

# The Saint and the World

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"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.-2 Cor. 8:9

Thou art required, O man! to die to thyself, thy sin, and the world; and to lead a holy, harmless life, according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This thou art to do, not with a view to merit anything at the hands of God, but from a principle of love to him, who performed and merited all for thee, and died to save thee.

2. Be not deceived: Jesus must be loved by thee, not in word and in tongue, but in deed and truth. "If," says he (John 14:23), "a man love me, he will keep my words;" and so St. John speaks: "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. And, again, the Saviour says: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). To him, indeed, who loves Christ with all his heart, it cannot but be easy to sacrifice the pleasure which earthly vanities afford, and to do that which is good, without constraint. Love renders every burden light that is laid upon us by Jesus; whereas to him that is devoid of this heavenly principle, every act which duty requires is grievous and oppressive. To such a one, every religious exercise is painful and laborious; whereas the man who sincerely loves the Lord Jesus Christ, esteems death itself to be in nowise terrible, when submitted to for his sake. And, therefore, the Apostle says: "Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29): nay, to lay down life itself, whenever that sacrifice is required of us.

3. In order to confirm thy faith, consider the example of Moses, who, "by faith, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:24-26).

4. Consider Daniel, who refused the luxuries of a court, and desired to be fed with pulse and water, resolving "that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Dan. 1:8, 12). He contemned the pleasures of Babylon, that he might attain "the wisdom that is from above" (James 3:17), which dwells only in a heart preserved pure from the pollutions of an unholy world. So, if thou desires that Christ, the eternal Wisdom, should enter into thy soul, thou must abhor the pleasures of sin. For as Daniel and his companions were made fairer by their sobriety and abstemious life, so be thou firmly assured, that thy soul will appear more beautiful and fair in the sight of God, even as "partaking of the divine nature," if thou escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:4).

5. Consider, further, the example of St. Paul, who says, "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14); that is, I am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me. Thus are all true Christians in the world, yet not of it. Though they live in it, they do not love it; for they view it as a transient shadow; and its pomps, dignities, and lusts, as vanity and deceit, vexation and disappointment. Hence, they are crucified to the world, though they remain in it; and the world is crucified to them; that is, they desire no mere worldly honor, wealth or joy.

6. How happy is the man who is dead to earthly vanities, and alive to God; separated from the world, and drawn into Christ! How blessed is he into whose heart divine grace is so infused, as wholly to wean it from inferior objects, and exalt it to the fruition of the light and glory of heaven. Such a state is the effect of daily prayer and supplications, without which a true Christian cannot possibly exist

7. Agur prayed to the Lord thus: "Two things, have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die. Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me" (Prov. 30:7, 8). So let the Christian pray: "Two things I desire of thee, O Lord, even these two: that I may die to myself, and to the world." For without the death, it is utterly impossible to be a true Christian. If thou, O Man! thinkest otherwise, thou certainly deceives" thyself, and shalt at last hear from the mouth of Christ that awful sentence, "I know you not" (Matt. 7:23; 25:12).

8. Though to die thus to self and to the world, is, to flesh and blood, a grievous cross, yet will the spirit and the love

of Christ eventually triumph over every difficulty. So powerful indeed are these aids, that they enable the true Christian to bear all things for the sake of the Beloved, as a pleasant yoke and easy burden. And although he who lives a life thus mortified, will be hated by the world, yet shall he be loved of God; for the enmity of the world is friendship with him (James 4:4). And the Lord hath himself declared, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19).

9. Those who are dead to the world for the testimony of Jesus, it casts out; but it honors and applauds them who, living in the enjoyment of its pomp and splendor, are its genuine offspring; because they live in the world, and the world liveth in them;.

10. In short, that man is not received and commended by the world, but is, on the contrary, cast out of it. In whose heart, pride, covetousness, lust, wrath, revenge, and the other corrupt passions of nature, are mortified and restrained. Unto him the world is dead; and he again is dead to the world; he begins to live in Christ, and Christ lives in him; and he will be confessed by the Saviour, as one of his peculiar people, in whom the great design of redemption has been effected. To others, on the contrary, it will be said, "I know you not, as ye, in like manner, knew me not." You have not confessed me before men, but have been ashamed of my life, my meekness, humility, and patience; and I will not confess you: you have despised the shame of my cross; and you shall be with shame disowned by me (Mark 8:38). For whoever refuses to live with Christ in time, cannot expect to live with him in eternity: whoever has not the life of Christ here, shall never have it set forth in him hereafter: and whoever disdains to follow Jesus in the present world, shall never be glorified with him in the world to come.

