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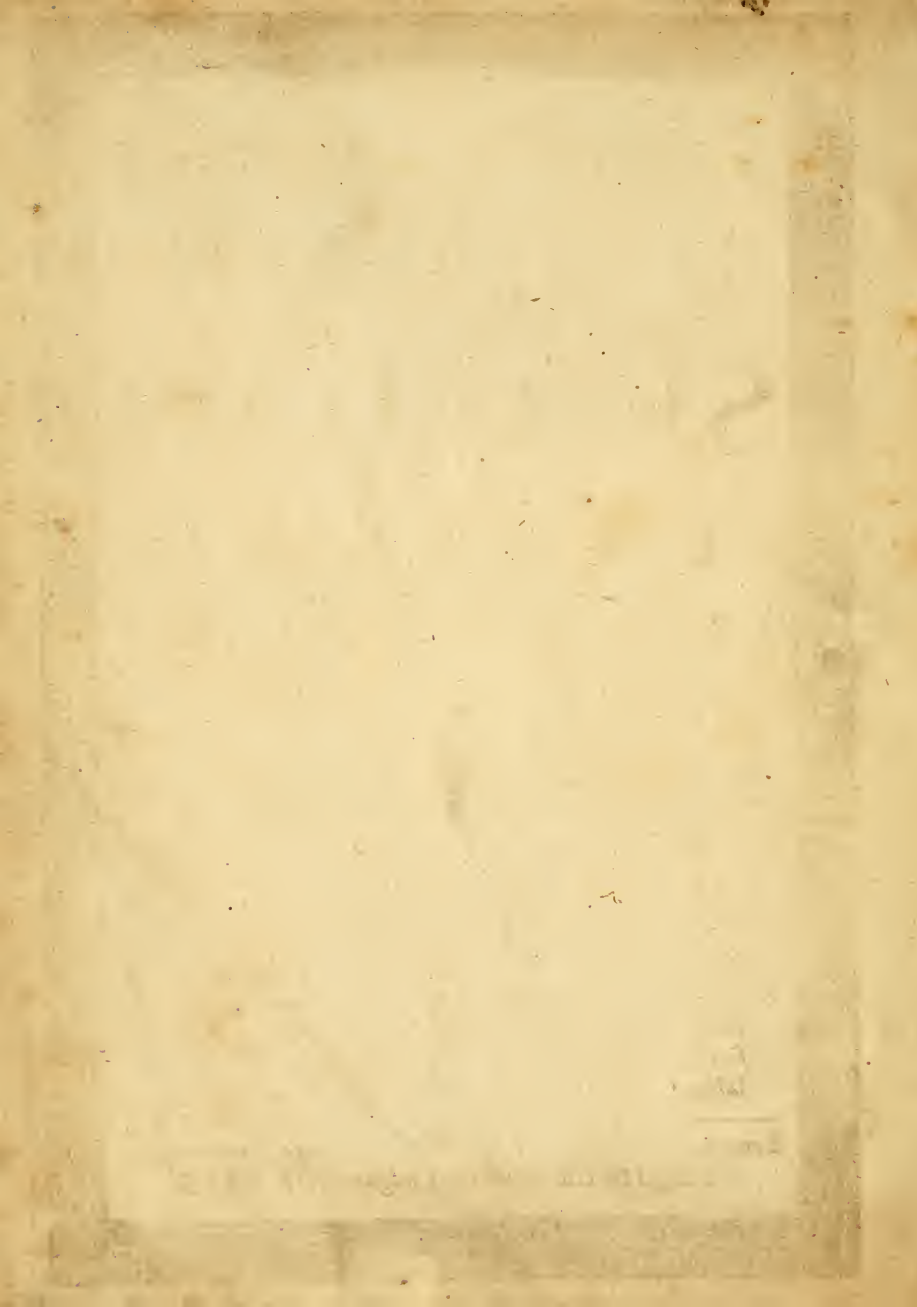
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THE
Faithfull Christians Gain
BY
D E A T H:
Opened, confirmed, and improved, in a
SERMON
AT THE
FUNERAL
of the Right Honourable
ESSEX, Countess of *Manchester*,
Preached at *Kimbolton*, Octob. 12. 1658.

By *Simeon Ashe* Minister of the Gospel at *St Augustines* in *Watlingstreet*, London.

The righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, every one walking in his uprightnes. Isa. 57. 1, 2.

And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them, Rev. 14. 13.

London, Printed by *A. M.* for *George Sawbridge* at the Sign of the Bible on *Ludgate-Hill*, 1659.

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TO THE
Right Honourable
EDWARD

Earl of *Manchester* Viscount
Mandevile, Baron of
Kimbolton.

Right Honourable,



*His Sermon was Preached,
and is now Printed upon
your Lordships Desires,
which my great Respects to
your Honour, do interpret
to be commands. I pro-
fesse, that I did not judge
it worthy publick view;
and therefore I laid my*

*Notes aside, till by the Reiteration of your Re-
quest,*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

quest, I was necessitated to re-assume them, which hath occasioned the enlarging of my Meditations. My Lord, since I promised to make this Sermon publick, your Expectations have been long frustrated, by reason of my many bodily distempers, accompanied with other unlooked for diversions. Now hoping that your Lordship, will accept this my Apologie, for my Delays, I doe humbly present, that Sermon in Print, which you have often called for. My Lord, The Almighty hath seen cause to exercise you, with mixtures of Providences. As he hath set you high in the estimations of many, who have experienced your worth, and your conscientious steadinesse, in Covenant-keeping with God and man (notwithstanding the manifold temptations, whereby you have beene solicited to change your course:.) So his Majestie hath been pleased, to give you a great share in the discomforts of these troublesome times. Your Name hath been blasted, as a man unfaithfull to your Trust, when the Parliament had made you Major-General of the Easterne Association; And you have been a great Sufferer in your outward Estate, having been cut short of sundry thousand pounds due Debt, because you would not (for in Conscience you could not) engage with some men, in their Principles and Practices: But as your Integrity cleared your Lordship, in the Consciences of your Accusers; So your inward peace doth more than countervail your outward losses. And now (my Lord) it cannot but paine your heart, (as it doth many thousands besides.) to see Religion it self wounded through the sides of your self
and

The Epistle Dedicatory.

and others, who appeared for the Parliament in the Warre betwixt the late King and it, because such who seemed zealous in the same cause, have not only deserted, but have made, and still doe make opposition against the Essentials thereof. But (my Lord) the naked Narrative of that first undertaking, compared with your subsequent and present practice, may vindicate your Lordship, (with all others who continue firme to their primary principles) from the Aspersions of distempered Spirits. When the late King forsook his Parliament, being misguided by evil Councillours, the raising of an Army, was judged necessary to restore Peace, preserve Religion, establish Fundamental Lawes, and secure the ancient Priviledges of Parliament. This was the Good Old Cause, held forth by the Solemne League and Covenant, in the Defence whereof, so much Treasure and Blood was exhausted. And this, this only was in the hearts of your Lordship and multitudes more, whose sincerity (expressed by their practices) doth now yeeld refreshing, when others crying up the Good Old Cause, doe pollute Religion, violate Lawes, tear Parliaments into peeces, and governe according to their own pleasure, which is matter of much lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation unto Posterity.

And now (my good Lord) God hath by a stroak (breaking your Conjugal Relation) removed an Helptr, whereby your heart was wont to be supported in the times of your heavinesse; but yet, you may, and doe encourage your self in the Lord your
God:

The Epistle Dedicatory.

God: For, as you hope, that her Ladiships Death is her gain; so your care to advance Godlinesse in your self, and your Relations, will undoubtedly gain the sanctification of your afflictions, with ground of rejoycing to the dayes of Eternity, through Christ.

My Lord, the subject matter of this Sermon, viz. (Gain by Death) was seasonable at a Funeral, both for the comfort of real mourners, and to move the Auditors to lay in such provision for their later end, that the thought thereof might rather be joyous than grievous to their spirits: How chearing are expectations of a good shelter unto Travellers in stormy weather? At this time (notwithstanding our present peace) black clouds (as many fear) are gathering, which threaten us with a sharp tempest, and therefore this discourse may, upon that account, be judged the more serviceable unto your Lordship and others, which that it may be, is the Prayer of

My Lord,

May 2^d.
1659.

Your Honours humble and

faithfull Servant

Simeon Ashe.



Phil. I. 21.

To die is gain.



To die is gain. This assertion is a Post mortem,
nulla voluptas. Paradox, not only unto the *Heathenish Epicures*, but also to all unbelieving Christians. Men without God in this world, do acknowledge no contentment, or delight to be enjoyed in another world. Such were their apprehensions, who said, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die.* And that *Epicure* was of the same mind, who having laid in provisions, for the comforts of this present life, spake these words, *Soul, Soul, Take thy rest, for thou hast goods laid up for many years.* But *S Paul* being animated by an higher, and a more noble spirit, with confidence doth report, *That to die is gain.* This assertion of the holy Apostle is to be understood, 1. Either according to the interpretation of his love. 2. Or according to the expectation of his faith. sa 22.12.

