

CHEAP TRACTS, No. 20.

TRUE RELIGION  
SOURCE OF HAPPINESS;  
A SERMON:

WITH  
THOUGHTS ON

THE SHORTNESS & IMPORTANCE  
OF TIME.

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*O happy is the man who hears  
Instruction's warning voice;  
And who celestial Wisdom makes  
his early, only choice.*

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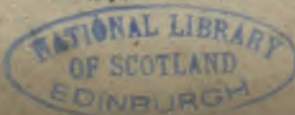
*Then what's our life? a vapour sure!  
Away it swiftly flies;  
The joys of life, how insecure!  
How trifling such a prize!*

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TRUE RELIGION A SOURCE  
OF PLEASURE.

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PROVERBS, III. 17.

*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and  
her paths are peace.*

THERE are few opinions which have obtained greater currency in the world, than that religion is a very dull, austere, melancholy affair; and that, in order to make the Christian profession in sincerity and truth, a person must bid adieu to the pleasures of life, and to every enjoyment that renders life desirable. It is, indeed, very certain that serious, practical piety, which has its basis in the fear and love of God, is an utter enemy to that noisy merriment that characterizes the laughter of fools, and which the scriptures assimilate to the cracking of thorns under a pot: a mere flash of the moment, occasioned by

ebullition of the animal spirits, producing a mere transient bluster, and then vanishing into emptiness. No; the happiness of a Christian is a serious thing. It consists in

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy;  
The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy.

To be convinced, however, that the men of the world are carried away with a popular error, when they imagine true religion to be a gloomy thing, they need only to read the Bible with an unprejudiced mind, and to give credit to its sacred dictates. They would then presently find that it is replete with encouragements, exhortations, and persuasions to the children of God to abound in the delightful exercise of praise, and gratitude, and joy. Hence it is that we read such passages as the following: "Rejoice evermore—and in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."—"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice."—"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."—"With

joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day ye shall say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name be exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things, let this be known in all the earth: Cry out and shout thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."

From this specimen of the grounds, and motives, and injunctions, to "rejoice and be exceeding glad," which every where pervade the sacred pages, we may at once perceive how greatly those mistake the matter, who suppose, that in order to be truly religious, they must needs be melancholy. But as many false notions respecting this important matter prevail even among professors themselves, I shall endeavour briefly to analyze the constituent principles of true religion, or godliness, and evince from the very nature of the thing, as well as from the divine testimony, that it is impossible to be truly religious without being comparatively happy; and that none but such persons can possibly be so. With a view to this I have chosen the words of Solomon, as the ground of my discourse, who, speaking of Wisdom, affirms that

“Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” In attempting an illustration of the text, I purpose,

I. To consider what is here meant by Wisdom.

II. Illustrate the truth of the proposition, that, “*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*”

III. I shall answer a few objections.

I. We are to consider what is here meant by wisdom, which is mentioned in ver. 13. and referred to by the pronoun *her* in our text. By wisdom here we are not to understand that *natural sagacity* which some men are possessed of in a higher degree than others; for there is nothing praise-worthy in mere natural talents, which, though a blessing in themselves, are often abused to the purposes of folly and vice, the very opposite of wisdom,—Nor are we to understand by wisdom, that **CUNNING**, or **POLITICAL CRAFTINESS** which is to be found in the most wicked characters, and is generally the object of fear and suspicion rather than of esteem.—Neither does it signify that **WORLDLY ACQUIRED WISDOM**,

of which Solomon says elsewhere, "*In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow,*" Eccles. i. 18 for the reverse of this is affirmed of true wisdom, "*She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her,*" Prov. iii. 18.

But the wisdom here intended is that which has the **FEAR OF THE LORD** for its beginning, or chief part, ch. i. 7. and ix. 10. which imports the true **KNOWLEDGE** and supreme **LOVE** of his character, with an **ESTEEM** of his favour as our chief happiness. So he that findeth this wisdom is said to "*understand the fear of the Lord,*" and to find "*the knowledge of God,*" ch. ii. 5. Now as we know nothing of God but as he has been pleased to reveal himself, so the most perfect display which God hath given of himself is in and by his Son, who is made unto us wisdom, and hath declared his Father's name, his grace, and his salvation, to the children of men, John i. 18.—xvii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30. To know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, is to be wise unto salvation, for it is life eternal, and with this is connected the true fear and love of God.

