

in the blind upon the awful transition from this world to the next.

In the *first* place, Jesus Christ gives us victory over death by delivering us from the doubts and fears which arose in the minds of those who knew not the Gospel, from the uncertainty in which a future state was involved.

Without Divine revelation, men wandered in the dark with respect to an after life. Unassisted reason could give but imperfect information on this important article. Conjectures, in place of discoveries, presumptions, in place of demonstrations, were all that it could offer to the enquiring mind. The unenlightened eye could not clearly pierce the cloud which veiled futurity from mortal view. The light of nature reached little further than the limits of this globe, and shed but a feeble ray upon the region beyond the grave. Hence, those heathen nations, of whom the Apostle speaks, are described as *sorrowing and having no hope*. And whence could reason derive complete information that there was a state of immortality beyond the grave? Consult with appearances in nature, and you find but few intimations of a future life. Destruction seems to be one of the great laws of the system. The various forms of life are indeed preserved; but while the species remains, the individual perishes. Everything passes away. A great and mighty river, for ages and centuries, has been rolling on, and sweeping away all that ever lived, to the vast abyss of eternity. On that darkness, light does not rise. From that unknown country none return. On that devouring deep, which swallows up everything, no vestige appears of the things that were.

There are particular appearances which might naturally excite an alarm for the future. The human machine is so constituted, that soul and body seem to decay together. To the eye of sense, as the beast dies, so dies the man. Death seems to close the scene, and the grave to put a final period to the prospects of man. The words of Job beautifully express the anxiety of the mind on the subject. "If a man die, shall he live again? There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet, through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant: but man dieth, and is cut off; man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea; as the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." But what a dreadful prospect does annihilation present to the mind! To be an outcast from existence; to be blotted out from the book of life; to mingle with the dust, and be scattered over the earth, as if the breath of life had not animated our frame! Man cannot support the

thought. Is the light which shone brighter than all the stars of heaven set in darkness, to rise no more? Are all the hopes of man come to this, to be taken into the councils of the Almighty, to be permitted to behold part of that plan of Providence which governs the world, and when his eyes are just opened to read the book, to be shut forever? If such were to be our state, we would be of all creatures the most miserable. The world appears a chaos without form, and void of order. From the throne of nature, God departs, and there appears a cruel and capricious being, who delights in death, and makes sport of human misery.

From this state of doubts and fears we are delivered by the Gospel of Jesus. The message which he brought, was life and immortality. From the Star of Jacob, light shone even upon the shades of death. As a proof of immortality, He called back the departed spirit from the world unknown; as an earnest of a future life, He Himself arose from the dead. When we contemplate the tomb of nature, we are apt to cry out, "Can these dry bones live?" When we contemplate the tomb of Jesus, we say, "Yes, they can live!" As He arose, we shall in like manner arise. In the tomb of nature you see man return to the dust from whence he was taken; in the tomb of Jesus you see man restored to life again. In the tomb of nature you see the shades of death fall on the weary traveller, and the darkness of the long night close over his head; in the tomb of Jesus you see light arise upon the shades of death, and the morning dawn upon the long night of the grave. On the tomb of nature it is written, "Behold thy end, O man! Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return. Thou who now callest thyself the son of heaven, shall become one of the clods of the valley;" on the tomb of Christ is written, "Thou diest, O man, but to live again. When dust return to dust, the spirit shall return to God who gave it. I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." From the tomb of nature you hear a voice, "Forever silent is the land of forgetfulness! From the slumbers of the grave shall we awake no more! Like the flowers of the field, shall we be as though we had never been!" from the tomb of Jesus you hear, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, yea saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors, and pass into glory. In my Father's house, there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go away, I will come again, and take you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Will not this assurance of a happy immortality and a blessed resurrection, in a great measure remove the terror and the sting of death? May we not walk without dismay through the dark valley, when we are conducted by a beam from heaven? May we