

which God has ordained, would change almost the entire aspect of death, even in this fallen world.

These remarks seem necessary in order to obtain a correct idea of the character of death, when not aggravated by the sins of men. For those aggravations seem superadded, in the case of men, as penal inflictions for their sins; and we ought to leave them out of the account, when we are considering death as a benevolent provision. I do not contend that death, even in its mildest forms, is no evil, nor that the apostacy of man was not the cause of its introduction into the world. These points I shall consider in another place. But I contend that, in the present system of the world, death, when not aggravated by the sins of men, is to be regarded as a benevolent provision, bringing with it more happiness than misery; although, had sin never existed, a system productive of still greater enjoyment might have been adopted in this world. But as the arrangements of the world now are, death affords the following evidences of infinite benevolence and wisdom.

In the *first place*, it is a transfer from a lower to a higher state of existence.

Let me here be understood distinctly as speaking only of the death of those accountable beings, who, by the transforming power of grace, have become prepared for a higher and perfectly holy state of being. For the death of all others can be looked on only in the light of a terrible penal infliction. But the righteous, when they die, (and all may, if they will, become righteous,) have before them the certain prospect of immortal happiness, such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man to conceive." They enter upon "fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore;" and therefore death to them is infinite gain.

Whether the inferior animals will exist again after death is a more doubtful point. There is certainly nothing in Scripture decisive against their future existence; for the passage in Psalms which says, that "man that is in honour and abideth not is like the brutes that perish," if understood to mean the annihilation of animals, would prove also the annihilation of wicked men. And while most men of learning and piety have suspended their opinion on the existence of the inferior animals after death, for want of evidence, some have been decided