First, *S Pauls* love to *Jesus Christ*, was so strong and operative, that, as he made his glory, the end of his life, [*To me to live is Christ*] So he would account it a great gain unto himself, if by dying as a Martyr for him, he might be to the honour of his Name. And doubtless this is the ingenuity of Go-

spel-love unto the Lord Jesus, in the heart, which knoweth his worth, and its personal propriety in him. This our Apostle was ready, not *only to be bound, but also to die for Christ*. Yea he himself, with others, being cruelly dealt with by persecutours, *rejoyced, that they were indeed worthy to suffer for his sake*. For as they see cause to prize Christ, in regard of his personal worth infinitely above themselves: So they for the present possess in him, and for the future look for much more from him, than their lives, their All, which they have to lose, can possibly countervail. They know, *That it is given* (as a priviledge of grace) *to suffer for Christ*. And therefore S: Paul mentioneth this, as a matter of glorying, that for Christ, he had *sustained the losse of all things*. His reputation in the world, and hopes of preferment from the great ones of the times, together with his personal liberty (for now he was a prisoner in bonds) were lost already, and life it self, now lay at stake.

Whereas vain-glorious spirits amongst the children of men, are lavish of their own limbs and lives, for the honour of such, who have advanced them into high-places of favour and honour; yea they do boast of the hazards runne, and the hardships endured upon that account. This our blessed Apostle doth upon farre better grounds, in a way of holy triumph, reckon up the several troublesome exercises, which he had experienced in a Christian course for Christ: thus he boasteth with confidence, *I have been in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often, &c.*

And now, expecting to be made a Sacrifice for the Lord Jesus; this was his chief design, desire and expectation, that Christ should be *magnified by him, whether by life or by death*. This high pitch of love, which S: Paul had attained towards Jesus Christ, might be propounded. (by way of im-

prove-

Act. 20. 24. &
21.

Acts 5. 41.

Phil. 1. 20.
ἐξουσία.

Phil. 3.

Er u nerat mi-
les vulnera.

2 Cor. 11. 16,
17, 23. to 28.

Phil. 1. 20.

provement) as a patern for Christian imitation. Gods Worthies of old, Christian Martyrs in all ages of the Church, have so burned in love towards the Lord their Saviour, that they have been fearless of death; yea they have been forward to expose themselves unto the flames, and other killing torments, for his cause and praise. How great a dishonour therefore is it unto Christians in these dayes, to shrink through cowardly fears, of suffering any thing for the Lord Jesus? Is Christ worse in himself, or less worthy to be suffered for now, than heretofore? Doth not Christ deserve as well at our hands, and are not his Truths, his Ordinances, equally precious, as in former times? And hath not the Lord obliged himself by promises (both as many, and as great) to Christians in this age, as in former generations? This is Christs promise, back'd with an Asseveration, *Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my Names sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit life everlasting.* Therefore this was not the language of blind love, when St Paul said, *To me to die is gain.* Mat. 19. 29.

But I will not insist upon this Point: I shall rather pitch upon that truth, which the Text holdeth forth, speaking the expectation of the Apostles faith: *St Paul was confident that his death would be his gain.*

This Proposition is to be explained, that it may be the better improved: wherein enquiry must be made,
1. What is signified by Death. 2. In what sense the Apostle was perswaded, that Death would be his gain.

First, By Death we are not to understand the death of the soul, which is called the *second death*. For in that sense, to die is the greatest loss, not to be made up, by the vastest advantage in the world; because this death consisteth in an everlasting separation from the presence of God in glory, and in the enduring of extream, unquenchable burnings. Rev. 21. 9.

Joh. 8. 50. & 11. 26. our Saviour giveth assurance, *That he who keepeth his sayings, shall never see death; and that, Whosoever believeth in him, shall never die.* But that death which our Apostle intendeth, is Natures dissolution, which is in his own language set in opposition unto the soul its abode in the flesh; *If I abide in the flesh. To abide in the flesh is more needfull for you.* Therefore this is the meaning of *S. Paul*, that the departure of his soul out of his body, would tend to his advantage.

Phil. 1. 22, 24.

Secondly, If it be demanded, upon what account, and under what notions the Apostle believed, that his natural death, would be his gain? I answer, both 1. Negatively. And, 2. Affirmatively.

Mat. 7. 22, 23.

First, Negatively. His perswasion of gain to be received by his death, did not issue from mistake of his future condition, hoping for better, than he had cause to expect. Our Saviour indeed speaketh of some, pleading with hopes of Heaven, when their souls have left their bodies, who are beaten off with disappointments, *Many shall say to me, Lord, Lord, &c. And then, I will professe unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* But *S. Paul* knew assuredly, by divine Revelation, that he was elected unto life. And upon the serious review of his holy conversation, he concluded, *That there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which God would give him infallibly.*

2 Tim. 4.

Job 3. 17, 18.

2. Nor did he through weariness, and despondency under his present pressures, and his imprisonment, thus express himself, *To die is gain.* As holy *Job*, when engulfed into discomforts, desired to die upon this account, and to be carried unto the dust, *There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the wearie are at rest. There the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressour.* For the Apostle, his bosome was so brim-full of love to Christ, and real Christians, that he did rather rejoyce, than despond under

under his persecutions (as was formerly hinted) because he apprehended that Christ would be magnified, and his Church benefited thereby. - *Some preach, supposing to adde affliction unto my bonds. Notwithstanding Christ is preached, and I do therein rejoyce, yea and will rejoyce. Yea, and if I be offered upon the Sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoyce with you all.* Phil. 1. 16, 18. Phil. 2. 17.

3. Much less did these words, *To die is gain*, discover discontentedness with his suffering condition. It is true, that some of Gods Worthies have in this regard desired to die. As *Elijah*, who spake thus to God, *It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life.* 1 King 19. 4. And *Jonah*, who fainting under the scorching Sunne, wished in himself *to die*, and said, *It is better for me to die, than to live.* Jonah 4. 8. - But this our Apostle had learned, *In every estate to be content.* - And doubtless that inward peace of conscience, which passeth all understanding; and those joyes in Christ, with which his spirit was refreshed, did raise his heart above such discontentments, as might draw forth passionate desires to die. Phil. 4. 11. Phil. 4. 7. & 33.

Secondly, Affirmatively. He therefore without the least doubt affirmeth, That *to die would be his gain*, because he knew, that upon his departure by death, he should be *with Christ, which is farre better.* These words *farre better*, are not to be restrictively referred unto his many and great sufferings; but are to be extended unto all that outward respect which he had amongst Gods people; yea, and unto all that inward comfort, which he enjoyed in his present faithfulness, and his future hopes. To be with Christ is farre better than all. Phil. 1. 23.

These things being premised, the Doctrine, which I shall undertake from the Text, is this,

That natural death will be a gain unto sincere Christians. Doct.

If it should be enquired, With what warrant I do make an universal inference, from a particular, a personal instance?

I answer, Because the comforts of grace, and the crown of glory, do equally belong unto all believers, as to any one who believeth. For,

1 Cor. 10. 3.
Heb. 13. 8.

1. Christ in all ages is the *same* unto all who do enjoy him; *Jesu, yesterday, and to day, is the same for ever.*

Ephes. 4.
2 Pet. 1. 1.
Col. 1. 27.
Act. 15. 9.

2. There is but *one faith*. All believers have received *like precious faith*.

2 Cor. 4. 13.

3. And Christ is the *hope of glory*, unto all who receive him into their hearts, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, without any difference at all. This our Apostle having suggested the fruit of *Dauids* faith, doth apply it unto himself, and to all the Saints in the Church of *Corinth*; *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, therefore have I spoken, we also believe, and therefore speak.*

The confirmation of this truth followeth, both in the *old*, and the *new*. Herein I shall discover, 1. That death is gain unto the godly. 2. And whence it is, that their death is gainfull.

1 Cor. 3. 21.

As for the former, It is considerable, that the Apostle instanceth in death, amongst all other things, which are for the advantage of Christians: And the proof thereof is more full and pregnant, *Revel. 14. 13.*

Revel. 14. 13.

I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works doe follow them.

From this Quotation two things are considerable; 1. The aptness and openness of the testimony, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*. If their death be blisfull, then gainfull. Now this is not only testified, but the reason thereof is rendred (*viz.*) *They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.*

Hence-

Henceforth (nor to touch upon other senses) even from the time of Natures dissolution, all their troubles shall be ended, and all their acts of obedience shall be recompenced.

2. How many wayes this testimony is made the more credible? 1. It is given in from Heaven. 2. The Authour thereof is the Spirit. 3. It is delivered by audible voice. 4. It is doubled with an Asseveration from the Holy Ghost, *Yea, saith the Spirit.* 5. And there is an expresse charge, that these things should be kept on Record for future ages, *I heard a voice from Heaven, saying, Write.* Now because this Scripture is thus pertinent and convincing, to ratifie the Doctrine, I will enlarge this proof under the two heads here hinted, whence the gain of death unto the godly is concluded.

First, By death they are set free from all things, which might make their condition grievous. *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.* Revel. 21.5.

In the amplifying of this head, I will briefly in some particulars compare their condition before death, and after death.

