

The Happiness of the Blessed,
Considered As To The Particulars Of Their State;
Their Recognition Of Each Other In That State; And Its Difference Of Degrees.
To Which Are Added Musings On The Church And Her Services.

By Richard Mant
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[Spelling selectively modernized. Bible citations converted to all Arabic numerals. Footnotes moved into place of citation or following that paragraph in square brackets.]

—— “What thou canst attain, which best may serve
To glorify the Maker, and infer
Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
Thy hearing beyond abstain
To ask, not let thine own invention hope
Things not reveal'd, which the invisible King,
Only omniscient, hath suppress'd in night,
To none communicable in earth and heaven:
Enough is left besides to search or know.”

Milton, *Par. Lost*, vii. 115-125

To The Rev. George Richards, D.D., Vicar of St. Martin's in the Fields, Westminster.
My Dear Friend,

With great satisfaction I request your acceptance of the little volume now offered to the public.

It is, I think, six or seven and thirty years ago, that my acquaintance with you originated: and I still remember the pleasure and instruction which I derived from the occasional society of one, at that time distinguished among the ornaments of the University, of which I was lately become a humble member. During the succeeding period, under a considerable variety of circumstances, my intercourse with you has been continually maintained; and I esteem the friendship, which has subsisted between us, among the most agreeable occurrences of my life.

With these impressions, it is my desire to associate your name with my own on the present occasion: and thus to assure you of the affectionate regard for your person, as well as of the respect and esteem for your professional and literary character, with which I am, my dear friend,

Ever very truly your's,
Rd. Down & Connor, Dec. 22, 1832

Preface.

The vast importance, as it appears to me, of the following topics; the lively interest belonging to them; and the invaluable practical effects which they may assist in producing: caused me, some time ago, to collect from Holy Scripture the materials of this treatise on “The Happiness of the blessed,” and to arrange them in the form of sermons, which have been delivered on different occasions in the course of my professional duties. The same motives, aided by circumstances attending the delivery of the sermons, now induce me to submit the substance of them to the public in a form better adapted to private perusal.

To the several sections of the treatise are annexed short poems, of which, as they are not intended to carry forward the argument of the treatise, so they will be found, I hope, not to impede it: at the same time they may have the effect of giving prominence and

emphasis to the sentiments which are conveyed by them, and which will be found closely connected with the subject matter of the treatise.

The form, under which these poems appear, is that usually denominated the SONNET: a name, degraded in many minds by an association with light and frivolous effusions, wherein that form of composition has been frequently employed: and therefore in common acceptation hardly characteristic of a species of poem, which is in reality well suited to the conveyance of brief thoughts on serious and solemn subjects with compression, beauty, energy, and effect. That such however is a character, to which the species is justly entitled, witness several of Milton's "SONNETS"; especially the 7th, 8th, 9th, 14th, 18th, 19th, and 22nd; which for loftiness and dignity of sentiment, and for corresponding vigour of expression, as likewise for a structure of versification, sometimes harsh indeed and abrupt, but often presenting great variety and richness of modulation, are worthy of the Poet of Lycidas, Comus, and Paradise Lost.

It was with such an opinion in favour of this species of poetry, that I took in hand a series of Sonnets "on the Church and her Services"; thinking that many particulars in our ecclesiastical provisions might be thus exhibited, compendiously and pointedly, and perhaps not ineffectually or unpleasingly withal. Of the soundness of these opinions it will be for the reader to judge.

On completing this series, which terminated with the two last stages of man in this world, "the deathbed" and "the funeral," I was led to pursue the train of reflection thus suggested, after the same manner, into the succeeding stages of "the intermediate state," "judgment," "hell," "heaven," and its accompaniments: being probably encouraged herein by the inquiry concerning "the Happiness of the Blessed," which had been for some time more particularly engaging my thoughts, but not with a view to an immediate connection between the two works. When, however, I came to arrange my treatise on "the Happiness of the Blessed" in its present form, these latter poems, such of them at least as had been then written, seemed to fall not unaptly into the intervals between the sections; and I thereupon added others for the intervals not already provided for, until in the end the whole treatise thus acquired its actual uniformity.

Such is the history of the present publication: the two members of which may be hereby perceived to have somewhat more of connection, than might at first sight be supposed. But, whatever be their connection, each of them, so far as regards its particular subject, is independent of the other. And either or both may, I trust, be made subservient to the welfare of the reader both in this life, and in that which is to come: for which end may Almighty God grant his blessing upon them for the sake of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Rd. D. & C.

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The Happiness of the Blessed, &c.

Chapter I – Particulars Which Constitute the Happiness of the Blessed.
 Section I: *Introductory – The Consideration of the subject suggested by Holy Scripture, and to be regulated by the same.*

That “Christ is risen from the dead,” as it is one of the most evident truths of Holy Scripture, so is it one of the most unquestionable articles of our Christian belief. That his resurrection is an assurance and a pledge of the resurrection of mankind, is another article equally evident from the Word of God, and equally entitled to our faith. The two articles are distinctly set forth by the apostle St. Paul, in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians; and their truth maintained, and their mutual connection argued, and their essential importance to the whole system of the Christian revelation unambiguously affirmed. “If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept; for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” [1 Cor. 15:13–22]

This article of the resurrection of all men divides itself into two members, the one comprising the resurrection of the righteous, the other that of the disobedient, who shall be raised indeed, (for “all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; [2 John 5:25, 29]) but *their* resurrection will be “the resurrection of damnation”; and they will be raised only to be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power” [2 Thess. 1:9]; whilst to the former their resurrection shall be “the resurrection of life,” or the commencement of a new existence of perpetual and everlasting enjoyment. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear,” declares St. Paul in another of his epistles, “then shall ye also” – he is addressing himself to the “saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae,” of whose “faith in Christ Jesus he had heard, and of the love which they had to all the saints,” that is, to all their brother Christians; and whom he here describes as “being dead,” meaning thereby “dead to sin”; and to these faithful disciples of their Lord, commended to him, as they were, for their holiness, and charity, and deadness to sin, and fruitfulness in well-doing, he says, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” [Col. 3:4] Similar general intimations of everlasting happiness and glory, prepared for the righteous at their resurrection, must be familiar to the mind of the reader, and cannot need to be here cited.

If it had pleased Almighty God to shut in our prospect of the future state of the blessed by such general intimations, and to withhold from us all knowledge of particulars, it might be irreverent and unprofitable for us to attempt an examination of it: irreverent, for it does not become us to pry into “the secret things of God” [Deut. 29:29]; unprofitable, for our inquiries, being not guided by his word of truth, must in such case end in uncertainty, and might probably lead us into error. But since it has pleased him to make a disclosure of several particulars which contribute to form the happiness of the blessed, the contemplation of such particulars is but a part of the grateful duty which we

owe to God, and which we perform by the study of those Holy Scriptures, all of which “were written for our learning, and that we, through patience and the comfort” that they impart to us, “might have hope.” [Rom. 15:4] Such a contemplation is calculated also to be profitable to us, by stimulating our endeavours in pursuit of the promised happiness, and in the preparatory acquirement of those qualifications which, by the mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, may fit us for obtaining and enjoying it. After all, indeed, our acquaintance with the subject must be very limited and imperfect; for of the particulars of that state of happiness much is undoubtedly left still unrevealed; there are many things too belonging to it of which our senses are altogether inexperienced; there are many of which our minds can form, no adequate conception. For, “as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” [1 Cor. 2:9] Yet, again, there are others of which the revelation is plain, and the comprehension falls within the reach of our faculties; at the same time that the contemplation of them is calculated to bring instruction and improvement, peace, comfort, and delight, to the devout and meditative soul.

With these feelings of reverence for the proposed subject, and with this persuasion of its value and importance as a part of God’s revelation, and of its profitableness in contributing to make “the man of God perfect,” [2 Tim. 3:17] I proceed, with the Divine blessing, to submit it to the consideration of the reader: and in prosecuting the inquiry it will be my first endeavour to place before him the **PRINCIPAL PARTICULARS** *in the future happiness of the blessed*; refraining from all unauthorized and imaginary speculations, confining myself to the things revealed by the wisdom of the Almighty, and, agreeably to the sentiment avowed by a great divine, one of the fathers of our Reformation, on another important and mysterious topic, “venturing only where the sacred text doth, as it were, lead me by the hand.”

The Day of Judgment.

The day of Christ; the last, the dreadful day;
When thou, and I, and all the world shall come
Before his judgment seat, to hear their doom
For ever and for ever: and when they,
Who lov’d not God, far, far from him away
Shall go:—but whither banish’d?—and with whom?—
And they, who lov’d him, shall be welcom’d home
To God, and Christ, and heav’n, and heav’n’s array,
Angels and saints made perfect.—May the scene
Of that dread day be always present *here*,
Here in my heart! that every day between,
Which brings my passage to the goal more near,
May find me fitter, by his love made clean,
Before his throne of justice to appear!

Section II: *The intermediate State.*

And here, as preliminary to our proposed investigation, it may be inquired in the first place, what will be the condition of the righteous *immediately after* their departure from this life, and *between* that event and the general resurrection.

Of that *intermediate state* the notices in Holy Scripture are few I apprehend in number, and scanty in their record of particulars; but they are enough, both in number and in circumstances, to enable us to form a notion of that state, as a state of repose and enjoyment to the righteous; though probably, not of that perfect and supreme enjoyment, which will be allotted to them at the resurrection of the just.

That the intermediate state of the righteous will be one of *repose* from the sufferings that mortality is heir to, may be thought sufficiently plain from the declaration of St. John in the Revelation; "I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." [Rev. 14:13] Thus we understand that to those, who "die in the Lord," their death will be the introduction to a state of undisturbed tranquility; they will "rest from their labours". That it will be their immediate introduction to a state of *enjoyment* also, may perhaps be inferred from the ensuing clause, namely, "and their works do follow them"; that is, the rewards consequent on their former "works". But we may perceive, more clearly, in other passages, a foundation for the opinion, that the righteous will enter upon a state of enjoyment immediately after their dissolution.

Our blessed Lord, in his parable of the rich man and Lazarus, describes their condition after death in the following terms; "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom." [Luke 16:23] Several circumstances, specified in this as well as in other passages of the parable, are indeed to be, not literally, but figuratively understood. Nevertheless, the whole appears to proceed upon the notion, that death is at once followed by a condition of conscious comfort and torment, respectively, to the persons who are in the end to be made partakers of one or the other of those two conditions; for it should be observed that the parable supposes the continuance upon earth of the "five brethren" of the rich man, in a state of prolonged trial and responsibility, at the same time that it represents Lazarus as "comforted," and the rich man as "tormented"; and it is therefore to be understood as describing, on the part of those who were dead, the condition which they were allotted before the day of judgment.

The language of our blessed Redeemer to the dying malefactor on the cross appears to recognize the same notion. To the supplication of the penitent, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," Jesus answered, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." [Luke 22:43] "Paradise" was the name of that place of happiness, to which the Jews supposed the souls of the pious to be conveyed on their separation from their bodies. To be admitted into that place, to be received withal into the society of the Redeemer, cannot but signify an admission to a state of enjoyment; and the period assigned for admission to it, "Today," or "this day," "shalt thou be with

me,” intimates an immediate transition from the sufferings of this life to the enjoyments of another.

We are led to the same conclusion, by the declarations of St. Paul to the Corinthians and the Philippians. In the fifth chapter of his second epistle to the former, the Apostle draws a comparison between the two conditions of life and death, wherein he respectively describes himself, as being on the one hand “at home in the body, and absent from the Lord,” and on the other, as being “absent from the body and present with the Lord” [2 Cor. 5:8]; and of his own feelings concerning them he says, “We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” Thus he speaks of death, or “absence from the body,” as immediately leading to a condition of being “present with the Lord”; and the condition of being “present with the Lord,” can hardly be understood, but as conveying the idea of enjoyment on the part of him who should be the subject of it.

Again, and agreeably to this, to the Philippians the Apostle says, “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain ... 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.” [Phil. 1:21–24] Here also “to depart from this life,” and “to be with Christ,” are brought into immediate connection with each other; and the latter is affirmed to be “far better,” or, by a very emphatic phrase in the original, “by much far better,” for the Apostle, whom we can hardly imagine therefore to have looked forward to it, but with anticipations of positive enjoyment and delight. It may be added, that he did not herein contemplate, as the prominent object of his desire, the final state of happiness and glory, consequent on the resurrection and the day of judgment, when the souls of the righteous shall be reunited to their bodies; for he speaks of a state of separation and absence from the body or the flesh; and whereas he is here speaking of a state, immediately consequent on death, he elsewhere speaks of the other as a remote condition, consequent on the appearance of the Lord at the great day. “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ... Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.” [2 Tim. 4:8]

From the foregoing passages we collect, that the *intermediate* state of the souls of the righteous is one of *rest and repose*: not however of insensibility, but of *consciousness*, and of positive and great *enjoyment*: still that it will be succeeded by another state of yet superior happiness, when “the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” [1 Cor. 15:52]; and when “the crown of righteousness,” heretofore “laid up” for “all those who love the Lord’s appearing,” shall be “given to them by the Lord, the righteous Judge,” in the presence of assembled men and angels, “on that day.” [2 Tim. 4:8]

This view of the intermediate state of the righteous, altogether at variance as it is with the doctrine of purgatory, one of the gratuitous assumptions and unscriptural tenets of the Romish Church, is well represented by our own scriptural Church; whose words

in the last Collect but one of her “Order for the Burial of the Dead,” may be here conveniently cited, as containing an excellent exposition of the doctrine of Holy Writ on the subject of the present section. “Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, *are in joy and felicity*; we give thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world; beseeching thee, that it may please thee of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our *perfect consummation and bliss*, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.” *Amen.*

Rest In Christ

Hail, heavenly voice, once heard in Patmos! “Write,
Henceforth the dead who die in Christ are blest:
Yea, saith the Spirit, for they now shall rest
From all their labours!” But no dull dark night
That rest o’ershadows: ’tis the dayspring bright
Of bliss; the foretaste of a richer feast;
A sleep, if sleep it be, of lively zest,
Peopled with visions of intense delight.
And though the secrets of that resting place
The soul embodied knows not; yet she knows,
No sin is there God’s likeness to deface,
To stint his love no purgatorial woes;
Her dross is left behind, nor mixture base
Mars the pure stream of her serene repose.

Section III: *The future State of the Blessed — Their Place of Abode.*

We enter now on our proposed consideration of the future state of the blessed, following the day of judgment. And the first particular, to which I would direct the attention of the reader, is the PLACE OF THEIR ABODE.

That place is called by the name of “heaven,” and the *situation* of it is represented to be in some elevated part of the universe of God. Accordingly the phrases of “coming down from heaven,” [John 6:33, Rev. 3:12] and “going up to heaven,” [Deut. 30:12] are of frequent occurrence in the word of God, as descriptive of that abode in its relation to this earth which we inhabit: and it is on account of the same relation that the Apostle uses the corresponding phrase of “above,” when pointing it out as the object of desire to the Colossians. “Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” [Col. 3:2]

But whatever be the precise situation of this place in the range of God’s creation, a subject of speculation more curious perhaps than profitable, it will be more to our purpose to remark, that the Holy Scriptures describe it as the peculiar *residence of God*; “The Lord,” saith the Psalmist, “is in his holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in heaven”; so that the tabernacle on earth, on account of its near resemblance to heaven in that

respect, was called “the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwelleth” [Ps. 11:4, 26:8]; whence God himself is oft-times denominated “the God of heaven,” [Ezra 6:10, Ps. 136:26, Dan. 2:44] “our heavenly Father,” [Matt. 6:14, 15:13, 18:35] “our Father which art in heaven.” [Matt. 6:9] From heaven our blessed Lord “came down,” [John 3:13] when he was made man. To heaven he re-ascended [Eph. 4:8] after his resurrection. In heaven he now “sitteth at the right hand of God.” [Col. 3:1] And he shall at his appointed day “descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,” [1 Thess. 4:16] to judge the quick and the dead.

To that abode meanwhile he has directed the thoughts of his disciples, as the *recompense* of all their sufferings, and the *scope and end* of all their exertions. “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.” [Matt. 5:12] “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” [Matt. 6:19] The hope of Christians is specified by St. Paul, as “the hope which is laid up for them in heaven.” [Col. 1:5] And “Blessed,” saith St. Peter, “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” [1 Pet. 1:3–5]

To this future residence of the blessed the Apostle to the Hebrews makes several allusions in terms which indicate its *excellence*. Thus he figuratively speaks of it as “Mount Sion” [Heb. 12:25]; an emphatic term in the estimation of those to whom it was directly addressed, for they accounted their own “Mount,” which properly bore that name, to be in the Psalmist’s language “the joy of the whole earth”; [Ps. 48:2] and in continuance he mentions it, by a different modification of the same figure, as “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” Expressing himself with reference to the same celestial abode in language intended to convey ideas of its eminent dignity, he elsewhere says of Abraham, “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” [Heb. 11:10] And in like manner of the descendants of Abraham after the flesh he saith, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.” [Heb. 11:13–16] And in like manner again, of the descendants of Abraham after the spirit, or the members of the Christian Church, the same Apostle saith, “Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” [Heb. 13:14]

All these passages are doubtless designed to point out to us the superior excellence and value of that celestial abode which is prepared for God’s faithful servants in the

world to come. To the same effect in general, but with a lively delineation of *several individual features*; of this abode the book of Revelation of St. John appears to supply us with descriptions, abounding in circumstances of magnificence, beauty, and enjoyment, among which are these that follow. It is portrayed as “the holy city, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,” “having the glory of God.” [Rev. 21:2, 11] “And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. ... And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.” [Rev. 21:19, 21] “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring into it their glory and honour.” [Rev. 21:23, 24] And it had “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” [Rev. 22:1, 2] In whatever manner such portraits as these are to be understood, whether it be that the most beautiful and splendid productions of the earth will be enjoyed in full perfection by the inhabitants of the heavenly state; agreeably to the idea ascribed to Raphael by our great poet,

—“what if earth
 Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
 Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?”
 P. L. v. 574.

or that the representations of heavenly things are set before us in a figurative manner, as calculated to impress us with a more lively sense of their value and delightfulness, when shadowed forth under the images of things which are esteemed on earth most precious and delightful; in either case they seem intended to place most expressively before our thoughts the *beauty* and *magnificence* of the future abode of the blessed.

Heaven

The pleasant garden, and the crystal stream,
 The tree of life which bears on every bough
 Fruits fit for joy or healing; on the brow,
 Of glorious gold a living diadem;
 The thrones which blaze with many a radiant gem;
 The branching palms; the raiment white as snow:
 Are these the joys that heaven’s abodes bestow?
 Or may they rather earth-form’d figures seem
 Of heavenly bliss?—To me it matters not,
 If I but reach the mark, whate’er the prize
 Of God’s high calling. Be content that what
 Is told, is told us by the only Wise:
 And blest, supremely blest, must be the lot,
 Which Christ hath purchas’d, and which God supplies.

Section IV: *The Condition of the Blessed.*

An observation, similar to that which closed the preceding section, is applicable to many of the phrases whereby Holy Scripture describes the future CONDITION of the blessed; and which speak of their condition under the images of “a kingdom,” [Luke 12:32, Heb. 12:28, James 2:5] “a crown,” [Rev. 3:11] and “a treasure” [Luke 12:33]; “a crown of life,” [Rev. 2:10] “of righteousness,” [2 Tim. 4:8] and “of glory” [1 Pet 5:4]; “a prize,” [1 Cor. 9:24] like that obtained by the conquerors in the ancient games, “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” [Phil. 3:14]; “an inheritance,” [Heb. 9:15] the portion of a beloved child in the property of an affectionate and opulent father, “an inheritance in the kingdom of God” [Eph. 5:5]; and which exhibit the good and faithful servants of Christ, who were “faithful in few things”, [Matt. 25:23] as, in his own language, “made rulers over many things”; or, in the language of his Apostle, appointed to “reign with him,” to “reign in life.” [Matt. 19:17] Such phrases as these may perhaps be regarded as figurative, rather than literal, representations of the future condition of the blessed; at the same time they are unquestionably intended to be in a high degree expressive of the *excellence* of that *condition*, and full of encouragement to us in the pursuit of it.

Passing on, however, from these phrases, let us proceed to such as obviously require a literal interpretation.

That condition is described by the term “*life*.” “If thou wilt enter into *life*,” said our blessed Redeemer, “keep the commandments.” [2 Tim. 2:12, Rom. 5:17] “In this,” saith his beloved disciple, “was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live* through him.” [1 John 4:9] And it is so termed in contradistinction from the frail and transitory existence which is assigned to us in this world, as where St. Paul speaks of “*mortality* being swallowed up of *life*” [2 Cor. 5:4]: in contradistinction also from that intermediate state of death from which the blessed shall be raised, according to that promise of the Redeemer, “he that believeth on me, though he were *dead*, yet shall he *live*” [John 11:25]: and further, in contradistinction from that state of punishment and insensibility to all enjoyment, to which the wicked will be abandoned, according to the saying of St. Paul, “the wages of sin is *death*, but the gift of God is eternal *life*, through Jesus Christ our Lord” [Rom. 6:23]; or, as when our Lord assures us, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from *death* unto *life*.” [John 5:24] And again, “The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of *life*; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of *damnation*.” [John 5:29] And, representing what shall follow on the final doom, he says, “And these shall go away into everlasting *punishment*, but the righteous into life eternal.” [Matt. 25:46]

This new life, to which the blessed will be admitted, is to be of *interminable duration*, a restoration to their aboriginal state; for, as the author of the Book of Wisdom beautifully says, “God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity.” [Wisd. 2:23] The epithet “everlasting,” or “eternal,” which has occurred in some passages just cited, is frequently repeated by the writers of the New Testament in combination with the future life of the blessed. Thus again, in a corresponding phrase,

our Lord Jesus Christ is said to have “brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” [2 Tim. 1:10] And thus, reverting to those expressions which we before noticed as emblematical of the happiness of heaven, we find that the residence, to which the blessed are to be promoted, is “a city which path foundations,” [Heb. 11:10] “a continuing city” [Heb. 13:14]; that “the kingdom” which they are to receive is “everlasting,” one “that cannot be moved” [2 Pet. 1:11, Heb. 12:28]; that their “crown” is “unfading, incorruptible” [1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Cor. 9:25]; that their “treasures” are such as “neither rust nor moth corrupteth, nor do thieves break through and steal” [Matt. 6:20]; that their “inheritance” is “incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away”. [1 Pet. 1:4]

This future life will also comprise in it, all the particulars which *make* life *desirable*.

For instance, it will be a perpetual *sabbath*, an uninterrupted season of *tranquility* and *rest*. “There remaineth therefore,” saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, “a rest to the people of God.” [Heb. 4:9] A “rest” it will be from *persecution* and *affliction*; for as he saith to the Thessalonians, “It is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.” [2 Thess. 1:6] It will be a “rest” from *toil* and *fatigue*; for, as we read in the Revelation of the beloved John, “I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.” [Rev. 14:13] It will be an exemption from *worldly privations*, *sufferings*, and *anxieties*; for, “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters.” [Rev. 7:16] An exemption from *worldly affliction* and *distress*; for, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” [Rev. 7:17] An exemption it will be from the *contradiction* and *seduction* of *sinners*; for, “the wicked shall be severed from among the just,” [Matt. 13:49] and “without,” that is, remote from the abode of the latter, “are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” [Rev. 22:15] An exemption from the *pollution* of sin; for, “there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.” [Rev. 21:27] An exemption from the *penalty* of *sin*; for “there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.” [Rev. 22:3]

But the future life of the blessed will be a condition, distinguished, not only by the absence of every occasion of annoyance and distress, but by the *presence* also of the most abundant occasions of *enjoyment* and *delight*. “To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, God will render,” as St. Paul assures us, “eternal life,” and therewithal “glory, honour, and peace.” [Rom. 2:7, 10] They shall be “glad,” as St. Peter assures us, “with exceeding joy.” [1 Pet. 4:13] The effect of their calling by the Gospel, shall be, as St. Paul again says, “the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” [2 Thess. 2:14] They shall, according to the emphatic declaration of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, “enter into the joy of their Lord.” [Matt. 25:21]

But the amount of the blessedness, comprised in these expressions absolutely taken, is further intended to be conveyed still more forcibly to our minds by the *comparison*, which the word of God sets forth, between the promised blessedness, and the severest earthly losses and sufferings, through which it may have been attained. “Blessed,” said our Lord to his first disciples, who were exposed to the most bitter persecution and the most excruciating torments by their acknowledgment of his truth, “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.” [Matt. 5:11] And what is the energetic language of the Apostle? “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” [Rom. 8:18] And, as he elsewhere expresses the sentiment, “for which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” [2 Cor. 4:16–18]

Heavenly Joys

O for the Christian’s prize! to reign in bliss,
 Unceasing, pure, complete; to feel no sting
 Of death, sin, care, or sorrow; life’s fresh spring
 To drink, and own the heart’s sweet charities,
 A soul by Jesus cleans’d, and framed like his
 A body glorious; evermore to sing
 With saints and angels the thrice Holy King,
 To see his face, and know him as he is,
 Truth, wisdom, greatness, love! But one brief word
 Concentrates all in its capacious span;
 ’Tis HEAVEN; the abode by God himself prepar’d
 For those that love him. Mete it as you can,
 Nor eye that bliss hath seen, nor ear hath heard,
 Nor dwells such rapture in the heart of man.

