myself in the constant relish of thy sweet and sacred truth, and with such encouraging success communicate it to others! That I must say, now my public work seems ended, that these forty-three or forty-four years I have no reason to think that ever I laboured in vain! Oh, with what gratitude must I look upon all places where I lived and laboured, but above all, that place that had my strength! I bless thee for the great numbers gone to heaven, and for the continuance of piety, humiliation, concord, and peace among them.

And for all that by my writings have received any saving light and grace. O my God, let not my own heart be barren while I labour in thy husbandry, to bring others unto holy fruit. Let me not be a stranger to the life and power of that

saving truth which I have done so much to communicate to others ! Oh, let not my own words and writings condemn me, as void of that divine and heavenly nature and life which I have said so much for to the world.

Stir up then, O my soul, thy sincere desires and all thy faculties, to do the remnant of the work of Christ appointed thee on earth, and then joyfully wait for the heavenly perfection in God's own time.

Thou canst truly say, 'To live to me is Christ,' it is his work for which thou livest : thou hast no other business in the world ; but thou dost his work with the mixture of many oversights and imperfections, and too much troublest thy thoughts distrustfully about God's part, who never faileth. If thy work be done, be thankful for what is past, and that thou art come so near the port of rest. If God will add any more to thy days, serve him with double alacrity, now thou art so near the end ; the prize is almost within sight : time is swift and short ; thou hast told others that there is no working in the grave, and that it must be now or never ; though the conceit of meriting of communicative justice be no better than madness, dream not that God will save the wicked, no, nor equally reward the slothful and the diligent, because Christ's righteousness was perfect. Paternal justice maketh difference according to that worthiness which is so denominated by the law of grace ; and as sin is its own punishment, holiness and obedience is much of its own reward : whatever God appointeth thee to do, see that thou do it sincerely, and with all thy might.

If sin dispose men to be angry, because it is detected, disgraced, and resisted, their wrath, if God be pleased, should be patiently borne, who will shortly be far more angry with themselves. If slander and obloquy survive, so will the better effects on those that are converted. And there is no comparison between these. I shall not be hurt when I am with Christ, by the calumnies of men on earth; but the saving benefit will, by converted sinners, be enjoyed everlastingly. Words and actions are transient things, and being once past are nothing; but the effect of them on an immortal soul may be endless. All the sermons that I have preached are nothing now; but the grace of God on sanctified souls is the beginning of eternal life. It is unspeakable mercy to be sincerely thus employed with success; therefore I had reason all this while to be in Paul's strait, and make no haste in my desires to depart. The crown will come in its due time; and eternity is long enough to enjoy it, how long soever it be delayed; but if I will do that which must obtain it for myself and others, it must be quickly done, before my declining sun be set.

Oh, that I had no worse causes of my unwillingness yet to die, than my desire to do the work of life for my own and other men's salvation! And to finish my course with joy, and the ministry committed to me by the Lord.

And as it is on earth, that I must do good to others, so it must be in a manner suited to their state on earth. Souls are here closely united to bodies, by which they must receive much good or hurt. Do

good to men's bodies, if thou wouldst do good to their souls. Say not, things corporeal are worthless trifles, for which the receivers will be never the better; they are things that nature is easily sensible of; and sense is the passage to the mind and will. Dost thou not find what a help it is to thyself, to have at any time, any ease and alacrity of body; and what a burden and hinderance pains and cares are? Labour then to free others from such burdens and temptations, and be not regardless of them. If thou must rejoice with them that rejoice, and mourn with them that mourn, further thy own joy in furthering theirs; and avoid thy own sorrows in avoiding or curing theirs.

But, alas, what power hath selfishness in most! How easily do we bear our brethren's pains, reproaches, wants, and afflictions, in comparison of our own! How few thoughts, and how little cost or labour do we use for their supply, in comparison of what we do for ourselves! Nature, indeed, teacheth us to be most sensible of our own case; but grace tells us that we should not make so great a difference as we do, but should love our neighbour as ourselves.

And now, O my soul, consider how mercifully God hath dealt with thee, that thy strait should be between two conditions so desirable. I shall either die speedily, or stay yet longer upon earth; whichever it be, it will be a merciful and comfortable state. That it is desirable to depart and be with Christ, I must not doubt, and shall, anon, more copiously consider. And if my abode on earth yet

longer be so great a mercy as to be put into the balance against my present possession of heaven, surely it must be a state which obligeth me to great thankfulness to God, and comfortable acknowledgment; and surely it is not my pain or sickness, my sufferings from malicious men, that should make this life on earth unacceptable, while God will continue in it. Paul had his prick or thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, and suffered more from men (though less in his health) than I have done; and yet he gloried in such infirmities, and rejoiced in his tribulations, and was in a strait between living and dying, yea, rather chose to live yet longer.

Alas! it is another kind of strait that most of the world are in; the strait of most is between the desire of life for fleshly interest, and the fear of death as ending their felicity; the strait of many is between a tiring world and body, which maketh them a-weary of living, and the dreadful prospect of future danger, which makes them afraid of dying. If they live, it is in misery; if they must die, they are afraid of greater misery; which way ever they look, behind or before them, to this world or the next, fear and trouble is their lot; yea, many an upright Christian, through the weakness of their trust in God, doth live in this perplexed strait; a-weary of living, and afraid of dying; between grief and fear they are prest continually; but Paul's strait was between two joys; which of them he should desire most; and if that be my case, what should much interrupt my peace or pleasure? If I

live, it is for Christ ; for his work and for his church, for preparation, for my own and others' everlasting felicity ; and should any suffering which maketh me not unserviceable, make me impatient with such a work, and such a life? If I die presently it is my gain ; God who appointeth me my work, doth limit my time, and sure his glorious reward can never be unseasonable or come too soon, if it be the time that he appointeth. When I first engaged myself to preach the gospel, I reckoned (as probable) but upon one or two years ; and God hath continued me it above forty-four, (with such interruptions as others in these times have had.) And what reason have I now to be unwilling either to live or die? God's service hath been so sweet to me, that it hath overcome the trouble of constant pains or weakness of the flesh, and all that men have said or done against me.

But the following crown exceeds this pleasure more than I am here capable to conceive. There is some trouble in all this pleasant work, from which the soul and flesh would rest ; and blessed are the dead that die in the Lord : even so saith the Spirit ; for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.

But, O my soul, what needest thou be troubled in this kind of strait? It is not left to thee to choose whether or when thou wilt live or die. It is God that will determine it, who is infinitely fitter to choose than thou : leave therefore his own work to himself, and mind that which is thine ; whilst thou livest, live to Christ, and when thou diest, thou

shalt die to Christ, even into his blessed hands. So live, that thou mayest say, 'It is Christ liveth in me, and the life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;' and then, as thou hast lived in the comfort of hope, thou shalt die unto the comfort of vision and fruition; and when thou canst say, He is the God whose I am, and whom I serve, thou mayest boldly add, and whom I trust, and to whom I commend my departing soul: and I know whom I have trusted.

DYING THOUGHTS.

PHILIPPIANS I. 23.

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better (or, for this is much rather to be preferred, or better.)

‘MAN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not; and dost thou open thine eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?’¹ saith Job. As a watch when it is wound up, or as a candle newly lighted, so man newly conceived or born, beginneth a motion which incessantly hasteth to its appointed period; and an action and its time that is past, is nothing. So vain a thing would man be, and so vain his life, were it not for the hopes of a more durable life, which this referreth to. But those hopes, and the means, do not only difference a believer from an infidel, but a man from a beast. When Solomon describeth

¹ Job, xiv. 1, 2, 3.

the difference, in respect to the time and things of this life only, he truly tells us, that 'one end here' befalling both, doth show that both are here but vanity, but man's vexation is greater than the beast's. And Paul truly saith of Christians, that 'if our hope were only in this life,' (that is, in the time and things of this life and world) 'we were of all men most miserable.' Though even in this life, as related to a better, and as we are exercised about things of a higher nature than the concerns of a temporal life, we are far happier than any worldlings.

Being to speak to myself, I shall pass by all the rest of the matter of this text, and suppose its due explication, and spread before my soul only the doctrine and uses of these two propositions contained in it. 1. That the souls of believers when departed hence, shall be with Christ. 2. That so to be with Christ is far better for them, than to be here in the body.

Concerning the first, my thoughts shall keep this order. 1. I shall consider the necessity of believing it. 2. Whether it be best believing it, without consideration of the proofs or difficulties. 3. The certainty of it manifested for the exercise of faith.

Whether the words signify that we shall be in the same place with Christ (which Grotius groundlessly denieth) or only in his hand, and care, and love, I will not stay to dispute. Many other texts concurring do assure us, that 'we shall be with him where he is;'¹ at least 'with him' can mean no less than a state of communion, and a participation of felicity. And to believe such a state of

¹ John xii. 26 ; xvii. 24, &c.

happiness for departed souls, is of manifold necessity or use.

If this be not soundly believed, a man must live beside, or below the end of life; he must have a false end, or be uncertain what should be his end.

I know it may be objected, that if I make it my end to please God, by obeying him, and doing all the good I can, and trust him with my soul and future estate, as one that is utterly uncertain what he will do with me, I have an end intended, which will make me godly, charitable, and just, and happy, so far as I am made for happiness; for the pleasing God is the right end of all.

But must I desire to please him no better than I do in this imperfect state, in which I have, and do so much which is displeasing to him? He that must desire to please him, must desire to please him perfectly; and our desires of our ultimate end must have no bounds or check. Am I capable of pleasing God no better than by such a sinful life as this?

God hath made the desire of our own felicity so necessary to the soul of man, that it cannot be expected that our desire to please him should be separated from this. Therefore both in respect of God as the end, and of our felicity as our second end, we must believe that he is the beatifying rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

For if we make such an ill description of God, as that he will turn our pleasing him to our loss, or will not turn it to our gain and welfare, or that we know not whether he will do so or not, it will hinder our love and trust, and joy in him, by which we must please him, and consequently hinder the alacrity, and soundness, and constancy of our obedience.

And it will much dismiss that self-love which must excite us, and it will take off part of our necessary end. And I think the objectors will confess, that if they have no certainty what God will do with them, they must have some probability and hope, before they can be sincerely devoted here to please him.

And if a man be but uncertain what he should make the end of his life, or what he should live for, how can he pitch upon an uncertain end? And if we waver so as to have no end, he can use no means; and if end and means be all laid by, the man liveth not as a man, but as a brute. And what a torment must it be to a considering mind to be uncertain what to intend and do in all the tenor and actions of his life? Like a man going out at his door, not knowing whither or what to do, or which way to go. Either he will stand still, or move as brutes do by present sense, or, like a windmill, or weathercock, as he is moved.

But if he pitch upon a wrong end, it may yet be worse than none; for he will but do hurt, or make work for repentance, and all the actions of his life must be formally wrong, (how good soever materially,) if the end of them be wrong.

And if I fetch them not from this end, and believe not in God as a rewarder of his servants in a better life, what motives shall I have which in our present difficulties, will be sufficient to cause me to live a holy, yea or a truly honest life? All piety and honesty indeed is good, and goodness is desirable for itself; but the goodness of a means is its aptitude for the end; and we have here abundance of impediments, competitors, diversions and temptations, and difficulties of many

sorts ; and all these must be overcome by him that will live in piety or honesty. And our natures (we find) are diseased, and greatly indisposed to unquestionable duties ; and will they ever discharge them and conquer all these difficulties and temptations, if the necessary motive be not believed ? Duty to God and man is accidentally hard and costly to the flesh, though amiable in itself : it may cost us our estates, our liberties, our lives. The world is not so happy as commonly to know good men from bad, nor to encourage piety and virtue, or to forbear opposing them. And who will let go his present welfare without some hope of better as a reward ? Men use not to serve God for nought, nor think that it will be their loss to serve him.

A life of sin will not be avoided upon lower ends and motives ; nay, those lower ends, when alone, will be a constant sin themselves : a preferring vanity to glory, the creature to God, and a setting our heart on that which will never make us happy. And when lust and appetite incline men strongly and constantly to their several objects, what shall sufficiently restrain them, except the greater and more durable delights or motives fetched from preponderating things ? Lust and appetite distinguish not between lawful and unlawful. We may see in the brutish politics of Benedictus Spinoza, in his *Tractat. Theolog. Polit.* whither the principles of infidelity tend. If sin so overspread the earth, that the whole world is as it were drowned in wickedness, notwithstanding all the hopes and fears of a life to come, what would it do were there no such hopes and fears ?

And no mercy can be truly known and estimated, nor rightly used and improved by him that seeth not its tendency to the end, and perceiveth not

that it leadeth to a better life, and useth it not thereunto. God dealeth more bountifully with us than worldlings understand; he giveth us all the mercies of this life as helps to an immortal state of glory, and as earnest of it. Sensualists know not what a soul is, nor what soul-mercies are, and therefore not what the soul of all bodily mercies are; but take up only with the carcass, shell, or shadow. If the king would give me a lordship, and send me a horse or coach to carry me to it, and I should only ride about the fields for my pleasure, and make no other use of it, should I not undervalue and lose the principal benefit of my horse or coach? No wonder if unbelievers be unthankful, when they know not at all that part of God's mercies which is the life and real excellency of them.

And, alas! how should I bear with comfort the sufferings of this wretched life without the hopes of a life with Christ? What should support and comfort me under my bodily languishings and pains; my weary hours and my daily experience of the vanity and vexation of all things under the sun, had I not a prospect of a comfortable end of all? I that have lived in the midst of great and precious mercies, have all my life had something to do to overcome the temptation of wishing that I had never been born, and had never overcome it but by the belief of a blessed life hereafter. Solomon's sense of vanity and vexation hath long made all the business, and wealth, and honour, and pleasure of this world, (as such,) appear such a dream and shadow to me, that were it not for the end, I could not have much differenced men's sleeping and their waking thoughts, nor have much more valued the waking than the sleeping part of life,

but should have thought it a kind of happiness to have slept from the birth unto the death. Children cry when they come into the world ; and I am often sorry when I am awakened out of a quiet sleep, especially to the business of an unquiet day. We should be strongly tempted, in our considering state, to murmur at our Creator, as dealing much harder by us than by the brutes ; if we must have had all those cares, and griefs, and fears, by the knowledge of what we want, and the prospect of death and future evils which they are exempted from, and had not withal had the hopes of a future felicity to support us. Seneca and his stoics had no better argument to silence such murmurers who believed not a better life, than to tell them, that if this life had more evil than good, and they thought God did them wrong, they might remedy themselves by ending it when they would ; but that would not cure the repinings of a nature, who found itself necessarily a-weary of the miseries of life, and yet afraid of dying. And it is no great wonder that many thought that pre-existent souls were put into these bodies as a punishment of something done in a former life, while they foresaw not the hoped end of all our fears and sorrows. " O how contemptible a thing is man !" saith the same Seneca, " unless he lift up himself above human things !" ' Therefore,' saith Solomon,¹ when he had glutted himself with all temporal pleasures, ' I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous to me ; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.'

I have often thought whether an implicit belief of a future happiness, without any search into its

¹ Eccles. ii. 17.

nature, and thinking of any thing that can be said against it, or the searching, trying way, be better. On the one side, I have known many godly women that never disputed the matter, but served God comfortably to a very old age, (between eighty and one hundred,) to have lived many years in a cheerful readiness and desire of death, and such as few learned studious men do ever attain to in that degree; who, no doubt, had this as a divine reward of their long and faithful service of God, and trusting in him. On the other side, a studious man can hardly keep off all objections, or secure his mind against the suggestions of difficulties and doubts; and if they come in they must be answered; seeing we give them half a victory, if we cast them off before we can answer them. And a faith that is not upheld by such evidence of truth as reason can discern and justify, is oft joined with much secret doubting, which men dare not open, but do not therefore overcome; and its weakness may have a weakening deficiency, as to all the graces and duties which should be strengthened by it. And who knoweth how soon a temptation from Satan or infidels, or our own dark hearts, may assault us, which will not, without such evidence and resolving light be overcome? And yet many that try and reason, and dispute most, have not the strongest, or most powerful faith.

And my thoughts of this have had this issue:
1 There is a great difference between that light which showeth us the thing itself, and that artificial skill by which we have right notions, names, definitions, and formed arguments and answers to objections. This artificial, logical, organical kind of knowledge is good and useful in its kind, if right,

like speech itself; but he that hath much of this may have little of the former; and unlearned persons, that have little of this, may have more of the former; and may have those inward perceptions of the verity of the promises and rewards of God, which they cannot bring forth into artificial reasonings to themselves or others; who are taught of God by the effective sort of teaching which reacheth the heart or will, as well as the understanding, and is a giving of what is taught, and a making us such as we are told we must be.¹ And who findeth not need to pray hard for this effective teaching of God when he hath got all organical knowledge; and words and arguments in themselves most apt at his fingers' ends, as we say? When I can prove the truth of the Word of God and the life to come, with the most convincing undeniable reasons, I feel need to cry and pray daily to God to increase my faith, and to give me that light which may satisfy the soul and reach the end.

Yet man being a rational creature, is not taught by mere instinct and inspiration; and therefore, this effective teaching of God doth ordinarily suppose a rational, objective, organical teaching and knowledge. And the foresaid unlearned Christians are convinced by good evidence, that God's Word is true, and his rewards are sure, though they have but a confused conception of this evidence, and cannot word it, nor reduce it to fit notions. And to drive these that have fundamental evidence unseasonably and hastily to dispute their faith; and so to puzzle them by words and artificial objections,

¹ This is the true mean between George Keith, the Quaker's doctrine of continued inspiration and intuition, and that on the other extreme.

is but to hurt them, by setting the artificial organical lower part (which is the body of knowledge) against the real light and perception of the thing (which is as the soul) even as carnal men set the creatures against God, that should lead us to God; so do they by logical artificial knowledge.

But they that are prepared for such disputes, and furnished with all artificial helps, may make good use of them for defending and clearing up the truth to themselves and others; so be it they use them as a means to the due end and in a right manner, and set them not up against, or instead of the real and effective light.

But the revealed and necessary part must here be distinguished from the unrevealed and unnecessary. To study till we, as clearly as may be, understand the certainty of a future happiness, and wherein it consisteth; (in the sight of God's glory, and in perfect, holy, mutual love, in union with Christ and all the blessed;) this is of great use to our holiness and peace. But when we will know more than God would have us, it doth but tend (as gazing on the sun) to make us blind, and to doubt of certainties, because we cannot be resolved of uncertainties. To trouble our heads too much in thinking how souls out of the body do subsist and act, sensitively or not by organs, or without; how far they are one, and how far still individuate, in what place they shall remain, and where is their paradise or heaven; how they shall be again united to the body; whether by their own emission, as the sunbeams touch their objects here, and whether the body shall be restored, as the consumed flesh of restored sick men, *aliunde*, that is, from new, or only from the old materials. A hundred of these ques-

tions are better left to the knowledge of Christ, lest we do but foolishly make snares for ourselves. Had all these been needful to us, they had been revealed. In respect to all such curiosities and needless knowledge, it is a believer's wisdom implicitly to trust his soul to Christ, and to be satisfied that he knoweth what we know not, and to fear that vain, vexatious knowledge, or inquisitiveness into good and evil, which is selfish, and savoureth of a distrust of God, and is that sin, and fruit of sin, which the learned world too little feareth.

That God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and that holy souls shall be in blessedness with Christ; these following evidences conjoined do evince, on which my soul doth raise its hopes.

1. The soul, which is an immortal spirit, must be immortally in a good or bad condition; but man's soul is an immortal spirit, and the good are not in a bad condition: its immortality is proved thus, "A spiritual, or most pure invisible substance, naturally endowed with the power, virtue, or faculty of vital action, intellection and volition, which is not annihilated nor destroyed by separation of parts, nor ceaseth or loseth either its power, species, individuation or action, is an immortal spirit. But such is the soul of man, as shall be manifest by parts."

The soul is a substance; for that which is nothing can do nothing; but it doth move, understand, and will. No man will deny that this is done by something in us, and by some substance; and that substance is it which we call the soul; it is not nothing, and it is within us.

As to them that say, It is the temperament of

several parts conjunct ; I have elsewhere fully confuted them and proved, 1. That it is some one part that is the agent on the rest, which all they confess that think it to be the material spirits or fiery part. It is not bones and flesh that understand, but a purer substance, as all acknowledge. 2. What part soever it can be, it can do no more than it is able to do ; and a conjunction of many parts, of which no one hath the power of vitality, intellection, or volition, formally or eminently (somewhat as excellent) can never by a contemperation do those acts ; for there can be no more in the effect than is in the cause, otherwise it were no effect.

The vanity of their objections, that tell us, a lute, a watch, a book, perform that by co-operation, which no one part can do, I have elsewhere manifested. 1. Many strings, indeed, have many motions, and so have many effects on the ear and phantasy, which in us are sound and harmony ; but all is but a percussion of the air by the strings, and were not that motion received by a sensitive soul, it would be no music or melody ; so that there is nothing done but what each part had power to do. But intellection and volition are not the conjunct motions of all parts of the body, receiving their form in a nobler intellectual nature, as the sound of the strings maketh melody in man. If it were so, that receptive nature still would be as excellent as the effect importeth. 2. And the watch or clock doth but move according to the action of the spring or poise ; but that it moveth in such an order as becometh to man a sign and measure of time ; this is from man who ordereth it to that use. But there is nothing in the motion but what the parts have their power to cause ; and that it signifieth the hour of the days to us is

no action ; but an object used by a rational soul, as it can use the shadow of a tree or house, that yet doth nothing. 3. And so a book doth nothing at all, but is a mere objective ordination of passive signs, by which man's active intellect can understand what the writer or orderer did intend ; so that here is nothing done beyond the power of the agent, nor any thing in the effect which was not in the cause, either formally or eminently. But for a company of atoms, of which no one hath sense or reason, to become sensitive and rational by mere conjunct motion, is an effect beyond the power of the supposed cause.

But as some think so basely of our noblest acts as to think that contempered agitated atoms can perform them, that have no natural, intellectual, or sensitive virtue or power in themselves, so others think so highly of them as to take them to be the acts only of God, or some universal soul, in the body of man ; and so that there is no life, sense, or reason in the world but God himself ; (or such an universal soul ;) and so that either every man is God, as to his soul, or that it is the body only that is to be called man as distinct from God. But this is the self-ensnaring and self-perplexing temerity of busy, bold, and arrogant heads, that know not their own capacity and measure. And on the like reasons they must at last come, with others, to say that all passive matter also is God, and that God is the universe, consisting of an active soul and passive body. As if God were no cause, and could make nothing, or nothing with life, or sense, or reason.

But why depart we from things certain by such presumptions as these ? Is it not certain that there

are baser creatures in the world than men or angels? Is it not certain that one man is not another? Is it not certain that some men are in torment of body and mind? And will it be a comfort to a man in such torment to tell him that he is God? or that he is part of an universal soul? Would not a man on the rack, or in the stone, or other misery say, call me by what name you please, that easeth not my pain; if I be part of God, or an universal soul, I am sure I am a tormented miserable part! And if you could make me believe that God hath some parts which are serpents, toads, devils, or wicked or tormented men, you must give me other senses, and perceptive powers, before it will comfort me, to hear that I am such a part. And if God had wicked and tormented parts on earth, why may he not have such, and I be one of them hereafter? And if I be a holy and happy part of God, or of an universal soul on earth, why may not I hope to be such hereafter?

We deny not but that God is the continued first cause of all being whatsoever; and that the branches and fruit depend not as effects so much on the causality of the stock and roots, as the creature doth on God; and that it is an impious conceit to think that the world, or any part of it, is a being independent and separated totally from God, or subsisting without his continued causation. But cannot God cause as a Creator, by making that which is not himself? This yieldeth the self-deceiver no other honour nor happiness but what equally belongeth to a devil, to a fly or worm, to a dunghill, or to the worst and most miserable man!

As man's soul is a SUBSTANCE, so is it a substance differenced formally from all inferior sub-

stances by an innate (indeed essential) power, virtue, or faculty of vital action, intellection, and free will: for we find all these acts performed by it, as motion, light, and heat are by the fire or sun. And if any should think that these actions are like those of a musician, compounded of the agent's (principal and organical several) parts, could he prove it, no more would follow, but that the lower powers (the sensitive or spirits) are to the higher as a passive organ, receiving its operations; and that the intellectual soul hath the power of causing intellection and volition by its action on the inferior parts, as a man can cause such motions of his lute as shall be melody (not to it, but) to himself; and consequently, that as music is but a lower operation of man, (whose proper acts of intellection and volition are above it,) so intellection and volition in the body are not the noblest acts of the soul, but it performeth them by an eminent power, which can do greater things. And if this could be proved, what would it tend to the unbeliever's ends, or to the disadvantage of our hopes and comforts?

That man's soul at death is not annihilated, even the Atomists and Epicureans will grant, who think that no atom in the universe is annihilated. And we that see not only the sun and heavens continued, but every grain of matter, and that compounds are changed by dissolution of parts, and rarefaction or migration, &c., and not by annihilation, have no reason to dream that God will annihilate one soul, though he can do it if he please, yea, and annihilate all the world: it is a thing beyond a rational expectation.

And a destruction by the dissolution of the parts of the soul we need not fear: for either an intel-

lectual spirit is divisible and partible, or not; if not, we need not fear it; if it be, either it is a thing that nature tendeth to, or not. But that nature doth not tend to it is evident: for there is naturally so strange and strong an inclination to unity, and averseness to separation in all things, that even earth and stones, that have no other known natural motion, have yet an aggregative motion in their gravitation; but if you will separate the parts from the rest, it must be by force. And water is yet more averse from partition without force, and more inclined to union than earth, and air than water, and fire than air; so that he that will cut a sunbeam into pieces, and make many of one, must be an extraordinary agent. And surely spirits, even intellectual spirits, will be no less averse from partition, and inclined to keep their unity, than fire or a sunbeam is; so that, naturally, it is not a thing to be feared that it should fall into pieces.

And he that will say, that the God of nature will change, and overcome the nature that he hath made, must give us good proofs of it, or it is not to be feared. And if he should do it as a punishment, we must find such a punishment somewhere threatened, either in his natural or supernatural law, which we do not, and therefore need not fear it.

But if it were to be feared that souls were partible, and would be broken into parts, this would be no destruction of them, either as to their substance, powers, form, or action, but only a breaking of one soul into many: for being not compounded of heterogeneous parts, but as simple elements of homogeneous only, as every atom of earth is earth, and every drop of water in the sea is water, and every

particle of air and fire is air and fire, and have all the properties of earth, water, air, and fire; so would it be with every particle of an intellectual spirit. But who can see cause to dream of such a partition, never threatened by God.

And that souls lose not their formal powers or virtues we have great reason to conceive, because they are their natural essence, not as mixed but simple substances. And though some imagine that the passive elements may, by attenuation, or incrassation, be transmitted one into another, yet we see that earth is still earth, and water is water, and air is air; and their conceit hath no proof: and, were it proved, it would but prove that none of these are a first or proper element. But what should an intellectual spirit be changed into? How should it lose its formal power? not by nature, for its nature hath nothing that tendeth to deterioration, or decay, or self-destruction. The sun doth not decay by its wonderful motion, light, and heat; and why should spirits? Not by God's destroying them, or changing their nature; for though all things are in constant motion or revolution, he continueth the natures of the simple beings, and showeth us that he delighteth in a constancy of operations, insomuch that hence Aristotle thought the world eternal. And God hath made no law that threateneth to do it as a penalty. Therefore to dream that intellectual spirits shall be turned into other things and lose their essential formal powers, which specify them, is without and against all sober reason. Let them first but prove that the sun loseth motion, light, and heat, and is turned into air, or water, or earth. Such changes are beyond a rational fear.

But some men dream that souls shall sleep, and cease their acts, though they lose not their powers. But this is more unreasonable than the former. For it must be remembered that it is not a mere obediential passive power that we speak of, but an active power, consisting in as great an inclination to act as passive natures have to forbear action. So that if such a nature act not, it must be because its natural inclination is hindered by a stronger. And who shall hinder it?

God would not continue an active power, force, and inclination in nature, and forcibly hinder the operation of that nature which he himself continueth; unless penally, for some special cause; which he never gave us any notice of by any threatening, but the contrary.

Objects will not be wanting, for all the world will be still at hand, and God above all. It is, therefore, an unreasonable conceit, to think that God will continue an active, vital, intellective, volitive nature, form, power, force, inclination, in a noble substance, which shall use none of these for many hundred or thousand years, and so continue them in vain.

It is rather to be thought that some action is their constant state, without which the cessation of their very form would be inferred.

But all that can be said with reason is, that separated souls, and souls hereafter in spiritual bodies, will have actions of another mode, and very different from these that we now perceive in flesh. And be it so. They will yet be radically of the same kind, and they will be formally or eminently such as we now call, vitality, intellection, and volition; and they will be no lower nor less excellent,

if not far more. And then, what the difference will be, Christ knoweth, whom I trust, and in season I shall know. But to talk of a dead life, an inactive activity, or a sleeping soul, is fitter for a sleeping than a waking man.

It is true that diseases or hurts do now hinder the soul's intellectual perceptions in the body; and in infancy and sleep they are imperfect. Which proveth indeed that the acts commonly called intellection and volition have now something in them also of sensation, and that sensitive operations are diversified by the organs of the several senses. And that bare intellection and volition without any sensation is now scarce to be observed in us, though the soul may have such acts intrinsically and in its profundity. For it is now so united to this body, that it acteth on it as our form; and indeed the acts observed by us cannot be denied to be such as are specified or modified, at least, by the agent's, and the recipient's, and the sub-agent's parts conjunct. But, 1. As the sun would do the same thing *ex parte sui* if in *vacuo* only it sent forth its beams, though this were no illumination or calefaction, because there were no recipient to be illuminated and heated by it. And it would lose nothing by the want of objects; so the soul, had it no body to act on, would have its profound immanent acts of self-living, self-perceiving, and self-loving; and all its external acts on other objects, which need not organs of sense for their approximation. And, 2. Its sensitive faculty is itself, or such as it is not separated from, though the particular sorts of sensation may be altered with their uses; and therefore it may still act on or with the sense; and if one way of sensation be hindered, it hath an-

other. 3. And how far this lantern of flesh doth help or hinder its operations we know not yet, but shall know hereafter. *Sandius de Orig. Animæ*, though an heretical writer, hath said much to prove that the body is a hinderance, and not a help to the soul's intuition. And if ratiocination be a compound act, yet intuition may be done for ever by the soul alone. 4. But as we are not to judge what powers the soul hath when the acts are hindered, but when they are done; nor what souls were made by God for, by their state in the womb, or in infancy, or when diseased, but by our ordinary mature state of life; so we have little reason to think that the same God who made them for life, intellection, and volitions here, will not continue the same powers to the same or as noble uses hereafter, whether with organs or without, as pleaseth him. If in this flesh our spirits were not unactive and useless, we have no reason to think that they will be so hereafter, and that for ever.

This greatest and hardest of all objections, doth make us confess (with *Contarenus, contra Pomponatium de Anim. Immortalit.*) that, though by the light of nature we may know the immortality of souls, and that they lose not their powers or activity, yet without supernatural light, we know not what manner of action they will have in their separated state, or in another world; because here they act according to objective termination, and the receptivity of the sense and phantasy, in the phrase of the schools, *recipitur ad modum recipientis*, and in the womb we perceive not that it acteth intellectually at all.

But we know that, 1. If even then it differed not in its formal power from the souls of brutes, it

would not so much afterward differ in act; and it would never be raised to that which was not virtually in its nature at the first. 2. And we find that even very little children have quick and strong knowledge of such objects as are brought within their reach; and that their ignorance is not for want of an intellectual power, but for want of objects, or images of things, with which time, and use, and conversation among objects, must furnish their phantasies and memories. And so a soul in the womb, or in an apoplexy, hath not objects of intellection within its reach to act upon, but is as the sun to a room that hath no windows to let in its light. 3. And what if its profound vitality, self-perception, and self-love be by a kind of sensation and intuition, rather than by discursive reason? I doubt not but some late philosophers make snares to themselves and others, by too much vilifying sense and sensitive souls; as if sense were but some loseable accident of contempered atoms; but sensation, though diversified by organs and uses, and so far mutable, is the act of a noble spiritual form and virtue. And as *Chambre*, and some others, make brutes a lower rank of rationals, and man another higher species, as having his noble reason for higher ends; so for man to be the noblest order, here, of sensitives, and to have an intellect to order and govern sensations, and combine and improve them, were a noble work, if we had no higher. And if intellection and volition were but a higher species of internal sensation than imagination, and the phantasy and memory are, it might yet be a height that should set man specifically above the brutes. And I am daily more and more persuaded that intellectual souls are essentially

sensitive, and more, that their sensation never ceaseth. 4. And still I say, that it is to nature itself a thing unlikely, that the God of nature will long continue a soul that hath formally or naturally an intellective power, in a state in which it shall have no use of it. Let others that will inquire, whether it shall have a vehicle or none to act in, and whether aerial, or igneous, and ethereal, and whether it be really an intellectual sort of fire, as material as the solar fire, whose (not compounding, but) inadequate objective conceptions are an igneous substance, and a formal virtue of life, sense, and intellection, with other such puzzling doubts; it satisfieth me, that God will not continue its noblest powers in vain; and how they shall be exercised is known to him; and that God's word tells us more than nature. And withal, life, intuition, and love, or volition, are acts so natural to the soul, as motion, light, and heat, in respect to fire, that I cannot conceive how its separation should hinder them; but rather that its incorporation hindereth the two latter, by hiding objects, whatever be said of abstractive knowledge and memory.

But the greatest difficulty to natural knowledge is, whether souls shall continue their individuation, or rather fall into one common soul, or return so to God that gave them as to be no more divers, or many, individuals as now, as extinguished candles are united to the illuminated air, or to the sunbeams, But of this I have elsewhere said much for others; and for myself I find I need but this: 1. That, as I said before, either souls are partible substances, or not; if not partible, how are they unible? If many may be made one by conjunction of substances, then that one may, by God, be made many

again by partition. Either all, or many, souls are now but one, individuate only by matter, as many gulfs in the sea, or many candles lighted by the sun, or not; if they are not one now in several bodies, what reason have we to think that they will be one hereafter any more than now? Augustine (*de Anim.*) was put on the question, 1. Whether souls are one, and not many? and that he utterly denieth. 2. Whether they are many, and not one? and that it seemeth he could not digest. 3. Whether they were at once both one and many? which he thought would seem to some ridiculous, but which he seemeth most inclined to. And as God is the God of nature, so nature, even of the devils themselves, dependeth on him, as I said, more than the leaves or fruit do on the tree; and we are all his offspring, and 'live, and move, and are in him.'¹ But we are certain, for all this, 1st, that we are not God; 2d, that we are yet many individuals, and not all one soul or man. If our union should be as near as the leaves and fruit on the same tree, yet those leaves and fruit are numerous and individual leaves and fruits, though parts of the tree. And were this proved of our present or our future state, it would not alter our hopes or fears. For as now, though we all live, move, and be in God, and, as some dream, are parts of a common soul, yet it is certain that some are better and happier than others; some wise and good, and some foolish and evil; some in pain and misery, and some at ease and in pleasure: and, as I said, it is now no ease to the miserable to be told that radically all souls are one; no more will it be hereafter, nor can men rea-

¹ Acts, xvii. 28.

sonably hope for, or fear such an union, as shall make their state the same. We see in nature, as I have elsewhere said, that if you graft many sorts of scions, some sweet, some bitter, some crabs, on the same stock, they will be one tree, and yet have diversity of fruit. If souls be not unible, nor partible substances, there is no place for this doubt; if they be, they will be still what they are, notwithstanding any such union with a common soul. As a drop of water in the sea is a separable part, and still itself; and as a crab upon the foresaid stock or tree. And the good or bad quality ceaseth not by any union with others.

Sure we are, that all creatures are in God, by close dependence, and yet that the good are good, and the bad are bad, and that God is good, and hath no evil; and that when man is tormented or miserable, God suffereth nothing by it, as the whole man doth when but a tooth doth ache; for he would not hurt himself were he passive. Therefore to dream of any such cessation of our individuation by any union with a creature, as shall make the good less good or happy, or the bad less bad or miserable, is a groundless folly.

Yet it is very probable that there will be a nearer union of holy souls with God and Christ, and one another, than we can here conceive of; but this is so far from being to be feared, that it is the highest of our hopes. God himself, though equally everywhere in his essence, doth operate very variously on his creatures. On the wicked he operateth as the first cause of nature, as his sun shineth on them. On some he operateth by common grace. To some he giveth faith to prepare them for the indwelling of his Spirit. In believers he dwelleth

by love, and they in him ; and if we may use such a comparison, as Satan acteth on some only by suggestions, but on others so despotically, as that it is called his possessing them ; so God's Spirit worketh on holy souls so powerfully and constantly, as is called his possessing them. And yet on the human nature of Christ, the divine nature of the second person hath such a further extraordinary operation as is justly called a personal union, which is not by a more essential presence, for that is every where, but by a peculiar operation and relation ; and so holy souls being under a more felicitating operation of God, may well be said to have a nearer union with him than now they have.

And I observe that, as is aforesaid, all things have naturally a strong inclination to union and communion with their like. Every clod and stone inclineth to the earth ; water would go to water, air to air, fire to fire, birds and beasts associate with their like. And the noblest natures are most strongly thus inclined ; and therefore I have natural reason to think that it will be so with holy souls.

And I find that the inordinate contraction of man to himself, and to the interest of this individual person, with the defect of love to all about us, according to every creature's goodness, and specially to God the infinite good, whom we should love above ourselves, is the very sum of all the pravity of man. And all the injustice and injury to others, and all the neglect of good works in the world, and all our daily terrors, and self-distracting self-tormenting cares, and griefs, and fears, proceed from this inordinate love and adhesion to ourselves ; therefore I have reason to think, that in our better

state, we shall perfectly love others as ourselves, and the selfish love will turn into a common and a divine love, which must be by our preferring the common and the divine good and interest.

And I am so sensible of the power and plague of selfishness, and how it now corrupteth, tempteth, and disquieteth me, that when I feel any fears, lest individuation cease, and my soul fall into one common soul, as the stoics thought all souls did at death, I find great cause to suspect that this ariseth from the power of this corrupting selfishness; for reason seeth no cause at all to fear it, were it so.

For I find also, that the nature of love is to desire as near a union as is possible, and the strongest love doth most strongly desire it. Fervent lovers think they can scarce be too much one; and love is our perfection, and therefore so is union.

And I find, 1. that when Christians had the first and full pouring out of the Spirit, they had the ferventest love, and the nearest union, and the least desire of propriety and distance. 2. That Christ's prayer for the felicity of his disciples is a prayer for their unity;¹ and in this he placeth much of their perfection. 3. That man is of a sociable nature, and that all men find by experience, that conjunction in societies is needful to their safety, strength, and pleasure. And lastly, I find, that my soul would fain be nearer God, and that darkness and distance is my misery, and near communion is it that would answer all the tendencies of my soul. Why then should I fear too near a union?

I think it utterly improbable that my soul should

¹ John, xvii. 22, 23.

become more nearly united to any creature than to God, though it be of the same kind with other souls, and infinitely below God ; for God is as near me as I am to myself. I still depend on him as the effect upon its total constant cause ; and that not as the fruit upon the tree, which borroweth all from the earth, water, air, and fire, which it communicateth to its fruit, but as a creature on its Creator, who hath no being but what it receiveth totally from God, by constant communication. Hence Antonine, Seneca, and the rest of the stoics, thought that all the world was God, or one great animal consisting of divine spirit and matter, as a man of soul and body ; sometime calling the supposed soul of the world God, and sometime calling the whole world God, but still meaning that the universe was but one spirit and body united, and that we all are parts of God, or of the body of God, or accidents at least.

And even the popish mystical divines, in their pretension to the highest perfection, say the same in sense ; such as Benedict. Anglus, in his *Regula Perfectionis*, approved by many doctors, who placeth much of his supereminent life in our believing verily that there is nothing but God, and living accordingly ; maintaining that all creatures are nothing distinct from God, but are to God as the beams are to the sun, and as the heat is to the fire, which really is itself ; and so teaching us to rest in all things as good, as being nothing but God's essential will, which is himself, resolving even our sins and imperfections, accordingly into God, so that they are God's or none.

And all these men have as fair a pretence for their conceits of such an union with God now, as

for such an union after death; for their reason is, 1. That God being infinite, there can be no more beings than his own. But God and the smallest being distinct, would be more entity than God alone, but infinity can have no addition. 2. Because being and good are convertible: but God only is good.

And if we are, notwithstanding all this, distinct beings from God now, we shall be so then. For we shall not be annihilated, and we shall not be so advanced as to be deified, and of creatures or distinct beings, turned into a being infinitely above us. If we be not parts of God now we shall not be so then.

But if they could prove that we are so now, we should quickly prove to them, 1. That then God hath material divisible parts, as the stoics thought. 2. And that we are no such parts as are not distinct from one another, but some are tormented and some happy. And, 3. That, as is said, it will be no abatement of the misery of the tormented, nor of the felicity of the blessed, to tell them that they are all parts of God; for though the manner of our union with him, and dependance on him, be past our comprehension, yet that we are distinct and distant from each other, and have each one a joy or misery of his own, is past all doubt. Therefore there is no union with God to be feared by holy souls, but the utmost possible is the most highly to be desired.

And if our union with God shall not cease our individuation, or resolve us into a principle to be feared, we may say so also of our union with any common soul, or many. If we be unible we are partible, and so have a distinct, though not a

divided substance, which will have its proper accidents. All plants are parts of the earth, really united to it, and radicated in it, and live, and are nourished by it; and yet a vine is a vine, and an apple is an apple, and a rose is a rose, and a nettle is a nettle. And few men would be toiled horses or toads, if it were proved that they are animated by a common soul.

But God letteth us see, that though the world be one, yet he delighteth in a wonderful diversity and multiplicity of individuals. How various and numerous are they in the sea, and on the land, and in the air. And are there none in the other world? How come the stars therein to be so numerous, which are of the same element? And though perhaps Saturn, or some other planets, or many stars, may send forth their radiant effluvia, or parts, into the same air, which the sun-beams seem totally to fill and illuminate, yet the rays of the sun and of other stars are not the same, how near soever in the same air.

Were there now no more contraction by egoiety or propriety among men, nor mine and thine did signify no more, nor the distance were greater than that of the several drops of water in the sea, or particles of light in the illuminated air; but I had all my part in such a perfect unity and communion with all others, and knew that all were as happy as I, so that there were no divisions by cross interests or minds, but all were one, certainly it would make my own comforts greater by far than they are now? Are not an hundred candles set together and united, as splendid a flame as if they were all set asunder? To one soul, one love, one joy would be.

To this it may be objected, that it is only the *fomes* that individuateth lights; as when the same sun by a burning-glass lighteth a thousand candles, they are individuate only by the matter contracting, being still all united parts of the same sun-beams. And when they are extinct they are nothing, or all one again.

We answer, that before they were extinct, they were both one and many; none but fools think that extinction annihilateth them, or any part of them. They are after as much substance and as much solar fire, though diffused, and as much and no more one than before, but not indeed many as before, but parts of one. Nature hath made the equal diffused sun-beams to be to the air and surface of the earth, as the blood equally moving in the body; and our candles and fires seem to be like the same blood contracted in a bile or inflammation, which indeed is more felt than the equally diffused blood, but it is as the pain of a disease. And so when our fires go out they are but like a healed scattered inflammation, and the same substance is more naturally and equally diffused. And if the individuation of souls were only by corporeal matter, and the union thus as great at their departure, it would not diminish, if it did not too much increase their perfection and felicity; for there would be no diminution of any substance, or power, or activity, or perfection whatsoever.

And this would confute their fond opinion, who think that separated souls sleep in mere potentiality, for want of an organized body to operate in; for, no doubt, but if all holy souls were one, this world, either in heaven or earth, hath a common body enough for such a soul to operate in.

Even those stoics that think departed souls are one, do think that that one soul hath a nobler operation than ours in our narrow bodies, and that when our souls cease animating this body, they have the nobler and sweeter work in part, of animating the whole world; and those that thought several orbs had their several souls, of which the particular individuals participated, said the like of separated souls, as animating the bodies of their globes or orbs. And though all these men trouble their heads with their own vain imaginations, yet this much the nature of the matter tells us, which is considerable, that whereas the utmost fear of the infidel is, that souls departed lose their individuation or activity, and are resolved into one common soul, or continue in a sleepy potentiality, for want of a body to operate in, they do but contradict themselves, seeing it is a notorious truth. 1. That if all holy souls were one, no one would be a loser by the union, but it would be a greater gain than we must hope for; for a part of one is as much and as noble, and as active a substance, as if it were a separated person; (and annihilation, or loss of specific powers, is not to be rationally feared.) 2. And that one soul is now either self-subsisting without a body, or animateth a suitable body (as some ancients thought the angels stars.) If that one soul can act without a body, so may ours, whether as parts of it or not. If that one soul animate a suitable body, ours, were they united parts of it, would have part of that employment; so that hereby they confute themselves.