11. Therefore, O Man! strictly scrutinize thy life, and see whether thou bearest a greater conformity to the life of Christ, or to the life of the devil: for thou must inevitably be united to one or other of these throughout all eternity.

12. If thou art dead to thyself and to they depraved desires within thee, thou wilt find it no hard task to die to the world and its vain allurements which are without thee: and whoever is thus dead to the world, will not love it or the things which it contains; for, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). Again, how shall his desires any more go out after the world without him, when he is dead to it? Great indeed would be the loss sustained by a lover of the blessed God, were he, in any degree, to yield to the allurements of the world, and allow it to obtain a share in that affection which should be fixed solely on the Supreme Good. A soul so undecided would soon be entirely vanquished by the blandishments of sin, as was Samson by the charms of Delilah (Judg. 16:6); and would become subject to all that misery and vexation of heart, which invariably attend the love of this world.

13. The love of the world appertains not to the new creature, but to the old: for the world has nothing to bestow but honor and vainglory, riches, pleasures, and carnal desires; in these the "old man" delights. The new man, on the other hand, has no peace except in Christ who is his honor and glory, his riches and his heaven.

14. And as nothing can be conceived of that is greater or more exalted than the image of God renewed in Christ Jesus, so it should be our only concern and care, to render ourselves partakers of this exalted honor; remembering the words of Tauler, "What man, who is possessed of reason, can doubt for a moment, that God can infinitely more rejoice and delight the heart, than the corrupt and indigent creature is capable of doing?"

15. In addition to this, the Scriptures assures us that man was not created for the world's sake, but the world for man's. It was not to pamper his appetite, to heap up riches, or to extend his empire without limits, that man was formed; it was not that he might acquire large estates and possessions, erect palaces, or be gorgeously attired, that he was endued with a soul intelligent and immortal: man was made to be lord of the earth, and not its slave; to subdue, and not to be subdued. He was not to seek his pleasure and enjoyment on earth, however fair and fascinating it might be to a depraved taste: he was not destined to be an heir of this inferior world, nor the possessor of terrestrial treasures, nor to be actuated by any worldly motive whatsoever. Man is to depart hence, as one that dwells on earth as a tenant at will. He was not made for it, and cannot remain in it; he entered it naked, and naked he must quit it again. Many, indeed, are born into the world at the same time; but an equal number, on the other hand, are daily taken out by death; nor can any carry with them even an atom of the treasures which they had accumulated upon earth.

16. Man, then, is but as guest and a pilgrim below; and most obvious it is, that he was not created for this temporal life, and that this world was never designed to be the end of his being. That end is God, and the image of God in Christ Jesus, unto which we are renewed by the Spirit; and we are created for the kingdom of God and for eternal

life. These our blessed Redeemer purchased for us, when they had been forfeited by us; and it is his Spirit that regenerates men who had been without God in the world.

17. How unreasonable, therefore, is it in man to fix his affections on temporal objects, when we are assured that the soul is infinitely more noble and more precious than the whole world! How preposterous is it, that he should lavish his time in the pursuit of earthly things, when he is conscious that he was created to bear the image of God in Christ, though the Holy Spirit! Therefore, let us now solemnly repeat what has been before affirmed, namely, that man was not made for the world, but the world for man. The excellency of the image of God in Christ Jesus, is inconceivably great and glorious: so that were all mankind to unite their labor and might, their wealth, their honors, and their all, they could not succeed in restoring even one soul to the possession of this image. It became requisite that Christ himself should die, in order that this divine image which had been utterly defaced by sin, might, through His Spirit, be revived; and that man might again become the temple and house of God through all eternity.