Section V: *The Bodies of the Blessed.*

For the enjoyment of the destined felicity in their new abode, and in their new state of being, a new CONFORMATION OF THEMSELVES, adapted to the circumstances of things about them, is moreover promised to the blessed.

“Some men will say,” observes St. Paul, in that sublime argument on the resurrection of the dead, in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, “Some men will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” And he replies to the supposed question by an answer, which sets forth the change that will be wrought in the human frame of the righteous by the power of God; and illustrates it by the change that is wrought by the same power in the reproduction of vegetable nature, and by the different degrees of excellence that prevail among the different works of God’s creation. “Thou fool,” he answers, “that which thou sowest is not quickened

except it die. And that which thou sowest thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead: it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” [1 Cor. 15:36–49] Thus under several striking similitudes, and in various particulars, is exhibited to us the contrast between that “terrestrial,” that “natural” or “animal body” which we now bear, suited as it is to the exigencies of this lower, sensible, animal state, wherein we now live; and that “*celestial*,” that “*spiritual body*,” which will hereafter be borne by the blessed in their new state of being, refined and purified from its present imperfections, and exalted by the acquisition of numerous excellent faculties, which it will continually exercise in obedience to the soul. And what the Apostle means at the conclusion of this extract by our “bearing the image of the heavenly,” as opposed to our “having borne the image of the earthy,” is more distinctly explained by him to the Philippians, where he says, “Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” [Phil. 3:20–21]

Such are the new *bodies*, wherewith the blessed shall be clothed: and “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” [Matt. 13:43] But as their new bodies shall be eminent for their excellence in other respects, so shall they be for their *endurance*. Like their celestial habitation and their glorious state, their corporeal frames also shall be incapable of decay. Distinguished from “the children of this world” by the absence of circumstances necessarily incidental to their mortal state, “they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” [Luke 20:36] These are our Redeemer’s words. And St. Paul, comparing our present bodies to a frail tabernacle or tent, and those with which the blessed shall be hereafter invested, to a dwelling of more enduring substance, saith, “We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” [2 Cor. 5:1] In the passage, indeed, which

has been already quoted from the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, he represents the future heavenly bodies of the blessed as distinguished from their present earthy ones, by their “incorruption,” as well as by their glory, power, and “spirituality”: and in pursuance of the same argument he thus reasons upon, and reaffirms the fact: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” [1 Cor. 15:50–55] Hence we understand, that the bodies of the blessed, both of those who shall be alive at the day of judgment, and of those who shall be then raised from the dead, will be thenceforth for ever incorruptible and immortal: in which incorruptibility and immortality will consist the final and complete triumph over death.

The Body Glorified

’Tis night: behold, as if by death opprest,
The sun his rays in gloom sepulchral hide!
’Tis day: behold, with renovated pride,
In the magnificence of morning drest,
The sun, rejoicing, lift his orient crest,
A bridegroom issuing forth to meet his bride!
Thus, like the sun, beneath the ocean tide,
The Christian seeks the chamber of his rest;
Thus, like the sun, to rise!—But not the same
Shall rise, as when his mortal course was run:
To that unearthly, pure, ethereal frame,
That robe of amaranthine radiance spun,
No nearer likeness this vile form may claim,
Than glimmering starlight to you glorious sun.

The Insect Transformed

Have you not seen how pent in narrow room,
From leaf to leaf the worm-like insect creeps?
Have you not seen, how undistinguish’d sleeps
That insect, girded by its death-like tomb?
Till, bursting forth in vernal beauty’s bloom,
Quick into life the winged wonder leaps,
Sports in the sun, the flower, the brooklet sips,
Broider’d with brightest tints from nature’s loom?
So man, within his being’s narrow ring,
Crawls on his kindred earth: so down he lies
In wintry slumber wrapt: in life’s new spring
Again, no more a groveling worm, to rise;

But, seraph-like, to soar on radiant wing,
And quaff delight mid heav'n's unclouded skies.

Section VI: *The Souls of the Blessed.*

Together with this improvement of their bodies, a corresponding improvement will be also wrought in the OTHER FACULTIES Of the blessed, in order to their “perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul, in God’s eternal and everlasting glory.”

“Blessed,” saith our Lord, “are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.” [Matt. 5:8] And, “Beloved,” saith St. John, in his first, or general Epistle, “now are we the sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” [1 John 3:2] And, as the same Apostle saith in his Revelation, “The servants of God shall serve him, and they shall see his face.” [Rev. 22:3–4] In which passage, whatever may be the precise import of these phrases of “seeing God,” of “seeing him as he is,” of “seeing his face,” they certainly appear to denote a more *intimate intuition* of the *Godhead*, than in our present imperfect and sinful state we can attain: — a more clear *manifestation* to us of the *divine excellence*, according to that saying of the Son of God, which contains a specific mention of such a manifestation, “Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” [John 17:24]: — a more entire and unclouded *perception* of the *divine nature*, than is compatible with this our condition of comparatively childish ignorance; “for now” as St. Paul says, “we see through a glass, darkly: but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” [1 Cor. 13:12]

With the high privilege of “seeing God” is closely connected that of a more prosperous *imitation* of his *perfections*, of a more near *assimilation* to his incomparable *excellence*. The two are immediately connected by St. John: “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” [1 John 3:2] St. Paul also speaks of those who “love God,” as being “conformed to the image of his Son” [Rom. 8:29]: meaning, probably, a conformity to his image in some degree during this life; but such conformity will doubtless be more thoroughly effected in that which is to come. And elsewhere he says, “We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” [2 Cor. 3:18] This “likeness to God,” this “conformity to the image of his Son,” this “change into the image of the glory of the Lord,” we may presume to consist in the improvement both of the *intellectual* and of the *moral* qualities of those, who are admitted to the contemplation of the excellence of the Godhead: according to the observation of St. Paul again, concerning Christians in their state of trial, and the same is surely even more applicable to them in a state of bliss; that they are “renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created them,” [Col. 3:10] and that “after God they are created anew in righteousness and true holiness.” [Eph. 4:24] And thus St. John, directing our thoughts and exertions towards the present attainment of that moral excellence, the full acquisition of which may be thence inferred to be a distinction of man’s improved and celestial nature, “Every man that hath this hope in him,” namely,

the hope of ultimately “seeing God as he is,” and of “being like him,” “purifieth himself even as he is pure.” [1 John 3:3] It may be added, that the comparison which our blessed Lord has instituted between the spirits of the blessed and “the angels of God,” to whom he expressly tells us that the former will bear a resemblance and “will be equal,” [Luke 20:36] distinguished as those excellent beings are for their wisdom and knowledge, their holiness and virtue, is an argument for the existence of the same qualities in those who are the subjects of that comparison.

The Spirit Sanctified

Most wise meseems it, of that unseen state
Whate'er in bounty God vouchsafes to show,
Moral or intellectual, *there* to throw
The inquiring eye, thereon to meditate;
Think how the blest God's goodness emulate,
And how they “see him as he is,” and know
His essence, and to his resemblance grow.
In heaven the sons of God such changes wait,
To angels equall'd. Dost thou hope to win
That sonship, that high knowledge to secure,
And that divine similitude? Begin
On earth; acquaint thyself with God; inure
Thy thoughts to serve him like the cherubin,
And seek for pureness ev'n as He is pure.

Section VII: *The Society and Employments of the Blessed.*

Thus glorified in their bodies, enlightened in their understandings, and purified and sanctified in their hearts, they, who are made “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” [Col. 1:12] will enjoy a SOCIETY, and be occupied in EMPLOYMENTS, corresponding to the glory of their residence, and the excellence of their condition, and their own improved state of body and of soul.

There they will associate with their *brethren*, “the spirits of” other “just men,” like themselves “made perfect” [Heb. 12:23]; their “fellow citizens of the household of God” [Eph. 2:19]; the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven” [Heb. 12:23]: with the blessed, with themselves, of their common Father; the good and faithful servants, with themselves, of their common Lord; the sanctified, with themselves of the Holy Ghost the Comforter: with patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and holy men; all those who “are departed hence in the true faith of God's holy name” [Order of the Burial of the Dead]; all those who from the beginning of the world “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” [Rev. 7:14]; “a great multitude, whom no man can number, of all kindreds, and nations, and peoples, and tongues”. [Rev. 7:9]

There shall they be admitted to the society of “an innumerable company of *angels*”; of those “ministering spirits,” who from the creation of man have been “sent forth to minister for” them who are now become “heirs of salvation” [Heb. 1:14]: those who, in their hour of danger upon earth, have “encamped round about them and delivered them,”

[Ps. 34:7] those who in heaven have “rejoiced over them on their repentance” [Luke 15:10]: who “at the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds with power and great glory, have gathered together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven unto the other” [Matt. 24:30–31]: and to whom they, shall themselves be thenceforth likened and equal, partaking of their spiritual nature; rivalling them in power, wisdom, and holiness; and clothed like them with immortality.

There shall they be admitted to the presence of “Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,” [Heb. 12:24] whom having not seen they love; in whom, though now they see him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” [1 Pet. 1:8]: who is now “gone to prepare a place for them in the many mansions of his Father’s house; and who will come again, and receive them unto himself, that where he is there they may be also.” [John 14:2–3] For, as the Apostle teaches us, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory” [Col. 3:4]; “and so shall they be ever with the Lord.” [1 Thess. 4:17]

There shall they be admitted to the presence of “God the Judge of all,” [Heb. 12:23] “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort” [2 Cor. 1:3]; “with whom is the fountain of life” [Rev. 21:6]; “in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” [Ps. 16:11] And “He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them” [Rev. 7:15]; and “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.” [Rev. 7:17]

With this society, and in this presence, shall the blessed continually dwell, occupied in such *employments* as are adapted to their new state of being: – cultivating and exercising that “charity,” which amid the failing of prophecies, and the ceasing of tongues, and the vanishing away of sublunary knowledge, “never faileth” [1 Cor. 13:8]; the best, and “most excellent,” [1 Cor. 12:31] and “greatest” [1 Cor. 13:13] of the gifts of God, love of God himself, and the love of our brethren for his sake: – “equaling” the angels in their undeviating “fulfilment of the Lord’s commandments,” in “diligently hearkening unto the voice of his words,” [Ps. 103:20] in their cheerful and unwearied attendance upon his pleasure: – copying after the pure enjoyments of their celestial nature: – imitating them in the excellency of their knowledge, and the beauty of their holiness: – examining with them his marvelous works of grandeur, power, and providential goodness in the glories of creation; and “looking with them into the mysteries” [1 Pet. 1:12] of the manifold wisdom of God involved in the wonders of redemption: – encircling with them the throne of God, and “always beholding his face,” [Matt. 18:10] and contemplating his perfections, and celebrating his glory, and “serving him night and day in his temple,” [Rev. 7:15] and worshipping him, and chanting forth his praise.

And there shall be “heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, and the voice of harpers harping with their harps.” [Rev. 14:2] And this shall be the tenor, and this, we are told, the very language of their song: “Allelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth: let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him.” [Rev. 19:6–7] “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God

Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” [Rev. 4:8] “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.” [Rev. 4:11] “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.” [Rev. 5:12, 9] “Amen. Allelujah. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” [Rev. 5:13]

The Assembly and Church of the Firstborn

It were a goodly and a glorious sight,
The assembled Church from time’s remotest age!
Priest, patriarch, ruler, lawgiver, and sage;
And they who soar’d the poet’s lofty flight,
Psalmist or seer; or fought the Gospel fight,
God’s truth proclaim’d, or stored the sacred page;
With all of less renown, who dared engage
Sin, and were conquerors in the Saviour’s might.
Behold them there! They stand before the gate,
(In heav’n their names are writ!) for entrance there
What time their Captain comes. Cast off the weight
That stays thy course; like them right onward bear;
So shalt thou swell with them their Leader’s state,
Partake his triumph, and his banquet share.

The Angels

They are God’s minist’ring spirits, and are sent,
His messengers of mercy, to fulfil
Good for salvation’s heirs. For us they still
Grieve when we sin, rejoice when we repent:
And on the last dread day they shall present
The severed righteous at his holy hill,
With them God’s face to see, to do his will,
And bear with them his likeness. Was it meant,
That we this knowledge should in secret seal,
Unthought of, unimproving? Rather say,
God deign’d to man his angel hosts reveal,
That man might learn like angels to obey;
And those, who long their bliss in heaven to feel,
Might strive on earth to serve him ev’n as they.

God’s Presence in Heaven

Yes, ‘tis God’s presence gives the welcomed blest
Their joy and bliss supreme. With him to dwell,
To see his glory, and his praises tell,
To copy him of perfectness possess,
The Holy, Holy, Holy! First and best

Of joys, fruition's base and pinnacle;
Without him, heav'n would more resemble hell,
Darkness with him were light, and labour rest.
God of my health, show me the way to bliss,
The way to Thee! Who slight thy proffer'd grace,
Sin is their portion now, at last the abyss
Of woe. Thy image in my soul replace,
That I may serve thee here in time; nor miss,
When time shall fail, the brightness of thy face!

God's Praises in Heaven

Methought I heard a voice to heav'n's high King
Shout "Allelujah!" From a host it came,
A countless number, which no man can name,
Of God's redeem'd, attemper'd to the string
Of harpers harping with their harps, that ring
Symphonious: "Worthy is the Great I AM,
Who us created; worthy is the Lamb,
Who died to save us:" and again they sing,
"Salvation, Allelujah!" Then I thought
With such celestial song what earthborn lays
Of meaner theme may vie, too oft o'erfraught
With vice or folly? May heaven's concert raise
Heav'nward my thoughts and hopes, till thither brought,
I hear and join in that immortal praise!

Chapter II – Application of the Foregoing Particulars.

Section I: *Gratitude due to God for the Revelation of future Happiness.*

In the former chapter it has been my endeavour to draw out from the word of God, and to place distinctly before the mind of the reader, the particulars which are therein contained, concerning the heavenly abode, and the blissful circumstances, and the personal condition, and the society and occupations of the blessed in the life that is to come. In the succeeding chapter it is my purpose to take up the subject again in a practical view; and to aim at unfolding the PRINCIPAL USES, to which the previous inquiry may, I think, be most fitly and properly applied.

Beseeking, therefore, the blessing of Almighty God for his Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake to give efficacy by his Spirit to these our meditations, I observe in the first place, that to Him also our GRATITUDE is due for this among manifold other instances of his "grace, which was given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospels." [2 Tim. 1:10]

Of a future state whatever we know, we know it only by the *revelation of divine wisdom*. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." [1 Cor. 2:9] By the revelation of the Spirit of God in old time, while the heathen world was sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, the

patriarchs and the people of God looked forward from this earthly scene to “a better country, that is an heavenly.” [Heb. 11:16] For, as our Church authoritatively sets forth the doctrine of holy Scripture, “The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises.” [Article VII] By the revelation of the same Spirit of God, a brighter and a stronger light has been cast through the Gospel of his Son on the doctrine of “life and immortality,” which according to the original of St. Paul’s affirmation to Timothy, may be less correctly said to have been “brought to light,” [2 Tim. 1:10] than to have been “enlightened, illustrated, or rendered clear,” by the dispersion of any doubts and difficulties in which it may have been previously involved, and by the evident proof and manifest demonstration thereby given of its certainty: at the same time many particulars have been detailed for our instruction by this latter disclosure of his truth, whilst darkness still continues to “cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.” [Isa. 60:2]

Of the particulars, or even of the existence, of such a state, it is impossible that any unassisted exercise of the human understanding could have attained to the certain knowledge. The insufficiency of the faculties of man for the discovery has been felt, is known, and cannot be questioned. What less then does it behove us to do, than to accept the *revelation* of it by God with the most *grateful acknowledgment*? “Blessed,” said our Redeemer to his disciples, “are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” [Matt. 13:16] And in contemplation of the knowledge of which they were made partakers, “in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” [Matt. 11:26. Luke 10:21] Of the knowledge revealed to the disciples of the Son of God, thus distinguished from those who are memorable for their worldly wisdom and discernment, no inconsiderable article is the knowledge of “the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” And surely it becomes them to participate in the joy which their Redeemer felt at their being enlightened by his Gospel, and to express such gratitude as he expressed: rendering, with his holy Apostles, blessing to “God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort,” [2 Cor. 3:3] “for the hope which is laid up for them in heaven” [Col. 1:5]; and “rejoicing greatly before him, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” [1 Pet. 1:8]

Praise to God for Heaven Revealed.

As God of old his people’s promised reign
To Moses show’d afar from Pisgah’s hill,
The vine-clad mountain, and the crystal rill,
City, and goodly field, and palm tree plain,
And Jordan’s flood, and Judah’s utmost main:
So to his servants’ eyes he proffers still,

As in a map which they may scan who will,
Their promised lot, their Canaan's rich domain.
Praised be our bounteous God! and praised the more,
That we herein are more than Moses blest!
He with his eyes beheld, but went not o'er
To tread the land by Israel's sons possess:
To us God gives his promise to explore,
To us to enter on his promised rest.

Section II: *Contemplation of heavenly Happiness. – Its immediate effect.*

With a thankful acknowledgment of God's goodness in revealing to us the particulars of heavenly happiness, it behoves us to combine a continued RECOLLECTION of them; to cherish them in our THOUGHTS, and to make them the subjects of our earnest CONTEMPLATION.

And, first, such CONTEMPLATION may be recommended by reason of the *immediate effect*, which in itself it is calculated to produce.

The subject of a man's thoughts contributes much to the formation of his character. He, whose imagination is wont to dwell on the world and worldly things, will be apt to contract a character of a worldly cast. He will be "of the earth, earthy." [1 Cor. 15:47] But he who is used to lift up his thoughts to high and heavenly things, and delights to feed his mind with the prospect of "the glory that shall be revealed" [Rom. 8:18] in the bodies of just men raised incorruptible, and in their spirits made perfect; of the excellency of their abode, and the purity of their joys, and the holiness of their companions, and the unmingled godliness of their pursuits and occupations in the presence of God and of Christ; will hardly fail of deriving thence by God's blessing, and infusing into his own character, some particles of a celestial spirit; and of advancing by means of these "exceeding great and precious promises," [2 Pet. 1:4] in that improvement of the inner man, which St. Peter terms a "partaking of the divine nature." As "the skin of Moses' face shone," [Exod. 34:29] when he had been holding converse with the Lord on Mount Sinai, so will the soul that ascends to "Mount Sion," and meditates on "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," [Heb. 12:22] with all its appropriate and divine accompaniments, reflect in some degree its loveliness and splendour: according to that beautiful similitude of St. Paul, where he is describing the excellency of the Gospel dispensation, "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass," or mirror, "the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." [2 Cor. 3:18]

Heaven Reflected.

On Sinai's mount, on God's appointed place,
When Israel's leader ceas'd to talk with God,
Israel with awe beheld him, for there glow'd
Jehovah's splendour on his servant's face.
So they, on Sion's mount who love to trace
His lineaments in blissful vision show'd,
Their hearts, through joy of that divine abode,

Reflect the brightness of celestial grace.
The fruit bespeaks its soil. Angelic food
Sweetens man's nature; and cherubic lyres
Tune him to cherubs' notes. The soul, imbued
 With heavenly thoughts, to heavenly things aspires:
And, in the mirror of God's Gospel view'd,
 Seeks to transcribe the image she admires.

Section III: *The contemplation of heavenly Happiness, a motive to a Christian life.*

Again, the CONTEMPLATION of the happiness of heaven is also to be recommended, as supplying a most animating *motive* to a *Christian life*.

“Whatever is written” in God's holy word “is written for our learning: that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures should have hope.” [Rom. 15:4] And surely no part of God's revelation is more worthy of being “learned” by us; no part is better calculated to confirm us in “patience,” to solace us with “comfort,” to cheer and enliven us with “hope”; than the promise of the blessedness “prepared for them that love him”.

Upon this blessedness *our Lord* himself continually *calls on us to meditate*: to this blessedness he continually has recourse for enforcing on us the profession of his faith, and the observance of his commandments, and the general duties of a sober, righteous, and godly life. Would he encourage us to a due employment of the talents entrusted to us by our heavenly Father? It is by a promise of our being received by him with the final sentence, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” [Matt. 25:21] – Would he encourage us to persevere in a course of piety and virtue? He promises, that “they which have done good shall go into life everlasting” [Matt. 25:46, John 5:29]; that “the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” [Matt. 13:43] – Would he encourage us to acts of mercy and loving-kindness to our brethren? It is by promising us “an inheritance in the kingdom prepared for the blessed children of his Father.” [Matt. 25:34] – Would he encourage us to the cultivation and the practice of inward piety and benevolence? He promises us “a reward from our Father which is in heaven, when he which seeth in secret himself shall reward us openly.” [Matt. 6:6] – Would he encourage us to an unreserved acknowledgment of him and of his truth? He promises, that “whosoever shall confess him before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.” [Matt. 10:32, Luke 12:8] – Would he encourage us to be patient and cheerful under persecutions for his sake? He promises, that “great shall be our reward in heaven.” [Matt. 5:12] – Would he encourage us to be humble and “poor in spirit?” He assures us, that “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” [Matt. 5:3] – Would he encourage us to be “pure in heart?” He tells us that they who are such “shall see God.” [Matt. 5:8]

Thus does our blessed Lord continually direct the thoughts of his disciples to the state of future happiness of the blessed, as a motive to the performance of their various Christian obligations. To the same state of happiness his *Apostles* in their admonitions continually have recourse for the same purpose: witness, as a single example, that

impressive conclusion, wherewith St. Paul applies to the practice of the Corinthians his sublime argument for the resurrection of the dead: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." [1 Cor. 15:58]

And as accordingly the promised state of blessedness is a subject, which the ministers of the Gospel of Christ should frequently offer to the contemplation of the other members of his Church; so it is one which the members of his Church in general should never fail to cherish in their contemplation: "having these things," as St. Peter says, "always in their remembrance" [2 Pet. 1:15]; "looking," in the language of St. Paul, "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" [2 Cor. 4:18]; and, as St. Peter again expresses it, "looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God." [2 Pet. 3:12]

For from an earnest contemplation of this state of happiness they will be naturally led to an earnest *desire* and *longing* for its attainment, and to earnest *endeavours* for attaining it.

So far as we are admitted to a foresight of the particulars which are to constitute it, we know that they are worthy of the most fervent aspirations, and the most strenuous exertions, of a being endowed with faculties like those of man. And of what remains to be disclosed, we may be sure that it is of the same desirable quality as that which has been disclosed to us already. So that the more thoroughly we can implant the ideas of these things in our minds, the more effectually will they be calculated to operate upon our hearts, and to stimulate our exertions.

This is what St. Paul knew, and felt, and set forth as the proper effect of such contemplations. "If ye then be risen with Christ," he saith to the Colossians, "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above." [Col. 3:1-2] What does he hold out to the Corinthians, as an object worthy of animating their ambition, and the most animating object of his own? "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I, therefore, so run, not as uncertainly." [1 Cor. 9:25] What does he inform the Philippians is the great aim and end of his desires and his exertions? "This one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." [Phil. 3:13] And then, directing their wishes and exertions to the same end and aim, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. For our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." [Phil. 3:20-21]

The expression used by the Apostle in this last passage is remarkable. "Our conversation is in heaven": rather, "our community," the society, that is, to which we belong, and to the privileges of which we are entitled, and aspire: or, as he expresses himself to the Hebrews, "here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

[Heb. 13:14] According to his previous declaration in the same epistle concerning Abraham, and the patriarchs, and the holy men of old, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.” [Heb. 11:13–16]

Heaven in fact is the home of the children of God. Earth is no dwelling place of theirs. It is only the passage, by which they must proceed on their way to their proper inheritance. And he, who duly reflects on this, as every Christian ought to do, will be perpetually during his passage looking forward to the end of his journey, and encouraging himself with the prospect of it, and cherishing the remembrance of it in his heart, and studying how he may in the end arrive at it, and reside there for ever and ever in glory, honour and peace.

The Prospect of Heaven a Motive To Exertion

Wouldest thou the mansions of the blest attain,
 (As who would not, for who would fain refuse
 Blessing and life, and death and evil choose?)
Look upward, eyes and heart, to you bright fane
On that sky-piercing mount, and tow’rd it strain
 With loins well girt, and on thy feet the shoes
 Of Gospel preparation! God endues
With strength who seek his face, but spare not pain
Meanwhile and toil to boot. Thou on the gate
 Fix firm thy gaze, nor heed the lure that lies
On right, on left, to tempt thee from the straight
 And onward path. Mark well the proffer’d prize,
Strive, win and wear it! Shame and sorrow wait
 On feeble feet, faint heart, and wavering eyes.