To this it is objected, that it would equalize the good and bad, or at least those that were good

in several degrees; and where then were the reward and punishment?

We answer, it would not equal them at all any more than distinct personality would do; for, 1. The souls of all holy persons may be so united, as that the souls of the wicked shall have no part in that union. Whether the souls of the wicked shall be united in one sinful miserable soul, or rather but in one sinful society, or be more separate dis-united, contrary to each other, and militant, as part of their sin and misery, is nothing to this case. 2. Yet natural and moral union must be differenced. God is the root of nature to the worst; and however in one sense it is said, that there is nothing in God but God, yet it is true, that in him all live and move, and have their being. But yet the inbeing of the wicked in God doth afford them no sanctifying and beatifying communion with him, as experience showeth us in this life; which yet holy souls have, as being made capable recipients of it. As I said, different plants, briars and cedars, the stinking and the sweet, are implanted parts, or accidents, of the same world or earth. 3. And the godly themselves may have as different a share of happiness in one common soul, as they have now of holiness, and so as different rewards, even as roses and rosemary, and other herbs differ in the same garden, and several fruits in the same orchard, or on the same tree. For, if souls are unible, and so partible substances, they have neither more nor less of substance or holiness for their union; and so will each have his proper measure. As a tun of water cast into the sea, will there still be the same, and more than a spoonful cast into it.

It is objected again, that spirits are not as bodies, extensive and quantitative, and so not partible or divisible; and therefore that our supposition is vain.

My supposition is but the objector's; for if they confess that spirits are substances (as cannot with reason be denied; for they that specify their operations by motion only, yet suppose a pure proper substance to be the subject or thing moved) then when they talk of many souls becoming one, it must be by conjunction and increase of the substance of that one. Or when they say that they were always one, they will confess withal that they now differ in number, as individuate in the body; and who will say that millions of millions are no more than one of all those millions. Number is a sort of quantity; and all souls in the world are more than Cain's or Abel's only. One feeleth not what another feeleth. One knoweth not what another knoweth. And, indeed, though souls have not such corporeal extension as passive gross bodily matter hath, yet as they are more noble, they have a more noble sort of extension, quantity, or degrees; according to which all mankind conceive of all the spiritual substance of the universe, yea, all the angels, or all the souls on earth, as being more, and having more substance than one man's soul alone. 2. And the fathers, for the most part, especially the Greeks, yea, and the second council of Nice, thought that spirits created had a purer sort of material being, which Tertullian called a body; and doubtless all created spirits have somewhat of passiveness, for they do receive or suffer from the divine influx; only God is wholly impassive. We are moved when we move and acted when we act:

and it is hard to conceive that, when matter is commonly called passive, that which is passive should have no sort of matter in a large sense taken; and if it have any parts distinguishable, they are by God divisible. 3. But if the contrary be supposed, that all souls are no more than one, and so that there is no place for uniting or partition, there is no place then for the objection of all souls becoming one, and of losing individuation, unless they mean by annihilation.

But that God who, as is said, delighteth both in the union and yet in the wonderful multiplicity of creatures, and will not make all stars to be only one, though fire have a most uniting or aggregative inclination, hath further given experimental notice that there is individuation in the other world as well as here, even innumerable angels and devils, and not one only, as apparitions and witches, and many other evidences prove, of which more anon. So that, all things considered, there is no reason to fear that souls shall lose their individuation or activity, though they change their manner of action, any more than their being or formal power: and so it is naturally certain that they are immortal.

And if holy souls are so far immortal, I need not prove that they will be immortally happy, for their holiness will infer it; and few will ever dream that it shall there go ill with them that are good, and that the most just and holy God will not use those well whom he maketh holy.

In the next place, that holy souls shall be hereafter happy seemeth to be one of the common notices of nature planted in the consciences of mankind; and it is, therefore, acknowledged by the generality of the world that freely use their under-

standings. Most, yea almost all the heathen nations at this day believe it, besides the Mahometans; and it is the most barbarous cannibals and Brazilians that do not, whose understandings have had the least improvement, and who have rather an inconsiderate ignorance of it than a denying opposition. And though some philosophers denied it, they were a small and contemned party; and though many of the rest were somewhat dubious, it was only a certainty which they professed to want, and not a probability or opinion that it was true. And both the vulgar and the deep studied men believed it; and those that questioned it were the half-studied philosophers, who not resting in the natural notice, nor yet reaching full intellectual evidence of it by discourse, had found out matter of difficulty to puzzle them, and came not to that degree of wisdom as would have resolved them.

2. And even among apostates from Christianity most or many still acknowledge the soul's immortality, and the felicity and reward of holy souls, to be of the common notices known by nature to mankind. Julian was so much persuaded of it, that on that account he exhorteth his priests and subjects to great strictness and holiness of life, and to see that the Christians did not exceed them. And among us, the Lord Herbert *de Veritate*, and many others that seem not to believe our supernatural revelations of Christianity, do fully acknowledge it. Besides those philosophers who most opposed Christianity, as Porphyrius, Maximus Tyrius, and such others.

3. And we find that this notice hath so deep a root in nature, that few of those that study and

labour themselves into bestiality, or Sadducism, are able to excuse the fears of future misery, but conscience overcometh or troubleth them much at least, when they have done the worst they can against it. And whence should all this be in man and not in beasts, if man had no further reason of hopes and fears than they? Are a few Sadducees wiser by their forced or crude conceits, than all the world that are taught by nature itself?

Thirdly; If the God of nature have made it every man's certain duty to make it his chief care and work in this life to seek for happiness hereafter, then such a happiness there is for them that truly seek it. But the antecedent is certain, as I have elsewhere proved.

For as to this, the world is made up of three sorts of men, as to the belief of future retribution. 1. Such as take it for a certain truth; such are Christians, Mahometans, and most heathens. 2. Such as take it for uncertain, but most probable or likeliest to be true. 3. Such as take it for uncertain, but rather think it untrue. For as none can be certain that it is false, which indeed is true, so I never yet met with one that would say he was certain it was false: so that I need not trouble you with the mention of any other party or opinion. But if any should say so, it is easy to prove that he speaketh falsely of himself.

And that it is the duty of all these, but especially of the two former sorts, to make it their chief care and work to seek for happiness in the life to come, is easily proved thus:—natural reason requir-eth every man to seek that which is best for himself with the greatest diligence; but natural reason saith that a probability or possibility of the future

everlasting happiness is better and more worthy to be sought, than any thing attainable in this present life, which doth not suppose it. *Ergo, &c.*

The major is past doubt. Good and felicity being necessarily desired by the will of man, that which is best and known so to be, must be most desired.

And the minor should be as far past doubt to men that use not their sense against their reason. For, 1. In this life there is nothing certain to be continued one hour. 2. It is certain that all will quickly end, and that the longest life is short. 3. It is certain that time and pleasure past are nothing, properly nothing; and so no better to us than if they had never been. 4. And it is certain that while we possess them, they are poor unsatisfactory things, the pleasure of the flesh being no sweeter to a man than to a beast, and the trouble that accompanieth it much more. Beasts have not the cares, fears, and sorrows upon foresight which man hath; they fear not death upon foreknowledge of it, nor fear any misery after death, nor are put upon any labour, sufferings, or trials, to obtain a future happiness, or avoid a future misery: all which considered, he speaketh not by reason, who saith this vain vexatious life is better than the possibility or probability of the everlasting glory.

Now as to the consequence, or major, of the first argument, it is evident of itself, from God's perfection, and the nature of his works. God maketh it not man's natural duty to lay out his chief care and labour of all his life, on that which is not, or to seek that which man was never made to attain; for then, 1. All his duty should result from mere deceit and falshood, and God should

govern all the world by a lie, which cannot be his part who wanteth not either power, wisdom, or love to rule them by truth and righteousness, and who hath printed his image both on his laws and on his servants, in which laws lying is condemned ; and the better any man is, the more he hateth it ; and liars are loathed by all mankind. 2. And then the better any man is, and the more he doth his duty, the more deluded, erroneous, and miserable should he be. For he should spend that care and labour of his life, upon deceit, for that which he shall never have, and so should lose his time and labour. And he should deny his flesh those temporal pleasures which bad men take, and suffer persecutions and injuries from the wicked, and all for nothing, and on mistake ; and the wickeder or more unbelieving any man is, the wiser and happier should he be, as being in the right, when he denieth the life to come, and all duty and labour in seeking it, or in avoiding future punishment ; and while he taketh his utmost pleasure here, he hath all that man was made for. But all this is utterly unsuitable to God's perfection, and to his other works ; for he maketh nothing in vain ; nor can he lie, much less will he make holiness itself, and all that duty and work of life which reason itself obligeth all men to, to be not only vain, but hurtful to them. But this argument I have presented more at length elsewhere.

Man differeth so much from brutes in the knowledge of God, and of his future possibilities, that it proveth that he differeth as much as in his capacity and certain hopes. 1. As to the antecedent, man knoweth that there is a God by his works : he knoweth that this God is our absolute

Lord, our Ruler, and our end: he knoweth that naturally we owe him all our love and obedience: he knoweth that good men use not to let their faithfulest servants be losers by their fidelity; nor do they use to set them to labour in vain. He knoweth that man's soul is immortal, (or at least that it is far most probable that it is so,) and therefore that it must accordingly be well or ill for ever, and that this should be most cared for. 2. And why should God give him all this knowledge more than to the brutes, if he were made for no more enjoyment than the brutes, of what he knoweth. Every wise man maketh his work fit for the use that he intendeth it to; and will not God? So that the consequence also is proved from the divine perfection; and if God were not perfect, he were not God. The denial of a God therefore is the result of the denial of man's future hopes.

And indeed, though it be but an analogical reason that brutes have, those men seem to be in the right, who place the difference between man and brutes, more in the objects, tendency, and work of our reason, than in our reason itself as such; and so make *animal religiosum* to be more of his description than *animal rationale*. About their own low concerns, a fox, a dog, yea, an ass, and a goose have such actions, as we know not well how to ascribe to any thing below some kind of reasoning, or a perception of the same importance. But they think not of God, and his government and laws; nor of obeying, trusting, or loving him, nor of the hopes or fears of another life, nor of the joyful prospect of it. These are that work that man was made for, which is the chief difference from the brutes; and shall we unman ourselves?

The justice of God, as governor of the world, inferreth different rewards hereafter, as I have largely elsewhere proved. 1. God is not only a mover of all that moveth, but a moral ruler of man by laws and judgment, and executions. Else there were no proper law of nature, which few are so unnatural as to deny; and man should have no proper duty, but only motion, as he is moved. And then how cometh a government by laws to be set up under God by men? And then there were no sin or fault in any; for if there were no law and duty, but only necessitated motion, all would be moved as the mover pleased, and there could be no sin. And then there would be no moral good, but forced or necessary motion; but all this is most absurd, and experience telleth us that God doth, *de facto*, morally govern the world, and his right is unquestionable.

2. And if God were not the ruler of the world, by laws and judgment, the world would have no universal laws; for there is no man that is the universal ruler. And then kings, and other supreme powers, would be utterly lawless and ungoverned, as having none above them to give them laws; and so they would be capable of no sin or fault, and of no punishment, which yet neither their subjects' interest, nor their own consciences will grant, or allow them thoroughly to believe.

3. And if God be a ruler he is just; or else he were not perfect, nor so good as he requireth princes and judges on earth to be. An unjust ruler or judge is abominable to all mankind. Righteousness is the great attribute of the universal King.

4. But how were he a righteous ruler. 1. If he drew all men to obey him by deceit. 2. If he

obliged them to seek and expect a felicity or reward which he will never give them. 3. If he make man's duty his misery. 4. If he require him to labour in vain. 5. If he suffer the wicked to prosecute his servants to the death, and make duty costly, and give no after recompense. 6. If he let the most wicked on the earth pass unpunished, or to scape as well hereafter as the best, and to live in greater pleasure here. The objections fetched from the intrinsical good of duty, I have elsewhere answered.

But God hath not left us to the light of mere nature, as being too dark for men so blind as we. The gospel revelation is the clear foundation of our faith and hopes. Christ hath brought life and immortality to light: one from heaven, that is greater than an angel, was sent to tell us what is there, and which is the way, and to secure our hopes. He hath risen and conquered death, and entered before us, as our captain and forerunner, into the everlasting habitations. And he hath all power in heaven and earth, and all judgment is committed to him, that he might give eternal life to his elect; he hath frequently and expressly promised it them, that they shall live because he liveth, and shall not perish, but have everlasting life.¹ And how fully he hath proved and sealed the truth of his word and office to us, I have so largely opened in my reasons of the Christian religion, and unreasonableness of infidelity, and in my life of faith, &c., and since in my household catechizing, that I will not here repeat it.

And as all his word is full of promises of our

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18; John, v. 22; xvii. 2; xii. 26; iii. 16; Rom. viii. 35, 36, 37, 38.

future glory at the resurrection; so we are not without assurance, that at death the departing soul doth enter upon a state of joy and blessedness;¹ for, 1. He expressly promised the penitent crucified thief, This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.² 2. He gave us the narrative or parable of the damned sensualist and of Lazarus,³ to instruct us, and not to deceive us. 3. He tells the Sadducees, that God is not the God of the dead, (as his subjects and beneficiaries) but of the living.⁴ 4. Enoch and Elias were taken up to heaven, and Moses that died appeared with Elias on the mount.⁵ 5. He telleth us,⁶ that they that kill the body are not able to kill the soul.⁷ 6. And Christ's own soul was commended into his Father's hands;⁸ and was in Paradise when his body was in the grave, to show us what shall become of ours. 7. And he hath promised that, 'Where he is, there shall his servant be also.'⁹ And that the life here begun in us is eternal life, and that he that believeth in him shall not die, but shall live by him, as he liveth by the Father; for he dwelleth in God, and God in him, and in Christ, and Christ in him.¹⁰ 8. And accordingly, Stephen that saw heaven opened, prayed the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit.¹¹ 9. And we

¹ 1 Peter, iv. 6. "They that died to (or in) the flesh, according to men, do live in the Spirit, according to God."

² Luke, xxiii. ³ Luke, xvi. ⁴ Matt. xxii. 32.

⁵ Matt. xvii. ⁶ Luke, xii. 4.

⁷ Indeed, if the soul were not immortal, the resurrection were impossible: it might be a new creation of another soul, but not a resurrection of the same, if the same be annihilated. It is certain that the Jews believed the immortality of the soul in that they believed the resurrection and future life of the same man.

⁸ Luke, xxiii. 46. ⁹ John, xii. 26.

¹⁰ Ibid. xvii. 3; vi. 54; iii. 16, 36; vi. 47, 56, 57, 50
1 John, iv. and v. 13; Luke, xvii. 21; Rom. xiv. 17.

¹¹ Acts, vii. 5. 59.

are come to Mount Sion, &c. to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of the just made perfect.¹ 10. And Paul here desired to depart and be with Christ as far better. And to be absent from the body, and be present with the Lord.² 11. And the dead that die in the Lord are blessed from henceforth, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them. 12. And if the disobedient spirits be in prison, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, then the just have eternal life.³ (And, if the Jews had not thought the soul immortal, Saul had not desired the witch to call up Samuel to speak with him :) the rest I now pass by. We have many great and precious promises on which a departed soul may trust. 13. And Christ expressly saith, that when we fail, (that is, must leave this world,) we shall be received into the everlasting habitations.⁴

And it is not nothing to encourage us to hope in him that hath made all these promises, when we find how he heareth prayers in this life, and thereby assureth his servants that he is their true and faithful Saviour. We are apt in our distress to cry loud for mercy and deliverances; and when human help faileth, to promise God that if he now will save us we will thankfully acknowledge it his work; and yet when we are delivered, to return not only to security, but to ingratitude; and think that our deliverance came but in the course of common providence, and not indeed as an answer to our prayers. And therefore God, in

¹ Heb. xii. 22, 23.

² 2 Cor. v. 8.

³ 1 Peter, iii. 19; Jude, vii.

⁴ Luke, xvi. 9.

mercy, reneweth both our distresses and our deliverances, that what once or twice will not convince us of, many and great deliverances may. This is my own case. O how oft have I cried to him when men and means were nothing, and when no help in second causes did appear, and how oft, and suddenly, and mercifully hath he delivered me! What sudden ease, what removal of long afflictions have I had! Such extraordinary changes, and beyond my own and others' expectations, when many plain-hearted, upright Christians have by fasting and prayer sought God on my behalf, as have over and over convinced me of special providence, and that God is indeed a hearer of prayers. And wonders I have seen done for others also, upon such prayer, more than for myself; yea, and wonders for the church and public societies. Though I and others are too like those Israelites¹ who cried to God in their troubles, and he oft delivered them out of their distress, but they quickly forgot his mercies, and their convictions, purposes, and promises, when they should have praised the Lord for his goodness, and declared his works with thanksgiving to the sons of men.

And what were all these answers and mercies but the fruits of Christ's power, fidelity, and love, the fulfilling of his promises, and the earnest of the greater blessing of immortality, which the same promises give me title to?

I know that no promise of hearing prayer setteth up our wills in absoluteness, or above God's; as if every will of ours must be fulfilled if we do but put it into a fervent or confident prayer; but if we

¹ Psalm, lxxviii.

ask any thing through Christ, according to his will, expressed in his promises, he will hear us. If a sinful love of this present life, or of ease, or wealth, or honour, should cause me to pray to God against death, or against all sickness, want, reproach, or other trials, as if I must live here in prosperity for ever, if I ask it, this sinful desire and expectation is not the work of faith, but of presumption. What if God will not abate me my last, or daily pains? What if he will continue my life no longer, whoever, pray for it, and how earnestly soever? Shall I therefore forget how oft he hath heard prayers for me? and how wonderfully he hath helped both me and others? My faith hath oft been helped by such experiences, and shall I forget them, or question them without cause at last?

And it is a subordinate help to my belief of immortality with Christ, to find so much evidence that angels have friendly communion with us here, and therefore we shall have communion with them hereafter. They have charge of us, and pitch their tents about us; they bear us up; they rejoice at our repentance; they are the regardful witnesses of our behaviour; they are ministering spirits for our good; they are our angels, beholding the face of our heavenly Father; they will come with Christ in glorious attendance at the great and joyful day; and as his executioners, they will separate the just from the unjust.¹

And it is not only the testimony of Scripture, by which we know their communion with us, but also some degree of experience. Not only of old did

¹ Psalm, xxxiv. 7; xci. 11, 12; Luke, xv. 10; 1 Cor. xi. 10; Heb. i. 14; xii. 22; xiii. 2; Matt. xviii. 10; xxv. 31; xiii. 39, 49; Acts, v. 19; viii. 26; xii. 7, 23.

they appear to the faithful as messengers from God, but of late times there have been testimonies of their ministration for us; of which see *Zanchy de Angelis*, and Mr. I. Ambrose, "Of our Communion with Angels." Many a mercy doth God give us by their ministry; and they that are now so friendly to us, and suitable to our communion and help, and make up one society with us, do hereby greatly encourage us to hope that we are made for the same region, work, and company, with these our blessed loving friends. They were once in a life of trial, it seems, as we are now, though not on earth.¹ And they that overcame and are confirmed rejoice in our victory and confirmation. It is not an uninhabited world which is above us; nor such as is beyond our capacity and hope: we are come to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of the perfected just, who together have discreet quantity, or numerical difference, notwithstanding their happy union and communion.

And Satan himself, though unwillingly, hath many ways helped my belief of our immortality and future hopes. 1. I have had many convincing proofs of witches, the contracts they have made with devils, and the power which they have received from them.² Besides the volumes of *Regimus*, and *Bodin*, and the *Mallei Maleficorum*,

¹ Jude vi. ; 2 Peter ii. 4.

² The intelligent reader will at once perceive that Baxter's allusion to the exploded opinion respecting witches and apparitions, does not in any way invalidate the substantial truth of his argument. Like many other great men of his time, he too readily admitted the truth of relations which had their origin in popular prejudices; but the error lay in the falsehood of the particular incidents, not in the principle on which they were received, which may be established both by history and Scripture.—*En.*

Danæus, and others,¹ we had many score of them detected, and many executed in one year, in Suffolk and Essex,² about 1644. And I have, at this present, a flint stone which was one of about one hundred and sixty, which were voided by the urinary passage, by a bewitched child in Evesham, yet living, some of near an ounce weight: which was fully proved, the witch executed, and the child, upon her imprisonment, freed. To pass by many others.

2 And I have had convincing testimony of apparitions, besides that famous one, the devil of Mascon, and that in the shape of Lieutenant Colonel Bowen, in Wales, mentioned elsewhere; and besides, many testimonies of haunted houses.³ However, many, or most such reports, are but deceits.

3. From both these I gather, 1, that there are individual inhabitants of the invisible world, and that spirits have their numerical differences, whatever unity is among them; and therefore, we have reason to judge the same of separated souls. 2. That our souls are designed to future happiness or misery, which is implied in the foresaid contracts and endeavours of devils, for our ruin. 3. That faith and holiness are the way of life, and unbelief and sin the way to misery, which also is in these implied.

And I have both read, and partly seen, convincing evidence, that there is such an exercise of diabolical power as we commonly call possession;

¹ Of this see the second edition by Dr. More, of Mr. Granville's Book of Apparitions called *Atheismus Triumphatus*.

² For the truth of this read Mr. Fairclough's *Life*.

³ See what I have said of particular testimonies in my "Saints' Rest," and "Unreasonableness of Infidelity."

whether all or most madmen are under such a power, as some think, I determine not; but that some are under it is evident: the motions of the body which I have seen, seem beyond man's natural power, the telling of secrets and things absent, the speaking languages never learnt, the vomiting of nails, glass, hairs, &c. and other such effects, which the most learned, sober, impartial physicians profess to have seen, are credible testimonies.

4. And I have felt, and heard, and known from others, of such a sort of temptations as show themselves to be acts of malicious spirits, enemies to mankind. The advantages that Satan taketh of a corrupted phantasy, which hath once taken in such an image as may be his matter to work upon, is very remarkable. I have known a worthy, learned, pious person, who from his youth to old age, upon such an advantage, hath been so tempted with pleasure to torment himself, even his own flesh, as that for many years together, in a partial melancholy at divers fits, he was not able (though conscience also tormented him for it) to forbear. Many through trifling circumstances, have given Satan such a power upon their phantasies, as no reason, conscience, or resolution could of a long time overcome. Few men, I think, that observe themselves, have not at some time had experience of such inward temptations, as show that the author of them is an invincible enemy. All which tells us, 1. That there are individual spirits; 2. Yea, devils that seek man's misery; 3. And that by the way of sin, and consequently that a future happiness or misery must be expected by us all.

But the great and sure prognostic of our

immortal happiness, is derived from the renewing operations of the spirit of holiness on the soul. 1. That such a renewing work there is, all true believers in some measure feel; 2. And that it is the earnest of heaven is proved thus.

1. If it be a change of greatest benefit to man; 2. And if heaven be the very sum and end of it; 3. And if it overcome all fleshly worldly opposition; 4. And can be wrought by none but God; 5. And was before promised by Jesus Christ to all sound believers; 6. And is universally wrought in them all, either only, or eminently above all others; 7. And was promised them as a pledge and earnest of glory, then it can be no less than such a pledge and earnest; but the former are all true, &c.

That the change is of grand importance unto man, appeareth in that it is the renovation of his mind, and will, and life; it repaireth his depraved faculties; it causeth man to live as man, who is degenerated to a life too like to brutes; by God's permitting many to live in blindness, wickedness, and confusion, and be tormentors of themselves and one another, by temptations, injuries, wars, and cruelty, we the fuller see what it is that grace doth save men from, and what a difference it maketh in the world. Those that have lived unholy in their youth, do easily find the difference in themselves when they are renewed; but to them that have been piously inclined from their childhood, it is harder to discern the difference, unless they mark the case of others. If man be worth any thing, it is for the use that his faculties were made; and if he be not good for the knowledge, love, and service of his Creator, what is he good for? And certainly the generality of ungodly worldlings

are undisposed to all such works as this, till the Spirit of Christ effectually change them. Men are slaves to sin till Christ thus make them free.¹ But 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'² If the divine nature and image, and the love of God shed abroad on the heart, be not our excellency, health, and beauty, what is? And 'that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.'³ Without Christ and his Spirit, we can do nothing; our dead notions and reason when we see the truth, have not power to overcome temptations, nor to raise up man's soul to its original and end, nor to possess us with the love and joyful hopes of future blessedness. It were better for us to have no souls, than that those souls should be void of the Spirit of God.

And that heaven is the sum and end of all the Spirit's operation, appeareth in all that are truly conscious of them in themselves; and to them and others, by all God's precepts which the Spirit causeth us to obey, and the doctrine which it causeth us to believe, and by the description of all God's graces which he worketh in us; what is our knowledge and faith, but our knowledge and belief of heaven, as consisting in the glory and love of God there manifested, and as purchased by Christ, and given by his covenant? What is our hope but the hope of glory?⁴ And through the Spirit we wait for all this hope.⁵ What is our love but a desire of

¹ John, viii. 32, 33, 36; Rom. vi. 18; Acts, xxvi. 18; Rom. viii. 2.

² 2 Cor. iii. 17.

³ John, iii. 6.

⁴ See Heb. xi. 1, and throughout 1 Pet. i. 3, 21; Heb. vi. 11, 18, 19, and iii. 6; Tit. ii. 13, and iii. 7; Col. i. 5, 23, 27.

⁵ Gal. v. 5.

communion with the blessed God initially here and perfectly hereafter? As the sum of Christ's gospel was, 'Take up the cross, forsake all here, and follow me, and thou shalt have a reward in heaven.'¹ And the consolation of his gospel is, 'Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.'² So the same is the sum of his Spirit's operations; for what he teacheth and commandeth that he worketh; for he worketh by that word; and the impress must be like the signet, what arm soever set it on. He sendeth not his Spirit to make men craftier than others for this world, but to make them wiser for salvation; and to make them more heavenly and holy; For 'the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light;' heavenliness is the Spirit's special work.

And in working this it conquereth the inward indisposedness and averseness of a fleshly, worldly mind and will, and the customs of a carnal life; and the outward temptations of Satan, and all the allurements of the world. Christ first overcame the world, and teacheth and causeth us to overcome it; even its flatteries and its frowns; our faith is our victory; whether this victory be easy, and any honour to the Spirit of Christ, let our experience of the wickedness of the ungodly world, and of our own weakness, and of our falls when the Spirit of God forsaketh us, be our informer.

And that none but God can do this work on the soul of man, the knowledge both of causes and experience proves. The most learned, wise, and holy teachers, cannot; (as they confess and show;) the wisest and most loving parents cannot,

¹ Luke, xiv. 26, 33, and xviii. 22, 23.

² Mat. v. 11, 12.

and therefore must pray to him that can; the greatest princes cannot; evil angels neither can nor will. What good angels can do on the heart we know not; but we know that they do nothing, but as the obedient ministers of God. And (though we have some power on ourselves; yet) that we ourselves cannot do it; that we cannot quicken illuminate, or sanctify ourselves, and that we have nothing but what we have received, conscience and experience fully tell us.

And that Christ promised this Spirit in a special measure, to all true believers, that it should be in them his advocate, agent, seal, and mark, is yet visible in the gospel; yea, and in the former prophets.¹ Indeed the Spirit here, and heaven hereafter, are the chief of all the promises of Christ.

And that this Spirit is given (not to hypocrites that abuse Christ, and do not seriously believe him, nor to mere pretending nominal Christians, but) to all that sincerely believe the gospel, is evident not only themselves in certainty, (if they are in a condition to know themselves,) but to others in part by the effects; they have other ends, other affections, other lives, than the rest of mankind have: though their heavenly nature and design be the less discerned and honoured in the world, because their chiefest difference is out of the sight of man, in the heart, and in their secret actions, and because their imperfections blemish them, and because the malignant world is by strangeness and enmity an incompetent judge, yet

¹ Isai. xlv. 34; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, and xxxvii. 14; Joel, ii. 28, 29; Ezek. xi. 19, and xviii. 31; Eph. i. 13; John, iii. 5, and iv. 23, 24, and vi. 63, and vii. 39; John, i. 33, and xiv. 16, 26; Acts, i. 5, 8; John, xv. 26, and xvi. 7, 8, 9, &c.

it is discernible to others, that they live upon the hopes of a better life, and their heavenly interest is it that overruleth all the adverse interests of this world, and that in order thereunto they live under the conduct of Divine authority, and that God's will is highest and most prevalent with them, and that to obey and please him, so far as they know it, is the greatest business of their lives, though ignorance and adverse flesh, do make their holiness and obedience imperfect. The universal noise and opposition of the world against them, doth show that men discern a very great difference, which error, and cross interests, and carnal inclinations, render displeasing to those who find themselves condemned by their heavenly designs and conversations.

But whether others discern it, or deny it, or detest it, the true believer is conscious of it in himself? Even when he groaneth to be better, to believe, and trust, and love God more, and to have more of the heavenly life and comforts, those very desires signify another appetite and mind, than worldlings have; and even when his frailties and weaknesses make him doubt of his own sincerity, he would not change his governor, rule, or hopes, for all that the world can offer him. He hath the witness in himself, that there is in believers a sanctifying Spirit, calling up their minds to God and glory, and warring victoriously against the flesh; so that to 'will is present with them;'¹ and they love and delight in a holy conformity to their rule, and it is never so well and pleasant with them, as when they can trust and love God most; and in their worst and weakest condition,

¹ 1 John, v. 9, 10, 11; Gal. v. 17; Rom. vii.; Phil. iii. 7, to 15.

they would fain be perfect. This Spirit, and its renewing work, so greatly different from the temper and desires of worldly men, is given by Christ to all sound believers.

It is true, that some that know not of an incarnate Saviour, have much in them that is very laudable; whether it be real saving holiness, and whether Abraham were erroneous in thinking that even the Sodoms of the world were likely to have had fifty righteous persons in them; I am not now to inquire; but it is sure, 1. That the world had really a Saviour about four thousand years before Christ's incarnation; even the God of pardoning mercy, who promised and undertook what after was performed, and shall be to the end. 2. And that the Spirit of this Saviour did sanctify God's elect from the beginning; and gave them the same holy and heavenly dispositions (in some degree) before Christ's incarnation, as is given since; yea, it is called, 'The Spirit of Christ, which was before given.'¹ 3. That this Spirit was then given to more than the Jews. 4. That Christ hath put that part of the world that hear not of his incarnation, into no worse a condition than he found them in: that as the Jews' covenant of peculiarity was no repeal of the universal law of grace, made by God with fallen mankind in Adam and Noah; so the covenant of grace of the second edition made with Christ's peculiar people, is no repeal of the foresaid law in the first edition, to them that hear not of the second. 5. That all that wisdom and goodness, that is in any without the Christian church is the

¹ 1 Pet. i. 11.

work of the Spirit of the Redeemer; as the light which goeth before sun-rising and after sun-setting, and in a cloudy day, is of the same sun which others see, even to them that see not the sun itself. 6. That the liker any without the church are to the sanctified believers, the better they are, and the more unlike the worse; so that all that these six things being undeniable, it appeareth that it is the same Spirit of Christ which now giveth all men what real goodness is any where to be found. But it is notorious that no part of the world is, in heavenliness and virtue, comparable to true and serious Christians.

And let it be added, that Christ who promised the greatest measures of the Spirit (which he accordingly hath given) did expressly promise this, as a means and pledge, first-fruits and earnest of the heavenly glory; and therefore it is a certain proof, that such a glory we shall have.¹ He that can and doth give us a spiritual change or renovation, which in its nature and tendency is heavenly, and sets our hopes and hearts on heaven, and turneth the endeavours of our lives to the seeking of future blessedness; and told us beforehand that he would give us this preparatory grace, as the earnest of that felicity, may well be trusted to perform his word in our actual glorification.

And now, O weak and fearful soul! Why shouldst thou draw back, as if the case were yet left doubtful? Is not thy foundation firm? Is not the way of life, through the valley of death, made safe by him that conquered death? Art thou not yet delivered from the bondage of thy fears, when the

¹ Eph. i. 14; Cor. i. 22, & v. 5; Rom. viii. 23; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Eph. i. 13, & iv. 30; 1 John, v. 9, 10; Heb. x. 15.

jailor and executioner who had the power of death, hath by Christ been put out of his power as to thee? Is not all this evidence true and sure? Hast thou not the witness in thyself? Hast thou not found the motions, the effectual operations, the renewing changes of this Spirit in thee long ago; and is he not still the agent and witness of Christ, residing and operating in thee? Whence else are thy groanings after God? Thy desires to be nearer to his glory? To know him better? To love him more? Whence came all the pleasure thou hast had in his sacred truth, and ways, and service? Who else overcame thy folly, and pride, and vain desires, so far as they are overcome? Who made it thy choice to sit at the feet of Christ, and hear his word, as the better part, and to despise the honours and preferments of the world, and to account them all as dung and dross? Who breathed in thee all those requests that thou hast sent up to God? Overvalue not corrupted nature; it bringeth not forth such fruits as these: if thou doubt of that, remember what thou wast in the hour of temptation; even of poor and weak temptations: and how small a matter hath drawn thee to sin, when God did but leave thee to thyself: forget not the days of youthful vanity: overlook not the case of the miserable world; even of thy sinful neighbours, who in the midst of light still live in darkness, and hear not the loudest calls of God: look about on thousands, that in the same land, and under the same teaching, and after the greatest judgments and deliverance, run on to all excess of riot, and as past feeling are greedily vicious and unclean. Is it no work of Christ's Spirit that hath made thee to differ? Thou hast nothing to boast of, and

much to be humbled for ; but thou hast also much to be thankful for. Thy holy desires are, alas ! too weak ; but they are holy : thy love hath been too cold ; but it is holiness, and the most holy God that thou hast loved : thy hopes in God have been too low ; but it is God thou hast hoped in, and his love and glory that thou hast hoped for : thy prayers have been too dull and interrupted ; but it is holiness and heaven that thou hast most prayed for : thy labours and endeavours have been too slothful ; but it is God and glory, and the good of mankind that thou hast laboured for. Though thy motion were too weak and slow, it hath been Godward ; and therefore it is from God. O bless the Lord that hath not only given thee a word, that beareth the image of God, and is sealed by uncontrolled miracles to be the matter of thy belief, but hath also fulfilled his promises so oft and notably to thee, in the answer of prayers, and in great and convincing deliverances of thyself and many others ! and hath by wonders oft assisted thy faith. Bless that God of light and love, who, besides the universal attestations of his word, long ago given to all the church, hath given thee the internal seal, the nearer indwelling attestation, the effects of power, light, and love, imprinted on thy nature, mind, and will, the witness in thyself that the word of God is not a human dream, or lifeless thing ; that by regeneration hath been here preparing thee for the light of glory, as by generation he prepared thee to see this light, and converse with men. And wilt thou yet doubt and fear against all this evidence, experience, and foretaste ?

I think it not needless labour to confirm my soul in the full persuasion of the truth of its own im-

mortal nature, and of a future life of joy or misery to mankind, and of the certain truth of the Christian faith. The being of God, and his perfection, hath so great evidence, that I find no great temptation to doubt of it, any more than, whether there be an earth or a sun; and the atheist seemeth to me to be in that no better than mad; the Christian verity is known only by supernatural revelation; but by such revelation it is so attested externally to the world, and internally to holy souls, as maketh faith the ruling, victorious, consolatory principle, by which we must live, and not by sight; but the soul's immortality and reward hereafter is of a middle nature, viz. of natural revelation, but incomparably less clear than the being of a God; and therefore, by the addition of evangelical (supernatural) revelation, is made to us much more clear and sure. And I find, among the infidels of this age, that most who deny the Christian verity, do almost as much deny or question the retribution of a future life; and they that are fully satisfied of this, do find Christianity so excellently congruous to it, as greatly facilitateth the work of faith. Therefore, I think that there is scarce any verity more needful to be thoroughly digested into a full assurance, than this of the soul's immortality and hope of future happiness.

And, when I consider the great unlikeness of men's hearts and lives to such a belief as we all profess, I cannot but fear that not only the ungodly, but most that truly hope for glory have a far weaker belief, in habit and act, of the soul's immortality, and the truth of the gospel, than they seem to take notice of in themselves. Can I be certain, or fully persuaded, in habit and act, of the future rewards

and punishments of souls; and that we shall be all shortly judged as we have lived here, and yet not despise all the vanities of this world, and set my heart with resolution and diligence to the preparation which must be made by a holy, heavenly, fruitful life, as one whose soul is taken up with the hopes and fears of things of such unspeakable importance? Who could stand dallying as most men do, at the door of eternity, that did verily believe his immortal soul must be shortly there? Though such a one had no certainty of his own particular title to salvation, the certainty of such a grand concernment, that joy or misery is at hand, would surely awaken him to try, to cry, to search; to beg, to strive, to watch, to spare no care, or cost, or labour, to make all sure in a matter of such weight: it could not be but he would do it with speed, and do it with a full resolved soul, and do it with earnest zeal and diligence. What man that once saw the things which we hear of, even heaven and hell, would not afterwards, at least in deep regard and seriousness, exceed the most resolved believer that you know? One would think in reason it should be so thought: I confess a wicked heart is very senseless.

I do confess that there is much weakness of the belief of things unseen where yet there is sincerity; but surely, there will be some proportion between our belief and its effects. And where there is little regard, or fear, or hopes, or sorrow, or joy, or resolved diligence for the world to come, I must think that there is, in act at least, but little belief of it; and that such persons little know themselves how much they secretly doubt whether it be true. I know that most complain almost altogether of the

uncertainty of their title to salvation, and little of their uncertainty of a heaven and hell; but were they more certain of this, and truly persuaded of it at the heart, it would do more to bring them to that serious resolved faithfulness in religion, which would help them more easily to be sure of their sincerity than long examinations, and many marks talked of without this, will do.

And I confess, that the great wisdom of God hath not thought meet, that in the body we should have as clear, and sensible, and lively apprehensions of heaven and hell as sight would cause. For that would be to have too much of heaven or hell on earth; for the gust would follow the perception, and so full a sense would be some sort of a possession, which we are not fit for in this world. And therefore, it must be a darker revelation than sight would be, that it may be a lower perception, lest this world and the next should be confounded; and faith and reason should be put out of office, and not duly tried, exercised, and fitted for reward. But yet faith is faith, and knowledge is knowledge; and he that verily believeth such great transcendent things, though he see them not, will have some proportionable affections and endeavours.

I confess also, that man's soul in flesh is not fit to bear so deep a sense of heaven and hell as sight would cause; because it here operateth on and with the body, and according to its capacity, which cannot bear so deep a sense without distraction, by screwing up the organs too high, till they break, and so overdoing would undo all; but yet there is an overruling seriousness, which a certain belief of future things must needs bring the soul to, that truly hath it. And he that is careful and serious

for this world, and looketh after a better, but with a slight, unwilling, half-regard, and in the second place, must give me leave to think that he believeth but as he liveth, and that his doubting or unbelief of the reality of a heaven and hell is greater than his belief.

O then, for what should my soul more pray, than for a clearer and a stronger faith? I believe, Lord help my unbelief! I have many a thousand times groaned to thee under the burden of this remnant of darkness and unbelief. I have many thousand times thought of the evidences of the Christian verity, and of the great necessity of a lively, powerful, active faith. I have begged it; I have cried to thee night and day, Lord increase my faith: I have written and spoken that to others, which might be most useful to myself, to raise the apprehensions of faith yet higher, and make them liker those of sense; but yet, yet Lord, how dark is this world! What a dungeon is this flesh! How little clearer is my sight, and little quicker are my perceptions of unseen things, than long ago! Am I at the highest that man on earth can reach? And that when I am so dark and low! Is there no growth of these apprehensions more to be expected? Doth the soul cease its increase in vigorous perception, when the body ceaseth its increase or vigour of sensation. Must I sit down in so low a measure, while I am drawing nearer to the things believed; and am almost there, where belief must pass into sight and love? or must I take up with the passive silence and inactivity, which some friars persuade us is nearer to perfection; and under pretence of annihilation and receptivity, let my sluggish heart alone, and say, that in this neglect,

I wait for thy operations? O, let not a soul, that is driven from this world and weary of vanity, and can think of little else but immortality, that seeks and cries both night and day for the heavenly light, and fain would have some foretaste of glory, and some more of the first-fruits of the promised joys, let not such a soul either long, or cry, or strive in vain: punish not my former grieving of thy Spirit, by deserting a soul that crieth for thy grace, so near its great and inconceivable change. Let me not languish in vain desires at the door of hope, nor pass with doubtful thoughts and fears from this vale of misery. Which should be the season of triumphant faith, and hope, and joy, if not when I am entering on the world of joy? O thou that has left us so many consolatory words of promise, that our joy may be full, send, O send the promised Comforter, without whose approaches and heavenly beams, when all is said, and a thousand thoughts and strivings have been assayed, it will still be night and winter with the soul.

But have I not expected more particular and more sensitive conceptions of heaven, and the state of blessed souls, than I should have done, and remained less satisfied, because I expected such distinct perceptions to my satisfaction which God doth not ordinarily give to souls in flesh? I fear it hath been too much so. A distrust of God, and a distrustful desire to know much, good and evil, for ourselves, as necessary to our quiet and satisfaction, was that sin which hath deeply corrupted man's nature, and is more of our common pravity than is usually observed. I find that this distrust of God and my Redeemer, hath had too great a hand in my desires of a distincter and more sen-

sible knowledge ; I know that I should implicitly, and absolutely, and quietly, trust my soul into my Redeemer's hands, of which I must speak more anon. And it is not only for the body, but also for the soul, that a distrustful care is our great sin and misery. But yet we must desire that our knowledge and belief may be as distinct and particular as God's revelations are ; and we can love no further than we know ; and the more we know of God and glory, the more we shall love, desire, and trust him : it is a known and not merely an unknown God, and happiness that the soul doth joyfully desire. And if I may not be ambitious of too sensible and distinct perceptions here, of the things unseen ; yet must I desire and beg the most fervent and sensible love to them that I am capable of. I am willing, in part, to take up with that unavoidable ignorance, and that low degree of such knowledge, which God confineth us to in the flesh, so be it he will give me but such consolatory foretaste in love and joy, which such a general imperfect knowledge may consist with, that my soul may not pass with distrust and terror, but with suitable triumphant hopes, to the everlasting pleasures.

O Father of lights, who givest wisdom to them that ask it of thee, shut not up this sinful soul in darkness ! Leave me not to grope in unsatisfied doubts, at the door of the celestial light ! or if my knowledge must be general, let it be clear and powerful, and deny me not now the lively exercise of faith, hope, and love, which are the stirrings of the new creature, and the dawnings of the everlasting light, and the earnest of the promised inheritance.

But we are oft ready to say with Cicero, when

he had been reading such as Plato, that while the book is in our hands, we seem confident of our immortality, and when we lay it by our doubts return ; so our arguments seem clear and cogent, and yet when we think not of them with the best advantage, we are oft surprised with fear, lest we should be mistaken, and our hopes be vain ; and, hereupon, and from the common fear of death, that even good men too often manifest, the infidels gather that we do but force ourselves into such a hope as we desire to be true, against the tendency of man's nature, and that we were not made for a better world.

But this fallacy ariseth from men's not distinguishing, 1. Sensitive fears from rational uncertainty, or doubts. 2. And the mind that is in the darkness of unbelief, from that which hath the light of faith.

I find in myself too much of fear, when I look into eternity, interrupting and weakening my desires and joy. But I find that it is very much an irrational sensitive fear, which the darkness of man's mind, the greatness of the change, the dreadful majesty of God, and man's natural averseness to die, do in some degree necessitate, even when reason is fully satisfied that such fears are consistent with certain safety. If I were bound with the strongest chains, or stood on the surest battlements, on the top of a castle or steeple, I could not possibly look down without fear, and such as would go near to overcome me ; and yet I should be rationally sure that I am there fast and safe, and cannot fall. So is it with our prospect into the life to come ; fear is oft a necessitated passion. When a man is certain of his safe foundation, it will violently rob him of the comfort of that certainty ; yea

it is a passion that irrationally doth much to corrupt our reason itself, and would make us doubt, because we fear, though we know not why; and a fearful man doth hardly trust his own apprehensions of his safety, but among other fears, is still ready to fear lest he be deceived. Like timorous melancholy persons about their bodies, who are ready still to think that every little distemper is a mortal symptom, and that worse is still near them than they feel, and they hardly believe any words of hope.

And Satan, knowing the power of these passions, and having easier access to the sensitive than to the intellectual faculties, doth labour to get in at this back door, and to frighten poor souls into doubts and unbelief; and in timorous natures he doth it with too great success, as to the consolatory acts of faith. Though yet God's mercy is wonderfully seen in preserving many honest, tender souls, from the damning part of unbelief, and by their fears, preserveth them from being bold with sin, when many bold and impudent sinners turn infidels or atheists, by forfeiting the helps of grace.