18. This being duly considered, as certainly it ought to be, how is it that man so thoroughly debases his soul as to seek after the things of this world, its honors, its pleasures, lusts, and wealth? He should surely reason with himself, and say: "Shall I, for the sake of a little gold, or for this fading world, or for all the honors and pleasures it can afford me—shall I, for the sake of these, sacrifice my immortal soul, which Christ has redeemed at so infinite a price? God forbid." "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). Alas! the "whole world," with all its power and glory, could not avail to rescue one soul from eternal destruction; for the soul is immortal, while the world passeth away with all that it contains (1 Cor. 7:31; 1 John 2:17).

The true Christian, who imitates Christ, hates his own life in this world, and forsakes the world.

In order that a man may hate himself, he must, in the first place, cease to love himself; secondly, he must daily die to sin; and, thirdly, maintain a continual warfare with his corrupt nature, or the flesh.

2. There is nothing that more obstructs the everlasting salvation of mankind than self-love. This is not to be understood of that natural love which excites to a due regard to self-preservation, but of that carnal and inordinate affection which influences man to be wholly concerned about himself, without any reference to the Supreme Being, the great Author of life. In this sense the term is used in the present Book. Man was created to love God alone; and since God only is to be loved, it follows that he who loves himself is an idolater, and makes of himself a god. The heart of man rejoices and rests in the object of his affection; and, whatever this be, he is brought by it into bondage, and is devoted to it. Man, in this state, is become a servant, and is deprived of that genuine liberty in the enjoyment of which he was originally created; and in this lapsed and divided state he must serve as many masters as there are objects upon which his affections are placed. But if thy love, O man! be sincerely and simply fixed on God, then thou art subject to no lord but Him; and thou preserves" thy liberty with all the privileges appertaining to it. It becometh thee, therefore, to be very circumspect in thy life and conduct, lest thou shouldst in any degree obstruct the progress of divine love to thy soul. If ever thou desires" to possess God alone, thou must make a surrender of thyself solely to him. If thou lovest and pleases" thyself, instead of loving and pleasing God, then sorrow and fear, sadness and anxiety, will inevitably attend thee; whereas, if thou wholly yieldest thyself unto God, cleaving to him and delighting thyself in him alone, then he will never leave thee nor forsake thee, but remove by his gracious presence all fear and anxiety from thy mind. He, on the other hand, who seeks himself in all situations and in every circumstance, and who incessantly pursues after profit, praise, and lust, can never attain to serenity and peace of mind; for some circumstance there always will be to cross his desires and to disturb his rest. Never, therefore, yield to the belief that an accession of fame, wealth, or honor in this world, is always good and profitable for thee; when, on the contrary, a righteous contempt of all such transient objects, nay, an utter extirpation of our love of them, would be attended with an infinite blessing and advantage.

3. As then, on the one hand, the things of this life, such as praise, riches, and pleasure, are frail, and pass away with the world that supplies them, while, on the other, the love of God endureth forever, it is evident that no satisfaction can be durable that is founded upon the love of self and of earthly objects. Such peace would be interrupted by every trivial circumstance that occurred; whereas, when the mind is firmly set upon God and upon his love, it cannot fail to be preserved in perfect peace and perpetual serenity amid all the changes of this life. Forsake thou, therefore, all things, and thou shalt, by faith, recover all things again; for never can the lover of himself and of the world find the blessed God.

4. Inordinate self-love is begotten of the world, and not of God; it is earthly, and the chief enemy to "the wisdom which is from above" (James 3:17). This wisdom does not seek the praise and the applause of men; and though in

itself "a pearl of great price" (Matt. 13:46), yet appearing with no other recommendation than its own native simplicity, it is but little valued in the world, and, with but few exceptions, is entirely neglected and forgotten; and though there are many who make a boast of this wisdom, yet the gem conceals itself from all who do not desire to apply it in their practice. If, therefore, thou desires" to be possessed of it, O man! lay aside all that human wisdom which "puffeth up" (1 Cor. 8:1), together with thy self-love and self-applause, and then shalt thou exchange thy earthly wisdom, which the world admires, for that which is heavenly and divine. Then, instead of the wisdom of this world, which in its nature is elevated and seeks the applause of men, thou shalt be put in possession of a wisdom which, far from attracting the notice of the world, is despised and rejected by it, but which is, nevertheless, of a divine origin, and of everlasting continuance.