Section IV: *The contemplation of Heaven means the affection from Earth.*

Whilst the CONTEMPLATION of heaven induces us to “set our affection on things above,” it may prompt us also to *wean* it from “*things on earth*,” of which it will lead us to form a jester estimate.

For, compared with the enjoyments of the blessed, how *insignificant* is the *happiness* which *this world* can bestow? All the constituents of happiness in this life are imperfect, and mingled more or less with circumstances of painful compensation.

I would not wish to depreciate the rational pleasures of our earthly existence; nor to abate those feelings of content, and cheerfulness, and joyousness, and innocent delight, wherewith I believe it to be the will of God that we should partake in the temporal and earthly blessings with which it hath pleased him to surround us. “He hath not left himself without witness” to his loving-kindness, as well as to his power, “in that he doeth good, and giveth us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with

food and gladness.” [Acts 14:17] And “the creatures of God are good, if they be received with thanksgiving,” and with “trust in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” [1 Tim. 4:4, 6:17]

Of the things indeed, which constitute merely worldly enjoyment, “the good things” of the men of the world, as our Lord terms them in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, [Luke 16:25] many have but small pretensions to be accounted really good. But whatever be the pleasurable circumstances of the best sources of earthly enjoyment, they are accompanied by a large *admixture* of different *ingredients*. We need no voice from heaven to teach us, what the experience of all must notice, and the hearts of all must feel, that “man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward” [Job 5:7]; that the fairest and brightest scene of his existence is liable to be overclouded with the cares of this world”; with perplexity, and anxiety, and fears, and sorrows, and disappointments, and mortifications, and distresses, and diseases, and the loss of his nearest kinsmen, and his dearest friends, and of all other things which make life enjoyable. But the happiness of the blessed is free from all these occasions of alloy. Of that state there is no evil to disturb the serenity and the delight. “God hath wiped away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” [Rev. 21:4]

Nor, again, do we need a heavenly revelation to teach us, that “man that is born of a woman,” as he is “full of trouble,” so also is he “short of days” [Job 14:1. marg. transl.]: that he “cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” However pure from interruption, however complete in its enjoyment, we may suppose the fairest condition of earthly existence, it is *brief* and *transitory* withal. The most splendid crown which this world can bestow is after all “corruptible”: [1 Cor. 9:25] no better than the chaplet of wild olive or parsley, which encircled the brows of the victorious champion at the Olympic or the Isthmian games; the transient prize and ornament of a day. But the Christian’s crown is “a crown of life,” [Rev. 2:10] as well as “of glory”: [1 Pet. 5:4] “incorruptible, unperishable, and that fadeth not away, incapable of decay, ever-flourishing, eternal in the heavens.” [1 Cor. 9:25, 2 Cor. 5:1]

How do all earthly endowments sink into comparative *insignificance* and *worthlessness*, when thus considered! Behold the noblest, the strongest, the most powerful, the most prosperous, the wealthiest, the loveliest, the most beloved and admired, hitherto the most exempt from suffering, the most abounding in enjoyment and delight, among the children of men; behold him, I say, bidding at length a farewell, an everlasting farewell, to all his earthly sources of enjoyment, “making his bed in darkness, and saying to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister” [Job 17:14]: and then cast up your eyes above, and see heaven opened; and contemplate those, whose “names are written in the Lamb’s book of life,” [Rev. 21:27] clothed with incorruption and immortality; and remember how of them it has been said, that “they cannot die any more,” [Luke 20:36] for “there shall be no more death” [Rev. 21:4]; and what argument can succeed in persuading you, if this contemplation shall fail to persuade you, to form a right estimate of the comparative

value of heavenly and of earthly things; and to “set your affection upon, and to seek after, the things, not in earth but in heaven?”

Earth Is Not the Christian's Home

Earth is not home of thine! A pilgrim thou
Art journeying onward to thine own abode,
Thy proper resting place. The inn, the road,
Each common traveler's haunts, thy sojourn now,
And now another's, *these* wilt thou allow
The love to challenge to thy homestead ow'd?
There shall thy heart be set, thy care bestow'd,
Scope of thy morning toil, thy evening vow?
God hath proclaim'd man's dwelling place above,
That man his thoughts may elevate to high
And holy things, which no corruption prove,
Fit for immortal souls. Beyond the sky
Thy home is fix'd: thereon be fix'd thy love,
Nor seek from earth what earth can ne'er supply!

Section V: *The Contemplation of Heaven a remedy for Earthly Sufferings.*

Let Us apply the like CONTEMPLATION, in forming our estimate of the *sufferings of this world.*

I neither entertain, nor affect, an unnatural insensibility to such sufferings. “Evils” they are called by the word of God himself: “Lazarus received evil things.” [Luke 16:25] Evils they are, when absolutely considered; and painful, and sometimes hardly possible to be borne by flesh and blood: though by God's grace they are capable of being converted into good, and to be made the occasion of the greatest spiritual improvement, and eventually to be the means of introducing the sufferer to happiness. No chastening,” saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, “for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” [Heb. 12:11]

The proper way of regarding the evils of this life is to regard them, not absolutely, but with reference to another life. And then, what says the Apostle St. Peter? “Wherein,” namely, in the prospect of the “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,” “ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” [1 Pet. 1:6–9] And, as he afterwards exhorts, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” [1 Pet. 4:13] And what says his brother in the apostleship, St. Paul? “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are

not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” [Rom. 8:18]: for, as he elsewhere says, “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” [2 Cor. 4:18]

The greatest sufferings of this life are capable of being mitigated by some circumstances of a consolatory nature; by some circumstances of alleviation. To the religious man, the sincere and faithful Christian, the affectionate child of his heavenly Father, the devoted follower of his meek and lowly Redeemer, such circumstances are wonderfully multiplied and increased. He has been admonished, “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.” [Heb. 12:5–7] He has been taught, that “the trying of his faith worketh patience.” [James 1:3] He has been taught, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” [James 1:12] Dreary as may be his passage through this world’s wilderness, weather-beaten and torn as may be his tabernacle, and comfortless the accommodations to which he may be sometimes compelled to submit; worn out, as he may be by fatigue, weighed down by affliction, beset with difficulties, impeded by sin, with a body liable to infirmities, diseases, and death, and a soul harassed by perplexity, and seeing dimly its way through surrounding darkness; molested and annoyed, assaulted perhaps and smitten, by his enemies, a solitary wanderer, separated and estranged from his friends; his soul vexed by the contradiction of sinners, his better thoughts and feelings liable to be distracted by the seductions of sense, and the cares of this world: how abundant in consolation to him is the reflection, that, for every evil which he can suffer God has provided a corresponding remedy; corresponding in kind, but infinitely surpassing the evil in measure and extent! How encouraging and cheering is the reflection, that, if he persevere faithfully in “running the race which is set before him,” [Heb. 12:1] ever relying on the mercy of God, and ever “looking unto Jesus as the author and finisher of his faith,” he will arrive in the end at a glorious and continuing home; where he will dwell for ever and ever, in life everlasting, in glory, honour, and peace, in security and happiness, in holiness and purity; with a body glorified, and a spirit made perfect; in the society of angels, and of good men, improved like himself into the likeness of the angelical, of the divine nature; and in the presence and in the service of his Maker, his Redeemer, and his Sanctifier, God blessed for ever, Amen!

Surely the contemplation of such scenes as these, should make us comparatively *indifferent* to the *things of this life*: should induce us to cherish its good things with moderation, as things which must pass away, and be no more found; and to bear its evil things with meekness, as things of which likewise there will soon be an end: on the one hand, “not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches,” [1 Tim. 6:17] nor “lay up for ourselves treasures upon earth, where the rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal” [Matt 6:19]; nor, on the other hand, to be beyond measure

troubled with “affliction, which is but for a moment” [2 Cor. 4:17]; nor to “cast away our confidence, which hath great recompense of reward” [Heb. 10:35]; but to “take joyfully” the sufferings, with which it may please God to visit us, “knowing in ourselves that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance,” [Heb. 10:34] “a treasure that faileth not, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”

The Mourner Comforted

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall find
Comfort and joy!” Though flesh and blood rebel
'Gainst heaven-ward thoughts, and the vext spirit swell
With anxious tossings, still, the veil behind
Of earth-born mists, the faith-directed mind
Sees thron'd in cloudless light the INVISIBLE,
At whose right hand delights in fullness dwell,
And bliss for everlasting. Be resign'd,
Thou child of sorrow, to his sovereign will;
Drink, as he bids, the bitter cup, and bear
Thy cross in patience! From the holy hill
A gleam shall cheer thee, till, safe-harbour'd there,
Thou feel how faintly earth's severest ill
May with the weight of heavenly joys compare!

Section VI: *The Contemplation of Heaven a corrective of Earthly Passions.*

The CONTEMPLATION of these things, should moreover animate us to subdue in ourselves those *earthly passions*, and to liberate ourselves from those *earthly practices*, which are at variance with the character of the blessedness of heaven; which must preclude us from attaining it, and disqualify us for enjoying it if we could attain it.

So saith the Apostle to the Colossians, following up his doctrine concerning the future glorified state of the faithful with the inferential admonition, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; in the which ye also walked sometime when ye lived in them.” [Col. 3:5–7] He alludes to their condition of sinfulness in heathen darkness, from which they had been delivered by the light of the Gospel. And he adds, “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.” [Col. 3:8]

Let us place before our eyes a man, who has been devoted to the pursuits and enjoyments of the world, of sense, and of sin, till the period of his transition from this to another life; and let us consider him with reference to the condition therein promised to the blessed. That condition will be one of heavenly, of refined, of spiritual delight. Their bodies will be fashioned anew, and purified from their corruptible elements, and adapted to the enjoyments of superior natures. Their souls will be sublimed, and exempted from the alloy of a corruptible body, and made capable of seeing God. Their society will be the spirits of other just men made perfect, and the holy angels of God.

They will dwell with their Redeemer reinvested with his Father's glory; him, who in his earthly state was purer than the stars; the guiltless, the spotless; who "knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." [1 Pet. 2:22] They will abide in the presence of God, the God of holiness, who is "of purer eyes, than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity," [Hab. 1:13] the "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY." And it will be their employment and their happiness, to contemplate his excellence, to imitate his perfections, to celebrate his praises, to perform his will. And now let me ask, is there any thing in the previous state of the worldly man and the sinner, to fit him for the enjoyment of this condition, and this society, and this presence, and these employments, supposing for a moment that he could be admitted into it? Rather, is there not every thing to unfit and disqualify him for it?

For, by what has his earthly state of trial and preparation been distinguished? A body, which has ever groveled upon and clung to the earth; a soul, weighed down by the body, and in love with sin; associates of the same character as himself, "earthly, sensual, devilish" [James 3:15]; a heart, which has been ever "going after its covetousness," [Ezek. 33:31] and framing schemes of worldly gratification; hands, ever prompt to execute them; feet, ever swift to pursue them; a tongue, ever apt to dilate upon them; neither God, nor Christ, nor heaven, nor heavenly joys, nor heavenly occupations, in all his thoughts: – how utterly uncongenial to heavenly felicity; how thoroughly unfitted, how entirely disqualified, for heaven are properties such as these! How utterly incapable of enjoying the blessedness of heaven, even if they were to be admitted! – But there they will not be admitted. For "he that soweth to his flesh, shall of his flesh reap corruption." [Gal. 6:8] And "the works of the flesh are manifest," says the Apostle: "of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." [Gal. 5:19, 21]

The Sinner Disqualified For Heaven

Who think'st thou, in the courts of heaven reside
They, who with malice burn, with envy pine,
Ply the full feast and quaff the midnight wine,
Loose pleasure's daughters, and the sons of pride?
They who from meek affliction turn aside,
Its plaints unheard; and bow at Mammon's shrine,
Molock's or Bel's; and blind to truth divine,
Neglect God's mercy, and his power deride?
If such heaven's inmates, well thou runn'st thy race,
Man of the world! But ah! let conscience tell,
If holy hearts the holy city grace,
What part hast thou therein; and ponder well,
Yea, ponder well betimes that other place,
And who its tenants, and with whom they dwell.

Hell

To close the eyes on earth; to wake in hell,
And lift them up in torments, mid the pains,

Deep curses, loud laments, and penal chains
 Of those who dar'd against their God rebel,
 The GREAT, the GOOD, and from their station fell
 Of glory and bliss; with them, where darkness reigns,
 Where the worm dies not, and the fire remains
 Unquench'd, mid everlasting flames to dwell! —
 Whose is that lot thou knowest. God undid
 The veil which screens his dreadfulnes, that so
 Man might be warn'd and fear. What pangs are hid
 Beneath that lot, those sights and sounds of woe,
 Thou know'st not yet, nor canst thou. God forbid
 Thou e'er by feeling shouldst their anguish know!

Section VII: *The Contemplation of Heaven promotes heavenly Affections.*

But, further; whilst we should be animated by the CONTEMPLATION of heavenly things, to the forsaking of those earthly things, of those desires and works of the flesh, which will render us unfit for the future happiness of the blessed, and which will as surely shut us out of heaven, as that God is there; the same contemplation should also animate us to the *cultivation* of those *affections*, and the *performance* of those *works*, which are in accordance with the promised blessings, and will be at the same time the means of introducing us to them, and of preparing and qualifying us for their enjoyment.

Thus the Apostle, having called on the Colossians, in anticipation of their promised state of glory, to “mortify their members which are on the earth,” calls on them in addition for the cultivation of heavenly graces. “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; and above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness,” [Col. 3:12, 14] And in like manner to the Ephesians he combines the two; “that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” [Eph. 4:22]

It is thus that the faithful disciple of Christ will find means of attaining to “the joy of his Lord.” He must “be not slothful, but a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” [Heb. 6:12] “Giving all diligence,” he must “add to his faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity: for so an entrance will be ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” [2 Pet. 1:5, &c.] “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gate into the city.” [Rev. 22:14]

It is thus also that Christ's faithful disciple will become better *prepared* and *qualified* for the enjoyment of his Lord's blessing.

Is heaven the abode to which he will be advanced? It has been the object of his desires and his endeavours, whilst, being persuaded that “here he has no continuing city, he has sought one to come.” [Heb. 13:14]

Will his body be changed, and spiritualized, and “fashioned after the likeness of Christ’s glorious body?” [Phil. 3:21] It has been his endeavour, whilst on earth, to “keep under his body, and bring it into subjection” [1 Cor. 9:27]; to “mortify the deeds of it” [Rom. 8:13]; to “be temperate in all things, striving for the mastery over it” [1 Cor. 9:25]; to be “conformed to the image of Christ.” [Rom. 8:29]

Will his “spirit be made perfect in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after the image of God who created him?” “Having the hope of seeing God,” and of being made “like him” in heaven, he hath endeavoured on earth to “purify himself, even as he is pure” [1 John 3:3]; and in the prospect of the promises of God, to “cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”. [2 Cor. 7:1]

Will his condition be henceforth one of unearthly, of celestial occupations and delights? “For the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, he has continually pressed toward the mark, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before”. [Phil. 3:13] “The crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give him in that day,” [2 Tim. 4:8] has been the great object of his ambition; and, in the hope of attaining it, he has “fought a good fight,” he has “finished his course,” he has “kept the faith.” His “treasure has been laid up in heaven;” and “where his treasure has been, there has his heart been also.” [Matt. 6:21]

Will his future existence be there passed in purity and holiness, in the practice of that “charity” which “never faileth,” and in the worship and service of God? The love of God, and the love of his neighbour, have been the ruling principles of his former life; and “herein has he exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man” [Acts 24:16]; and “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” [Titus 2:12–14]

Will he be thenceforth associated with “the spirits of just men made perfect, with the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and with an innumerable company of angels,” in the presence of “Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and of God the Judge of all?” His most cherished society upon earth have been those good men, whom he has found “righteous before God, and walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” [Luke 1:6] With those who have finished their earthly course in the true faith and fear of God, and are gone hence to rest in Christ, and with those heavenly and more exalted creatures, who, though unseen, have ministered to him in his progress to the inheritance of salvation, and whose business and delight it ever is to do the will of their Father in heaven, he has continually had fellowship in thought; rejoicing in their happiness, copying their virtues, and emulating the brightness of their crowns; and “seeing himself compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,” [Heb. 12:1] he has striven to “lay aside every weight, and to run with patience the race that was set before him.” Especially, and above all, he has “looked unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of

the throne of God.” [Heb. 12:2] With God himself the Father, as with his Son Jesus Christ, it has always been his delight to hold communion in prayer and meditation, and his appointed ordinances; “choosing rather,” if such be the Divine will, “to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures” [Heb. 11:25] of this world; “having respect unto the recompense of the reward” [Heb. 11:26]; by the eye of faith “seeing him who is invisible” [Heb. 11:27]; and submitting himself, his will and his actions, to God’s wisdom; and continually “walking with God”. [Gen. 5:24]

Thus the existence of the faithful Christian here will have been a preparation for his future existence hereafter, at the same time that it will have been the means of introducing him to that heavenly state. As “the wickedness of the wicked” will have altogether disqualified him for the enjoyment of heaven, could he be admitted there, so “the righteousness of the righteous” [Ezek. 18:20] will have trained and disciplined him through the Redeemer’s merits for the participation of his joy; and thus the contemplation of the happiness of heaven should animate us to apply our knowledge of the particulars, of which it will consist, to our present improvement, by adapting our thoughts and affections and conduct, as much as possible, to “the glory that is to be revealed.” “To be carnally minded is death” [Rom. 8:6]; such a condition is one of estrangement both from the possession and from the capability of enjoyment of everlasting life: but “to be spiritually minded,” with respect to the qualifications for enjoying the heavenly reward, as well as to the acquisition of the reward itself, “is life and peace.” [Ibid.]

The Holy City

O! 'tis a glorious city! passing ken
 Of eye, and stretch of thought! earth's cities glow
 With no such luster, nor such riches show.
 HOLINESS is its name. Each citizen
 Is pure and holy. There with sainted men,
 Purg'd from the native dross of earth below,
 And spirits whose natures no pollution know,
 God dwells, and He who once for man was slain,
 The Lamb all-spotless. Who a post would hold
 Therein, by him must thitherward be trod
 The path of holiness. That chosen fold
 Defilement enters not. And lo, in broad
 Letters of light its charter is enrolled,
 “None but the pure in heart shall see their God.”

Section VIII: *Gratitude due to God for the Gift of heavenly Happiness.*

But, finally, whilst we speak of the means and qualifications, whereby we must be admitted to and prepared for heavenly happiness, let us at the same time recollect, and never cease to bear in mind, that, after all, the happiness of heaven is freely bestowed by the divine favour for the alone merits of the Redeemer.

“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” [Rom. 6:23] However the contemplation of it may operate upon us to the several purposes which have been now considered; however it may contribute to form our characters, and to supply motives for our practice, and to stimulate our desires and our exertions in its pursuit, and to wean us from the good things of this world, and to support us under this world’s evils, and to assist us in mortifying the works of the flesh and in acquiring heavenly qualifications: – and unless it does operate to such purposes as these, the mere contemplation of heavenly happiness “shall be as a dream of a night vision; it shall even be as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite” [Isa. 29:8]; – but I say, to whatever good purposes it may operate upon us, it is impossible that any act or acts of ours can be of value to purchase for us that “unspeakable gift of God.” [2 Cor. 9:15] “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” [Rom. 8:24]; so that, although at the last day, when “God will render to every man according to his deeds,” “to them, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, will be rendered eternal life,” with “glory, honour, and peace” [Rom. 2:7, 10]; that reward will be bestowed upon them, not for their own sakes, but by the mercy and loving-kindness of God, and for the sake of his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, as our GRATITUDE is due to God for the *knowledge* which he has vouchsafed us of the future happiness of the blessed, so is it still more due for the *gift itself*. “Blessed, therefore, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven!” [1 Pet 1:4] Blessed be He, who hath “by his Spirit revealed to us, what he hath prepared for them that love him!” [1 Cor. 2:10] “Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him!” [Rev. 19:7] “Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.” [Rev. 19:5] And as we commence these our meditations with a thankful and affectionate acknowledgment of his goodness, so let us now bring them to a close with the like commemorative tribute of devotion: humbly presenting our thanks and praises to “Almighty God, who through his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hath overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life” [Collect for Easter Day]: and adding withal our supplications, “that we, which know him now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of his glorious godhead through the same Jesus Christ our Lord” [Collect for the Epiphany]; where “with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven we may laud and magnify his glorious name, evermore praising him and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: glory be to thee, O Lord most high.” [Communion Service] *Amen*.

Thanks to God for the Gift of Heaven
Who to man’s sight unfolds the bliss above?

Who on lost man bestows that blissful prize?
 Who bids the musing spirit thither rise,
 The heart desire it, and the mind approve?
 Who, when the wayward thoughts to distance rove,
 Recalls them home, and points them to the skies?
 Who gives the terms, and strength withal supplies
 To heed and keep them? He whose name is LOVE.
 He sent, from heaven's adoring hosts among,
 His Son to save us: He to heavenly rest
 Invites his saved. O, be his bounty sung,
 To him be glory, thanks, and praise address:
 The loud Hosanna of the tuneful tongue,
 The deep still homage of the thoughtful breast!

Chapter III – The Recognition of Each Other by the Blessed.

Section I: *The general Persuasion on the proposed Subject – Motive for discussing it.*

In a poem entitled "The Exequy," written on the death of a beloved wife, by Henry King, who was Bishop of Chichester in the former part of the seventeenth century, occurs the following apostrophe to the person, whose departure was the occasion of the poem.

——— "Never shall I
 Be so much blessed as to descry
 A glimpse of thee, till that day come
 Which shall the earth to cinders doom,
 And a fierce fever must calcine.
 The body of this world like thine,
 (My little world!) that fit of fire
 Once off, our bodies shall aspire
 To our souls' bliss: then we shall rise
 And view ourselves with clearer eyes
 In that calm region, where no night
 Can hide us from each other's sight"

And after some intervening passages, the poem concludes thus:

"The thought of this bids me go on,
 And wait my dissolution
 With hope and comfort. Dear, (forgive
 The crime!) I am content to live
 Divided, with but half a heart,
 Till we shall meet and never part."

It is not on account of any peculiarity of sentiment or expression, that I have quoted these passages: but by way of introduction to the subject, which is proposed for examination in the present chapter; and in exemplification of an opinion, which the reader will probably at once admit to prevail very generally amongst Christians; namely, that, in the future state of happiness of the blessed, they who have known and loved each other in this world will be the subjects Of MUTUAL RECOGNITION, and will be

REUNITED and ASSOCIATED with EACH OTHER, and contribute to EACH OTHER'S DELIGHT in that condition of perpetual blessedness.

But, notwithstanding the general prevalence of this opinion, a question may perhaps be entertained, whether in the minds of most persons it rests upon the sense of any distinct *evidence* which holy *Scripture* is understood to bear in support of it: or whether it is not rather a vague anticipation, which our natural feelings and affections prompt us to cherish.

Of the future state of blessedness, indeed, prepared for God's faithful servants, we are so distinctly and unequivocally assured by the word of God; and by the same word we are also so distinctly and unequivocally assured of the fullness and perfection of the happiness, "which God hath prepared for them that love him"; that no Christian, possessed of very moderate attainments in scriptural learning can be thought altogether deficient in scriptural evidences and arguments for the proof of these doctrines. But that a restoration to the knowledge and society of those individuals, whom the blessed have known and loved on earth, will be an ingredient in their future happiness, is by no means revealed with the same distinctness and precision: and indeed it is rather remarkable, that very little that I can perceive is said expressly in Holy Writ, which can be judged to bear directly upon the subject. So that if they, who cherish the opinion to which I am adverting, were required, or were to require of themselves, to state the scriptural evidence upon which they entertain it, many of them, many I mean even of those who are not unaccustomed to serious meditation on religious topics, would be not immediately supplied with the required proofs; and would be found to entertain the opinion, rather because the presence and society of those whom they love are included in their general notion of happiness, than by reason of any specific testimony which they could adduce from Holy Scripture in its support.