And indeed, irrational fears have so much power to raise doubts, that they are seldom separated; insomuch, that many scarce know or observe the difference between doubts and fears; and many say they not only fear, but doubt, when they scarce can tell why: as if it were no intellectual act which they meant, but an irrational passion.

If therefore my soul see undeniable evidence of immortality, and if it be able by irrefragable argument, to prove the future blessedness expected, and if it be convinced that God's promises are true, and sufficiently sealed and attested by him, to warrant the most confident belief, and if I trust my

soul and all my hopes upon this word, and evidences of truth, it is not then our averseness to die, nor the sensible fears of a soul that looketh into eternity, that invalidate any of the reasons of my hope, nor prove the unsoundness of my faith.

But yet these fears do prove its weakness, and were they prevalent against the choice, obedience, resolutions, and endeavours of faith, they would be prevalent against the truth of faith, or prove its nullity; for faith is trust, and trust is a securing, quieting thing; 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' was a just reproof of Christ to his disciples, when sensible dangers raised up their fears; for the established will hath a political or imperfect, though not a despotical and absolute power over our passions; and therefore our fears do show us our unbelief, and stronger faith is the best means of conquering even irrational fears: 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou so disquieted in me? Trust in God,'¹ &c. is a needful way of chiding a timorous heart.

And though many say that faith hath not evidence, and think that it is an assent of the mind, merely commanded by the empire of the will, without a knowledge of the verity of the testimony; yet certainly the same assent is ordinarily in the Scriptures called indifferently, 'knowing' and 'believing;' and as a bare command will not cause love, unless we perceive an amiableness in the object; so a bare command of the law or of the will, cannot alone cause belief, unless we perceive a truth in the testimony believed; for it is a contradiction,

¹ Psalm xlii.

or an act without its object. And truth is perceived only so far as it is some way evident; for evidence is nothing but the objective perceptibility of truth, or that which is metaphorically called light, so that we must say that faith hath not sensible evidence of the invisible things believed; but faith is nothing else but the willing perception of the evidence of truth in the word of the assertor, and a trust therein. We have and must have evidence that Scripture is the God's word, and that his word is true, before, by any command of the word or will, we can believe it.

I do therefore neither despise evidence as unnecessary, nor trust to it alone as the sufficient total cause of my belief; for if God's grace do not open mine eyes, and come down in power upon my will, and insinuate into it a sweet acquaintance with the things unseen, and a taste of their goodness to delight my soul, no reasons will serve to stablish and comfort me, how undeniable soever: reason is fain first to make use of notions, words or signs; and to know terms, propositions, and arguments, which are but means to the knowledge of things, is its first employment, and that, alas! which multitudes of learned men do take up with; but it is the illumination of God that must give us an effectual acquaintance with the things spiritual and invisible, which these notions signify, and to which our organical knowledge is but a means.

To sum up all, That our hopes of heaven have a certain ground appeareth, I. From nature. II. From grace. III. From other works of gracious Providence.

I. From the nature of man:—1. Made capable

of it. 2. Obligated even by the law of nature to seek it before all. 3. Naturally desiring perfection:—1. habitual, 2. active, and 3. objective.

And from the nature of God:—1. As good and communicative. 2. As holy and righteous. 3. As wise, making none of his works in vain.

II. From grace:—1. Purchasing it. 2. Declaring it by a messenger from heaven, both by word and by Christ's own (and others) resurrection. 3. Promising it. 4. Sealing that promise by miracles then. 5. And by the work of sanctification to the end of the world.

III. By subordinate Providence:—1. God's actual governing the world by the hopes and fears of another life. 2. The many helps which he giveth us for a heavenly life, and for attaining it, which are not vain. 3. Specially the ministration of angels, and their love to us, and communion with us. 4. And, by accident, devils themselves convince us:—1. By the nature of their temptations. 2. By apparitions and haunting houses. 3. By witches. 4. By possessions: which though it be but a satanical operation on the body, yet is so extraordinary an operation that it differeth from the more usual, as, if I may so compare them, God's Spirit so operateth on the saints that it is called his dwelling in them or possessing them, as different from his lower operations on others.

Having proved that faith and hope have a certain future happiness to expect, the text directeth me next to consider, why it is described as being with Christ: viz. I. What is included in our being with Christ. II. That we shall be with him. III. Why we shall be with him.

To be with Christ includeth, 1. Presence. 2.

Union. 3. Communion, or participation of felicity with him.

Is it Christ's godhead, or his human soul, or his human body, that we shall be present with and united to, or all? It is all, but variously.

We shall be present with the divine nature of Christ. But are we not always so? And are not all creatures so? Yes, as his essence comprehendeth all place and beings; but not as it is operative and manifested in and by his glory. Christ directeth our hearts and tongues to pray, 'Our Father which art in heaven;' and yet he knew that all place is in and with God; because it is in heaven that he gloriously operateth and shineth forth to holy souls: even as man's soul is eminently said to be in the head, because it understandeth and reasoneth in the head, and not in the foot or hand, though it be also there. And as we look a man in the face when we talk to him, so we look up to heaven when we pray to God. God, who is and operateth as the root of nature in all the works of creation, (for in him we live, move, and are,) and by the way of grace in all the gracious, doth operate and is by the works and splendour of his glory eminently in heaven: by which glory therefore we must mean some created glory, for his essence hath no inequality.

We shall be present with the human nature of Christ, both soul and body. But here our present narrow thoughts must not too boldly presume to resolve the difficulties, which to a distinct understanding of this should be overcome; for we must not here expect any more than a dark and general knowledge of them: as, 1. What is the formal difference between Christ's glorified body, and his

flesh on earth. 2. Where Christ's glorified body is, and how far it extendeth. 3. Wherein the soul and the glorified body differ, seeing that it is called a spiritual body. These things are beyond our present reach.

For what conceptions can we have of a spiritual body, save that it is pure, incorruptible, invisible to mortal eyes, and fitted to the most perfect state of the soul. How near the nature of it is to a spirit, and so to the soul, and how far they agree or differ in substance, extensiveness, divisibility, or activity, little do we know.

Nor do we know where and how far Christ's body is present by extent. The sun is commonly taken for a body, and its motive, illuminative, and calefactive beams, are by the most probable philosophy taken to be a real emanant part of its substance, and so that it is essentially as extensive as those beams: that is, it at once filleth all our air, and toucheth the surface of the earth, and how much further it extendeth we cannot tell. And what difference there is between Christ's glorified body and the sun, in purity, splendour, extent, or excellency of nature, little do poor mortals know. And so of the rest.

Let no man therefore cavil, and say, how can a whole world of glorified bodies be all present with the one body of Christ, when each must possess its own proper room? For as the body of the solar beams, and the extensive air, are so compresent, as that none can discern the difference of the places which they possess, and a world of bodies are present with them both, so may all our bodies be with Christ's body, and that without any true confusion.

Besides presence with Christ, there will be such an union as we cannot now distinctly know. A political relative union is past doubt, such as subjects have in one kingdom with their king; but little know we how much more. We see that there is a wonderful corporeal continuity or contact among the material works of God: and the more spiritual, pure, and noble, the more inclination each nature hath to union. Every plant on earth hath a union with the whole earth in which it liveth; they are real parts of it. And what natural conjunction our bodies shall have to Christ's, and what influence from it, is past our knowledge: though his similitudes, in John, xv. and vi., Eph. v., and 1 Cor. xii., seem to extend far, yet being but similitudes, we cannot fully know how far.

The same, *variatis variandis*, we may say of our union with Christ's human soul. Seeing souls are more inclinable to union than bodies, when we see all vegetables to be united parts of one earth, and yet to have each one its proper individuating form and matter, we cannot (though animals seem to walk more disjunct) imagine that there is no kind of union or conjunction of invisible souls, though they retain their several substances and forms: nor yet that our bodies shall have a nearer union with Christ's body, than our souls with his soul; but the nature, manner, and measure of it, we know not.

Far be it from us to think that Christ's glorified spiritual body is such in form, parts, and dimensions as his earthly body was; that it hath hands, feet, brains, heart, stomach, liver, intestines, as on earth; or that it is such a compound of earth, water, and air, as here it was, and of such confined

extent: for then as his disciples and a few Jews only were present with him, and all the world besides were absent, and had none of his company, so it would be in heaven. But it is not such only as Paul, but all true believers in the world, from the creation to the end, shall be with Christ and see his glory. And though inequality of fitness, or degrees of holiness, will make an inequality of glory, no man can prove an inequality by local distance from Christ; or, if such there be, for it is beyond our reach, yet none in heaven are at such a distance from him as not to enjoy the felicity of his presence.

Therefore when we dispute against them that hold transubstantiation, and the ubiquity of Christ's body, we do assuredly conclude that sense is judge whether there be real bread and wine present or not; but it is no judge whether Christ's spiritual body be present or not, no more than whether an angel be present. And we conclude that Christ's body is not infinite or immense as is his Godhead; but what are its dimensions, limits, or extent, and where it is absent, far be it from us to determine when we cannot tell how far the sun extendeth its secondary substance, or emanant beams; nor well what locality is as to Christ's soul or any spirit, if to a spiritual body.

Their fear is vain and carnal who are afraid lest their union with Christ or one another will be too near; even lest thereby they lose their individuation, as rivers that fall into the sea; or extinguished candles, whose fire is after but a sun-beam, or part of the common element of fire in the air; or as the vegetative spirits, which in autumn retire from the leaves into the branches and trunk of the tree.

I have proved before, that our individuation, or numerical existence, ceaseth not; and that no union is to be feared, were it never so sure, which destroyeth not the being, or formal powers, or action of the soul: and that it is the great radical disease of selfishness, and want of holy love to God and our Saviour, and one another, which causeth these unreasonable fears; even that selfishness which now maketh men so partially desirous of their own wills and pleasure in comparison of God's, and their own felicity in comparison of others', and which maketh them so easily bear God's injuries, and the sufferings of a thousand others, in comparison of their own. But he that put a great desire of the body's preservation into the soul while it is its form, will abate that desire when the time of separation is come, because there is then no use for it till the resurrection; else it would be a torment to the soul.

And as we shall have union, so also communion with the divine and human nature of Christ respectively. Both as they will be the objects of our soul's most noble and constant acts, and as they will be the fountain or communicative cause of our receptions.

We find now that our various faculties have various objects suitable to their natures. The objects of sense are things sensible, and the objects of imagination things imaginable, and the objects of intellection things intelligible, and the objects of the will things amiable. The eye, that is a nobler sense than some others, hath light for its object, which to other senses is none; and so of the rest. Therefore we have cause to suppose, that as far as our glorified souls and our spiritual glorified bodies

will differ, so far Christ's glorified soul and body will respectively be their several objects; and beholding the glory of both will be part of our glory.

Yet is it not hence to be gathered that the separated soul before the resurrection shall not have Christ's glorified body for its object; for the objects of the body are also the objects of the soul; or to speak more properly, the objects of sense are also the objects of intellection and will, though all the objects of the intellect and will are not objects of sense. The separated soul can know Christ's glorified body, though our present bodies cannot see a soul. But how much our spiritual bodies will excel in capacity and activity these passive bodies that have so much earth and water, we cannot tell.

And though now our souls are as a candle in a lantern, and must have extrinsic objects admitted by the senses before they can be understood, yet it followeth not that therefore a separated soul cannot know such objects. 1. Because it now knoweth them abstractively per species, because its act of ratiocination is compound as to the cause, soul and body. But it will then know such things intuitively, as now it can do itself, when the lantern is cast by. 2. And, whatever many of late that have given themselves the title of ingenious have said to the contrary, we have little reason to think that the sensitive faculty is not an essential, inseparable power of the same soul that is intellectual, and that sensation ceaseth to separated souls, however the modes of it may cease with their several uses and organs. To feel intellectually, or to understand and will feelingly, we have cause to think will be the action of separated souls. And if so, why may they not have communion with Christ's body and

soul as their objects, in their separated state? 3. Besides that we are uncertain whether the separated soul have no vehicle or body at all. Things unknown to us must not be supposed true or false. Some think that the sensitive soul is material, and as a body to the intellectual, never separated. I am not of their opinion that make them two substances, but I cannot say I am certain that they err. Some think that the soul is material, of a purer substance than things visible, and that the common notion of its substantiality meaneth nothing else but a pure (as they call it spiritual) materiality. Thus thought not only Tertullian, but almost all the old Greek doctors of the church that write of it, and most of the Latin, or very many, as I have elsewhere showed, and as Faustus reciteth them in the treatise answered by Mammertus. Some think that the soul, as vegetative, is an igneous body, such as we call æther, or solar fire, or rather of a higher, purer kind; and that sensation and intellection are those formal faculties which specifically difference it from inferior mere fire or æther. There were few of the old doctors that thought it not some of these ways material; and consequently extensive and divisible *per potentiam divinam*, though not naturally or of its own inclination, because most strongly inclined to unity. And if any of all these uncertain opinions should prove true, the objections in hand will find no place. To say nothing of their conceit who say, that as the spirit that retireth from the falling leaves in autumn continueth to animate the tree, so man's soul may do when departed with that to which it is united, to animate some more noble universal body. But as all these are the too bold cogitations of men that had better

let unknown things alone, so yet they may be mentioned to repel that more perilous boldness which denieth the soul's action, which is certain upon, at best, uncertain reasons.

I may boldly conclude, notwithstanding such objections, that Christ's divine and human nature, soul and body, shall be the felicitating objects of intuition and holy love to the separated soul before the resurrection; and that to be with Christ, is to have such communion with him, and not only to be present where he is.

And the chief part of this communion will be that in which we are receptive; even Christ's communications to the soul. And as the infinite incomprehensible Deity is the root or first cause of all communication, natural, gracious, and glorious, to being, motion, life, rule, reason, holiness, and happiness; and the whole creation is more dependent on God than the fruit on the tree, or the plants on the earth, or the members on the body, (though yet they are not parts of the Deity, nor deified, because the communication is creative;) so God useth second causes in his communications to inferior natures; and it is more than probable, that the human soul of Christ, primarily, and his body, secondarily, are the chief second cause of influence and communication both of grace and glory, both to man in the body, and to the separated soul. And as the sun is first an efficient, communicative second cause of seeing to the eye, and then is also the object of our sight, so Christ is to the soul;¹ for as God, so the Lamb is the light and glory of the

¹ This one truth will give great light into the controversies, about God's gracious operations on the soul; for when he useth second causes, we see he operateth according to their limited

heavenly Jerusalem; and in his light we shall have light. Though he give up the kingdom to the Father, so far as that God shall be all and all, and his creature fully restored to his favour, and there shall be need of a healing government no more, for the recovering of lapsed souls to God; yet sure he will not cease to be our Mediator, and to be the church's head, and to be the conveying cause of everlasting life, and light, and love to all his members: as now we live because he liveth, even as the branches in the vine, and the Spirit that quickeneth, enlighteneth, and sanctifieth us, is first the Spirit of Christ before it is ours, and is communicated from God by him to us; so will it be in the state of glory; for we shall have our union and communion with him perfected, and not destroyed or diminished. And unless I could be so proud as to think that I am or shall be the most excellent of all the creatures of God, and therefore nearest him, and above all others, how could I think that I am under the influence of no second cause, but have either grace or glory from God alone?

So far am I from such arrogancy, as to think that I shall be so near to God, as to be above the need and use of Christ and his communications, as that I dare not say that I shall be above the need and help of other subordinate causes; as I am now lower than angels, and need their help, and as I am under the government of my superiors, and as a poor, weak member am little worth in comparison of the whole body, the church of Christ, and receive continual help from the whole; so how aptitude; and Christ's human nature, and all other second causes are limited, and operate variously and resistibly, according to the recipient's capacity.

far it will be thus in glory I know not, but that God will still use second causes for our joy I doubt not; and also that there will not be an equality; and that it will be consistent with God's all-sufficiency to us and our felicity in him, that we shall for ever have use for one another; and that to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and to be in Abraham's bosom, and sit at Christ's right and left hand in his kingdom, and to be ruler over ten cities, and to join with the heavenly host or choir in the joyful love and praise of God, and of the Lamb, and many such like, are not false nor useless notes, and notions of our celestial glory.

And certainly if I be with Christ, I shall be with all that are with Christ; even with all the heavenly society; though these bodies of gross passive matter must have so much room, that the earth is little enough for all its inhabitants; and those at the antipodes are almost as strange to us as if they were in another world, and those of another kingdom, another province or country, and oft another parish, yea, another house, are strangers to us; so narrow is our capacity of communion here. Yet we have great cause to think by many scripture expressions, that our heavenly union and communion will be nearer and more extensive; and that all the glorified shall know each other, or at least be far less distant, and less strange than now we are. As I said before, when I see how far the sun-beams do extend, how they penetrate our closest glass, and puzzle them that say that all bodies are impenetrable; when I see how little they hinder the placing or presence of other creatures, and how intimately they mix themselves with all; and seem to.

possess the whole region of the air, yet when the air seemeth itself to fill it, &c., I dare not think that glorified spirits, (no nor spiritual bodies) will be such strangers to one another as we are here on earth.

And I must needs say, that it is a pleasant thought to me, and greatly helpeth my willingness to die, to think that I shall go to all the holy ones, both Christ and angels, and departed blessed souls. For, 1. God hath convinced me that they are better than I, each singly, and therefore more amiable than myself; 2, and that many are better than one; and the whole, than a poor sinful part; and the new Jerusalem is the glory of the creation. 3. God hath given me a love to all his holy ones as such; 4, and a love to the work of love and praise, which they continually and perfectly perform to God; 5, and a love to the celestial Jerusalem as it is complete, and to his glory shining in them; 6, and my old acquaintance with many a holy person gone to Christ, doth make my thoughts of heaven the more familiar to me. O, how many of them could I name! 7. And it is no small encouragement to one that is to enter upon an unseen world, to think that he goeth not an untrodden path, nor enters into a solitary or singular state, but followeth all by the creation to this day, that have passed by death to endless life. And is it not an emboldening consideration to think that I am to go no other way, nor to no other place or state, than all the believers and saints have gone to before me, from the beginning to this time? Of this more anon.

To depart.

But I must be loosed, or depart, before I can

thus be with Christ. And I must here consider, I. From what I must depart. II. And how, or in what manner; and I must not refuse to know the worst.

And, first, I know that I must depart from this body itself, and the life which consisteth in the animating of it. These eyes must here see no more; this hand must move no more; these feet must go no more; this tongue must speak no more. As much as I have loved and over-loved this body, I must leave it to the grave. There must it lie and rot in darkness, as a neglected and loathed thing.

This is the fruit of sin, and nature would not have it so: I mean the nature of this compound man: but what though it be so? 1. It is but my shell or tabernacle, and the clothing of my soul, and not itself. 2. It is but an elementary composition dissolved, and earth going to earth, and water to water, and air to air, and fire to fire, into that union which the elementary nature doth incline to. 3. It is but an instrument laid by when all its work is done, and a servant dismissed when his service is at an end. And what shall I do with a horse when I shall need to ride or travel no more? or with a pen, when I must write no more? It is but the laying by the passive receiver of my soul's operations, when the soul hath no more to do upon it, as I cast by my lute or other instrument when I have better employment than music to take up my time! 4. Or at most it is but as flowers die in the fall, and plants in winter, when the retiring spirits have done their work, and are indisposed to dwell in so cold and unmeet a habitation, as the season maketh their former matter then to be.

And its retirement is not its annihilation, but its taking up a fitter place.

5. It is but a separation from a troublesome companion, and putting off a shoe that pinched me : many a sad and painful hour I have had in this frail and faltering flesh ; many a weary night and day ; what cares, what fears, what griefs, what groans hath this body cost me ! Alas ! how many hours of my precious time have been spent to maintain it, please it, or repair it ! How considerable a part of all my life hath been spent in necessary sleep and rest ! and how much in eating, drinking, dressing, physic ! and how much in labouring or using means to procure these and other necessaries ! Many a hundred times I have thought, that it costeth me so dear to live, yea to live a painful weary life, that were it not for the work and higher ends of life, I had little reason to be much in love with it, or to be loath to leave it. And had not God put into our nature itself a necessary, unavoidable, sensitive love of the body, and of life, as he puts into the mother, and into every brute, a love of their young ones, how unclean, and impotent, and troublesome soever, for the propagation and continuance of man on earth ; had God but left it to mere reason, without this necessary pre-engagement of our natures, it would have been a matter of more doubt and difficulty than it is, whether this life should be loved and desired, and no small number would daily wish that they had never been born ! a wish which I have had much ado to forbear, even when I have known that it is sinful, and when the work and pleasure of my life have been such to overcome the evils of it, as few have had.

6. Yea, to depart from such a body, is but to be

removed from a very foul, uncleanly, and sordid habitation. I know that the body of man and brutes is the curious wonderful work of God, and not to be despised, nor injuriously dishonoured, but admired and well used ; but yet it is a wonder to our reason that so noble a spirit should be so meanly housed ; and we may call it our vile body, as the apostle doth.¹ It is made up of the airy, watery, and earthly parts of our daily food, subtracted and actuated by the fiery part, as the instrument of the soul. The greater part of the same food, which, with great cost and pomp, and pleasure, is first upon our tables, and then in our mouths to-day, is to-morrow a fetid loathsome excrement, and cast out into the draught, that the sight and smell of that annoy us not, which yesterday was the sumptuous fruit of our abundance, and the glory of that which is called great housekeeping, and the pleasure of our eyes and taste. And is not the rest that turneth into blood and flesh of the same general kind with that which is turned into loathsome filth ? The difference is, that it is fitter for the soul by the fiery spirits, yet longer to operate on and keep from corruption. Our blood and flesh are as stinking and loathsome a substance as our filthiest excrements, save that they are longer kept from putrefaction. Why then should it more grieve me, that one part of my food which turned into flesh, should rot and stink in the grave, than that all the rest should daily stink in the draught ? Yea, while it is within me, were it not covered from my sight, what a loathsome mass would my intestines appear ! If I saw what is in the guts,

¹ Phil. iii. 21.

the mesentery, the ventricles of the brain, what filth, what bilious or mucous matter, and perhaps crawling worms there are in the most proud or comely person, I should think that the cover of a cleaner skin, and the borrowed ornaments of apparel, make no great difference between such a body and a carcass, which may be also covered with an adorned coffin and monument, to deceive such spectators that see but outsides; the change is not so great of corruptible flesh, replete with such fetid excrements into corrupted flesh, as some fools imagine.

7. Yet more, to depart from such a body, is but to be loosed from the bondage of corruption, and from a clog and prison of the soul. I say not, that God put a pre-existent soul into this prison penally, for former faults; I must say no more than I can prove, or than I know; but that body which was an apt servant to innocent man's soul, is become as a prison to him now. What alteration sin made upon the nature of the body, as whether it be more terrene and gross than else it would have been, I have no reason to assert. Of earth or dust it was at first, and to dust it is sentenced to return. But no doubt but it hath its part in that dispositive depravation which is the fruit of sin. We find that the soul as sensitive, is so imprisoned or shut up in flesh, that sometimes it is more than one door that must be opened before the object and the faculty can meet. In the eye, indeed, the soul seemeth to have a window to look out at, and to be almost itself visible to others; and yet there are many interposing tunicles, and a suffusion or winking, can make the clearest sight to be as useless for the time as if it were none; and, if sense be thus shut up

from its object, no wonder if reason also be under difficulties from corporeal impediments; and, if the soul that is yoked with such a body, can go no faster than its heavy pace.

8. Yet further; to depart from such a body, is but to be separated from an accidental enemy, and one of our greatest and most hurtful enemies: though still we say, that it is not by any default in the work of our Creator, but by the effects of sin, that it is such. What could Satan or any other enemy of our souls have done against us without our flesh? What is it but the interest of this body that standeth in competition against the interest of our souls and God? What else do the profane sell their heavenly inheritance for, as Esau his birthright? No man loveth evil as evil, but as some way a real or seeming good. And what good is it but that which seemeth good for the body? What else is the bait of ambition, covetousness, and sensuality, but the interest and pleasure of this flesh? What taketh up the thoughts and care which we should lay out upon things spiritual and heavenly, but this body and its life? What pleasures be they that steal away men's hearts from the heavenly pleasures of faith, hope, and love, but the pleasures of this flesh? This draweth us to sin: this hindereth us from and in our duty. This body hath its interest which must be minded, and its inordinate appetite, which must be pleased, or else what murmurings and disquiet must we expect? Were it not for bodily interest and its temptations, how much more innocently and holily might I live? I should have nothing to care for, but to please God and to be pleased in him, were it not for the care of this bodily life. What employment should my will and love have, but to delight in God and love

Him, and his interest, were it not for the love of the body, and its concerns? By this the mind is darkened, and the thoughts diverted; by this our wills are perverted and corrupted, and by loving things corporeal, contract a strangeness and aversion from things spiritual: by this, heart and time are alienated from God; our guilt is increased, and our heavenly desire and hopes destroyed; life made unholy and uncomfortable, and death made terrible, God and our souls separated, and life eternal set by, and in danger of being utterly lost. I know that it is the sinful soul, that is in all this the chief cause and agent; but what is it but bodily interest that is its temptation, bait, and end? What but the body, and its life and pleasure, is the chief objective, alluring cause of all this sin and misery? And shall I take such a body to be better than heaven, or be loath to be loosed from so troublesome a yoke-fellow, or to be separated from so burthensome and dangerous a companion?

But it may be objected, I know this habitation, but the next I know not: I have long been acquainted with this body and this world, but the next I am unacquainted with.

I answer, 1. If you know it, you know all that of it which I have mentioned before: you know it to be a burden and snare. I am sure I know, by long experience, that this flesh hath been a painful lodging to my soul, and this world as a tumultuous ocean, or like the uncertain and stormy region of the air. And well he deserveth bondage, pain, and enmity, who will love them because he is acquainted with them, and is loath to leave them, because he hath had them long, and is afraid of being well, because he hath been long sick.

2. And do you not know the next and better habitation? Is faith no knowledge? If you believe God's promise you know that such a state there is; and you know in general that it is better than this world; and you know that we shall be in holiness and glorious happiness with Christ; and is this no knowledge? 3. And what we know not, Christ that prepareth and promiseth, it doth know; and is that nothing to us, if really we trust our souls to him? He that knoweth not more good by heaven than by earth, is yet so earthly and unbelieving, that it is no wonder if he be afraid and unwilling to depart.

Secondly, in departing from this body and life, I must depart from all its ancient pleasures: I must taste no more sweetness in meat or drink, or rest, or sport, or any such thing that now delighteth me; house and lands, and goods and wealth must all be left; and the place where I live must know me no more. All my possessions must be no more to me, nor all that I laboured for or took delight in than if they had never been at all.

And what though it must be so? Consider, O my soul, 1. Thy ancient pleasures are all past already: thou lovest none of them by death, for they are all lost before (if immortal grace have not by sanctifying them, made the benefits of them to become immortal.) All the sweet draughts, and morsels, and sports, and laughters; all the sweet thoughts of thy worldly possessions, or thy hopes, that ever thou hadst till this present hour, are past by, dead, and gone already. All that death doth to such as these is to prevent such, that on earth thou shalt have no more.

2. And is not that the case of every brute, that

hath no comfort from the prospect of another life, to repair his loss? And yet as our dominion diminisheth their pleasure while they live, by our keeping them under fear and labour, so at our will their lives must end. To please a gentleman's appetite for half an hour or less, birds, beasts, and fishes must lose life itself, and all the pleasure which life might have afforded them for many years; yea, perhaps many of these, birds and fishes at least, must die to become but one feast to a rich man, if not one ordinary meal. And is not their sensual pleasure of the same nature as ours? Meat is as sweet to them, and ease as welcome, and lust as strong; and the pleasure that death depriveth our flesh of, is such as is common to man with brutes. Why, then, should it seem hard to us to lose that in the course of nature, which our wills deprive them of at our pleasure? When, if we are believers, we can say that we do but exchange these delights of life for the greater delights of a life with Christ, which is a comfort which our fellow-creatures, the brutes, have not.

3. And, indeed, the pleasures of life are usually embittered with so much pain, that to a great part of the world doth seem to exceed them. The vanity and vexation is so great and grievous, as the pleasure seldom countervaieth. It is true that nature desireth life even under sufferings that are but tolerable, rather than to die; but that is not so much from the sensible pleasure of life, as from mere natural inclination; which God hath laid so deep that free-will hath not full power against it. As before I said, that the body of man is such a thing, that could we see through the skin, as men may look through a glass hive upon the bees, and see all the parts and motion, the filth and excre-

ments that are in it, the soul would hardly be willing to actuate, love, and cherish such a mass of unclean matter, and to dwell in such a loathsome place, unless God had necessitated it by nature (deeper than reason or sense) to such a love, and such a labour, by the *pondus* or spring of inclination. Even as the cow would not else lick the unclean calf, nor women themselves be at so much labour and trouble with their children, while there is little of them to be pleasant, but uncleanness and crying, and helpless impatience to make them wearisome, had not necessitating inclination done more hereto than any other sense or reason: even so I now say of the pleasures of living, that the sorrows are so much greater to multitudes than the sensible delight, that life would not be so commonly chosen and endured under so much trouble, were not men determined thereto by natural necessitating inclination; or deterred from death by the fears of misery to the separated soul. And yet all this kept not some, counted the best and wisest of the heathens, from taking it for the valour and wisdom of a man to make away his life in time of extremity, and from making this the great answer to them that grudge at God, for making their lives so miserable. If the misery be greater than the good of life, why dost thou not end it? Thou mayest do that when thou wilt.

Our meat and drink is pleasant to the healthful; but it costeth poor men so much toil, and labour, and care, and trouble to procure a poor diet for themselves and their families, that I think, could they live without eating and drinking, they would thankfully exchange the pleasure of it all, to be eased of their care and toil in getting it; and when sick-

ness cometh, even the pleasantest food is loathsome.

4. And do we not willingly interrupt and lay by the pleasures every night, when we betake ourselves to sleep? It is possible, indeed, a man may then have pleasant dreams, but I think few go to sleep for the pleasure of dreaming; either no dreams, or vain, or troublesome dreams are much more common. And to say that rest and ease is my pleasure, is but to say that my daily labour and cares are so much greater than my waking pleasure, that I am glad to lay by both together; for what is ease but deliverance from weariness and pain? For in deep and dreamless sleep there is little positive sense of the pleasure of rest itself. But indeed it is more from nature's necessitated inclination to this self-easing and repairing means, than from the positive pleasure of it, that we desire sleep. And if we can thus be contented every night to die as it were to all our waking pleasures, why should we be unwilling to die to them at once?

5. If it be the inordinate pleasures forbidden of God, which you are loath to leave, those must be left before you die, or else it had been better for you never to have been born; yea, every wise and godly man doth cast them off with detestation; you must be against holiness on that account as well as against death; and indeed the same cause which maketh men unwilling to live a holy life, hath a great hand in making them unwilling to die, even because they are loath to leave the pleasure of sin. If the wicked be converted, he must be gluttonous and drunken no more; he must live in pride, vain glory, worldliness, and sensual pleasures no more; and therefore he draweth back from a

holy life, as if it were from death itself. And so he is the loather to die, because he must have no more of the pleasures of his riches, pomp, and honours, his sports, and lust, and pleased appetite, no more for ever: but what is this to them that have mortified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof?

6. Yea, it is these forbidden pleasures which are the great impediments both of our holiness and our truest pleasures; and one of the reasons why God forbiddeth them, is because they hinder us from better. And if for our own good we must forsake them when we turn to God, it must be supposed that they should be no reason against our willingness to die, but rather that to be free from the danger of them, we should be the more willing.

7. But the great satisfying answer of this objection is, that death will pass us to far greater pleasures with which all these are worthy to be compared. But of this, more in due place.

Thirdly. When I die, I must depart not only from sensual delights, but from the more manly pleasures of my studies, knowledge, and converse with many wise and godly men, and from all my pleasure in reading, hearing, public and private exercises of religion, &c. I must leave my library, and turn over those pleasant books no more: I must no more come among the living, nor see the faces of my faithful friends, nor be seen of man: houses, and cities, and fields, and countries, gardens, and walks, will be nothing as to me. I shall no more hear of the affairs of the world, of man, or wars, or other news, nor see what becomes of that beloved interest of wisdom, piety, and peace, which I desire may prosper, &c.

I answer, 1. Though these delights are far above those of sensual sinners, yet, alas! how low and little are they! How small is our knowledge in comparison of our ignorance! And how little doth the knowledge of learned doctors differ from the thoughts of a silly child! For from our childhood we take it in but by drops; and as trifles are the matter of childish knowledge, so words and notions, and artificial forms do make up more of the learning of the world, than is commonly understood; and many such learned men know little more of any great and excellent things themselves, than rustics that are contemned by them for their ignorance. God and the life to come are little better known by them if not much less than by many of the unlearned. What is it but a child-game that many logicians, rhetoricians, grammarians, yea, metaphysicians, and other philosophers in their eagerest studies and disputes are exercised in? Of how little use is it to know what is contained in many hundred of the volumes that fill our libraries! Yea, or to know many of the most glorious speculations in physics, mathematics, &c. which have given some the title of virtuosi and ingeniosi, in these times, who have little the more wit or virtue to live to God, or overcome temptations from the flesh and the world, and to secure their everlasting hopes: what pleasure or quiet doth it give to a dying man, to know almost any of their trifles?

2. Yea, it were well if much of our reading and learning did us no harm, and more than good. I fear lest books are to some but a more honourable kind of temptation than cards and dice; lest many a precious hour be lost in them, that should be employed on much higher matters; and lest many

make such knowledge but an unholy, natural, yea, carnal pleasure, as worldlings do the thoughts of their lands and honours; and lest they be the more dangerous by how much the less suspected; but the best is, it is a pleasure so fenced from the slothful with thorny labour of hard and long studies, that laziness saveth more from it than grace and holy wisdom doth. But doubtless fancy and the natural intellect may with as little sanctity live in the pleasure of reading, knowing, disputing, and writing, as others spend their time at a game at chess, or other ingenious sport.

For my own part, I know that the knowledge of natural things is valuable and may be sanctified; much more theological theory; and when it is so, it is of good use; and I have little knowledge which I find not some way useful to my highest ends. And if wishing or money would procure more, I would wish and empty my purse for it; but yet if many score or hundred books which I have read, had been all unread, and I had that time now to lay out upon higher things, I should think myself much richer than now I am. And I must earnestly pray, the Lord forgive me the hours that I have spent in reading things less profitable, for the pleasing of a mind that would fain know all, which I should have spent for the increase of holiness in myself and others; and yet I must thankfully acknowledge to God, that from my youth he taught me to begin with things of greatest weight, and to refer most of my other studies thereto, and to spend my days under the motives of necessity and profit to myself, and those with whom I had to do. And I now think better of the course of Paul, that determined to know nothing but a cru-

cified Christ among the Corinthians ; that is, so to converse with them as to use and glorying, as if he knew nothing else ; and so of the rest of the apostles and primitive ages. And though I still love and honour the fullest knowledge, (and am not of Dr. Collett's mind, who, as Erasmus saith, most slighted Augustine,) yet I less censure even that Carthage council which forbad the reading of the heathen's books of learning and arts, than formerly I have done. And I would have men savour most that learning in their health, which they will or should savour most in sickness, and near to death.

3. And, alas ! how dear a vanity is this knowledge ! That which is but theoretical and notional is but a tickling delectation of the phantasy or mind, little differing from a pleasant dream ; but how many hours, what gazing of the wearied eye, what stretching thoughts of the impatient brain must it cost us, if we will attain to an excellency ? Well, saith Solomon, 'Much reading is a weariness to the flesh,' and 'He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.' How many hundred studious days and weeks, and how many hard and tearing thoughts, hath my little, very little knowledge cost me ! And how much infirmity and painfulness to my flesh, increase of painful diseases, and loss of bodily ease and health ! How much pleasure to myself of other kinds, and how much acceptance with men, have I lost by it, which I might easily have had in a more conversant and plausible way of life ! And when all is done, if I reach to know any more than others, of my place and order, I must differ so much, usually, from them ; and if I manifest not that difference, but keep all that knowledge to myself, I sin against conscience and na-

ture itself: the love of man, and the love of truth, oblige me to be soberly communicative. Were I so indifferent to truth and knowledge as easily to forbear their propagation, I must also be so indifferent to them, as not to think them worth so dear a price as they have cost me, though they are the free gifts of God. As nature is universally inclined to the propagation of the kind by generation, so is the intellectual nature to the communication of knowledge; which yet hath its lust and inordinacy in proud, ignorant, hasty teachers, and disputers, as the generating faculty hath in fornicators and adulterers.

But if I obey nature and conscience in communicating that knowledge which containeth my difference aforesaid, the dissenters too often take themselves disparaged by it, how peaceably soever I manage it; and as bad men take the piety of the godly to be an accusation of their impiety, so many teachers take themselves to be accused of ignorance, by such as condemn their errors by the light of truth; and if you meddle not with any person, yet take their opinions to be so much their interest, as that all that is said against them, they take as said against themselves. And then, alas! what envyings, what whispering disparagements, and what back-bitings, if not malicious slanders and underminings, do we meet with from the carnal clergy! And O that it were all from them alone, and that among the zealous and suffering party of faithful preachers, there were not much of sin and iniquity, and that none of them preached Christ in strife and envy. It is sad that error should find so much shelter under the selfishness and pride of pious men; and that the friends of truth should be tempted to reject and abuse so

much of it in their ignorance as they do ; but the matter of fact is too evident to be hid.

But especially if we meet with a clergy that are high, and have a great deal of worldly interest at the stake ; or if they be in councils and synods, and have got the major vote, they too easily believe that either their grandeur, reverence, names, or numbers must give them the reputation of being orthodox, and in the right, and will warrant them to account and defame him as erroneous, heretical, schismatical, singular, factious, or proud, that presumeth to contradict them, and to know more than they ; of which not only the case of Nazienzene, Martin, Chrysostom are sad proofs, but also the proceedings of too many general and provincial councils. And so our hard studies and darling truth must make us as owls or reproached persons among those reverend brethren, who are ignorant at easier rates, and who find it a far softer kind of life to think and say as the most or best esteemed do, than to purchase reproach and obloquy so dearly.

And the religious people of the several parts, will say as they hear their teachers do, and be the militant followers of their too militant leaders ; and it will be their house talk, their shop talk, their street talk, if not their church talk, that such a one is an erroneous, dangerous man, because he is not as ignorant and erroneous as they, especially if they be followers of a teacher much exasperated by confutation, and engaged in the controversy ; and also if it should be suffering confessors that are contradicted, or men most highly esteemed for extraordinary degrees of piety : then what cruel censures must we expect, who never so tenderly would suppress their errors ?

O what sad instances of this are, 1. The case of the confessors in Cyprian's days, who, as many of his epistles show, became the great disturbers of that church. 2. And the Egyptian monks at Alexandria, in the days of Theophilus, who turned Anthropomorphites, and raised abominable tumults, with woful scandal, and odious bloodshed. 3. And O that this age had not yet greater instances to prove the matter than any of these!

And now should a man be loath to die, for fear of leaving such troublesome ostly learning and knowledge, as the wisest men can here attain?

4. But the chief answer is yet behind. No knowledge is lost, but perfected, and changed for much nobler, sweeter, greater knowledge. Let men be never so uncertain in particular *de modo*, whether acquired habits of intellect and memory die with us, as being dependent on the body; yet, by what manner soever, that a far clearer knowledge we shall have than is here attainable, is not to be doubted of. And the cessation of our present mode of knowing is but the cessation of our ignorance and imperfection; as our wakening endeth a dreaming knowledge, and our maturity endeth the trifling knowledge of a child; for so saith the Holy Ghost, 'Love never faileth,' (and we can love no more than we know;) but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; (that is, cease;) whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, (notional and abstractive, such as we have now,) it shall vanish away; 'when I was a child I spake as a child, understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things, for now we see through a glass,' per species, 'darkly,' as men un-

derstand a thing by a metaphor, parable, or riddle, 'but then face to face,'¹ even creatures intuitively, as in themselves naked and open to our sight; 'now I know in part,' not *rem, sed, aliquid rei*, (not the reality itself, but something of the reality,) in which sense Sanchez truly saith, *nihil scitur*, 'but then shall I know even as I am known;' not as God knoweth us, for our knowledge and his must not be so comparatively likened, but as holy spirits know us both now and for ever, we shall both know and be known by immediate intuition.

If a physician be to describe the parts of man, and the latent diseases of his patient, he is fain to search hard and bestow many thoughts of it, besides his long reading and converse, to make him capable of knowing; and when all is done, he goeth much upon conjectures, and his knowledge is mixed with many uncertainties, yea and mistakes; but when he openeth the corpse, he seeth all, and his knowledge is more full, more true, and more certain, besides that it is easily and quickly attained, even by a present look. A countryman knoweth the town, the fields, and rivers where he dwelleth, yea and the plants and animals, with ease and certain clearness; when he that must know the same things by the study of geographical writings and tables, must know them but with a general, an unsatisfactory, and oft a much mistaking kind of knowledge. Alas, when our present knowledge hath cost a man the study of forty, or fifty, or sixty years, how lean and poor, how doubtful and unsatisfactory is it after all! But when God will show us himself and all things, and when heaven is known as the sun by

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

its own light, this will be the clear, sure, and satisfactory knowledge. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;'¹ and without holiness, none can see him.'² This sight will be worthy the name of wisdom, when our present glimpse is but philosophy, a love and desire of wisdom. So far should we be from fearing death, through the fear of losing our knowledge, or any of the means of knowledge, that it should make us rather long for the world of glorious light, that we might get out of this darkness, and know all that with an easy look, to our joy and satisfaction, which here we know with troublesome doubtings, or not at all. Shall we be afraid of darkness in the heavenly light, or of ignorance when we see the Lord of glory?

And as for the loss of sermons, books, and other means, surely it is no loss to cease the means, when we have attained the end. Cannot we spare our winter clothes as troublesome in the heat of summer, and sit by the hot fire without our gloves? Cannot we sit at home without a horse or coach, or set them by at our journey's end? Cannot we lie in bed without boots and spurs? Is it grievous to us to cease our physic when we are well? Even here he is happier that hath least of the creature, and needeth least, than he that hath much and needeth much; because all creature commodities and helps have also their discommodities and troublesomeness, and the very applying and using so many remedies of our want is tedious of itself. And as God only needeth nothing, but is self-sufficient, and therefore only perfectly and essentially happy, so those are likest God that need least from without, and have the greatest plenitude of inter-

¹ Matt. v.

² Heb. xii. 14.

nal goodness. What need we to preach, hear, read, pray, to bring us to heaven when we are there?

And as for our friends, and our converse with them as relations, or as wise, religious, and faithful to us, he that believeth not that there are far more and far better in heaven than are on earth, doth not believe as he ought that there is a heaven. Our friends here are wise, but they are unwise also; they are faithful, but partly unfaithful; they are holy, but also, alas! too sinful; they have the image of God, but blotted and dishonoured by their faults; they do God and his church much service, but they also do too much against him, and too much for Satan, even when they intend the honour of God; they promote the gospel, but they also hinder it; their weakness, ignorance, error, selfishness, pride, passion, division, contention, scandals, and remissness, do oft so much hurt that it is hard to discern whether it be not greater than their good to the church or to their neighbours. Our friends are our helpers and comforters; but how oft, also, are they our hinderers, troubles, and grief? But in heaven they are altogether wise, and holy, and faithful, and concordant, and have nothing in them, nor is there aught done by them there, but what is amiable to God and man.

And with our faithful friends we have here a mixture, partly of useless and burdensome persons, and partly of unfaithful hypocrites, and partly of self-conceited factious wranglers, and partly of malicious envious underminers, and partly of implacable enemies. And how many of all these set together is there for one worthy faithful friend? And how great a number is there to trouble you, for one that will indeed comfort you? But in

heaven there are none but the wise and holy ; no hypocrites, no burdensome neighbours, no treacherous, or oppressing, or persecuting enemies are there. And is not all good and amiable, better than a little good with so troublesome a mixture of noisome evils ?

Christ loved his disciples, his kindred, yea and all mankind, and took pleasure in doing good to all ; and so did his apostles : but how poor a requital had he or they from any but from God ! Christ's own brethren believed not in him, but wrangled with him ; almost like those that said to him on the cross, ' If thou be the Son of God, come down and we will believe.' Peter himself was once a Satan to him,¹ and after, with cursing and swearing, denied him ; and all his disciples forsook him and fled ; and what then from others could be expected ?