First, By means of death, the souls of believers are set at liberty from that restraint, which they are kept under, during their abode in their bodies. This *Simeon* suggesteth in his Swan-like Song before his death, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.* Luk. 2.29.
επιλευσις.
Feliciter me
The prisoner would account it a gain to be set at liberty, *Bring my soul out of prison* (saith *David*) *that I may praise thy Name.* dimittes.
Psal. 142.7.
The Bird in a cage, desireth to be let out, that it may take wing and flee abroad. This speech I often heard from Reverend Mr *Jer. Whitaker* in the time of his last sicknesse, *Oh that the Lord would open the prison door, that my soul may depart!* How are our spirits, while in our bodies (as it were) under shackles

shackles, which hold them down, that they cannot expatiate, and soar aloft in the contemplation and improvement of the things above: but by death God granteth a gainfull release and enlargement.

Secondly, Those who die in the Lord, do rest from their labours. I grant that there is work in Heaven for the believing souls, which by death are translated thither: but it is not cutting, grievous (as the word signifies) it is joyous rather. Here those, who trust in the Lord, do labour, in reference to manifold services and sufferings, together with variety of exercises, in regard of their persons and relations. They do experience the consequence of mans first Apostasie from God, *In the sweat of thy face, thou shalt eat bread, till thou returne to the ground. But there remaineth a rest for the people of God;* and upon Natures dissolution, they shall rest in their beds. And as rest is sweet to the labouring man, so will death be unto the laborious Christian.

Thirdly, Whereas here on earth they profess themselves to be pilgrims and strangers: And while their souls dwell in their bodies, *They are absent from the Lord.* In which regard, like Travellers in a strange Countrey, how well soever accommodated with necessaries, do long for home. *Home is home.* So do the godly grow, being burthened, while in the Tabernacle of the body. Here they sojourn, as in a strange Countrey, do seek a better Countrey, which is heavenly; yea look for a City, whose builder and maker is God. And because by death, they shall be brought home to their heavenly countrey, their City, where their nearest relations are, therefore their death will be their gain. Upon this confidence they are rather willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Fourthly, During life, Christians are like them who runne a race. This is intimated by sundry Scripture

Revel. 14. 13.

το πτω.

I Tim. 4. 10.

Gen. 3. 19.

Heb. 4. 9.

Isa. 57. 2.

Heb. 11. 13.

2 Cor. 5. 6.

2 Cor. 5. 4.

Heb. 11. 13.

vers. 16.

vers. 10.

2 Cor. 5. 8.

pture-exhortations, *Let us runne with patience, the race which is set before us. So runne, that ye may obtain.* And though in other races runne, there is one only of the runners which getteth the prize: Yet in the Christian race, all who hold on shall certainly receive it. *St Paul assured himself of the Crown, upon the finishing of his course.* In running the body is tired, and the natural spirits are spent, by sweating and by straining with the utmost of endeavours, to make speed unto the Goal: but the gain cometh in, by winning the prize. Thus at the end of our dayes on earth, we receive the fruit of our long continued, vigorous motions for Heaven; and therefore death will be gain.

Fifthly, Here, upon earth, we are like men upon a troublesome Sea, but by death we come unto shore. The condition of the Disciples, in that case doth represent ours, when the Ship, wherein they were, being in the midst of the Sea, was tossed with waves, by contrary winds, and they toyled and rowed, to get unto Land. The Psalmist doth very elegantly describe the estate of them, who sail upon a tempestuous Sea, both while they stay there, and when they come to shore, *They mount up to the Heaven, they go down again to the depths, their soul is melted, because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivereth them out of their distresses. He maketh a storm, a calm; so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they be quiet, so he bringeth them unto their desired Haven.* Oh how welcome is the change unto seafaring men, when having been engulfed into many dangers, and perplexed with sundry uncertainties, they are brought unto settledness! Now after death, there will be no more Sea unto the Saints; and therefore to die will be gain.

Heb. 12. 2.
1 Cor. 9. 24.

1 Cor. 9. 24, 26

2 Tim. 4.

Matth. 14. 24.
Mark 6. 48.

1 sal. 107. 25,
27, 30

Rev. 21. 1.

Gal. 6. 8. Sixthly, Our life time is our seed time, but death brings in our Harvest, *He that soweth to the Spirit, shall reap life everlasting.* The Husbandman is put upon great pains, cost and care in preparing the soil for seed, and in bestowing seed upon the ground, but his gain cometh in at Harvest. And thus it is with Christians, *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* After many weary dayes past in the pinching Winter and scorching Summer, the income of the crop, is the Husband-mans gain. More certainly shall all true believers be advantaged, when cut down by death, themselves with all their *good works following them*, shall be inned in the place of blessedness. Although nothing is merited, yet God recompenceth in mercy, *Psal. 62. 12. They who sow in righteousness, shall reap in mercy: And those who sow liberally, shall reap liberally.*

Rev. 14. 13.
Mar. 13. 38.

Hos. 10. 12.

Isa. 40.
2 Tim. 2. 3.

Rom. 8.
Revel. 3.
2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

Seventhly, Here upon earth, Christians are in a condition of warfare, and they must *endure hardship, as good souldiers*, who are necessitated to take up with hard lodging, course fare; who are toyled with tedious marches, and tormented with dangerous wounds: But at death they shall be *more than conquerours through Christ*; And *having fought the good fight, they shall receive the crown of life*, as this our Apostle with confidence did expect. Therefore, as the time of conquest, is a time of gain to the souldier, when he is enriched with the spoils, and cometh out of the field with honour; so is the day of death gainfull to the true believer.

Psal. 120. 5.

Psal. 119. 158.

Eighthly, In this life, the godly are molested with bad company. *David thus bemoaneth himself, upon this account, Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, and that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar.* And again, *I saw the transgressours, and was grieved, because they*

they kept not thy Word. A good man can scarcely look abroad amongst the children of men, but he shall both see and hear matter of sorrow, while he abideth in the Land of the living; for till he goe out of the world, he shall be necessitated, to converse with wicked ones. But by death, the soul is translated to the fellowship of souls made perfect; into which society, no prophane person can possibly be admitted. How sweet is that change accounted, when we remove from Jewish fogs, ugly sights, harsh sounds, and unfavoury smels, into the open healthfull air, to curious Prospects, delightfull Musick, and sweet Gardens? No less comfortable, is the translation of a real Christian, from the company of wicked ones (*who are filthy and stinking*) into communion with glorified Saints in Heaven.

Ninthly, While the soul abideth in the body, it is often shaken by the assaults of Satan. He goeth about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour. And though their soul-safety be secured by Christ, yet he will molest them, as he did Peter, desiring to winnow him like wheat. He will bruise the heel, though he cannot break the head; and a bruise in the heel, may reach the heart with pain. As St Pauls buffetings by a Messenger of Satan, were like a thorn in the flesh. Yea, the Devil doth not only affright the faithfull, but doth often toyl them, as is manifest by the example of David, who was by him moved through pride and carnal confidence, to number the people; whereby much anguish was wrought in his heart, and great judgement brought upon his Kingdom: But death doth remove them from the reach of the Devils Gun-shot: For then he is trod under their feet. The fears with which Satan filleth their minds, last no longer than this life. And neither Devils, nor damned spirits can possibly approach Heaven, whither the souls of Saints, are

1 Cor. 5.10.

Heb. 12.23.
Revel. 21.27.

Psal. 14.

1 Pet. 5.
Luk. 22.

Gen. 3.

2 Cor. 12.

1 Chron. 21.
with 2 Sam. 24Rom. 16.20.
Heb. 2.15.
Luk. 16.29.

translated, upon Natures dissolution. In this respect therefore, the death of believers becomes their gain.

Tenthly, During the time of the soul its abode in the body, there is a *body of death dwelling in the soul*, which doth alwayes dispose the soul unto sinne, and indisposeth it unto good. Oh how grievously did this our Apostle cry out of the *body of this death!* Oh wretched man that I am, when I would do good, evil is present with me! It worketh in me all manner of concupiscence, and it carrieth me captive. And thus it is with all regenerate Christians. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that they cannot do the things that they would. And many wofull fruits, break forth from hence in their lives, as the Apostle suggesteth, and experience too often proveth, in the hearts and lives of believers. But death (which is the last enemy which shall be destroyed) bringeth a total conquest of all corruptions whatsoever. Nothing within, or without, shall be left, as an adversary to a believer after death. How many thousands of enemies did Samson kill at his death? And as Moses said to the Israelites, *The Egyptians, whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever:* So I may confidently affirm, to the comfort of all believing Christians. Your lusts which warre against your souls, and carry you captives, shall after death molest you no more. You shall never any more, be kept off from Christ, by unbelief, never swelled by pride, disguised by discontent, vexed with envy, stained with hypocrisie, or prejudiced by distrustfull dispondency, any more. And doubtless upon all these considerations, the people of God will joyfully say, *To die is gain.*

Secondly, Their death is gainfull, not only in respect of the grievances from which it freeth them; but

Rom. 7.

Gal. 5.17.

1 Cor. 15.25.

Judg. 16.30.

Exod. 14.13.

but also in regard of the advantages into which it estateth them, both in reference unto their bodies and their souls.