These observations do not proceed in any degree from a desire to discredit the opinion in question. It is an opinion, calculated, I think, to enhance the innocent delights, and to alleviate the unavoidable sufferings of this present life; and to improve us in virtue, as well as to further our consolation and enjoyment. It is an opinion too, of which, if the grounds are not very distinctly and unequivocally set forth in holy scripture, holy scripture nevertheless does not contain any thing, which so far as I am aware, militates against it; whilst, on the contrary, there are several considerations to be derived from its contents, which make the opinion highly probable. It is not therefore for the purpose of discouraging the opinion, that I have ventured on the foregoing introductory remarks; nor is it for any such purpose that I offer the present subject to the consideration of the reader. But it is for the purpose of *stating* the SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS, on which it appears to me that the opinion may be maintained; so that in entertaining it we may not cherish in our minds a vague and indefinite prepossession, which will not bear examination and inquiry; but may be satisfied ourselves of the reasonable probability, and be "ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us." [1 Peter 3:15]

Knowledge of Each Other in Heaven

I count the hope no day-dream of the mind,
No vision fair of transitory hue,
The souls of those, whom once on earth we knew,
And lov'd, and walk'd with in communion kind,
Departed hence, again in heav'n to find.
Such hope to nature's sympathies is true;
And such, we deem, the holy word to view
Unfolds, an antidote for grief design'd,
One drop from comfort's well. 'Tis thus we read
The Book of life: but if we read amiss,
By God prepar'd fresh treasures shall succeed
To kinsmen, fellows, friends, a vast abyss
Of joy; nor aught the longing spirit need,
To fill its measure of enormous bliss.

Section II: *The recognition of each other probable, from exhortation to comfort under the loss of departed friends.*

The first passage in holy scripture, to which I would direct the thoughts of the reader, as affording a probable ground for the opinion, that the blessed in a future state will recognize, and be reunited to those, whom they have known and loved in this life, is the conclusion of the fourth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonians. It is desirable that the passage should be cited at length, and it runs in this wise. "I would not have you to 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. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." [1 Thess. 4:13-18]

Now it is avowedly the purpose of the Apostle, to afford by these words "comfort" to the Thessalonians, who were under affliction for their deceased friends: and in order to afford them "comfort," the "hope" which he suggests must be taken as co-extensive with their "sorrow". But when we reflect on the affections, which are natural to the human heart, and bear in mind that a prominent motive to "sorrow" on the decease of friends is the survivors' sense of separation from the society of those whom they love; we shall think it reasonable to believe, that the "sorrow" of these Thessalonians was caused, not merely by anxiety concerning the future resurrection of their departed friends, absolutely considered, but by an apprehension also that they may have been by death separated from them for ever; and hence we may think it reasonable to believe, that the CONSOLATORY LANGUAGE of the Apostle was directed to the removal of such an apprehension; and to the establishment of the "hope," that the deceased should not only rise again themselves, but should be reunited to the survivors in a future state.

And this is agreeable to the Apostle's language; which speaks first of the deceased and the survivors, under the phrases respectively of "them which are asleep," and "us which are alive and remain," as actually separated from each other; and then says of the latter, that "they shall be caught up together with" the former "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so," he adds, "shall we," that is, apparently, the whole body of us reunited, "ever be with the Lord". Thus, supposing the Thessalonians, who had survived their friends at the time of the Apostle's writing, to have remained alive on earth "unto the coming of the Lord," St. Paul appears to teach that they should then be reunited with those who had previously fallen "asleep". Hence we may understand it to be probable concerning friends in general, who are separated by death, that, should the life of the survivors be prolonged to "the Lord's coming," they will then be reunited with the deceased.

And what we thus understand concerning separated friends, some departed and others surviving at the period of the Lord's coming, is obviously to be understood concerning those also, all of whom may have departed hence before that period; namely, that they will all be reunited together at the coming of the Lord.

This interpretation of the Apostle's language may be illustrated and confirmed by the remark, that even wider the Old Testament COMFORT was derived from the persuasion, that in a future life a *reunion* would be effected of those *ties of affection* which had been severed in this life. The reader will readily call to mind the affecting language of David, wherein he explains the motives of his conduct, first during the illness, and then after the death, of his child. "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." [2 Sam. 12:23]

The particular phrase to which I allude is that, wherein the parent comforts himself under his bereavement by the reflection, that, although the child could not return to him, he himself should go to the child. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Will it be said, that David by these words means no more, than the being gathered with the child into the sepulchre of his fathers? I answer, that this is a gratuitous assumption: that the words really convey a further meaning; that they are the expression not merely of submission to the will of the Almighty in the general ordinance of death, but of consolation in anticipating the remedy by which the painful effects of that ordinance would be counteracted; not of melancholy acquiescence in the prospect of the corpses of the father and the child being deposited in the same state of lifelessness and insensibility, but of cheerful exultation in looking forward to the reunion of their spirits in a state of animation and intelligence, of pleasure and delight. That David was apprized of such a state of existence, is plain beyond reasonable contradiction from his own explicit avowals, especially from that in the sixteenth Psalm. And, admitting that such was his belief, we cannot be satisfied with less than the supposition, that such a state was the subject of his contemplation on this occasion; and that he comforted himself with the assurance, that the child, whom God had taken from him in this life, he would restore to him in the life to come.

Sorrow Not Without Hope

Weep for the dead! God bids you not restrain,
 What nature claims, affection's soothing tear.
 But weep, like Christian mourners! Tho' the bier
Bear him away to death's obscure domain,
Yet he with you, who still on earth remain,
 The summons of the Archangel's voice shall hear;
 And he with you before the Lord appear,
Soar to the clouds, and meet you there again.
Weep then, but do not as the hopeless weep,
 For them who rest in Christ! A common prize
Awaits both them, and you, and all who keep
 His truth, and love is coming in the skies.
They, in the Saviour who or wake or sleep,
 Shall all united in the Saviour rise.

Section III: *The recognition of each other probable, from observations relating to St. Paul and his disciples.*

I proceed to notice, and to lay before the reader's consideration under one point of view, three or four passages, in which St. Paul speaks of the connection between *himself* and several of the *Christian churches* to whom his epistles were addressed; and which appear to bear upon the subject of our present inquiry.

In the first chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle thus expresses himself. "We write none other things unto you than what ye read and acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end: as also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." [2 Cor. 1:13, 14]

"The day of the Lord Jesus" may be presumed to be the day of his coming to judge the world; and on this day it appears that the Corinthians, whom the Apostle had been the instrument of converting to the faith of Christ, would be "his rejoicing," or an occasion for his exultation and joy. Hence it should seem, that the Apostle in the day of judgment would have a *consciousness* of the salvation of such members of the Corinthian church, as he had been the instrument of saving: and it may be deemed a probable supposition, that such consciousness would be accompanied by a *personal recognition* of the individuals, whose happiness was to be the cause of "his rejoicing".

To the same effect it may be remarked on his language in the second chapter to the Philippians. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God? without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." [Phil. 2:14, 15] Of the salvation of some of the members of the Philippian church, as of that of some of the church at Corinth, the Apostle here anticipates the *knowledge* in "the day of Christ," as affording him an occasion of rejoicing: and thus

that he would be brought to a *personal recognition* of them, the text may be thought to suggest the probability.

A similar conscious joyfulness is intimated concerning the Thessalonians in the last day, in the second chapter of his first epistle to that Church. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." [1 Thess. 2:19, 20] And the intimation is attended by the same circumstance of probable *personal recognition*.

In a passage to the Colossians, this probability may be thought to rise a degree higher. At the end of his first chapter, speaking of Christ "in," or "among them, the hope of glory," he adds, "whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour." [Col. 1:27–29] "The *presenting of every man* perfect in Christ Jesus," of which the Apostle here speaks, seems to bring him into immediate *personal connection* with every individual so to be "*presented*": and, if the "presenting" is to be understood as taking place "in the day of Christ," according to the phrase in the before-cited passages, it seems to indicate a *personal recognition* of the individuals, and a *personal intercourse* with them on the part of St. Paul, at the commencement of their future state of everlasting happiness.

From each of these passages separately, and still more from all taken together, we derive a very considerable probability, that St. Paul anticipated on the last day a *personal knowledge* of those on his part, and a *personal reunion* with them, with whom he had been connected in this life by the ties of pastoral offices and kind affection. That the recognition would be mutual, seems to be a matter of course. And it may, I apprehend, be further assumed, that the same faculty of recognition, which would exist at "the day of Christ," or at the commencement of the future state of existence, would be perpetuated during its continuance: and that a faculty, which should be allowed to St. Paul and to those with whom he was thus connected, would not be withheld from others, who had stood to each other in the same relation, or in other relations of mutual attachment and endearment whilst on earth.

There are two other passages in St. Paul's epistles, wherein, under a somewhat different form, the idea of *personal recognition* and *reunion* between former friends appears to be countenanced by the Apostle.

Speaking of himself in his relation to the Corinthians whom he is addressing, he thus writes in the fourth chapter of his second epistle. "Knowing that he, which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." [2 Cor. 4:14] And in the first chapter of his second epistle to the Thessalonians, he thus expresses himself: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." [2 Thess. 1:6, 7]

Do not these expressions of the Apostle, wherein he speaks of himself as "*presented* by God *with the Corinthians*," at their resurrection by the Lord Jesus; and describes the Thessalonians as admitted to "*rest with him*," at the period of the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven; intimate communion with them respectively at those seasons of

presentation and rest? Such communion appears to be distinctly intimated. And the passages cooperate with those previously cited from St. Paul's epistles, and form altogether a strong body of evidence, to prove that the Apostle, in these his communications with his converts and disciples, took for granted the affirmative of the question, the scriptural announcements upon which are the present subject of our inquiry.

The Christian Pastor's Joy In His Flock.

'Tis sweet to feel the waking consciousness
Of home-bred rapture in the pensive mind:
'Tis sweet to think, that those, whom God hath join'd
With us in love, the like enjoyments bless:
But still more sweet the joy our hearts confess,
To see ourselves by Providence design'd
Stewards of good, where those who love may find
The means and channel of their blessedness.
Such, Christian pastor, is thy heart's delight,
To serve thy God, and see thy people share
His service, led by thee: with them how bright
Thy joy to come, let holy Paul declare;
A joy, a glory, and a crown of light,
Which kings might envy and exult to wear!

Section IV: *The recognition of each other probable, from our Lord's language with reference to the day of judgment.*

An argument for the mutual recognition of the blessed has been derived in the preceding section from the language of St. Paul, relative to himself and his disciples at the day of judgment. With reference to the same day our blessed Lord, in his most impressive description of its occurrences, appears to intimate, that the righteous shall see and recognize those individuals, who have been the *objects of their benevolence* during their season of probation. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations. And he shall separate them one from another. ... Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For ... inasmuch as ye have done it," namely, an act of bounty and mercy as just specified in the foregoing sentence, "unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." [Matt. 25:40]

It is worthy of observation, that he does not say, "unto one of the least of my brethren;" but he says "unto one of the least of *these* my brethren." The demonstrative pronoun "these" appears to be emphatic and significant with regard to our present subject, as if it were intended to convey the understanding, that they, who had called forth the exercise of Christian benevolence, should be presented *immediately to the eyes* of those, by whom that benevolence had been exercised towards them; and that the dispensers of temporal as well as of spiritual blessings, which latter case we have

already contemplated in the instance of St. Paul and his disciples, should be thus delightfully reminded of the special objects of their care.

And according to this is the general supposition, a supposition which may be esteemed natural and reasonable in itself, that when the righteous shall receive the reward of all their other kind words and actions in the presence of assembled men and angels, the objects at large of their brotherly love and Christian charity will be offered to their sight, at the same time that the particular occasions will be revived in their memory: and the pleasure of the recompense will be enhanced by perceiving, that they who have partaken of their benevolence are also the witnesses of their reward.

The Reward of Christian Benevolence

Remove the seal from thy compassion's spring,
And let the water for the pilgrims flow
Of the world's waste, the sons of want and woe!
Though their exhausted frame affliction wring;
And hunger, thirst, and nakedness, the sting
Of sharp disease, and bitter bonds they know;
They are the "brethren," he to call them so
Vouchsafes, the brethren of thy Lord and King.
A day shall come, when thou before his throne
Those sons of woe with lively thoughts must see
Of joy or anguish. Then shall far be shewn
The alms in secret done; and publicly
A voice proclaim, "Each act of mercy, done
To these my brethren, has been done to me."

Section V: *The recognition of each other probable, from what is revealed concerning the future society of the Blessed.*

Passing on to the information which the holy Scriptures give us concerning the *future society* of the blessed, I observe that the Apostle says, in his twelfth chapter to the Hebrews, "Ye are come to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." [Heb. 12:23]

Here the *society*, with which they are to be in future conversant, is evidently adduced as one constituent of heavenly blessedness. And when we reflect on the pleasure which is imparted to our minds by being admitted, after long separation, to the society of those, whom we have known and loved from early years, but from whom we have been constrained to endure a temporary separation; and on the special delight which we experience from reviving in communion with them old but dormant affections, retracing in conversation the events of scenes gone by, and dwelling upon affairs of mutual personal interest; a delight, which the formation of no new acquaintance, however virtuous, however intelligent, however amiable, is for the most part found capable of conferring: it may be thought probable, that among their future associates, considered as constituents of the happiness of the blessed, those, whom they have formerly known and loved and cherished, will be comprehended; and that the company of "the spirits" of

other “just men made perfect,” will not preclude a readmission to the fellowship of their former connections and friends.

In connection with this I would notice the declaration of our blessed Lord, with reference to a future state, that “many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” [Matt. 8:11]

The idea is that of a feast, at which the believers of the Gospel are described to be admitted as fellow guests with the Hebrew patriarchs: and the declaration seems to designate some of the most illustrious *members* of the believers’ future *society*; and also to intimate on the part of the believers a *consciousness* as to the illustrious persons to whose society they should be introduced.

This consciousness readily offers itself to our thoughts as an occasion of peculiar gratification: for who can think without delight on a promised admission to the company of those, whom he has been wont to regard as estimable for piety, wisdom, and virtue? But if such consciousness exist with reference to those individuals, with whom the blessed were previously acquainted only by name and character, it seems probable that they will be conscious of the presence of those also with whom they have been personally acquainted. If consciousness exist with reference to those, whom they have been used to hold in respect and veneration as their natural or spiritual progenitors in former ages, it seems probable that it will not be withheld with respect to those, whom they have cherished in their affections and dwelt upon with fond and unceasing recollection, as their own immediate connections; the watchful and tender parent, the affectionate consort, the dutiful child, the attached kinsman, the faithful friend, the vigilant and revered pastor, the meek and docile disciple.

In pursuance and in support of this sentiment, we may refer to our Saviour’s parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where the former is represented in a future state as *seeing* and *knowing* “in Abraham’s bosom” the *beggar* who had been known to him on earth. [Luke 16:23]

In this indeed, as in other parables, I apprehend that we may discern some ornamental and illustrative circumstances of a figurative nature, which were introduced by our blessed Lord as useful in setting forth the important truths that he intended to convey under this parabolic imagery; but which ought not to be strictly interpreted or literally understood. But, without adverting specifically to these circumstances, it may be observed, that this consideration does not preclude the application that I am now making of the parable: which appears to be framed on the assumption, that after this life we shall retain the faculty of recognizing the persons who have been previously known to us.

True indeed it is, that in this particular instance the faculty is attributed to a person in a state of torment: but nothing occurs to warrant the supposition, that it will be limited to such persons, and not extended to others in a state of bliss. On the contrary, the information, which we possess concerning the faculties of the blessed, is in favour of the opposite supposition. For it does not appear that there will be a diminution of their faculties, intellectual or corporeal: rather it appears, that their faculties will be improved and strengthened, for what is “sown in weakness” will be “raised in power” [1 Cor.

15:43]; so that they will be enabled to see and know objects surpassing the compass of the abilities which they now possess. Thus the faculty of seeing and knowing again those whom they have previously known will probably be perpetuated: and, as the faculty will exist, our former considerations have perhaps shewn that there will probably be opportunities for exercising it, opportunities especially acceptable to the affectionate and feeling heart.

The Reunion of Friends in Heaven

There is a void in born affection's heart,
Which yearns to be supplied. On God's high will
Though it repose submissively, yet still
Of those, who bore in its regards a part,
The cherished forms it holds, as in a chart
Depicted, hoping He may yet fulfill
Their restitution. Pardon it, if ill
Lurk in that hope, Great Father! True thou art;
Thou sayest the just shall bliss in fullness prove,
And, what thou sayest, thy bounty will provide:
And yet meseems the blissful souls above,
The sense of earth's sweet charities denied,
Might feel a craving in those realms of love,
By angel hosts and patriarchs unsupplied.

Section VI: *The recognition of each other probable, from what is revealed concerning the future feelings of the Blessed.*

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which has been just noticed in illustration and support of our views concerning the faculties of the blessed, may be further noticed, as tending to shew, that we shall probably carry with us into another world the same *feelings* with respect to our *relatives* and *connections*, by which we have been affected in this world.

Together with a pungent sense of his own condition, the rich man retained a lively interest for those whom he had left behind him, his "five brethren" in his father's house. [Luke 16:28] Why should we imagine such an interest to be peculiar to those in his condition? Why should we not suppose that, when the righteous are awakened from the sleep of death, they with a personal feeling concerning their own state will unite a reviving feeling concerning the happiness of their relatives and friends? Why should we not suppose that that feeling will be subsequently retained with respect to their former connections, so far as shall be consistent with their own promised blessedness; a limitation to which we shall presently have occasion to give more particular attention? And why should we not suppose that, retaining the feeling, they will enjoy a fit field and scope for its exercise?

That the righteous will enjoy *occasions* for the exercise of such a *feeling* of interest concerning their former relations and friends, is rendered highly probable by a particular which I would now mention, as revealed in the *future condition* of the blessed.

Of the Christian gifts and graces there is one especially distinguished by its property of perpetual endurance. "Charity never faileth." [1 Cor. 13:8] Throughout the future existence of the blessed, the love of God and the love of man, the two principal departments of this comprehensive grace of "charity," will still remain in active operation.

Now of the love of man the most delightful exercise is that which arises from intercourse with those, with whom we are associated by the nearest and the dearest ties. The natural, the domestic relations are the most precious forms under which charity takes possession of the soul: and together with, and next to, these, the almost natural connection of early, long-continued, persevering, reciprocal friendship. It appears, therefore reasonable to suppose, that these relations will be prolonged into a future state, as modes for the exercise of never-failing charity: the rather, forasmuch as that grace will be deprived of an extensive sphere of its activity in this life by the absence of all poverty and affliction.

Doubtless in the company of other "just men made perfect," with whom they are to be thenceforth associated, though they may have been beforehand personally unknown, the blessed will experience, by the bounty of the All-Good, no want of sufficient objects of their affection. Still we cannot but deem it probable, that, so far as shall be consistent with their exalted, purified, and spiritual nature, those peculiar objects of affection, on which more than on any other earthly object, the heart now delights to dwell, in pursuance of its natural, innocent, virtuous, praiseworthy feelings, and in obedience to the will and word of its Creator, will not be withheld from it hereafter. The sweet sympathies of parental, of filial, of fraternal, may I not add of conjugal affection? (for although in that life "they neither marry nor are given in marriage," yet I see not reason to disbelieve the perpetual existence of affection derived from that holy estate in this life); the sweet sympathies, I say, of domestic affection, together with those of friendly and social intercommunion, will probably be continually maintained; and contribute to constitute there, as here, some of the most precious objects for the exercise of the "charity which never faileth"; the most enduring and the most unperishable, as well as the greatest and most excellent, of the graces and gifts of God.

Charity Never Faileth

What joy more pure, or worthier of our kind,
Than when the good, the wise, the pious meet,
By bond of kindred, love, or friendship sweet
Link'd in a fellowship of heart and mind,
And rivalry of worth! Nor shall they find
More joy from aught in that celestial seat,
Save from God's presence, than again to greet
Each other's spirits, there to dwell combin'd
In brotherhood of love. The golden tie,
Dissolv'd, again unites. Ordain'd to train
Earth's tenants for their dwelling in the sky,
Faith lost in sight, and hope in joy, shall wane,
Their task fulfill'd; but heaven-born charity,

God's greatest gift, shall still in heaven remain.

Section VII: *Probability confirmed by the general tenor of Holy Scripture – Question as to the change in the Blessed.*

The foregoing considerations are submitted to the judgment of the reader, as the principal intimations whereby the word of God appears in my mind to give probability to the opinion, that those, whom the blessed have known in this life, they will know also in the life that is to come.

The probability hence derived is great; as great as could with reason be expected from any intimation short of a distinct and positive affirmation of the fact. The intimations come before us under the various forms, as casual circumstances seem to have suggested, of *exhortation to comfort* under the loss of departed friends; of *incidental observations* on the *future relation* of persons at present placed in connection with each other; and of references to the future *society, faculties, and feelings* of the blessed. An additional argument accordingly arises from each of the several forms, under which the doctrine appears to be inferred. Nor do I think its probability much, if at all, lessened by a reflection, that the manner in which these intimations are given, seems rather to *assume* the fact of such knowledge existing, than expressly to affirm it. Perhaps, indeed, the general silence which is for the most part to be noticed on the subject in Holy Writ, may be taken for an admission that the knowledge in question will exist. For the supposition is so congenial with our best feelings, and appears to be so natural a consequence of the general doctrine of the resurrection, as clearly set before us by the word of God, that we might be expected in the common course of things to take it for granted, unless it were contradicted or opposed by that word, or unless it were encumbered by great and insurmountable objections.

If it be asked, then, whether this opinion is at all contradicted or opposed by the word of God? I answer that I am not aware of any such impediment to its reception. If it be asked, whether it is encumbered by any serious objections? I answer to the same effect. But, as there are *two questions*, which may perhaps raise some scruple in a reflecting mind on a consideration of this subject, I would detain the reader by bestowing on these questions some degree of attention.

First, is the opinion, that the blessed will know each other again in a future life, *at variance* with the *declaration* of St. Paul, that at the resurrection “we shall all be *changed.*” [1 Cor. 15:51]

To me such variance is not perceivable. For the *change*, of which the Apostle speaks, is to be understood as having regard to the future immortality and incorruptibility, to the glory, power, and spirituality of the bodies with which the blessed will be invested, in comparison with their present condition of corruption, mortality, dishonour, weakness, and earthiness. But, though thus improved and elevated, their bodies, so far as we are informed, will not be “changed” with reference to the distinguishing characteristics of individuals, so as to preclude a mutual recognition. In the particulars, which are specifically stated concerning the change, there is nothing which requires us to understand, that the removal of marks of individual distinction will

be a part of it: whereas there are particulars enough specified to explain the change, without causing us to have recourse to the removal of these marks, and to the construction, as it were, of totally new individuals. This may be illustrated by the occurrences at our Lord's Transfiguration, when, as St. Luke informs us, "the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering" [Luke 9:29];" but they who were "eye-witnesses of his majesty," while impressed with a lively sense of his "honour and glory," were not prevented thereby from recognizing their Lord [2 Pet. 1:16, 17]: and so we presume, that when "he shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," [Phil. 3:21] that change will not operate so as to prevent those which were formerly known from being then recognized by others.

That the *self-consciousness* of each individual will be retained, notwithstanding the marvelous changes of body and of soul to which he will have been subject, and that it will be made an occasion of his future misery or enjoyment, is unquestionable: and it is only in harmony with what we know on this subject, to suppose that a change, which will not preclude the power of *identification* with individuals as to *themselves*, will not preclude the power in its application to *others*.

Besides that, after all, great as the change in question may, and undoubtedly will be, it will probably not in effect surpass the *changes* which in this life are continually occurring to the *same individual*, and which nevertheless do not prevent his recognition, however altered through the successive stages of infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and old age; nay, even of death itself. As amid the decay and decrepitude of declining years we call to mind the same individual whom we have formerly known in the opening bloom, the full-blown beauty, the confirmed lustyhood and fruitfulness, of each previous successive period; and as the marks for recollection are still capable of being discerned even when the last great change of mortality has passed upon the individual, and the animated body has become a lifeless gorse: so we may be hereby prepared to expect that it may be recognized again, when "dishonour and weakness" shall have been succeeded by "glory and power," and "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality."

The Changed Body Recognized

And shall I e'er again thy features trace,
Beloved friend; thy lineaments review;
Yes: though the sunken eyes, and livid hue,
And lips comprest, have quenched each lively grace,
Death's triumph; still I recognize the face
Which thine for many a year affection knew:
And what forbids, that, cloth'd with life anew,
It still on memory's tablet hold its place? —
Tho' then thy cheek with deathless bloom be sheen,
And rays of splendour wreath thy sunlike brow,
That change I deem shall sever not between
Thee and thy former self; nor disallow
That love's tried eyes discern thee through the screen
Of glory then, as of corruption now.

Section VIII: *Question as to the consciousness of the Blessed concerning the absence of their friends.*

We will now turn our thoughts to the other question to which I alluded, as throwing a possible obstacle in the way of a persuasion that the blessed will recognize each other in a future life: namely, whether the supposition is not at variance with the idea of the perfect happiness, which is prepared for the blessed in a future state? For, whatever enjoyment may be derived from their consciousness of the presence of those of their relatives and friends, with whom they will become conversant, will not a counterbalancing pain be felt from the *consciousness* of the *absence* of others, and of their consequent abandonment to a state of suffering and woe?