No friends have a perfect suitableness to each other ; and roughness and inequalities that are nearest us, are most troublesome. The wonderful variety and contrariety of apprehension, interest, educations, temperaments, and occasions, and temptations, &c., are such, that whilst we are scandalized at the discord and confusions of the world, we must recal ourselves, and admire that all-ruling Providence which keepeth up so much order and concord as there is. We are, indeed, like people in crowded streets, who going several ways, molest each other with their justling oppositions ; or like boys at foot-ball, striving to overthrow each other for the ball. But it is a wonder of divine power and wisdom that all the world is not continually in mortal war.

¹ Matt. xvi.

If I do men no harm, yet if I do but cross their wills, it goeth for a provoking injury : and when there are as many wills as persons, who is it that can please them all ? Who hath money enough to please all the poor that need it, or the covetous that desire it ? Or who can live with displeased men, and not feel some of the fruits of their displeasure ? What day goeth over my head in which abundance desire not or expect not impossibilities from me ? And how great is the number of them that expect unrighteous things ? By nothing do I displease so many as by not displeasing God and my conscience ; and for nothing am so deeply accused of sin as for not sinning. And the world will not think well of any thing that crosseth their opinion and carnal interest, be it never so conform to God's commands. I must confess that while I suffer from all sides, few men have more common and open praises from their persecutors than I. But while they praise me in the general, and for other particulars, they aggravate my nonconformity to their opinions and wills, and take me to be so much the more hurtful to them. The greatest crimes that have been charged on me, have been for the things which I thought to be my greatest duties, and for those parts of my obedience to my conscience and God which cost me dearest ; and where I pleased my flesh least, I pleased the world least. At how cheap a rate to my flesh could I have got the applause of factious men, if that had been my end and business ? Would I have conformed to their wills, and taken a bishopric, and the honour and riches of the world, how good a man had I been called by the diocesan party ? And O what praise I should have with the Papists,

could I turn Papist! And all the backbitings and bitter censures of the Antinomians, Anabaptists, and Separatists, had been turned into praise, could I have said as they, or not contradicted them. But otherwise there is no escaping their accusations. And is this tumultuous, militant, yea malignant world, a place that I should be loath to leave?

Alas! our darkness, and weakness, and passions are such, that it is hard for a family or a few faithful friends, to live so evenly in the exercise of love as not to have oft unpleasant jars! What then is to be expected from strangers and from enemies? Ten thousand persons will judge of abundance of my words and actions, who never knew the reasons of them. Every one's conceptions are as the report and conveyance of the matter to them is; and while they have a various light, and false reports, and defectiveness will make them false, what can be expected but false, injurious censures?

And though no outward thing on earth is more precious than the holy word, and worship, and ordinances of God, yet even here I see that which pointeth me up higher, and telleth me it is much better to be with Christ. For shall I love the name of heaven better than heaven itself? The holy Scriptures are precious, because I have there the promise of glory; but is not the possession better than the promise? If a light and guide thither through this wilderness be good, surely the end must needs be better. And it hath pleased God that all things on earth, and therefore even the sacred Scriptures, should bear the marks of our state of imperfection: imperfect persons were the penmen; and imperfect human language is the conveying, signal, organical part of the matter;

and the method and phrase, though true and blameless, are far short of the heavenly perfection. Else so many commentators had not found so hard a task of it to expound innumerable difficulties, and reconcile so many seeming contradictions, nor would infidels find matter of so strong temptation, and so much cavil as they do; nor would Peter have told us of the difficulties of Paul's epistles, and such occasions of men's wresting them to their own destruction. Heaven will not be made to perfect spirits the occasion of so many errors, and controversies, and quarrels, as the Scriptures are to us imperfect men on earth. Yea, heaven is the more desirable, because there I shall better understand the Scriptures than here I can ever hope to do. All the hard passages now misunderstood will there be made plain, and all the seeming contradictions reconciled; and, which is much more, that God, that Christ, that new Jerusalem, that glory, and that felicity of souls, which are now known but darkly and enigmatically in the glass, will then be known intuitively, as we see the face itself, whose image only the glass first showed us. To leave my Bible, and go to the God and the heaven that is revealed, will be no otherwise a loss to me, than to lay by my crutches or spectacles when I need them not, or to leave his image for the presence of my friend.

Much less do I need to fear the loss of all other books, or sermons, or other verbal informations. Much reading hath oft been a weariness to my flesh; and the pleasure of my mind is much abated by the great imperfection of the means. Many books must be partly read, that I may know that they are scarce worth the reading; and many

must be read to enable us to satisfy other mens expectations, and to confute those who abuse the authority of the authors against the truth: and many good books must be read, that have little to add, to what we have read in many others before; and many that are blotted with ensnaring errors; which if we detect not, we leave snares for such as see them not; and if we detect them (never so tenderly, if truly) we are taken to be injurious to the honour of the learned godly authors, and proudly to overvalue our own conceits. And so lamentable is the case of all mankind, by the imperfections of human language, that those words which are invented for communication of conceptions, are so little fitted to their use, as rather to occasion misunderstandings and contentions; there being scarce a word that hath not many significations, and that needeth not many more words to bring us to the true notice of the speaker's mind; and when every word is a signum that hath three relations, 1. To the matter spoken of; 2. To the mind of the speaker, as signifying his conceptions of that matter; 3. And to the mind of the hearer or reader, which is to be informed by it, it is so hard to find, and use words that are fitted indeed to all these uses, and to have store of such, and mix no other, that few, if any in the world, were ever so happy as to attain it. And if words be not fitted to the matter or things, they are false as to their first and proper use; and yet the penury of apt words, and the redundancy of others, and the authority of the masters of sciences imposing arbitrary terms and notions on their disciples, and the custom of the vulgar, who have the empire as to the sense of words,

have all conspired to make words inept, and of very uncertain signification. So that when students have learnt words by long and hard studies, they are oft little the nearer the true knowledge of the things; and too oft, by their ineptitude, misled to false conceptions. And so their saying is too often true, that a great book is a great evil, while it containeth so great a number of uncertain words, which become the matter of great contentions.

And when the mind of the speaker or writer is no better informed by such notions, but his conceptions of things are some false, some confused and undigested, what wonder if his words do no otherwise express his mind to others, when even men of clearest understanding find it difficult to have words still ready to communicate their conceptions with truth and clearness? To form true sentiments of things into apt significant words, is a matter of mere art, and requireth an apt teacher, and a serious learner, and long use: and too many take their art of speaking in prayer, conference, or preaching, to have more in it of wisdom and piety than it hath; and some too much condemn the unaccustomed that want it.

And if we could fit our words well to the matter and to our minds (with that double verity) yet still it is hard to fit them to the reader or hearer; for want of which they are lost as to him; and his information being our end, they are therefore so far lost to us. And that which is spoken most congruously to the matter, is seldom fitted to the capacity of the receiver. And *recipitur ad modum recipientis, et pro captu lectoris, &c.* Some readers or hearers (yea, almost all) are so used to unapt

words and notions, obtruded on mankind by the masters of words, that they cannot understand us if we change their terms and offer them fitter, and and yet least understand those which they think that they best understand ; and all men must have long time to learn the art of words, before they can understand them, as well as before they can readily use them. And the duller any man is, and of less understanding, the more words are necessary to make him understand ; and yet his memory is the less capable of retaining many. This is our difficulty not only in catechizing, but in all our writings and teaching, a short catechism, or a short style, the ignorant understand not ; and a long one they remember not. And he that will accommodate one judicious reader or hearer, with profound matter or an accurate style, must incommode multitudes that are incapable of it. And therefore such must be content with few approvers, and leave the applause of the multitude to the more popular, unless he be one that can seasonably suit himself to both.

A man that resolveth not to be deceived by ambiguous words, and maketh it his first work in all his reading and disputings to difference between words, and sense, and things, and strictly to examine each disputed term, till the speaker's meaning be distinctly known, will see the lamentable case of the church, and all mankind, and what shadows of knowledge deceive the world, and in what useless dreams the greatest part of men, yea, of learned men do spend their days ; much of that which some men unweariedly study, and take to be the honour of their understandings, and their lives, and much of that which multitudes place their piety

and hopes of salvation in, being a mere game at words and useless notions, and as truly to be called vanity and vexation as is the rest of the vain show that most men walk in. My sad and bitter thoughts of the heathen, infidel, Mahometan world, and of the common corruptions of rulers and teachers, cities and countries, senates and councils, I will not here open to others, lest they offend; nor cry out as Seneca, *Omnes mali sumus*, or *stultorum plena sunt omnia*,¹ nor describe the furious spirits of the clergy, and their ignorance and unrighteous calumnies and schisms, as Gregory Nazianzen and others do, nor voluminously lament the seeming hopeless case of the earth, by the boldness, blindness, and fury of men that make use of such sad considerations to loosen my love from such a world, and make me willing to be with Christ.

And if other men's words and writings are blemished with so much imperfection, why should I think that my own are blameless? I must for ever be thankful for the holy instructions and writings of others, notwithstanding human frailty, and contentious men's abuse of words; and so I must be thankful that God hath made any use of my own for the good of souls and his church's edification. But with how many alloys are such comforts here mixed! We are not the teachers of a well ruled school, where learners are ranked into several forms, that every one may have the teaching which is agreeable to his capacity; but we must set open the door to all that will crowd in, and publish our writings to all sorts of readers; and there being as various degrees of capacity as

¹ We all are evil; or the world is every where filled with fools.

there are men and women, and consequently great variety and contrariness of apprehensions, it is easy *ab antecedente* to know what various reception we must expect: we cast out our doctrine almost as a foot-ball is turned out among boys in the street, in some congregations: few understand it, but every one censureth it. Few come as learners or teachable disciples, but most come to sit as judges on their teacher's words; and yet have neither the skill, nor the patience, nor the diligence which is necessary in a just trial, to a righteous judgment. But as our words agree or disagree with the former conceptions of every hearer, so are they judged to be wise or foolish, sound or unsound, true or false, fit or unfit. Few sermons that I preach but one extolleth them, and wisheth they were printed, and another accuseth them of some heinous fault; some men are pleased with clearness and accuracy of doctrine; and others account it too high, and say we shoot over the hearers' heads, and like nothing but the fervent application of what they knew before. Most hearers are displeased with that which they most need: if they err, they reproach that doctrine as erroneous that would cure them; if they are guilty of any prevailing distemper and sin, they take that application to be injurious to them, which would convince them, and save them from that guilt. Most are much pleased with plain and zealous reproof of sin; but it must be other men's sins and not their own. The poor love to hear of the evil of oppression and unmercifulness, of pride, fulness, and idleness, and all the sins of the rich; subjects love to hear of their rulers' faults, and say, "O this man is no flatterer; he dares tell the greatest of their sins:" but if they hear of their own, they

take it for an injury. Rulers like a sermon for submission and obedience ; but how few love to hear of the evil of injustice and oppression, or pride and sensuality, or to read Luke xvi. or xii. or James v., or to hear of the necessity of holiness, justice, and temperance, and of death, and judgment, and the life to come ! Every sectary and dogmatist delighteth to have his own opinion cried up, and his party praised as the chiefest saints ; but all that tendeth to the praise of those that he dissenteth from, and accounteth adversaries to the truth, is distasteful to him, as complying with iniquity, and a strengthening of the enemies of Christ ; and all that uncharitableness which he expecteth from us against others, is as much expected by others, as against him and such as he.

This day, while I am writing these words, my pockets are too full of letters sent me, on one side importunately charging it on me as my duty to conform, (to the oaths, declarations, covenants, and practices, now imposed,) or else to give over preaching (which would please them ;) and on the other side vehemently censuring me as guilty of grievous sin, for declaring my judgment for so much of conformity as I have done ; and charging me by predictions as guilty of the sufferings of all that are otherwise minded, for communicating in the sacrament and the common prayers of the church ; and others in the mid-way, persuading me equally to bear my testimony against unjust separation and persecution, and to endeavour still, if possible, to save a self-destroying people from the tearing fury of these two extremes : and how should I answer these contrary expectations, or escape the censures of such expectants ?

And it hath pleased God, who thirty years and

more hath tried me by human applause of late, in this city (where multitudes of persons of contrary minds are like passengers in crowded streets, still jostling and offending one another) to exercise me with men's daily backbitings and cavils; and so many have chosen me for the subject of their discourse, that I may say as Paul, 'We are made a spectacle (or theatre) to the world, and to angels, and to men; we are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ,' &c.¹ Did I not live out of the noise, in retirement, and taken up with pain and expectations of my change, what an annoyance to me would it be to hear religious persons, that have a God, a Christ, a heaven to talk of, to abuse their time and tongues in so much talking of one so inconsiderable, and that hath so little to do with them, or they with him; while with some overvaluing me and others still quarrelling, I am the matter of their idle sinful talk! The persecutors, for divers years, after first silencing (if not still) and the separatists for two or three years last past, have been possessed with so strange a jealousy and quarrelsome a disposition against me, that they seem to take it for their interest to promote my defamation; and for much of their work to search what may afford them any matter of accusation in every sermon that I preach, and every book that I write. And though the fury of the persecutors be such as maketh them much incapable of such converse and sober consideration as is needful to their true information and satisfaction, yet most of the more religious cavillers are satisfied as soon as I have spoken with them, and all endeth in a *putarem* or *non putarem*:² for want of accurateness

¹ 1 Cor iv. 9, 10, &c.

² I should, or should not, think.

and patience, they judge rashly before they understand, and when they understand, confess their error; and yet many go on and take no warning after many times' conviction of their mistake. Even in books that are still before their eyes, (as well as in transient words in sermons,) they heedlessly leave out, or put in, or alter, and misreport plain words, and with confidence affirm those things to have been said that never were said, but perhaps the contrary. And when all people will judge of the good or evil of our words as they think we have reason to use them or forbear them, how can we satisfy men that are out of our hearing, and to whom we cannot tell our reasons: most men are of private, narrow observation, and judge of the good or hurt that our words do, by those that they themselves converse with; and when I convince them that my decisions of many questions (which they are offended at) are true, they say, it is an unseasonable and a hurtful truth; and when I have called them to look further abroad in the world, and told them my reasons; they say, had these been all set down, men would have been satisfied. And on how hard terms do we instruct such persons, whose narrow understandings cannot know obvious reasons of what we say till they are particularly told them? And so, to tell men the reasons of all that such can quarrel with, will make every book to swell with commentaries to such a bigness as they can neither buy nor read; and they come not to us to know our reasons; nor have we leisure to open them to every single person; and thus suspicious men, when their understandings want the humbling acquaintance with their ignorance, and their consciences that tenderness which should restrain them from rash judging, go on to accuse such needful

truths of which they know not the use and reason. And what man living hath the leisure and opportunity to acquaint all the ignorant persons in city and country with all the reasons of all that he shall say, write, or do? Or who that writeth not a page instead of a sentence, can so write that every unprepared reader shall understand him? And what hopes hath that tutor or schoolmaster of preserving his reputation, who shall be accounted erroneous, and accused of unsound or injurious doctrine, by every scholar that understandeth not his words, and all the reasons of them?

But God, in great mercy to me, hath made this my lot, not causing, but permitting the sins of the contentious, that I might before death be better weaned from all below: had my temptations from inordinate applause had no alloy, they might have been more dangerously strong. Even yet, while church dividers on both extremes do make me the object of their daily obloquy, the continued respects of the sober and peaceable, are so great as to be a temptation strong enough, to so weak a person, to give a check to my desires to leave the world. It is long since riches and worldly honour appeared to me as they are, as not rendering the world lovely or desirable. But the love and concord of religious persons hath a more amiable aspect. There is so much holiness in these, that I was loath to call them vanity and vexation; but, yet as flesh and blood would refer them to selfish ends, and any way value them as a carnal interest, I must so call them, and number them with the things that are loss and dung.¹ Selfishness can serve itself upon things good and holy; and if good men, and

¹ Phil. iii. 7, 8.

good books, and good sermons would make the world seem over-lovely to us, it will be a mercy of God to abate the temptation: and if my soul looking toward the heavenly Jerusalem, be hindered as Paul was in his journey to Jerusalem,¹ by the love of ancient friends and hearers, I must say, what mean you to weep and break my heart! I am ready to leave the dearest friends on earth, and life, and all the pleasures of life, for the presence of far better friends with Christ, and the sweeter pleasures of a better life. That little aimableness which is in things below, is in godly men as life in the heart, which dieth last: when that is all gone, when we are dead to the love of the godly themselves, and to learning, books, and meditate ordinances, so far as they serve a selfish interest, and tempt down our hearts from heavenly aspirings, the world then is crucified to us indeed, and we to it. I rejoice to tread in the footsteps of my Lord, who had some, indeed, weeping about his cross, but was forsaken by all his disciples, while in the hour of temptation they all fled. But my desertion is far less, for it is less than I am fit to bear. If God will justify, who shall condemn? If he be for me, who shall be against me? O may I not be put to that dreadful case, to cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' And may nothing separate me from his love! And then were I forsaken of the sober and peaceable, as I am in part of some quarrelsome dividers, how tolerable a trial would it be? Man is as dust in the balance, that addeth little to it, and signifieth nothing when God is in the other

¹ Acts, xx. and xxi.

end. But I suspect still that I make too much account of man, since this case hath taken up so much of my observation.

And of all things, surely a departing soul hath least cause to fear the losing of its notice of the affairs of the world ; of peace or wars, or church or kingdoms. For, if the sun can send forth its material beams, and operate by motion, light, and heat, at such a distance as this earth, why should I think that blessed spirits are such local, confined, and impotent substances, as not to have notice of the things of earth ? Had I but bodily eyes, I could see more from the top of a tower or hill, than any one that is below can do. And shall I know less of earth from heaven, than I do now ? It is unlike that my capacity will be so little ; and if it were, it is unlike that Christ and all the angels will be so strange to me, as to give me no notice of things that so much concern my God, and my Redeemer, (to whom I am united,) and of the holy society of which I am a part, and myself as a member of Christ and that society ! I do not think that the communion of the celestial inhabitants is so narrow and slow, as it is of walking clods of earth, and of souls that are confined to such dark lanterns as this body is. Stars can shine one to another ; and we on earth can see them so far off in their heaven ; and sure, then, if they have a seeing faculty, each of them can see many of us ; even the kingdoms of the world. Spirits are most active, and of powerful and quick communication. They need not send letters, nor write books to one another, nor lift up a voice to make each other hear ; nor is there any unkindness, division, or unsociable selfishness among them, which may cause them to conceal

their notices or their joys: but as activity, so unity is greatest where there is most perfection: they will so be many, as yet to be one; and their knowledge will be one knowledge, and their love one love, and their joy one joy; not by so perfect a unity as in God himself, who is one and but one; but such as is suitable to created imperfection, which participate of the perfection of the Creator, as the effect doth of the virtue of the cause, and therefore hath some participation of his unity. O foolish soul! if I shall fear this unity with God, Christ, and all the holy spirits, lest I should lose my present separate individuation, when perfection and union are so near akin. In a word, I have no cause to think that my celestial advancement will be a diminution of any desirable knowledge even of things on earth; but contrarily, that it will be inconceivably increased.

But if indeed I shall know less of things below, it will be because that the knowledge of them is a part of vanity and vexation, which hath no place in heaven. So much knowledge of good and evil in lower matters as came to us by sin, is unworthy of our fond tenaciousness and fear of losing it. Surely the sad tidings which we have weekly in our news books, our lamentable notices of heathen and infidel kingdoms, of the overspreading prevalence of barbarousness, idolatry, ignorance, and infidelity; of the rage and success of cruel tyrants; of the bloody wars of proud, unquiet, worldly men; of the miseries of the oppressed desolate countries, the dissipated churches, the persecuted innocent Christians,—are no such pleasing things as that we should be afraid to hear of such no more. To know or hear of the poor in famine, the rich in

folly, the church distracted, the kingdom discontented; the godly scandalous by the effects of their errors, imperfections, and divisions; the wicked outrageous and waxing worse; the falseness, or miscarriages, or sufferings of friends; the fury or success of enemies,—is this an intelligence which I cannot spare? What is the daily tidings that I hear, but of bloody wars, the undone countries, the persecuted churches; the silenced, banished, or imprisoned preachers, of the best removed in judgment from an unworthy world by death, and the worse succeeding in their rooms; of the renewed designs and endeavours of the church's enemies; the implacable rage of the worldly and unquiet clergy, and the new divisions of self-conceited sectaries, and the obloquy and backbitings of each party against the other? How oft hear I the sad tidings of this friend's sickness or death, and that friend's discontent, and of another's fall, and of many, very many's sufferings? My ears are daily filled with the cries of the poor, whom I cannot relieve; with the endless complaints of fearful, melancholy, despairing persons; with the wranglings of the ignorant and proud professors, and contentious divines, who censure most boldly where they are most erroneous or dark; or with the troublesome discontents of those that I converse with. And should I be afraid of the ending of so sad a tragedy, or of awaking out of such an unpleasant dream? Have I not many times thought of the privilege of the deaf, that hear not these troublesome and provoking things; and of the blind, that see not the vanities and temptations of this world? It is one part of the benefit of solitude, or a private life and habitation, to free me from many of these unpleas-

ing objects; and a great part of the benefit of sleep, that with my clothes I may lay by these troublous thoughts.

But other men tell me, The church cannot yet spare you; there is yet this and that necessary work to be done; there is this and that need, &c.

But, 1. Is it we or God that must choose his servants, and cut out their work? Whose work am I doing? Is it my own, or his? If his, is it not he that must tell me what, and when, and how long? And will not his will and choice be best? If I believe not this, how do I take him for my God? Doth God or I know better what he hath yet to do; and who is fittest to do it? The church's service and benefits must be measured out by our Master and Benefactor, and not by ourselves.

2. What am I to those more excellent persons whom in all ages he hath taken out of the world? And would men's thoughts of the church's needs detain them? The poor heathen, infidel, Mahometan nations have no preachers of the gospel. And if their need prove not that God will send them such, no country's need will prove that God will continue them such. Many more useful servants of Christ have died in their youth. John Janeway preached but one sermon; Joseph Allen (and many another excellent man) died young, in the midst of his vigorous, successful labours: both of them far more fit for God's work, and likely to win souls and glorify God, than I am or ever was: however, their greater light was partly kindled from my lesser. Yet did both these, under painful, consuming, languishings of the flesh, die as they had long lived, in the lively triumphant praises of their Redeemer, and joyful desire and hopes of

glory. And shall I, at sixty-seven years of age, after such a life of unspeakable mercies, and after almost forty-four years of comfortable help in the service of my Lord, be now afraid of my reward, and shrink at the sentence of death, and still be desiring to stay here, upon pretence of further service. We know not what is best for the church as God doth : the church and the world are not ours, but his : not our desires, but his will, must measure out its mercies : we are not so merciful as he is. It is not meet for us to desire many things which God will not give, nor seeth it meet to grant the particulars of such desires. Nothing ever lay so heavy on my heart as the sin and misery of mankind, and to think how much of the world lieth in folly and wickedness. And for what can I pray so heartily as for the world's recovery ? And it is his will that I should show a holy and universal love by praying, Let thy name be hallowed, thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven ; and yet, alas ! how unlike is earth to heaven, and what ignorance, sin, confusions, and cruelties here reign and prosper ? And unless there be a wonderful change to be expected, even as by a general miracle, how little hope appeareth that ever these prayers should be granted in the things ? It maketh us better to desire that others may be better ; but God is the free disposer of his own gifts ; and it seemeth to be his will, that the permitted ignorance and confusions of this world should help us the more to value and desire that world of light, love and order, which he calleth us to prefer and hope for.

And if I am any way useful to the world, it is undeserved mercy that hath made me so ; for which

I must be thankful; but how long I shall be so is not my business to determine, but my Lord's. My many sweet and beautiful flowers arise and appear in their beauty and sweetness but for one summer's time, and they murmur not that they flourish for so short a space. The beasts, and birds, and fishes, which I feed on, do live till I will have them die; and as God will be served and pleased by wonderful variety at once, (of animals and vegetables, &c.) so will he by many successive generations. If one flower fall or die, it sufficeth that others shall, summer after summer, arise from the same root; and if my pears, apples, plums, &c. fall or serve me when they are ripe, it sufficeth that (not they, but) others, the next year, shall do the same: God will have other generations to succeed us. Let us thank him that we have had our time; and could we overcome the grand (too little observed) crime of selfishness, and could love others as ourselves, and God as God above all the world, it would comfort us at death, that others shall survive us, and the world shall continue, and God will be still God, and be glorified in his works: and love will say, I shall live in my successors, and I shall more than live in the life of the world; and yet most of all in the eternal life and glory of God.

And God (who made us not gods, but poor creatures, as it pleased him) doth know best our measures; and he will not try us with too long a life of temptations, lest we should grow too familiar where we should be strangers, and utterly strangers to our home. No wonder if that world was ready for a deluge, by a deluge of sin, in which men lived to six, seven, eight, and nine hundred years of age. Had our great sensualists any hope of so long a

life, they were like to be like incarnate devils, and there would be no dwelling near them for the holy seed. If angels were among them, they would, like the Sodomites, seek furiously to abuse them.

Nor will God tire us with too long a life of earthly sufferings. We think short cares, and fears, and sorrows, persecutions, sickness, and crosses to be long; and shall we grudge at the wisdom and love which shorneth them? Yea, though holy duty itself be excellent and sweet, yet the weakness of the flesh maketh us liable to weariness, and abateth the willingness of the spirit; and our wise and merciful God will not make our warfare or our race too long, lest we be wearied and faint, and fall short of the prize. By our weariness, and complaints, and fears, and groans, one would think that we thought this life too long; and yet, when we should yield to the call of God, we draw back, as if we would have it everlasting.

Willingly submit then, O my soul: it is not thou, but this flesh that must be dissolved; this troublesome, vile, and corruptible flesh: it is but the other half, thy meat and drink, which thy presence kept longer uncorrupted, going after the excremental part. Thou diest not when man (the *compositum*) dieth, by thy departure. And as thou livest not to thyself, I die not to myself; whether I live or die, I am the Lord's: he that set up the candle, knoweth how long he hath use for the light of it. Study thy duty, and work while it is day, and let God choose thy time, and willingly stand to his disposal. The gospel dieth not when I die; the church dieth not; the praises of God die not; the world dieth not; and perhaps it shall grow better, and those prayers shall be answered which seemed

lost; yea, and it may be some of the seed that I have sown, shall spring up to some benefit of the dark unpeaceable world when I am dead. And is not this much of the end of life? and is not that life good which attaineth its end? If my end was to do good and glorify God, if good be done, and God be glorified when I am dead, yea, though I were annihilated, is not my end attained. Feign not thyself to be God, whose interest (that is, the pleasing of his will) is the end of all things; and whose will is the measure of all created good: feign not thyself to be all the world: God hath not lost his work; the world is not dissolved when I am dissolved. O how strong and unreasonable a disease is this inordinate selfishness! Is not God's will infinitely better than mine, and fitter to be fulfilled? Choose the fulfilling of his will, and thou shalt always have thy choice. If a man be well that can always have his will, let this always be thy will, that God's will may be done, and thou shalt always have it.

Lord, let thy servant depart in peace; even in thy peace, which passeth understanding, and which Christ, the Prince of Peace, doth give, and nothing in the world can take away! O give me that peace which beseemeth a soul which is so near the harbour, even the world of endless peace and love! where perfect union (such as I am capable of) will free me from all the sins and troubles which are caused by the convulsions, divulsions, and confusions of this divided selfish world. Call home this soul by the encouraging voice of love, that it may joyfully hear, and say, It is my Father's voice; invite it to thee by the heavenly messenger; attract it by the tokens and the foretastes of love. The

messengers that invited me to the feast of grace, compelled me to come in without constraint. Thy effectual call did make me willing; and is not glory better than preparing grace? Shall I not come more willingly to the celestial feast? What was thy grace for, but to make me willing of glory, and the way to it? Why didst thou dart down thy beams of love, but to make me love thee, and to call me up to the everlasting centre! Was not the feast of grace as a sacrament of the feast of glory? Did I not take it in remembrance of my Lord until he come? Did not he that told me, all things are ready, tell me also that He is gone to prepare a place for us, and it is his will that we shall be with him and see his glory? They that are given him, and drawn to him by the Father on earth, do come to Christ. Give now and draw my departing soul to thy glorified head; and as I have glorified thee on earth, in the measure that thy grace hath prevailed in me, pardon the sins by which I have offended thee, and glorify me in the beholding and participation of the glory of my Redeemer. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, with fuller life, and light, and love, into this too dead and dark, and disaffected soul, that it may come with joyful willingness unto thee.

Willingly depart, O lingering soul! It is from a Sodom, though in it there be righteous Lots, who yet are not without their woeful blemishes! Hast thou so oft groaned for the general blindness and wickedness of the world, and art thou loath to leave it for a better? How oft wouldst thou have rejoiced to have seen but the dawning of a day of universal peace and reformation? And wouldst thou not see it, where it shineth forth in fullest

glory? Would a light at midnight have pleased thee so well? Hast thou prayed and laboured for it so hard, and wouldst thou not see the sun? Will the things of heaven please thee no where but on earth, where they come in the least and weakest influences, and are terminated in gross, terrene, obscure, and unkind recipients? Away, away, the vindictive flames are ready to consume this sinful world. Sinners that blindly rage in sin, must quickly rage in the effects of sin, and of God's justice: the pangs of lust prepared for these pangs! They are treasuring up wrath against this day. Look not then behind thee: away from this unhappy world! Press on unto the mark,¹ 'Looking towards, and hastening to the coming of the day of God.'²

As this world hath used thee, it would use thee still, and it will use others. If thou hast sped well in it, no thanks to it, but unto God. If thou hast had manifold deliverances, and marvellous preservations, and hast been fed with angel's food, love not this wilderness for it, but God and his angel, which was thy guide, protector, and deliverer.

And hath this troublesome flesh been so comfortable a companion to thee, that thou shouldst be so loath to leave it? Have thy pains, thy weariness, thy languishings, thy labours, thy cares and fears about this body, been pleasing to thee? And art thou loath that they should have an end? Didst thou not find a need of patience to undergo them? And of greater patience than mere nature gave thee? And canst thou hope now for better, when nature faileth, and that an aged, consumed, more

¹ Phil. iii.

² 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11, 12.

diseased body, should be a pleasanter habitation to thee than it was heretofore? If from thy youth up it hath been both a tempting and a troubling thing to thee, surely though it be less tempting, it will not be less troubling, when it is falling to the dust, and above ground savoureth of the grave. Had things sensible been never so pleasant in thy youth, and hadst thou glutted thyself in health with that sort of delight, in age thou art to say by nature, I have no pleasure in them. Doth God in great mercy make pain and feebleness the harbingers of death, and wilt thou not understand their business? Doth he mercifully beforehand take away the pleasure of all fleshly things and worldly vanities, that there may be nothing to restrain a departing soul, as the shell breaketh when the bird is hatched, and the womb relaxed when the infant must be born; and yet shall we stay when nothing holdeth us, and still be loath to come away? Wouldst thou dwell with thy beloved body in the grave, where it will rot and stink in loathsome darkness? If not, why should it now, in its painful languor, seem to thee a more pleasant habitation than the glorious presence of thy Lord? In the grave it will be at rest, and not tormented as now it is, nor wish at night, O that it were morning; nor say at morning, when will it be night? And is this a dwelling fit for thy delight? Patience in it while God will so try thee, is thy duty; but is such patience a better and sweeter life than rest and joy?

But, alas! how deaf is flesh to reason? Faith hath the reason which easily may shame all contrary reasoning; but sense is unreasonable, and especially this inordinate tenacious love of present life. I have reason enough to be willing to depart,

even much more willing than I am. O that I could be as willing as I am convinced that I have reason to be! Could I love God as much as I know that I should love him, then I should desire to depart and be with Christ, as much as I know that I should desire it. But God in nature hath here laid upon me some necessity of aversation, though the inordinateness came from sin, else Christ had not so feared and deprecated the cup. Death must be a penalty, even where it is a gain; and therefore it must meet with some unwillingness: because we willingly sinned, we must unwillingly suffer: the gain is not the pain or dissolution in itself, but the happy consequents of it. All the faith and reason in the world will not make death to be no penalty, and therefore will not take away all unwillingness. No man ever yet reasoned or believed himself into a love of pain and death as such; but seeing that the gain is unspeakably greater than the pain and loss, faith and holy reason may make our willingness to be greater than our unwillingness, and our hope and joy, than our fear and sorrow. And it is the deep and effectual notice of goodness, which is God's way in nature and grace, to change and draw the will of man. Come then, my soul, and think believingly what is best for thee; and wilt thou not love and desire most that which is certainly the best?

*'To depart and to be with Christ is far better,'
(or rather to be chosen.)*

To say and hear that it is far better to be with Christ, is not enough to make us willing. Words and notions are such instruments as God useth to work on souls with; but the convincing, satisfying, powerful light, and the inclining love are other things.

The soul now operateth *ut forma hominis*, on and with the corporeal spirit and organs ; and it perceiveth now its own perceptions ; but it is a stranger to the mode of its future action, when it is separated from the body, and can have no formal conception of such conceptions as yet it never had. And therefore its thoughts of its future state must be analogical and general, and partly strange. But general notices, when certain, may be very powerful, and satisfy us in so much as is needful to our consent, and to such a measure of joy as is suitable to this earthly state. And such notices we have from the nature of the soul, with the nature of God, the course of providence, and government of mankind, the internal and external conflicts which we perceive about men's souls, the testimony and promises of the word of God, the testimony of conscience, with the witness of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, and in it the earnest and the foretaste of glory, and the beginnings of life eternal here, all of which I have before considered.

The Socinians, who would interpret this of the state of resurrection only, against plain evidence, violate the text : seeing Paul expressly speaketh of his gain by death, which will be his abode with Christ, and this upon his departure hence, which he calleth his being ' absent from the body, and present with the Lord ;'¹ and Christ to the penitent thief calleth his being ' with him in paradise ;'² and in the parable of the steward, Christ intimateth to us, that wise preparers, when they go hence, are received into everlasting habitations ; as he there further tells us, Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 7, 8.

² Luke xvi.

Goodness is *primaria et mensurans*, (primary and measuring,) *vel secundaria et mensurata*: (or secondary and measured.) The first is God's perfect essence and will: the second is either properly and simply good, or analogical. The former is the creature's conformity to the will of God, or its pleasingness to his will. The latter is, 1. The greater, which is the welfare or perfection of the universe. 2. The lesser, which is the perfection of the several parts of the universe, either, 1. In the nobler respect, as they are parts contributing to the perfection of the whole; or 2. In the lower respect, as they are perfect or happy in themselves; or 3. In the lowest respect of all, as they are good to their fellow-creatures which are below themselves.

Accordingly, 'It is far better to be with Christ,' I. Properly and simply, as it is the fulfilling of God's will. II. Analogically, as it tendeth to the perfection of the universe and the church. III. And as it will be our own good or felicity. IV. And as it will be good to our inferior fellow-creatures, though this last be most questionable, and seemeth not included in the meaning of this text. Somewhat of these in order.

I. It is an odious effect of idolatrous selfishness to acknowledge no goodness above our own felicity, and accordingly to make the goodness of God to be but formally his usefulness, benevolence, and beneficence to his creatures; which is, by making the creature the ultimate end, and God but the means, to make the creature to be God, and deny God indeed, while we honour his name; as also it is, to acknowledge no higher goodness formally in the creature, than its own felicity as such, as if neither the pleasing of God's will, nor the perfection of

the church and world, were better than we are : we are not of ourselves, and therefore we are not chiefly for ourselves, and therefore we have a higher good to love.

That is simply best which God willeth ; therefore to live here is best, whilst I do live here ; and to depart is best when the time of my departure cometh. That is best which is—which is the work of God. The world cannot be better at this instant than it is, nor any thing better, which is of God ; because it is as he willeth it to be ; but when God hath changed them it will then be best that they are changed. Were there no other good in my departure hence, but this simple good, the fulfilling of God's will, my reason telleth me that I should be fully satisfied in it ; but there is also a subordinate sort of good.

II. For my change will tend to the perfection of the universe ; even that material good or perfection which is its aptitude for the use to which God hath created and doth preserve it ; as all the parts, the modes, the situation, the motions of a clock, a watch, or other such engine, do to the ends of the artificer. Though God hath not told me particularly, why every thing, and mode, and motion is as it is, I know it is all done in perfect wisdom, and suited to its proper use and end. If the hen or bird knoweth how to make her nest, to lay her eggs secretly together, when and how to sit on them till they are hatched, and how to feed them and preserve them, and when to forsake them, as sufficient for themselves without her help, &c. If the bee know when, and whence, and how to gather her honey and wax, and how to form the repository combs, and how to lay it up, and all the rest of her

marvellous economy, shall I think that God doth he knoweth not what, or what is not absolutely the best? Doth he want either skill, or will, or power?

And should the stone grudge to be hewed, the brick to be burnt, the trees to be cut down, and sawed, and framed, the lead and iron to be melted, &c. when it is but to form a useful edifice, and to adapt and compose every part to the perfecting of the whole?

Shall the waters grudge that they must glide away, and the plants that they must die, and half die every winter, and the fruit and flowers that they must fall, or the moon that it must have its changing motions, or the sun that it must set and rise so oft, &c. when all is but the action and order which maketh up that harmony and perfection which was designed by the Creator, and is pleasing to his will?

III. But lawful self-love is yet further herein gratified. The goodness expressed in the text, is that analogical subordinate good, which is *mihi bonum*, (my own felicity,) and that which tendeth thereunto. It is most reasonable to love God best, and that next which is likest him, if known. And why should it not be the easiest and the sweetest? But experience findeth it so easy to love ourselves, that certainly if I firmly believe that it is best for me, I shall 'desire to depart, and to be with Christ.' And have I not reason to believe it?

The reasons of it I will consider in this order: I. The general reason from the efficient and the means. II. The final reasons. III. The constitutive reasons from the state of my intellect, and its action and fruition there. IV. The constitutive reasons from the state of my will. V. The consti-

tutive reasons from my practice there, leaving out those which the resurrection will give me, because I am speaking but of my present departure unto Christ.

And 1. That is best for me, which love itself, my heavenly Father designeth and chooseth for my good. I hope I shall never dare to think or say that he is mistaken, or that he wanted skill or love; or that I could have chosen better for myself than he doth, if he had left all to my choice. Many a time the wise and good will of God, hath crossed my foolish rebellious will on earth; and afterward I have still perceived that it was best; usually for myself, but always for a higher good than mine. It is not an enemy, nor a tyrant that made me, that hath preserved me, and that calls me hence. He hath not used me as an enemy; the more I have tried him the better I have found him. Had I better obeyed his ruling will, how happy had I been! and is not his disposing and rewarding will as good? Man's work is like man, and evil corrupteth it; but God's work is like God, and uncorrupted. If I should not die until my dearest friend would have it, much more till I myself would choose it, not constrained by misery, I should rejoice, and think my life were safe! O foolish sinful soul, if I take it not to be far better to be at God's choice, than at my own or any man's! and if I had not rather that he choose the time than I!

Be of good cheer then, O my soul; it is thy Father's voice that calls thee hence; his voice that called thee into the world, and bade thee live; that called thee out of a state of sin and death, and bade thee live hereafter unto him; that called thee so oft from the grave, and forgiving thy sins, renewed

thy strength, restored thee to the comforts of his house and service, and hath so graciously led thee through this howling wilderness, and brought thee almost to the sight of the promised land. And wilt thou not willingly go, when infinite, fatherly love doth call thee? Art thou not desirous of his presence? Art thou afraid to go to him who is the only cure of thy fears? What was it but this glory to which he did, finally, elect thee? Where dost thou read that he elected thee to the riches and honours of this world, or to the pleasures of the flesh? But he elected us in Christ to the heavenly inheritance.¹ Indeed, he elected thee also to bear the cross, and to manifold sufferings here. But is it that which thou preferrest before the crown? That was but as a means unto the kingdom, that thou mightst be conformed to Christ, and reign with him when thou hast suffered with him. If God choose thee to blessedness, refuse it not thyself, nor behave thyself like a refuser.

2. And surely that state is my best, which my Saviour purchased and promised me as best: as he bought me not with silver and gold, so neither to silver and gold. Did he live and die to make me rich, or advanced in the world? Surely his incarnation, merits, sacrifice, and intercession had a low design if that were all. And who hath more of these than they that have least of Christ? But he purchased us to an incorruptible crown, to an inheritance undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us that are kept by God's power through faith unto salvation.¹ And is it heaven that cost so dear a price for me, and is the end of

¹ Eph. i. 3, 4, &c.

² 1 Pet. i.

so wonderful a design of grace, and shall I be unwilling now to receive the gift?

3. That sure is best for me for which God's holy Spirit is preparing me; that for which he is given to believers; and that which is the end of all his holy operations on my soul. But it is not to love this world that he is persuading me from day to day; but to come off from such love, and to set my heart on the things above. Is it to love this life and fleshly interest, this vanity and vexation, or rather to love the invisible perfection, that this blessed Spirit hath done so much to work my heart? And would I now undo all, or cross and frustrate all his operations? Hath grace been so long preparing me for glory, and shall I be loath to take possession of it? If I am not willing, I am not yet sufficiently prepared.

4. If heaven be not better for me than earth, God's word and ordinances have been all in vain. Surely that is my best which is the gift of the better covenant, and which is secured to me by so many sealed promises, and which I am directed to by so many sacred precepts, doctrines, and examples; and for which I have been called to hear, and read, and meditate, and pray, and watch so long. Was it the interest of the flesh on earth, or a longer life of worldly prosperity, which the gospel covenant secured to me, which the sacraments and Spirit sealed to me, which the Bible was written to direct me to, which ministers preached to me, which my books were written for, for which I prayed, and for which I served God? Or was it not for his grace on earth, and glory in heaven? and is it not better for me to have the end of all these means, than lose them all, and lose my hopes? Why

have I used them, if I would not attain their end?

5. That is my best state which all the course of God's fatherly providences tend to. All his sweeter mercies, and all his sharper corrections, are to make me partaker of his holiness, and to lead me to glory in the way that my Saviour and all his saints have gone before me. All things work together for the best to me, by preparing me for that which is best indeed. Both calms and storms are to bring me to this harbour; if I take them but for themselves and this present life, I mistake them and understand them not, but unthankfully vilify them, and lose their end, and life, and sweetness. Every word and work of God, every day's mercies, and changes, and usages do look at heaven, and intend eternity. God leadeth me no other way; if I follow him not, I forsake my hope in forsaking him; if I follow him, shall I be unwilling to be at home, and come to the end of all this way?

6. Surely that is best for me which God hath required me principally to value, love, and seek, and that as the business of all my life, referring all things else thereto. That this is my duty I am fully certain, as is proved elsewhere and before. Is my business in the world only for the things of this world? How vain a creature then were man; and how little were the difference between waking and sleeping, life and death? No wonder if he that believeth that there is no life but this to seek or hope for, doth live in uncomfortable despair, and only seek to palliate his misery with the brutish pleasure of a wicked life, and if he stick at no villany which his fleshly lusts incline him to; especially tyrants and multitudes who have none but

God to fear. And it is my certain duty to seek heaven with all the fervour of my soul, and diligence of my life : and is it not best to find it ?

7. That must needs be best for me which all other things must be forsaken for. It is folly to forsake the better for the worse ; but Scripture, reason, and conscience tell me that all this world, when it stands in competition or opposition, should be forsaken for heaven, yea for the least hopes of it. A possible everlasting glory should be preferred before a certainly perishing vanity. I am sure this life will shortly be nothing to me, and therefore it is next to nothing now. And must I forsake all my everlasting hopes, and yet be unwilling to pass unto the possession of them ?

8. That is like to be our best, which is our maturest state. Nature carrieth all things towards their perfection : our apples, pears, grapes, and every fruit, is best when it is ripe ; and though they then hasten to corruption, that is, through the incapacity of the corporeal materials any longer to retain the vegetative spirit, which is not annihilated at its separation ; and being not made for its own felicity, but for man's, its ripeness is the state in which man useth it, before it doth corrupt of itself, that its corruption may be for his nutriment ; and the spirits and best matter of his said food doth become his very substance. And doth God cause saints to grow unto ripeness, only to perish and drop down unto useless rottenness ? It is not credible. Though our bodies become but like our filthiest excrements, our souls return to God that gave them. And though he need them not, he useth them in their separated state ; and that to such heavenly uses, as their heavenly maturity and

mellowness hath disposed them to. Seing then love hath ripened me for itself, shall I not willingly drop into its hand ?

9. That is like to be the best which the wisest and holiest, in all ages of the world, have preferred before all, and have most desired ; and which, also, almost all mankind do acknowledge to be best at last. It is not like that all the best men in the world should be most deceived, and be put upon fruitless labour and sufferings by this deceit, and be undone by their duty ; and that God should by such deceits rule all or almost all mankind ? And also that the common notices of human nature, and conscience's last and closest documents, should be all in vain. But it is past all doubt, that no men usually are worse than those that have no belief or hopes of any life but this ; and that none are so holy, just, and sober, so charitable to others, and so useful to mankind, as those that firmliest believe and hope for the state of immortality. And shall I fear that state which all that were wise and holy in all ages have preferred and desired ?