1. Their *bodies fall asleep*, and upon the souls departure, *they rest in their graves, as in their beds*, where they shall continue, without any painfull disturbance, till the *day of the general Resurrection*. I remember, that when Christ had suggested the death of *Lazarus* under this notion, that he was *fallen asleep*, the Disciples answered, *If he sleep, he shall do well*. Now the sleep of Saints, who die in the Lord, is much better, both for quality and continuance, for they shall rest, and not be awakened, till the end of the world; and therefore to die will be their gain.

2. Their *positive gain by death*, will especially appear, if we consider the condition of their souls, upon Natures dissolution, in the particulars following:

1. Now the soul dwelleth in the body, as in a Tent, or (as the Prophet *Daniel* expresseth it) *like a Sword in its sheath*; but when this *earthly Tabernacle* is taken down, the soul shall have an *house not made with hands, but eternal in the Heavens*. And great is the difference, both in stateliness and durableness, betwixt our bodies of clay, and the highest Heavens. The Apostle calleth them, *Bodies of vileness*, (and in how many regards, so to be accounted, it is worth our consideration) whereas Heaven is the *high and holy place*, the Palace for Gods special residence. And therefore the translation of the soul by death, will be gainfull.

2. Here Saints are vilified, scorned and reproached, but there advanced and crowned. This Apostle having spoken of his death, whereby he was offered as a sacrifice, he addeth, *Henceforth there is laid up for me, a Crowne of righteousness, which the Lord,*

the righteous Judge shall give me. The righteousness here mentioned, whence they are said to receive this crown, doth not intimate any merit (as the Papists imagine) but doth rather express Gods *truth and fidelity*. For as here it's asserted, that this crown is Gods gift; so this is promised to the Church of *Smyrna*; *Be thou faithfull unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* As it was much to *Mordecai* his advantage, when taken from the Court-gate, in his mourning garment, *The Royal apparel was put upon him, and the crown Royal set upon his head.* Thus shall it be with all the godly, who during their abode upon earth, are accounted, as the off-scouring of all things, shall upon Natures dissolution, receive the crown of glory.

3. And (that they may be judged meet for this glorious advancement) their souls shall be compleatly furnished, with all rich, gracious, beautifying qualifications. For there the *spirits of all just ones, shall be made perfect.* As their souls shall be raised in their several faculties, unto the utmost, to which their capacities can be extended: so they shall be filled brim-full with all graces, whereof they be capable. *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part, shall be done away.* Whereas the soul dwelling in the body, is not perfect (as our Apostle confesseth) and much flesh continueth, waging warre against the spirit: When it is admitted into Heaven, it shall be full of light, without any darkness, full of rectitude, without any exorbitancy, full of humility, without the least pride, of sincerity, without the least hypocrisie at all: And the like I might speak in regard of all the other graces of the Holy Ghost. I appeal therefore unto all gracious hearts, whether in this regard their death will not be their gain.

4. Their souls being thus completed in respect
of

1 Joh. 1.9.

Rev. 2.10.

Esth. 5.8.

Heb 12.23.

1 Cor. 13.10.

Phil. 3.

Gal. 5.17.

of all gracious habits, shall be alwayes in the unweari-
 ed exercise thereof, to the honour of the Almighty.
 As the *four Beasts*, so the *four and twenty Elders*,
cease not day, and night in singing Hallelujahs unto Rev. 4. 8, 10.
the most High. This suguesteth the constant practice,
 both of the glorious Angels, and glorified Saints, in
 honouring God in Heaven. The graces of Gods Spi-
 rit in the bosoms of his people on earth, are frequen-
 tly suspended in their exercise, their motions are in-
 terrupted. The time was, when it was thus with
 Christs Disciples, in respect of their faith. Hence it
 was, that he spake thus chidingly unto them, *where* Luk. 8. 25.
is your faith? How is it, that you have no faith? Mark 4. 40.
 Where was the patience of *Jonah*, when he told the
 Lord to his face, *I doe well to be angry, even unto* Jonah 4.
death. And alas, alas, which of Gods Worthies,
 do not know this frequently by sad experience?
 Oh, what a gain will they esteem it, when the
 soul compleatly furnished with all saving graces, shall
 be evermore on the wing, with holy enlargements, in
 the exercise thereof in Heaven.

5. In this vigorous exercise of all graces in their
 perfection, the soul shall enjoy the society of spotless
 Saints in glory, with the sweetest complacency. It's
 true, that the faithfull people of God, have *fellowship one* 1 Joh. 1. 7.
with another, in this world; and this is marvellous de-
 lightfull. *Barnabas* being a good man, coming to
Antioch, and seeing the grace of God, which appeared, Act. 11. 22, 23,
he was glad. But their communion in Heaven, 24.
 is more immediate and full, their graces shall be more
 shining, and their society shall never be interrupted.
 Here our joy in the company of the best Christians, is
 checked both by their weakneses and some miscar-
 riages, together with our own inability to improve
 them: But then *being come into the fellowship of the* Heb. 12. 23.
Spirits of just men made perfect, with personal perfe-
 ction, our gain will be very great, how comfortable
 soever:

soever our society was, with the best people living upon earth.

6. And they shall be admitted into the beatifical presence of God, and Jesus Christ his Sonne, in transcendent glory. This Apostle telleth us, (as a Reason of our Doctrine) *That to be with Jesus Christ in Heaven, is farre better, than any estate upon earth.*
- Phil. 1. 23. When Peter, James and John, were with Christ, at his transfiguration, they were ravished with that sight, and said, *Lord, it is good to be here.* How much more taking upon the heart, will his glorious sight be in Heaven, where in his presence, there will be fulness of joy? The happiness of Heaven is thus described, for the comfort of such, who are heirs thereof. *God himself will be with them, and he shall dwell with them.* When Christ after his Resurrection, manifested himself unto his Apostles, they rejoiced and wondered, though he there was not to continue long with them. And when we have the clearest views of the Lord here, we doe onely (as the Spouse expresseth it) *see him through the lattice; many things interposing between him and us, while our souls do dwell in tabernacles of clay: How much more ravishing will his presence be, when we shall see, as we are seen, God the Father, and Christ his holy Sonne, to abide with us for ever? This, this is the utmost, which the Lord Jesus could ask for them, to compleat their blessedness, Father, I will, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me.*
- Matth. 17. 2, 4. Psal. 16. 11. Revel. 21. 3. Luk. 24. 40, 41. Cant. Joh. 17. 24.

7. Lastly, In all those enjoyments and employments, there shall be no nauiousness nor satiety. For in Gods presence, there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, there are pleasures for evermore. The satisfactions of the soul enjoying God with suitable dispositions, shall be both transcendently and everlastingly
- Psal. 16. 11.

stingly delightsfull. Here the stomach in a short time, will nauseate the sweetest meats and drinks, *The full soul doth loath the honey-comb.* By long continuance, the most melodious Musick becomes an offensive sound, and the most lovely sights, are accounted dull displeasing objects. But Heavens joyes, services, and enjoyments, will abide as fully ravishing, as they were the first moment, when enjoyed. And therefore unto the heirs of Heaven, *To die will be gain.*

Having thus farre demonstrated this *Truth* (*viz.*) That natural death will be a spiritual gain unto the godly. I proceed to give an account of the grounds thereof. And here in general, know, that the root from whence all our real comfort ariseth, whether in life, at death, or after death, is Jesus Christ. When *S^t Paul* had spoken thus unto the believing *Corinthians*, *All things are yours, whether life, or death,* 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22 *things present, or things to come;* he addeth as the reason of all, *You are Christs.* And the same *Apostle* saith, *If God hath given us his Sonne, how shall he not with him also, freely give all things.* Rom. 8. 32. For seeing God hath made him the *Mediatour* of the new *Covenant*, all *Gospel-promises*, whether they concern this life, or that which is to come, *They are in him, Yea, and in him, Amen, to the praise of God.* 2 Cor. 1. 20.

More particularly (wherein I will be the shorter, because I have been too large in the former) the gain which cometh in, by death, unto regenerate *Christians*, is procured by *Christ*.

First, By the prevalency of his prayer unto God his *Father*. This was his great request, in his most solemn application unto the *Lord*; *Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, may be where I am, to behold my glory, which thou hast given me.* John 17. 24. And he did not, in the least doubt of Gods readines, to gratifie him, in whatsoever he asked: *Father* (said he)

John 11.41. he) *I know that thou hearest me alwayes.* For he well understood that promise made long before, which might be a sufficient ground of his strong confidence, *Ask of me, and I will give thee, the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth, for thy possession.* Now there is no question to be made, but that Christ praying for his heritage, shall have audience for their advancement.

Secondly, By the meritorious worth of his active and passive obedience. In this regard Heaven is called, *Their purchased possession.* For although in respect of our worthlessness, *Eternal life is the gift of Gods grace;* yet in reference unto the Lord Jesus, eternal life is conferred in a way of *righteousnesse,* upon his account.

