

ing age, four of them between fifteen and twenty years. But the cup which our Heavenly Father hath given us, shall we not drink it? That God, who sets the solitary in families like a flock, and diminishes them at pleasure, gives us wives like unto fruitful vines, and children like unto olive plants about our tables. How ready were we then to say in our prosperity, we should not be moved, we should die in our nest, our seed and offspring should be powerful in the earth, and blessed among the generation of the upright, useful servants of God and their generation, nourishers of our old age, and everlasting preservatives of our memorial!

"But we have now laid them in the grave. These lately pleasant bodies say to corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, my sister and brother. With them we have buried a great part of our worldly comforts, hopes, and projects. Oh! what a dark veil doth death and the grave cast on all human glory. It cannot descend after them into the dust.

"We return from the grave to our house. There perhaps we find a Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted because they are not. Here an empty coat, there an empty bed. We sit down at our table.—The olive plants are missing. The wind hath passed over the flowers, and they are gone. These beautiful lambs, that used to play through our houses and fields, and sweetly divert us with their familiar conversations and loving embraces, we see no more. Death hath torn them from our bosoms; and fears us to their eternal state, and reflections as to our duty towards them, may crown the melancholy scene.

"Yet, let us not dwell too much on such thoughts, lest a wounded spirit, like a sharp knife, cut the thin sheath of our frail bodies, and disable us in body or mind from our duty to God or man. Especially let us beware of any hard thoughts of God, and still acknowledge that he is righteous, and in faithfulness hath afflicted. Let us turn our complaints upon ourselves, and say, "We have sinned, what shall we do unto thee? Wherein we have done foolishly, we will do so no more. The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord. Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also? It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. Good is the will of the Lord."

"But we are called, not to sorrow as those who have no hope. To the true Israelite within the bond of God's covenant, a brighter side of the cloud may appear, and he may justly rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Let us enter into our closet, the proper place for giving vent to our lawful passions, and where I have experienced the greatest relief: there, having offered the sacrifice of moderate sorrow and contrition, especially for sin, which brought death into the world, let us, upon the wing of faith, see with faith's eye the blessedness of the dead in Christ, rejoice in their joy, and triumph with God's inheritance. Let us view our dead relations and children, concerning whom we hope, in the good-will of God to men, that they were chosen of the Father, redeemed by the Son, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Let us view them in the covenant and promise, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed;" in Christ's invitation to come to him, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Let us view them by us devoted to God, ingrafted into Christ, and sealed to eternal life by

baptism. Let us view these olive plants, transplanted from the stormy barren soil of this world, into the heavenly paradise, and flourishing in the courts of the New Jerusalem. Let us view these pleasant lambs eating the fruit of the tree of life, and drinking the waters of the river that flows from beneath the throne of God and of the Lamb. Let us view them in the bosom of the good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep, and carries the lambs in his bosom. Let us view them in Abraham's bosom; and why not in the bosom of their more immediate parents and relations now in heaven. Let us view not only their angels who ministered to them here on earth, and carried their souls to glory; but even *themselves* beholding the face of their Heavenly Father, admiring and worshipping Him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb, for ever and ever. Let us behold, following the Lamb wheresoever he goeth, those virgins not defiled with the pollutions of a world, no guile found in their mouth, and their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Let us view their bodies spiritual, immortal, incorruptible, made like to Christ's glorious body, joyfully united to their souls, now satisfied with the likeness, and with the full enjoyment of God. If many descriptions of the heavenly glory are metaphorical, in this the wisdom and condescension of God appear: for how otherwise would we conceive these things in our present state and capacity? But that glory infinitely exceeds all metaphors, and is a glory yet to be revealed.

"Unbelief in our hearts may object. These are mysterious and great things, hard to be believed and hoped for by poor sinful mortals. True; though great, yet not too great to display the infinite glory and perfections of God. They are mysterious enough to confound all the mere natural, rational, and moral schemes in the world; and, as to a great part of them, could never have been known or believed, without the light and assistance of that word and spirit of God, which have brought life and immortality to light, and are as the sun to the spiritual world. It is true many invisible things of God are clearly manifested by the things that are seen; and the light of nature condemns the world for want of a faith and practice suitable to the evidence it affords. But, let us not separate what God has joined together, his word and works. Do not his glorious perfections equally shine in both? Do they not mutually illustrate one another? A wonderful likeness between the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of grace, teaches us many fundamental and difficult doctrines of our Christian faith. Is not the resurrection from the dead taught us every morning we rise from sleep; and every spring, when vegetative nature, which has been dead through winter, revives? Are we not taught the immortality of the soul, and its acting in a separate state, by our dreams? The spirit (no doubt only in its imaginations) runs through the universe. It hears, sees, feels, and exercises all the bodily senses. It fears, grieves, loves, joys, and exercises all its own faculties, when the body lies in a deep sleep. It does all this in such a manner as our reason can now no more comprehend, than we can a real separate state. Is not all nature adapted to teach us God and spiritual things, and continually improved for that end by the divine oracles? Every employment, merchandise, husbandry, &c.; every work, building, ploughing, sowing, digging, &c.; every member of our body, hands, feet, eyes, illustrate the divine perfections and op-