10. And it is not unlike that my best state is that which my greatest enemies are most against. And how much Satan doth to keep me and other men from heaven, and how much worldly honour, and pleasure, and wealth he could afford us to accomplish it, I need not here again be copious in reciting, having said so much of it elsewhere.¹ And shall I be towards myself so much of Satan's mind ? He would not have me come to heaven ; and shall I also be unwilling ? All these things tell me that it is best to be with Christ.

¹ Treat. of Infidelity.

II. The final reasons.

1. Is it not far better to dwell with God in glory, than with sinful men in such a world as this? Though he be every where, his glory, which we must behold to our felicity, and the perfecting operations and communications of his love, are in the glorious world, and not on earth. As the eye is made to see the light, and then to see other things by the light, so is man's mind made to see God and to love him; and other things as in, by, and for him. He that is our beginning is our end; and our end is the first motive of all moral actions, and for it it is that all means are used. And the end attained is the rest of souls. How oft hath my soul groaned under the sense of distance, and darkness, and estrangeness from God! How oft hath it looked up and gasped after him, and said, O when shall I be nearer and better acquainted with my God! 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?'¹ And would I not have my prayers heard, and my desires granted? What else is the sum of lawful prayers, but God himself? If I desire any thing more than God, what sinfulness is in those desires, and how sad is their signification? How oft have I said, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire besides thee? It is good for me to draw near to God.'² Woe to me if I did dissemble: if not, why should my soul draw back? Is it because that death stands in the way? Do not my fellow-creatures die for my daily food? And

¹ Psalm, xl. 12.² Ib. lxxiii. 25, 28.

is not my passage secured by the love of my Father, and the resurrection and intercession of my Lord? Can I see the light of heavenly glory in this darksome shell and womb of flesh?

2. All creatures are more or less excellent and glorious as God is more or less operative and refulgent in them, and by that operation communicateth most of himself unto them. Though he be immense and indivisible, his operations and communications are not equal; and that is said to be nearest to him which hath most of those operations on it, and that without the intervenient causality of any second created cause; and so all those are in their order near unto him as they have noblest natures, and fewest intervenient causes. Far am I from presuming to think that I am or shall be the best and noblest of God's creatures, and so that I shall be so near him as to be under the influx of no second or created causes; (of which more anon;) but to be as near as my nature was ordained to approach, is but to attain the end and perfection of my nature.

3. And as I must not look to be the nearest to him as he is the first efficient, no more must I as he is the first dirigent or governing cause. As now I am under the government of his officers on earth, I look for ever to be under sub-governors in heaven. My glorified Saviour must be Lord and ruler, and who else under him I know not. If angels are not equal in perfection, nor, as is commonly supposed, equal in power, nor without some regimental order among themselves, I must not conclude that no created angel or spirit shall have any government over me; but it will be so pure and divine, as that the blessed effects of God's own government will

be sweetly powerful therein. If the law was given by angels, and the angel of God was in the burning bush, and the angel conducted the people through the wilderness, and yet all these things are ascribed to God, much more near and glorious will the divine regiment there be, whoever are the administrators.

4. And as I must expect to be under some created, efficient, and dirigent causes there, so must I expect to have some subordinate ends; else there would not be a proportion and harmony in causalities; whatever nobler creatures are above me, and have their causalities upon me, I must look to be finally for those nobler creatures. When I look up and think what a world of glorious beings are now over me, I dare not presume to think that I shall finally any more than receptively, be the nearest unto God, and that I am made for none but him. I find here that I am made and ruled, and sanctified, for the public or common good of many as above my own (of which I am past doubt.) And I am sure that I must be finally for my glorified Redeemer; and for what other spiritual beings or intelligences that are above me, little do I know: and God hath so ordered all his creatures, as that they are mutually ends and means for and to one another, though not in an equality, nor in the same respects. But whatever nearer ends there will be, I am sure that he who is the first efficient and dirigent, will be the ultimate final cause. And I shall be in this respect as near him, as is due to the rank and order of my nature. I shall be useful to the ends which are answerable to my perfection.

5. And if it be the honour of a servant to have an honourable master, and to be appointed to the most

honourable work : if it be some honour to a horse above a swine, or a worm, or fly, that he serveth more nearly for the use of man, yea, for a prince, will it not be also my advancement to be ultimately for God, and subordinately for the highest created natures, and this in such services as are suitable to my spiritual and heavenly state ?

6. For I am far from thinking that I shall be above service, and have none to do. For activity will be my perfection and my rest ; and all such activity must be regular in harmony and order of causes, and for its proper use. And what, though I know not now fully what service it is that I must do ? I know it will be good, and suitable to the blessed state which I shall be in : and it is enough that God and my Redeemer know it ; and that I shall know it in due time, when I come to practise it, (of which more afterward.)

7. The inordinate love of this body and present composition seduceth souls to think that all their use and work is for its maintenance and prosperity ; and when the soul hath done that, and is separated from flesh, it hath nothing to do, but must lie idle, or be as nothing, or have no considerable work or pleasure : as if there were nothing in the whole world, but this little fluid mass of matter for a soul to work upon ! As if itself, and all the creatures, and God were nothing, or no fit objects for a soul ! And why not hereafter as well as now ? Or as if that which in our compound state doth operate on and by its organs, had no other way of operation without them ! As if the musician lost all his power, or were dead, when his instrument is out of tune or broken, and could do nothing else but play on that ! As if the fiery part of the candle were

annihilated or transmutate (as some following philosophers imagine) when the candle goeth out; and were not fire, and in action still! Or, as if that sun-beam which I shut out, or which passeth from our horizon, were annihilated, or did nothing, when it shineth not with us! Had it no other individual to illuminate or to terminate its beams or action, were it nothing to illuminate the common air? Though I shall not always have a body to operate in and upon, I shall always have a God and a Saviour, and a world of fellow-creatures; and when I shine not in this lantern, and see not by these spectacles, nor imaginarily in a glass, I shall yet see things suitable intuitively, and as face to face. That which is essentially life (as a living principle) will live; and that which is essentially an active, intellective, volitive principle, force and virtue, will still be such while it is itself, and is not annihilated or changed into another thing; (which is not to be feared;) and that which is such can never want an object, till all things be annihilated.

8. Reason assureth me, that were my will now what it should be, and fully obsequious herein to my understanding, to fulfil God's will would be the fulfilling my own will, (for my will should perfectly comply with his) and to please him perfectly would be my perfect pleasure; and it is the unreasonable adhesion to this body, and sinful selfishness, which maketh any one think otherwise now. I am sure that my soul shall live, (for it is life itself,) and I am sure that I shall live to God, and that I shall fulfil and please his blessed will; and this is, as such, incomparably better than my felicity, as such; and yet, so far as I am pleased in so doing, it will be my felicity.

9. I begin now to think, that the strange love which the soul hath to this body, so far as it is not inordinate, is put into us of God, partly to signify to us the great love which Christ hath to his mystical political body, and to every member of it, even the least. He will gather all his elect out of the world, and none that come to him shall be shut out, and none that are given him shall be lost: as his flesh is to them meat indeed, and his blood is to them drink indeed, and he nourisheth them for life eternal; (his Spirit in them, turning the sacrament, the word, and Christ himself *in esse objectivo* as believed in, into spirit and life to us, as the soul and our natural spirits turn our food into flesh, and blood, and spirits, which in a dead body, or any lifeless repository, it would never be;) so as we delight in the ease and prosperity of our body and each member, and have pleasure in the pleasant food that nourisheth it, and other pleasant objects which accommodate it. Christ also delighteth in the welfare of his church and of all the faithful; and is pleased when they are fed with good and pleasant food, and when hereby they prosper. Christ loveth the church, not only as a man must love his wife, but as we love our bodies; and no man ever hated his own flesh;¹ and herein I must allow my Saviour the pre-eminence, to overgo me in powerful faithful love: he will save me better from pain and death, than I can save my body; and will more inseparably hold me to himself. If it please my soul to dwell in such a house of clay, and to operate on so mean a thing as flesh, how greatly will it please my glorified Lord, to dwell with his glo-

¹ Ephes. v. 27, &c.

rified body, the triumphant church, and to cherish and bless each member of it! It would be a kind of death to Christ to be separated from his body, and to have it die: whether Augustine and the rest of the fathers were in the right or no, who thought, that as our bodies do not only shed their hairs, but by sicknesses waste and lose much of their very flesh, so Christ's militant body doth not only lose hypocrites, but also some living, justified members; yet, certain it is, that confirmed members, and more certain, that glorified members shall not be lost. Heaven is not a place for Christ or us to suffer such loss in. And will Christ love me better than I love my body? Will he be loather to lose me than I am to lose a member or to die? Will he not take incomparably greater pleasure in animating and actuating me for ever, than my soul doth in animating and actuating this body? O then let me long to be with him! And though I am naturally loath to be absent from the body, let me be by his spirit more unwilling to be absent from the Lord. And, though I would not be unclothed had not sin made it necessary, let me groan to be clothed upon with my heavenly habitation, and to become the delight of my Redeemer, and to be perfectly loved, by love itself.

10. And even this blessed receptivity of my soul, in terminating the love and delight of my glorified head, must needs be a felicity to me. The insensible creatures are but beautified by the sun's communication of its light and heat; but the sensitives have also the pleasure of it. Shall my soul be senseless? Will it be a clod or stone? Shall that which is now the form of God, be then more lifeless, senseless, or incapable than the form of brutes

is now ? Doubtless it will be a living, perceiving, sensible recipient, of the felicitating love of God and my Redeemer. I shall be loved as a living spirit, and not as a dead and senseless thing, that doth not comfortably perceive it.

11. And if I must rejoice with my fellow-servants that rejoice, shall I not be glad to think that my blessed Lord will rejoice in me, and in all his glorified ones ? Union will make his pleasure to be much mine ; and it will be aptly said by him to the faithful soul, ‘ Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’¹ His own active joy will objectively be ours, as ours will be efficiently his, or from him. Can that be an ill condition to me in which my Lord will most rejoice ? It is best to him, and therefore best to me.

12. And the heavenly society will joyfully welcome a holy soul. If there be now ‘ joy in the heaven among the angels for one sinner that repenteth,’² who hath yet so little holiness and so much sin, what joy will there be over a perfected glorified soul ! Surely if ‘ our angels there behold our Father’s face,’ they will be glad in season of our company. The angels that carried Lazarus to Abraham’s bosom, no doubt rejoiced in their work and their success. And is the joy of angels and the heavenly host as nothing to me ? Will not love and union make their joy to be my own ? If love here must make all my friends’ and neighbours’ comforts to become my own ; and as their joy, according to their perfection, is greater than any that I am now capable of, so the participation of so great a joy as theirs, will be far better than to have my little se-

¹ Matt. xxv. 21.

² Luke, xv. 10.

parated apartment. Surely that will be my best condition, which angels and blessed spirits will be best pleased in, and I shall rejoice most in that which they most rejoice in.

III. The constitutive reasons from the intellectual state.

Though the tempter would persuade men, because of the case of infants in the womb, apoplectics, &c. that the understanding will be but an inactive power when separated from these corporal organs, I have seen before sufficient reasons to repel this temptation. I will suppose that it will not have such a mode of conception as it hath now by these organs. But, 1. The soul will be still essentially a vital intellectual substance, disposed to act naturally, and that is, to those acts which it is formally inclined to, as fire to illuminate and heat. And as it cannot die, while it is what it is in essence, because it is life itself; that is, the vital substance; so it cannot but be intellectual, as to an inclined power, because it is such essentially, though God can change or annihilate any thing if he would. 2. And it will be among a world of objects. 3. And it will still have its dependence on the first cause, and receive his continual actuating influx. 4. And no man can give the least show of true reason, to prove that it shall cease sensation, whether the sensitive faculties be in the same substance, which is intellectual, which is most probable, or in one conjunct, as some imagine, though the species and modes of sensation cease which are denominated from the various organs. 5. Yea, no man can prove that the departing soul doth not carry with it its igneous spirits, which in the body it did immediately actuate. If it were

never so certain that those Greek fathers were mistaken, as well as Hippocrates, who took the soul itself to be a sublime intellectual fire.

And as to the objection some hold, that the soul pre-existed before it was in the body ; others, and most, that it then received its first being. If the first were true, it would be true that the soul had its intellectual activity before, though the soul itself incorporate remember it not, because it operateth but *ut forma hominis*, and its oblivion they take to be part of its penalty. And they that think it a radius of the *anima mundi vel systematis*, must think that then it did intellectually animate *hunc mundum, vel mundi partem* : and to do so again, is the worst they can conjecture of it. As the rays of the sun which heat a burning glass, and by it set a candle on fire, are the same rays still diffused in the air, and illuminating, heating, and moving it, and terminated on some other body, and not annihilated or debilitated when their contracted operation ceaseth by breaking the glass, or putting out the candle ; and as the spirit of a tree still animateth the tree, when it retireth from the leaves and lets them fall. But this being an unproved imagination of men's own brains, we have no further use of it than to confute themselves. But if the soul existed not till its incorporation, what wonder if it operate but *ut forma*, when it is united to the body for that use ? What wonder if its initial operations, like a spark of fire in tinder, or the first lighting of a candle, be weak, and scarce by us perceptible ? What wonder if it operate but to the uses that the creation did appoint it ; and first, as vegetative, fabricate its own body as the maker's instrument, and then feel, and then understand ?

And what wonder if it operate no further than objects are admitted? And therefore what wonder if in apoplexies, &c. such operations are intercepted? But the departing soul is, 1. In its maturity. 2. No more united to this body, and so not confined to sense and imagination in its operations, and the admission of its objects. 3. And it is *sub ratione meriti*, and as a governed subject is ordinate to its reward; which it was not capable of receiving in the womb or in an apoplexy. And as we have the reasons before alleged to hold, 1. That it shall not be annihilated. 2. Nor dissolved. 3. Nor lose its essential faculties or powers. 4. Nor those essential powers be continued useless by the wise and merciful Creator, though by natural revelation we know not in what manner they shall act; whether on any other body, and by what conjunction, and how far; so by supernatural revelation we are assured, that there is a reward for the righteous, and that holy souls are still members of Christ, and live because he liveth, and that in the day of their departure they shall be with him in paradise, and being absent from the body, shall be present with the Lord; and that Christ therefore died, rose, and revived that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living; that is, of those that being dead, hence do live with him, and of those that yet live in the body; for he that said, 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living;' that is, stands not related to them as his people, as a king to his subjects, is not himself the Lord of the absolute dead, but of the living.

Therefore, as Contarenus against Pompanatius *de Immortal. Anim.* saith, the immortality of the soul is provable by the light of nature, but the manner

of its future operation must be known by faith. And blessed be the Father of spirits, and our Redeemer, who hath sent and set up this excellent light, by which we see further than purblind infidels can do.

But I deny not but even the Scripture itself doth tell us but little of the manner of our intellection when we are out of the body; and it is not improbable that there is more imperfection in this mode of notional, organical, abstractive knowledge which the soul exerciseth in the body, than most consider of; and that as the eye hath the visive faculty in sleep, and when we wink, and an internal action of the visive spirits, no doubt, and yet seeth not anything without, till the eye-lids are opened, and was not made to see its own sight; so the soul in the body is as a winking eye, to all things that are not by the sense and imagination intromitted or brought within its reach. And whether "As I see not sight, neither the faculty, nor the seeing substance, yet by seeing do certainly perceive that I see; so it may be said, I do not immediately understand the understanding itself; yet by understanding do certainly perceive that I understand, because the act of the intellect is felt by the operation on the sensitive spirit;"¹ or whether we must further say with Ockam, that "The intellect understands itself both intuitively and abstractly,"² I leave to wiser men to judge; but I am very suspicious that the

¹ Sicut non video visum, neque facultatem, neque substantiam videntem, videndo tamen certo percipio me videre; so it may be said, Non intelligo immediate ipsam intellectionem, neque facultatem, aut substantiam intelligentem; intelligendo tamen certo percipio me intelligere, quia actus intellectus in spiritus sensitivos operans sentitur.

² Intellectus tum intuitive tum abstractive se intelligit.

body is more a lantern to the soul than some will admit; and that this *lusus notionum secundarum*, or abstractive knowledge of things by organical images, names, and notions, is occasioned by the union of the soul with the body *ut formæ*; and is that childish knowledge which the apostle saith shall be done away. And how much of man's fall might consist in such a knowing of good and evil I cannot tell, or in the overvaluing such a knowledge; and I think that when vain philosophy at Athens had called the thoughts and desires of mankind from the great realities to the logical and philological game at words and notions, it was Socrates's wisdom to call them to more concerning studies, and Paul's greater wisdom to warn men to take heed of such vain philosophy, and to labour to know God and Jesus Christ, and the things of the Spirit, and not to overvalue this ludicrous, dreaming, worldly wisdom. And if I have none of this kind of notional childish knowledge when I am absent from the body, the glass and spectacles may then be spared, when I come to see with open face, or as face to face. Our future knowledge is usually in Scripture called seeing, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'¹ 'We shall see face to face.'² 'We shall see him as he is.'³ 'Father, I will that those which thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me,'⁴ &c. An intuitive knowledge of all things as in themselves immediately is a more excellent sort of knowledge than this by similitudes, names, and notions, which our

¹ Matt. v. 8.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

³ 1 John, iii. 2.

⁴ John, xvii. 24.

learning now consisteth in, and is but an art acquired by many acts and use.

If the sun were, as the heathens thought it, an intellective animal, and its emitted rays were vitally visive, and when one of those rays were received by prepared seminal matter, as in insects, it became the soul of an inferior animal; in this case, the said ray would operate in that insect or animal but according to the capacity of the recipient matter; whereas the sun itself, by all its emitted rays, would see all things intellectually and with delight; and when that insect were dead, that ray would be what it was, an intellective, intuitive emanation. And though the soul in flesh do not know itself how it shall be united to Christ, and to all other holy souls, and to God himself, nor how near, or of what sort that union will be, yet united it will be; and therefore will participate accordingly of the universal light or understanding to which it is united. The soul now, as it is or operateth in the foot or hand, doth not understand, but only as it is and operateth in the head; and yet the same soul which is in the hand understandeth in the head; and the soul operateth not so selfishly or dividedly in the hand, as to repine there because it understandeth not there; but it is quiet in that it understandeth in the head, and performeth its due operation in the hand. But this diversity of operations seemeth to be from the organ's and the body's use or need; but souls dismissed from the body seem to be as all eye, or intuitive light. Therefore though it might content us to say that our head seeth all things, and we are united to him, yet we may say further, that we ourselves shall see God and all things that are meet for us to see.

And seeing it is most certain that the superior glorious regions are full of blessed spirits, who do see God and one another, having much more perfect operations than we have, whose effects we mortals find here below, why should I, that find an intellectual nature in myself, make any doubt of my more perfect operations when I am dismissed hence, being satisfied that a soul will not lose its simple essence. Either those superior spirits have ethereal bodies to act in (or are such themselves) or not. If they are, or have such, why should I doubt of the like, and think that my substance or vehicle will not be according to the region of my abode? If not, why should I think that my departed soul may not know or see without an igneous or ethereal body or vehicle, as well as all those worlds of spirits. And the certainty of apparitions, possessions, and witches, do tell us, not only that there are such inhabitants of other regions, ordinarily invisible to us, but also that we are in the way to that happiness or misery which is in our invisible state.

These things reviewed, (being partly mentioned before,) assuring me that I shall have actual intellection in my separated state, the region, with the objects, but above all, the holy Scriptures will tell me as much as it is meet that I should here know, what it is that I shall intuitively understand. The apostle doth distinguish our knowing in part and knowing perfectly; knowing as a child, and as a man; knowing darkly and enigmatically as in a glass, and knowing face to face as we are known.¹ The great question is, when this time of perfection

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11, 12.

is; whether he mean at death or at the resurrection. If Dr. Hammond's observation hold, that 'Ανάστασις in Scripture,¹ when the flesh or body is not joined with it, signifies that life which the soul doth enter upon immediately after our death, and so that the soul hath that after living which is signified by the very word which we translate resurrection, then it will lead men to think that there is less difference between man's state at his first departure and at his last resurrection than most think, even than Calvin himself thought; but the difference between our first and last state of after-life, or resurrection, cannot be now distinctly known. What difference there is now between Enoch, Elias, and those who rose at Christ's resurrection, and the rest of the saints, even the spirits of the perfected just; and whether the first have as much greater glory than the rest, as it is conceived that we shall have at the resurrection above that which immediately followeth death, what mortal man can tell? I am past doubt, that flesh and blood (formally so called, and not only *ab accidente*, as sinful) shall not inherit the kingdom of God,¹ but that our natural bodies shall be made spiritual bodies; and how a spiritual body differeth from a spirit or soul, I pretend not well to understand, but must stay till God by experience or fuller light inform me. But surely the difference is not like to be so great, as that a soul in flesh shall know in part, and a soul in a spiritual body shall know perfectly, and a soul between both shall not know at all. If it be perfection which we shall have in our

¹ And Mr. Beverly, in his, 'Great Soul of Man.'

² Vid. Hammond in loc.

spiritual body, it is like that we are nearer to that perfection, in knowledge and felicity, while we are between both, than we are in the flesh.

And sure a soul, that even Solomon saith goeth upward, and to God that gave it, is liker to know God than that which is terminated in flesh, and operateth *ut forma*, according to its capacity and state; and a soul that is with Christ, is liker to know Christ, and the Father in him, than that which is present with the body and absent from the Lord. What less can the promise of being with him signify?

And, 1st, as to the kind of knowledge, how excellent and more satisfactory a way will that of intuition or intellective sense be, than is our present way of abstraction, similitudes, and signs? What abundance of time, thoughts, and labour doth it cost us now to learn our grammar, our rhetoric, and our logic; our *artes loquendi, dicendi et differendi*; to learn our wordy rules and axioms in metaphysics, physics, &c.? And when we have learned them all, if all can be learned, how little the nearer are many to the knowing of the signified realities? We oft get but a set of words to play with, to take up our time, and divert us from the matter. Even as carnal men use the creatures which signify God, and are made to lead them up to him, to entangle them and be the greatest and most pernicious diversion of their souls from God, so do too many learned men do by their organical, signal knowledge; they use it as men do cards, and romances, and plays, to delight their phantasies, but they know less of the things that are worth their knowing than many unlearned persons do, as I said before. Had not much of the Athenian learn-

ing been then a mere game for men to play away their precious time at, and to grow proud of, while they were ignorant of saving realities, Christ and his apostles had not so much neglected it as they did, nor Paul so much warned men to take heed of being deceived by that vain kind of philosophy; in which he seemeth to me to have greater respect to the universally esteemed Athenian arts, than, as Dr. Hammond thought, to the mere Gnostic pretensions.

This poor, dreaming, signal, artificial knowledge is, 1. Costly. 2. Uncertain. 3. Contentious. 4. Unsatisfactory, in comparison of intuitive knowledge.

1. It is costly, as to the hard labour and precious time which must be laid out for it, as aforesaid; we grow old in getting us horses, and boots, and spurs for our journey; and it is well if we begin it at the last. Like a man that would study the new-found planets, and the shape of Saturn and Jupiter's satellites, and the *Viam Lacteam*, &c., and he spends his whole life in getting him the best tubes or telescopes, and never useth them to his ends; or like one that, instead of learning to write, doth spend his life in getting the best ink, paper, and pens; or rather, like one that learneth to write and print exactly, and not to understand what any of his words do signify. Men take their spectacles instead of eyes.

2. And when this learning is got, how uncertain are we whether the words have no ambiguity; whether they give us the true notice of the speaker's mind, and of the matter spoken of! As I said before, what a penury and yet redundancy of words have we; of how various and uncertain sig-

nification! Changed by custom, or arbitrary design; sometime by the vulgar use; and sometime by learned men, that being conscious of the defectiveness of the speaking art, are still tampering and attempting to amend it. And some men speak obscurely on purpose, to raise in their readers a conceit of their subtle and sublime conceptions. And he that understandeth things most clearly, and speaketh them most plainly, which are the parts of true learning, shall have much ado to get the matter out of dark and bewildering uncertainties, and to make others understand both it and him.

3. And hence come the greatest part of the contentions of the world, which are hottest among men that most pretend to worldly knowledge. As in traffic and converse, the more men and business we have to do with, usually the more quarrels and differences we have; so the more of this wordy learning, instead of realities, men pretend to, the more disputes and controversies they make; and the instruments of knowledge prove the instruments of error and contention. And, alas! how many applauded volumes are the snares and troubles of the world! And, how great a part of our libraries are vain janglings, and strife of words, and traps for the more ingenious sort, that will not be taken with cards and dice, robbing us of our time, destroying our love, depressing our minds that should ascend to God, and diverting them from the great and holy things which should be the matter of our thoughts and joys; and filling the church with sects and strife, while every one striveth for the pre-eminence of his wit and notions, and few strive for holy love, and unity, and good works.

4. And all this while, alas! too many learned men do but lick the outside of the glass, and leave the wine within untasted. To know God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness, do give the soul a nourishing and strengthening kind of pleasure, like that of the appetite in its food; but this game at words is but a knowing of images, signs, and shadows, and so is but an image and shadow of true knowledge: it is not that grace which Austine's definition saith, *Nemo male utitur*, but it is that which the sanctified use well, and the unsanctified are puffed up by, and use to the opposition of truth, the ostentation of a foolish wit, and the deceit of their own souls; and if it be sanctified knowledge, it is but mediate in order to our knowledge of the things thus signified; and it is the real good which contenteth and beatifieth, though the notions may be a subordinate recreation. And intuition feasteth on these realities.

And as to the objects of this intuition, their excellency will be the excellency of our knowledge. 1. I shall know God better. 2. I shall know the universe better. 3. I shall know Christ better. 4. I shall know the church body better, with the holy angels. 5. I shall better know the methods and perfection of the Scripture, and all God's dirigent word and will. 6. I shall know the methods and sense of disposing Providence better. 7. I shall know the divine benefits which are the fruits of love, better. 8. I shall know myself better. 9. I shall better know every fellow-creature which I am concerned to know. 10. And I shall better know all that evil, sin, satan, and misery from which I am delivered.

Aquinas and many others took it for the chief natural proof of the soul's immortality, that man by

nature desireth not only to know effects and second causes, but to rise up to the knowledge of the first cause; and therefore was made for such knowledge in the state of his perfection. But grace hath much more of this desire than nature: not that we must not be content to be without a great deal of knowledge, which would be unmeet for us, useless, troublesome or dangerous to us; nor must we aspire to that which is above our capacity; and to know the unsearchable things of God; but not to know God is to know nothing, and to have an understanding worse than none. I presume not to pry into the secrets of the Almighty, nor to pretend to know more of God than indeed I know; but O that I might know more of his glorious perfections, of his will, and love, and ways, with that knowledge which is eternal life! Blessed be that love that sent the son of God from heaven to reveal him to us in the gospel as he hath done; but all that hear the same words and believe them, have not the same degree of light or faith. If an angel from heaven came down on earth to tell us all of God that we would know, and might lawfully desire and ask him, who would not turn his back on libraries and universities, and the learned men, to go and discourse with such a messenger? What travel should I think too far? What cost too great for one hour's talk with such a messenger? But we must have here but such intimations as will exercise faith and excite desire, and try us under the temptations of the world and flesh; the glorious light is the reward of the victory obtained by the conduct of the light of grace. God in great mercy even here beginneth the reward: they that are true to the initial light, and faithfully follow on to know the Lord, do find usually such increase of light,

(not of vain notions, but of quickening and comforting knowledge of God,) as greatly encourageth them, and draweth them still on to seek for more. It is very pleasant here to increase in holy knowledge, though it usually bring an increase of malignant opposition, and so of sorrows to the flesh. The pleasure that the mind hath in common knowledge brings men through a great deal of labour to attain it. How many years travel over land and sea do some men take, to see and know more of this lower world? Though it is little that they bring home, but more acquaintance with sin, and vanity, and vexation. How many more years do thousands spend in the reading of multitudes of tedious volumes, that they may know what others knew before them? Printers and booksellers live by our desire of knowledge. What soul then on earth can possibly conceive how great a pleasure it will be for a glorified soul to see the Lord? Though I cannot now conceive what the intuition of God himself will be, and whether it will not be a glorious kind of concluding or abstractive knowledge; whether the glory which we shall see be only a created appearance of God, or be his very essence, it satisfieth me that it will be as perfect a knowledge as is fit for me to desire; and I shall then desire no more than is fit: and what it is I shall then know by itself, for it is not otherwise to be clearly known. And all the pleasure that I shall have in heaven in knowing any of the works of God, will be in my beholding God himself, his being, his vital power and action, his wisdom, and his love and goodness in those works; for he is the life and glory of them all. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

And doubtless it will be no small part of my delight, to see and know God's perfect works; I mean, the universe itself. I cannot say that I shall have so large a capacity as to comprehend all the world, or know it perfectly and with an adequate knowledge; but I shall know it in such perfection as is suitable to my capacity. It is exceeding pleasant to know the least particles of the works of God: with what diligence and delight have men endeavoured to anatomize a body, yea, a small part of a carcass, and to know and describe poor worms and insects, plants and minerals! And no man ever yet perfectly knew the least of them all; no herbalist or physician ever yet knew the nature, and uses of any one herb with an adequate knowledge. With what delight and diligence are physical searches carried on in the world, though still we are all but groping in the dark, and ignorant of many things for one that we know, and therefore know no one perfectly because we are ignorant of the rest! But if, indeed, we were above our dreaming erroneous hypotheses, and saw the nature of every creature, even in sea and land (this little spot of God's creation,) and the compages of all, oh, what a delightful spectacle would it be! How much more to see the whole creation, yea, or one vortex or system of the globes, and to know their union and communion, and to behold their beauteous symmetry, and hear them, in concord and melodious harmony, praising the glory of their great, wise, amiable Creator, this were a delectable sight indeed! I shall have as much of this as I shall be capable of; and the wonders and glory of the works of God, shall wrap up my soul in admiring joyful praise for

ever; and though here it be but little of God's works that we know, I have great reason to think that it will be far otherwise there. 1. Because the state of perfection must far excel our dark and infant state of imperfection. We have now desires after such a knowledge: his works are great, sought out of them that have pleasure therein. And these desires being of God, shall not be frustrate. 2. Because there will be a proportionableness of the parts of our perfection; and therefore as our love to God and his works will be there perfected, so will be our knowledge. 3. Because we shall know God himself as much as we are capable, and therefore we shall know his works, in Him, or by a subordinate knowledge, the less being in the greater. 4. Because God hath made his works to be known to his glory; but it is little that is here known of them by mortals; therefore they are known by them in heaven, who are fitted to improve that knowledge to his praise.

If Christ, who is the wisdom of God, will teach me the true philosophy, how to love God and live here in all well pleasing unto him, I shall quickly in heaven be a perfect philosopher; and experience will tell me, that the surest way to be truly learned, and know the wonderful works of God, was to know, love, and serve the great Creator, and in him we shall have all, and without him we know nothing, and have nothing at all.

Satan tempted Christ by showing him the kingdoms and glory of the world, and promising them all to him if he would have worshipped him; but God will show me more than Satan could show, and give me more of that which is best, than Satan could give.

And that in heaven I shall better know Jesus Christ, and all the mystery of our redemption by him, will not be the least of my felicity. For in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom; and to know the mystery of his eternal Godhead in the second person, and his created nature, and the union of these; and to see God's wonderful design and work of grace in him laid open to our clearest view: O what beatifying knowledge would this be! All dark texts concerning his person, his office, and his works will be then expounded and fully understood: all those strange and difficult things which were the great exercise and honour of faith will then be plain: difficulties will no more be Satan's advantage to tempt us to unbelief or doubting. The sight of the glory of my Lord will be my glory.¹ If Paul had not then attained to perfection in the knowledge of Christ, and the power of his resurrection, but was pressing forward to reach that crown in the life to come, which he calleth 'the resurrection of the dead,'² such as I must not expect here to attain it; but when that which is perfect is come, this imperfect knowledge of faith will be done away, as childish knowledge is unmanly; and the glass and riddle shall be laid aside, when we 'shall see face to face, and shall know as we are known,'³ as to our sight and knowledge of Christ and his triumphant body; for I dare not apply that phrase to the sight and knowledge of the divine essence, nor yet deny it.

If now, though we see not Christ, yet believing we love him, and rejoice in him with unspeakable glorying joy, what love and joy will the everlasting

¹ John, xvii. 24.

² Phil. iii. 9, 10, 11, 12.

³ 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11, 12.

sight of our blessed head, excite there in the souls of all the glorified ?

I shall better (O much better) know the heavenly Jerusalem, the triumphant church, the blessed angels and glorified saints; and as my love to them, so my knowledge of them will not be the least part of my heavenly delight. As strangely as I now look upward to that world, because I cannot see it with these eyes, it shall be my well known everlasting habitation. O what a sight, what a joyful sight will death show me by drawing aside the veil! Or rather the Lord of life, by turning death to my advantage! When I am there at home, I shall no more think with confusion, fear, or doubting of that blessed place or state. My fears, which now come from the smallness of my faith, will end when faith is turned into vision. As I now know the several rooms in my house, and houses in the streets, and streets in the city, so shall I then know the many mansions, which Christ hath said are in his Father's house. Words now give me so poor, imperfect a conception of the world and things which I never saw, as that sometimes I can scarcely tell, whether the joy of my faith, or the trouble of my dark apprehensions be the greater; but when I shall see the place, the persons, the glory which I heard of, that will be the delightful satisfying and possessing kind of knowledge. If Nehemiah and the godly Jews made so great a matter of seeing the walls of Jerusalem repaired, and others of the imperfect re-edifying of the temple, O what a joyful sight to me will the heavenly Jerusalem then be! The most glorious sight will be at the great marriage-day of the Lamb, when Christ shall come

to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that now believe; but the next to that will be the day of my particular deliverance, when I shall come to Christ, and see the saints admiring him in glory.

If I were of the opinion of those Greek fathers, who thought that stars were angels, or had intellectual souls, (matters unknown to us) I should love them as my guardians, and take it to be yet more of my concernment to be advanced to the fuller knowledge of them. But seeing I know that angels love us, and by office do attend and keep us, and rejoice at our good, and at our repentance, and, which is far more, are more holy and excellent creatures than we are, it is therefore my comfort to think that I shall better know them, and live in near and perpetual acquaintance and communion with them, a more sensible and sweet communion than we can have with them here. Devils are aerial and near to this dark and sinful world, and oftner appear to men than angels; but the angels affect not such descending appearances, till love and obedience to their Lord make it pleasing to them. And therefore we have but little knowledge even of those that know, and love, and keep us; but when we come home to their nearest society and converse, to know them will be sweet and joyful knowledge; for they are more excellent creatures than the most glorious that are below the intellectual nature; they are full of life, and full of love to God and man. Had God bid me pray to them, I would not have refused it, but taken it for my honour; but seeing he hath not, I will do that which he hath bid me, even love them, and rejoice in my re-

lation to the innumerable company of them, in the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,¹ and long to know and love them more; expecting ere long to bear my part in the praises of God and of the Lamb, in the same choir where they are the precentors.

And that I shall know the spirits of the perfected just, and be of their communion, will be no small addition to my joy. How sweet hath one wise and holy (though weak and blemished) companion been to me here on earth? And how lovely have God's graces in such, though smutted, appeared to me. O then, what a sight will it be when we shall see the millions of souls that shine in perfect wisdom and holiness with Christ! To see a garden that hath some beautiful flowers in it, is something; but if you saw whole fields and countries shining with them, it would be a glory, though fading, to the earth. A well built city is a pleasanter sight than a single house; and a navy, than a ship; and an army, than one man; and if this poor low world did all consist of wise, and just, and holy persons, O what an orderly, lovely world would it be! If one kingdom consisted (prince, magistrates, pastors, and people) all of such, what a blessed kingdom would that be! The plague of wicked men's deceits and falsehoods, oppressions and iniquities, may help to make us sensible of this. It would be a great temptation to us to be loath to die, and leave such a country, were it not that the more the beauty of goodness appeareth, the more the state of perfection is desired. It is pleasant to me to pray in hope, as Christ hath

¹ Heb. xii. 22.

commanded me, that earth may be made liker unto heaven, which now is become so like to hell; but when I shall see the society perfected in number, in holiness, in glory, in heavenly employment, the joyful praises of Jehovah, the glory of God, and the Lamb shining on them, and God rejoicing over them as his delight, and myself partaking of the same, that will be the truly blessed day. And why doth my soul imprisoned in flesh no more desire it?

I shall better understand all the word of God; the matter and the method of it. Though I shall not have that use for it as I have now in this life of faith, yet I shall see more of God's wisdom and his goodness, his love, mercy and justice appearing in it, than ever man on earth could do. As the creatures, so the Scriptures are perfectly known only by perfect spirits. I shall then know how to solve all doubts, and reconcile all seeming contradictions, and to expound the hardest prophecies: that light will show me the admirable methods of those sacred words, where dark minds now suspect confusion: how evident and clear will every thing appear to me! Like a small print when the light comes in, which I could not read in the glimmering twilight. How easily shall I then confute the cavils of all our present unbelievers! And how joyfully shall I praise that God and Saviour that gave his church so clear a light to guide them through this darksome world, and so sure a promise to support them till they come to life eternal! How joyfully shall I bless him, that by that immortal seed did regenerate me to the hopes of glory; and that ruled me by so holy and just a law!

In that world of light I shall better understand God's present and past works of providence, by which he ordereth the matters of this world: the wisdom and goodness of them is little understood in little parcels; it is the union and harmony of all the parts which showeth the beauty of them; when the single portions seem deformed, or are not understood. And no one can see the whole together but God, and they that see it in the light of his celestial glory: it is a prospect of that end by which we have here any true understanding of such parcels as we see. Then I shall know clearly why, or to what use, God prospered the wicked, and tried the righteous by so many afflictions. I shall know why he set up the ungodly, and put the humble under their feet: why he permitted so much ignorance, ungodliness, pride, lust, oppression, persecution, falsehood, deceit, and other sins in the world. I shall know why the faithful are so few; and why so many kingdoms of the world are left in heathenism, Mahometanism, and infidelity. The strange permissions which now so puzzle me, and are the matter of my astonishment, shall all be then as clear as day. I shall know why God disposed of me as he did, through all my life; and why I suffered what I did; and how many great deliverances I had, which I understood not here; and how they were accomplished. All our misinterpretations of God's works and permissions will be then rectified; and all our controversies about them, which Satan hath made so great advantage of, by a pretended zeal for some truths of God, will then be reconciled and at an end; and all the works of divine Providence from the

beginning of the world, will then appear a most delectable beauteous frame.

And among all these works, I shall specially know more the nature and excellency of God's mercies and gifts of love, which here we too unthankfully undervalued and made light of. The special works of love should be the matter of our most constant, sweet, and serious thoughts, and the fuel of our constant love and gratitude. The lively sense of love and mercy maketh lively Christians abounding in love to God, and mercy to others; but the enemy to God and man most laboureth to obscure, diminish, and disgrace God's love and mercy to us, or to put us out of relish to them, that they be unfruitful as to their excellent ends and uses. Little do most Christians know how much they wrong God and themselves, and how much they lose by the diminutive poor thoughts which they have of God's mercies. Ingratitude is a grievous misery to the sinner, as gratitude is a very pleasant work. Many a thousand mercies we now receive, which we greatly undervalue. But when I come to the state and work of perfect gratitude, I shall have a more perfect knowledge of all the mercies which ever I received in my life, and which my neighbours and friends, and God's church, and the world did ever receive; for though the thing be past, the use of it is not past: mercies remembered must be the matter of our everlasting thanks, and we cannot be perfectly thankful for them without a perfect knowledge of them. The worth of a Christ and all his grace, the worth of the gospel, the worth of our church privileges, and all God's ordinances, the worth of our books, and friends, and helps of our life and health,

and all conveniences, will be better understood in heaven, than the most holy and thankful Christian here understandeth them.

And it will be some addition to my future happiness that I shall then be much better acquainted with myself, both with my nature, and with my sin and grace. I shall then better know the nature of a soul, and its formal faculties, three in one. I shall know the nature and way of its operations, and how far its acts are simple, or compound, or organical. I shall know how far memory, phantasy, and sense internal and external belong to the rational soul, and whether the sensitive and rational are two or one, and what senses will perish and what not. I shall know how the soul doth act upon itself, and what acts it hath that are not felt, in sleep, in apoplexies, and in the womb. I shall know whether the vegetative nature be any thing else than fire, and whether it be of the same essence with the soul, sensitive or rational; and whether fire *eminenter* be a common fundamental substance of all spirits, diversly specified by the forms, mental, sensitive, and vegetative; or whether it be as a body, or vehicle to spirits, or rather a nature made for the copulation of spirits and bodies, and the operation of the former on the latter, as between both; and whether fire, and what sort, be the active *forma telluris*, and of other globes. I shall know how far souls are one and yet many, and how they are individuate; and whether their *quantitas discreta* in being numerically many, do prove that they have any *quantitatem continuam*, and whether they are a purer sort of bodies, as the Greek fathers, Tertullian and others thought, and what immateriality signifieth; and what substan-

tiality of spirit; and how *substantia* and *materia* differ; and how far they are penetrable and indivisible; and whether a soul be properly *pars*; and whether individual souls are parts of any common soul; and how far the individuation doth continue, And whether separated from the body, they operate in and by any other vehicle, or without, and how; and whether they take with them any of their fiery nature as a vehicle or as a constitutive part. I shall know how God produceth souls; and how his production by emanation or creation, doth consist in generation; and how forms are multiplied; and what causality the parents' soul hath to the production of the child. Whether by communication of substance, or only by disposing the recipient matter, I shall know whether all souls came from Adam's one substantiality, and whether there be more substance in them all than in that one, and whether one substance cause more by generation, or whether it be so as to the souls of brutes; or whether any *anima communis* inform many organical bodies of the brutes, as the sun lighteth many candles which are individuate by matter to which, as parts of one, they variously are contracted, and on which they operate, and whether they were individuate in pre-existence, or shall be individuate after separation. I shall know how far the *semen* in generation is animated, and how the animated *semina* of two make one. And if animated, what becomes of the *anima seminis perdit*, and of an abortive. And whether the body be animated as vegetative, or sensitive, before the entrance of the rational soul; or rather, whether the same soul, which in its faculty is rational, being one with the sensitive and vegetative, be the constitutive form of the first

animated body, and the fabricator of its own *domicilium*. I shall know how far the soul is receptive, and what the *causa finalis* doth to it, and what each object is to the constitution or production of the act. Yea, and what an act is, and what a habit: and how a soul acting or habited differeth from itself not acting or habited. And how its acts are many and yet but one, or its faculties at least. Many other such difficulties will all be solved, which now philosophers contend about in the dark, and pass but under doubtful conjectures; or at least are known to very few.

And I shall know how God's Spirit operateth on souls, and how it is sent from Christ's human nature to work on man; and whether grace be properly, or only metaphorically called a nature; a new nature, a divine nature, in us. I shall know what free will is, and how man's will can be the first determiner of any act of its own *in specie morali*, good or evil, without being such a *causa prima* as none but God can be; and so how far free acts are necessitated or not. I shall know what power the intellect hath on the will, and the will on the intellect, and what power the sense and phantasy hath on either; and what any *intellectus agens* doth. Whether it be to our intellection, as the sun is to our sight. I shall know what is meant by the degrees of acts and habits in the soul; and whether there be divers degrees of substantiality, or of the *virtus vel facultas formalis* of several souls. I shall know better the difference of the habits called acquired and infused; and what common grace is, and what it doth; and what nature can do of itself, or by common grace, without that

which is proper to the justified ; and how far any degrees of grace are lost.

I shall know what measure of grace I had myself, and how far I was mistaken in myself ; and what acts were sincere, and how much that was not sound was mixed ; and what was of myself and sin.

I shall know much more of my sins than here I ever knew ; the number and the greatness of them ; that so I may know with greatest thankfulness and love how much I am beholden to pardoning and healing grace.

Yea, I shall know more of my body, as it was the habitation of my soul, or the organical matter on which unitedly it worked. I shall know how far it helped or hindered me ; and what were all those obscure diseases that puzzled all the physicians and myself ; and how marvellously God sustained, preserved, and oft delivered me ; and what of my actions was to be imputed to the body, and what of them to the soul.

And every fellow-creature which I am concerned to know, I shall know far better than now I do, both things and persons ; the good and bad, the sincere and the hypocrites will be there discerned ; and many an action that here went for honourable, covered or coloured with wit or worldly advantages, or false pretences, will then be found to be odious and unjust ; and wickedness will be flattered or extenuated no more ; and many a good and holy work, which false men, through wickedness and worldly interest, reproached as some odious crime, will there be justified, honoured, and rewarded. All sciences are there perfect, without our ambiguous terms, or imperfect axioms and rules of art.