Thirdly, By his ascension into Heaven, he hath prepared and taken possession of an happy estate for them. This Christ reporteth, for the comfort of his Apostles, being subject to sinking troubles, in regard of death-threatening persecution, upon his departure from them. *In my Fathers house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto my self, that where I am, there you may be also.*

Fourthly, By cooperating by his Spirit, with his Ordinances, that they might be fitted through Sanctification, for beatifical fellowship and satisfaction in glory, *Whereas all the vessels of mercy, are prepared for glory; and they are made meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of Saints in light.* The Lord Christ hath instituted Ordinances and Officers to dispense them, *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Sonne of God, unto a perfect man, and to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* And he himself doth in such sort accompany them by his Spirit, *That he might sanctifie*

sanctifie and cleanse his Church with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it unto himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish. Therefore our Saviour having provided Heaven for his Elect, and having prepared them for Heavens happiness, with himself, their souls shall without doubt, enjoy the gain of glory, upon Natures dissolution by death.

Fifthly, By undertaking their perseverance in this estate of grace and sanctification. Although it must be acknowledged, that true believers, are opposed by manifold difficulties, with dangers also, in their passage to Heaven; and themselves are too weak to overcome the oppositions made and maintained against them, from Earth, Hell, and their own corrupt hearts; yet they shall be kept by the power of ^{1 Pet. i. 4, 5.} God, through faith unto salvation: Yea, as an inheritance incorruptible, that fadeth not away, is reserved in Heaven for them; so infallibly shall they be preserved for it. And the Apostle Paul, reckoning up many particulars, which may probably threaten their perseverance, both persons and things, doth upon the consideration of all, confidently conclude their conquest and glory, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than Conquerours through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of*

Rom. 8. 33, 34,
35, 37, 38, 39.

God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus having briefly from pregnant Scriptures held forth the grounds, from whence the true Christians gain by death, ariseth through Christ, I now proceed to the Application of the Doctrine by way of Use.

Use 1.

There are two erroneous conceits crushed by this *Confutation.* Doctrine, (*viz.*) 1. The Mortality of the soul: 2. The sleeping of the soul, upon its departure out of the body.

First error concerning the soul its mortality, is overthrown by the truth, which hath been sufficiently confirmed, by the fore-going discourse: For it is absurd to imagine, that the death and annihilation should be more for its gain, then to remain in a regenerate estate within the body. Although this gross opinion may by sober Christians, be judged unworthy confutation, yet because pleaded for by some in these corrupt times, I will suggest some Arguments against it; and the rather, because it layeth the foundation of much sinfull, sensual looseness, amongst the children of men. *S. Paul* endeavouring to stop their mouths, who in his dayes said, *There was no resurrection of the body*, (which falleth in, with this phancy of the soul its mortality) telleth us, That these evil words, do corrupt good manners. And the Prophet *Isaiah* long before, bringeth in, men of this mind, encouraging themselves in courses of sensuality, upon this imagination, *Let us eat, and drink, for tomorrow we shall die.* Therefore here consider these things:

1. Cor. 15. 32.

Isa. 22. 13.

Ecl. 9. 4.

1. That our Apostle his expectation by faith, to be a gainer by death, doth strongly militate against this conceit concerning the mortality of the soul, because *Solomon* saith, *That a living dog is better than a dead Lion.*

2. That manifold passages in the Scriptures of truth.

truth, do openly and expressly contradict it. When the body goeth to the dust, then the soul returneth to God who gave it. Eccl. 12. 1. The souls both of the godly and ungodly, leaving the mortal body, do forthwith appear alive before the Lord, by him to be adjudged unto an everlasting estate, either of weal, or woe. Heb. 9. 27. And Christ, (who is called *The true and faithfull witness*, Luk. 16. 22. *Revel. 3. 14.* In whose mouth, there was no guile, 1 Pet. 2. 22.) doth once and again suggest the soul its immortality. In the Parable of the rich man and *Lazarus*, the one is spoken of, as in unquenchable flames, and the other in an unchangeable estate of comfort, suddenly upon their natural death. His promise also made to the petition of the penitent thief, [*This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*] doth assert, That his soul died not with his body. Yea once more, consider how clearly our Saviour doth confute this opinion, by citing Gods own words spoken unto *Moses*, long after the death of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, acknowledging himself, even then to be their God; whence he concludeth their immortal life, saying, *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* Mat. 22. 31, 32.

3. The immortality of the soul may be strongly evidenced, by the Nature of it, being spiritual, and often called a Spirit, (*viz.*) That part of man, whereby he understandeth, his reasonable soul. *There is* (*saith Elibu*), *a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.* Job 32. 8. And *S Paul* professing his inwardness and heartiness in Gods worship, he thus expresseth himself, *Whom I serve in my spirit*, knowing that God being a spirit, must be worshipped in spirit. John 4. 24. Now Jesus Christ himself attesteth, *That a spirit cannot die.* Luk. 20. 36.

The second error hence to be confuted, is that concerning the sleep of the soul from the time of its dissolution from the body, till the Day of the General

John 11.
1. 1. heff. 4. 15.
Dan. 12. 2.
Isa. 57. 2.
1. Cor. 15. 44.

ral Resurrection. Although I grant, that the Scripture calleth death a sleep, and speaketh of Christians dead, as of persons *fallen asleep*: yet it is manifest, that these expressions, do relate to the body alone, which is said *to sleep in the dust*, and *there to rest as in a bed*, till God shall awaken it by the sound of his Trumpet, and raise it by his power. And the Apostle discoursing of the Resurrection of them, who fall asleep by death, doth openly apply it to the body, *It is sown* (saith he) *a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body*. Whereas we know, that sleep is the binding up of the senses by vapours, the soul being incorporeal is not capable of humours, nor subject to have its operations ceased thereby. And my Text also, and my Doctrine from thence, do strongly beat down this carnal imagination. For Christians, while their souls dwell in their bodies, do judge their condition lesse comfortable in the night, when through corporeal sleep, their spiritual motions are suspended: Therefore doubtless their death would rather render their estate worse than better, if the soul should sleep upon its departure from the body. How ordinarily do gracious ones lament their sluggishness, when with God in holy duties; therefore their death could not be their gain, if thereby their souls, should be laid asleep, without any spiritual activity, to the end of the world.

Use 2.

Use 2. Examination, whether we have a good, and a well-grounded hope, that our death shall be found our gain. When *Rahab* heard that *Jericho*, the place of her present abode, would ere long be besieged and spoiled, she seeketh security, that her self and relations should be preserved: Thus she speaketh to the Spies, *Give me a true token, that you will save me alive*. Now the case stands thus with us all, we are besieged with bodily distempers, which threaten death, when our earthly Tabernacles will be thrown down,

down, &c. Therefore should we enquire, what true tokens we have, to strengthen our hopes, that Natures dissolution shall rather tend unto our advantage, then prejudice. This trial may be quickened by these considerations :

1. Because gain by death is not the common portion of all. Our Apostle in the Text speaketh of it, as a peculiar priviledge, *To me* (saith he) *to die is gain* : But all cannot be thus confident. In the Parable of the *rich mans death and burial*, this followeth immediately, *That he was in hell in torments.* Luk. 16. 22, 23.

2. Multitudes, in the bosome of the Church, are filled with vain hopes. Our Saviour bringeth in many, pleading boldly for admission into Heaven, having died, with hopefull persuasions, bottomed upon a glorious profession, and a commendable conversation, who are cast off, with dolefull disappointment, *Many will say to me at that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out Devils, and in thy Name, done many wonderfull works ? And then I will professe unto them, I never knew you : Depart from me, ye that worke iniquity.* As Dogs are ready to snatch the childrens meat out of their hands, so are the worst of men very apt to appropriate to themselves, the priviledges which do peculiarly appertain unto the people of God. Wicked *Haman* no sooner heareth of a man, whom the King delighted to honour, but he thought thus in his heart ; *To whom will the King delight to doe honour, more than to my selfe ?* In this respect therefore, we should take heed of building our hopes of happinets after death, upon a sandy foundation. Esth. 6. 6.

3. Infallible assurance may be attained, that natural death, will make way for incomparable and everlasting gain ; and therefore there is hope, that labour

in

in this search, shall not be in vain. My Text speaketh out *S^t Paul's* confidence, *To me to die is gain.* And elsewhere, being in expectation to suffer death, he saith, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness:* Yea, this our Apostle bringeth in other Christians with himself, without the least hesitancy, professing their undoubted hopes hereof, *We know, that if our earthly house, of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house, not made with hands, but eternal in the Heavens.* And there is no good reason can be rendred, wherefore ordinary Christians in these dayes, may not arrive at the same certainty. For, 1. We enjoy Gods Word, 2. *That we may know we have eternal life.* 2. And we have the promise of his Spirit, *That we may know the things, which are freely given us of God.*

4. And the consequences of this certainty, will be many wayes advantagious, as the experiences of Gods servants have witnessed in all ages. I will briefly point at some :

1. Hereupon the *Psalmist* was wrought unto contentment in a low condition, being confident, *That God would bring him to glory,* when he had passed through a wilderness, by the conduct of his counsel. The traveller contentedly will take up with little and course allowance, from hope of full provisions at home, when he cometh unto his journeys end.

2. The thought and approach of death, hastening on by means of many weaknesses and sufferings, will be the less tedious and terrible. *We faint not* (saith the Apostle) *though the outward man perish, for our light affliction, worketh for us, a farre more exceeding eternal weight of glory.*

3. Thus courage will be increased, when the greatest difficulties and dangers shall be encountred in a Christian course. *S^t Paul,* as a valiant Souldier, did undaunt-

dauntedly bear up, when in expectation of a violent death from the Lion-like persecutors; *I am ready to be offered.*—*Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown.* Ecclesiastical History giveth many such like instances amongst the worthy Martyrs of old.