Further, the wisdom in our text is such as influenceth us to conform to the will of

God in heart and life. This will appear from the different things connected with it, such as uprightness, righteousness, judgment, equity, every good path, Prov. ii. 7, 9. liberality, patience under affliction, &c. ch. iii. 9, 11. 12. so that it includes in it both the principles and practices of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, Tit. ii. 12. When the Psalmist says, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,*" he adds, "*a good understanding have all they that do his commandments,*" Psalm. cxi. 10. This is true wisdom, and every thing short of it, or opposed to it is folly, vanity, and vexation of spirit.

II. It is affirmed of this Wisdom, that "*her ways are ways of pleasantness; and all her paths are peace.*" It is of the utmost consequence to be thoroughly convinced of this. The love of happiness is deeply implanted in our nature by God himself, and nothing can effectually attach us to the ways of wisdom, but a strong conviction that our own true happiness is connected with walking in them. Many will admit that the ways of true religion ultimately land in happiness; but then they imagine that all the way thither is a most cheerless, melancholy, and unpleasant path. The fact is, they do not relish religion itself; their minds are not formed for its enjoy-

ments; but set upon other objects which religion prohibits; and hence they consider it as inimical to their present happiness. But our text not only affirms that wisdom's ways issue in happiness at last, but that they are at present ways of pleasantness and paths of peace to them that walk in them. And to this the experience of the saints has borne witness in all ages. The Psalmist says, "*I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches,*" Psalm cxix. 24. "*I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved,*" ver. 47. And in general he says, "*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his ways,*" Psalm, xxxvii. 23. But it will also appear from the nature of things that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace, if we consider,

1. That the PRINCIPLES of true wisdom are pleasant, and productive of peace and happiness to the minds of those who really understand and believe them. These principles are clearly revealed in the gospel which is glad tidings of great joy. Here we have such an amiable display of God and of his love in Christ Jesus towards guilty sinners—such a full and free salvation, every way suited by divine wisdom



and grace to our guilty and deplorable condition—such inestimable blessings of present pardon and peace with God, and such glorious prospects of everlasting future happiness; that reason itself must admit these truths to be every way calculated to support the mind under a conscious sense of guilt, and in the prospect of death and judgment, which naturally appal the hearts of men; and not only so, but also to fill the believer of them with all joy and peace. Paul counted all things but loss and dung for this excellent knowledge. His soul was happy in it, amidst all the afflictions he suffered on its account. This was also the case with those who at first believed the gospel; and from the very nature of the thing, it must be so to the end.

2. The DISPOSITIONS and AFFECTIONS influenced by these principles, are a source of pleasure and peace to the mind, both in their nature and effects. The effects of the Gospel believed, are love to God and men, hope, joy, peace, humility, temperance, meekness, patience, gentleness, contentment, &c. These and such like are fruits of the Spirit, and not only constituent parts of holiness, but of happiness. They are the health of the soul; but their opposites are its maladies, and its misery. The soul

can never be happy while alienated from God, and under the dominion of corrupt and insatiable desires, malevolent dispositions, and unruly passions; these are harpies that prey upon the peace of the soul, and fill it with disorder and misery. What a happiness to be delivered from these, and to have the fruits of the Spirit which are life and peace to the soul.

3. The CONDUCT influenced by such principles, dispositions, and affections, is obedience to the revealed will of God, and this properly speaking is to walk in the WAYS and PATHS of wisdom, for as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, so a good understanding have all they that do his commandments. His commandments are all ways of pleasantness and paths of peace; for "*great peace have they that love his law; nothing shall stumble or offend them,*" Psalm, cxix. 165. The divine precepts are all CONDUCIVE TO HAPPINESS from their very nature; and this philosophy acknowledges with respect to such of them as respect morality. The principle of the law is LOVE, and its precepts are only so many directions to the proper exercise of love. We are always gratified and happy in acting suitably to our affections; and it is this free, happy, and delightful obedience, that Christ demands; "*If ye*

love me, keep my commandments," John xiv. 15.—"If a man love me, he will keep my words," ver. 23. and so Paul says, "the love of Christ constraineth us," 2 Cor. v. 14. How pleasant must that obedience be which is under such a constraint.—The institutions of the gospel are all means of corresponding with God, and of holding communion with him; and therefore must be delightful and pleasant to those who love him. "How amiable 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," Psalm, lxxxiv. 1, 2.—The joyful testimony of conscience attends the paths and ways of wisdom, which is no small source of joy. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward," 2 Cor. i 12. "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another," Gal. vi. 4.—The promise of special manifestation by the Spirit as the Comforter, is made to them who keep Christ's commandments; "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he