5. It is impossible to love God, until thou abhorrest thyself; that is, until thou art heartily displeased with thyself and with thy sins; until thy own carnal nature is crucified, together with the evil propensities of thy self-will. For the more a man strives to love God, the more he labors to subdue the lusts of the flesh and his sensual appetites; and the more he departs from self and from self-love, by the power of the Spirit of God, the more nearly he approaches, by faith, unto God, and to his divine love. For as inward peace depends on a freedom from desires after the things of this world; so when this peace is once settled in the soul, and the heart has disengaged itself from the ties which bound it to the creature, it returns freely into God, and rests in him alone.

6. Now he who is sincerely disposed to deny himself, must follow, not his own will, but the will of Christ, who has declared, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). As though he had said: "Without the way, no man walketh; without the truth, nothing is known; and without life, no man liveth: therefore, look upon me, who am the way in which it is thy duty to walk, the truth in which thou art called to believe, and the life in which thou art bound to live. I am the unerring way, the infallible truth, and the everlasting life: the way to immortality is through my merit; the truth itself is in my word; and life is through the efficacy of my death; and, therefore, if thou continues" in the way, the truth will guide thee unto eternal life. If thou desires" not to go astray, follow me; if thou wilt know the truth, believe in me; and if thou wouldst possess life everlasting, put thy whole trust in me, who for thy sake have endured the death of the cross."

7. What, indeed, is the safe way, the infallible truth, and the endless life? What, the way, truth, and life, that are more excellent than every other? Surely there is no way, but the holy and precious merits of Christ; no truth, but his eternal word; no life, but a blissful immortality in heaven. If, therefore, O Christian! thou desires" to be raised up into heaven with Christ Jesus, believe in him here, and tread in the footsteps of his humility; this is the safe Way to everlasting glory. If thou wouldst escape the snares of the world, take hold of his Word by faith, and follow the example which he has left for thy imitation; because this is the infallible Truth. And if it be thy wish to live with Christ, then die thou with him and in him unto sin, and become a new creature; for this is Life. Thus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; and he is so, both by his example and by his merit.

8. "Be ye followers of God as dear children" (Eph. 5:1). Let us labor and strive after this one thing; that our lives may resemble the life of Christ. Were there nothing else to confound the false Christian, the example of Christ might effectually and abundantly do it. When we consider that Christ our Lord passed his life in grief and pain, we ought to be ashamed to spend our lives in ease and pleasures. If the soldier forgets his own ease and comfort when he beholds his captain fighting unto death, shalt thou pursue after worldly pleasures and honors, when thy Prince was so ignominiously treated, and, for thy sake, nailed to the cross? Is it not a sign that then thou cost not, in fact, fight under his banner?

9. It is true that, in our day, every one desires to be considered a Christian; but how few are they who imitate the life and deportment of Christ. Had it been the character of a follower of Christ, to aim at the acquisition of honors and possessions, our Lord would never have taught that these are not worthy to be compared with heavenly treasures. Contemplate the life and doctrine of the blessed Jesus, and thou shalt own that nothing can be more opposed than he and the world. Behold that manger and that stable! do they not forcibly evidence a contempt of worldly things? And will the example of Christ lead thee to err from the right way? No! he is the way, and he is the truth; and his life, compared with his doctrine, is the only means to preserve thee from mistake, and to guard thee from the delusions and errors of the world. Since then the Lord hath chosen to enter into his glory by the way of suffering and reproach, why shouldst thou labor to make thy way to hell, through the pomps and vanities of the world? Return, then, O deluded soul! escape from the broad way that leadeth unto death, and in which thy only enjoyment is "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25); enter into this safe Way, in which the wayfaring man shall not stray: cordially embrace that Truth which never can deceive: and live in Him who is Life itself. This way is the truth, and this truth is the way. Awful blindness! a worm of the earth would make himself great in the world, when the Lord of glory abased himself to the very dust. O faithful soul! when thy bridegroom moves to meet thee, clothed with humility, come down from the elevation of thy pride and ambition, and descend into the vale of humiliation to meet

him, and he will embrace and receive thee with joy.