4. And hereby we shall be much quickened in wayes of serviceableness, both unto God and man. By this argument the Apostle urgeth double diligence and unweariedness in well-doing; *Therefore be steadfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch, as ye know, that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* • The Mariner knowing that he is in a safe road towards his native Countrey, hoiseth up sail, and putteth on with the more vigour. 1 Cor. 15. 58.

Now all these considerations being enlarged and applied by meditation, may be sufficient to perswade a serious tryal, whether we have a well-bottomed hope, that our death shall be our gain.

The Characters of them, to whom death will be gain, I will cast under two heads, making a double enquiry.

First, Whether in our inward disposition, and outward practice, we be really like *S^t Paul*, who was sure (as my Text tells us) that unto himself, *To die would be gain?* Here I will hint some few particulars from this his Epistle, referring the improvement unto your own faithfulness:

1. His conversation was in Heaven, while he was on earth; and upon this account he was confident of communion with Christ in Heaven. The good Apostle did look upon himself, as a Citizen, a free Denison of Heaven; and therefore studied and endeavoured, that his carriage might be answerable to this his condition. Query therefore upon what you do most bestow your heads and hearts, your thoughts and affections. Whether do you rather order your course according to the fashion of this world? Or do

Phil. 3. 20.
πολιτευμα.

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you labour to be like them who are with God in Heavens glory?

2. He fate not down satisfied with that measure of grace and sanctification, which he had attained, but pressed hard towards perfection, that he might be compleat both in heart and life, in a way of conformity to the mind of Christ. *I presse towards the mark.* This therefore falleth foul upon such, who satisfie and flatter themselves in their present attainments and enjoyments, like the *Laodiceans*, saying, *I am rich, and have need of nothing.*

Phil. 3. 10, 11,
12, 13, 14

Revel. 3. 17.

Phil. 1. 20.

Zech. 7. 5, 9.

Phil. 2. 21.

3. He did not center in himself, in his own comfort, but designed the honour of Christ, in all the graces with which he was enriched, and in all his serviceableness, both in active and passive obedience. *According to my earnest expectation and hope (saith he) that Jesus Christ shall be magnified in me, whether by life, or death.* This cuts the combs, and crusheth the hopes of such, who are meerly selfish in their ends and aims, in religious performances. And this is so ordinary, that our Apostle saith, *All seeke their owne things, not the things, which are Jesus Christs.*

Phil. 3. 3, 4.

Luk. 18. 9.

Gal. 5. 4.

4. Notwithstanding all his graces received, services discharged, and perfection with sincerity designed, he did not dare to depend upon self, in regard of parts raised, priviledges possessed, duties performed, but pitcheth his confidence upon Christ, and upon him alone. *I rejoyce in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh, though I might, if any other, &c.* This splits the hopes of proud Justiciaries, who pharisaically trust to their own goodness, unto whom *S^t Paul* speaketh smartly; *Christ is become of none effect unto you, whatsoever of you are justified by the Law: ye are fallen from grace.*

5. And he sought, both by his counsel and conversation, to winne and work others with himself, unto the

the like disposition and conversation. *Let as many as be perfect, be thus minded. Be followers of me.* And though he longed for immediate fellowship with Christ, yet he was content to stay out of Heaven, for a time, that he might be instrumentally serviceable to the promoting of Sanctification in Saints on earth. *To abide in the flesh (saith he) is more needfull for you: Having this confidence, I shall continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.* Here I referre it to every mans conscience, to give in evidence, how carefull, or careles he is of the souls welfare, of such with whom they do converse; for accordingly, either hope, or hopelesness of gain by death, may be inferred.

Phil. 3. 15, 17.

Phil. 1. 24, 25.

Secondly, Whether Christ be our life. This is the Argument from whence our Apostle doth satisfyingly inferre his hope of gain by death. *To me, to live is Christ; and therefore undoubtedly, To die will be gain.*—This lieth fair in the face of the Text; and he argueth in like manner elsewhere, *If Christ be our life, then death will produce our glory.*

Col. 3. 4.

Now as Natural life, so also spiritual life may be manifested, by 1. Breathings. 2. Senses. 3. Motions:

First, Breath evidenceth life. The first discovery of life in the child enlivened by the Prophet, was this, *He needes seven times.* And spiritual breathing, is expressed:

2 King. 4. 35.

1. By groans and grievous complaints, because of sinfull principles and out-breaches; felt within, and appearing outward. As this Apostle, *I find a Law in my members, warring against the Law of my mind, &c. Oh wretched man that I am! &c.*

2. By desires, gasping after God, in wayes of communion and holy obedience. *There is none upon earth (saith the Psalmist) that I desire, beside thee.* And, *Oh that my wayes were directed, to keep thy statutes.*

Psal. 73. 25.

Psal. 119. 5.

Secondly, Sense sheweth life, whether it be from that which toucheth with painfull trouble, or with tickling delight.

1. The soul enlivened by grace, doth feel the weight of sinne. *Mine iniquities* (saith David), *are an heavy burthen, too heavy for me to bear: I am troubled, and bowed down greatly.* Whereas a dead man would not be sensible, though a mountain should be cast upon him, or though sore wounded. And men *dead in sinne are past feeling.*

Ephes. 4. 19.

2. And the Christian who is made spiritually alive by Christ, doth sensibly rejoyce in fellowship with him. *My Spirit hath rejoyced* (saith the blessed Virgin) *in God my Saviour.* Whereas an utter want of *delight in the Ordinances* of communion with God, doth argue the absence of this life.

Jer. 6. 10.

Thirdly, Motion manifesteth life. So soon as *Lazarus* was restored to life, he ariseth out of *his grave, and goeth abroad.* As in all other motions, so in this which is spiritual, there are two terms, *à quo*, and *ad quem.* The *Ephesians* being quickened, they relinquish their *old conversation in the lusts of the flesh, and walk in good works.* And the regenerated *Thessalonians*, *Turn from Idols to serve the living and true God.* In like manner, all those in whom Christ lieth by his Spirit, they turn their backs upon sinne, with dislike, detestation, and endeavour to decline it: And they face about towards God, in approving, loving and prosecuting whatsoever is good in his sight.

Joh. 11. 44.

Ephes. 2. 1, 2,
3, 10.

1. Thess. 1. 9.

Now all these particulars thus generally and briefly hinted, being conjoynd, and without partiality applied, may serve to discover, Whether we have a good Scripture-hope, *That our death will be our gain.*

Use 3.

*Ante obitum,
nemo supremamq;
funera, &c.*

Use 3. Information, in four particulars:

First, That a full judgement cannot be given of the blissefull

blissefull condition of godly persons, while they live on earth. For their death bringeth in their greatest gain. Eccl. 9. 1, 2. *No man knoweth either love, or hatred, by all that is before him. All things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked, &c. And it doth not yet appear, what we shall be.* As the profit, which cometh in by Husbandry, cannot be discerned till Harvest; if a man unacquainted with that course of life, should see his Neighbour plough up his ground, tear it in peeces with the Harrow, and throw away his seed upon it, he would judge all lost. So while we behold Gods people persecuted, racked and tormented in this world, we cannot make out their happiness. *If in this life only, we have hope in Christ,* 1 Cor. 15. 19, we are of all men most miserable (saith the Apostle) 32. *And if after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Epheſus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?* Therefore conclude not, what the estate of true Christians is, till you have considered, the conclusion of their lives. *Mark the perfect man,* Pſal. 37. 37. *and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* During the time of life (as the Parable telleth us) *the rich man being cloathed in purple, and fine linnen, and faring sumptuously every day, seemed to be in a farre better condition, than Lazarus, who was laid at his gate full of sores; but upon their death, and the sequell thereof, a right judgement might be passed, whether of the two was the happier man. For the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abrahams bosome; the rich man died also, and went to Hell.* Luk 16. 19, 20. vers. 22, 23.