And lastly, I shall better know from what enemies, what sins, what dangers I was here delivered. What contrivances and malicious endeavours of Satan and his instruments God defeated; how many snares I escaped; and I shall better know how great my deliverance is by Christ from the wrath to come. Though we shall not know hell by painful sense, we shall know it so far as is necessary to fill us with gratitude to our Redeemer; yea, we shall know much of it far better than the damned spirits that feel it. For we shall know, by sweet and full fruition, what the joy and blessedness is which they have lost, when they have no such kind of knowledge of it.

All this knowledge will be thus advanced to my glorified soul beyond what I can here conceive in flesh. And is it not then far better to be with Christ?

IV. The constitutive reasons from the state of my will.

But it is the will that is to the soul what the heart is to the body: and as it is the prime seat of mortality, so is it the chief seat of felicity. My greatest evil is there, and my greatest subjective good will be there. Satan did most against it, and God will do most for it. And will it not be better with Christ than here?

1. It will not there be tied to a body of cross interests and inclinations, which is now the greatest snare and enemy to my soul, which is still drawing my love, and care, and fears, and sorrows to and for itself, and turning them from my highest interest. How great a deliverance will it be to be freed from temptations, and inordinate love, and cares, and fears for this corruptible flesh!

2. My will shall not there be tempted by a world of inferior good, which is the bait and provision for the flesh, where meat, and sleep, and possessions, house, lands, and friends, are all become my snares and danger; God's mercies will not be made there the tempter's instruments; I shall not there have the flatteries or frowns, promises or threatenings of the tyrants of the world to tempt me; bad company will not infect me, nor divert me; the errors of good men will not seduce me, nor reputation or reverence of the wise, learned, or religious draw me to imitate them in any sin.

3. I shall there have none of Satan's solicitations to pervert my will: he will not have that advantage by my sense and phantasy, nor that access unto me as now he hath. But of this I spake before.

My will shall there be better than here: I. Negatively; because, 1. There will be nothing in it that is displeasing to God; no sinful inclination, habit, or act; nothing to strive against God's Spirit, nor grudge at any word or work of God; no principles of enmity or rebellion left. 2. There will be nothing that is against the good of others; no inclinations to injury, or any thing that is against my neighbour's or the common good. 3. There will be nothing in it that is cross to itself; no more war or striving in me; not a law in my mind, and a law in my members, that are contrary to each other; no crossness between sense and reason, nor between the sensitive appetite and the rational: all will be at unity and peace within.

II. Positively. Christ will have finished his cure on my will; the work of sanctification will be perfect. And, 1. My will shall there by union and

communion be made conformable to the will of Christ, and so unto the Father's will. This must needs be meant, whatever more, in the prayer of Christ, where he prayeth that they may be 'one as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us, that they may be one even as we are one.'¹ The will of Christ and of the Father will be my will; that is, I shall love and will, dispositively and actually, the same that God loveth and willeth, in the measure of a creature infinitely below him. And if so, how can the will of man have greater honour than to be the same with the will of God? Assimilation to a king, among us poor mortals, goeth for honour; assimilation to angels is much more. That we shall be like or equal to the angels, is a high part of the blessed's praise; but how much more is it to be thus far like to God? Indeed, God's image and the divine in us here, can be no less than this similitude to God's will in the degree that we have it; but, alas! that degree is so very low, as that we can hardly tell whether our similitude or our dissimilitude be the more; I mean, whether our wills are for more than God willeth, or against more. O how many thousand wishes and desires have we had which are against the will of God! But there we shall have the full impression of God's will upon our wills, as face answereth face in a glass, or the wax answereth the seal: as the finger on the outside answereth the motion of the clock within, so in all things which belong to our duty and perfection we shall answer the will of God: as the echo answereth the voice defectively, but truly, without contradiction or dis-

¹ John, xvii. 21, 22.

cord, so will our wills be as the echo of God's will.

2. And then I am sure that there will be nothing in my will but good ; for God willeth no evil.

3. And this will be virtually all obedience ; for all sin is voluntary, and all moral good is primarily in the will.

4. And then there can be no matter of disquiet in me, but all will be in perfect peace ; for all that is like God will be pleasing both to God and me ; no troubling crossness will remain.

5. And how easy and sweet then will all my obedience be when I shall perfectly will it, without any reluctancy or averseness ! All will be my very pleasure that I do.

And seeing my will shall be the same with the will of God, it followeth that it shall never be frustrate, but I shall have all whatsoever I would have, and shall be and do whatsoever I would be and do ; for I shall desire nothing but what God willeth, and God's will shall certainly be done. I shall have as much love and joy as I would have ; I shall be as happy as I would be ; I shall desire nothing for others but it shall be done. Indeed if God's will were there unknown to me, I might ignorantly go against it, as I do here ; but there, before I will or desire any thing, I shall know whether it be God's will or not, so that I shall never wish any thing which shall not be accomplished. And as it is God's perfection to have his will alway done, though all his laws be not obeyed, so my perfection shall consist in this likeness unto God, that my will shall be still fulfilled. And then Christ's promises will be perfectly performed, 'Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name he

will give it you;’ ‘ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you;’¹ while their will was the same with the will of Christ. But he saith not that it shall all be given us here: we ask for perfection, and we shall have it, but not here.

Yea, my will itself shall be my fruition; for it shall not be the will of one in need, a desire of what I want, for I shall want nothing; therefore it is said that we shall thirst no more; but it will be a complacency in what I do possess. And in this also my perfection will be the image of God’s perfection. Not but that all creatures still receive from God, and in that sense may be said to need, in that they have nothing of themselves, but all by gift and communication from him; but being still and full possessors, they cannot properly be said to want. Complacency in that which we possess, is love and pleasure in one act; and, indeed, pleasure and love are the same thing. To love any thing, is to have that thing to be pleasing to my mind. Even when it is wanted it is thought on as a pleasing thing, and therefore desired; so that the desiring act of the will is but a second act occasioned by want, and following the first act, which is complacency, or simple love. I desire it because I love it. Rightly therefore is the will itself called love; for in the first act, love, will, and rational appetite are all words of the same signification. My will therefore must needs be perpetually full of perfect joy, when enjoying love and pleasure will be my will itself. Thus shall I have in me the spring of living waters; and the Comforter will then perfectly do his work, when my constant will itself shall be

¹ John, xv. 16; xvi. 23; xiv. 13, 14; xv. 7.

comfort. Well therefore is glory said to be the perfection of sanctifying grace, when this grace is the beginning of that love and joy which glory is the perfection of; and perfection is the Spirit's work.

And it will be much of my felicity, that my will shall be confirmed and fixed in this conformity to the will of God, and holy love will be its nature. Now both understanding and will are so lamentably mutable, that further than God promiseth to uphold us, we know not one day, what we shall think, judge, or will the next. But when love is as a fixed nature in us, we shall be still the same, adhering to amiable goodness, without intermission or cessation; it will be as easy to us (and more) to love God and holiness, as it is to the hungry and thirsty to love meat and drink, or to the proud to love praise or domination; yea, or to any man to love his life. And we shall be no more weary of loving than the sun is of shining, or than the hungry is of feasting, or a friend of friendly love and converse: nay, the comparison is quite too low; for all creatures here have a fading vanity which wearieth the satiated or failing appetite; but there is no such thing in heaven.

And as from the nature of that act, so much more from the nature of the object, my love will appear to be my happiness: the objects, which are as the matter of the act, will be these:—

1. God himself will be the full and everlasting object of my love. And he that could but understand as well as those in heaven do, what this word signifieth, (to love God and be beloved of him,) would say, that there needs no other description of perfect happiness! Perfect joyful complacency in

God is the heaven which I desire and hope for. This is my felicity and much more. As I am the agent of love to God, and the object of God's love to me, it is my felicity. As God is the ultimate object of my love, and the agent of his love to me, that is, of the effects of it, so it is unspeakably more high and excellent than to be my felicity; love is the closure of the wills of God and man; and as it is God's part or interest, efficiently or objectively, it is infinitely more excellent, than as it is my part and interest.

In God there is all that love can desire for its full everlasting feast. 1. He is infinitely good in himself, that is, most aimable; and the nature of man's will is to love good as good; could we love God with a love that is adequate to the object, we should be God ourselves, which is impossible; none but God can adequately know God or love him: in God's love to himself, both the act and object are infinite, and indeed are both one, there being not that formally which we know by the name of act and object; but (act and object) are our analogical, inadequate conceptions of that act of God which is his essence. But in our love to God, the act is finite and infinitely below the object; yea, the object which in reality is itself infinite, yet proximately as the *esse cognitum* is the object of our love, is finite there: it is the conception or idea of God in the intellect, which is the proper and nearest object of the will: and this is as a face in a glass—a shadow; even the finite little shadow of an infinite being. The same infinite good is a felicity to divers persons in divers degrees, according as they diversly love, and are receptive of his love.

2. God, who is infinitely good in himself, will

be that most suitable good to me, and meetest for the dearest embracements of my will. For, 1. He hath all in himself that I need or can desire: there is no room, nothing above him, or beyond him, or without him, for love to cleave to: (though below him the creature, though not being without him, is loved without him, by the deception of the mind.)

He is willing to be beloved by me: he disdaineth not my love: he might have refused to be embraced by such affections, as have so oft and sinfully polluted themselves by embracing vanity and filth: as persons of state and stately cleanliness will not be touched by filthy hands, much less let dogs or dirty swine leap on them which come from wallowing in the mire; God might have driven me away from the happiness of loving him; and have denied me the leave for so high a work: but he commandeth my love, and maketh it my greatest duty: he inviteth and entreateth me, as if he were a gainer by my happiness: he seeketh to me to seek to him, and as he is the first, so is he the most earnest suitor: he is far readier to receive my love than I am to give it him. All the compassionate invitations which I have had from him here, by his word and mercies, assure me that he will there receive me readily. He that so valued my poor, cold, imperfect love to him on earth, will not reject my perfect love in heaven: he that made it the great work of his Spirit to effect it, will not refuse it when it is made perfect by himself.

And he is near to me, and not a distant God out of my reach, and so unsuitable to my love: blind unbelievers may dream that he is far off, but

he is as near us even now, as we are to ourselves; he is not far from any of us, for in him we live, and move, and have our being; the light of the sun is not so near my eyes, as God will be for ever to my mind. When he would sanctify us to love him, he bringeth us nigh to him in Christ. As we love ourselves easily, as being, as they say, the nearest to ourselves; so we shall as easily love God as ourselves, when we see that he is as near us as we are to ourselves, as well as that he is infinitely more amiable in himself.

And because of the imparity of the creature and the Creator, he hath provided such means to demonstrate to us his nearness, as are necessary to the exercise of our love: we shall see his glory and taste his love in our glorified Mediator, and in the glory of the church and world; God will condescend to show himself to us according to our capacities of beholding him; here we see him in his works and word, and there we shall see him in the glory of all his perfect works. But this leadeth me to the second object of my love.

Under God as I shall see, so I shall delightfully love the glorious perfection of the universe; even the image of God in all the world; as my love will be my delight, so I shall love best that which is best, and most delight in it; and the whole is better than any part; and there is a peculiar beauty and excellency in the whole world, as perfect, compaginate, harmonious, which is not to be found in any part, no not in Christ himself as man, nor in his church.

The marvellous inclination that all things have to union, even the inanimates, might persuade me, if I felt it not certainly in myself, that it

is most credible that man also shall have the like inclination, and such as is agreeable to the nature of his faculties; and therefore our love and delight in all things, is that uniting inclination in man.

And I shall have a special love to the holy society, the triumphant universal church, consisting of Christ, angels, and saints, as they are specially amiable, in the image and glory of God: God himself loveth them more than his inferior works (that is, his essence, which is love, and hath no degrees or change, doth send forth fuller streams of good upon them, or maketh them better and happier than the rest :) and my love will imitate the love of God, in my capacity. And if societies on earth, more holy and wise than others, though imperfectly, are very amiable, what then will the heavenly society be? Of this I spake before, (of knowing them.)

Think here, O my soul, how sweet a state unto thee it will be to love the Lord Jesus thy glorified head with perfect love! When the glory of God which shineth in him, will feast thy love with full and everlasting pleasure: the highest created perfection of power, wisdom, and goodness, refulgent in him, will not give leave to thy love, to cease, or intermit, or abate its fervour. When thou shalt see in the glorified church the precious fruits of Christ's redemption, grace, and love, this also will feed thy love to him, from whom this heavenly glory cometh; and when thou shalt feel thyself possessed of perfect happiness, by his love to thee, will not this also do its part? Yea, the remembrance of all his former love; what he did for thee,

and what he did in thee here on earth, how he called thee with a holy calling, how he washed thee in his blood from all thy sins, how he kindled in thee those desires which tended to that perfect glory, how he renewed thy nature, how he instructed, and guided, and preserved thee from thy childhood, and how many and how great sins, enemies, dangers, and sufferings he saved thee from, all this will constrain thee everlastingly to love him: thus, (though he give the kingdom to the Father, as ceasing his mediatory, healing, saving work of acquisition,) he will be to thee the Mediator of fruition: God in him will be accessible, and condescend to a suitable communion with us.¹ And as Christ is thy life, radically and efficiently, as he is the giver of grace, and the spirit of love, so he will be objectively thy life as he is lovely, and it will be formally thy life to love him, and God in him for ever.

Think also, O my soul, how delectable it will be to love, as well as to know those angels that most fervently love the Lord! They will be lovely to thee as they have loved thee, and more as they have been lovers and benefactors to the church and to mankind; but far more as they are so many refulgent stars which continually move and shine, and burn in purest love to their Creator. O blessed difference between that amiable society of holy spirits, and this dark, mad, distracted, wicked world! Here devils tempt me within, and devils incarnate persecute me without: blaspheming of God, reviling godliness, deriding the sacred Scriptures and sacred exercises, malignant slandering of

¹ John xvii. 24.

the servants of God ; hating, persecuting, silencing, and saying all manner of evil falsely of them, for their righteousness' sake, while such crimes are pretended as they once falsely charged on Christ himself ; this is the conversation of those that I have long dwelt with in this world. Atheism, infidelity, papal church tyranny, bloody wars, destroying the righteous, oppressing the poor, adultery and fornication, stigmatizing perjury, ambition, violence, covetousness, deceit, sottish ignorance, wilfulness in sin, hatred of reproof, revengeful malice ; these and such like are the fruits of the soil where I have long sojourned ; (though, through the grace of Christ, among the faithful there have been better fruits :) and is not the company of holy angels better than this ? With whom God is all ; who are even made up of shining wisdom, and holy love, and beneficent activity : who are the blessed choir, that melodiously sing forth the high praises of their Maker : among whom God dwelleth as in his presence-chamber or his temple, and in whom he taketh his great delight. With these I shall see or hear no evil. No mixture of fools or wicked ones do pollute or trouble their society ; there will be no false doctrine, no evil example, no favouring wickedness, no accusing goodness, no hurtful violence ; but holy, powerful, operative love, will be all and do all, as their very nature, life, and work. And is it not better be a door-keeper there than to dwell in the palaces of wickedness ? And is not a day with them better than a thousand here ?

And with the holy angels I shall love holy souls that are made like unto them, and joined with them in the same society (and it is likely with them judge, that is, rule the world.) All their in-

firmities are there put off with the flesh ; they also are spirits made up of holy life, and light and love : there is none of their former ignorance, error, imprudence, selfishness, contentiousness, impatience, or any other troubling, hurtful thing. When I think with what fervent love to God, to Jesus Christ, and to one another, they will be perfectly united there, alas ! how sad and how shameful is it, that they should here be prone to disaffections and divisions, and hardly agree to call each other the servants of God, or to worship God in the same assemblies ; but the remnants of dividing principles (viz. pride, error, and uncharitableness) will be all left behind. Society with imperfect saints is sweet ; the imperfect image of God upon them is amiable ; but their frailties here are so vexatious, that it is hard to live with some of them in peace. But perfect love will make them one ; and O how delightful will that communion of saints be ! I can never forget how sweet God hath made the course of my pilgrimage, by the fragrancy and usefulness of his servants' graces ; how sweet have my bosom friends been, how mutable ! How sweet hath the neighbourhood of the godly been ! How sweet hath the holy assemblies ! And how many hours of comfort have I there had ! How profitable have their writings, their conference, and their prayers been ! What then will it be to live in the union of perfect love with perfect saints in heaven for ever, and with them concordantly to love the God of love ?

And as the act and the object of love will constitute my felicity, so will my reception from the love of God, and his creatures, be sweeter to me than my own activity can be ; for it is mutual love that makes it up. I shall not be the fountain of

my own delights, nor can I act till I am acted, nor offer any thing to God, but what I have first received from him. And receive I shall abundantly and continually, and from thence shall overflow to God, and receiving and returning, are now, and will be, the circular endless motion, and our true perpetual life and happiness.

All my receivings shall be from God. His love is not a mere immanent will, nor a wish which toucheth not the object; but it is what heat is in or from the sun or fire: it is an efflux of goodness: it is the most powerful, sweet, communicating principle or work. All love is communicative; but none in comparison of God's: as there is none primitive and simply good but God. How much doth love in the affairs of men! All that is pleasant in the world is it, or its effects. Were it not for sensual love there would be no generation of man or brutes: God hath made it a generating principle. Hatred causeth not congress, but fighting with or flying from one another. Were it not for natural love, mothers would never endure the pain, and trouble, and care, which is necessary to human birth and education: were it not for love, parents would never labour all their lives to leave their children well instructed and well provided for when they are gone. My food would not please me, did I not love it, and I should neglect it to the neglect of my life: did I not love my books and learning itself, I should never have bestowed so much of threescore years in poring on them, and searching for knowledge as I have done: did I not love my house, my conveniences and necessities I should neglect them, and they would be to me of small use: did I not love my friends, I

should be less profitable to them and they to me: did not I love my life, I should neglect it, and never have endured the labour and cost about it as I have done. If a man love not his country, posterity, and the common good, he will be as a burdensome drone in the hive, or as pernicious vermin. What is done in the world that is good, but by love?

And if created love be so necessary, so active, so communicative, how much more will the infinite love of the Creator be? His love is now the life of the world: his love is the life of nature in the living; the life of holiness in saints, and the life of glory in the blessed. In this infinite love it is that I and all the saints shall dwell for evermore. And if I dwell in love, and love in me, surely I shall have its sweet and plenteous communication; and shall ever drink of the rivers of pleasure. It is pleasant in nature to be beloved of others; especially of the great, and wise, and good; much more to have all the communications of love, in converse and gifts, in plenty and continuance, which may be still expressing it to our greatest benefit! Had I a friend now that did for me but the hundredth part of what God doth, how dearly should I love him! Think then, think believingly, seriously, constantly, O my soul, what a life thou shalt live for ever in the presence, the face, the bosom of infinite eternal love! He now shineth on me by the sun, and on my soul, by the sun of righteousness; but it is as through a lantern, or the crevices of my darksome habitation; but then he will shine on me, and in me, openly and with the fullest streams and beams of love.

God is the same God in heaven and earth, but I

shall not be the same man. Here I receive comparatively little, but live in darkness, doubtful and frequent sorrows, because my receptivity is less. The windows of my soul are not open to his light : sin hath raised clouds, and consequently storms against my comforts : the entrances to my soul by the straits of flesh and sense are narrow ; and they are made narrower by sin than they were by nature. Alas ! how oft would love have spoken comfortably to me ; and I was not at home, to be spoken with, but was abroad among a world of vanities ; or was not at leisure ; or was asleep, and not willing to be awaked ! How oft would love have come in and dwelt with me, and I have unkindly shut my doors against him ! How oft would he have been with me in secret where he freely would embrace me, but I had some pleasing company or business which I was loath to leave ! How oft would he have feasted me, and had made all ready, but I was taken up and could not come ; nay, when his table hath been spread before me, Christ, grace, and glory hath been offered to me, my appetite hath been gone or dull, and all hath been almost neglected by me, and hath scarce seemed pleasant enough to be accepted, or to call off my mind from luscious poison ! How oft would he have shined upon me, and I have shut my windows or mine eyes. He was jealous, indeed, and liked not a partner ; he would have been all to me, if I would have been all for him ; but I divided my heart, my thoughts, my love, my desires, and my kindnesses ; and, alas ! how much did go besides him ! Yea, against him to his enemies, even when I knew that all was lost, and worse than lost, which was not his ! What wonder then if so

foolish and unkind a sinner had little pleasure in his love; and if so great ingratitude and neglect of sovereign goodness were punished with such strangeness, and fears, and faintings, as I have long with groans lamented? *Recipitur ad modum recipientis.*

But in heaven I shall have none of these obstructions; all old unkindness and ingratitude will be forgiven; the great reconciler, in whom I am beloved, will then have perfected his work: I shall then be wholly separated from the vanity which here deceived me! My open soul will be prepared to receive the heavenly influx; with open face I shall behold the open face of glorifying love; I shall joyfully attend his voice, and delightfully relish the celestial provisions! No disease will corrupt my appetite: no sluggishness will make me guilty again of mouldy neglects: the love of the Father, by the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, will have got the victory over all my deadness, folly, and disaffection, and my God-displeasing and self-undoing averseness and enmity will be gone for ever! The perfect love which God doth first effect in me, will be my everlasting receptivity of the fullest love of God: benevolent love will make me a good, that is, a holy lover of God; and then pleased love will make me his delight, and benevolence will still maintain me in my capacity.

Study this heavenly work of love, O my soul! These are not dead or barren studies; these are not sad unpleasant studies; it is only love that can relish love, and understand it: the will here hath its gust so like to an understanding, as maketh some philosophers say that *voluntas percipit*, the will perceives, is a proper phrase. What can poor carnal world-

lings know of glorious love, who study it without love? What sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, a lifeless voice, are they that preach of God, and Christ, and heavenly glory without love! But gazing upon the face of love in Christ, and tasting of its gifts, and looking up to its glorious reign, is the way to kindle the sacred fire in thee. Look upwards if thou wouldst see the light that must lead thee upwards! It is not for nothing that Christ hath taught us to begin our prayers with 'Our Father which art in heaven.' It is fatherly love that must win our hearts, and that must comfort them; and it is (in heaven) where this is gloriously manifested; as I said before, as the soul is in all the body, but yet understandeth not in the hand as it doth in the head, nor rejoiceth not in the foot as it doth in the heart: so God that is every where, doth not every where glorify his love, as he doth it in heaven; thither, therefore, the mind and eye are even by nature taught to look up as to God, as we look a man in the face when we speak to him, rather than to his feet, though his soul be also there.

My sinful heart hath needed sorrow; my careless, rash, presumptuous soul hath needed fears; and I have had some part of these: mercy saw it good for me, as necessary to prevent my more dangerous deceits and lapses! And, O, that in the hour of sensual temptations, I had feared more, and departed from evil! But it is holy love that must be my life; or else I am dead, notwithstanding fear.

O come then and study the life of love; it is more of a holy nature than of art, but yet study must do much to prepare thee to receive it. This

is the great use of a heavenly conversation. It is the contemplation, belief and hope of the glorious state of love hereafter that must make us like it, and kindle it in us here; the burning-glass must be turned directly to the sun, if you will have it set any thing on fire. There is a carnal or common love to God, which is kindled in men by carnal pleasures; but a holy love like that, in heaven, must be studiously fetched from heaven, and kindled by the foresight of what is there, and what we shall be there for ever; faith must ascend, and look within the veil; thou must not live as a stranger to thy home, to thy God and Saviour, and thy hopes; the fire that must warm thee is in heaven, and thou must come near it, or open thyself to its influence, if thou wilt feel its powerful efficacy. It is night and winter with carnal minds, when it is day and summer with those that set their faces heavenward.

But though all my receivings will be from God, they will not be from him alone; we must live in perfect union also with one another, and with all the heavenly society; and therefore as we must love them all, so shall we be beloved by them all; and this will be a subordinate part of our blessedness; God there will make use of second causes, even in communicating his love and glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ will not only be the object of our delightful love, but will also love us with an effectual operative love for ever; his love will be as the vital heat and motion of the heart to all the members; the root of our life and joy. The love of our Redeemer will flow out into us all the vital spirits, and his face of glory will be the sun of the heavenly Jerusalem, and will shine upon us,

and show us God. And in his light we shall have light. Did his tears for a dead Lazarus make men say, 'Behold how he loved him!' O, then, what will the reviving beams of heavenly life make us say of that love which filleth us with the pleasures of his presence, and turneth our souls into joy itself! He comforteth us now by the teaching of his word; but surely the fruition of salvation will be more gladdening than the tidings of it! When he that told us of glory in his gospel shall give it us, we shall not only believe but feel that he loveth us.

Believe, O my soul, thy Saviour's love that thou mayst foretaste it and be fit to feel it. We were incapable in sinful flesh of seeing him otherwise than as clothed with flesh; and his consolations were administered by a word of promise suitable to his appearance; but when he withdrew his bodily presence, the Comforter was sent with a fuller consolation. But all that was but the earnest and the first-fruits of what he will be to us for ever. Be not seldom, nor unbelieving, nor slight in the thoughts of thy Saviour's love, for it is he that is the way to the infinite love; let thy believing be so much of thy daily work, that thou mayst say, that he 'dwelleth in thy heart by faith,'¹ and that while thou livest here it is Christ that liveth in thee; and that 'thy life in the flesh is not a fleshly life, but by the faith of the Son of God that hath loved thee and given himself for thee.'² And that though thou see him not, yet believing thou lovest him also with unspeakable joy, as believing the unspeakable, perfect joy which his love will communicate to thee for ever.

Look upon the sun and think thus with thyself.—

¹ Eph. iii. 17.

² Gal. ii. 20.

How wonderful is the emanation of this sun ; its motion, light, and heat communicated to so many millions of creatures all over the earth, and in the seas ; what if all these beams of light and heat, were proportionable beams of perfect knowledge, love, and joy ? and that all creatures that are under the sun had from its influx as much wisdom, love, and joy, as they have light, heat, and motion ; would not then this earth be as a world of angels, and a heaven ? O, what a blessed world would it be ! And what a benefactor would the sun be to the world ! Why, even the Sun of glory by his influence will send forth life, and light, and joyful love upon all the blessed from the face of God, as the sun sends forth from God, its motion, light, and heat upon this world. Now, therefore, begin and live upon him ; live upon the influence of his grace, his teaching, love-kindling, and quickening grace, that thou mayst have his name and mark, and he may find in thee something of himself or his own, when thou comest to his righteous trial. His grace is not in my power, nor at my command ; it is not meet it should be so ; but he hath not bid me seek and beg in vain ; if he had never told me that he will give it me, it is equal to a promise, if he do but bid me to seek and ask ; but I have more ! He teacheth me pray ; he maketh my prayers ; he writeth me out a prayer-book on my heart ; he giveth me desires, and he loveth to be importuned by them ! His Spirit is first a spirit of supplication, and after of consolation, and in both a spirit of adoption ; so far is he from being loath to be troubled with my importunity, that he seeketh to me to seek his grace, and is displeased with me that I will ask and have no more !

All this is true. But how then cometh my soul to be yet so low, so dark, so fond of this wretched flesh and world, and so backward to go home and dwell with Christ? Alas! a taste of heaven on earth is a mercy too precious to be cast away upon such as have long grieved and quenched the Spirit, and are not, by diligent and patient seeking, prepared to receive it. He that proclaimeth a general peace, will give peace only to the sons of peace. If, after such unkind neglects, such wilful sins as I have been guilty of, I should expect to be suddenly in my Saviour's arms, and to be feasted presently with the first-fruits of heaven, I should look that the Most Holy should too little manifest his hatred of my sin. My conscience remembereth the follies of my youth, and many a later odious sin; and telleth me, that if heaven were quite hid from my sight, and I should never have a glimpse of the face of glorious eternal love, it were but just. I look upward from day to day; I groan to see his pleased face, and better to know my God and my home. I cry to him daily, "My God, this little is better than all the pleasures of sin: my hopes are better than all the possessions of this world. Thy gracious looks have oft revived me, and thy mercies have been unmeasurable to my soul and body; but, oh, how far short am I of what even forty years ago I hoped sooner to have attained! Where is the peace that passeth understanding, that should keep my heart and mind in Christ? O where is the seeing, the longing, the rejoicing and triumphing faith? Where is that pleasant familiarity above, that should make a thought of Christ and heaven to be sweeter to me than the thoughts of friends, or health, or all the prosperity and plea-

sure of this world? Do those that dwell in God, and God in them, and have their hearts and conversations in heaven, attain to no more clear and satisfying perceptions of that blessed state, than I have yet attained? Is there no more acquaintance above to be here expected? No livelier sense of future joys? No sweeter foretaste? Nor fuller silencing of doubts and fears? I am not so loath to go to a friend, nor to the bed where I oft spend the night in restless pains and rolling, as I have too often been to come to thee! Alas, how many of thy servants are less afraid to go to a prison than to their God! and had rather be banished to a land of strangers, than sent to heaven! Lord, must I, that am called the child, and a heir of heaven, and a coheir with Christ, have no more acquaintance with my glorified Lord, and no more love to thee that art my portion, before I go hence, and come before thee? Shall I have no more of the heavenly life, and light, and love? Alas! I have scarce enough in my meditations, to denominate them truly heavenly meditations: I have scarce enough in a prayer to make it indeed a heavenly prayer; or in a sermon, to make it a heavenly sermon; and shall I have no more when I come to die? Must I go hence so like a stranger to my home? Wilt thou take strangers into heaven, and know them as thine that do no better know thee here? O, my God, vouchsafe a sinner yet more of his Spirit, that came down on earth to call up earthly minds to God; and to open heaven to all believers! O, what do I beg for so frequently, so earnestly, for the sake of my Redeemer, as the Spirit of life and consolation which may show me the pleased face of God and

unite all my affections to my glorified head, and draw up this dark and drowsy soul, to love and long to be with thee?"

But, alas! though these are my daily groans, how little yet do I ascend! I dare not blame the God of love: he is full and willing. I dare not blame my blessed Saviour: he hath showed that he is not backward to do good. I dare not accuse the Holy Spirit: it is his work to sanctify and comfort souls. If I knew no reason of this my low and dark estate, I must needs conclude that it is somewhat in myself. But, alas! my conscience wants no matter to satisfy me of the cause. Sinful resistance of the Spirit, and unthankful neglects of grace and glory, are undoubtedly the cause. But are they not a cause that mercy can forgive; that grace can overcome? and may I not yet hope for such a victory before I die?

"Lord, I will lie at thy doors and groan! I will pour out my moans before thee! I will beg, and whatever thou wilt do with me! Thou describest the kindness of the dogs to a Lazarus, that lay at a rich man's doors in sores! Thou commendest the neighbourly pity of a Samaritan, that took care of a wounded man! Thou condemnest those that will not show mercy to the poor and needy! Thou biddest us, 'Be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful.' If we see our brother have need, and shut up the bowels of our compassion from him, it is because thy love dwelleth not in us. And shall I wait then at thy doors in vain, and go empty away from such a God; when I beg but for that which thou hast commanded me to ask, and without which I cannot serve thee or come to thee,

live, or die, in a habit beseeming a member of Christ, a child of God, and a heir of heaven? O give me the wedding garment without which I shall but dishonour thy beauteous feast. Let me wear a livery which becometh one of thy family, even a child of God! How oft hast thou commanded me to rejoice! Yea, to rejoice with 'exceeding and unspeakable joy.' And how fain would I in this obey thee. O that I had more faithfully obeyed thee in other preparatory duties; in ruling my senses, my phantasy, my tongue, and in diligent using all thy talents! Then I might more easily have obeyed thee in this! Thou knowest, Lord, that love and joy are duties that must have more than a command. O bid me do them with an effecting word. How can I rejoice in death and darkness? When the bridegroom is absent I must fast and mourn! While I look towards heaven but through the crevices of this dungeon flesh, my love and joy will be but answerable to my light. How long is it since I hoped that I had been translated from the kingdom of darkness, and delivered from the power of the prince of darkness, and brought into that light which is the entrance of the inheritance of saints; and yet, alas! darkness, darkness is still my misery! There is light round about me, in thy word and works, but darkness is within me. And if my eye be dark, the sun will be no sun to me. Alas! my Lord, it is not all the learning in the world, no not of theology that consisteth in the knowledge of words and methods, which I can take for the satisfactory heavenly light! To know what thou hast written in the sacred book, is not enough to make me know my glorified Saviour, my Father, and my home. It must be a light from heaven

that must show me heaven; and a light accompanied with a vital heat, that must turn to love and joy within me. O let me not have only dreaming knowledge of words and signs, but quickening light, to show the things which these words do signify, to my mind and heart! Surely the faith by which we must live, must be a living faith! and must reach further than to words, how true soever. Can faith live in the dark? What is it but an effect of thine illumination? What is my unbelief but the darkness of my soul? Lord Jesus scatter all these mists; make thy way, O thou Son of righteousness into this benighted mind! O send thy Advocate to silence every temptation that is against thy truth and thee, and thine agent to prosecute thy cause against thine enemies and mine, and to be the resident witness of thy verity, and my sonship and salvation. Hearing of thee is not satisfactory to me! It must be the presence and operation of thy light and love, shed abroad by thy Spirit on my heart, that must quiet and content my soul! I confess with shame that I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am unworthy to have any glimpse or taste of heaven! but so did many that are now entertained and feasted by thy love in glory.

“ My Lord, I know that heaven is not far from me. It is not, I believe, one day's or hour's journey to a separated soul! How quick is the communion of my eyes with the sun, that seems far off! And couldst thou not show it me in a moment? Is not faith a seeing grace? It can see the invisible God, and the unseen world, the new Jerusalem, and the innumerable spirits of the perfected just, if it be animated by thine influx! without which it can

do nothing, and is nothing! 'Thou that oft healedst the blind here in the flesh, didst tell us that it is much more thy work to illuminate souls! It is but forgiving all my sins, and removing this film that sin hath gathered, and my illuminated soul will see thy glory: I know that the veil of flesh must be also rent before I shall see thee with open face, and know my fellow-citizens above as I am known! It is not heaven on earth that I am begging for, but that I may see it from Mount Nebo, and have the bunch of grapes; the pledge, and the first fruits; that faith and hope which may kindle love and desire, and make me run my race in patience, and live and die in the joy which beseemeth an heir of heaven.

“ But if my part on earth must be no greater than yet it is, let it make me the wearier of this dungeon, and groan more fervently to be with thee, and long for the day when all my longing shall be satisfied, and my soul be filled with thy light and love.

And doubtless, as I shall love the angels and saints in heaven, so I shall some way in subordination to Christ be a receiver from them. Our love will be mutual: and which way soever I owe duty, I shall expect some answerable return of benefit. The sun shineth upon the stars as well as on the earth, and the stars on one another. If angels are greatly useful to me here, it is like they will be much more there, where I shall be a more capable receiver. It will be no diminution to Christ's honour, that he there maketh use of my fellow-creatures to my joy, no more than it is here. The whole creation will be still one compaginated frame; and the heavenly society will for ever

retain their relation to each other, and their aptitude and disposition to the duties and benefits of those relations. And as we shall be far fitter for them than here we are, so shall we have far more comfort in them. How gloriously will God shine in the glory of the blessed! How delightful will it be to see their perfection in wisdom, holiness, love, and concord!—what voices they use, or what communication instead of voices we shall shortly know. But surely there is a blessed harmony of minds, and wills, and practice. All are not equal, but all accord to love and praise their glorious God, and readily to obey him, and perfectly to love each other. There is no jarring or discordant spirit that is out of tune; no separation or opposition to each other! As God's love in Christ is our full and final happiness, so nature, which hath made us sociable, teacheth us to desire to be loved of each other; but especially by wise and worthy persons. Saints and angels in heaven will love incomparably better than our dearest friends on earth can do, and better than they did themselves when we were on earth; for they will love that best which is best, and where there is most of God appearing, else it were not intellectual love! and therefore they will love us much better when we come to heaven, as we shall be better. If we go from loving friends on earth, we shall go to them that love us far more: the love of these here doth but pity us in our pains, and go weeping with our carcasses to the grave; but the love of those above will joyfully convoy or welcome our souls, to their triumphing society: all the holy friends that we thought we had lost, that went before us, we shall find rejoicing there with Christ.

And O what a glorious state will be that common uniting and united love ! If two or three candles joined together make a great flame and light, what would ten thousand stars united do ? When all the love of angels and saints in full perfection shall be so united as to make one love, to God that is one, and to one another, who are there all one in Christ, O what a glorious love will that be ! That love and joy will be the same thing ; and that one universal love will be one universal joy.

Little know we how great a mercy it is to be here commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves, and much more to be effectually taught of God so to love one another. And did we all here live in such unfeigned love, we should be like to heaven, as bearing the image of the God of love : but, alas ! our societies here are small ; our goodness, which is our amiableness, wofully imperfect, and mixed with loathsome sin and discord ; but there a whole heaven full of blessed spirits will flame for ever in perfect love to God, to Christ, and one another.

Go then, go willingly, O my soul ! love joineth with light to draw up thy desires ! Nature inclineth all things unto union ! Even the lifeless elements have an aggregative motion, by which the parts when violently separated do hastily return to their natural adhesion. Art thou a lover of wisdom, and wouldst thou not be united to the wise ?—art thou a lover of holiness, and of love itself, and wouldst thou not be united to the holy, who are made of love ?—art thou a hater of enmity, discord, and divisions, and a lover of unity here on earth, and wouldst thou not be where all the just are one ? It is not an unnatural union to thy loss : nothing

shall be taken from thee by it. Thou shalt receive by it more than thou canst contribute: it shall not be forced against thy will: it is but a union of minds and wills: a perfect union of loves. Let not natural or sinful selfishness cause thee to think suspiciously or hardly of it; for it is thy happiness and end. What got the angels that fell to selfishness from unity? And what got Adam, that followed them herein? The further any man goeth from unity by selfishness, the deeper he falleth into sin and misery from God! And what doth grace but call us back, from sin and selfishness to God's unity again? Dote not then on this dark divided world. Is not thy body, while the parts by a uniting soul are kept together and make one, in a better state than when it is crumbled into lifeless dust? And doth not death creep on thee by a gradual dissolution? Away then from this sandy incoherent state! The further from the centre the further from unity: a unity indeed there is of all things; but it is one heavenly life, and light, and love, which is the true felicitating union.

We dispute here whether the aggregative motion of separated parts, as in *descensu gravium*, be from a motive principle in the part, or by the attraction of the whole, or by any external impulse. It is like that there is somewhat of all these; but sure the greatest cause is like to do most to the effect: the body of the earth hath more power to attract a clod or stone, than the intrinsic principle to move it downwards; but intrinsic gravity is also necessary. The superior attractive love and loveliness must do more to draw up this mind to God, than my intrinsic holiness to move it upward; but without this holiness the soul would not be capable

of feeling that attractive influx. Every grace cometh from God to fit and lead up my soul to God: faith therefore believeth the heavenly state, and love doth, with some delight, desire it; and hope gapeth after it, that I may at last attain it.

They that have pleaded against propriety, and would have all things common in this world, have forgotten that there is a propriety in our present egoity and natural constitution, which rendereth some accidental propriety necessary to us. Every man hath his own bodily parts, and inherent accidents; and every man must have his own food, his own place, clothing, and acquisitions; his own children, and therefore his own wife, &c. But that the greatest perfection is most for community, as far as nature is capable of it, God would show us in making the first receivers of the extraordinary pourings out of his Spirit, to sell all and voluntarily make all common, none saying, this or that is my own; which was not done by any constraining law, but by the law or power of uniting love; they were first all as 'of one heart and soul.'¹

Take not then thy inordinate desire of propriety for thy health, but for thy sickness; cherish it not, and be not afraid to lose it; and measure not the heavenly felicity by it. Spirits are penetrable; they claim not so much as a propriety of place as bodies do. It is thy weakness and state of imperfection now, which maketh it so desirable to thee that thy house should be thine, and none's but thine; thy land be thine, and none's but thine; thy clothes, thy books, yea, thy knowledge and grace, be thine and only thine. How much

¹ Acts, iv. 32.

more excellent a state were it, if we were here capable of it, if we could say that all these are as the common light of the sun, which is mine and every one's as well as mine! Why are we so desirous to speak all languages, but that we might understand all men and be understood of all, and so might make our sentiments as common as is possible? Whence is it that men are so addicted to talkativeness, but that nature would make all our thoughts and passions as common as it can? And why else are learned men so desirous to propagate their learning, and godly men so desirous to make all others wise and godly. It seemeth one of the greatest calamities of this life, that when a man hath with the longest and hardest study attained to much knowledge, he cannot bequeath it, or any part of it, to his heir, or any person, when he dieth, but every man must acquire it for himself. And when God hath sanctified the parents, they cannot communicate their holiness to their children, though God promise to bless them on their account; much less can any man make his grace or knowledge common. Nature and grace incline us to desire it, but we cannot do it. For this end we talk, and preach, and write; for this end we study to be as plain, and convincing, and moving as we can, that we may make our knowledge and affections as common to our hearers and readers as we can. And, O, what a blessed work should we take preaching and writing for, if we could make them all know but what we know, and love what we are persuading them to love! There would then be no need of schools and universities; a few hours would do more than they do in an age. But, alas! how rare is it for a father of excellent learning and

piety to have one son like himself, after all his industry!

Is not the heavenly communion then desirable, where every man shall have his own, and yet his own be common to all others? My knowledge shall be mine own, and other men's as well as mine; my goodness shall be mine own and theirs; my glory and felicity shall be mine and theirs, and theirs also shall be mine as well as theirs; the knowledge, the goodness, the glory of all the heavenly society, shall be mine according to my capacity. Grace is the seed of such a state, which maketh us all one in Christ, (neither barbarian nor Scythian, circumcision nor uncircumcision, bond nor free,) by giving us to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to love both our neighbours and ourselves for Christ, and Christ in all. Well might Paul say, 'All things are yours.' But it is here but as in the seed; the perfect union and communion is hereafter. Earth and heaven must be distinguished. We must not extend our hopes or pretensions here beyond the capacity of our natures. As perfect holiness and knowledge, so perfect unity and concord is proper to heaven, and is not here to be expected. The Papal pretensions of an impossible union in one governor of all the earth, is the means to hinder that union which is possible. But the state of perfection is the state of perfect union and communion. Hasten then upwards, O my soul, with the ferventest desires, and breathe after that state with the strongest hopes; where thou shalt not be rich, and see thy neighbours poor about thee, nor be poor while they are rich; nor be well while they are sick, or sick while they are well: but their riches, their health, their joy will be all thine, and

thine will be all theirs, as the common light; and none will have the less for the participation of the rest: yea, communion will be part of every ones felicity; it constituteth the very being of the city of God. This celestial communion of saints in one holy church, above what is here to be attained, is now an article of our belief; but believing will soon end in seeing and enjoying.

V. The constitutive reasons from the heavenly life or practice.

Seeing and loving will be the heavenly life; but yet it seemeth that, besides these, there will be executive powers, and therefore some answerable practice. There are good works in heaven, and far more and better than on earth. For, 1. There will be more vital activity, and therefore more exercise of it; for the power is for action. 2. There will be more love to God and one another; and love is active. 3. There will be more likeness to God and our Redeemer; who is communicative, and doth good as he is good. 4. Our union with Christ, who will be everlastingly beneficent, as well as benevolent, will make us in our places also beneficent. 5. Our communion in the city of God, will prove that we shall all bear our part as the members of the body, in contributing to the welfare of the whole, and in the common returns to God.

But what are the heavenly works we must perfectly know when we come thither. In general we know, 1. That they will be the works of love to God and to his creatures; that is, such as love inclineth us to exercise. 2. And they will be the works of obedience to God; that is, such as we shall do to please his will, and because he willeth

them to be our duty. 3. They will be useful works to others. 4. They will be pleasant to ourselves, and part of our felicity. 5. And they will carry all to God, our end.

And somewhat of them is particularly described in the holy Scriptures: as, 1. We shall, in concord with the whole society or choir, give thanks and praise to God and our Redeemer.¹ Whether there be any voice, or only such spiritual activity and exultation as to man in flesh, is not to be clearly understood, and is not fit for us here to presume to determine: it will be somewhat more high and excellent than our vocal praise and singing is, and of which this beareth some analogical resemblance or signification. As all passions earnestly desire vent and exercise, so especially do our holy affections of love, joy, and admiration of God Almighty; and there is in us a desire of communion with many in such affections and expressions. Methinks when we are singing or speaking God's praise in the great assemblies, with joyful and fervent souls, I have the liveliest foretaste of heaven on earth; and I could almost wish that our voices were loud enough to reach through all the world, and unto heaven itself; nor could I ever be offended, as many are, at the organs and other convenient music, soberly and seasonably used, which excite and help to tune my soul in so holy a work, in which no true assistance is to be despised. No work more comforteth me in my greatest sufferings, none seemeth more congruous and pleasant to me, while I wait for death, than psalms and words of praise to God;

¹ Rev. xix. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 11; Rev. vii. 4; iv. 7, 11; v. 13; vii. 12; xix. 1; Phil. iv. 20.

nor is there any exercise in which I had rather end my life. And should I not then go willingly to the heavenly choir, where God is praised with perfect love, and joy, and harmony? Had I more of a praising frame of soul, it would make me long more for that life of praise; for I never find myself more willing to be there, than when I most joyfully speak or sing God's praise. Though the dead praise not God in the grave, and dust doth not give him thanks, yet living souls in heaven do it joyfully, while their fleshly clothing turns to dust.