10. As Abraham quitted his father's house, to go into a land which the Lord was to show him (Gen. 12:1), so quit thou, as a true child of Abraham, the pleasure-house of self-will and self-love, that thou mayest obtain the divine blessing. Self-love biases the judgment, blinds the understanding, disturbs the reason, seduces the will, corrupts the conscience, closes the gates of life, and acknowledges neither God nor neighbor. It banishes virtue; seeks after honors, riches, and pleasures; and, in a word, prefers earth to heaven. He, therefore, who thus "loveth his life, shall lose it; but he that hateth his life" (that is, resists this principle of self-love), "shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:25). Self-love is the root of impenitence, and the cause of damnation. They who are controlled by self-love and self-honor are destitute of humility and a knowledge of sin; consequently, they never can obtain the remission of sin, though they seek it with tears; their tears not being shed because they have offended God, but merely on account of the personal loss which they have sustained.

11. the kingdom of heaven is compared in Scripture to "a pearl of great price;" in order to obtain which, a man sold all that he had (Matt. 13:45, 46). This pearl is God himself, and that eternal life which he has promised, and for the attainment of which every other object must be forsaken. We have an example of this in our Lord Jesus Christ, who descended from heaven not for his own sake, but for thy sake; not for his own profit and advantage, but for shine (Luke 19:10). And wilt thou yet delay to love him who gave himself up unto death for thee?

12. It doubtless is the part of a faithful spouse, to please her husband alone: and art thou desirous of pleasing the world, when thou mayest be espoused unto Christ, the great lover of souls? Forsake therefore and sincerely despise all this is in the world, in order that thou mayest become worthy of the eminent dignity of this spiritual marriage: for if thy love cleave not solely to Christ, it is a corrupt and adulterous love, and not that which a Christian should bear to the Redeemer. For the Christian's love to the Redeemer must possess virgin purity.

13. The law of Moses required that the priest should marry a virgin (Lev. 21:13, 14); and Christ, our High Priest, will espouse only a virgin-soul; one that is attached to nothing that the world can offer, but solely to himself; nay, one that loves not even herself, in comparison with Christ. "If any man come to me," he says, "and hate not his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

14. In order to understand what is meant by hating ourselves, we are to remember that we carry about with us "the old man," and are indeed the old man himself; whose nature is to hasten from one sin to another, to love himself, to pursue his own profit and honor, and to indulge his own will and carnal appetite. For the flesh is at all times the same; always considering itself, easily grieved, envious, bitter, covetous, and revengeful. This, O Man! is what thou doest: these sinful motions proceed from thy heart; this is thy very life, even the life of the old man in thee: and therefore thou must of necessity hate thyself, and shine own natural life, if ever thou desires" to be a disciple of Christ. Whoever loves himself, must love his own pride and avarice, his own wrath and hatred, envy and lying, faithlessness and unrighteousness; and, in short, he must love all the progeny of unholy desires, and a corrupt heart. But if thou desires" to be a Christian indeed, thou must not love, nor excuse, nor palliate thy sins, but thou must hate them, forsake them, and subdue them.

The Inheritance and possessions of Christians are not of this world; they should, therefore, regard themselves as strangers in it, while they make use of earthly things.

"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." -1 Timothy 6:7, 8

The design of the blessed God in creating temporal things, was that they might supply man's bodily wants; and it is right that they should be used for such a purpose, and be received at the hands of God with gratitude, attended with fear and trembling. In regard to those things which are not absolutely necessary, whether gold and silver, food and raiment, etc., they are left to man in order to prove him; so that from the manner in which he employs these objects, it may be discovered how he stands affected towards God, while possessed of the goods of this world: whether, on the one hand, he will still cleave to God, and in the midst of earthly possessions, keep his eye constantly fixed on those which are to come; or whether, withdrawing his love from God, he will attach himself to this fleeting world, and prefer a fading earthly paradise, to that which is permanent and heavenly.

2. Man is therefore left to his own liberty and choice, in order that he may be judged hereafter according to that which he has chosen here, and thus be without excuse in that day. Agreeably to this principle, it was the solemn

declaration of Moses to the people of Israel: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19).

3. The things of this world are then designed, not to kill us with earthly delight and pleasures, but to be tests and trials of our fidelity. In these trials the fall is very easy, when once we begin to withdraw from God. The pleasures of this world are the fruits of a forbidden tree; of which we are warned by God not to eat, lest our minds going out after them should eventually take delight in them, after the manner of those who know no other pleasures, but such as are derived from earthly objects. These persons, by indulging the flesh, convert meat, drink, and apparel into snares by which they are turned away from God.