*that loveth me shall be loved of my Father  
 and I will love him, and will manifest myself to  
 him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord,  
 how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto  
 us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered  
 and said unto him, if a man love me, he will  
 keep my words: and my Father will love him,  
 and we will come unto him, and make our  
 abode with him,"* John, xiv. 21—23.—The  
 lively hope of eternal life attends the way  
 and paths of wisdom: "And we desire  
 that every one of you do shew the same  
 diligence to the full assurance of hope un-  
 to the end," Heb. vi. 11. "Who are kept  
 by the power of God through faith unto  
 salvation ready to be revealed in the last  
 time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though  
 now for a season, if need be, ye are in  
 heaviness through manifold temptations,  
 that the trial of your faith, being much  
 more precious than of gold that perisheth,  
 though it be tried with fire, might be  
 found unto praise and honour and glory  
 at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom  
 having not seen, ye love; in whom, though  
 now ye see him not, yet believing, ye re-  
 joice with joy unspeakable and full of  
 glory: receiving the end of your faith,  
 even the salvation of your souls," 1 Pet. i.  
 5—9.—Lastly, Wisdom's ways are not only  
 ways of pleasantness and peace in this

world, but they land in everlasting peace and happiness beyond death and the grave. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." Psalm, xxxvii. 37. Those who are made free from sin, and become servants to God. have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, Rom. vi. 22. It is the way, or path, which leads to life in the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, Psalm, xvi. 11. Thus I have briefly illustrated the proposition in our text, and shall now

III. Answer a few objections.

1. It is objected that "Christ declares the gate is STRAIT, and the way NARROW, that leadeth unto life; how then can it be a way of pleasantness and peace?" Matt. vii. 13, 14. To which I answer, that this straitness and narrowness arises not from any thing in the nature of the way itself, but from something about ourselves which is very opposite to that way; such as our ignorance, unbelief, pride, self-righteousness, love of this present world, &c. Were we freed from these things, we should walk at liberty, and find the way full of pleasantness and peace.

2. But "it is a way which requires SELF-DENIAL, which is rather painful than pleasant." I answer, The pain of self-denial is only felt by sinful self. Were we free of unlawful desires, and propensities, we should not feel this pain. To deny ourselves UNLAWFUL pleasures is only to thwart our corruptions, the source of all our unhappiness. To deny ourselves in LAWFUL things for Christ's sake, is only to exchange a less for a greater good, which every wise merchant will do with pleasure.

3. But "the CROSS is part of wisdom's ways, and is far from being pleasant." I answer, Though the cross attends the way of wisdom in this world, yet it is not properly her ways, but the effect of the hatred and opposition of the world to them. The cross is not unpleasant to them who love Christ. They rejoice in tribulation, and in being counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, Acts, v. 41. Rom. v. 3. And surely, those must be pleasant paths which make men joyful and happy even in tribulations, which in themselves are not joyous but grievous.

4. "Sorrow and REPENTANCE for sin do not appear pleasant." It should be noticed, however, that the sorrow and un-

ness of repentance is not the native fruit of duty and obedience, but of sin—nor is it peculiar to Wisdom's ways; for natural men have often deep remorse.—The pleasure of true repentance far surpasseth its pain; for true repentance is the exercise of love to God and hatred of sin, and is always attended with hope in his mercy, and more or less of a sense of pardon. It is our restoration to a state of happiness, from which impenitence necessarily excludes us. See the parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke xv.

5. But "the fact seems to contradict all this. Many who seem very religious, do not appear very happy." Answer, All who appear religious are not really so; for many are very serious, who have never yet known the truth that makes free; and so they are labouring to establish their own righteousness, and are neither delivered from the guilt of sin in their consciences, nor from the dominion of sin in their hearts; consequently cannot have this peace and happiness, for they are not in Wisdom's ways. Again, there are many who take up a profession of religion, while it never had the chief place in their hearts. Such cannot have peace and happiness in it. Conscience may prompt them to comply with

outward observances; but if their heart does not relish it, or if their affections are divided betwixt God and this world, they cannot be happy in Wisdom's ways. I may further add, that there are many who are sincere Christians, but their comfort is much marred by ignorance—by the weakness of their faith—by judging of their state from improper, or fluctuating evidences, such as passionate emotions, &c. and there are some who are constitutionally of a melancholy cast. But none of these things can fairly and justly be attributed to Wisdom's ways.