An answer to this question will perhaps be furnished, and the difficulty be removed or at least abated, by such considerations as the following.

First, although a recognition of each other may take place among the blessed to a certain extent, it does not perhaps follow, that with *all* of those, who have been objects of their affection in this world, their connection and acquaintance must necessarily be *renewed* in another. "In my Father's house," saith our blessed Lord, "are many mansions." [John 14:2] The lot of some may be cast in some of these "mansions," and of others in others; and hence there may be room for imagining, that some are in a state of happiness, though they be not brought to the knowledge of their former relations and friends.

But supposing that those, who are not brought to the knowledge of the blessed as being in a state of happiness, must be understood to be in a different state, the circumstance of their being removed *out of the sight* of their former friends, will probably cause their fate to be contemplated with less lively and pungent feelings.

Further, the lapse of *time* will probably cooperate with absence, and eventually obliterate the remembrance of them from the memories of the blessed.

And it may be, since God's rational creatures are dear to him according to their moral excellence, and since the blessed in the future state will be "like God"; it may be, that their *affection* towards those, who in their earthly relation were naturally the objects of it, will be regulated by this likeness to the Divine nature; and that, whilst it will be ratified, confirmed, and strengthened with respect to such as partake of their Father's blessing, and are objects of his love, it will be *annihilated* with respect to those who are banished from his presence, and pronounced aliens from his affectionate regard.

This *difficulty* indeed applies, though in an inferior degree, to the doctrine of the *punishment* of the wicked in a general way.

The angels of heaven know the judicial sufferings of their companions who sinned: nevertheless their own condition is one of pure felicity. The spirits of just men made perfect will in all probability know, that a large number of their fellow creatures is doomed to misery. But the effect of this knowledge on their feelings will doubtless be so overruled by the Providence of God, that it shall not disturb their happiness: and such, we may likewise presume, will be the result, as to the knowledge which they may possess of the condition of their own immediate earthly connections. If requisite for the

fulfilment of their joy, God himself, we may humbly presume, will *providentially interpose*; and counteract by some merciful agency of his own any tendency to the diminution of the delight, which he has prepared and promised for them that love him.

Heaven's Bliss Not Affected by Thoughts of Hell

Fear not, the prospect of the realms of woe
Shall mar thy bliss, or thence sad thoughts arise
To blunt thy sense of heavenly ecstasies.
There, if thy heart with warm devotion glow
Meet for thy place, 'twill solace thee to know
No friend of thine, 'mid those keen agonies,
In that dark prison house of torment lies;
For none is there but is of God the foe.
An Alien thus from thee. The ties of blood,
And earth's most sacred bonds, are but a twine
Of gossamer, compar'd with what is ow'd
To Him, the Lord of all! On Him recline;
He shall thy heart of every care unload,
He bid thy day with cloudless luster shine.

Section IX: *Conclusion. –Utility, and salutary effects, of such an inquiry as the present.*

In bringing the inquiry, which has been prosecuted through this chapter, to a conclusion, I wish it to be understood by the reader, that it has been by no means my desire to occupy his mind with a far-fetched and strange topic; or to induce him to indulge in groundless imagination, or in idle and unprofitable speculations concerning it. On the contrary, presupposing in the minds of most reflecting persons a disposition to think on these things, I have endeavoured to direct my own and the reader's thoughts into the *proper channel*, so that we may be regulated in our conclusions by the *revelation* imparted to us by the written word of God, from which I have made it my business to adduce such passages as seemed calculated to throw light upon the question, and to give of them a just and satisfactory exposition.

At the same time it appears to me, that an examination of the subject conducted in a spirit of devout submission to that word; – and it is in such a spirit that every religious examination ought to be conducted, and, unless so conducted, it cannot lead to ultimate satisfaction in the discovery of the truth; – but a modest and devout examination of our present subject by the light of Scripture appears to me, not innocent only, but *profitable* and *improving*. For supposing us to arrive, as by this inquiry I think we have arrived, at the probable conclusion, that the blessed, who have been known to each other in the present life, will also be known to each other in the life to come, the persuasion may be judged calculated to produce some such effects as the following.

Whilst we are endeavouring to improve our own hearts and lives, it may concur with other motives in animating us to strive after the *improvement* of the hearts and lives of those with *whom we are connected*, from an anticipation of the joy which we shall experience in the consciousness of their being admitted to everlasting happiness in pursuance of such our exertions. Thus St. Paul laboured among his brethren in Christ,

that he might “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”; esteeming them his “hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing, at the coming of the Lord”: an example, worthy of being followed, as especially by every minister of Christ, so also in a due degree by every Christian.

It may animate us to practice towards those who fall within the reach of our benevolence, the *poorer* and more *afflicted* of our fellow creatures, acts of *mercy* and *loving kindness*: looking forward to that day, when we shall be brought together with them into the presence of our Judge; and shall hear with inexpressible delight the sentence of the Redeemer: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

It may animate us to cultivate and exhibit towards all those with whom we are connected by any natural or social bond those *kindly feelings*, the recollection of which on our future reunion will be calculated to enhance our delight; and the cherishing and the exercise of which will be for ever among the occupations and enjoyments of that blissful state.

It may animate us to bear with *contented* minds a temporary *separation* from our *departed friends*: to “sorrow not for them that are asleep in the Lord, even as others which have no hope”: but to cast our thoughts forward to the time, when we shall meet them again, and be reunited in the presence of the Lord; and so, as the Apostle exhorts, to “comfort one another with these words.”

Lastly, it may animate us to *bless* and *praise* our gracious GOD, “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort,” for this among numberless other topics of consolation under a Christian’s worldly afflictions, for this among numberless other anticipated ingredients of heavenly blessedness.

Indeed, whatever may be the sufferings of his faithful servants here, and whatever may be the particulars of their joy hereafter, the former, we know, will altogether cease, and the latter will be fully accomplished: so that even should that future recognition and reunion among the blessed, which we esteem highly probable, nevertheless not be brought to pass, we may be sure that they will be admitted to “fullness of joy in the presence of God.”

But as the Scripture appears to make this particular event probable, we may properly cherish the anticipation: and the anticipation should lead to a grateful acknowledgment of his goodness, who will probably thus contribute to the felicity of the blessed by their enjoyment in heaven of the society of those whom they have known and loved upon earth; and who probably by these means, and, if not by these, yet certainly by others, such as he knows to be sufficient for their “perfect consummation and bliss,” “will wipe away all tears from their eyes”; and “make them drink of the rivers of his pleasure” in that “continuing city,” where “there shall be no more death; neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.”

Heaven’s Joys Perfect

’Tis naught but bliss in that celestial seat!

Where GOD, essential GOOD, resides, and where
Thron'd with the LAMB he deigns his joy prepare
For those that love Him, floods of pleasure meet.
The deep delight of that secure retreat
No uncongenial thoughts annoy; nor care,
Nor pain, nor grief, but bliss alone is there,
Pure, undisturb'd, undimm'd, divinely sweet.
Pure as the snow that lies on Lebanon,
Wreath above wreath in virgin brightness pil'd;
Calm as yon lake, when not a breath hath blown
On its clear crystal; cloudless as the mild
Moonlight, o'er heav'n a robe of silver thrown;
Sweet as the slumber of a sinless child.

Chapter IV – Different Degrees of Happiness Among the Blessed

Section I: *Introduction.* – *Statement of the case of the sons of Zebedee, and doctrine of different degrees of future happiness founded thereon.*

An inquiry into the future happiness of the blessed should seem to be incomplete and defective, if it omitted a notice of the doctrine, which ascribes DIFFERENT DEGREES of happiness to DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS. An examination of this doctrine, therefore, will naturally follow our previous course of inquiry. The doctrine also is one of no trivial interest and moment in itself; but is calculated, I apprehend, in a high degree, to elevate the affections, and stimulate the exertions, of those Christians, who may be impressed with a well-founded and deep persuasion of its truth.

It is accordingly my purpose in the following chapter to consider the doctrine which teaches that *different degrees* of happiness will be bestowed on the blessed in a future life; and to state the *scriptural ground* on which I apprehend that it may be established. And then, supposing the doctrine to be true, it is my purpose to state the *qualifications* requisite in those who would attain to a superior degree of happiness: and the *principles*, according to which it will be bestowed by the bounty of God on the disciples of the Redeemer. May God, by his holy Spirit, dispose the minds both of the writer and the reader to a serious contemplation and a corresponding application of the truth, “that when Christ who is our life shall appear, then may we also appear with him in glory.”

There are various independent passages in Holy Writ, which, in the progress of our examination, will be found to give support to the doctrine in question. But there is *one passage* in particular which appears to me possessed of special and singular efficacy in deciding the question before us in the affirmative. I propose, therefore, in the first place to state that passage, and to examine it more particularly; and then to confirm the doctrine conveyed in it by other corroborative observations.

The passage to which I allude is contained in the twentieth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and, with some unimportant variations, in the tenth chapter of St. Mark's. In the former it runs in this wise. “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus

answered, and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father.” [Matt. 20:20–23] The reader will observe that I give the concluding clause without the additional words which are inserted into our translation, and which are indicated to be not in the original Greek by the Italic character, the customary index employed by our translators on all such occasions. Accordingly the sentence correctly runs, “to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but,” that is, except to those, “for whom it is prepared of my Father.” This correction does not immediately affect the particular subject of our present inquiry. But as, in referring hereafter to the text, I would wish to refer to it in its most correct form, I judge it advisable that this matter should be adjusted in the outset.

For a clearer understanding of this narrative, and for its application to our present inquiry, I now proceed to observe, that the royal character and state which had been ascribed to the promised Messiah by the Hebrew prophets, and the image of a kingdom under which his future dispensation had been foreshadowed, had impressed the Jews with an expectation, that our Lord, when he made his appearance upon earth in fulfillment of their national predictions, would establish a *temporal sovereignty* over the world. His apostles partook in this general prepossession and anticipation of their countrymen. They expected that the establishment of an earthly sovereignty would consummate his pretensions to superior wisdom, authority, and power: and they were with difficulty at length induced to surrender the flattering vision, which they had persisted in fondly cherishing during their Lord’s ministry, that a season of national prosperity would succeed to that of their national humiliation and depression; and that the Messiah, however he might delay the restoration, would nevertheless eventually “restore again the kingdom to Israel.” [Acts 1:6]

Meanwhile that they, who had been the chosen, the constant, and generally the faithful attendants of their Lord through his lowlier course, should be partakers of his elevation, and be admitted to a proportionate share in the glory of his royal dignity, was a reasonable, perhaps, at least a natural expectation. The highest stations of honour in his kingdom, a nearer approach to his royal person, a more intimate communication of the imperial favour of their Lord, would naturally be an object of ambition with them all.

Such in effect was the consequence of their expectation of his temporal sovereignty. Hence the repeated disputes and strifes among them all in general, “which should be accounted the greatest” in their Master’s anticipated kingdom. And hence in particular the petition of two of the most favoured of their number, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, as recorded in the narrative before us: a petition expressive of their own most fervent desire, for from St. Mark’s relation it appears to have been urged by themselves in person, and pressed upon the notice of the Saviour by the additional most lowly solicitation of their mother Salome, who, as St. Matthew relates, “came to him worshipping him,” and beseeching that he would “grant that these her two sons might

sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on the left,” or, according to the usage of worldly potentates, in the two stations of the *highest power* and *dignity* “in his kingdom”.

To this petition of the two brethren their Lord made answer by a question on his part, relative to their qualifications for the solicited preeminence. “Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” alluding to that bitter cup of suffering, of which, in compliance with the awful dispensation of divine mercy and wisdom, he was about to drink: and to that agonizing baptism, wherewith he was soon to be baptized in his own blood. “They say unto him, We are able:” they probably did not perceive the full import of the question; or they presumed too confidently on their own resolution and strength.

But our Lord accepted this tender of their readiness to partake of his sufferings; and ratified it by a prediction of its fulfilment in their future destiny: “Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.” But at the same time, adopting the phraseology of their petition, and leaving the proper exposition of it, and its liberation from the erroneous notions concerning a temporal kingdom, with which it was encumbered in the minds of the Apostles, to future opportunities, he added, “but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom,” or except to those for whom, “it is prepared of my Father.” They appear to have supposed that the distinction which they sought would be bestowed by their Master absolutely and arbitrarily, in pursuance of a feeling of partiality and fondness for his followers, and in compliance with the importunity of friends and interested advocates, after the manner of earthly sovereigns: he gives them to understand, that the distinction which he should in reality bestow, would be bestowed upon very different principles, and agreeably to the general rules adapted to the perfections of the divine nature, and prescribed by God for the distribution of future glory and happiness.

And now, that we may apply this to our immediate purpose, the language employed by our blessed Lord in this memorable dialogue, appears clearly to warrant the opinion, that *different degrees* of felicity and glory are prepared for those, who shall be admitted to the fruition of the Godhead in a future state of existence.

The two brethren, we have seen, petitioned of their Lord to “grant that they might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on the left, in his kingdom.” Concerning the nature of the kingdom, in which these stations of preeminence were desired, he made no remark, leaving that to be unfolded in due time more clearly to their apprehension. But the existence of *such stations* as they desired, *stations* of distinguished and preeminent *dignity*, *his answer* appears to *recognize*: for he distinctly speaks of those to whom “it should be given,” and “for whom it was prepared,” “to sit on his right hand and on his left,” in contradistinction as it should seem from those, to whom other stations would be assigned in his realm of glory. If the two apostles sought by their petition, as unquestionably they did seek, stations of dignified preeminence above their fellows in the Messiah’s kingdom, though of that kingdom itself they mistook the nature; the answer of their Lord appears to be a manifest indication, that in his kingdom, rightly understood, stations of superior dignity would be assigned to some individuals over

others, more nearly approaching to his own unparalleled state of elevation, and more intimately partaking of the enjoyment of his presence.

The Ambitious Disciples

Rash was the tongue, and unadvisedly bold,
Which sought, Salome, for thy favour'd twain
Above their fellows in Messiah's reign
On right, on left, the foremost place to hold.
More rash perhaps, and bolder, that which told
Of pow'r the Saviour's bitter cup to drain,
And, passing stretch of human strength, sustain
His bath baptismal. Lord, by thee enroll'd
Thy servant, grant me thy Almighty grace,
My destin'd portion of thy griefs to bear,
Ev'n what thou wilt! But chiefly grant, thy face
Within thy glory's realm to see, where'er
Most meet thy wisdom deems; whate'er the place,
It must be blest, for thou, my God, art there.

Section II: *Doctrine of different degrees of future happiness, corroborated by other arguments.*

The doctrine, that there will be different degrees of happiness and glory in the world to come, may be thought to derive satisfactory testimony from the foregoing declaration of our blessed Lord to the sons of Zebedee. It is *confirmed* by the following *corroborative* arguments, which are now to be submitted to the reader's consideration.

First, it is *analogous* to the constitution and course of nature, as settled by the will of divine Providence; wherein we perceive diversities of gifts, of administrations, and of operations; differences in the talents entrusted to different agents, and corresponding differences in the employments whereon they are exercised, and in the rewards wherewith they are recompensed: so that by the variety, which we actually perceive in the present state, we are prepared for a similar dispensation in the future.

It is *agreeable* also to the anticipations of *reason*, that from the Being, who is an all-wise, an all righteous, an all-bountiful Judge and "Rewarder of them that diligently seek him," [Heb. 11:6] the most diligent, the most laborious, the most arduous, the most persevering efforts should be rewarded by the most distinguished success: that they who have "let their light shine" most brightly "before men, that they may see their good works" most conspicuously, and most worthily "glorify their Father which is in heaven," [Matt. 5:16] should be admitted to the highest degree of favour by their heavenly Father: that them who have most delighted to "honour" God, "God" should be most delighted to "honour" [1 Sam. 2:30]: that they, who have "hungered and thirsted" most intensely after their inheritance of righteousness and glory, should be most abundantly "filled." [Matt. 5:6]

But what is of still more importance is the fact, that this notion of different degrees of glory in a future state, indicated, as we have seen with much clearness by our Lord in

his dialogue with the sons of Zebedee, is in conformity with *other intimations* also in the WORD OF GOD.

True, indeed, it is, that the happiness of that state is sometimes represented generally, and without any distinction among those who shall be advanced to its inheritance, under the lofty figures of “a kingdom,” [Matt. 25:34, Heb. 12:28, James 2:5] and “a throne,” [Rev. 3:21] and “a crown of life,” [James 1:12] “of righteousness,” [2 Tim. 4: 8] and “of glory” [1 Pet. 5:4]: and we doubt not, that the very lowest inmate of that blissful abode, the very “doorkeeper,” if I may so express myself, “of the house of God,” [Psalm 84:10] will have ample reason to “rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great will be his reward in heaven.” [Matt. 5:12] Still, while all who are admitted into that blessed state will doubtless find a sufficiency of fruition in “the joy of their Lord,” [Matt. 25:21, 23] the Scriptures seem to sanction the opinion, that a preeminence of bliss and glory will be allotted to some over others.

If, on “the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, he will render unto every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life”; and “glory, honour, and peace shall be recompensed to every man that worketh good” [Rom. 2:7, 10]: it seems to follow from this rule of distribution, that the *most abundant glory* will be awarded to those, who by the *most patient continuance* in well-doing have been the most diligent in seeking it, and have *wrought good the most abundantly*.

If at “the judgment seat of Christ every one shall receive according to the good that he hath done in the body” [2 Cor. 5:10]; it should seem that the *blessing*, which every one is to receive, will be in some way *apportioned* to the *good* which he has done: conformably to the rule which is elsewhere stated by the Apostle, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” [Gal. 6:7]; and again, “He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” [2 Cor. 9:6]

When the Saviour saith, “Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” [Rev. 22:12]: it should seem to be his purpose to announce, that a scale of *recompense* will be established ascending with the qualifications of those who are the objects of it; and that the *reward* of every man will be *regulated* by his previous *work*: conformably to the Apostle’s position, that “every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.” [1 Cor. 3:8]

Not that any ground is here intended to be supplied for the notion, that whatever be the works of the best of men, or whatever be their reward, the former can establish a claim to a meritorious recompense, or the latter is to be regarded as the price of their deservings. Doubtless the reward is in every case to be ascribed to the free grace of God and the sole merits of the Redeemer. Nevertheless, speaking of the consequences of this dispensation of the divine love, we judge it to be the doctrine of Holy Writ, that the grace of God, for the sake of the Redeemer’s merits, will apportion his reward according to the deeds of his servants.

In answer to the question of Peter, “Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?” the Redeemer said unto his disciples, “Verily I say unto

you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." [Matt. 19:27–29] Thus again then it seems to be announced, that the future *reward* shall be regulated according to the *character* and *deeds* of the person to be rewarded: that *greater sacrifices* for Christ's sake shall receive a *greater remuneration*.

Meanwhile, in further proof of the different degrees of dignity and bliss in a future state, let it be observed, that our Saviour on several occasions speaks, as of "the *least*," so of "the *greatest* and the *chief* in the kingdom of heaven" [Matt. 18:4, 5:19, 11:11]: and that the "authority" described by him in the parable, as conferred, emblematically of the future reward of fidelity, upon the servant who was constituted ruler "over *ten* cities," appears to indicate a condition of preeminence over him who was made ruler only "over *five*." [Luke 19:17, 19]

Further, "our vile bodies," we are told, "shall be changed "at the appearance of the Saviour, and "shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body," in incorruption and honour: but we are likewise told, that "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory; *so also* is the resurrection of the dead." [1 Cor. 15:41, 42]

And, since "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead," shall be "as the angels of God in heaven," [Matt. 22:30] this *similitude* appears to imply different distinctions and degrees of rank among "the spirits of just men made perfect"; after the manner of the gradation which prevails among that "innumerable company" [Heb. 12:22] of the Lord's hosts, ascending from the lowest order of "ministering spirits," [Heb. 1:14] up to the princes of the celestial hierarchy, "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." [Col. 1:16]

Degrees of Heavenly Happiness

If loftier posts superior state declare;
More virtuous acts if ampler needs requite;
If brightest crowns on noblest prowess light,
And well-sown fields a fuller harvest bear;
If thrones, dominions, pryncedoms, powers there are,
Which God's inferior hosts excel in might;
If day's bright orb outshine the lamp of night,
And Hesper's radiance the remotest star:
Then shall the younger brethren of the sky,
If right I scan the records of their fate,
In varied ranks of social harmony
God's mount encircle. Glorious is the state
Ev'n of the lowest there: but seats more nigh
The Sovereign's throne his greater servants wait.

Section III: *Qualifications for higher degrees of happiness.*

Having considered the grounds of the doctrine that there will be different degrees of happiness and glory in the life to come, I pass on to consider the QUALIFICATIONS requisite for those, who would attain the highest degrees of honour in the Messiah's kingdom.

And this consideration is the more deserving of our regard, and the more indispensable for every Christian, because, whilst the qualifications requisite for attaining the most eminent honours are in the most eminent degree requisite for those, who aspire to sit at the right hand and at the left of the Saviour in his kingdom, the diligent pursuit and the acquisition of the *same qualifications*, though in an inferior and less perfect degree, are necessary for those also, who will be admitted to fill the lowest stations in his kingdom. The holy city must be approached by the way of holiness. Superior degrees of excellence will be advanced, so we may humbly believe, through the merits of the Redeemer, to superior degrees of the Divine favour, and will occupy a preeminent station in the "many mansions of his Father's house." [John 14:2] But the highway to it is one which the unclean shall not pass over: and "there shall in no wise enter into the city any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." [Rev. 21:27]

With respect then to the *qualifications* in question, they have been anticipated in a *general* way in the foregoing section, where notice has been taken of higher degrees of happiness, as the consequence of the most diligent, laborious, arduous, and unwearied *efforts* in the service of God: of the most intense *thirst* after the promised inheritance of glory; of the most patient *perseverance* and the most abundant *fruitfulness* in well doing; of the greatest *sacrifices* for Christ's sake.

But for a fuller exposition of the subject, I would again advert to our Lord's dialogue with the sons of Zebedee. For therein our attention is directed to the *nature* of the *qualifications* requisite for those disciples of Christ, who desire to be admitted into the Saviour's future kingdom, and especially for those who aspire to stations of preeminence in that kingdom, by his question addressed to the two brethren, whose request has been made the foundation of our present reflections. "Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask." Their view had been limited to the wished-for object, instead of being extended to the qualifying means. To these latter, therefore, their thoughts were to be drawn by the ensuing inquiry, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

The "cup" of the Saviour, as we have already had occasion to notice, was that *bitter cup* of suffering which he was about to drink for man's salvation in compliance with the awful dispensation of the divine will: and the Saviour's "baptism" was that *agonizing sacrifice*, wherein he was soon to be baptized in his own blood. And the question in its *literal* and *primary* bearing points to those losses and privations, to those mortifications and distresses, to which his first followers were exposed: when they were called on to "forsake houses, and brethren, and sisters, and father, and mother, and wife, and children, and lands for his sake and the gospel's" [Mark 10:29]; or, as elsewhere expressed, "for the kingdom of God's sake" [Luke 18:29]: and when, for his sake also and the gospel's, they were called on to suffer persecution under its various forms of false

accusations and injurious revilings, of stripes, and bonds, and imprisonment, and banishment, and finally of a violent and cruel death. These are the persons to whom the language of our Saviour appears to point *literally* in the first place; and to indicate “*the martyrs of Jesus*,” [Rev. 17:6] “them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held,” [Rev. 6:9] who “loved not their lives unto the death,” [Rev. 12:11] but who “came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” [Rev. 7:14] as entitled to peculiar distinction “before the throne of God.”

But the qualification may be regarded perhaps as of a *less limited extent*, and may be understood to comprehend those disciples of Christ also, who in after ages, for the sake of Christ and his gospel, and of the kingdom of Christ, should suffer *persecution*: whether such persecution might lead to the actual laying down of their lives in defense of the Christian verity; or might stop short of the last extremity of suffering, and thus not render necessary a “resistance unto blood”. [Heb. 12:4]

Or, again, in more peaceable times of the gospel, the conformity to the Saviour, intimated by the figurative expressions of the question, may probably be accomplished, not so much by a resolute and constant endurance of the perils of persecution, as by a patient, composed, and devout *submission* to those *sufferings*, which are more usually incidental to our nature and to our present state of existence.