“Lord, tune my soul to thy praises now, that sweet experience may make me long to be where I shall do it better! I see where any excellent music is, nature maketh men flock to it; and they that are but hearers, yet join by a concurrent phantasy and delight: surely if I had once heard the heavenly choir, I should echo to their holy songs, though I could not imitate them; and I should think it the truest blessedness to be there and bear my part. My God, the voice of thy comforting Spirit, speaking thy love effectually to my soul, would make such holy music in me that would incline me to the celestial concert; and without it all these thoughts and words will be in vain. It is the inward melody of thy Spirit and my conscience that must tune me to desire the heavenly melody. O speak thy love first to my heart, and then I shall joyfully speak it to my brethren, and shall ambitiously seek that communion of them that praise thee better than sinful, groaning mortals can! And though my sins here make a loathed jar and discord in my songs, I hope my groans for those sins and their effects will make no discord: sighs and tears have had the honour to be accepted by thee,

who despisest not a contrite soul ; but if thy Spirit will sing and speak within me, and help me against the discordant murmurs of my unbelieving heart and pained flesh, I shall offer thee that which is more suitable to thy love and grace. I confess, Lord, that daily tears and sighs are not unsuitable to the eyes and voice of so great a sinner, who is under thy correcting rod. What better could I expect when I grieved thy Spirit, than that it should prove my grief? Yea, this is far better than the genuine effects of sin. But this is not it that is meetest to be offered to the God of love. 'He that offereth praise doth glorify thee!' And is not this the 'spiritual sacrifice acceptable through Christ,' for which we were made 'priests to God.'¹ I refuse not, Lord, to lie in tears and groans when thou requirest it; and do not thou refuse those tears and groans; but O give me better, that I may have better of thine own to offer thee; and by this prepare me for the 'far better' which I shall find with Christ. And that which is best to us, thy creatures, will be accepted as best by thee, who art glorified and pleased in the perfection of his works.

It is at least very probable that God maketh glorified spirits his agents and ministers of much of his beneficence to the creatures that are below them. For, 1. We see that where he endueth any creature with the noblest endowments, he maketh most use of that creature to the benefit of others: we shall in heaven be most furnished to do good; and that furniture will not be unused. 2. And Christ tells us that we shall be like or equal to the

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 5.

angels; which, though it mean not simply and in all things, yet it meaneth more than to be above carnal generation; for it speaketh of a similitude of nature and state as the reason of the other. And that the angels are God's ministers for the good of his chosen in this world, and administrators of much of the affairs on earth, is past all doubt. 3. The apostle telleth us, that the saints shall judge the world and angels; and judging in Scripture is oft put for ruling. It is therefore probable at least, that the devils and the damned shall be put under the saints, and that with the angels they shall be employed in some ministerial oversight of the inhabitants and affairs of the promised new earth. 4. And when even the more noble superior bodies, even the stars, are of so great use and influx to inferior bodies, it is like that accordingly superior spirits will be of use to the inhabitants of the world below them.

But I think it not meet to venture here upon uncertain conjectures beyond the revelation of God's word, and therefore shall add no more, but conclude that God knoweth what use to make of us hereafter as well as here; and that, if there were no more for us to do in heaven, but with perfect knowledge, love, and joy, to hold communion with God and all the heavenly society, it were enough to attract a sensible and considerate soul, to fervent desires to be at home with God.

And here I must not overpass my rejection of the injurious opinion of too many philosophers and divines, who exclude all sense and affection from heaven, and acknowledge nothing there but intellect and will; and this is because they find sense and affection in the brutes, and they think that the

souls of brutes are but some quality or perishing temperament of matter; and therefore that sense and affection is in us no better.

But what felicity can we conceive of without any affection of delight or joy? Certainly bare volition now without these doth seem to be no felicity to us: nor knowledge neither, if there were no delight in knowing.

Yea, I leave it to men's experience to judge, whether there be now any such thing in us as proper willing, which is not also some internal sense of, and affection to the good which we will? If it be complacency or the pleasedness of the will, this signifies some pleasure: and love, in the first act, is nothing else but such an appetite: if it be desire, it hath in it a pleasedness in the thing desired, as in *esse cognito*, as it is thought on by us; and what love is without all sense and affection?

Why doth the Scripture ascribe love and joy to God and angels if there were not some reason for it? Doubtless there is great difference between the heavenly love and joy, and ours here in the body; and so there is also between their knowledge and ours, and their will and ours; but it is not that theirs is less or lower than ours, but somewhat more excellent, which ours giveth us some analogical, or imperfect formal notice of it?

And what, though brutes have sense and affection, doth it follow therefore that we have none now? Or that we shall have none hereafter? Brutes have life; and must we therefore have no life hereafter, because it is a thing that is common to brutes? Rather as now, we have all that the brutes have and more, so shall we then have life, and sense, and affection of a nobler sort than brutes,

and more. Is not God the living God? Shall we say that he liveth not, because brutes live? Or rather, that they live a sensitive life, and man a sensitive and intellectual, because God is essential, transcendent, infinite life, that makes them live.

But if they say that there is no sensation or affection but by bodily organs, I answered before to that; the body feeleth nothing at all, but the soul in the body. The soul uniteth itself most nearly to the igneous-aereal parts, called the spirits; and in them it feeleth, seeth, tasteth, smelleth, &c. And that soul that feeleth, and seeth, doth also inwardly, love, desire, and rejoice; and that soul which doth this in the body, hath the same power and faculty out of the body; and if they judge by the cessation of sensation when the organs are indisposed or dead, so they might as well conclude against our future intellection and will, whose operation in an apoplexy, we no more perceive than that of sense. But I have before showed that the soul will not want exercise for its essential faculties, for want of objects or bodily organs; and that men conclude basely of the souls of brutes, as if they were not an enduring substance, without any proof or probability; and tell us idle dreams, that they are but vanishing temperaments, &c. which are founded on another dream, that fire (or the motive-illuminative-calefactive cause) is no substance neither; and so our unnatural somatists¹ know none of the most excellent substances, which actuate all the rest, but only the more base and gross which are actuated by them; and they think they have well acquitted themselves, by telling us of subtile acted matter and motion, without understanding what any living

¹ Corporealists.

active motive, faculty, or virtue is. And because no man knoweth what God doth with the souls of brutes, (whether they are only one common sensitive soul of a more common body, or whether individuate still, and transmigrant from body to body, or what else;) therefore they make ignorance a plea for error, and feign them to be no substances, or to be annihilate.

I doubt not but sensation (as is aforesaid) is an excellent operation of the essential faculties of real substances called spirits; and that the highest and noblest creatures have it in the highest excellency; and though God, that fitteth every thing to its use, hath given, *e. g.* a dog a more perfect sense of smelling than a man, yet man's internal sense is far more excellent than the brutes, and thereby is an advantage to our intellection, volition, and joy here in the flesh; and that in heaven we shall have not less, but more, even more excellent sense and affections of love and joy, as well as more excellent intellection and volition; but such as we cannot now clearly conceive of.

Therefore there is great reason for all those analogical collections which I have mentioned in my book, called "The Saint's Rest;" from the present operations and pleasures of the soul in flesh, to help our conceptions of its future pleasures; and though we cannot conclude that they will not unconceivably differ in their manner from what we now feel, I doubt not, but feel and rejoice we shall, as certainly as live, (and the soul is essential life,) and that our life, and feeling, and joy, will be inconceivably better.

The concluding application.

I am convinced, that it is far better to depart and

be with Christ, than to be here ; but there is much more than such conviction necessary to bring up my soul to such desires. Still there resisteth, I. The natural averseness to death which God hath put into every animal, and which is become inordinate and too strong by sin. II. The remnants of unbelief, taking advantage of our darkness here in the flesh, and our too much familiarity with this visible world. III. The want of more lively foretastes in a heavenly mind and love, through weakness of grace, and the fear of guilt. These stand up against all that is said ; and words will not overcome them. What then must be done ? Is there no remedy ?

There is a special sort of the teaching of God, by which we must learn so to number our days as to apply our hearts to wisdom ; without which we shall never effectually, practically, and savingly learn either this or any the most common and obvious easy lesson. When we have read, and heard, and spoken, and written the soundest truth, and certainest arguments, we know yet as if we knew not, and believe as if we believed not, with a slight and dreaming kind of apprehension, till God, by a special illumination, bring the same things clearly to our minds, and awaken the soul by a special suscitation, to feel what we know, and suit the soul to the truth revealed, by an influx of his love, which giveth us a pleasing sense of the amiableness and congruity of the things proposed. Since we separated ourselves from God, there is a hedge of separation between our senses and our understandings, and between our understandings and our wills and affections, so that the communion between them is violated, and we are divided in ourselves by this

schism in our faculties. All men still see the demonstrations of divine perfections in the world and every part thereof; and yet how little is God known! All men may easily know that there is a God, who is almighty, omniscient, goodness itself, eternal, omnipresent, the maker, preserver, and governor of all, who should have our whole trust, and love, and obedience; and yet how little of this knowledge is to be perceived in men's hearts to themselves, or in their lives to others! All men know that the world is vanity, that man must die, that riches then profit not, that time is precious, and that we have only this little time to prepare for that which we must receive hereafter; and yet how little do men seem to know indeed, of all such things as no man doubts of! And when God doth come in with his powerful awakening light and love, then all these things have another appearance of affecting reality than they had before; as if but now we began to know them: words, doctrines, persons, things do seem as newly known to us.

All my best reasons for our immortality and future life, are but as the new-formed body of Adam, before God breathed into him the breath of life: it is he that must make them living reasons. To the Father of lights, therefore, I must still look up, and for his light and love I must still wait; as for his blessing on the food which I have eaten, which must concoct it into my living substance: arguments will be but undigested food, till God's effectual influx do digest them. I must learn both as a student and beggar: when I have thought and thought a thousand times, I must beg thy blessing, Lord, upon my thoughts, or they will all be but dulness or self-distracted. If there be no motion, light, and life, here without the influx of

the sun, what can souls do, or receive, or feel without thy influx. This world will be to us without thy grace, as a grave or dungeon, where we shall lie in death and darkness. The eye of my understanding, and all its thoughts, will be useless or vexatious to me, without thine illuminating beams? O shine the soul of thy servant into a clearer knowledge of thyself and kingdom, and love him into more divine and heavenly love, and then he will willingly come to thee!

And why should I strive, by the fears of death, against the common course of nature, and against my only hopes of happiness? Is it not appointed for all men once to die? Would I have God to alter this determinate course, and make sinful man immortal upon earth? When we are sinless we shall be immortal. The love of life was given to teach me to preserve it carefully and use it well, and not to torment me with the continual troubling foresight of death. Shall I make myself more miserable than the vegetatives and brutes? neither they nor I do grieve that my flowers must fade and die, and that my sweet and pleasant fruits must fall, and the trees be unclothed of their beauteous leaves, until the spring. Birds, and beasts, and fishes, and worms, have all a self-preserving fear of death, which urgeth them to fly from danger; but few if any of them have a tormenting fear arising from the forethoughts that they must die. To the body, death is less troublesome than sleep; for in sleep I may have disquieting pains or dreams; and yet I fear not going to my bed. But of this before.

If it be the misery after death that is feared, O what have I now to do, but to receive the free reconciling grace which is offered me from heaven, to save me from such misery, and to devote myself

totally to him, who hath promised, that those that come to him he will in no wise cast out.

But this cometh by my selfishness. Had I studied my duty, and then remembered that I am not mine own, and that it is God's part and not mine to determine of the duration of my life, I had been quiet from these fruitless fears; but when I fell to myself from God, I fell to care for myself, as if it were my work to measure out my days, and now I trust not God as I should do with his own. And had my resignation and devotedness to him been more absolute, my trust in him would have been more easy. But, Lord, thou knowest that I would fain be thine, and wholly thine; and it is to thee that I desire to live; therefore let me quietly die to thee, and wholly trust thee with my soul.

II. And why should my want of formal conceptions of the future state of separated souls, and my strangeness to the manner of their subsistence and operations, induce me to doubt of those generals, which are evident, and beyond all rational doubting? That souls are substances, and not annihilated, and essentially the same when they forsake the body, as before, I doubt not. Otherwise, neither the Christians' resurrection, nor the Pythagoreans' transmigration were a possible thing. For if the soul cease to be, it cannot pass into another body, nor can it re-enter into this. If God raise this body, then it must be by another soul! For the same soul to be annihilated, and yet to begin again to be, is a contradiction; for the second beginning would be by creation, which maketh a new soul, and not the same that was before. It is the invisible things that are excellent, active, operative,

and permanent. The visible, (excepting light which maketh all things else visible,) are of themselves but lifeless dross. It is the unseen part of plants and flowers which causeth all their growth and beauty, their fruit and sweetness. Passive matter is but moved up and down by the invisible active powers, as chessmen are moved from place to place by the gamester's hands. What a loathsome corpse were the world without the invisible spirits and natures that animate, actuate, or move it! To doubt of the being or continuation of the most excellent spiritual parts of the creation, when we live in a world that is actuated by them, and where every thing demonstrates them as their effects, is more foolish than to doubt of the being of these gross materials which we see.

How oft have I been convinced that there are good spirits with whom our souls have as certain communion, though not so sensible, as our life hath with the sun, and as we have with one another. And that there are evil and envious spirits, that fight against our holiness and peace, as certain narratives of apparitions and witches, and too sad experience of temptations do evince. And the marvellous diversity of creatures on earth, for kind and number, yea, the diversity of stars in heaven, as well as the diversities of angels and devils, do partly tell me, that though all be of one, and through one, and to one, yet absolute unity is the divine prerogative, and we must not presume to expect such perfection, as to lose our *specifique*, or numerical diversity, by any union which shall befall our souls. Nor can I reasonably doubt that so noble and active a nature as souls, dwelling above in the lucid regions, in communion with

their like, and with their betters, shall be without the activity, the pleasure, and felicity, which is suitable to their nature, their region, and their company. And my Saviour hath entered into the holiest, and hath assured me that there are many mansions in his Father's house, and that when we are absent from the body we shall be present with the Lord.

Organical sight is given me for my use here in the body; and a serpent or a hawk hath as much or more of this than I have. Mental knowledge reacheth further than sight, and is the act of a nobler faculty, and for a higher use. Though it be the soul itself embodied in the igneous spirits that seeth, yet it is by a higher and more useful faculty that it understandeth. And faith is an understanding act; it knoweth things unseen because they are revealed. Who can think that all believing holy souls that have passed hence from the beginning of the world, have been deceived in their faith and hope? And that all the wicked, worldly infidels, whose hope was only in this life, have been the wisest men, and have been in the right? If virtue and piety are faults or follies, and brutish sensuality be best, then why are not laws made to command sensuality, and forbid piety and virtue? To say this, is to deny humanity, and the wisdom of our Creator, and to feign the world to be governed by a lie, and to take the perfection of our nature for its disease, and our greatest disease for our perfection. But if piety and virtue be better than impiety and vice, the principles and necessary motives of them are certainly true, and the exercise of them is not in vain. What abominable folly and wickedness were it to say, that the wicked only attain their ends; and that they all

lose their labour, and live and die in miserable deceit, who seek to please God in hope of a better life to come, believing that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Would not this justify the foolish Manichees, that thought a bad God made this world; yea, and would infer that he not only made us for mischief, but ruleth us to our deceit and hurt, and giveth us both natural and supernatural laws, in ill-will to us, to mislead us to our misery, and to fill our lives with needless troubles. Shall I not abhor every suggestion that containeth such inhuman absurdities as these? Wonderful! that Satan can keep up so much unbelief in the world, while he must make men such fools that he may make them unbelievers and ungodly.

III. That my soul is no more heavenly, and my foretaste of future blessedness is so small, is partly the fruit of those many wilful sins, by which I have quenched the Spirit that should be my comforter; and it is partly from our common state of darkness and strangeness, while the soul is in flesh, and operateth as the body's form according to its interest and capacity. Affections are more easily stirred up to things seen, than to things that are both unseen and known only very defectively, by general, and not by clear, distinct apprehensions. And yet this, O this is the misery and burden of my soul! Though I can say that I love God's truth and graces, his work, and his servants, and whatever of God I see in the world; and that this is a love of God in his creatures' words, and works; yet that I have no more desiring and delightful love of heaven, where his loveliness will be more fully opened to my soul, and that the

thoughts of my speedy appearing there are no more joyful to me than they are, is my sin, and my calamity, and my shame: and if I did not see that it is so with other of the servants of Christ as well as with me, I should doubt whether affections so unproportionable to my profession did not signify unsoundness in my belief. It is strange and shameful that one that expecteth quickly to see the glorious world, and to enter the holy celestial society, should be no more joyfully affected with these hopes; and that I should make any great matter of the pain, and languishing, and perishing of the flesh, when it is the common way to such an end! O hateful sin, that hath so darkened and corrupted souls as to estrange and indispose them to the only state of their hoped happiness! Alas! what did man when he forsook the love and obedience of his God? How just it is, that this flesh and world should become our prison, which we would make our home, and would not use as our Lord appointed us, as our servant and way to our better state! Though our way must not be our home, our Father would not have been so strange to us in the way, if we had not unthankfully turned away from his grace and love.

It is to us that know not the mysteries of infinite wisdom the saddest thought that ever doth possess our minds, to consider that there is no more grace and holiness, knowledge of God, and communion with him in this world! That so few are saints, and those few so lamentably defective and imperfect! That when the sun shineth on all the earth, the Sun of Righteousness shineth on so small a part of it; and so few live in the love of God, and the joyful hopes of future blessedness;

and those few have so low a measure of it, and are corrupted and troubled with so many contrary affections! Infinite goodness is not indisposed to do good. He that made us capable of holy and heavenly affections, gave us not that capacity in vain. And yet, alas! how little of God and glory taketh up the hearts of men!

But man hath no cause to grudge at God. The devils, before their fall, were not made indefectible. Divine wisdom is delighted in the diversity of his works, and maketh them not all of equal excellency. Free will was to act its part. Hell is not to be as good as heaven: and sin hath made earth to be next to hell; so much sin, so much hell. What is sin but a wilful forsaking of God? And can we forsake him, and yet love him, and enjoy his love? God's kingdom is not to be judged of by his jail, or gibbets. We wilfully forsook the light, and made the world a dungeon to ourselves: and when recovering light doth shine unto us, how unthankfully do we usually entertain it! We cannot have the conduct and comfort of it while we shut our eyes and turn away. And what, though God give not to all men an overcoming measure, nor to the best so much as they desire? The earth is but a spot or point of God's creation, not so much as an ant-hillock to a kingdom, or perhaps to all the earth; and who is scandalized because the world hath a heap of ants in it, yea, or a nest of snakes, that are not men? The vast unmeasurable worlds of light which be above us, are possessed by inhabitants suitable to their glory! A casement, or crevice of light, or a candle in this darksome world is an unspeakable mercy; yea, that we may but hear of a better world, and may seek it in hope! We must not

grudge that in our prison we have not that presence of our King, and pleasures of the kingdom, as innocent and free subjects have: hope of pardon, and of a speedy deliverance are great mercies to malefactors.

And if my want of the knowledge and love of God and joyful communion with the heavenly society be my prison, and as the suburbs of hell, should it not make me long for the day of my redemption, and the glorious liberty of the sons of God. My true desires of deliverance, and of holiness and perfection, are my evidences that I shall obtain them. As the will is the sinner, so it is the obstinate continuance of a will to sin, which is the bondage and the cause of continued sin: and a continued hell is continued sin, as to the first part at least. Therefore they that continue in hell, do continue in a sinning will; and so continue in a love and willingness of so much of hell. So far as God maketh us willing to be delivered from sin, so far we are delivered; and our initial imperfect deliverance is the way to more. If pains then make me groan for ease, and sickness make me wish for health, why should not my remnants of ignorance, unbelief, and strangeness to God, occasion me to long for the day of my salvation? This is the greatest of all my troubles. And should it not then be the greatest wearying burden from which I should earnestly desire to be eased. As grace never doth hurt efficiently, and yet may be ill-used and do hurt objectively, as to them that are proud of it, so sin never doth good efficiently and of itself, and yet objectively may do good; for sin may be the object of grace, and so to use it is not sin. My unbelief, and darkness, and disaffection, and inor-

dinate love of this life, do of themselves most hinder my desires of deliverance, and of a better life ; but objectively, what more fit to make me a-weary of such a grievous state ? Were my unbelief and earthly mind predominant, they would chain my affections to this world ; or if I were constrainedly weary of a miserable life, I should have no comfortable hopes of a better. But as it is the nature of my sin to draw down my heart from God and glory, it is the nature of my faith, and hope, and love, to carry it upward, and to desire the heavenly perfection ; not to love death, but to love that which is beyond it. And have I been so many years in the school of Christ, learning both how to live and die, begging and studying for this grace, and exercising it against this sinful flesh, and shall I now after all find flesh more powerful to draw me downward than faith, hope, and love, to carry my desires up to God ?

O God forbid: O, thou that freely gavest me thy grace, maintain it to the last against its enemies, and make it finally victorious : it came from thee ; it hath been preserved by thee ; it is on thy side, and wholly for thee ; O, let it not now fail, and be conquered by blind and base carnality, or by the temptations of a hellish conquered enemy ; without it I had lived as a beast, and without it I should die more miserably than a beast. It is thine image which thou lovest ; it is a divine nature and heavenly beam ; what will a soul be without it, but a dungeon of darkness, a devil for malignity, and dead to holiness and heaven ? Without it, who shall plead thy cause against the devil, world, and flesh ? without thy glory, earth is but earth ; without thy natural efficacy, it would be nothing :

without thy wise and potent ordination, it would be but a chaos ; and without thy grace it would be a hell. O, rather deny me the light of the sun, than the light of thy countenance ! Less miserable had I been without life or being, than without thy grace. Without thee and my Saviour's help I can do nothing : I did not live without thee, I could not pray or learn without thee ; I never could conquer a temptation without thee, and can I die, or be prepared to die without thee ? Alas ! I shall but say as Philip of Christ, I know not whither my soul is going, and how then shall I know the way. My Lord having loved his own in the world, did love them to the end. Thou lovest fidelity and perseverance in thy servants, even those that in his sufferings forsook him and fled, yet are commended and rewarded by Christ, for continuing with him in his temptations.¹ And wilt thou forsake a sinner in his extremity, who consenteth to thy covenant, and would not forsake thee ? My God, I have often sinned against thee, but yet thou knowest I would fain be thine ; I have not served thee with the resolution, fidelity, and delight as such a master should have been served, but yet I would not forsake thy service, nor change my master or my work ; I can say with thy servant Paul, ' that thou art the God whose I am, and whom I serve ;'² and O that I could serve thee better ! For to serve thee is but to receive thy grace, and to use it for my own and others good, and so to glorify thee and please thy will, which being love itself, is pleased best when we receive and do most good. I have not loved thee as infi-

¹ Luke, xxii. 28.

Acts, xxvii. 23.

nite goodness, and love itself, and fatherly bounty should have been loved ; but yet I would not forsake thy family ; and nothing in this world is more my grief than that I love thee no more. Forsake not, then, a sinner that would not forsake thee, that looketh every hour towards thee, that feeleth it as a piece of hell to be so dark and strange unto thee, that gropeth, and groaneth, and gaspeth after thee ; feeling to his greatest sorrow, (though thou art every where) that while he is present in the body, he is absent from the Lord. My Lord, I have nothing to do in this world, but to seek and serve thee ; I have nothing to do with a heart and its affections, but to breathe after thee. I have nothing to do with my tongue and pen, but to speak to thee, and for thee, and to publish thy glory and thy will ! What have I to do with all my reputation, and interest in my friends, but to increase thy church, and propagate thy holy truth and service ? What have I to do with my remaining time, even these last and languishing hours, but to look up unto thee, and wait for thy grace and thy salvation ? O, pardon all my carnal thoughts, and all my unthankful neglects of thy precious grace and love, and all my wilful sin against thy truth and thee ! and let the fuller communications of thy forfeited grace, now tell me by experience that thou dost forgive me ! Even under the terrible law thou didst tell man thy very nature, by proclaiming thy name.¹ ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin ;’ and

¹ Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

is not the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ revealed in the gospel for our more abundant faith and consolation? My God, I know, as I cannot love thee according to thy loveliness, so I cannot trust thee according to thy faithfulness: I can never be sufficiently confident of thy all-sufficient power, thy wisdom, and thy goodness. When I have said, '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 to generations? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?'¹ Conscience hath replied, that this is my infirmity. I never wanted comfort, because thou wantedst mercy, but because I wanted faith and fitness to receive it, and perceive it. But hast thou not mercy also to give me, even that fitness and that faith? My God, all is of thee, and through thee, and all is to thee, and when I have the felicity, the glory of all for ever will be thine. None that trusteth in thee (according to thy nature and promise) shall be ashamed: if I can live and die in trusting in thee, surely I shall not be confounded.

Why then should it seem a difficult question, how I may willingly leave this world, and my soul depart to Christ in peace? The same grace which regenerated me, must bring me to my desired end, as the same principle of vegetation which causeth the bud must bring the fruit to sweet maturity.

1. Believe and trust thy Father, thy Saviour, and thy Comforter.
2. And hope for the joyful entertainments of his love, and for the blessed state which he hath promised.
3. And long by love

¹ Psalm, lxxvii. 7.

for nearer union and communion with him ; and thus, O my soul, thou mayst depart in peace.

How sure is the promise of God ! How suitable to his love, and to the nature of our souls, and to the operations of every grace ! It is initially performed here, whilst our desires are turned towards him, and the heavenly seed and spark is here ingenerated in a soul that was dead and dark, and disaffected. Is it any strange thing for fire to ascend ? yea, or the fiery principle of vegetation in a tree, to carry up the earthy matter to a great procerity ? Is it strange that rivers should hasten to the sea ? Whither should spirits go but to the region, or world of spirits ? And whither should Christ's members and holy spirits go, but to himself and the heavenly society ? And is not that a more holy and glorious place and state than this below ? Earth is between heaven and hell ; a place of gross and passive matter, where spirits may indeed operate upon that which needeth them, and where they may be detained awhile in such operation, or as incorporated forms, if not incarcerate delinquents ; but it is not their centre, end, or home. Even sight and reason might persuade me, that all the noble invisible powers that operate on this lower world, do principally belong unto a higher ; and what can earth add to their essence, dignity, or perfection ?

But why, O my soul ! art thou so vainly solicitous to have formal, clear, distinct conceptions of the celestial world, and the individuation and operations of separated souls, any more than of the angels ? While thou art the formal principle of an animated body, thy conceptions must be but suit-

able to their present state and use ; when thou art possessed of a better state, thou shalt know it as a possessor ought to do : for such a knowledge as thou lookest after, is part of the possession : and to long to know and love, in clearness and perfection, is to long to possess. It is thy Saviour and his glorified ones, that are comprehensors and possessors ! And it is his knowledge which must now be most of thy satisfaction. To seek his prerogative to thyself is vain usurping arrogance. Wouldst thou be a God and Saviour to thyself ? O, consider how much of the fall is in this selfish care and desire to be as God, in knowing that of good and evil which belongeth not to thee, but to God to know. Thou knowest, past doubt, that there is a God of infinite perfection, who is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him : labour more to know thy duty to this God, and absolutely trust in him as to the particularities of thy felicity and reward. Thou didst trust thy parents to provide thee food and raiment, when thou didst but dutifully obey them ; though they could have forsaken thee or killed thee every hour, thou didst never fear it. Thou hast trusted physicians to give thee even ungrateful medicines, without enquiring after every ingredient, or fearing lest they should wilfully give thee poison ! I trust a barber with my throat ; I trust a boat-man or ship-master with my life ; yea, my horse that might cast me ; because I have no reason to distrust them, (saving their insufficiency and uncertainty as creatures.) If a pilot undertake to bring thee to the Indies, thou canst trust his conduct, though thou know thyself, neither the ship, nor how to govern it, neither the way, nor the place to which thou art conveyed. And must not

thy God and Saviour be trusted to bring thee safe to heaven, unless he will satisfy all thy enquiries, of the individuation and operation of Spirits? Leave unsearchable and useless questions to him that can easily resolve them, and to those to whom the knowledge of them doth belong. Thou dost but entangle thyself in sin and self-vexation, while thou wouldst take God's work upon thee and wouldst know that for thyself, which he must know for thee: thy knowledge and care for it did not precede nor prepare for thy generation; nor for the motion of one pulse or breath, or for the concoction of one bit of all thy food, or the continuance of thy life one hour; supposing but thy care to use the means which God appointed thee, and to avoid things hurtful, and to beg his blessing. The command of being careful for nothing, and casting all thy care on God, who careth for us, obligeth us in all things that are God's part; and for our souls as well as for our bodies; yea, to trust him with the greatest of our concerns, is our greatest duty; supposing we be careful about our own part, viz. to use the means and obey his precepts. 'To dispose of a departing soul is God's part and not ours! O, how much evil is in this distrustful self-providing care! If I did but know what I would know about my soul and myself, and if I might but choose what condition it should be in, and be the final disposer of it myself, O, what satisfaction and joy would it afford me! And is not this to be partly a God to myself? Is he not fitter to know, and choose, and dispose of me than I am? I could trust myself easily, even my wit and will, in such a choice, if I had but power. And cannot I trust God and my Redeemer, with-

out all this care, and fear, and trouble, and all these particular enquiries? If you are convoying your child in a boat, or coach, by water, or by land, and at every turn he be crying out "O, Father! whither do we go?" or "What shall I do?" or "I shall be drowned or fall;" is it not rather his trust in you, than the particular satisfaction of his ignorant doubts, that must quiet and silence him? Be not then foolishly distrustful and inquisitive. Make not thyself thy own disquieter or tormentor, or by an inordinate care of thy own security. Be not cast down, O, departing soul, nor by unbelief disquieted within me: trust in God, for thou shalt quickly by experience be taught to give him thanks and praise, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

O, what clear reason! What great experience do command me to trust him, absolutely and implicitly to trust him, and to distrust myself.

1. He is essential infinite perfection, power, wisdom and love. There is in him all that should invite and encourage rational trust, and nothing that should discourage it.

2. There is nothing in any creature to be trusted, but God in that creature, or God working in or by it. Distrust him, and there is nothing to be trusted; not the earth to bear me, nor the air to breath in, much less any mutable friend.

3. I am altogether his own: his own by right, and his own by devotion and consent; and shall I not trust him with his own?

4. He is the great benefactor of all the world, that giveth all good to every creature, not by constraint, nor by commutation, but as freely as the

sun giveth forth its light: and shall we not trust the sun to shine?

5. He is my Father and special benefactor; and hath taken me into his family as his child; and shall I not trust my heavenly Father?

6. He hath given me his Son as the great pledge of his love: and what then will he think too dear for me? Will he not with him give me all things?¹

7. His Son came purposely to reveal the Father's unspeakable love, and purpose to save us; and shall I not trust him that hath proclaimed his love and reconciliation by such a messenger from heaven?

8. He hath given me the Spirit of his Son, even the Spirit of adoption, which is the surest character of his child, the witness, pledge, and earnest of heaven, the name, and mark of God upon me, holiness to the Lord; and yet shall I not believe his love, and trust him?

9. He hath made me a member of his Son, and so far already united me to him; and will he not take care of the members of his Son? Will he lose those that are given him? Is not Christ to be trusted with his members?

10. I am his interest and the interest of his Son; freely beloved; dearly bought! For whom so much is suffered and done, that he is pleased to call us his peculiar treasure. And may I not trust him with his dear bought treasure?

11. He hath stated me in a relation to angels, who rejoiced at my repentance, and to the hea-

¹ Rom. viii. 32.

venly society, which shall not miss the smallest part. Angels shall not lose their joy, or ministration.

12. He is in covenant with me; even the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: he hath given me many great and precious promises: and shall I fear lest he will break his word or covenant?

13. My Saviour is the forerunner, entered into the holiest, and there appearing and interceding for me; and this after he had conquered death, and risen again to assure me of a future life, and ascended into heaven to show us whither we must ascend; and that after these comfortable words, 'Say to my brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'¹ And shall I not follow him through death, and trust such a guide and captain of my salvation?

14. He is there to prepare a place for me, and will take me to himself? And may I not confidently expect it?

15. He told a malefactor on the cross, that he should that day be with him in paradise, to tell believing sinners what they may expect.

16. The church, by the article of his descent into hell, hath signified their common belief, that his separated soul had its subsistence and operation, and did not sleep or perish, to tell us the immortality of separated souls.

17. His apostles and other servants have on earth served him all with these expectations.

18. The spirits of the perfected just are now in possession of what I hope for! And I am a follower of them who by faith and patience have at-

¹ John, xx. 17.

tained the promised felicity ! And may I not trust him to save me who hath already saved millions in this way ? When I could trust a ferryman to pass me over a river, that had safely passed over thousands before me ; or I could trust a physician who cureth all that he undertaketh of the same disease.

19. I must be at his disposal whether I will or not : I shall live while he will, and die when he will, and go whither he will : I may sin, and vex my soul with fears, and cares, and sorrows, but I shall never prevail against his will.

20. Therefore there is no rest for souls but in the will of God : that will created us, and that will did govern us, and that will shall be fulfilled on us. It was our efficient and our regent cause, and it shall be our end. Where else is it that we should rest ? In the will of men, or angels, or in our own wills ? All creatures are but creatures ; and our own wills have undone us ; they have misgoverned us, and they are our greatest enemies ; our disease, our prison, and our death, till they are brought over to the will of God : till then they are like a foot out of joint ; like a child or subject in rebellion ! There is no rectitude or health, no order, no peace or true felicity, but in the conformity of our wills to the will of God. And shall I die in distrustful striving against his will, and desiring to keep up my own before it ?

21. What abundant experience have I had of God's fidelity and love ? And after all this shall I not trust him ! His undeserved mercy gave me being, it chose my parents : it gave them a tender love to me, and desire of my good : it taught them to instruct me early in his word, and to educate

me in his fear : it chose me suitable company and habitation : it gave me betimes a teachable disposition : it chose my schoolmasters : it brought to my hands many excellent and suitable books : it gave me some profitable public teachers : it placed me in the best of lands on earth, and I think in the best of ages which that land had seen ; it did early destroy all great expectations and desires of the world, teaching me to bear the yoke from my youth, and causing me rather to groan under my infirmities, than to fight with strong and potent lusts ; it chastened me betimes, but did not destroy me. Great mercy hath trained me up all my days, since I was nineteen years of age, in the school of affliction, to keep my sluggish soul awake, in the constant expectations of my change, and to kill my pride, and overvaluing of this world, and to lead all my studies to the most necessary things, and as a spur to excite my soul to seriousness, and especially to save me from the supine neglect and loss of time. O what unspeakable mercy hath a life of constant but gentle chastisement proved to me ! It urged me against all dull delays, to make my calling and election sure, and to make ready my accounts as one that must quickly give them up to God. The face of death, and nearness of eternity, did much convince me what books to read, what studies to prefer and prosecute, what company and conversation to choose ! It drove me early into the vineyard of the Lord, and taught me to preach as a dying man to dying men : it was divine love and mercy which made sacred truth so pleasant to me, that my life hath been (under all my infirmities) almost a constant recreation and delight, in its discoveries, contemplation, and practical use. How happy a

teacher have I had! What excellent help, and sweet illumination! How far beyond my expectation hath divine mercy encouraged me in his sacred work! How congruously did he choose every place of my ministration and habitation to this day, without my own forecast or seeking! When and where, since he first sent me forth, did I labour in vain? How many are gone to heaven, and how many are in the way to whom he hath blessed the word which in weakness I did by his grace and providence deliver! Many good Christians are glad of now and then an hour's time to meditate on God's word, and recreate themselves in his holy worship; but God hath allowed and called me, to make it the constant business of my life. My library hath afforded me both profitable and pleasant company and help at all times, whenever I would use them. I have dwelt among the shining lights, which the learned, wise, and holy men of all ages have set up, and left to illuminate the world. How many comfortable hours have I had in the society of living saints, and in the love of faithful friends! How many joyful days have I had in the solemn assemblies, where God hath been worshiped with seriousness and alacrity, by concordant, though imperfect saints! Where the Spirit of Christ hath manifested his presence, by helping myself and my brethren in speaking, and the people in ready delightful hearing, and all of us in loving and gladly receiving his doctrine, covenant, and laws! How unworthy was such a sinful worm as I (who never had any academical helps, nor much from the mouth of any teacher) that books should become so great a blessing to me; and that quite beyond my own intentions, God should induce or constrain

me to provide any such like helps for others ! How unworthy was I to be kept from the multiplied snares of sects and errors which reigned in this age, and to be used as a means for other men's preservation and reduction ; and to be kept in a love of unity and peace ! How unworthy was I that God should make known to me so much of his reconciling truth, while extremes did round about prevail, and were commended to the churches by the advantages of piety on the one side, and of worldly prosperity and power on the other ! And that God should use me above thirty years in so comfortable a work as to plead and write for love, peace, and concord, and to vouchsafe me so much success therein as he hath done, notwithstanding the general prevalency of the contentious military tribe. Mercy I have had in peace, and liberty in times of violence : and mercy I have had in wars, living two years in safety in a city of defence, in the very midst of the land, (Coventry,) and seeing no enemy while the kingdom was in wars and flames ; and only hearing of the common calamities round about : and when I went abroad and saw the effects of human folly and fury, and of God's displeasure, he mercifully kept me from hurting any one, and being hurt by any. How many a time hath he preserved me by day and night, in difficulties and dangers, from the malice of Satan, and from the wrath of man, and from accidents which threatened sudden death. While I beheld the ruins of towns and countries, and the fields covered with the carcasses of the slain, I was preserved and returned home in peace. And, O, how great was the mercy which he showed me, in a teachable, tractable, peaceable, humble, unanimous people ! So many

in number, and so exemplary in quality, who to this day keep their integrity and concord, when violence hath separated me from them twenty-two years; yea, the like mercy of acceptance and success, beyond my expectation, he hath showed me: everywhere I have had opportunity of free ministration, even where there were many adversaries I have had an open door in the midst of human wrath and rage, he hath preserved my liberty beyond expectation, and continued my acceptance and success. When I might not speak by voice to any single congregation, he enabled me to speak by writings to many; and for the success of my plainest and popular writings, which cost me least, I can never be sufficiently thankful: some of which he sent to preach abroad in other languages in foreign lands. When my mouth, with eighteen hundred or two thousands more, had been many years stopped, he hath since opened them in some degree; and the sufferings intended us by men have been partly put by, and partly much alleviated by his providence; and the hardness of our terms hath not so much hindered the success of faithful labours as we feared, and as others hoped it would have done. I have had the comfort of seeing some peace, and concord, and prosperity of truth and piety kept up, under the utmost opposition of diabolical and human power, policy, and wrath. When I have been sent to the common jail for my service and obedience to him, he hath there kept me in peace, and soon delivered me. He hath made the mouths of my greatest enemies, who have studied my defamation and my ruin, to become my witnesses and compurgators, and to cross their own design. How wonderful is it that I should so long

dwell in so much peace, in the midst of those that seemed to want neither power nor skill, and much less will, to tread me down into contempt and misery! And, O, how many a danger, fear, and pain hath he delivered this frail and languishing body from! How oft hath he succoured me, when flesh, and heart, and art have failed! He hath cured my consuming coughs, and many a time stayed my flowing blood; he hath eased my pained limbs, and supported a weary macerated skeleton; he hath fetched me up from the jaws of death, and reversed the sentence which men have passed on me. How many thousand weary days have been sweetened with his pleasant work! And how many thousand painful weary nights have had a comfortable morning! How many thousand strong and healthful persons have been taken away by death, whilst I have been upheld under all this weakness? Many a time have I cried to the Lord in my trouble, and he hath delivered me out of my distress? I have had forty years added to my days, since I would have been full glad of Hezekiah's promise of fifteen. Since the day that I first preached his gospel, I expected not of long time to live above a year; and I have lived since then forty years. When my own prayers were cold and unbelieving, how many hundreds have prayed for me; and what strange deliverances, encouraging, fasting, and prayer, have I oft had, upon their importunate requests! My friends have been faithful, and the few that proved unfaithful have profitably taught me to place no confidence in man, and not to be inordinately affected to any thing on earth; for I was forsaken by none of them, but those few that I excessively valued and overloved: my relations

have been comfortable to me, contrary to my deserts, and much beyond my expectations : my servants have been faithful : my neighbours have been kind : my enemies have been impotent, harmless or profitable : my superiors have honoured me by their respectful words ; and while they have afflicted me, as supposing me a *remora* to their designs, they have not destroyed, but protected me. To my inferiors God hath made me in my low capacity somewhat helpful. I have been protected in ordinary health and safety, when the raging pestilence came near my habitation, and consumed an hundred thousand citizens ! My dwelling hath been safe when I have seen the glory of the land in flames, and after beheld the dismal ruins ! When violence separated me from my too much beloved library, and drove me into a poor and smoky house, I never had more help of God, nor did more difficult work than there ! What pleasant retirements and quietness in the country have been the fruits of persecuting wrath ! And I must not forget, when I had more public liberty, how he saved me and all my hearers, even by a wonder from being buried in the ruins of the fabric where we were ; and others from the calamitous scandal and lamentations which would else have followed : and is it not a mercy to be extenuated, that when the tongues and pens of all sects among us, and of proud self-exalters, and of some worthy, pious, differing brethren, have been long and vehemently bent against me, when my infamy hath been endeavoured by abundance of volumes, by the backbiting of angry dividers of all sorts, and by the calumniating accusations of some that were too high to be gainsayed, and would not endure me to answer

them and vindicate my innocency; yet, all these together were never able to fasten their accusations, and procure any common belief, nor to bring me under the designed contempt, much less to break my comforts, encouragements, or labours.

These, all these, and very many more than these, are my experiences of that wondrous mercy which hath measured my pilgrimage, and filled up my days. Never did God break his promise with me! never did he fail me nor forsake me. Had I not provoked him, by rash and wilful sinning, how little interruption of my peace and comforts had I ever been likely to have had! And shall I now distrust him at the last? Shall I not trust, and quietly trust, that infinite wisdom, love, and power, whom I have so long trusted, and found so good?

Nature teacheth man to love best those animals that are tame and tractable, that trust us and love us, that will come to our hands and love our company, that will be familiar with us, and follow us, be it horse or dog, beasts or birds: but those that are wild and live in woods, and fly from the face of man, are taken to be the game and prey of any one that can catch and kill them. And shall my foolish soul thus wildly fly from the face of God? Shall his children be like the fearful hare? or like a guilty Cain? or like an unbelieving Sadducee, that either believeth not, or hopeth not for the forgiveness of sin, and the life everlasting? Doth not the Spirit of adoption incline us to love our Father's presence, and to be loath to be long from home? To distrust all creatures, even thyself, is not unreasonable; but to distrust God hath no just excuse. Fly from sin, from Satan, from temptations, from the world, from sinful flesh and idol-

self; but fly not from him that is goodness, love, and joy itself. Fear thine enemy, but trust thy Father. If thy heart be reconciled to him and his service, by the Spirit, he is certainly reconciled to thee through Christ; and if he be for thee, and justify and love thee, who shall be against thee, or condemn thee, or separate thee from his love? If thy unreconciled will do make thee doubt of his reconciliation, it is time to abhor and lay by thy enmity. Consent, and be sure that he consenteth. Be willing to be his, and in holiness to serve him, and to be united in joyful glory to him, and then be sure that he is willing to accept thee, and receive thee to that glory. O dark and sinful soul! how little dost thou know thy friend, thyself, or God, if thou canst more easily and quietly trust thy life, thy soul and hopes to the will of thy friend, or of thyself, if thou hadst power, than to the will of God? Every dog will be at home, and with his master, much more every ingenuous child with his father; and though enemies distrust us, wife and children will not do so, while they believe us just. And hath God ever showed himself either unfaithful or unmerciful to me?

To thee, O Lord, as to 'a faithful Creator I commit my soul.'¹ 'I know that thou art the faithful God who keepest covenant and mercy with them that love thee, and keep thy commandments.'² 'Thou art faithful who hast called me to the communion of thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.'³ Thy faithfulness hath saved me in and from temptation,⁴ It hath stablished me and kept me from prevail-

¹ 1 Peter, iv. 19.

² Deut. vii. 9.

³ 1 Cor. i. 9.