Thus have I evinced the truth of the proposition in the text, that the ways of Wisdom are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace; and have also endeavoured to obviate the most plausible objections that are raised by the unbelieving heart against the Christian profession. I come now, before I dismiss the subject, calmly expostulate with those, if any such there be, who are so unhappy as to have imbibed these unfounded prejudices against religion or the ways of Christ. You are anxious seeking after happiness; but alas, you are vainly pursuing it, in a course where it never yet was found, and where indeed it is impossible in the nature of things to



ever should attain unto it! What a mercy must it be to you to be undeceived on a matter of such unspeakable importance. Perhaps you expect to find substantial bliss in the PLEASURES of the world; the gratification of your appetites and fleshly lusts; by living in softness, delicacy and effeminacy! But mark what Solomon says of this from his own experience: "All things are full of labour: man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing," Eccl. i. 8. "Whatever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy—out, behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun," ch. ii. 10, 11. It is absolutely impossible for any to be happy while under the dominion of tormenting, pernicious, contradictory, unsatisfied and insatiable passions. Perhaps you are seeking this blessing in the pursuit of RICHES and HONOUR; but can these give ease to the soul, or is it possible to satisfy the inordinate cravings of covetousness and ambition? Listen again to the experience of Solomon: "I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces"—so that his possessions exceeded all that were in Jerusalem before

him, Eccles. ii. 7, 8. But he found himself just as much disappointed of the object of his pursuit as ever. He sought too, in the acquisition of science, who certainly it is much more likely to be found than in pleasure, riches, or honour; but what says he to this? "I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I will come to great estate, and have obtained more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge: And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit; for in much (worldly) wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," Eccles. i. 16—

Be persuaded then, you who are seeking happiness in similar courses, that the object is unattainable therein, and credit the decision of the same inspired teacher when he tells you in the words of the text, that Wisdom's ways, and they also are ways of pleasantness, and that her paths are peace." Hearken to the voice that now speaks to you from heaven through the medium of the written word: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls," Matt. xi. 28, 29. But beware how you rifle with subjects of such momentous concern. "Behold now is the accepted time; and now is the day of salvation." He that cometh to Jesus shall never hunger: and he that believeth on him shall never thirst, John vi. 35. Oh, that he may never have it to say of any of you, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and ye regarded it not; but have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh—because ye hated knowledge, and did not despise the fear of the Lord," Prov. i. 24-29.

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## ON THE SHORTNESS AND IMPORTANCE OF TIME.

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John iv. 14.—*For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

To a reflecting mind, regulated by the word of God, the occurrences of every day will furnish abundant evidence of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and the precarious nature of all earthly enjoy-

ments. But there are certain periods in the revolutions of time, and particular dispensations of divine providence more immediately calculated to imprint the mind with a deep sense of this important truth. The history of the world in all ages, universal experience, and general observation, unite in confirming the testimony of Scripture, that "*man that is born a woman is of few days, and full of trouble,*" Job, xv. Indeed there is no subject, the truth of which is more universally acknowledged, than the shortness and uncertainty of human life. But while all are ready to confess the truth, yet how few, alas! among children of men live as if they really believed this important fact. And hence we see the language of the poet verified to an exceedingly great degree. "*All men think all men mortal but themselves.*"

But though time be short, even as a hand-breadth or a span, it is of infinite value, it is of incalculable importance to the human race. ETERNITY stands in TIME with everlasting importance to all. Time is the prelude, it is the forerunner to eternity: it is the introduction to heaven or hell; to everlasting felicity or to everlasting misery and woe. To one or other of these states it has introduced all who have lived, and will most certainly introduce all who are now present living, or shall hereafter live upon the surface of the earth. How incalculable then is the importance of time, and yet how short and uncertain is its duration! But though the importance of time is not readily appear to all, it should ever be remembered that it can only be of real advantage to any as it is improved in the present moment. Where is the whole space of time which has elapsed since the dawn of the first morning till the present moment? Where is the present hour? Its moments are on the wing, flying with rapid velocity! And if we ask where is to-morrow, or where is the next hour? the question is involved in uncertainty, because it

gs to futurity ; for who knows what shall be on  
 morrow, or even the next hour ? " For what is  
 ur life ?" saith the Apostle James, " it is even a  
 our, that appeareth for a little time, and then  
 ishetii away " May this solemn consideration lead  
 all duly to appreciate and improve the present  
 ment.

