

be passed, its warfare will be accomplished, its sanctification will be complete, and its declension will be impossible. The shout and strife of battle will be exchanged for the song of peace and triumph. Released from the burden of the flesh, rescued from the dangers of the world, and raised beyond the reach of satanic influence, the spirit will expatiate in the perfect freedom and inviolable security of a nature holy and incorruptible.

*2nd.—We have next to consider the state of mind of which the Apostle's desire is indicative.*

(1.) It supposes a preparedness of spirit to be with Christ. That fervent love which constrained the Apostle to labor and suffer for the glory of Christ on earth, constituted his fitness for the presence and fellowship of Christ in heaven. We can truly wish to be with the Saviour only when we truly love Him. As we rise in His image, our desire to be with Him will proportionately increase; and as His service on earth becomes more interesting to us, His presence in heaven will become more attractive. If the believer were suddenly transported from earth to heaven, he would have within him those principles and affections that would render the presence of a holy Saviour most welcome, and His service a source of ever-growing delight. Here, then, is a sure test of character. Without that love to Christ that longs to be with Him, we can have no hope. A mere willingness to die is no proof of preparation. It may spring from various causes. The ch. repining beneath his lot; the mortified victim of disappointed ambition; the exhausted votary of the world, whose sensibilities are deadened, and whose spirits have sunk into incurable dejection and despondency; and the man bowed down under the accumulated infirmities of age, may be willing to die, without duly estimating the consequences of death. But it was for none of these reasons