4. It certainly is the duty of every true Christian, to esteem himself a stranger and pilgrim in this world; and as bound to use earthly blessings, not as means of satisfying lust or gratifying wantonness, but of supplying his absolute wants and necessities. We ought not to set our affections on these inferior objects, but on Him alone who is able to satisfy them. To do otherwise, is to expose ourselves to dangerous temptations, and with Eve, to eat daily of the forbidden tree. The real Christian is not intent upon worldly concerns, or delicious fare; for his interior eye is directed to that bread which endureth unto eternal life. Nor is he solicitous about fine and fashionable apparel; aspiring rather after robes of divine light, and the raiment of glorified bodies. In short, all things that please the natural man in this world, are, to a true Christian, only so many crosses and temptations, allurements of sin and snares of death, that continually exercise his virtue. Whatever man uses without the fear of God, whatever he applies to the mere gratifying of his flesh, cannot fail to operate as a poison to the soul, however pleasant and salutary it may appear to be to the body. Yet, so far from laboring to know the forbidden tree of worldly pleasures and its various fruits, man gives himself up to a careless and thoughtless state of life, and yields to the lust of the flesh, not considering that this lust is really the forbidden tree.

5. The Christian, on the other hand, uses all things in the fear of God, and as a stranger and pilgrim on the earth; avoiding every kind of excess in meat, drink, apparel, houses, and the other things of this life, lest, by an improper use of them, he should offend both his Father in heaven, and his fellow-Christians upon earth. He will not so much as gaze on the forbidden tree, in order that he may not be ensnared; but with the eye of faith, he steadfastly beholds the future felicity of the soul, and for the sake of this felicity, refuses to yield to the cravings of corrupt nature. What does it profit the body that in this world it swims in lusts and pleasures, when, after a short period, it must be devoured by worms, and stripped of all its enjoyments! "Naked," says Job, "came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither" (Job 1:21). We bring into the world a naked and infirm, a poor and indigent body; and even this is the spoil of death; for when we pass out off this world we leave it behind us forever.

6. Whatever we enjoy from the time of our birth to the period of our dissolution, is all the bread of mercy and affliction, and designed to supply the bare wants of this mortal life. At the approach of death all is taken from us again, and we depart out of the world poorer than when we entered it. When man enters the world, he brings with him life and a body, and finds the necessary shelter, meat, and drink provided for him; but, after existing a short time, he is, in a moment, bereft of all, and leaves behind him even his body and his life. Consider then, O man! whether there can be anything more wretched and poor, more naked and miserable, than man when he dies, if he be not clothed with Christ's righteousness, and enriched in his God.

7. As, therefore, we are confessedly strangers and pilgrims here, and the hour of dissolution must leave behind us every earthly enjoyment, let us at least, cease to encumber our souls with things which we cannot carry out of this world, and the use of which is restricted to this life only. Is it not a species of madness to heap up riches for a frail body, for a body which we must leave behind us, and which cannot possibly enjoy wealth hereafter? (Luke 12:20,21). Are we ignorant that there is another and a better world, another body and another life, and that, whatever we may appear in the sight of men, we are in the eye of God only strangers and sojourners on the earth? (Psa. 39:12; Lev. 25:23). "Ye are," saith the Lord, "strangers and sojourners with me," that is, "before my eyes, although ye may not remember it."

8. If, then, we are strangers and sojourners, it follows that our country and our home must be elsewhere. This will be most evident to us, if we compare time with eternity, the visible with the invisible world, the earthly tabernacle with the heavenly, and things that are frail and perishing, with those that are lasting and eternal. Such a comparison will afford us a due insight into time and eternity, and lead us to behold with the eye of faith, such things as remain altogether unknown to the unthinking multitude. It is from the want of this consideration, that so many become lax and disorderly in their manners, wallow in the mire of earthly pleasures, and drown themselves in avarice and worldly cares. It is from the want of this reflection, that the major part of mankind, however keen and shrewd in the

pursuits of this world, are blind and insensible to the concerns of the immortal soul. They addict themselves so much to this life, as to esteem it to be the most delightful, the best and noblest of all; while the true Christian, on the contrary, accounts it an exile, a vale of tears, a place of misery, a deep and dark prison.