⁴ 1 Cor. x. 13.

ing evil.¹ And it will keep my spirit, soul and body to the coming of Christ.² It is in faithfulness that thou hast afflicted me;³ and shall not I trust thee then to save me? It is thy faithful word, that all thine elect shall obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory; and if we be dead with him, we shall live with him; and if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.⁴

To thee, O my Saviour, I commit my soul; it is thine own by redemption; it is thine own by covenant! It is marked and sealed by thy Spirit as thine own, and thou hast promised not to lose it.⁵ Thou wast made like us thy brethren, that thou mightst be a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for our sins. By thy blood we have boldness to enter into the holiest, even by the new and living consecrated way! Cause me to draw near with a sincere heart, in full assurance of faith, by thee that art the High-priest over the house of God; for he is faithful that has promised life through thee.⁶ Thy name is faithful and true,⁷ and faithful and true are all thy promises.⁸ Thou hast promised rest to weary souls that come to thee.⁹ I am weary of suffering and sin; weary of my flesh, and weary of my darkness, and dulness, and distance, and of this wicked, blind, unrighteous, and confounded world! And whither should I look for rest but home to my heavenly Father and to thee? I am but a bruised reed, but thou wilt not break me. I am but a smoking flax, but thou wilt not quench

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 3.

⁵ John, vi. 39.

² 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.

⁶ Heb. x. 19, 20. 21, 22, 23.

³ Psalm, cxix. 75.

⁷ Rev. xix. 11.

⁴ 2 Tim. ii. 10, 11, 12.

⁸ Rev. xxii. 6, and xxi. 5.

⁹ Matth. xi. 28; 2 Thess. i. 7.

what thy grace hath kindled ; but thou, in whose name the nations trust, will bring forth judgment unto victory.¹ ‘The Lord redeemeth the souls of his servants, and none of them that trust in thee shall be desolate.’² ‘Therefore will I wait on thy name, for it is good ; and will trust in the mercy of God for ever.’³ ‘The Lord is good ; a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him.’⁴ Sinful fear is a snare ; but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be set on high.⁵ ‘Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, and such as turn aside to lies.’⁶ ‘Thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my trust from my youth ; by thee have I been holden up from the womb, my praise shall be continually of thee. Cast me not off now in the time of age ; forsake me not when my strength faileth, O God ; thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also, when I am old and grey, O God, forsake me not.’⁷ ‘Leave not my soul destitute ; for mine eyes are toward thee, and my trust is in thee.’⁸ I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living : even where they that live shall die no more. The sun may cease to shine on man, and the earth to bear us, but God will never cease to be love, nor to be faithful in his promises. Blessed be the Lord, who hath commanded me so safe and quieting a duty, as to trust him, and cast all my cares on him, as on one that hath promised to care for me.

¹ Matth. xii. 20, 21.

² Psalm xxxiv. 22.

³ Psalm lii. 8, 9.

⁴ Nah. i. 7.

⁵ Prov. xxix. 25.

⁶ Psalm xl. 4.

⁷ Psalm lxxi. 5, 6, 9, 17, 18.

⁸ Psalm cxli. 8.

And blessed be God who hath made it my duty to hope for his salvation. Hope is the ease, yea the life of our hearts, that else would break, yea die within us. Despair is no small part of hell. God cherisheth hope, as he is the lover of souls; Satan, our enemy, cherisheth despair, when his way of blind presumption faileth. As fear is a fore-taste of evil before it is felt, so hope doth anticipate and foretaste salvation before it is possessed. It is then worldly hypocrites' hope that perisheth; for all that hope for true or durable happiness on earth, in the pleasures of this perishing flesh, must needs be deceived. But happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, 'whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made heaven and earth, which keepeth truth for ever.'¹ 'Woe to me, were my hope only in the time and matters of this fleshy life;'² 'but the righteous hath hope in his death;'³ 'and hope maketh not ashamed.'⁴ 'Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is.'⁵ 'Lay hold then, O my soul, upon the hope which is set before thee;' 'it is thy firm and steadfast anchor'⁶ without it thou wilt be as a shipwrecked vessel. 'Thy foundation is sure; it is God himself: our faith and hope are both in God.'⁷ 'It is Jesus, our Lord, who is risen from the dead, and reigneth in glory, Lord of all.'⁸ 'Yea, it is the Christ who by faith doth dwell within us, who is our hope of glory.'⁹ 'In this hope, which is better than the law that Moses gave, it is that we draw nigh to God.'¹⁰ It is the Holy Ghost that is both

¹ Psalm, cxlvi. 5, 6.² 1 Cor. xv. 19.³ Prov. xiv. 32.⁴ Rom. v. 5.⁵ Jer. xvii. 7.⁶ Heb. vi. 18, 19.⁷ 1 Pet. i. 21.⁸ 1 Tim. i. 1.⁹ Eph. iii. 17; Col. i. 27.¹⁰ Heb. vii. 19.

our evidence and the efficient of our hope. 'By him we hope for that which we see not, and therefore wait in patience for it.'¹ 'By hope we are saved:' it is an encouraging grace, which will make us stir, whereas despair doth kill endeavours: it cureth sloth, and makes us diligent and constant to the end, and by this doth help us to full assurance:² it is a desiring grace, and would fain obtain the glory hoped for: it is a quieting and comforting grace. The God of hope doth fill us with joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Shake off despondency, O my soul, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Believe in hope, though dying flesh would tell thee that it is against hope.³ 'God, that cannot lie, hath confirmed his covenant by his immutable oath, that we might have strong consolation who are fled for refuge to the hope which is set before us.'⁴ What blessed preparations are made for our hope! And shall we now let the tempter shake it, or discourage it? The abundant mercy of God the Father hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.⁵ Grace teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, as looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour.⁶ We are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and justified by grace, that we should be made heirs

¹ Gal. v. 5; Rom. viii. 16, 23, 24, 25.

² Heb. vi. 11, 12.

³ Rom. xv. 4, 13; v. 2; iv. 18.

⁴ Heb. vi. 18.

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 3.

⁶ Tit. ii. 12, 13.

according to the hope of eternal life.¹ We are illuminated that we may know the hope of Christ's calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.² The hope that is laid up for us in heaven is the chief doctrine of the gospel, which bringeth life and immortality into clearer light.³ It is for this hope that we keep a conscience void of offence, and that God is served in the world:⁴ wherefore, gird up the loins of thy mind; put on this helmet, the hope of salvation: and let not death seem to thee as it doth to them that have no hope.⁵ The love of our Father and our Saviour have given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, to comfort our hearts, and establish them in every good word and work.⁶ Keep therefore the rejoicing of hope firm to the end;⁷ continue grounded and settled in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.⁸ 'And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.' 'Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live; and let me not be ashamed of my hope.'⁹ 'Though mine iniquities testify against me, yet, O thou that art the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, be not as a stranger to my soul!' 'Thy name is called upon by me, O forsake me not!'¹⁰ Why have our eyes beheld thy wonders, and why have we had thy covenant and thy mercies, but that we might set our hope in God. 'Remember the word of thy servant,

¹ Tit. iii. 6, 7.² Eph. i. 18, 19.³ Col. i. 5; 2 Tim. i. 10.⁴ Acts, xxiv. 15, 16; xxvi. 7.⁵ 1 Thess. v. 8; iv. 13;⁶ 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.⁷ Heb. iii. 6.⁸ Col. i. 23; 1 Pet. i. 13.⁹ Psalm, xxxix. 7; cxix. 116.¹⁰ Jer. xiv. 7, 8, 9.

upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who should stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared. I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. I will hope in the Lord, for with him there is mercy and plenteous redemption.' 'For he taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.'¹ Though flesh and heart fail, the Lord is the rock of my heart; he is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good to them that wait for him; to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that I should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for me that I have borne the yoke in my youth, and that I keep silence and put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.²

God need not flatter such worms as we, nor promise us that which he never meaneth to perform. He hath laid the rudiments of our hope, in a nature capable of desiring, seeking, and thinking of another life. He hath called me by grace to actual desires and endeavours; and some foretastes he hath vouchsafed. I look for no heaven, but the perfection of divine life, light, and love, in endless glory with Christ and his holy ones. And this he hath begun in me already. And shall I not boldly hope, when I have the capacity, the promise, and the earnest, and foretaste? Is it not God himself that hath caused me to hope? Was not nature, promise, and grace from him? And can a soul miscarry and be deceived, that departeth hence in a hope

¹ Psalm, lxxviii. v. 7; cxix. 49; cxxx. 3, 4, 5, 7; cxlvii. 11.

² Psalm, lxxiii. 26; Lam. iii. 24, 25, 26, 27, 29.

of God's own causing and encouraging? Lord, I have lived in hope; I have prayed in hope; I have laboured, suffered, and waited in hope; and by thy grace I will die in hope! And is not this according to thy word and will? And wilt thou cast away a soul that hopeth in thee by thine own command and operation? Had wealth, and honour, and continuance on earth, or the favour of man, been my reward and hope, my hope and I had died together. Were this our best, how vain were man! But the Lord liveth, and my Redeemer is glorified and intercedeth for me! And the same Spirit is in heaven who is in my heart; as the same sun is in the firmament which is in my house: and the promise is sure to all Christ's seed: and millions are now in heaven, that once did live and die in hope; they were sinners once, as now I am; they had no other Saviour, no other sanctifier, no other promise than I now have: confessing that they were strangers here, they looked for a better country, and for a city that had foundations, even a heavenly; where now they are. And shall I not follow them in hope that have sped so well? Hope then, O my soul, unto the end;¹ from henceforth and for ever hope in the Lord. I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more: my mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and salvation. The Lord is at my right hand, I shall not be moved: my heart therefore is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall dwell confidently and rest in hope, for God hath showed me the path of life; in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.²

¹ 1 Pet. i. 13. ² Psalm, cxxxi. 3; lxxi. 14, 15; xvi. 8—11.

What then remaineth, O my soul, but that in trust and hope thou love thy God, thy Saviour, thy Comforter, the glorious society, thy own perfection in glorious, endless, heavenly life, and light, and love, and the joyful praises of Jehovah, better than this burden of painful and corruptible flesh, and this howling wilderness, the habitation of serpents and untamed brutes, where unbelief and murmuring, lust and folly, injustice and uncharitableness, tyranny and divisions, pride and contention, have long provoked God and wearied thee? Where the vintage and harvest is thorns and thistles, sin and sorrows, cares and crosses, manured by manifold temptations! How odious is that darkness and unbelief, that unholiness and disaffection, that deadness and stupidity, which maketh such a work as this, so reasonable, necessary, and pleasant a work, to seem unsuitable or hard! Is it unsuitable or hard to the eye to see the sun and light? or by it to see the beautified world? or for a man to love his life or health, his father or his friend? What should be easier to a nature that hath rational love, than to love him that is essential love itself. He that loveth all, and giveth to all the loving faculty, should be loved by all. And he that hath specially loved me should be specially loved by me!

Love is the perfection of all thy preparations: it desireth to please God, and therefore to be in the most pleasing state, and freed from all that is displeasing to him; which is not to be hoped for on earth. It desireth all suitable nearness, acquaintance, union and communion. It is weary of distance, estrangedness, and alien society, and affairs. It taketh advantage of every notice, intimation, or mention of God, to renew and exercise these desires.

Every message, and mercy from him is fuel for love, and while we are short of perfection stir up our desires after more! When love tasteth of the grapes, it would have the vine; when it tasteth of the fruits it would dwell where they grow, and possess the land! Its thoughts of proximity and fruition are sweet. No other person or thing can satisfy it. The soul is where it loveth. If our friend dwell in our hearts by love; and if fleshly pleasure, riches, and honour, do dwell in the heart of the voluptuous, the covetous, and the proud, surely God and our Redeemer, the heavenly society, holiness, and glory, do dwell in the heart which loveth them with a fervent love! And if heaven dwell in my heart, shall I not desire to dwell in heaven? Light and light, fire and fire, are not more inclined to union than love and love: gracious love and glorious love. Would divine, original, universal love, communicate and pour out itself more plentifully upon my heart, how easy would it be to leave this flesh and world, and to hear the sentence of my departure to my God! Death and the grave would be but a triumph for victorious love. It would be easier to die in peace and joy, than to rest at night, or to come home from my travel to my beloved friends, or to go when I am hungry to a feast. A little love hath made me study willingly, and preach willingly, and write willingly, yea, and suffer somewhat willingly; and would not more make me go more willingly to God? Shall the imagination of house, gardens, walks, libraries, prospects, meadows, orchards, hills, and rivers, allure the desires of deceived minds? And shall not the thoughts of the heavenly mansions, society, and delights, much more allure and draw up my desires? The reading of a known fiction, of a

Civitas Solis, an *Utopia*, an *Atlantis*, &c. hath pleased many; but if I did believingly hear of such a country in the world, where men did never die, nor were sick, or weak, or sad, where the prince were perfectly just and pious, wise and peaceable, devoted to God and the public good; and the teachers were all wise judicious men, of universal, certain knowledge, perfectly acquainted with the matter and method of natural and theological truths, and all their duty, and all of one mind, and of one heart, and tongue, and practice, loving each other, and the people as themselves, and leading the flocks heavenward, through all temptations, with triumphant hopes and joy; where all the people perfectly obeyed God, their commanders and their teachers, and lived in perfect love, unity, and peace, and were daily employed in the joyful praises of God and hopes of glory, and in doing all possible good to one another; contending with none through ignorance, uncharitableness, or pride, nor ever reproaching, injuring, or hurting one another, &c.; I say, if I knew or heard of such a country, should I not love it before I ever see it, and earnestly desire to be there? Nay, do I not overlove this distracted world, where tyranny sheddeth streams of blood, and layeth desolate cities and countries, and exposeth the miserable inhabitants to lamentable distress and famine; where the same tyranny sets up the wicked, reproacheth and oppresseth the just and innocent, keepeth out the gospel, and keepeth up idolatry, infidelity, and wickedness, in the far greatest part of all the earth; where Satan chooseth pastors too often for the churches of Christ, even such as by ignorance, pride, sensuality, worldliness, and malignity, become thorns and thistles, yea, devouring wolves, to

those whom they should feed and comfort; where no two persons are in all things of a mind; where evil is commended, and truth and goodness accused and oppressed, because men's minds are unacquainted with them or unsuitable to them; and those that are the greatest pretenders to truth, do most eagerly contend against it and oppose it; and almost all the world are scolding or scuffling in the dark, and where there appeareth but little hopes of a remedy: I say, can I love such a world as this? and shall I not think more delightfully of the inheritance of the saints in light, and the uniting love and joyful praises of the church triumphant, and the heavenly choir?

Should I not love a lovely and a loving world much better than a world where there is comparatively so little loveliness or love? All that is of God is good and lovely; but it is not here that his glory shineth in felicitating splendour. I am taught to look upward when I pray, and to say, 'Our Father which art in heaven.' God's works are amiable even in hell; and yet though I would know them, I would not be there. And, alas! how much of the works of man are mixed here with the works of God! Here is God's wisdom manifest, but here is man's obstinate folly; here is God's government, but here is man's tyranny and unruliness. Here is God's love and mercies, but here are men's malice, wrath, and cruelty; by which they are worse to one another than wolves or tigers, depopulating countries, and filling the world with bloodshed, famine, misery, and lamentations; proud tyrants being worse than raging plagues, which made David choose the pestilence before his enemies' pursuit. Here is much of God's beauteous

order and harmony; but here is also much of man's madness, deformity, and confusion. Here is much historical truth, and some civil and ecclesiastic justice; but, alas! with how much odious falsehood and injustice is it mixed! Here is much precious theological verity; but how dark is much of it to such blind, and negligent, and corrupted minds as every where abound. Here are wise judicious teachers and companions to be found; but, alas! how few in comparison of the most! and how hardly known by those that need them! Here are sound and orthodox ministers of Christ; but how few that most need them know which are they, and how to value them or use them! And how many thousands of seduced or sensual sinners are made believe that they are but deceivers, or as they called Paul, pestilent fellows, and movers of sedition among the people. And in how many parts of the world are they as the prophets that Obadiah hid in caves, or as Micaiah, or Elias among the lying prophets, or the Baalites? Though such as of whom the world is not worthy. And is that world then more worthy of any love than heaven? There are worthy and religious families which honour God, and are honoured by him; but, alas! how few! and usually by the temptations of wealth and worldly interest, how full even of the sins of Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, if not also unmercifulness to the poor. And how are they tempted to plead for their sins and snares, and account it rustic ignorance which contradicteth them. And how few pious families are there of the greater sort that do not quickly degenerate; and thus posterity by false religion, error or sensuality, grow most contrary to the minds of their

pious progenitors. There are many that educate their children wisely in the fear of God, and have accordingly comfort in them; but how many are there that having devoted them in baptism to God, do train them up in the service of the flesh, the world, and the devil, which they renounced, and never understood, or at least intended, for themselves, or children, what they did profess. How many parents think, that when they offer their children to God in baptism without a sober and due consideration of the nature and meaning of that great covenant with God, that God must accept and certainly regenerate and save them! Yea, too many religious parents forget that they themselves are sponsors in that covenant, and undertake to use the means on their part, to make their children fit for the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Spirit, as they grow up, and think God should absolutely sanctify, keep, and save them at age, because they are theirs and were baptized, though they keep them not from great and unnecessary temptations, nor teach them plainly and seriously the meaning of the covenant which was made for them with God, as to the nature, benefits, or conditions of it. How many send them to others to be taught in grammar, logic, philosophy, or arts; yea, and divinity, before their own parents ever taught them what they did with God in baptism, what they received, and what they promised and vowed to do? They send them to trades or secular callings, or to travel in foreign lands, among a multitude of snares, among tempting company, and tempting baits, before ever at home they were instructed, armed, and settled against those temptations which they must needs

encounter, and which, if they overcome them, they are undone. How ordinarily when they have first neglected this great duty of their own for their fortification, do they plead a necessity of thrusting them out on these temptations, though utterly unarmed, from some punctilio of honour or conformity to the world, to avoid the contempt of worldly men, or to adorn their yet naked souls, with some of the plumes or painted trifles, ceremonies or complements, which will never serve instead of heavenly wisdom, mortification, and the love of God and man; as if they were like to learn that fear of God in a crowd of diverting and tempting company, baits, and business, which they never learnt under the teaching, nurture, and daily oversight of their religious parents, in a safer station; or as if, for some little reason, they might send them as to sea without pilot or anchor, and think that God must save them from the waves; or as if it were better to enter them into Satan's school or army, and venture them upon the notorious danger of damnation, than miss of preferment and wealth, or of the fashions and favours of the times? And then when they hear that they have forsaken God, and true religion, and given up themselves to lust and sensuality, and perhaps as enemies to God and good men, destroy what their parents laboured to build up, these parents wonder at God's judgments, and with broken hearts lament their infelicity, when it were better to lament their own misdoing, and it had been best of all to have prevented it.

Thus families, churches, and kingdoms, run on to blindness, ungodliness, and confusion: self-undoing and serving the malice of Satan, for fleshly lust, is the too common employment of mankind:

all is wise, and good, and sweet, which is prescribed us by God, in the true nature of supernatural revelation ; but folly, sin, and misery, mistaking themselves to be wit, and honesty, and prosperity, and raging against that which nominally they pretend to and profess, are the ordinary case and course of the most of men ; and when we would plead them out of their deceit and misery, it is well if we are not tempted to imitate them, or be not partly infected with their disease, or at least reproached and oppressed as their enemies ; such a beldam is most of the world become, where madness goeth for the only wisdom, and he is the bravest man that can sin and be damned with reputation and renown, and successfully drive or draw the greatest number with him unto hell ; to which the world hath no small likeness, forsaking God, and being very much forsaken by him.

This is the world which standeth in competition for my love, with the spiritual blessed world. Much of God's mercies and comforts I have here had ; but their sweetness was their taste of divine love, and their tendency to heavenly perfection. What was the end and use of all the good that ever I saw, or that ever God did for my soul or body, but to teach me to love him, and to long for more ? How many weaning experiences ? How many thousand bitter or contemning thoughts have I had of all the glory and pleasures of this world ! How many thousand love-tokens from God have called me to believe and taste his goodness ! Wherever I go, and which way soever I look, I see vanity and vexation written upon all things in this world, so far as they stand in competition with God, and would be the end and portion of a fleshly mind :

and I see holiness to the Lord written upon every thing, so far as it declareth God, and leadeth me to him as my ultimate end. God hath not for nothing engaged in a war against this world, and commanded me to take and use it as mine enemy : the emptiness, dangerousness, and bitterness of the world, and the all-sufficiency, trustiness, and goodness of God have been the sum of all the experiences of my life. And shall a worldly backward heart overcome the teachings of nature, Scripture, the Spirit of grace, and all experience? Far be it from me!

But, O my God, love is thy great and special gift; all good is from thee; but love is the Godlike nature, life, and image; it is given us from the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the quickening, illuminating, and sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit. What can the earth return unto the sun but its own reflected beams? (If those.) As how far soever man is a medium in generation, nature, and that appetite which is the moving pondus in the child is thy work; so whatever is man's part in the mediate work of believing and repenting, (which yet is not done without thy Spirit and grace,) certainly it is the blessed Regenerator which must make us new creatures by giving us this divine nature, holy love, which is the holy appetite and pondus of the soul. Come down, Lord, into this heart, for it cannot come up to thee. Can the plants for life, or the eye for light, go up unto the sun? Dwell in me by the Spirit of love, and I shall dwell by love in thee. Reason is weak, and thoughts are various, and man will be a slippery uncertain wight, if love be not his fixing principle, and do not incline his soul to thee! Surely, through

thy grace I easily feel that I love thy word, I love thy image, I love thy work, and O, how heartily do I love to love thee; and long to know and love thee more! And if all things be of thee, and through thee, and to thee, surely this love to the beams of thy glory here on earth is eminently so! It is thee, Lord, that it meaneth! To thee it looketh: it is thee it serveth! For thee it mourns, and seeks, and groans! In thee it trusteth! And the hope, and peace, and comfort which support me, are in thee! When I was a returning prodigal in rags, thou sawest me afar off, and mettest me with thy embracing, feasting love: and shall I doubt whether he that hath better clothed me, and dwelt within me, will entertain me with a feast of greater love in the heavenly mansions, the world of love?

The suitableness of things below to my fleshly nature, hath detained my affections too much on earth! And shall not the suitableness of things above to my spiritual nature, much more draw up my love to heaven. There is the God whom I have sought and served; he is also here, but veiled, and but little known: but there he shineth to heavenly spirits in heavenly glory. There is the Saviour in whom I have believed; he hath also dwelt in flesh on earth; but clothed in such meanness, and humbled to such a life and death, as was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the gentiles matter of reproach; but he shineth and reigneth now in glory, above the malice and contempt of sinners. And I shall there live because he liveth; and in his light I shall have light. He loved me here with a redeeming, regenerating, and preserving love; but there he will love me with a perfecting, glorifying, joyful

love. I had here some rays of heavenly light; but interpositions caused eclipses and nights, yea, some long and winter nights; but there I shall dwell in the city of the sun, the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where there is no night, eclipse, or darkness! There are the heavenly hosts whose holy love and joyful praises I would fain be a partaker of: I have here had some of their loving assistance, but to me unseen, being above our fleshly way of converse. But there I shall be with them, of the like nature, in the same orb, and of the same triumphant church and choir! There are perfected souls gathered home to Christ: not, as here, striving like Esau and Jacob in the womb, nor yet as John when he leaped in the womb, because of his mother's joy; nor as wrangling children that are hardly kept in the same house in peace: not like the servants of Abraham and Lot, like Paul and Barnabas, like Epiphanius and Chrysostom, like Luther and Carolostadius, like Ridley and Hooper, or the many striving parties now among us; nor like the disciples striving who should be the greatest; not like Noah's family in a wicked world, or Lot in a wicked city, or Abraham in an idolatrous land; nor like Elijah left alone, nor like those that wandered in sheep-skins, and goat-skins destitute, afflicted, and tormented, hid in dens and caves of the earth; not like Job on the dunghill, or like Lazarus at the rich man's doors; not like the African bishops, whose tongues were cut out; nor like the preachers silenced by papist imposers; (in Germany, by the *interim*, or elsewhere;) nor such as Tzegedine, Beucer, and many other worthy men, whose maturest age was spent in prisons; not as we poor bewildered sinners, feeling

evil, and fearing more, confounded in folly and mad contention, some hating the only way of peace, and others groping for it in the dark, wandering and lost in the clearest light, where the illuminated can but pity the blind, but cannot make them willing to be delivered. What is heaven to me, but God? God who is life, and light, and love, communicating himself to blessed spirits, perfecting them in the reception, possession, and exercise of life, and light, and love, for ever. These are not the accidents, but the essence of that God who is in heaven and all to me; should I fear that death which passeth me to infinite essential life? Should I fear a darksome passage into a world of perfect light? Should I fear to go to love itself? Think, O my soul, what the sun's quickening light and heat is to this lower corporeal world! Much more is God, even infinite life and light, and love to the blessed world above. Doth it not draw out thy desires to think of going into a world of love? When love will be our region, our company, our life: more to us than the air is for our breath, than the light is for our sight, than our food is for our life, than our friends are for our solace, and more to us than we are to ourselves, and we more for it as our ultimate end, than for ourselves! O, excellent grace of faith, which doth foresee, and blessed word of faith, that doth foreshow, this world of love! Shall I fear to enter where there is no wrath, no fear, no strangeness, nor suspicion, nor selfish separation, but love will make every holy spirit as dear and lovely to me as myself, and me to them as lovely as themselves, and God to us all more amiable than ourselves and all: where love will have no defects or distances, no damps or discour-

ragements, no discontinuance or mixed disaffection; but as life will be without death, and light without darkness, (a perfect everlasting day of glory,) so will love be without any hatred, unkindness, or alloy. As many coals make one fire, and many candles conjoined make one light, so will many living spirits make one life, and many illuminated glorious spirits one light and glory, and many spirits innaturalized into love, will make one perfect love of God, and be loved as one by God for ever: for all the body of Christ is one; even here it is one in initial union of the Spirit, and relation to one God, and head, and life,¹ and shall be presented as beloved and spotless to God, when the great marriage-day of the Lamb shall come.²

Had thou not given me, O Lord, the life of nature, I should have had no conceptions of a glorious everlasting life; but if thou give me not the life of grace, I shall have no sufficient delightful inclination and desire after it. Hadst thou not given me sight and reason, the light of nature, I should not have thought how desirable it is to live in the glorious light and vision; but if thou give me not the spiritual illumination of a seeing faith, I shall not yet long for the glorious light, and beatifical vision. Hadst thou not given me a will and love which is part of my very nature itself, I could not have tasted how desirable it is to live in a world of universal, perfect, endless love; but unless thou also shed abroad thy love upon my heart, by the Spirit of Jesus, the great medium of love, and turn my very nature or inclination into

¹ 1 Cor. xii. throughout; Eph. iv. 1 to 17.

² Eph. v. 24, 25, &c.; Rev. xxi. and xxii.

divine and holy love, I shall not long for the world of love. Appetite followeth nature: O give me not only the image and the art of godliness, the approaches towards it, nor only some forced or inconstant acts; but give me the divine nature, which is holy love, and then my soul will hasten towards thee, and cry, How long, O Lord, how long! O come, come quickly, make no delay. Surely, the fear of dying intimateth some contrary love that inclineth the soul another way; and some shameful unbelief and great unapprehensiveness of the attractive glory of the world of love: otherwise no frozen person so longeth for the fire, none in a dungeon so desireth light, as we should long for heavenly light and love.

God's infinite essential self-love, in which he is eternally delighted in himself, is the most amiable object, and heaven itself to saints and angels; and next to that his love to all his works, to the world, and to the church in heaven, speaketh much more of his loveliness than his love to me. But yet due self-love in me is his work, and part of his natural image; and when this by sin is grown up to excess, (through the withdrawing of a contracted narrow soul, from the union and due love to my fellow-creatures and to God,) I must also, I cannot but inquire after God's love to me, and by this my desires must much be moved; for I am not so capable of ascending above self-interest and self-love, as in the state of glorious union I shall be. I am glad to perceive that others do love God; and I love those most that I find most love him; but it is not other men's love to God that will be accepted by him instead of mine; nor is it God's love to others (which yet rejoiceth me) that will satisfy me without his love to me. But when

all these are still before me, God's essential self-love and delight, his love to his creatures, especially the glorified, and his love to me also, even to me a vile unworthy sinner; what then should stay my ascending love, or discourage my desires to be with God?

And dost thou doubt, canst thou doubt, O my soul, whether thou art going to a God that loveth thee? If the Jews discerned the great love of Christ to Lazarus by his tears, canst not thou discern his love to thee in his blood? It is never the less, but the more obliging and amiable, that it was not shed for thee alone, but for many. May I not say as Paul, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, that hath loved me, and given himself for me!'¹ Yea, it is not so much I that live, as Christ liveth in me. And will he forsake the habitation which his love hath chosen, and which he hath so dearly bought? O, read often that triumphing chapter, Rom. viii. and conclude, 'What shall separate us from the love of God?' If life have not done it, death shall not do it. If leaning on his breast at meat was a token of Christ's special love to John, is not his dwelling in me by my faith, and his living in me by his Spirit, a sure token of his love to me? and if a dark saying, 'If he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' raised a report that the beloved disciple should not die, why should not plain promises assure me that I shall live with him that loveth me for ever? Be not so unthankful, O my soul, as to question, doubtingly, whether thy heavenly Father and thy Lord doth love thee? Canst thou forget the sealed testimonies of it? Did I not even now repeat so many as should

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

shame thy doubts? A multitude of thy friends have loved thee so entirely, that thou canst not doubt of it? And did any of them signify their love with the convincing evidence that God hath done? Have they done for thee what he hath done? Are they love itself? Is their love so full, so firm, and unchangeable as his? I think the sweetlier of heaven, because abundance of my ancient lovely and loving holy friends are there, and am the willinger by death to follow them. And should I not think of it more pleasedly because my God and Father, and Saviour, and my Comforter, is there? And not alone, but with all the society of love. Was not Lazarus in the bosom of God himself? Yet it is said, that he was in Abraham's bosom; as the promise runs, that we shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. And what maketh the society of saints so sweet as holy love? It is comfortable to read that, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart and soul, and might, is the first and great commandment; and the second is like to it, to love our neighbours as ourselves. For God's commands proceed from that will which is his nature or essence, and they tend to the same as their objective end. Therefore he that hath made love the great command, doth tell us that love is the great conception of his own essence, the spring of that command; and that this commanded imperfect love, doth tend to perfect heavenly love, even to our communion with essential infinite love. It were strange that the love and goodness, which is equal to the power that made the world, and the wisdom that ordereth it, should be scant and backward to do good, and to be suspected more than the love of friends!

The remembrance of the holiness, humility, love, and faithfulness of my dearest friends of every rank with whom I have conversed on earth, in every place where I have lived, is so sweet to me, that I am oft ready to recreate myself with the naming of such as are now with Christ: but in heaven they will love me better than they did on earth; and my love to them will be more pleasant; but all these sparks are little to the sun.

Every place that I have lived in was a place of divine love, which there set up its obliging monuments. Every year and hour of my life hath been a time of love. Every friend, and every neighbour, yea, every enemy have been the messengers and instruments of love. Every state and change of my life, notwithstanding my sin, hath opened to me treasures and mysteries of love. And after such a life of love, shall I doubt whether the same God do love me? Is he the God of the mountains and not of the valleys? Did he love me in my youth and health? And doth he not love me in my age, and pain, and sickness? Did he love all the faithful better in their life than at their death? If our hope be not chiefly in this life, neither is our state of love, which is principally the heavenly endless grace. My groans grieve my friends, but abate not their love. Did he love me for my strength, my weakness might be my fear: as they that love for beauty, loathe them that are deformed; and they that love for riches, despise the poor; but God loved me when I was his enemy, to make me a friend; when I was bad, to make me better: whatever, he taketh pleasure in his own gift. Who made me to differ? And what have I that I have not received? And God will finish the work, the

building, the warfare that is his own. O the multitude of mercies to my soul and body, in peace and war, in youth and age, to myself and friends; the many great and gracious deliverances which have testified to me the love of God! Have I lived in the experience of it, and shall I die in the doubts of it? Had it been love only to my body, it would have died with me, and not have accompanied my departing soul. I am not much in doubt of the truth of my love to him: though I have not seen him, save as in a glass; as in a glass seen I love him. I love my brethren whom I have seen, and those most that are most in love with him: I love his word, and works, and ways, and fain I would be nearer him, and love him more; and I loathe myself for loving him no better. And shall Peter say more confidently, 'Thou knowest that I love thee,' than I know that thou lovest me? Yes, he may; because, though God's love is greater and stead-faster than ours, yet our knowledge of his great love is less than his knowledge of our little love; and as we are defective in our own love, so are we in our certainty of its sincerity. And without the knowledge of our love to God, we can never be sure of his special love to us. But yet I am not utterly a stranger to myself: I know for what I have lived and laboured in the world; and who it is that I have desired to please. The God whose I am, and whom I serve hath loved me in my youth, and he will love me in my aged weakness. My flesh and my heart fail: my pains seem grievous to the flesh; but it is love that chooseth them, that useth them for my good, that moderateth them, and will shortly end them. Why then should I doubt of my Father's love? Shall pain or dying make me doubt? Did

God love none from the beginning of the world, but Enoch and Elias? And what am I better than my forefathers? What is in me that I should expect exemption from the common lot of all mankind? Is not a competent time of great mercy on earth, in order to the unseen felicity, all that the best of men can hope for? O for a clearer, stronger faith, to show me the world that more excelleth this, than this excelleth the womb where I was conceived! Then should I not fear my third birth-day, what pangs soever go before it; nor be unwilling of my change! The grave, indeed, is a bed that nature doth abhor; yet there the weary be at rest: but souls new born have a double nature that is immortal, and go to the place that is agreeable to their nature; even to the region of spirits, and the region of holy love. Even passive matter, that hath no other natural motion, hath a natural inclination to uniting, aggregative motion. And God maketh all natures suitable to their proper ends and use. How can it be that a spirit should not incline to be with spirits? And souls that have the divine nature in holy love, desire to be with the God of love? Arts, and sciences, and tongues, become not a nature to us; else they would not cease at death: but holy love is our new nature, and therefore ceaseth not with this bodily life. And shall accidental love make me desire the company of a frail and mutable friend? And shall not this ingrafted inseparable love, make me long to be with Christ? Though the love of God to all his creatures will not prove that they are all immortal, nor oblige them to expect another life, that never had capacity or faculties to expect it; yet his love to such as in nature and grace are made capable of it, doth

warrant and oblige them to believe and hope for the full perfection of the work of love. Some comfort themselves in the love of St. Peter, as having the keys of heaven: and how many could I name, that are now with Christ, who loved me so faithfully on earth, that were I sure they had the keys and power of heaven, (and were not changed in their love,) I could put my departing soul into their hands, and die with joy. And is it not better in the hand of my Redeemer, and of the God of love, and Father of spirits? Is any love comparable to his? Or any friend so boldly to be trusted? I should take it for ungrateful unkindness in my friend, to doubt of my love and trustiness, if I had given him all that he hath, and maintained him constantly by my kindness! But O how odious a thing is sin! which, by destroying our love to God, doth make us unmeet to believe and sweetly perceive his love: and by making us doubt of the love of God, and lose the pleasant relish of it, doth more increase our difficulty of loving him. The title that the angel gave to Daniel, (a man greatly beloved of God,) methinks should be enough to make one joyfully love and trust God, both in life and death. Will almighty love ever hurt me or forsake me? And have not all saints that title in their degrees? What else signifieth their mark and name—Holiness to the Lord? What is it but our separation to God as his peculiar beloved people? And how are they separated but by mutual love, and our forsaking all that alienateth or is contrary? Let scorners deride us as self-flatterers, that believe they are God's darlings, (and woe to the hypocrites that believe it on their false presumption,) without such belief or grounded

hopes I see not how any man can die in true peace. He that is no otherwise beloved than hypocrites and unbelievers, must have his portion with them; and he that is no otherwise beloved than as the ungodly, unholy, and unregenerate, shall not stand in judgment; nor see God, nor enter into his kingdom. Most upright souls are to blame for groundless doubting of God's love; but not for acknowledging it, rejoicing in it, and in their doubts being most solicitous to make it sure: love brought me into the world, and furnished me with a thousand mercies! Love hath provided for me, delivered me, and preserved me till now! And will it not entertain my separated soul? Is God like false or insufficient friends, that forsake us in adversity!

I confess, that I have wronged love by sin, by many and great, inexcusable sins. But all, save Christ himself, were sinners, which love did purify and receive to glorify. 'God, who is rich in mercy for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace we are saved,) and hath raised us up together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'¹ O that I could love much that have so much forgiven! The glorified praise him 'who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God.'² Our Father that hath loved us, giveth us consolation and good hope through grace.³ I know of no sin which I repent not of with self-loathing; and I earnestly beg and labour that none of my sins may be to me unknown. I dare not justify even what is any way uncertain, though I dare not call all

¹ Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6.

² Rev. i. 5, 6.

³ 2 Thess. ii. 16.

that my sin which siding men of differing judgments on each side passionately call so: while both sides do it on contrary accounts; and not to go contrary ways is a crime. O that God would bless my accusations to my illumination, that I may not be unknown to myself! Though some think me much better than I am, and others much worse, it most concerneth me to know the truth myself: flattery would be more dangerous to me than false accusations; I may safelier be ignorant of other men's sins than of my own. 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me, Lord, from secret sins; and let not ignorance or error keep me in impenitence; and keep thou me back from presumptuous sins.'¹ I have an advocate with the Father, and thy promise, that he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy. Those are by some men taken for my greatest sins, which my most serious thoughts did judge to be the greatest of my outward duties, and which I performed through the greatest difficulties, and which cost me dearest to the flesh, and the greatest self-denial and patience in my reluctant mind. Wherever I have erred, Lord, make it known to me, that my confession may prevent the sin of others; and where I have not erred, confirm and accept me in the right.

And seeing an unworthy worm hath had so many testimonies of thy tender love, let me not be like them that when thou saidst, 'I have loved you,' unthankfully asked, 'Wherein hast thou loved us.'² Heaven is not more spangled with stars, than thy word and works with the refulgent signatures of love. Thy well-beloved Son, the Son of thy

¹ Psalm, xix. 12, 13.

² Mal. i. 1, 2.

love, undertaking the office, message, and work of the greatest love, was full of that spirit which is love; which he sheds abroad in the hearts of thine elect, that the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Spirit may be their hope and life. His works, his sufferings, his gifts, as well as his comfortable word, did say to his disciples, 'As the Father loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.'¹ And how, Lord, shall we continue in it, but by the thankful belief of thy love and loveliness, desiring still to love thee more, and in all things to know and please thy will; which thou knowest is my soul's desire.

Behold then, O my soul, with what love the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have loved thee; that thou shouldst be made and called a Son of God, redeemed, regenerate, adopted into that covenant state of grace in which thou standest. Rejoice therefore in hope of the glory of God,² being justified by faith, having peace with God, and access by faith and hope that maketh not ashamed: that being reconciled, when an enemy, by the death of Christ, I shall be saved by his life. Having loved his own, to the end he loveth them, and without end. His gifts and calling are without repentance. When Satan and thy flesh would hide God's love, look to Christ, and read the golden words of love in the sacred gospel, and peruse thy many recorded experiences, and remember the convictions which secret and open mercies have many a time afforded thee. But especially draw nearer to the Lord of love, and be not seldom and slight in thy contemplations of his love and loveliness. Dwell in the

¹ John, xv. 9.

² Rom. v. 1, 2.

sunshine, and thou wilt know that it is light, and warm, and comfortable. Distance and strangeness cherish thy doubts : acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace.

Yet look up, and oft and earnestly look up after thy ascended glorified head, who said, 'Tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Think where and what he is, and what he is now doing for all his own ; and how humbled, abased, suffering love is now triumphant, regnant, glorified love ; and therefore no less than in all its tender expressions upon earth. As love is no where perfectly revealed but in heaven, so I can nowhere so fully discern it as by looking up by faith to my Father and Saviour which is in heaven, and conversing more believingly with the heavenly society. Had I done this more and better, and as I have persuaded others to do it, I had lived in more convincing delights of God's love, which would have turned the fears of death into joyfuller hopes, and more earnest desires to be with Christ, in the arms, in the world, in the life of love, as far better than to be here, in a dark, a doubting, fearing world.

But, O my Father, Infinite Love! though my arguments be many and strong, my heart is bad, and my strength is weakness, and I am insufficient to plead the cause of thy love and loveliness to myself or others. O plead thy own cause, and what heart can resist? Let it not be my word only, but thine, that thou lovest me, even me a sinner ; speak it as Christ said to Lazarus, 'Arise : ' if not, as thou tellest me that the sun is warm, yea, as thou hast told me that my parents and dearest friends did love me : and much more powerfully than so,

tell it me as thou tellest me that thou hast given me life, by the consciousness and works of life. That while I can say, 'Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee,' it may include, 'therefore, I know I am beloved of thee;' and therefore come to thee in the confidence of thy love, and long to be nearer in the clearer sight, the fuller sense, and joyfuller exercise of love for ever. Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! Amen.

THE END.

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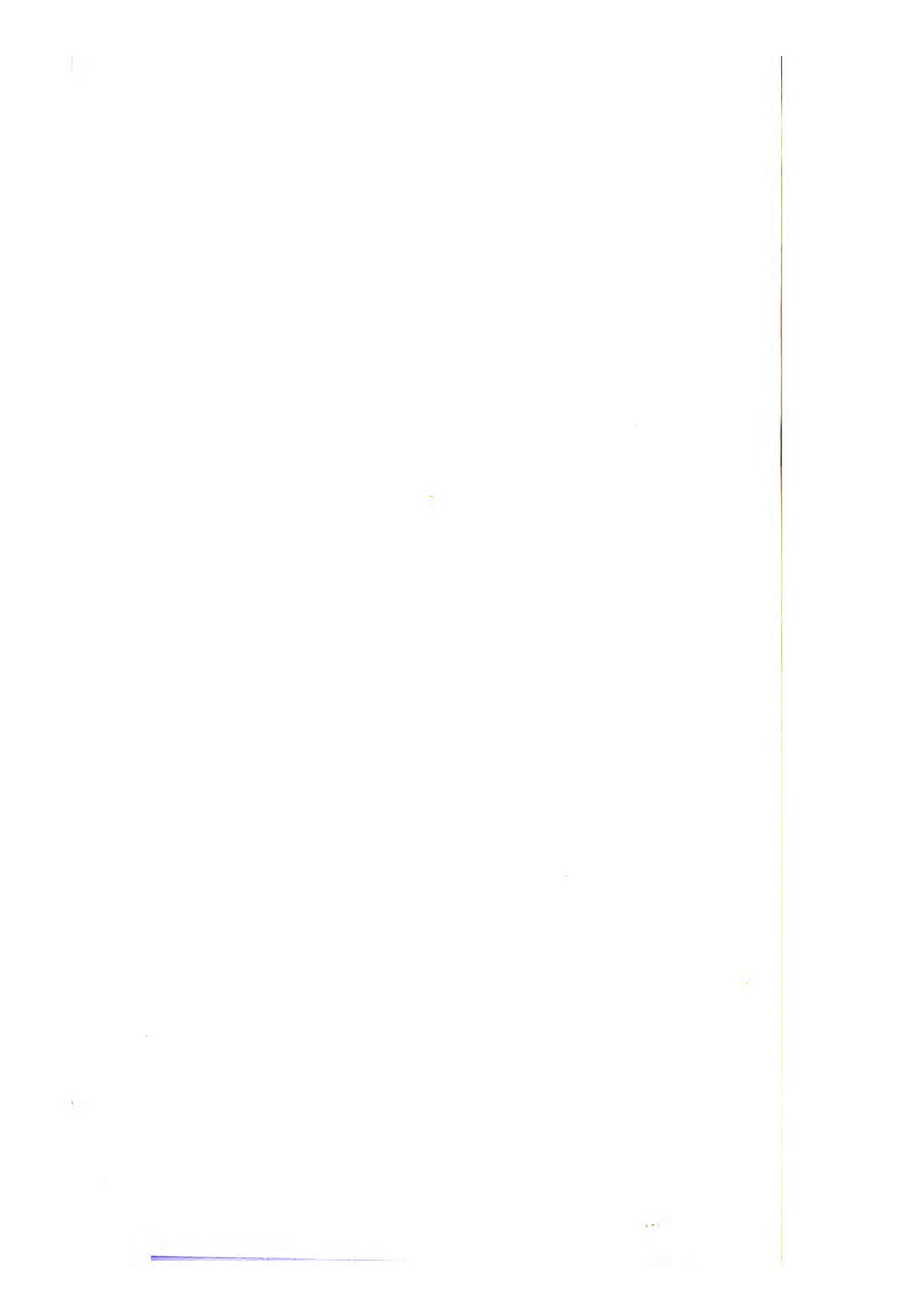
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