Or, again, it may be the will of God for such conformity to be manifested, less by the patient endurance of extraordinary persecutions, or even by that of any intense degree of affliction, than by a strict imitation of the *example of holiness* which Christ has left us, in the general course of our Christian duty, and in a punctual following of his steps, notwithstanding the temptations of our spiritual enemies, through the ordinary offices of a “sober, righteous, and godly life,” [Titus 2:12] and with the meekness and humility of “little children.” [Matt. 18:4]

Thus much indeed may be accounted certain, that an endeavour to “be *conformed* to the *image* of the Son of God” [Rom. 8:29] through this season of discipline and probation, in such respects and to such a degree, as the state of life, in which it hath pleased God to place us, shall render practicable, is a necessary qualification for all those his disciples, who desire to be admitted to a participation of his glory. And the more completely the Christian can succeed by God’s grace, in becoming “conformed to the image of his Son,” by submitting with devout resignation to severer trials, if in the good pleasure of God severer trials await him; or, if not, by “patient continuance in well-doing,” unterrified by the dangers, and unseduced by the allurements of the world; the more properly may he be said to “drink of the cup of which his Saviour drank, and to be baptized with the baptism which his Saviour was baptized with”: and the more lively hope may he reasonably cherish, that he is a partaker of the qualifications which are necessary for his admission to a station of eminence in his Saviour’s everlasting kingdom.

Conformity to Christ’s Example, the Way to His Glory

Seek thou the image of the Lord to share,

And thou shalt share his glory! If the will
 Of God require thee thy heart's blood to spill
 For him, a willing martyr; or to bear
 Thy cross, thro' sickness, penury, and care,
 And drink affliction's cup: or thro' the still
 Calm vale thy course of righteousness fulfil,
 And his mild yoke in love and pureness wear:
 Hold fast the Great Exemplar! — Blest are they,
 Who stem serenely the world's uproar wild,
 Nor fears dishearten them, nor pains dismay:
 Nor they less blest, who, humbly as a child,
 Far from the world pursue their blameless way,
 And by the world's allurements undefil'd.

Section IV: *Principle on which higher degrees of happiness will be bestowed.*

And this leads us to a consideration of the PRINCIPLE, according to which we presume that stations of eminence will be bestowed by the bounty of God through the merits and on the disciples of the Redeemer.

Here I would again advert to the circumstances of the narrative on which we have already commented; and to the condition of the two brethren, the sons of Zebedee, for whom, favoured as they were by the special notice and friendship of their Lord during his earthly ministry, special marks of distinction were sought by them and by their mother in their Lord's expected kingdom. Their request on this occasion was evidently founded on their experience of his previous personal regard: and it seems to have been their apprehension that the desired distinction would be conferred on those, whom their Lord should absolutely and arbitrarily choose to be the objects of it, actuated by a feeling of partiality and fondness for their persons, and induced moreover by the solicitations and importunity of their friends.

To correct this erroneous apprehension appears to have been our Lord's purpose; and to assure them that the preeminence in his kingdom would not be bestowed in such a manner and from such motives as they vainly imagined, but according to *certain rules* prescribed by *Divine Providence* for bestowing them. "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father." As if he had said, Such preeminence in my kingdom "is not mine to give," as you fondly suppose, by any absolute will of mine, or by any arbitrary selection of objects: by any undue partiality or fondness for the persons to be admitted; or out of any undue compliance with the earnest solicitation of others: "but" these rewards are regulated by the counsels of divine wisdom, which pervade the dispensation whereof I am the Mediator; and, accordingly, in the execution of my mediatorial office, it is mine to give it unto them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

Now, *who* are *they*, for whom future blessedness and glory are "prepared of his Father," he has not left us to conjecture, but has elsewhere graciously informed us.

They are they who *love God*: for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which *God hath prepared* for them that love him." [1 Cor. 2:9] They are they who *love their brethren*, the brethren of Christ as he is

not ashamed to call them, and practice towards them the offices of benevolence and love: for this shall be the language addressed to them by the King, the Son of man, when he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him; “Come, ye blessed of my *Father*, inherit the kingdom *prepared for you* from the foundation of the world: for inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” [Matt. 25:34, 40] They are they, who on their passage through this terrestrial scene *confess by their conduct* that “they are *strangers* and *pilgrims* on the earth,” and “desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for *he hath prepared for them* a city.” [Heb. 11:13, 16]

These are they, for whom is prepared of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ a future abode of blessedness and glory: these are they, to whom that abode shall be given by our Lord Jesus Christ himself. And according as they shall have been *more distinguished* for their love of God, for their gratitude to their Saviour testified by acts of benevolence to their brethren, and for their elevation above earthly things, and their devout aspiration after the things of heaven, the *more distinguished*, we may conceive, will be their *recompense*; the *brighter* will be “the *crown* of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give them in that day”; and the *nearer* will be their *approximation* to the glory of the Redeemer’s throne.

In short, they who shall have “drunk” most deeply “of the cup” of Christ, and shall have been most thoroughly “baptized with his baptism,” or, in other words, they who shall have been most perfectly “conformed to the image of the Son of God,” and shall have been thus best qualified to attain preeminence in his kingdom, are also they, for whom, after a course of love to God and man, and of affection for things above, the glory of “sitting on his right hand and on his left” is prepared of his Father: a glory, which is prepared and will be bestowed, not in compliance with any partial favour, but in pursuance of that principle of *divine wisdom* and *equity*, which provides that the *best things* be “prepared” for those who are *best prepared* to receive them; and which has been propounded by the Judge himself in his own impressive annunciation, “He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me; to give every man according as his work shall be.” [Rev. 22:11, 12]

Happiness Prepared of the Father for Christ’s Disciples

God for his own elect prepares a throne
Of glorious brightness: what the Sire prepares,
The Son bestows; so strict an union theirs,
In nature, substance, will, and actions one.
Would’st thou that throne of glory make thy own?
Purge off each earthly passion, that impairs
Thy heavenly likeness; to salvation’s heirs
Perform the angel’s part; and in the Son
Love God! The pure, the merciful, the meek,
The poor in spirit, and the rich in love,
Are his delight, his children. Such bespeak

The holy influence of the mystic Dove:
Such best below his heavenly kingdom seek,
Such come most near Him in the realm above.

Section V: *Proper effect of the foregoing reflections.*

The PROPER EFFECT of such reflections, as have been now occupying our minds, is that the disciple of Christ should be animated with a very fervent desire and longing to “sit on the right hand or on the left” of his Master in his kingdom of glory; and accordingly should strive to invest himself, through the power of the Spirit of Christ, with that “conformity to Christ’s image,” which will qualify him for such a station of dignity; and to acquire those Christian graces of piety, charity, and spiritual mindedness, for the possessors of which it is prepared.

The *desire of preeminence* is inherent in our nature; but the indulgence of it is too frequently an introduction to a disregard of the laws of God, to injurious treatment of our brethren, to a neglect of our blessed Saviour’s example, to an abandonment of the graces and virtues of the Christian life.

Even where no positive disobedience to God’s laws, and no positive injustice towards others, result from the indulgence of *temporal ambition*, its pursuits have a natural tendency to secularize the mind of its votary, to weigh and press it down to the things of earth, and to produce an indifference, a disinclination, a neglect, a contempt, for high and heavenly things.

Disappointment also and mortification are the frequent consequences of its efforts: whilst, after all, even where disappointment is avoided, and the object of pursuit is attained, how little satisfactory is the consequent enjoyment, how ill calculated to fill up the cravings of a reasonable soul, how transitory and perishable in its duration!

Nor is it without its accompaniment of painful reflection to the mind of a considerate and generous competitor, that whatever gratification prosperity may produce from the contemplation of his own success, very different feelings are the natural consequence of failure in those who have been defeated in the pursuit of the object, which he has succeeded in attaining.

But to the object of desire, which is held forth to the *Christian* disciple as the scope of *his loftiest ambition*, no such derogatory and depreciating considerations can be applied.

A desire to attain that object, as it is in full accordance with the will of our Creator, so does it lead, in its regular course, to an observance of his commandments, to active benevolence for our fellow creatures, to a cultivation of all Christian graces, to an imitation of the example of Christ.

The more perfect and earnest is our desire for such preeminence in Christ’s kingdom, the more is the soul elevated above a desire for earthly things, and partakes more of the nature of those high and heavenly things, to which it is lifted up and aspires.

The object itself is in its nature most valuable, in its duration eternal; calculated to satisfy the most longing hunger and thirst of a creature, formed in the image, after the likeness, of his Creator, and gifted with immortality.

And although the very notion which we are considering supposes a superiority of reward in some, and of course an inferiority in others, and although therefore we may ourselves not be foremost in the competition, or may be sensible that others have failed in their efforts for the most distinguished prize; yet will a sense of such difference not be liable to produce the painful effects, which follow the variable success of worldly competitions; for we may be sure that they, who earnestly strive after the highest stations, will not fail of obtaining a reward fully sufficient for their eventual satisfaction and delight: since of the “many mansions,” which our blessed Lord has assured us that there “are in his Father’s house,” however some may be distinguished by circumstances of preeminence, there is none which will not secure for its possessor an abundance of joy. If a brighter crown await the martyred Apostle, who “fought the good fight, and finished his course,” amid distresses, afflictions, and persecutions, “always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus,” and “alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake” [2 Cor. 4:10, 11]; still a crown of righteousness and of glory, incorruptible, eternal, and that fadeth not away, shall be given by “the Lord, the righteous Judge,” not to him, the martyred Apostle only, but “unto all them also, who love the Lord’s appearing” [2 Tim. 4: 6–8]; and who testify such their affection by “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” [Titus 2:12]

The Christian’s Aim

Aim at the highest prize: if there thou fail,
 Thou’lt haply reach to one not far below.
 Strive first the goal to compass: if too slow
 Thy speed, the attempt may ne’ertheless avail
 The next best post to conquer. Let not quail
 Eye, heart, or limb; but still right onward go:
 The Judge shall heed thee, and a crown bestow,
 And bid thy name the loud-voic’d herald hail.
 To the wish’d mark one racer only came
 Of old victorious: to entwine his brow
 One only grasp’d the crown, and won the game,
 Isthmian or proud Olympian. Happier thou
 Pursu’st thy course with no uncertain aim,
 Secure to seize an amaranthine bough.

Section VI: *Concluding Exhortation.*

I have thus completed the proposed inquiry concerning the *different degrees of happiness* which will probably be assigned to different individuals in a future state; and withal the general inquiry concerning the *happiness of the blessed*. And I would now conclude the subject, by leaving on the mind of the reader, in summary application of the whole, the INFERENCE with which St. Paul concludes his sublime argument to the Corinthians upon the resurrection of the dead. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

“Be ye steadfast, unmoveable,” in contemplating, in longing after, and in pursuing, “the things which God hath prepared for them that love him:” especially, “be ye steadfast, unmoveable,” in setting before your eyes, as objects of your never ceasing desire, the highest glories in the Redeemer’s kingdom.

“Be ye steadfast, unmoveable,” in endeavouring, by the grace of his Holy Spirit, to become qualified for partaking in those glories, by becoming conformed to the Redeemer’s image.

“Be ye steadfast, unmoveable,” in endeavouring to acquire that love of God and of your brethren in Christ Jesus, and that affection for things above, which are indispensable in those, for whom a participation of such glories is prepared of the Father.

Thus, “be ye always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”; but that it will be abundantly recompensed in that day, when the Son of man shall come in his glory to dispense “the kingdom prepared for the blessed of his Father from the foundation of the world” [Matt. 25:34]; when “every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour” [1 Cor. 13:8]; when “the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” [Matt. 13:43]; and “they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” [Dan. 12:3]

Christian Ambition

“Ambition is the vice of noble souls!”

If ’tis a vice, then let those souls beware,
Thrice noble tho’ they be, and passing fair
In the world’s eye, and high upon the scrolls,
Her favour’d minions where the world inrolla,
Lest it conduct to shame! Be thine the care,
Soldier of Christ, that nobler strife to dare,
Which the rash spirit of the world controls,
And makes ambition virtue! Be it thine
To win thy bright unfading diadem
By works of love! — Around *his* brows shall shine
In heaven from glory’s source the purest beam,
Whose aspect here, with beauty most divine,
Reflects the image of the GOOD SUPREME.

The following COLLECTS, selected from our Book of Common Prayer, are recommended to the notice of the Reader, as applicable to the subjects of the foregoing Inquiry.

PRAYER: *For the blessed hope of everlasting life through the Scriptures.*
(Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent.)

“Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that I/we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that by patience, and comfort of thy Holy Word, I/we may embrace, and ever hold

fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For grace in this mortal life, in order to the life immortal.*

(Collect for the First Sunday in Advent.)

“Almighty God, give me/us grace that I/we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility: that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty, to judge both the quick and dead, I/we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For God’s guidance through temporal things.*

(Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity.)

“O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; increase and multiply upon me/us thy mercy: that thou being my/our ruler and guide, I/we may so pass through things temporal, that I/we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ’s sake our Lord. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For God’s grace and defense in this mortal life.*

(Collect from the Post Communion.)

“Assist me/us mercifully, O Lord, in these my/our supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of thy servant(s) towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, he/they may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For love of God.*

(Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity.)

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man’s understanding; pour into my/our heart(s) such love toward thee, that I/we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that I/we can desire; through Jesus we Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For the enjoyment of God in Heaven.*

(Collect for the Epiphany.)

“O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; mercifully grant, that I/we, which know thee now by faith may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For love of God’s commandments.*

(Collect for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.)

“Almighty and everlasting God, give unto me/us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that I/we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make me/us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For obedience to God’s commandments.*

(Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.)

“O God, who declarest thy Almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity; mercifully grant unto that me/us such a measure of thy grace, that I/we, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made (a) partaker(s) of thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For good desires.*

(Collect for Easter.)

“Almighty God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; I/we humbly beseech thee, that, as by thy special grace preventing me/us thou dost put unto my/our mind(s) good desires, so by thy continual help I/we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For heavenly mindedness.*

(Collect for Ascension-Day.)

“Grant, I/we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as I/we do believe thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so I/we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For grace to follow the Saints in virtue and godliness.*

(Collect for All Saints’ Day.)

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant me/us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that I/we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For likeness to Christ in purity and glory.*

(Collect for the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.)

“O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; grant me/us, I/we beseech thee, that, having this hope, I/we may purify myself/ourselves, even as he is pure; that when ourselves, he shall appear again with power and great glory, I/we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*”

PRAYER: *For acceptance at the general resurrection.*

(Collect from the Burial Service, and from that on the day of King Charles's Martyrdom.)

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in him, shall not die eternally; who also hath taught us by his holy Apostle St. Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for them that sleep in him; I/we meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise me/us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. And teach me/us, O Lord, so to number mm/our days, that I/we may apply my/our heart(s) unto wisdom. And grant, that neither the splendour of any thing that is great, nor the conceit of any thing that is good in me/us may withdraw my/our eyes from looking upon myself/ourselves as sinful dust and as ashes; but that I/we may press forward towards the prize of the high calling that is before me/us with faith and patience, with humility and meekness, with mortification and self-denial, with charity and constant perseverance unto the end; that so, when I/we shall depart this life, I/we may sleep in the Lord; and at the general resurrection in the last day may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying, Come ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, I/we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*"

Musings on the Church and Her Services

"Her foundations are upon the holy hills: the Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God."
— Psalm 87:1, 2.

Musings On The Church And Her Services

The sonnets marked thus*, are added to those in the former editions.

I. To My Country's Church

As oft on thee, my country's CHURCH, I muse,
Thy form apostolic, thy scripture creed,
Devotions pure, and rites divine, the seed
Of heavenly graces, with what else may use
The aspiring soul the better part to choose;
I marvel much and grieve that aught should breed
Ill thoughts of thee in Christian men, by deed
Or word to mar thy beauty, and refuse
Thy chaste communion. Yes, my early vow
Was thine, and still thy sanctuaries I've trod
With honest zeal. Accept this tribute now
Of filial love, to thee, MY MOTHER, owed!
The stay and pillar of God's truth art thou,

And thou the temple of the living God.

II. The Church Apostolic

Some are there, nam'd of CHRIST, who think they see
His power conferr'd on one vicegerent man:
And some, who deem the scheme republican
More near akin to Christian liberty:
And some, who, as by light of history
The scripture records of God's will they scan,
From times primeval mark the self-same plan,
Which still prevails, my country's Church, in thee,
Of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. — Peace to all,
Who serve their God in love and faith sincere,
Howe'er they serve him! each must stand or fall
To his own Lord. For me, with godly fear
And awe I listen to my Saviour's call,
And here I seek, and trust I find him here.

III. True Knowledge

What Is True Knowledge? — Is it with keen eye
Of lucre's sons to thread the mazy way?
Is it of civic rights, and royal sway,
And wealth political, the depths to try?
Is it to delve the earth, or soar the sky?
To marshal nature's tribes in just array?
To mix, and analyze, and mete, and weigh
Her elements, and all her powers descry? —
These things, who will may know them, if to know
Breed not vain glory. But o'er all to scan
God, in his works and word shown forth below;
Creation's wonders, and Redemption's plan;
Whence came we, what to do, and whither go: —
This is TRUE KNOWLEDGE, and "the whole of man".

III*. The Name of God

[See Turner's History of the Anglo Saxons, vol. i. p. 212. 8vo.]
Choose we a Title, which may best beseem
The world's CREATOR! Shall his name declare
The *power* which made all living things that are?
The *providence*, whose eye's unerring beam
Sees all things at a glance, that naught may seem
Or dark or distant? The *protecting care*,
Which sleep impedes not, nor can time impair?
Or, sovereign over all, the *will supreme*? —
Well judg'd our Saxon fathers. To their sense
Appear'd the self-existing One endued
With all his nature's dread magnificence.
On all with awe they gaz'd; but most they view'd
With deep delight his moral excellence,

Their being's source and stay, and call'd him "GOOD".

IV. The Works of God

Trace nature's course; each step the Maker tells!
His majesty the glorious heavens declare;
His all-pervading breath the expanded air;
The roaring sea his might, which hers excels;
Earth and her sons, each vein with life that swells,
Sentient or senseless, his providing care,
Wise, powerful, good, which form'd them as they are,
And still preserves: a host of miracles,
Unnumber'd, vast, unceasing! Look around;
Look to thyself, thy frame, thy soul: the sign,
Where'er thou look'st, of reasoning power is found,
Forecasting will, intelligent design;
Deem nature not their author; nor confound
With his own laws the Lawgiver divine.

IV*. God's Providence

Father of All, the powerful and the good!
To thee the fowls of air for succour cry:
No seed time theirs, nor well-stored granary,
But thou sustain'st them with their daily food.
Nor less thy plants, a well-robed multitude,
Which spring to wither, and are born to die,
The field flow'rs grow beneath thy fostering eye,
With beauty, passing royal pomp, endued.
Father of all! On thee I east my care,
By doubts distracted, and by fears distrest
O, grant me strength thy righteous yoke to bear,
Thy will to do, on thy support to rest!
Whate'er we need, thy bounty will not spare
Those lower gifts, if first we seek the best.

V. The Book of God

The Book of God! And is there then a book,
Which on its front that awful title bears?
Who hold it, what high duty must be theirs,
And what high privilege, therein to look,
To read, mark, learn, digest! But in this nook
Of earth pent up, and blinded by earth's cares,
Its hopes and joys, if man the treasure dares
To scorn, such scorn shall the great Author brook! —
How long'd the holy men and prophets old
God's truth to see! How blest, whom He hath will'd
To see his truth in his own book enroll'd!
Pure is the Book of God, with sweetness fill'd:
More pure than massive unadulterate gold,
More sweet than honey from the rock distill'd.

VI. The Law

He spake in thunder, making the heart quail
Of conscious Israel, when from Sinai's height
GOD gave his LAW! And well might deep affright
The soul appall: for who, by nature frail,
Could do his bidding? Yet beneath the veil
Of shadowy type, and sacrificial rite,
And lofty prophecy, the illumin'd sight
Might far-off scenes of better promise hail.
Revere its voice; 'tis "holy, just, and good":
But look not there for pardon, nor confide
To 'scape its curse! 'Twas given that flesh and blood
Might stand condemn'd by that tribunal tried:
And, by the standard of God's justice view'd,
Man see his weakness, and forego his pride.

VII. The Gospel

'Twas music's voice, and thus the descant ran,
"Glory to God," what time to Bethlehem's fold
The Saviour's birth the angelic anthem told,
"On earth be peace, benevolence to man!"
And He, who then his earthly course began,
What did He else but that sweet hymn unfold,
A lovely sight for angels to behold,
And men to copy? — Duly as ye can
Transcribe the pattern! What the *Law* austere
Gave not, the GOSPEL gives: by truth portray'd
Life's perfect model; and the radiance clear
Of brighter light; and stronger grace to aid;
And hope, the debtor's prison-house to cheer,
The debt all cancell'd, and the ransom paid.

VIII. Scripture Difficulties

Yes, 'tis a mine of precious jewelry,
The Book of God; a well of streams divine!
But who would wish the riches of that mine
To make his own; his thirst to satisfy
From that pure well; must ear, eye, soul, apply;
On precept precept scan, and line on line;
Search, ponder, sift, compare, divide, combine,
For truths that oft beneath the surface lie.
Yes; there are things which he who runs may read:
Nor few there are, which yield a harder part,
To mark, discern, and know. With cautious heed,
'Tis God's command, survey thy safety's chart;
Lest arduous things, distorted, death-ward lead
The mind unlearned, and the unstable heart.

[2 Pet. 3:16]

IX. Scripture Guides

“How can I sound the depths of sacred lore
Without the guidance of a friendly hand?” [Acts 8:30, 31]
Such Candour’s meek confession, as he scann’d
Thy volume, Seer evangelic, of yore.
And Candour still, ’mid truth’s exhaustless store,
Will his own powers unapt to understand
Much of God’s word untaught. ’Twas Christ’s command,
His preacher’s voice the sound of truth should pour
On listening years; “and I with you remain
Till the world’s end!” And tho’ the world to turn
From sin, his truth in one recorded strain
Subsist, for living lips the many yearn
Their guides; and He, who works nor wills in vain,
Still wills that some should teach and some should learn.

X. The Lord’s Day

Hail to the day, which He, who made the heaven,
Earth, and their armies, sanctified and blest,
Perpetual memory of the Maker’s rest!
Hail to the day, when He, by whom was given
New life to man, the tomb asunder riven,
Arose! That day his Church hath still confest,
At once Creation’s and Redemption’s feast,
Sign of a world call’d forth, a world forgiven.
Welcome that day, the day of holy peace,
The LORD’S OWN DAY! to man’s Creator owed,
And man’s Redeemer; for the soul’s increase
In sanctity, and sweet repose bestow’d;
Type of the rest, when sin and care shall cease,
The rest remaining for the lov’d of God!

XI. God’s Sabbath

Call’d by the Church, before God’s holy shrine,
Oft as the Sabbath-morn with sacred ray
Warns me his courts to tread, I humbly pray,
That for time past forgiveness may be mine,
Whene’er I’ve err’d, and he will still incline
My heart no more from his command to stray;
But holy keep and unprofan’d the day,
First blest and hallow’d by the voice divine.
Are there who deem a less commanding law
Alone gives sanction to the Christian’s rest?
Be theirs their fond conceit! Be mine to draw
The mind to reverence, by God’s Church confest,
His own commandment: and with holy awe
Revere the day by man’s Creator blest!

XII. The House of God

It is the Sabbath bell which calls to pray'r,
 Ev'n to the HOUSE of GOD, the hallow'd dome,
 Where he, who claims it, bids his people come,
To bow before his throne, and serve him there
With pray'rs, and thanks, and praises. Some there are,
 Who hold it meet to linger now at home;
 And some o'er fields and the wide hills to roam,
And worship in the temple of the air!
For me, not heedless of the lone address,
 Nor slack to greet my Maker on the height,
By wood, or living stream; yet not the less
 Seek I his presence in each social rite
Of his own temple: *that* he deigns to bless,
 There still he dwells, and *there* is his delight.

XIII. Social Worship

There is a joy, which angels well may prize;
 To see, and hear, and aid God's worship, when
 Unnumber'd tongues, a host of Christian men,
Youths, matrons, maidens join. Their sounds arise,
"Like many waters:" now glad symphonies
 Of thanks and glory to our God; and then,
 Seal of the social pray'r, the loud Amen!
Faith's common pledge; contrition's mingled cries.
Thus, when the Church of Christ was hale and young,
 She call'd on God, one spirit and one voice:
Thus from corruption cleans'd, with health new strung,
 Her sons she nurtur'd. O, be theirs the choice,
What duty bids to worship heart and tongue,
 At once to pray, at once in God rejoice!

XIII*. Spiritual Communion

O, it is full of joy and pleasantness,
 The sabbath bell, which to God's house of pray'r
 On God's own day his people bids repair;
Aid at his throne to seek, their sins confess,
To speak his praises, and his bounty bless,
 And hear his holy word! For with them there
 God dwells, and gives them through his Son to share
Health from the Spirit of his blessedness.
But grieve not thou, as if from grace divine
 Secluded, nor thy loss too deeply rue,
Whom NEEDFUL CAUSE, not choice, forbids to join
 The great assembly! With devotion true
Be thou in spirit there, and doubt not thine
 Shall be a part of God's celestial dew.