Secondly, That the condition of the Saints in Heaven, will be unexpressibly joyous and happy, because their death will be their gain. For all the delights, with which their hearts are cheared in the land of the living, are only the tastes, the first fruits of Heaven. That bunch of Grapes, which was

brought from *Canaan*, was nothing in comparison of all the fruits of that promised Land, which were assured upon *Israel*. Who knoweth how sweet, and how many cordials Gods servants are refreshed with, in their passage through the wilderness of this world? and yet it will be admirably to their advantage, when they shall upon Natures dissolution, take possession of their heavenly countrey. Doubtless this our Apostle had experience of *that peace, which passeth all understanding*, and of those joyes of the Holy Ghost, which are *most unspeakable, and full of glory*; he reporteth to the *Corinthians*, his enjoyment of *abounding consolations*; and yet he was confident, *That to die would be his gain*. The Lord giveth his people *everlasting comfort through grace*, which in that regard is called, *The oyl of gladnesse*. All wisdomes wayes are *pleasantness*. And *David* rejoiced therein, *more than in all riches*; who took delight also in the society of *Saints on earth*. God maketh his servants glad in the house of prayer. The Spirit of the blessed Virgin did leap for joy, in God her Saviour, notwithstanding her smarting exercises. But this, all this possessed upon earth, in the habit of grace, in the acts of grace, in the use of holy Ordinances, in fellowship with the godly, and in communion with God, Father, Sonne and Holy Ghost, doth fall very short of that fulness of joy, those Rivers of delight, wherein they shall bathe in blis upon their departure by death, from Earth to Heaven. For unto them, *To die will be gain*. Therefore from hence, we may with the admirations of faith, consider the provisions which Gods grace hath made in Heaven for believing souls. St *Paul* in reference unto the priviledges to be possessed on earth, speaketh thus, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: and yet he saith in my Text, To me to die is gain.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That therefore the estate of glorified Saints will be transcendently glorious at the Day of the General Resurrection; for then doubtless there shall be an addition made unto the gain, which death doth bring in unto them. The Scripture calleth it, *The time when refreshing* (superlative refreshing) *shall come from the Lord.* And the language of the **Apostle** is very notable, speaking of the rest with which believers shall be recompenced, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed with his mighty Angels. When he shall come (saith he) to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day. Then, then, both the glorified Saints themselves; and the glorious Angels also, shall wonder with amazement, to behold the amazing comforts and glory, with which they shall be crowned. Here I will briefly point at a few particulars.

Act. 3. 19.

2 Theff. 1. 7,
10.

1. Then they shall behold all their fellow-members of that mystical Body, whereof Christ is the Head, brought together into one company. *Them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him, and then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air.*

1 Theff. 4. 14.

vers. 17.

2. They shall arise first; both that the Lord may express his peculiar respect unto them, and that they may not want that honour and comfort which the subsequent providences of that great Day shall afford.

1 Theff. 4. 16.

3. Forthwith upon their Resurrection, they shall ride (as it were) in joy and triumph, to attend the Judge of the world in his glory, which will be no small honour, when Christ shall come with ten thousands of his Saints, and all the holy Angels with him.

1 Theff. 4. 17.

Jude v. 14.

Mat. 25. 31.

4. When the Lord Jesus shall sit down upon the Throne of Judgement, they shall be admitted to be Assessors, giving in their attestation unto all his
right-

righteous, judicial administrations. Know ye not (saith the Apostle) that the Saints shall judge the world? And know ye not, that we shall judge Angels?

5. When Christ who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory. As their bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body, shining like the Sunne in the firmament: So their souls shall be satisfied with Gods Image, both in perfect knowledge, and all other divine graces, made like unto his Majesty, according to their utmost capacities.

6. And in this happy condition, they all shall have compleat communion with each other, without the mixture of any sorrow, and crowned with immediate fellowship with the Lord himself unto all eternity. And then we shall ever be with the Lord.

1 Theff. 4. 17.

Fourthly, Hence it followeth by the rule of contraries, that the death of the wicked shall be greatly to their los. For the consequences of contraries, are as contrary, as the contraries themselves. And such like inferences, are made ordinarily in holy Scripture, Eccl. 8. 12. Isa. 3. 10, 11.

As the inference is natural, and not enforced; so the misery of the ungodly upon their death, may many wayes be manifested, both in respect of los and sense.

Their punishment of los consisteth:

1. In the want of all inferiour creature-comforts here enjoyed, For they have their portion in this life only. And therefore it was thus spoken to the covetous worldling when ready to die, This night shall thy soul be taken from thee, and whose then shall all these things be? Thy enlarged Barns, and thy fruits with which filled, shall be thine no more.

Pfal. 17. 14.

Luk. 16. 20.

Mat. 25. 32. &
13. 30.

2. In their separation from the society of all Gods faithfull servants. The Sheep must be severed from the Goats, the tares from the good corn, the chaff from the wheat.

3. In

Thirdly, In their everlasting banishment from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus. *They shall be punished* ^{2 Theff. 1. 9.} *with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. And Christ will say,* ^{Mat. 7. 23.} *Depart from me ye workers of iniquity.*

Now what loss can be so great? But this is not all the misery, which shall befall the ungodly in the world to come; for the punishment of sense will be exceeding grievous also.

1. Their departure from God shall be attended with his heavy displeasure. *Go ye cursed,* ^{Mat. 25. 34.} *will the Lord say (q.d.) Be gone with a vengeance under my heavy displeasure.*

2. *They shall be turned into hell,* the torment whereof is metaphorically expressed by fire, which *is kindled by the breath of God, as a stream of brim-* ^{Psal. 9. 17.} ^{Isa 30. 33-} *stone.*

3. This pain shall not only be extream, but everlasting also. *The worm* (of an accusing ever-gnawing conscience) *shall never die,* and the fire (of their torment) *never goeth out.* ^{Mark 9.}

4. In this dolefull condition, there shall be no means of mitigation to their pain. Not one drop of water, or the *tip of a cold finger to cool an inflamed tongue,* and no better company than *Devils,* whose fellowship will rather augment, then abate their grief. ^{Luk. 16. 24.} ^{Mat. 25. 34-}

5. And whereas persons in misery *would be pitied* (the want whereof causeth sad complaints, *Have you no pity, all ye who passe by?*) these wretched creatures shall arise out of the *dust to shame and everlasting contempt: Yea, They shall be an abhorring to all flesh.* ^{Job 19. 11.} ^{Lam. 1. 12.} ^{Dan. 12. 2.} ^{Isa. 66. 24.} ^{Psal. 58. 10.} *The righteous shall rejoyce, when he seeth the vengeance.*

These particulars do in some measure manifest, ^{2 Pet. 4. 17.} *what shall be the end of them, who obey not the Gospel.* And if the Question of the Apostle should be pro-

verf. 18.

pounded to us, *Where shall the wicked and ungodly appear?* We may return answer from this, which hath been hinted (*viz.*) They shall appear at a great distance from all creature-comforts, separated from God, and all godly ones, in the place of unexpressible torment with Devils, without any relief, under the curse of God, and the contempt of all godly ones for evermore.

Thus from these inferences, by way of *Information*, I proceed to the Uses of *Exhortation*, which I shall cast under three heads, according to the number of those persons unto whom they are to be directed, in all which I shall be short.

Heb. 4. 9, 11.

First, All such who have cause to suspect their interest in this priviledge (*viz.*) that their death will be their gain, they are to be perswaded, to seek their propriety therein, by looking out, after those qualifications formerly mentioned, unto which this rich prerogative doth appertain. *There remaineth a rest to the people of God, let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.* This endeavour may be quickened by considering the miserable estate of all others (which was cleared in the last branch of the former Use) who in

Hab. 2. 15.

that condition are *in bondage all their life time, through the fear of death.* And as that consideration may affright, so the thought of the happiness of such, who have good assurance, *That death will be their gain,* may allure to this practice. *Balaam himself saith, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.* Think thus with your selves :

Numb. 23. 10.

Heb. 9. 27.

1. *It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgement.*

Job 18. 14.

2. *Death is the King of terrors.*

3. *Christ is both in life and death advantage, unto all such who are united unto him by faith, and the knowledge hereof will be admirably advantageous*

(as hath been discovered) unto all such, who manifest this their union, by an holy life; therefore we will without delay, with double diligence, endeavour to estate our selves in this precious privilege.

Secondly, All the heirs of this precious privilege, should be moved to these ensuing duties.

First, Be very thankfull to the Lord. *I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart (saith David) and I will glorifie thy Name for evermore, for great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest Hell.* Now the gain by death, is a greater blessing, and a fruit of sweeter mercy, then to be secured from death; and therefore this his thankfulness should quicken our gratitude. Psal. 86. 12, 13.

2. Moreover, consider that this privilege was dearly purchased by Jesus Christ. Upon this account *S Paul* breaketh forth into his Doxology, *O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be given to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Cor. 15. 55, 57.

3. Remember that the benefits of death shall extend unto all eternity (as hath been manifested) both in reference unto body and soul. The speech of *David* is here applicable, *Who am I, O Lord God, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God, but thou hast spoken also of thy servant for a great while to come.* Now the advantages by death are greater, and many more, which shall be reaped, not only upon natures dissolution, but thousand thousands of years, after the general Resurrection. 2 Sam. 7. 18, 19

The work of thanksgiving thus perswaded, should be expressed,

1. By our constant and abundant fruitfulness in all the practices of holiness. *Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in* 1 Cor. 15. 58.

the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

2. And by seeking to make others partakers with our selves in this rich prerogative. The speech and practice of the Lepers is imitable, *They said one to another, we do not well; this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace, &c.* As love, so all grace is communicative; therefore let us acquaint our friends with the gain which is to be reaped by death, adding counsel and encouragement, that they may severally share therein, through Gods rich grace in Christ.

