

pierce the dark gloom of heathen philosophy and superstition, or lit up one ray of hope to cheer us through the dark valley and shadow of death. But thanks to God for the inestimable gift of revelation which teaches us what shall be our true state in a future world, and develops to us a source "of everlasting consolation and good hope through grace," that when we are done with all the fleeting and transitory things of this sublimary world, we shall be received into mansions of happiness and unalloyed felicity. In anticipation of this, the good old Apostle could say, "we know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternally in the heavens." And this hope did not forsake him in the moment when it was most needed, but stood like a bulwark in the hour of his severest affliction, when loaded with chains in the prison of Rome, and there about to offer up his life under the hand of the ruthless Nero, we hear him exclaim, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, finished my course, and kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them who love his appearing." This hope is indeed an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast. It is this that brightens the stormy pathway of life, imparts courage to the sinking soul, and renders death a welcome messenger. As he who has promised cannot lie, the Christian has strong consolation who has fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them. Though every friend should forsake him, and every vestige of earthly possessions should be bereft from him by the unrelenting hand of adversity; though foes should combine to render more bitter the last dregs of affliction, he can confidently look up to heaven to a friend who will never forsake him. Deprive the Christian of this hope and he sinks in despair, tear from him his glorious destiny revealed in the Bible, and you rob him of all that can render him happy or sweeten the bitter cup of adversity. Ay—rob him of this and you rob him of all, shake his faith in God's promise and you leave him nothing to cling to in the hour of affliction. No bosom of Omnipotence on which to pillow his dying head. But give him this divine assurance and you kindle a ray of hope in his soul that the floods of affliction or death cannot quench. Let him repose on the immutable promise of Jehovah and he is happy. Let him know that heaven is his home and he fears not the rack or the fire. How many have been put to the most excruciating torture that human ingenuity could invent, and yet have been sustained even in the midst of the flame with unshaken hope, which nothing but christianity could bestow. When we contemplate the glorious promise revealed to us in God's word, we are ready to exclaim with Paul, "who shall separate us from the love of God; shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or peril, or sword." No says he, "I am persuaded that principalities nor powers, things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." He that spared not his only begotten Son but gave him up freely for us all,