XIV. The Cathedral

Oft on the HALLOW'D PILES I love to gaze,
Which our forefathers built: whether the round
Deep arch, and massive pillars quaintly crown'd,
Of NORMAN grandeur; or, of home-born praise,
The lighter forms which grac'd PLANTAGENET'S days,
High-pointed vault, and shafts in clusters bound;
Or where the trellis'd network richly wound
O'er TUDOR'S roofs and low-brow'd portals strays.
Gaze on them! They are worthy, and declare
A brave munificence! Nor let thy heart
Indulge the niggard thought, that aught is there
Of vain profusion. Noble was the art,
And nobly us'd, which gave their GOD to share
From his own gifts a large and liberal part.

XV. Choral Service

And well I love the organ's notes to hear
Sounding aloud thro' all the sacred pile,
High altar, vaulted nave, and pillar'd aisle:
Link'd with that sound if voice of anthem clear
Alone, or chant alternate win the ear,
Or mingled swell of many tongues; the while
The high-roof'd tower, and arches' lessening file,
Send back the pealing thunder. Heav'n's blest sphere
Resounds with song and harpings: and I deem
The rich-ton'd organ and symphonious choir
Give taste of heaven. Devotion's self may seem
From music's flame to catch a warmer fire;
And wafted by her breath, as on the steam
Of fragrant incense, to the skies aspire.

XVI. The Village Church

Dear is the ancient VILLAGE CHURCH, which rears
By the lone yew, on lime or elm-girt mound,
Its modest fabric: dear, amid the sound
Of bells, the grey embattled tower, that wears
Of changeful hue the marks of bygone years;
Buttress, and porch, and arch with mazy round
Of curious fret, or shapes fantastic, crown'd;
Tall pinnacles, and mingled window tiers,
NORMAN, or misnam'd GOTHIC. Fairer spot,
Thou giv'st not, ENGLAND, to the tasteful eye,
Nor to the heart more soothing. Blest their lot,
Knew they their bliss, who own, their dwelling nigh,
Such resting place; there, by the world forgot,
In life to worship, and when dead to lie.

XVII. Parochial Service

And dear it is, within the village fane
To go and worship! Simple tho' it be,

Whate'er of pray'r, or holy mystery
To cleanse or strengthen, God hath will'd ordain;
And priest, and sacred truth's unsullied strain,
Are here: nor wants their voice of psalmody,
Rude, but not coarse; then sweetest, when most free
From art, and led by yonder youthful train.
God owns the worship, which his laws approve,
Whether mid populous city, nor the less
In lonely hamlet. Lift thy heart above,
And prosper! He religion's costly dress
Rejects not, worn in meekness, faith, and love;
And he the lowlier village rites will bless.

XVIII. The Church's Ceremonial

'Tis not that thou art robed in gorgeous sheen,
Thy native charms outshone by jewels' glare:
For one there is, that thus o'ersteps thee far,
Who sits upon her mountain, as a queen.
'Tis not that thou all unadorn'd art seen:
For, far beyond thee, some again there are,
Who count it beauty when they nothing wear,
Unclad, or clad in raiment poor and mean.
Not for such cause, lov'd Mother, I admire
Thy features, drest anew in elder days
By holy men: but that thy meet attire
Thy form with decent dignity arrays;
Where simple neatness, modest grace, conspire
To deck thy beauty to thy Sovereign's praise.

XIX. The Lord's Prayer

All thanks to Him, who taught us how to pray!
So taught we beg, our heavenly Father's name,
Dominion, will, may have their rightful claim,
Be hallow'd, serv'd, obey'd: that He each day
May give us needful food, and drive away
Unkindness, danger, sin; and thus proclaim
His kingdom, power, and glory. Do not blame,
If, whom she knows "the life, the truth, the way,"
On his blest word with reverential awe
And grateful faith the Church hath aye relied,
And led and modell'd by his perfect law
Her meek devotions! Lord, by thee supplied
With light, still near the throne of grace we draw,
Thy name our safeguard, and thy word our guide!

XX. The Apostles' Liturgy

If, by the rule Apostolic, to plead
For all that God holds good, and deprecate
What He holds evil; if with our estate
Our brother-man's to blend, and intercede

For friend and foe, but chief that we may lead
 In peace, and rul'd by God's crown'd delegate,
 Lives pure and holy; if to dedicate
Thanks for past good with pray'r for present need;
Be welcome worship: then content with thee,
 My country's Church, I join the voice to raise,
Collect, and psalm inspir'd, and litany,
 And hymn of glory. Ever-varying phrase
God seeks not; pleas'd, when from corruption free,
 And cloth'd with truth, his Church her homage pays.

XXI. Prayer in Christ's Name

Ask you perchance, the throne of grace before,
 Why still her pray'rs the Church delights to frame
 Of varied form, but gives to each the same
Essential closure? 'Tis that from his store
Of boundless bounties God delights to pour
 All good on man in his Beloved's name.
 Who prays for aught, in CHRIST must urge the claim:
Who calls on God, must by the Son adore
The Father. "Blessings of my Father seek,
 Seek in my name, and have whate'er ye need!" [John 14:13; 16:23]
"Thank God for all things, but your praises speak
 In Jesus' name!" Thou, who for us didst bleed, [Eph. 5:20, Heb. 13:15]
On thee we cast us, worthless all and weak,
 Thy might acknowledge, and thy merits plead.

XXII. Devout Worship

Nay, sit not there unheedful, nor profane
 With attitude of cold indifference
 God's worship! Sighs of contrite penitence,
The lowly pray'r that seeks relief from pain,
The hymn of praise, thanksgiving's festive strain,
 Claim they no seemlier posture? True; pretense
 May mimic, but devotion's heartfelt sense
Devotion's guise will choose. The sainted train,
Apostles, psalmists, prophets; Lord of all,
 The Prince of glory, when our form he wore,
With bended knees submissive stoop'd to call
 To heaven's high King: yea, heaven's crown'd saints, before
The throne of God, in sign of worship fall,
 Their crowns cast off, and prostrate there adore.

XXIII. The Christian's Belief

What God for man's instruction deigns reveal,
 His guide to truth, and love, and holiness,
 We hold that man should hear, believe, confess;
Not slight, nor spurn, nor thanklessly conceal
The heavenly treasure; but with earnest zeal
 Strive for the faith, before the Church express

His hope assur'd of promis'd blessedness,
And with his lips his heart's persuasion seal.
On those, who sunk in heathen darkness pine,
 No doom we dare pronounce. But Christian light
Brings Christian duties. Where the sunbeams shine
 Of Gospel truth, who wish for heav'n's delight
Must own and serve the triune name divine,
 And plead for health the incarnate Godhead's might.

XXIV. Psalmody

Are sounds of music heard among the blest?
 And does in heav'n the Church triumphant raise,
 Circling the throne of God, the voice of praise?
Well may her voice on earth, ere she her rest
From warfare gain, be thus to God address:
 While Sion's songs, the Psalmist's heav'n taught lays,
 And hymns, the firstfruits of the Gospel days,
Her thanks, and joy, and holy hopes attest.
There are whose voice by strains less sweet is shar'd
 Me the pure songs, by Siloa's echoes caught,
Suffice. Nor deem I that the pledg'd regard,
 To thee, my Mother, ow'd, permits us aught
But what thou vouchest! song of gifted bard,
 Rich in God's truth, and by his Spirit taught.

XXV. The Churchyard

As by the CHURCHYARD yew my evening way
I take, and meditate the sacred muse,
 To catch thy notes my ears unbidden use,
Sweet Elegist, sublimely solemn GRAY!
Yet ah! thy pensive moralizing lay
 Were to my heart more grateful, if thy views,
 Profusely rich in earth's autumnal hues,
Show'd more of heaven's enlivening vernal day.
"The paths of glory lead but to the grave" —
 Lo, from the grave fresh paths of glory rise!
Reviving thence the "flower" shall breathe and wave
 With purer sweetness and with lovelier dies;
And the bright "gem," releas'd from ocean's cave,
 Adorn with sun-like ray its kindred skies.

XXVI. The Tombstones

From stone to stone my eyes successive roam,
 And note what tenants underneath them lie.
 Each sex is here; all ages, infancy
To second childhood: some the stately tomb,
Some hold the osier'd earth's contracted room,
 Signs of their former fortunes: low and high,
 All ranks and states of earth's society,
All earthly kindreds find a common home.

Hark, from the grave with still small voice they call,
And thus the moral of their stories preach!
“We all were born, we lived, we died, and all
Shall rise to judgment. How on earth by each
His task was done, and what shall each befall,
Inquire not now; that day alone can teach!”

XXVII. Church Bells

What varied sounds from you grey pinnacles
Sweep o'er the ear, and claim the heart's reply!
Now the blithe peal of home festivity,
Natal or nuptial, in full concert swells:
Now the brisk chime, or voice of alter'd bells,
Speaks the due hour of social worship nigh:
And now the last stage of mortality
The deep dull toll with lingering warning tells.
How much of human life those sounds comprise;
Birth, wedded love, God's service, and the tomb!
Not heard in vain, if thence kind feelings rise,
Such as befit our being, free from gloom
Monastic; pray'r, that communes with the skies;
And musings mindful of the final doom.

XXVIII. The Village Clock

Hark, 'tis the Village clock! It bids the swain,
As breaks the morning, to his labour haste
A-field: and now the hour of noon's repast
The glad stroke tells, short season to remain,
For the next note of time is heard again
Sign of returning toil, until at last
It's welcome sound bespeaks the day is past,
And sends him home releas'd from care and pain,
Till the next morning dawn. Thus hour by hour,
And day by day, time creeps unresting by,
Mark'd by the sound from the low village tower,
Our workday's guide; on days, beyond that lie,
Note we meanwhile its everlasting power,
For time's the passport to eternity.

XXIX. The Parsonage

See you that house beneath the church-topp'd hill?
An elm o'erhangs the porch, and round it twine
The honeysuckle and sweet eglantine:
And there the mullion'd windows linger still,
Reliques of elder days, the moulded sill,
And pointed arch, where creeps the cluster'd vine:
And flowers, and fruits, and well-trimm'd turf combine
To show domestick taste and rural skill.
There lives the Village Pastor! Mark him there!
From weightier duties for a season freed

Of books and pastoral calls, his willing care
The garden claims, to check the trailing weed,
And prune the fruit branch. Breathe a passing pray'r,
And bid the good man and his works "God speed!"

XXX. The Man of God

He's CHRIST'S ambassador, that man of GOD,
Steward of GOD's own mysteries! From on high
His warrant is: his charge, aloud to cry
And spread his Master's attributes abroad,
His works, his ark of mercy, and his rod
Of justice; *his*, to sinners to supply
The means of grace, and point how they may fly
Hell-flames, and how heaven's pathway must be trod.
Hold him in honour on his works' account,
And on his Master's! Though a man he be,
And with his flock partake corruption's fount,
Holy and reverend is his ministry:
And, hark! a voice sounds from the heavenly mount,
"He, that despiseth *you*, despiseth ME!"

XXXI. The Gospel Ministry

Him beautiful upon the mountain's head, [Isa. 52:7, Rom, 10:15]
Like "the bright morning-star, day's harbinger," [Milton]
The feet of them, who to their country bear
News of release for slaves to bondage led!
How beautiful on Judah's hills the tread
Of feet to Sion sent, to minister
Good tidings of great joy, and cry to her,
"Joy, for her warfare is accomplished!" —
Still are ye beautiful, ye feet, that bring
On God's high embassy the authentic sign
Of peace. 'Tis yours, God's light abroad to fling,
That men may see his Glorious Gospel shine:
'Tis theirs to greet you heralds of heav'n's King,
Divine your mission, as your charge divine.

XXXII. The Priesthood

Take not the holy office, till the call
Of God has made thee, Aaron-like, be known
His minister! Tho' round thy loins be thrown
Zeal, as thou deem'st to gird thee, and the pall
Of sanctity; yet not for these, for all
Thy private worth, does the great Master own
Thy PRIESTHOOD, till the honour'd claim be shown
By lawful charge and hands episcopal.
God is a God of order, nor approves
Confusion in his Church! Whate'er he wills,
He freely does, but still by laws he moves,
Laws of his own! — Among the vales and hills

Its stated course the heaven-fed river roves:
He marks its path, and he its channel fills.

XXXIII. The Inward Call

Who gives to man sufficiency? and whence
Proceed the holy wish, the good design,
The righteous deed, save from the source divine,
The Spirit of God? — If thine the heart-felt sense
Of holy love; if, cautious of offence,
Thine be the wish with knowledge meet to join
True zeal of God, and so to serve his shrine;
Fear not to own thy humble confidence,
God's Spirit moves thee to the work! — No bold
Presumptuous bearing, no intemperate flame,
No voice internal loud and uncontroll'd,
God or his Church expects; but the just aim
Sincere, to feed, not unprepar'd, his fold
With food celestial, and adorn his name.

XXXIV. Pastoral Studies

Who would teach others, first himself must learn
The lore he fain would teach them. Who would teach
High lore, surpassing human wisdom's reach,
For grace must beg God's wisdom to discern,
Nor fail God's sacred book by day to turn,
By night: yet think not 'twill God's pow'r impeach,
If weapons, meet to pierce the hidden speech,
He fetch from learning's armory, nor spurn
Aid from well-cultur'd reason. Truth divine
Comes not with light intuitive to guide
The man of God; tho', duly sought, 'twill shine
His polar star. Then may his vessel ride
In safety on: nor from its course decline
Astray, nor founder in the darkling tide.

XXXV. Pastoral Recreations

What fitter, man of God, thy thoughts to share,
To charm, nor less improve, a vacant hour,
Than thy great Master's works? — The wild fieldflower,
Insect or bird, that gaily wings the air,
And what earth holds of wonderful or fair,
Invite thee forth; to thread the coppice bower,
Pierce the deep glen, or climb the rocky tower,
Wave-hollow'd bank, thick wood, or mountain bare.
Rich is the volume of the word of God:
Rich is the volumes of his works! At home
Be *that*; be *this* thy cherish'd search abroad!
Like Noah's dove, there see each fine-wrought plume
God's love attest: each plant, like Aaron's rod,
With signs of might and thought paternal bloom!

XXXVI. The Preacher

Who would not choose the PREACHER'S words sincere,
Which truth unmaim'd and unadulterate deal
To willing ears and minds? With prudent zeal,
Temperate, tho' earnest; grave, but not austere;
Strong, without coarseness; without meanness, clear;
Firm, to denounce God's wrath; but meek to feel
For human frailty; pitiful, to heal
The wounded spirit, and the weak to rear
Gently with mild endurance! Wouldst thou find
Wild rhapsody, the gesture strange, the start
Ecstatic, apt the better sense to blind?
Go, elsewhere seek it! *His* the soberer part,
Like Paul to satisfy the reasoning mind,
And "draw by cords of man" the obedient heart. [Hos. 11:4]

XXXVII. Preaching Evangelical

Say, what is GOSPEL-PREACHING? – 'Tis to show,
How from his Father's love by wilful deed
Man fell; and how, for ransom'd man to bleed,
The Son of God took in this world of woe
Our flesh, and quell'd by death our mortal foe:
And what his Spirit's aid; and whither lead
His laws; his means of grace; and what the meed
Of faith, matur'd by love; and what we owe
The THREE in ONE! This knowledge, passing reach
Of man's device or angel's, broad and deep,
God by his Son deliver'd; this to teach
Mankind, he charg'd the shepherds of his sheep:
If man or angel other Gospel preach, [Gal. 1:8]
He "sows the wind, and shall the whirlwind reap." [Hos. 8:7]

XXXVIII. Preaching Un-Evangelical

"To shut the gates of mercy on mankind," [Gray's Elegy]
By God's mere will excluded, save a few,
Will they or not, who pass selected through;
To stint the stream of heavenly love; to bind
By strong necessity the human mind
To sin and endless woe; to hold to view
The God of all perfection, as untrue,
Unjust, unpardoning, pitiless, unkind:
Is THIS to PREACH the GOSPEL? — In thy word
Not such, great God, thy loving mercy's call
These eyes o'erjoy'd have seen, these ears have heard.
Thy name is "LOVE." By our forefathers' fall, [1 John 4:8, 16]
All sinn'd and died. Forgive me if I've err'd,
Deeming thy Son a ransom paid for all! [1 Tim. 2:6]

XXXIX. The Poor Man's Friend

“He was the POOR MAN'S FRIEND! He sought and knew
Who needed succour, and would fain incline
His ear and hearken. From his care benign
The parent help, the child instruction true,
Deriv'd: on age a cheering gleam he threw:
The sick man's wounds he bath'd with oil and wine:
On sin denounc'd the scourge of wrath divine,
But more the meek with words of comfort drew.”—
You've read his epitaph: do you ask his name?
Full many a POOR MAN'S FRIEND does Britain own
Among her pastors; though from public fame
Remote they labour, mark'd by God alone,
And those they tend; but mid the world's acclaim
The Lord's “Well done” shall make their labours known.

XL. The Pastor's Help Meet

And no kind HELP dost thou, my country, know,
MEET for such Pastor? — Yes, 'tis she who bears
Her more than portion in his household cares;
Wife of his bosom, friend in weal or woe,
His children's mother! As thro' life they go,
Knit in the bonds of holy love, 'tis hers,
As woman may beseem whose meekness fears
Offence, his charge to deem her own, and sow
Instruction, comfort, round. Alas, she needs
Comfort herself too oft, when left to feel
Want link'd with widowhood. Her gentle deeds
Bear then in mind; to her the kindness deal,
She dealt to others; bind the wound that bleeds,
And soothe the heart which none but God can heal!

XLI. The Pastor's Widow and Orphans

Yes, she must go, and from their place of birth
Her children with her; from that pleasant spot,
Where Providence had cast their goodly lot,
The Pastor's dwelling. They the tale of mirth
No more shall pass around you Christmas hearth;
No more shall they on yonder grassy plot
Sport the long summer eve: for he is *not*,
The husband, father! — Truly they on earth
Are strangers, pilgrims they! Their wonted home,
Yes, they must leave; and what may then betide,
O God, thou knowest. O, as hence they roam,
Mayst thou watch over them! Mayst thou provide
Friends, shelter, food, and comfort yet to come,
The ORPHAN'S Father, and the WIDOW'S Guide!

XLII. The Ark of Christ's Church

Rent were at once the floodgates of the sky,
And burst the great deep's fountains. All was dark,
Throng'd with the forms of drowning men: and, hark,
O'er the wide earth one agonizing cry!
Then mid the swelling surge, careering high,
Fraught with the world's remains, the Patriarch's ARK
Went o'er the waters: for that wondrous bark
Liv'd in the safeguard of Jehovah's eye.
Past is the plague! But still o'er earth the flood
Of sin reigns paramount: still God provides
An Ark of health for those who walk with God;
His power secures it, and his wisdom guides.
Faith clings obedient to that lov'd abode,
And o'er the waves the life-fraught vessel rides.

XLIII. Holy Baptism

To the enliv'ning font the sponsors came,
Bearing their infant charge; the white-rob'd priest
Stood there beside. Then with meek pray'r address
To the Great Sire the promis'd boon to claim,
The babe, unconscious yet of sin or shame,
With greeting kind the holy man embrac'd,
And on his brow the cleansing water cast,
And spake the mystic words, the TRIUNE NAME.
The sight was common: but withal a sight,
So sweet, so lovely, to behold a son
Of God adopted by his own blest rite —
Methought that Seraphs round about the throne
Might gaze thereon o'erjoy'd: and with delight
Hail the newborn a brother of their own.

XLIV. The Baptized in Health

Why not before the Church, with reverence due,
As she enjoins, thy infant consecrate?
Why not God's rite in God's house celebrate?
Why public forms withdraw from public view?
Why ancient rules displace for fancies new?
Why tempt the man of God to desecrate
Religion's face august, and violate
His own high charge, nor hold allegiance true?
Alas! that fashion thus the palm from sense,
From order, right, and decency should win!
That holy rite should breed the law's offence!
And when we pray, that, as our babes begin
So they their lives may lead, we date it thence,
Where our own act is not exempt from sin!

XLV. The Baptized in Danger

Sickness is on thy infant: great the need,
And urgent! Haste, thy parish pastor crave

To visit thee, the sinking babe to lave
With rite baptismal. For God's grace to plead
Few words suffice, when danger prompts to speed.
 He breathes the hallowing pray'r; in the pure wave
 Bathes the sin-born; and speaks the words, to save
Effectual, symbol of thy Christian creed.
Now peace be thine! For his beloved Son
 On thy regenerate infant God hath smil'd.
Lives he? Before the Church give God his own:
 Or, if the Almighty Father claim his child,
Yield him content! To heav'n his soul hath flown,
 An angel spirit, cleans'd and undefil'd.

XLVI. Spiritual Life

He brooded o'er the waters at the first,
 The Spirit of Life, o'er waters void and dead:
 And, as he brooded, formless chaos fled,
Life glow'd, and nature into being burst.
And tho' the ground, by ban primeval curst,
 Sin's penalty, hath thorns and thistles bred;
 With beauty still is nature's face o'erspread,
Fann'd by his breeze, and by his sunshine nurst.
'Tis so with man. In his baptismal hour
 The Spirit bathes and raises him from death:
And tho' the weeds of sin with noxious power
 Mar the celestial plant, the Spirit's breath
Rears with its genial warmth the languid flower,
 And fruits of Eden ripen on the heath.

XLVI.* A Birthday Thought

It is my NATAL DAY! Another year
 Is register'd against me in the account
 Of time to me entrusted, and the amount
Of that rich talent for my trial here
By one more year diminish'd. As more near
 My reckoning draws, does evil's inborn fount
 Within me more subside, and paramount
To the world's love, the love of God sincere
Reign arbiter? — O, may each year, each day,
 By him vouchsaf'd, to him its tribute pour,
And his free love with answering love repay:
 Worthless, alas! Yet such as may for store
Of blessings giv'n meet gratitude display,
 Till the night come, and I can work no more!

XLVII. Childhood Trained

As wrapt and hidden in the stone's embrace
 The future statue lies, yet undefin'd;
 Till the nice chisel clears the form design'd,
The trunk, the moving limbs, the speaking face

Developes: so instruction's hand must trace
The intellectual form, which lies enshrin'd
Mid nature's rude materials; and the mind
Invest with due proportion, strength, and grace.
God to thy teaching delegates the art
To form the future man: the care be thine,
No shape unworthy from the marble start,
Reptile or monster; but with just design
Copy the heavenly model, and impart,
As best thou canst, similitude divine.

XLVIII. The Catechist

'Twas a wise rule, which in the Church's face
The Pastor bade collect his youthful fold,
Instruct, examine, to their view uphold
Their wants, their blessings, and their means of grace:
And what their Christian creed; and how their race
To run of Christian love. Such lessons told,
Their elders listening round, to truth a hold
Might give more sacred from the holy place,
Mix'd with God's word and pray'r. And oft I've thought,
If well the value of that pastoral scene,
Where the good man with care paternal taught
God's will, with cheering word and smile between,
The Preacher's voice supplies, tho' haply fraught
With eloquence and powerful reasoning keen.

XLIX. The Catechism

That call not education, which decries
God and his truth, content the seed to strew
Of moral maxims, and the mind imbue
With elements, which form the worldly wise.
So call the training, which can duly prize
Such lighter lore, but chiefly holds to view
What God requires us to believe and do,
And notes man's end, and shapes him for the skies.
This praise be thine, that by the truth set free
Thou still hast trod the right way and the best,
City of God, my Mother! yea, of thee
"Excellent 'things are said'"; nor this the least,
That thou thy children giv'st the path to see
Of life, and lead'st them by their God's behest.

L. Parochial Instruction

Seek we the parish school! I love to view
The village group, as one large family,
In seemly guise arrang'd: the sparkling eye
To mark, and eager tone, to feeling true,
Quick to embrace and utter learning new;
The seed deep sown, in time to flourish high,

Of virtuous deeds, and social harmony;
But chiefly how by pure religion's clue
The mind is forward led. This gives a price
 To mental, moral, training. All beside
Is doubtful good, perchance the source of vice
 And thoughts presumptuous. Knowledge oft with pride
Puffs up the mind, and worldly lusts entice,
 Unless God's truth man's erring nature guide.

LI. The Baptized Adult

What God ordains, it fits not man to slight!
 Thy parents, doubtful of the power to save,
 Or heedless, kept thee from the cleansing wave.
More wisely thou by God's appointed rite
Resolv'st to arm thee for thy ghostly fight;
 By pray'r, with faith and penitence, to crave
 The heavenly grace; and thus the combat brave,
Born of the Spirit, in the Saviour's might.
Now thou art Christ's own soldier. Now thy foes
 Will haply more assail thee, as the fiend,
When own'd of heav'n from Jordan's flood he rose,
 Thy Saviour tempted. O, with him to friend
Beneath his banner march, whate'er oppose,
 Faithful; and conquest on thy steps attend!