9. Hence it is that those who love this world, and seek their happiness in it, do not excel even the brute creation in wisdom or understanding; and as they live, so they die like beasts (Psa. 49:12, 20). They are totally blind as it respects the inward man; they do not even think of heavenly and eternal things; they never rejoice in God, but only in the low and sordid pleasures afforded by this world. It is in earthly things that they seek their rest and their enjoyment; and having obtained their object after much labor and toil, they sit quietly down and congratulate themselves on their possessions. Wretched, miserable men! blind and insensible to the tremendous concerns of their eternal salvation! here, they lie contentedly in the darkness of ignorance, soon to remove hence to that of death and damnation (Luke 1:79).

10. In order to our better acquaintance with the nature of our pilgrimage here, we should unceasingly consider the example left us by the Redeemer, and earnestly follow him both in his life and doctrine. He hath set us an unerring pattern of universal holiness. He is our captain and our guide; and to his life and manners, our lives and our manners should be conformed. Go thou, therefore, and look unto him; unto him who, when the greatest of all men, voluntarily chose that life in which nothing of greatness appeared; a life of meanness, poverty, and contempt of honor, wealth, and pleasure, the threefold deity of this world. All these things, to which the world offers sacrifice, the Lord contemned; for he himself said, "He had not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20).

11. Such, likewise, was the character of David; who, before his exaltation to the throne, was poor and despised; and who, when created king, accounted all his regal splendor as nothing compared with eternal life, and the kingdom of God, to which he was called. "How amiable," says he, "are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."-"A day in thy courts is better than a thousand" (Psa. 84). As if he had said, I possess a kingdom, and have people subject to my sway; I possess kingly palaces, and the strong hold of Zion; but what are all these in comparison of thy tabernacle, O Lord of hosts? So, too, Job found comfort in his Redeemer" (Job 19:25).

12. Neither Peter, nor Paul, nor any of the apostles, sought the riches of this life, but directed their attention to those which were laid up in another and better world. Hence they freely espoused the despised life of Christ, walking in his charity, lowliness, and patience; contemning the earth, and triumphing over the world, its snares, and its allurements. They prayed for those who cursed them; they thanked those who reproached them; they blessed those who reviled them (1 Cor. 4:12; Acts 5:41). When they were persecuted, they glorified God; when scourged, they were immovably patient, professing that "through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22); and when slaughtered, they prayed (with Christ their Head), "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34); "lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). Thus were they, on the one hand, dead to all wrath and revenge; to bitterness, ambition, and pride; to the love of the world, and of their own life also; while, on the other, they lived in Christ and in his love, in his meekness and humility, his patience and his resignation. They are, indeed, made alive in Christ by faith, who thus live.

13. To a lover of the world, this excellent way of life is unknown; for with regard to those who do not live in Christ, nor know that the truth is in him, these are still dead in their sins; dead in wrath and hatred, in envy and avarice, in pride and revenge; and as long as they so continue, they are in a state of impenitence, and have not been quickened by faith in Jesus, be their boasting what it may. But the genuine disciples of Christ know it to be a duty to follow the steps of their divine Master (1 Pet. 2:21), and to be conformed to his life, as the supreme and original pattern of all virtue and goodness. In a word, the life of Christ is their exemplar; he himself is their book, whence they derive all solid and substantial learning, as it respects both life and doctrine. Such persons declare with the apostle, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:8). And with holy men of old they unite in saying, "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" Heb. 13:14).

14. If, then, from a review of all these considerations, it evidently appear, as it surely does, that in this world we are strangers and have no abiding place, it follows that we were not created for the sake of earthly things as the ultimate end of our being; but that there remain for us another country and other dwellings, to gain which we ought not to hesitate to sacrifice a hundred worlds, or even life itself. These are subjects upon which the true Christian continually meditates with pleasure; and it is his joy that here he has no continuing city, but is created for life eternal. But how sad is the state of those who, occupied wholly in pursuing the things of this life, lade their souls

with a crushing weight of worldly vanities, and thereby expose them to endless perdition.