The important lesson to be learned from the con-  
 eration of the shortness and the uncertainty of  
 e, is to improve it. " It is appointed unto men  
 e to die, but after this the judgment." " For we  
 st all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,  
 t every one may receive the things done in his  
 ly, according to that he hath done, whether it  
 good or bad." The consideration of a future  
 gment produces very different effects, according  
 the two different views taken of it by the two  
 erent classes of men, the righteous and the wicked.  
 ievers of the gospel, while in this world, like  
 er men, are the subjects of various and numerous  
 ictions, of sorrow, of disease and death. They  
 ow that it is through much tribulation they must  
 er the kingdom. They know that all things work  
 ethoder for their good ; and though " no chastening  
 the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous ;  
 urthertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit  
 ightheousness to them that are exercised thereby." The  
 e consideration of the shortness of time, in one  
 nt of view, is not a subject of regret to the believer.  
 looks forward to death as the happy period which  
 ll terminate the scene of distress and dissappoint-  
 nt, with which he hath been surrounded in this  
 e of tears, this valley of the shadow of death.  
 knows that " Jesus Christ hath abolished death,  
 brought life and immortality to light by the  
 pel." He can adopt the language of the apostle  
 im. iv. 6-8. " For I am now ready to be offered  
 the time of my departure is at hand. I have

fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." The experience of every believer, will found more or less to correspond with that of the apostle in this passage, according to the strength of his faith in the divine testimony, and the conviction which he has of things not seen. Paul does not mean that his death should be a sacrifice for sin, but only an evidence of his faith in Christ, of his attachment to him, and of his belief of the excellency of the truths which he taught. He was ready to die by whatever means. He did not put off the consideration of eternity till a dying hour. He knew whom he had believed. He made his calling and election sure, and, therefore, was prepared for death, and could not but rejoice in the prospect of it, patiently waiting for the day of his departure, the king of terrors. He knew that death to him would be a gain; that when the earthly house of his tabernacle is dissolved, he had a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. He, therefore, desired to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better than any thing under the sun. He knew that the time of his departure was at hand, he was not put to confusion. He was ready to die with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He was superior to the fear of death, and, therefore, he speaks of it in the most pleasant and composed manner as a *departure*. A departure from a world of trouble, of sorrow, of misery and disappointment, to a land of peace, happiness, joy, unspeakable pleasure and eternal glory: a departure from a waste and howling wilderness, to a land flowing with milk and honey: a departure from an enemy's country, to his father's house.

And hence in the prospect of death he enjoyed perfect peace and tranquility of mind. Mark the perfect, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.

Such was the comfortable state of mind in which the apostle Paul contemplated his approaching dissolution; and such in some degree, will be the experience of all, in the contemplation of death, who, with the apostle, have obtained like precious faith in the promises of God; who are justified by faith in the righteousness of Jesus, sanctified by his word and Spirit, and saved by his grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life.

But on the other hand, how different are the effects produced in the minds of those who disbelieve the gospel, in the prospect of death and judgment. If they reflect at all on the shortness and uncertainty of time, their minds are filled with pain and anxiety. They have no well grounded hope of appearing with safety before the Judge of the living and the dead. Indeed the very prospect of this fills their guilty minds with horror. They cannot endure it, and hence the numerous sinful pleasures which men have contrived to kill time, and banish the reflections of futurity from their minds. In this way many succeed so long as health and prosperity are continued. But when some mortal disease seizes their body, and the king of terrors stares them in the face, they have nothing to support their mind, and nothing can defend their mortal body from the stroke of death. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death."

Others again who are still more hardened in their infidelity and rebellion against God, when death stares them in the face, betake themselves to the miserable doctrine of annihilation. But such a refuge, or rather subterfuge, is vain. it is sure to misgive in the hour of extremity. It is impossible for a guilty sinner to divest himself of the keen apprehensions of

immortality, of the lively forebodings of a future state. It may with confidence be asserted, that there never was a man, that there never can be a man, who shall at all times, and in every situation, be completely destitute of the feeling and conviction that he is an immortal creature. How foolish and vain then is it to attempt to banish reflection from the mind respecting the momentous concerns of eternity. Time is short, and death is certain. We know that we must all soon die. In the course of a few years at most, we shall all go the way whence we shall not return. The year which has now begun its course, will doubtless be that important period of time which will introduce many of us into eternity. The question then which each reader should ask himself is, "Am I ready to die?" and those only can answer this question in the affirmative, who have fled for refuge to the hope set before the guilty in the gospel of Christ, who are resting all their hopes on his "finished work," and rejoicing in his righteousness, as the sole ground of their hope and confidence towards God. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

For the origin of this at it is not to be found in the  
 form of eternity. It is impossible for a guilty sin-  
 ner to direct himself of the beam apprehensions of