

The measure of that strength and holiness, both of body and mind, will be graduated by the attainments we make in the present life in physical, intellectual, and moral culture.

The mind of a Newton in heaven will excel in strength, and soar higher in contemplation, than the mind of the converted Hottentot. The apostle John will luxuriate in love, adoration, and praise, far beyond the miser converted on his death bed; and the spiritual body of a virgin will surpass in beauty that of a Magdalene.

Death separates us from each other; and in the loss of children, we feel as if we were burying part of our own persons. But this separation will be short. Even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. We shall soon meet again, though it will be in a distant country, and we shall recognize each other as fellow travellers returning from a journey.

Whether we shall arise with the dead in Christ in the first resurrection, to glory, or in the last resurrection to contempt, will depend not upon any arbitrary law of nature and of morals. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; and he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting:

“So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall
take

His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou, go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but sustained and
soothed
By an unaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who draws the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant
dreams.”

And I saw the dead, said John, both small and great, the infant and the hoary sire, the idiot and the philosopher, stand before God; and the books were opened, the book of men's conscience, and the book of God's omniscience, which is greater than conscience, and knoweth all things. These books will give evidence of matter of fact.

And another book was opened, which is the book of life, the scriptures, the statute book of heaven, the rule of life by which the hearts and lives will be judged.

And the sea gave up its dead, and the graves delivered up the dead that were in them.

The rich and the poor will indeed strangely meet together, when all the inequalities of the present life shall disappear and the conqueror and his captive, the monarch and his subject, the lord and his vassal, the master and his slave, the statesman and the peasant, the philosopher and the unlettered hind, shall discover their distinctions to have been mere illusions.

“And then for all a judgment day,
A trumpet blast, when human clay
Shall be re-formed; then Christ shall say,
Night waits for those; for these shines day.”

How consoling to the believer in the pains of expiring nature is the truth that he shall soon be with his Lord and elder Brother, and be embraced with a cordial welcome! Here he followed him in his ordinances, but it was often at a distance. In heaven he shall be for ever with him.

On the mount of transfiguration, the subject of conversation was the decease which Jesus should accomplish at Jerusalem. In heaven the subject of never-tiresome conversation will be the decease he has accomplished, with its endless train of benefits and blessings.

The present mystery of providence in the afflictions of the righteous and in the prosperity of the wicked will then be explained. Few, very few in heaven will thank God for the wealth, or honours, or pleasures they may have enjoyed here. These prove for the most part clogs to the Christian, and impede him in the divine life. Many, very many in heaven will thank God for poverty, and affliction, and bereavements. These serve to wean the affections from earth and direct them heaven-ward.

Courage, then, Christian disciple! The warfare with spiritual foes will soon be ended. The race in the performance of duties will soon be run. The struggle with temptation will soon be over. You have the promise, through the apostles of him who cannot lie—for his nature as well as his name is truth—that there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness, of life and of glory, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to you at that day, and to all those who love and long for his appearing.