Secondly, Be not discouraged in a course of godliness, though for the present you meet with much trouble, and little comfort; for at death (if not sooner) you shall receive that which will pay for all. Be not weary of well-doing, for in due time you shall reap, if you faint not. Behold the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and bath long patience for it. Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sinne for a season, &c. for he had respect to the recompence of reward. And Christ himself, who was a man of sorrows, yet for the joy that was set before him, endured the crosse, and despised the shame. Hope of gain heartneth both Merchant and Mariner, notwithstanding high winds, and boisterous waves upon the troublesome Seas, though the voyage be long, and the profit of it very uncertain: but the promise of gain by godliness at the end, will speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Thirdly, Be not immoderately afraid of death. Although Nature seeking its own preservation, doth shrink from approaching death in Gods own peculiar people. The terrours of death (saith David) are fallen upon me. And though the unregenerate under the

the awakenings of their guilty consciences, are through the fear of death in bondage; yet when faith Heb.2.15. is on exercise in believing breasts, they are bravely elevated above these fears, whether bodily diseases, or bloody persecutors, do threaten Natures downfall. Holy Job knowing, that his Redeemer liveth, doth upon this ground, glory over death: *Though after* Job.19.25,26, 27. *my skinne wormes destroy this body, yet in my flesh, I shall see God: Whom I shall see for my self, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.* And S. Paul speaketh thus of himself, and fellow-sufferers, *For this cause we faint not, though our outward man perish, &c. For we know that if our earthly house were dissolved, we have a building of God; an house eternal in the Heavens.* And many such like examples, might easily be produced from Ecclesiastical Histories of worthy Martyrs, who with undaunted magnanimity expected death, and with joy clapped their hands in the flames, being confident, that their death would be their gain. But I forbear.

Fourthly, Be willing to welcome death when it cometh, as a Messenger from God to call the soul out of the body. Hear what this our Apostle saith upon this ground, *I desire to depart, and to be with Christ,* Phil.1.23. *which is farre better.* And dying Simeon in his Swan-like Song useth the like language, *Now let thy servant* Luk.2.25. *depart in peace.* For the truth in my Text, which hath occasioned this long discourse, rendreth the request reasonable, which the Spouse of Christ makes to him, *Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the Mountaines of* Cant.8.14. *Spices.*

Here these Cautions are needfull, to be cast into your consideration, that this Life may not be abused.

1. Dare not to desire death from proud passion or discontent; as *Elijah* and *Jonah* did.

2. Neglect not the use of means of life, either food, Physick, &c. by yeelding to melancholy fancies, or diabolical delusions.

3. Do not through pride or fool-hardiness hazard your lives by Duels, or any other desperate adventures.

4. Especially take heed of shortening your own lives by self-murther upon the bloody assaults, and insinuations of Satan. But these things I shall not enlarge.

2 Pet. 3. 14.

Fifthly, Lastly, *wherefore, Beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent, that you may be found without spot and blameless.* Men are wont to furnish themselves with such apparel, and to be every way in such sort qualified, as may answer the places, relations, employments, unto which they expect advancements: and holy wisdom will work us to the like endeavour from our hope of the gain of death. The Apostle *S^t John* having touched upon this glorious Metamorphosis, *We shall be like Christ*, addeth, *And every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* *S^t Paul* also, from this expectation of faith, *When Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory*, doth perswade both to mortifie all sinfull lusts, and to set our affections more upon the things above, than the things on the earth. And he himself doth intimate this happy change looked for, through *Jesus Christ*, to be a strong argument to promote his *heavenly conversation in this world.* A Spirit of gracious ingenuity, love and gratitude, will undoubtedly inferre the same conclusion from these premises.

1 Joh. 3. 2, 3.

Col. 3. 2, 4, 5.

Phil. 3. 20, 21.

Thirdly, The Friends of godly persons deceased, are hence to be advised, to moderate their sorrow, because the death of such Friends tends to their gain. The Apostle *S^t Paul*, by this very argument, which he much enlargeth, warneth the *Thessalonians* not to

mourn in such cases, as men without hope; but rather to comfort one another. 1 Theff. 4. 13, 18.

Although I am very farre from condemning all sorrow upon such occasions,

1. For we have approved examples of the mourning for *Jacob*, and for *Dorcas*, and of Christ himself weeping for *Lazarus* being dead. Gen. 50. 10. Act. 9. 39. Joh. 11. 35.

2. And not mourning at all in such cases, would argue people to be *without natural affection*, which is a sinfull frame of heart; and God threatneth this, as a great judgement against people, *who die, not lamented*. Rom. 1. 31. Jer. 16. 4.

Yet sorrow upon the death of real Saints, should be moderate and mixed with comfort, *Because their death is their gain*. Here the words of Christ unto his desponding Disciples, are considerable, *Let not your heart be troubled*. Ye have heard how I said unto you, *I go away: If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, because I said, I go unto the Father*. Those parents who were excessive in their grief, because their children were carried into captivity, were check'd, because God promised their return. Now the gain to godly persons by death, is much more than their return from the dust, by the general Resurrection (as hath been largely discovered) therefore our sorrow should be kept within its due bounds. As *David* cheered his Spirit, when his child was dead, because he was perswaded, that his soul was gone to Heaven, where himself hoped to be ere long, *I shall go to him*. Therefore upon the death of the godly, though we should lament our own loss, and the expression of Gods displeasure against them who survive, together with the sinnes whereby their lives have been forfeited, yet in love to them we should not mourn unto dejectedness; for as Christ was in life their advantage, so in death their gain. *To die is gain*.

I Know it is expected, that I should speak something, in reference to the Life and Death of the Honourable Lady, whose Funeral hath occasioned this Assembly and Sermon; and because I hope it may be usefull to the living, and do right to the memory of her that is dead, I shall mention the heads of what my self have observed, and have received from the credible testimony of others. I judge it needless to suggest her Noble Extraction, her Religious Education, together with her Personal Beauty, great Ingenuity, sweet natural Disposition, and courteous commendable Deportment towards all with whom she conversed.

My first acquaintance with her Ladiship was brought on, by my relation unto my much honoured Lord, the Earl of *Manchester*, upon whom I waited, when their Marriage was transacted and concluded. Then she told me, That by means of the Small-Pox, whereby her life was threatned, God was pleased to awaken her heart, to seek him, and to mind her soul more exactly than formerly. At the same time, she did earnestly intreat me, not for the present only, to bestow such counsel, as I judged most expedient, but for the future also, to deal plainly with her in soul-concernments. Then she professed with seriousness, that the chiefest Loadstone, which drew forth her heart in Conjugal love towards my Lord of *Manchester*, was, his Ingenuity and Piety, hoping that in so near a Relation, he might prove an happy instrument of good unto her immortal Soul. This also I took to be an evidence of a gracious frame, that as she did often request me, to tell her of what my self might espy, or others judge blame-worthy; so she did alwayes with meekness and thankfulness, accept my faithfulness therein. In her first Marriage (when she was very young) she acted not, without the advice and consent

consent of her Parents: And upon the Death of her Husband, she returned to her Fathers Family, with resolutions to be guided by Paternal counsel, in her future course. Herein her practice proved the sincerity of her purpose; and this was very commendable in her, that she would not so take the liberty allowed by her Widdowhood, as to cast off duty and observance to her Parents, in her second Marriage. Her love to her Husband was faithfull and constant; God was pleased to give her eight Children by my Lord of *Manchester*, to whom she was an affectionate tender Mother, a carefull and diligent Nurse, giving suck to seven of them; which commendable practice is very rare in this Age, amongst women of her Rank and Quality. She was carefull of their Religious Education, that they might be instructed in the Principles of the Oracles of God, and be kept in awe by his fear, that they might be secured from sinne. She was charitable to the poor, friendly in visiting her Neighbours, especially when sick and weak: yea, she would upon necessary occasions, draw forth her own breasts, to give suck unto the Children of such, who were of low condition in the world. Although her estimations and loves unto her precious Husband, were high, and his company delightfull; yet she was willing he should be much absent from home, when appointed by both Houses of Parliament (as Major General of the Eastern Association) to attend their Army for the recovering of *Englands* peace, the settling of Laws, the Preservation of Parliament Priviledges, and the Establishment of Protestant Religion, without mixture of Popish Innovations. (*For these were the true ends of that Warre, which the Parliament held forth by their manifold Declarations, and his Lordship, with others who engaged therein did verily believe, now heartily bewailing their dolefull disappointments therein.*) I have been assured, that she kept a constant

course daily, in her secret Devotions, besides her attendance upon Family-duties, setting apart also every day some time, wherein her Lord and she did by prayers and praises to God, commend themselves, their Relations, conditions and concernments to his Majesty before the Throne of Grace.

As she waited upon holy Ordinances in publick on the Lords-day, so she frequented Sermons upon Lecture dayes, both in *London*, and elsewhere, as opportunities were afforded. And her great Knowledge in matters of Religion, did discover her good improvement of the means enjoyed. That bodily distemper, which shortened her life, did mind her in such manner of her latter end, that she spake often affectionately of it, with care to make ready for the Lord. Although I was not with her Ladiship in the time of her last sickness, yet I have heard of her patient and pious submission to Gods will therein. And however she expressed desires to live, in tender respect to her dear Husband, and that she might further take care of the Education of her beloved Children: yet with contentment and comfort, she commended her self by prayer to the good pleasure of the Almighty, with hope of everlasting rest in glory, through Jesus Christ, pressing this, as a Request to her Lord, that he would think that best, which God should please to determine.

Thus in her Life she was many wayes an honour to her Sex and Family, and her Death is matter of lamentation to all who knew and loved her, whose sorrow may be abated, and their comfort promoted, by their hopes, that Christ was unto her, both in life and death advantage.