LII. Confirmation

Pledg'd was their faith in infancy: but now
 When opening years the reasoning soul reveal,
 Before yon altar's rails behold them kneel,
Ingenuous youths and maidens! There they bow
The modest head, and there the early vow
 With words of solemn CONFIRMATION seal,
 And on their brow the hand CONFIRMING feel
Of CHRIST'S high minister. O GOD, do Thou
Save and defend thy children! Gracious Lord,
 Father, thy hand be o'er, thy Spirit's grace
Be ever with them, and thy powerful Word
 Their light and leader! — Awful is the race
Before them set, with toil and peril stor'd,
 And steep the pathway to behold thy face!

LIII. The Lord's Supper

“Take, eat and drink, and thus remember me!”
 Remember thee! Alas, the mighty debt
 Of heavenly love that man should e'er forget!
Ah! how can I my Lord and Saviour see,
Reclining at the board, and on the tree
 Suspended! bow'd with agony, and yet
 Breathing sweet love for men against thee set,
Thine enemies! and not remember Thee? —

Duty most bounden, *thus* on thee to think,
 Thus, as thou biddest! Privilege divine,
Pledge of thy boundless love, to eat and drink
 Thy body and blood beneath the bread and wine!
O, ever thus, till worn-out nature sink,
 That duty, Lord, that privilege be mine!

LIV. The Wedding Garment

Spread is the table of the Lord, and there,
 Who will, may go and freely feast: but high,
 Bethink thee well! and full of dignity
That table; nor befits it *them* to share,
Whose hearts with malice swell, or pine with care
 For earthly toys, or grovel in the sty
 Of sensual pleasure, or God's truth decry,
His name, his word dishonour! O, beware!
Approach not rashly; but about thee throw
 The WEDDING GARMENT, and present thee drest
In faith, and love, and penitence; that so,
 The King, when he surveys each bridal guest,
The appointed sign of fellowship may know,
 And welcome thee to that celestial feast.

LV. The Scrupulous Christian

And wilt thou from Christ's table turn away? —
 True: if profanely, thoughtlessly, thou come,
 Well mayest thou shrink from God's chastising doom:
But what, if God's command thou disobey,
Self-will'd, self-led, injurious? — True: thy way
 Is mark'd by weakness, sin: yet there is room
 For such; for where's the just that may presume,
Safe in unsullied righteousness, to stay? —
Come then, with mind enlighten'd to perceive,
 Discern, and value, that most heavenly feast!
Come, with repentant heart, resolv'd to leave
 The sins it feels and grieves for! Do thy best:
And He, who calls thee, will thy wants relieve,
 Thy sins remit, and give thy conscience rest!

LVI. The Humble Communicant

“Why at Christ's Table dost thou bend thy knee?
 Is it before a wheaten God to show
 Will-worship rash; profane?” — Ah! deem not so:
For not in form corporeal here is He,
Who sits inthron'd aloft in majesty.
 Deem it a sign, with what devotion glow
 Our hearts for Him, who feeds us thus below;
How worthy Christ, and how unworthy we!
If there be yet a sign of love more meet
 For love divine sent forth our souls to heal,

Such sign, O Lord, be ours! Prepar'd to eat
Thy mystic feast, behold, we meekly kneel:
O grant us, grant us, at thy mercy seat
The sense, our bodies show, our hearts may feel!

LVI.* The Poor Blind Man

Dark were his eyes from childhood! Poor and blind
He has travell'd on, till on his patient head
Their gather'd frosts have fourscore winters shed:
But still God's word he hears, and in his mind,
What can he more? digests; nor fails to find
Each day of rest the churchward path unled,
And share, whene'er dispens'd, the living bread,
Pleas'd with God's bounty, to his rod resign'd.
Blind though he be, deem him not wholly so,
Who knows the way of heavenly truth to scan!
A day perchance may come, when thou shalt throw
Thoughts of regret on life's exhausted span,
Ah, blest with sight in vain! and long to know
The soul's enlightening of that POOR BLIND MAN!

LVII. The High Festivals

'Tis a benignant feeling, which delights
In seasons mindful of events gone by,
Dear as they past, and precious. But more high
The sense, and holier, which the Church incites,
To mark with FESTAL DAYS, and solemn rites,
The annual course of God's great mystery,
"The Word made flesh." On that with piercing eye
The angels gaze! On that the Church invites
Her sons to linger! As thereon we muse,
On each strange scene, or altogether wove
A wondrous tissue, like the braided hues
Which blest the Patriarch's sight, with eye above
Uplifted, faith the dear memorials views,
Signs of past mercy and enduring love!

LVIII. The Saints' Day

Not that to them we pray, whose work is done;
Not that through them, who ran their earthly race
Frail like ourselves, tho' strong in heavenly grace,
For aid we supplicate our race to run:
Not for such cause the Church each SAINTED SON
Thankful commemorates; but as guides to trace
More clear our passage to the appointed place,
Proofs of the battle fought, the victory won.
Lov'd names! Apostles in communion bright,
The Martyrs' noble brotherhood, and they
"Whose praise is in the Gospel!" But with might
Divine or mediatorial to array

Created beings — 'twere to choose dark night
To walk in, and reject the golden day!

LIX. Daily Prayers

A law there was, such law our fathers knew,
Believing God that he delights to dwell
With his assembled Church! the parish bell
Each morn and eve the gather'd people drew
God's word to hear, their daily vows renew.
Such law their offspring we have bid farewell.
Contents us now each week's return so tell
Our wants to God, and tender homage due.
Is it, our hearts the world's allurements fill?
That "itching ears" less wholesome food require?
That love and piety have waxen chill? —
Yet, when did zeal to loftier flights aspire? —
But not most deeply flows the noisiest rill;
Nor crackling thorns bespeak the steadiest fire.

LX. The Morning Offering

When nature wakes, and man awakes withal
To taste the freshness of the newborn day,
And feel himself alive; what debt to pay
Should conscience prompt him? What, but first of all
Before his own and nature's God to fall;
Him, who has chas'd the gloom of night away,
To thank; from Him, his being's only stay,
To ask for succour? — Hear the MORNING CALL,
Almighty Father! Hear, my Guard and Guide!
Another day thou giv'st me to begin:
Defend me in it for his sake who died
Man's ransom! O, from foes without, within,
Protect me; rule my ways; and turn aside
The shafts of danger and the snares of sin!

LXI. The Evening Sacrifice

Canst thou thy body on thy bed compose,
The resting place whence it no more may rise,
Till the Archangel's trump unseal thine eyes,
And call thee hence to judgment; canst thou close
Those eyes with comfort, and in peace repose,
Before thou lift thy voice, and to the skies
Send up devotion's EVENING SACRIFICE,
Sweet as the fumes which from the censer rose?
Ere on thy thoughts oblivious slumber creep,
Ere the still sleep can lull thy pillow'd head,
To Him, whose eyelids slumber not, nor sleep,
Commend thy spirit: that about thy bed
His wings may shield thee, and his feathers keep,
Sustain thee living, or receive thee dead!

LXII. Family Worship

Fair is the sight, by Israel's psalmist sung,
Of those whom God hath in one household join'd,
In peace, and unity, and love combin'd;
Most fair, when all assemble, old and young,
Parents and children; those who serve, among
Those whom they serve; with social feelings kind
Each to the other, and with knees inclin'd
In patriarchal worship, heart and tongue.
List to the Saviour's words! "Where two or three
Meet in my name, there in the midst am I."
Believe, and welcome to thy family
The gracious Guest; and by his blessing try,
How much domestic bliss and amity
Hang on DOMESTIC WORSHIP'S hallowing tie!

LXIII. Holy Matrimony

If there's a scene, which joy unmingled cheers,
It is not, no, it is not when the bride
And happy bridegroom meet, and side by side
Before the altar stand; while mid the tears
Of mother, sisters, friends, the sire appears,
To yield his child, his heart's delight and pride,
To him she loves, uncertain how the tide
Of life may ebb or flow! — But truce to fears
And anxious bodings! Hark, the vow they plight
Of mutual truth: and now the sacred priest
Joins them with pray'r, and bids a blessing light
From God upon them. Happy omens rest
On love so pledg'd, and HALLOW'D by the RITE
Which GOD appointed and CHRIST'S presence blest!

LXIV. The Honoured Wife

If "worship," honour, (kindred terms I use,
As us'd our fathers, for the self-same thought):
If worship man, by God's instruction taught,
Pays to his brother man; shall he refuse
Due share to her, whom his affections choose
His home's, his heart's companion; if in aught
Less worthy, yet perchance with feelings fraught
Holier, more virtuous deeds, more generous views? —
'Tis her's to yield, the weaker vessel's sign,
Obedience, reverence; to receive is her's,
Love, comfort, honour:* made by God's design
"Help meet for man,"** like man from God she bears
His image, his similitude divine;
Both taught of God, and both "salvation's heirs."

[*1 Pet. 3:1, 5, 7. Eph. 5:22. 25. Col. 3:18, 19.]

**Gen. 1:27, 2:18.]

LXV. The Thankful Mother

Yes, in thy chamber thou dost well to pray,
And there to thank thy Refuge and Support,
Who hath not cut thine own existence short,
But adds to thine thy offspring's. Day by day,
And night by night, thy praise in secret pay:
But not the less in Salem's public court,
The house of GOD, his people's lov'd resort,
(So bids the CHURCH), thy gratitude display!
'Twas thine the fruit of EVE'S offence to feel,
That she "in sorrow should her children bear":
'Tis thine to taste, that He who smites can heal.
Go then, like holy MARY! Go, repair
To God's high temple; there devoutly kneel,
There lift thy voice, and make thine offering there!

LXVI. The Christian Family

Is there a sight on earth, where God may throw
His eyes, and gaze with heart's complacency? —
Such sight is that, where her young family
The virtuous mother trains, *his* praise to show
In hymn or holy psalm, to whom they owe
Life, health and all things; while the father by
Sits thrill'd with thoughts of silent ecstasy;
Sweet thoughts, which none but pious parents know!
This be thy garland, lady fair and good,
That those, whom God hath given, thy blooming race
To God thou lead'st! — With goodness unendued,
What were the fairest form, the loveliest face?
But dear to heaven, with heaven's own tints imbued,
Is female beauty deck'd with Christian grace.

LXVII. God's Judgments Denounced Against Sinners in the Communion

No! deem it not the Church could e'er pursue
Her sons, tho' mark'd by many a crimson spot,
With pray'r or wish for evil! Deem it not
She bids thee e'er such pray'r or wish renew!
But well she knows that holy, just, and true
Are GOD'S commands and menaces; and what
His word proclaims the wilful sinner's lot,
She knows, and owns, and bids thee own it due.
"Curs'd is the man who spurns Jehovah's will."
Doubt'st thou the sentence? Does it aught declare
Which is not? aught which He shall not fulfil?
Confess the truth: pray God his flock to spare:
And, warn'd thyself, and heedful of the ill,
Of sin, and sin's appointed doom, beware!

LXVIII. In a Time of Common Sickness*

'Twas not the day of Sabbath, when I past,
Nor by the Church made holy: yet a dumb
Lone stillness reign'd there for the weekday hum
Of busy men, and every door was fast
Where traffic went to toil; and as I cast
A sidelong glance on every hallow'd dome,
Thither I saw the assembled people come,
To pray the God of mercy! — 'Tis the blast
Of his displeasure hovering o'er their head,
Which calls them thither. Hear their fervent pray'r,
All Merciful! Bid thou the arm outspread
Of the destroyer from his prey forbear;
And may the Great Atoner from the dead
Sever the living, and thy suppliants spare!

*On passing through a town in my diocese towards the end of August this year (1832), I was much affected by the solemnity of the appearance. All the shops were closed; the streets well-nigh deserted; and the church and other places of divine worship filled, in pursuance of an arrangement among the several ministers of religion for a day of fast and humiliation, on account of the Cholera, then raging in the town. The unexpected sight produced in me a solemn feeling, which vented itself as above.

LXIX. The Sick Man Visited

"Peace to this house!" — Now, ere in languor lost
The weary spirit from the task recoil
Of self-research, or racking pain embroil
The thoughts, and reason's gentle sway be crost;
Welcome the holy man! What tho' he boast
No potent charm the sting of death to foil,
Relic, or magic word, or holy oil,
Or image-bearing cross, or wafer host:
Yet may his voice thy heart to faith incline,
Love, patience, trust, repentance, and release
From worldly cares; his hand confer the sign
Of pardoning mercy; and his pray'r increase
(God's steward he!) thy store of wealth divine,
Support thee here, or send thee hence in peace!

LXX. The Sick Communicant

Nor fail, as round the clouds of sickness steal,
Perchance of death, again a willing guest
To seek refreshment at the heavenly feast,
Pledge of thy faith, and thy salvation's seal.
Alas! that reckless of their spirit's weal
Some should refrain till then; as if, imprest
With sigh quaint, by cunning wizard blest,
A spell were there the fainting soul to heal,
Howe'er in Christ untutor'd. Wiser thou,
As he commands, thy Christian race hast run;
As he commands, renew'd thy plighted vow;
And sought his glory, not content to shun

His means of grace. His peace be with thee now,
And hope presageful of thy Lord's "Well done!"

LXXI. The Absolved Sinner

Think'st thou the Church, to give the sinner rest,
Has dar'd assume a more than human sway? —
What by her Lord's high will she justly may,
She does. To ease the soul, its sin confest,
Which humbly sues relief, her Lord's behest
She names, his promis'd boon, the appointed way
The absolving words; nor fails of God to pray,
To seal the sentence in his name exprest.
Deems she that thus is purg'd the sinner's spot,
If faithless, unrepentant; or to her
Heaven's empery belongs? — Believe it not!
Full well she knows, to pardon and to spare
Is God's prerogative: well knows she, what
The heaven-ward road, and what the passport there.

LXXII. The Sick Restored

On thy dim eye, how many a cheerless day,
And many a weary night, hath nature frown'd!
Day was to thee as night: for sickness round
Thy pillow clung, and darkness the glad ray
Of light obscur'd. Now forth thou wendest gay,
With life renew'd: now teems the unwonted ground
For thee with flowers of Eden; and each sound
Is to thine ear a springtime roundelay.
Quaff from the air its mu sick! from the flower
Its sweetness quaff! But fail not thanks to yield
To Him who made them, and to thee the power
Restores to taste their beauties! He repeal'd
The impending sentence: he affliction's hour
Has chang'd to joy: he smote and he has heal'd.

LXXIII. Fruits of Sickness

And wilt thou now that God hath rais'd thee up,
The vows, the promises, thy conscience made,
What time beneath God's chastening rod afraid
Thou drank'st submissive of affliction's cup,
Wilt thou in health perform? Or wilt thou stoop
Again to sin, as if thou wouldst upbraid
God for his kindness, all thy debt unpaid
Of gratitude, foregone thy Christian hope,
Thy tears, and pray'rs for pardon? — If misus'd
God's grace, bethink thee lest thy end be worse
Than thy beginning! Mercy's boon refus'd
Shall fall in judgment on the soul perverse
That slights the gift; and goodness long abus'd
Convert the intended blessing to a curse.

LXXIII.* Timely Preparation

Who, when the pilot warns, would lose the tide
By casting pebbles on the glassy sea?
Who to weave garlands in the flowery lea
Would far from home the waning hours abide?
What racer from his course would turn aside
To pick up apples from Hesperian tree?
What soldier, striving for the mastery,
Waste in Campanian sloth his manhood's pride?
CHRISTIAN, be wise! The tide is at its height,
Which now may waft thee to the wished-for shore:
Thy home's away, and swift the moment's flight:
The goal, the crown's right on, thine eyes before:
The trumpet calls to gird thee for the fight;
Hark! now it sounds, but soon shall sound no more!

LXXIV. The Death Bed

Full of deep learning is the BED OF DEATH!
When this lov'd world is fading from the sense,
And the soul feels the body's impotence;
And things, which lurk'd disguis'd, self-love beneath,
Take their own shape; and what remains of breath
Is spent in pray'r, and sighs of penitence
For life's misdoings; and the next step hence
Leads to the demon's flames, or angel's wreath:
Who would not then the paths of sin disclaim? —
Who would not then to God for mercy fly,
And plead the bulwark of a Saviour's name? —
O, on that name in health may I rely;
On that my faith, by that my practice, frame;
And live to Christ, that I in Christ may die!

LXXIV.* The Sudden Death

He was an alien from the House of God!
Admonish'd oft, his grief he oft exprest,
And better things for time to come profest,
For time to come he hoped for! yet untrod
The church-ward path still left he, till the rod
Smote him, what time amid the drunken feast
His unnerv'd throat the unswallow'd morsel prest,
And now he lies beneath the churchyard sod!
What's now his place, and whither he is gone,
Who rashly dares pronounce? But who can hear
His fate, nor breathe a wish that he had known
To tread with reverence and holy fear
God's courts, or ere before God's judgment throne
The accusing Angel bade his soul appear?

LXXV. The Dying Criminal

His life was spent in sin, and, often owed,
Was paid the law's just forfeit. But at last,
Ere from the death-doom'd frame the spirit past,
The outward marks of penitence he showed;
With faith, 'twas said, with love, with transport glowed;
Nor want there some, by whom he's surely class'd
With God's elect in glory. Who would blast
Hope's opening bud for him, the heavenward road
Who seems e'en thus to seek? — Yet who may dare
Pronounce him blest, for who can rightly weigh
His faith and late repentance? — Leave him where
God's word has left him. Thou meanwhile obey
The calls of palpable duty; nor forbear
Till night's approach the labour of the day!

LXXVI. The Obedient Disciple

More sure we deem the obedient Christian's meed,
Who near his end by duty's pathway draws!
His the prompt zeal, to serve his Father's cause;
The lowly heart, to feel and own its need;
The faith, the Saviour's righteousness to plead,
And use his means of grace; the love, his laws
To keep; with hope, not heedless of the applause
To heavenly thoughts and holy deeds decreed.
Peace be to those, who on God's altar lay
Their life's late gleanings, scant thro' lengthen'd crime
But glean'd in shame and sorrow? Happier they,
Who sow to God in nature's genial prime;
And to the HARVEST'S LORD their fullness pay,
The strength and glory of the golden time!

LXXVII. The Death of the Righteous

Wouldst thou the Christian's death triumphant die,
Live thou the Christian's life! — To fight the fight
Of God supported by the Spirit's might,
And in the Saviour's name; to fix the eye
Fast on the prize, and strive for mastery;
To keep the faith's rich jewel, whole and bright:
Such aim accomplish'd was the heart's delight [2 Tim. 4:6, 7]
Of dying Paul: such aim be thine to try!
So move thou duly on to reach the goal!
So may God's Spirit with thine own attest
Thy heavenly sonship, and his peace control
Earth's anxious thoughts! So meet to join the blest!
His gentle breath shed comfort on thy soul,
The pledge and earnest of eternal rest!

LXXVIII. The Passing Bell

That sound upon my ear falls heavily! —
 It is the PASSING BELL, the deep slow toll
 Which speaks the transit of a deathless soul,
Call'd from its mortal tenement to fly,
And of the unseen world the secrets try.
 A few hours more, wrapt in its funeral stole,
 Death's winding sheet, that bell again shall knoll
The body hence, in its long home to lie,
Till the angel's trump arouse it. Do not say,
 'Tis a vain sound, that passing spirit's sign!
But warn'd, awhile, thy heart withdraw away
 From this world's toys, to heavenly themes incline:
And think, "The solemn knell, which sounds today
 A brother's fate, tomorrow may be mine!"

LXXIX. The Funeral

I envy not the feelings which can send
 The breathless corpse to its sepulchral home,
 Heedless of Him who made it! Mid the gloom
Of sorrows, which the widow'd bosom rend,
'Tis kind, 'tis comforting, 'tis wise to blend
 Earth, as it were, with heaven, whence thoughts may come
 Rous'd by God's word and pray'r; and from the tomb
The heart to bliss unseen, unheard, ascend!
God takes the spirit: to the ground we give
 The body, "earth to earth, and dust to dust!"
But not, as they who have no hope, we grieve:
 Sure is the Christian's faith, and firm his trust,
That they, who sleep in Christ, in Christ shall live,
 And waking join the assembly of the just.

LXXX. Thanksgiving for the Departed

This world abounds in misery and in sin!
 Each has his share: and who, that on the days
 Yet future meditates with careful gaze,
Can tell how much of ill, without, within,
Waits him; or what of freedom he may win
 By death's kind stroke? — Then count it not dispraise,
 That when the Church her children's bodies lays
In the still grave, meet theme of thanks therein
She sees to God who claims them! Well she knows,
 That sins beset, that ambush'd sorrow tries,
The flesh-encumber'd spirit: whither goes
 Each spirit hence, she dares not say; but wise
And good is He, who mid impending woes
 Still notes his creatures with benignant eyes.

LXXXI. Hope for the Departed

To doom thy brother, from the flesh releas'd,
 Christian, befits thee not. 'Twill best behave

The grace which “hopeth all things,” Christian love,
 To hope that each may in the Saviour rest.
 Degrees of hope are various: for the best
 Well may it rise to faith, but not above:
 For those, the worst in semblance, — who can prove
 God’s mercy may not rank them with the blest?
 Yield then, in hope that he in Christ may sleep,
 To earth thy lifeless brother! — Whom most pure
 Thou deem’st, in mind his good example keep;
 Whom soil’d with sin, his sins avoid, abjure:
 So may’st thou sow in love, in transport reap,
 Thyself; and make thine own election sure!

LXXXII. Christian Unity

One God there is, who reigns above in light:
 One Lord on earth, for man incarnate made;
 One body form’d He by one Spirit’s aid;
 Call’d to one hope by one baptismal rite,
 One holy bread to eat of, and to plight
 One common faith.* Who name his name, he bade
 In concord live; and of his Father pray’d,
 Perfection’s bond, all might in one unite.**
 God wills our union. Man, by passion driven,
 Turns to a sword, the rod for healing sent.
 Lo, limb from limb the spouse of Christ is riven,
 His seamless coat by reckless hands is rent:
 As, if the goodliest, loveliest gift of heaven,
 When most disfigur’d, were most excellent.

[*Eph. 4:4–6; 1 Cor. 10:17]

[**John 17:20–23; Col. 3:14]

LXXXIII. Beauty of the Church

What fairer form, my Country’s Church, than thine?
 “Glorious within, thy clothing of wrought gold!” [Psa. 45:14]
 What tho’, (for who his course on earth may hold,
 Nor aught betray of earthliness a sign?)
 A speck perchance of earthly origin
 May here and there by curious eyes be told,
 Dimming the brightness of thy raiment’s fold;
 ’Tis of wrought gold from God’s celestial mine,
 Of “glory and beauty” — Yes, thou’rt passing fair, [Exod. 28:40]
 My Country’s Church! — To grace their royal Sire
 Full many a daughter stands: but few compare
 With thee for virtuous deeds and meet attire;
 Few to their King so pure an offering bear,
 Tried in the flame, and purified by fire.

LXXXIV. Safety in the Church

Why should I e’er forsake thy dwelling, blest
 Of God; or whither from thy shelter move?

Whate'er vouchsafement waits us from above
To cheer, sustain, enlighten, is possest
By thee, and thou to thine distributest:
 And sure I think, if tempted once to rove
 From thee, my foot would find, like Noah's dove,
O'er the wide waters refuge none, nor rest.
Grace is within thy precincts, holy Ark;
 Grace and salvation! And tho' gathering gloom
Now and again with signs of presage dark
 O'erhang thee, mercy's beams the skreen illumine;
And faith on blackest clouds may brightest mark
 God's bow, the pledge of blessings yet to come.

LXXXV. God the Preserver of His Church
A Sound is in the trees and on the flood!
 The wind is up; it lifts the waters high,
 As if to battle with the eternal sky,
And from its roots to tear the ancient wood.
But there is ONE, the *Powerful* and the *Good*,
 Who sits above the storm with wakeful eye,
 Prompt, if need be, with voice of sovereignty
To speak, as once Tiberias' waves he strew'd
With "Peace, be still!" — Yea, Lord, if aught of ill
 Thy Church assail, her griefs thy care engage;
Safe stands she, founded on thy holy hill:
 Thou canst the tempest's fearful roar assuage,
Tumultuous noise! and more tumultuous still,
 Lash'd into storm the maddening people's rage.

LXXXVI. To the Reader
Reader, if aught, these Musings brief comprise,
 May quell a judgment harsh, or wish unkind,
 For my lov'd Mother Church; and in thy mind
Bid thoughts more just, and kindlier feelings rise:
Deem them not air-born baseless fantasies!
 Scan her by God's own word, and thou shalt find,
 The more thou scann'st, thy spirit more inclin'd
Her name to venerate, her worth to prize.
To thee the search a rich return may bear
 Of sacred lore, and aspirations raise
Which the earth owns not: nor shalt thou not share
 The grateful sense, which, ah! too scantily, pays
Blessings conferr'd with thanksgiving and pray'r,
 "Peace to our Sion, to our God be praise!"

THE END